

Denis Dunne

From: bennettsbridgecommdev@gmail.com
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Municipal Household Waste

- Capturing plastic bottles and drink cans via a National Deposit and Refund Scheme

It is acknowledged within the consultation document that radical action will be required to increase recycling rates up to 65% by 2035. However previous attempts to establish a national deposit and return scheme has been unsuccessful. It is our understanding that the study deemed the scheme financially unviable however it would be interesting to see these findings published to determine if the original study scope was adequate.

This scheme works successfully throughout mainland Europe and as a member state we are lagging behind considerably. Not only would it capture a better quality of material, it has the capacity to change the public's perception of their waste, a scheme like this would enable them to start appreciating waste as a resource. Being financially rewarded we believe is the incentive required for the public to participate in a deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and drink cans.

It would be interesting to determine if the scope of the previous study included other benefits such as litter clean-up costs. In County Kilkenny, from litter analysis conducted by Kilkenny County Council, 5 km stretches of roadway yielded on average 639 plastic bottles, 575 drink cans and 329 disposable cups. From litter picking, our group realises that when these materials are litter picked, they are usually not in a suitable condition to be placed into the recycling stream as they are filthy and often degraded due to weather exposure.

Roadside litter is difficult to pick due to the dangers working alongside moving vehicles and the lack of suitable road margins in rural areas, the National Spring Clean and other clean up initiatives ask volunteers to take to roadsides to clean up after others, however we believe the volume of roadside litter would reduce dramatically if a deposit and return scheme was put in place for plastic drink bottles and aluminium cans. If a value is placed on these items and the scheme operated in local shops, service stations and supermarkets, recycling rates would soar and the incidences of litter would reduce dramatically therefore reducing the associated costs linked with clean ups.

Bennettsbridge Tidy Towns call on the government to play catch up on the other EU member states and introduce a national deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and aluminium drink cans to increase recycling, promote a circular economy and to reduce litter across the country.

Regards
Bennettsbridge Tidy Towns

