



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

**First Meeting, 11:00 am, Friday 31 January 2020**

**Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment, Adelaide Road, Dublin.**

**Attendance list attached**

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Philip Nugent opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. He outlined the purpose of the Group, as detailed in the Terms of Reference, and of how important citizen engagement, the main theme of the first meeting, would be to the process. The advisory group members were selected on the basis of diversity and to represent a broad spectrum of industry/organisations and the end product of this exercise will be a plan that will encompass best principles of the circular economy and the Climate Action Plan. The Group will act as an advisory forum during the preparation of a new waste policy and as an implementation body for the period of the agreed policy.

The Group will focus on one or two agenda items per meeting to allow effective consideration of issues. DCCAE will circulate short discussion papers on agenda items ahead of each meeting.

### **2. Presentation on Citizen Engagement**

Dr Sarah Miller, CEO, the Rediscovery Centre then gave a short presentation on the Circular Economy/Citizen Engagement which was followed by a wide ranging discussion on the existing challenges in the sector, suggested steps to address some of these challenges and the need to ensure citizen engagement in the process.

### 3. Discussion highlights and comments

- Society needs to reverse its tendency towards quick disposal of goods and move to a more circular economy / consumption pattern. In looking to the future, there are lessons to be learned from traditional consumption patterns to include re-use, repair, exchange and consuming less 'stuff'.
- Volume of packaging with new goods was highlighted as a major challenge. Current standards of labelling, in providing information for disposal, could be improved and eco-labelling may have a major role to play in educating consumers. There was broad agreement that products should carry a message on how they should be dealt with at end of life – manufacturers have a key role to play.
- New waste policy should be evidence- and science-based. Focus should also be on how engagement can be achieved through the work place. Messages around sustainability and resource efficiency could be provided to employees using the health and safety awareness model.
- There is general public awareness on environmental issues and this should be harnessed but a balance needs to be struck in not overloading the public with too many messages.
- Need to consider national communication strategy and an annual plan as a central element of the new waste policy to support short, medium and long term delivery. A reasonable mix of carrot and stick is required and some of the benefits of incentivising good behaviour were mentioned e.g. sitting in a café for a coffee rather than a take away coffee in a take away cup.
- Extended Producer Responsibility schemes must be looked at carefully and the need to work green product procurement concepts into this was stressed.
- Members of the Advisory Group are invited to outline, in writing by **21 February**, the specific actions they can take to support effective citizen engagement. Submissions can be sent to [Denis.Dunne@dccae.gov.ie](mailto:Denis.Dunne@dccae.gov.ie).

### 4. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Advisory Group will take place on **Thursday 7 February** at 11:00 am in the Ormonde Meeting Rooms, 31-36 Ormonde Quay Upper, Dublin 7. Specific discussion topics for next meeting will be circulated in advance.