

Meeting of the Cross Party Group on the Circular Economy

24th November 2021 – 6:00pm Via Zoom

In Attendance

- Maurice Golden MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Sarah Boyack MSP (Scottish Labour)
- Gillian Martin MSP (Scottish National Party)
- Catherine Gemmell (Marine Conservation Society)
- Michael Cook (Circular Communities)
- Phoebe Cochrane (Scottish Environment LINK)
- Catherine Gunby (Fidra)
- Karen Freel (Perspective Consultants)
- Jon Molyneux (Fare Share)
- Jack Barrie (Royal Institute of International Affairs)
- Niki Taylor (Fashion Revolution)
- Karen Finn (Fashion Revolution)
- Rosalind Studd (Repair What You Wear)
- Rebecca Pankhurst (Zero Waste Scotland)
- Kim Pratt (Friends of the Earth Scotland)
- Mary Beth (Apparel Xchange/Fashion Revolution)
- Lisa Alfredovna Lehtinen
- James Mackenzie
- Mairi Lowe (Sustainable Fashion Scotland)
- Calum Duncan (Marine Conservation Society)
- Barry Fisher (Keep Scotland Beautiful)
- Katy Dimmock (Fashion Revolution)
- Paul Smith
- Gavin Mackenzie

Agenda

Apologies

- Liam Kerr MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Monica Lennon MSP (Scottish Labour)
- Mark Ruskell MSP (Scottish Greens) (Note: Mr Ruskell would have raised the need for Circularity Scotland to provide a presentation on deposit return (DRS), and this was duly noted. It was then suggested from the floor that a representative with experience of a digital

DRS (for example, from Wales) should be invited to attend a future meeting. This was also noted.).

- Foysoil Choudhury MSP (Scottish Labour)

Minutes Of The Last Meeting

- Proposed by Phoebe Cochrane
- Seconded by Michael Cook

Introduction

- The high turnout for the meeting was noted with approval and as a sign of both the interest in the group and its importance to furthering discussion and action on circular economic activity.

Topics

- Topics for the upcoming next four meetings were decided after discussion and a vote by attendees. These were: food systems & agriculture; raw material consumption (including CO2), reuse & repair and waste management, including incineration, residual and local authority collections (and perhaps deposit return).
- Additionally, other topics raised, that are not included in the first four meetings, were extended producer responsibility (EPR) and marine pollution.
- Catherine Gemmell of The Marine Conservation Society advised that marine pollution did not need to be a specific topic as its wide-ranging nature would be woven across the topics chosen. Additionally, it was noted and agreed that Catherine would be a strong voice for the marine environment in all discussions.
- Following on was a wide-ranging discussion on specific aspects of each of those four topics that might be discussed as well as potential expert speakers for each topic. The chair and secretariat will consider options for these speakers and look to extend invitations at the appropriate time as well as examining specific topics within each category area to take forward at future meetings. Meetings should hear about best practice and international examples where appropriate.
- It was also noted that an invitation to address the CPG should be extended to the Minister for the Circular Economy. The convener will write to do so.

Roundtable Discussion

There followed a roundtable discussion covering four areas.

Catherine Gemmell outlined the results of the latest Great British Beach Clean; noting that recent legislation has resulted in a decrease of banned items being found on beaches, but that there is still a huge amount of marine litter. This includes items that will be addressed by the proposed deposit return scheme, and, as such, there was discussion of the potential impact of delaying its

introduction. There was also discussion of potential action on items not covered by DRS, such as banning plastic wet wipes.

Catherine Gunby from Fidra spoke about chemical pollution and how reducing and improving the management of harmful chemicals is of increasing importance as reuse and recycling is increased. She also spoke about supporting a safe circular economy through banning certain groups of chemicals, such as bisphenols in thermal paper or PFAS from food packaging.

Phoebe Cochrane from Scottish Environment LINK spoke about waste, including prevention, reuse, recycling, DRS and incineration. She presented data outlining trends in waste arising (fluctuating and the 2025 target likely to be missed), recycling rates (steadily increasing for all waste but plateauing for household waste), quantities and composition of waste going to landfill and incineration (landfill is reducing whilst incineration is increasing with soil the biggest component of waste to landfill and wood the biggest component of waste to incineration). Phoebe noted that DRS is going to be delayed beyond July 2022, but that the new timetable has not been announced. She also noted that there is an incineration review and that it was difficult to comment on reuse as national data is not collected. She suggested this was something that should be rectified and reuse should be put on par with recycling in terms of national ambition and investment. Phoebe noted that the data she presented was from SEPA.

Phoebe then gave a brief overview of the landscape regarding textiles and the circular economy, noting that textiles have a huge environmental impact. She also noted that separate collection will be mandatory from 2025 and that they are a priority sector under the EU CE Action Plan (2020). She explained that there is a UK voluntary initiative which aims to reduce the carbon footprint by 50% and water use by 30% by 2050. Phoebe then spoke about how moving to more circular textiles would mean there would be three areas to address: eco-design, increased hiring/sharing as opposed to ownership, and systems and infrastructure to facilitate reuse, such as labelling and collection services.

Litter and Flytipping

A general discussion on these areas followed with the following points/suggestions from the floor:

- Local authorities find it hard to do much on reuse as their focus is to fulfil recycling obligations.
- Reuse targets are required to drive reuse with it being noted that Spain and an area in Belgium have such targets.
- The requirement to apply VAT to upcycled items makes items expensive and constrains what is viable.
- Mattresses are routinely recycled in other parts of the UK, so it would be helpful to have recycling facilities for these (as well as hard plastics) in Scotland.
- Consideration should be given to EPR on textiles.
- Psychology and behaviour change should be considered across all the topics being discussed.
- Education as an effective tool in relation to the topics being discussed.
- The experience of a particular business hiring out children's ware facing barriers to public receptiveness was noted.

Consideration should be given to improved coordination between local government and national government aspirations.

AOCB

- The convener closed the meeting suggesting the possibility of a hybrid meeting in the New Year.

MEETING CLOSES AT 7:20pm