

Deputy Minister urges Welsh public to have their say on plastic waste

The Welsh Government has been working with the other UK nations on a comprehensive UK wide approach to address the problems created by commonly littered single use plastics.

As a result, the UK nations have today launched three joint consultations and the Deputy Minister is encouraging those in Wales with an interest to have their say.

Two joint consultations are being launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) The first, which applies to the UK as a whole, relates to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging.

Currently, in the UK, it is estimated that producers only pay approximately 10% of the overall cost of recycling their packaging waste. EPR schemes aim to ensure that producers bear the waste management cost of the products they place onto the market, in line with the 'polluter pays' principle.

The second consultation, which applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, relates to a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers. The Scottish Government consulted on proposals for a DRS last year.

A third UK-wide consultation is also being published by HM Treasury today. It proposes a tax on the production and import of plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic.

Hannah Blythyn said: "Plastic waste and packaging waste are important issues. Every year in the UK, we generate around 11 million tonnes of packaging waste as a whole 2.3 million tonnes of which is plastic packaging waste.

"Wales is a world leader in recycling but we want to go further, we want to take action to minimise the amount of packaging we use, and incentivise better design of products and packaging, so that it can be reused or easily recycled. This could stimulate economic opportunities for Wales and support our aim to become a more circular economy.

"While the consultations are being launched jointly across the whole of the UK, our position as a world leader in recycling means our circumstances are different from the rest of the UK. I am particularly keen to explore whether a DRS for drinks containers would work for Wales, given our already high recycling rate.

"I would like to hear views from all sectors on these proposals as I want to understand the likely impact on local authority income and recycling rates, and also on businesses. I would also like to hear from members of the public. If a DRS is to be introduced in Wales, shoppers will be expected to pay a deposit on drinks containers and have to manually return empty containers to collection points in order to claim back their deposit, rather than use

household waste collections provided by their councils.

“I would therefore urge people in Wales to read and respond to the consultations to make sure Wales’ voice is heard on these issues.”