



## Advisory Group on ‘A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy’

**Time, Date, Duration:** Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 10:00

**Location:** Via MS Teams

### MINUTES

Mr Philip Nugent, Assistant Secretary, DECC welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the agenda for the session.

#### **Presentations**

The following presentations were given on the day:

- Kevin Swift of the Connacht-Ulster Region Waste Management Office updated on the “National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.”
- Aoife Byrne of DECC on the Waste Recovery Levy
- Denis Dunne of DECC on the Introduction of Commercial Waste Incentivisation
- Philip Nugent on the Introduction of a Deposit and Return Scheme
- Les Carberry on DECC Circular Economy communications campaign

Copies of the presentations given by Mr Swift and Mr Dunne will be circulated.

#### **1. National Waste Management Plan (NWMP)**

- Interaction with the planning system- it is expected that the plan would be taken into account in arriving at planning decisions.
- County Development Plan should take account of NWMP when being put together.
- The inclusion of consumption and waste targets were welcomed.

- The need for data on the volume of virgin material being placed on the market was discussed and the next iteration of the Circular Economy Strategy will consider this.
- It was suggested that subgroups should be formed on the issues of textiles, packaging and repair to consider recommendations and solutions. The Chair welcomed this suggestion which will be followed up by the Department.
- There is work to be done use of material and products that have entered the waste stream. The target in the NWMP for 10kg reuse is primarily for product reuse.
- Application of 10% contamination target- Mr Swift envisages this measurement at processing facility level, measurement at entry point with responsibility applying along the chain.
- Mr Carberry gave an update on development of the Circular Economy Strategy, a material flow analysis is being commissioned which will be a 6-month piece of work providing an evidence base. In terms of timeline on engagement and development of the strategy, H1 will be used for regulations financing, governance, and H2 will look at material streams and sectors after material flow analysis is available.

## 2. Waste Recovery Levy

- Development of the levy is at an early stage. There will be further consultation. DECC is looking to commission 2 studies, one by EPA is looking at activity in other MS. The 2<sup>nd</sup> report will look at impact of levy at national level, optimum rate of levy etc.... A roadmap for introduction will be developed to provide certainty to market on timelines and rates.
- A review of the landfill levy will be considered as part of this programme. There is a need to ensure that disposal is still the least desirable option.
- Ms Byrne asked industry to share data in relation to R codes being used and what material it represents, tonnages arising etc... Any information on other government policy area's that are impacted by the WRL should also be shared.
- There was a query in relation to review of Biowaste and whether the recovery levy would apply to recovery of Biowaste. Ms Byrne responded that we would tread carefully with this and there would be further consultation. The Chair added that a subgroup of the WAG would be considered to further inform policy in this area.

### **3. Commercial Waste Incentivisation**

- More staff will be appointed to the WERLA's which will assist with enforcement and awareness/education -focussing on issues such as contamination. Waste collection companies have a significant role in educating their customers to reduce contamination.
- Default position is that every business and household will have a 3-bin system. It was suggested that there may be a need to consider exemptions for specific businesses for example retail and to have consultation with business sectors.

### **4. Deposit Return Scheme**

- Deposit & Return Scheme Ireland have been approved as the compliance scheme for the Deposit Return Scheme. DRSI is a not for profit company for the producers and retailers to fulfil their obligations under the regulations. The planned date to go live to see the reverse vending machines in stores is February 2024. The Chair thanked the waste advisory group and the subgroup for their input.

### **5. Circular Economy Communications Campaign**

- The first communication strategy for the circular economy has launched on social media, radio and print and is now finished.
- The second block will drop January 2023 for 4 weeks on social, print and radio. After the second block we are going back to the market and the two key metrics will be are more people aware of the circular economy and are they as positive as they were previously. We will look to commission further campaigns throughout 2023.
- At present the campaign is targeting the general public where awareness is very low. By the end of 2023 we hope to have a campaign targeting the enterprise sector.
- Circular Economy will be treated as a separate communications strand so won't direct to waste resources.
- It was suggested that WEEE should be measured on repairability rather than just recycling. Durability and sustainability for electrical items is very important. Sustainability of products will have to come from EU level.

## 6. AOB

- The Minister has announced that Department will be fully funding Circuléire's activity for 2023. Circuléire is a public/private partnership with Irish Manufacturing Research around circular innovation and circular manufacturing. The Minister is also providing funding for the development of a long-term centre of excellence for circular innovation.
- There are a number of suppliers using plastic cutlery and labelling it as reusable. This will need to be looked at.
- Mr Nugent thanked all who attended. The next meeting has been scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023.