



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

Time, Date: Thursday 19th October 10:00

Location: Via MS Teams

Frank Gallagher, Principal Officer, DECC welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the agenda for the session.

1. Presentations

The following presentations were given on the day:

- Ireland’s Municipal Waste Characterisation Study 2022, Dr. Karen Creed, EPA.
- A Critical Analysis of Ireland’s Circular Material Use Rate (CMUR), Claire Downey, Rediscovery Centre.

Copies of the presentations by Dr. Creed and Ms. Downey will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

2. Ireland’s Municipal Waste Characterisation Study

- The study is undertaken every 4 years and enables waste statistics reporting as well as informing policy and assisting in planning of waste management and waste infrastructure.
- The latest stats show that only 41% of municipal waste is recycled so Ireland is currently on track to miss the recycling target of 55% by 2025. There has been very little change since the previous study in 2018.
- The study looked at the composition of both household and commercial waste streams in the general waste bin, recycling bin and organic waste bin.
- Only 36% of the waste in household general waste bins were placed in the correct bin. The remainder should have been sorted into the recycling or organic waste bins.

- Similar to households, food waste was the most common waste found in the commercial general waste bin.
- The EPA have identified the following actions required to improve segregation:
 - Roll out of organic waste bins to all households and commercial premises as well as enforcement of same.
 - Targeted awareness campaigns to motivate and support householders and the commercial sector.
 - Improved waste collection charging to incentivise and reward better waste segregation.
 - Improved recycling infrastructure such as civic amenity sites, recycling centres and bring banks.
- All reports are available on the EPA website.

3. A Critical Analysis of Ireland's Circular Material Use Rate (CMUR)

- Circular Material Use Rate is a measure of circularity of materials which Eurostat developed to monitor progress.
- Ireland's current rate is 2% as compared with the EU average of 12%. Government is aiming to improve Ireland's CMUR rate to above the EU average by 2030.
- The analysis conducted reviewed the CMUR metric and also compared Ireland to three comparison countries: the Netherlands (EU CMUR leader), Austria (Mid-level improver), Croatia (Improved CMUR from low base).
- Ireland's CMUR is based on material consumption statistics, international trade in goods statistics and national waste statistics via mandatory Eurostat reporting.
- There are some limitations as CMUR does not directly measure prevention or preparation for use. It also is weight based so does not differentiate between heavy materials with a high carbon footprint and other lighter materials with a lesser carbon footprint. CMUR should therefore be used in conjunction with other measures to get an accurate picture of Ireland's position.
- The observations showed that Ireland compares more per capita than comparison countries. We also recycle less per capita and we have a very high level of backfilling. Ireland also underperforms in recycling in certain waste categories.
- 73% of Ireland's waste is soils and minerals recorded as waste and which is reflective of construction activity.

- The Rediscovery will be holding workshops to further examine Ireland's CMUR and would be interested in the views of stakeholders. Details of the workshops will be circulated to Waste Advisory Group Members.

4. AOB

- Vivienne Ahern, DECC, provided an update on current EU negotiations.
 - The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation negotiations are currently in session. It has a 12-month negotiation period from its proposal at Council which is quite fast. Vivienne urged anyone in industry with any concerns to engage with their European associations.
 - On the Single Use Plastics Directive, the implementing decision relating to calculation has been agreed but the Commission have committed to revising this in early 2024 to incorporate chemical recycling and to rectify some issues in the text around the reporting.
 - The Waste Shipment Regulation is currently at trilogue. This is expected to conclude before end of the year. Ireland has asked for more clarity on how the ban of plastic shipments to both non-OECD and OECD countries could be phased the capacity to deal with these materials within the EU does not currently exist.
- Brian Quirke, DECC, advised that a draft of the Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan is now available for public consultation. This will close on the 10th November and a link will be circulated to all attendees.
- Sean Scott, Local Authority Waste Planning Coordinator, confirmed that the local authority sector is currently working on the codes of practice for the use of CCTV for waste enforcement and advised that these will be passed to the Minister for approval shortly.
- Kieran Mullins updated the group on current issues for the waste industry, in particular nitrous oxide gas cylinders and disposable vapes. He advised that the sale of nitrous oxide cylinders is being heavily regulated now in the UK and wanted to highlight this to the group.
- Mindy O'Brien requested an update on the provisions of the Circular Economy Act be provided at the next meeting of the group. Mindy also asked that an update be provided on the disposable cup levy.

- Sean Scott requested an update on the streamlining of the waste licensing system. Sean also introduced the WERLA regional coordinators, Colman Kelly (SR WERLA), Cathal Gahan (EM WERLA) and David Barry (CU WERLA).

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for the 25th January 2024 from 10 to 12pm.