



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

Time, Date, Duration: Thursday 20th July 2023 10:00

Location: Via MS Teams

MINUTES

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:

- John Dunne (Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA)) on the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Recycling Targets Task Force which has been established by the IWMA.
- Gerry Clabby (DECC) presented on the Department’s Research & Innovation Strategy

Copies of the presentations given by Mr Dunne and Mr Clabby have been circulated.

1. IWMA Recycling Targets Task Force – Main Points

- Set up in Nov 2022 with the aim of identifying the changes and improvements needed within the waste collection industry if Ireland is to meet the 2025 EU MSW recycling target of 55%.
- Failure to meet targets will lead to large fines and may lead to accusations of market failure which could support calls for re-municipalisation.
- The work of the Task Force to date can be broken into two main parts;

- A research exercise which began in February and was carried out by Eunomia to see how Ireland compares to the rest of Europe. It also looked at high achieving countries to see what they are doing.

(ii) Identified potential ways that Ireland can improve recycling rates in order to meet targets. This work identified measures which, if fully implemented, could lead to a total potential increase in recycling rates of 24.83%. Some identified measures include:

- Ensuring correct classification of incoming skips, roll-ons and compactors.
- Roll out of brown bins to the 36% of households who do not currently have a brown bin service.
- Provision of kitchen caddies where there is low usage and a second/larger bin could be provided to customers who require them.
- The ongoing roll out of brown bins to commercial customers and apartment complexes.
- Reduction in contamination rates in both household and commercial waste bins.
- Improved recording of green waste which is currently collected.

2. Developing the Department's Research and Innovation Strategy - Main Points

- The Department is currently developing our Research and Innovation Strategy.
- DECC's vision is a climate neutral, sustainable and digitally connected Ireland and our mission is to collaboratively deliver policies and programmes to empower people, communities and businesses to continue the transition to a better quality of life for current and future generations.
- To deliver this, a constant flow of information is required so that our policies and spending is evidence based.
- Several bodies under the aegis of the Department are also responsible for research in their own right.
- The national Research and Innovation Strategy "Impact 2030" calls out climate, environment, sustainability and digital goals so its important that we have our own strategy going forward.

- The process will be to review what we are currently doing, followed by consultation with internal, external stakeholders as well as the public then draft the strategy.
- We are also conducting a national comparative study into how other Depts structure, coordinate and fund their R&I activities.
- There is also a review ongoing of international best practice.
- Public consultation process is open until the 11th August. The Department is seeking input from stakeholders on the content of the R&I strategy. Feedback can be provided through a short online survey.

3. AOB

- Claire Downey (Rediscovery Centre) informed the group of an upcoming workshop on the 21st September. This is part of a feasibility study commissioned by the Department of the Environment to look at communications and engagement for the Circular Economy. The invitation will be circulated to this group.
- Elizabeth O'Reilly (WEEE) let the group know that new battery regulations will be in force in the coming days. Ms. O'Reilly also confirmed that the public consultation for the WEEE directive evaluation is also open.
- Vivienne Ahern (DECC) gave an update on a number of new proposals which have been published under the Waste Framework Directive.
- Frank Gallagher thanked all contributors and attendees and brought the meeting to a close.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for the 19th Oct from 10 to 12pm.