

TO: JOINT WASTE DISPOSAL BOARD
15th June 2023

Re3 DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME CORRESPONDENCE REPORT
Report of the re3 Project Director

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the re3 Board with a briefing on correspondence, from the re3 Board to Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience, on the subject of the planned Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for some recyclables.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Members note the contents of this report.**

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 None for this report.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to share with Members the response from the Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience, Rebecca Pow MP, to the letter from the re3 Board, about the intended Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for some recyclables.

5 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Government has announced its intention to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). This is formalised within the Environment Act 2021, and will be further developed via secondary legislation and subsequent statutory guidance
- 5.2 In consideration of the information currently available on DRS, and recognising that the decision to introduce the scheme has been made, officers identified some areas of query and potential concern.
- 5.3 These queries were reported to the re3 Board, who wished to raise them, with Government, in the hope that any clarification would help the councils to better understand the impacts of DRS for local residents, and on the councils themselves.
- 5.4 A letter was sent, on behalf of the re3 Board, to Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience. The re3 letter is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.5 A response has been received from Minister Pow, and it is attached at Appendix 2.

Outcome of Correspondence

- 5.6 The re3 Board raised, in the initial letter, queries about the following:
- The apparent absence of an equalities impact assessment (EqIA) for DRS and concerns about fairness and accessibility for residents who are elderly and/or disabled.
 - Cost of living concerns relating to the application of a 'deposit' on top of the current sale price for items of packaging that fall within the planned scope of

DRS.

- Fair funding queries on behalf of councils.
- Queries about the potential complexity for service users.
- The environmental impacts of DRS, such as relating to litter.

5.7 The response from Minister Pow only superficially engages with the reasonable queries raised by the re3 Board. In general, it does not provide detailed answers or reassurance, this is especially the case in relation to concerns around the accessibility of DRS for residents who are elderly or disabled.

5.8 In the absence of answers via the Ministerial reply, it must be hoped that the queries have contributed to the ongoing process of drafting the legislation and guidance on DRS and that the re3 Board has provided helpful feedback to Government.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

Head of Legal Services

6.1 None for this report.

Corporate Finance Business Partner

6.2 None for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 None.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None

Climate Impact Assessment

6.5 None.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

Not applicable.

7.2 Method of Consultation

Not applicable.

7.3 Representations Received

Not applicable.

Background Papers

JWDB Legislation Update Report – 2nd March 2023

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