

# Cross-Party Group on the Circular Economy

7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 1pm

Online via Microsoft Teams

## Present

### MSPs

- Maurice Golden MSP
- Sarah Boyack MSP
- Monica Lennon MSP
- Mark Ruskell MSP

### Invited Guests

- Lorna Slater MSP – Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity
- Andrew Murdoch – RMAS
- Duncan Simpsons - RMAS
- Cheryl McCulloch – Circular Glasgow
- Michael Lenaghan – Anthesis UK

### Non-MSP Group Members and Guests

- Adrian Pratt – Benders Paper Cups
- Al Walker – NFU Scotland
- Alex Morrison – Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Alexander Quayle
- Alison Gallacher
- Amelia Gilmore – Berwickshire Swap
- Andrew Murdoch - RMAS
- Andrew Timmins
- Anna Forrest – Berwickshire Swap
- Anthony Burns – ACS Clothing
- Catherine Gemmell – Marine Conservation Society
- Catherine Gunby – Fidra
- Catriona Graham – Office of Lorna Slater MSP
- David McIntosh – Dramm Communications
- Reuben Duffy – Office of Monica Lennon MSP
- Gareth Heavisides

- Holly Owens – Resources Future
- Ifeyina Kanu - IntelliDigest
- Izzie Eriksen – ApparelXchange CIC
- Jack Barrie – Oxfam Scotland
- James Mackenzie - Action to Protect Rural Scotland (APRS)
- Jannik Giesekam – University of Strathclyde
- Joanna Cloy - Fidra
- Jon Havens – The Civil Service
- Justine Scullion
- Karen Wares – Infection Prevention Society
- Kim Pratt – FoE
- Lorraine Sweeney
- Laura Alcock-Ferguson – Circular Communities
- Lynn Wilson – Adam Smith Business School
- Will Mackay
- Marissa Gallagher – Office of the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity
- Mary Michel - Osterio
- Matt Lewis – Circular Communities
- Matthew Crighton – Friends of the Earth Scotland
- Megan Pirie – Fashion Roundtable
- Natasha Wilcox
- Neil Whittall – Fibre Foodservice EAO
- Nick Noble – Dantu Robotics
- Paul Smith – Office of Maurice Golden MSP
- Nicki Souter - RMAS
- Pheobe Cochrane – ScotLINK
- Reeni Kennedy-Boyle – Fyne Futures
- Rhianna Montgomery - NFUS
- Ros Studd – Repair What You Wear
- Ruth Innes
- Sarah Archer – Zero Waste Scotland
- Sarah Cowie - NFUS
- Setareh Dashte Bozorgy
- Simon Kenton-Lake – Nourish (Scotland)
- Suzanne Forup – Cycling UK
- Tamara Cinik
- Toni Freitas – University of Edinburgh
- Wendy Rayner
- Adam Wilson – Office of Sarah Boyack MSP

## Apologies

- Donald Cameron MSP

- Angus Murdoch – Edinburgh City Council
- Bruce Reekie
- Michelle Thomson MSP
- Brian Whittle MSP

## Agenda Item 1: Welcome

- Maurice Golden MSP opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Apologies and the minutes of the previous meeting were noted and proposed by Sarah Boyack MSP and seconded by Maurice Golden MSP.

## Agenda Item 2: An Update on the Circular Economy Bill

- Maurice Golden MSP welcomed Minister Lorna Slater to the CPG meeting. Maurice provided a brief overview of the context of the Circular Economy Bill (CE Bill), including the fact that it pre- dates the Minister and has been through several iterations. It was explained that the bill was currently sitting with parliamentarians at Stage 1 and due to be debated next month before then moving onto Stages 2 and 3. Once the NZET Committee have agreed their report this will go to Parliament and Stages 2 and 3.
- Minister Lorna Slater MSP outlined that MPs would be debating Stage 1 in the Chamber and that the focus is now on Stage 2 and where we might bring in amendments. The CE Bill was one piece of a larger puzzle to bring the economy forward to a circular economy set within the waste hierarchy. The minister said we already have many powers in hand, e.g. the forthcoming disposable vapes ban showed we already have some of these powers, so the CE Bill wouldn't cover elements where powers were already accounted for. The minister pointed out that where there are no devolved powers minister could not legislate. Consumer products/labelling, for example, are constrained by reserved powers and therefore not able to be legislated for even though it's an important area. The Minister said there were twelve provisions within the CE Bill, combining national targets and provisions with local authorities, businesses etc. She went on to say that it made up one part of a larger jigsaw alongside, for example, the Waste Route Map, Extended Producer Responsibility and work with UK Government on packaging and WEE.
- Monica Lennon MSP said that given the role of the NZET Committee, which she is part of, she doesn't have questions specifically on the CE Bill. Instead, she asked what work the Scottish Government was doing to improve the public's understanding of the CE Bill e.g. behaviour change on recycling and support for local communities to understand what they have to do. She also asked what was being done to ensure the public knew what the circular economy was, why we need to do this and what resources were available.
- The Minister confirmed she had watched the evidence sessions and went on to say that the key people affected are businesses impacted by any secondary

legislation and COSLA. The Minister said she had been meeting with businesses and COSLA particularly around reporting on waste. Food waste would come first, so the Minister had met with retailers and planned to meet with restaurants, etc. to understand what action they were already taking. The Minister also mentioned a meeting with WRAP the following day to understand the reporting requirement. The Minister said that the intention was not to add to the burden where businesses are already doing good work and that many were already reporting. The Minister said there was a commitment to co-develop targets and understand what resourcing opportunities there were with COSLA.

- Sarah Boyack MSP spoke about points of information and resourcing for local authorities and the public to encourage people in terms of re-use, re-purpose, recycle and to learn from others in other countries and reduce the waste we produce in the first place. She said they wanted to develop something new.
- Simon Kenton Lake raised the issue of domestic food waste and said that there was no silver bullet but asked what we might see in terms of new innovative thinking e.g. could there be provision for a local authority forum.
- The Minister said different local authorities were doing different things with food waste, but the big question was how to stop so much food waste in the first place. The Minister had asked Zero Waste Scotland to put in place sharing opportunities and said that the idea of a Local Authority Forum was a good one. She added that it was not something that needed to be legislated for but could possibly fit in the route map and that she was open to a conversation on it.
- Maurice Golden highlighted the Love Food - Hate Waste or compost at home as previous campaigns.
- The Minister said there was a need for more research and to do more than communication campaigns e.g. for waste and packaging.
- James Mackenzie made suggestions around product stewardship (tyres, mattresses, etc.), noted there was only three categories, and asked if there was a political appetite to go deeper into product stewardship.
- The Minister said this was from the Route Map and confirmed there was appetite to do so but that the Scottish Government could not do everything at once. She said it was a case of picking the worst offenders and ones they could make an impact on but that she was happy to look at other suggestions as part of the consultation on the Waste Route Map. The Minister also said that packaging for drinks were in a hiatus until confirmation from UK Government on deposit return and that progress was being made on extended producer responsibility on packaging.

- Toni Freitas asked if there were wider plans regarding the Waste Route Map to improve or have new infrastructure that might be better and/or unique in Scotland.
- The Minister mentioned passports for buildings e.g. not everything would be done by government, but reporting would be required, for example, but businesses would lead the way. Food waste would come first and then construction. The Minister went on to say that in terms of local authorities, some have excellent facilities e.g. Moray Waste Busters, that facilitate high recycling rates. The Minister then issued a challenge to universities on how to get designers excited about designing things that anyone could repair.
- Kim Pratt raised the point that transition minerals were needed to transform the energy sector with a need for 240 million tonnes of material. She asked how the CE Bill would support the supply of materials in future sectors.
- The Minister said there was a need to look at consumption targets and put those in place. She explained that how those materials were supplied was not part of the CE Bill or the Waste Route Map, however, if there were policies around circularity of those targets then she would be happy to have that conversation.
- Maurice Golden highlighted that the Global Battery Alliance doing interesting work in that space.
- Meg Pirie asked how textile waste was being prioritised e.g. through extended producer responsibility.
- The Minister said that on EPR the EU was looking at it but that it was not something the Scottish Government could practically implement on their own due to the UK Internal Market Act. She said that one of the provisions in the CE Bill was looking at the introduction of a ban on the destruction of unsold goods. The Minister went on to say that, in terms of household recycling charges, the collection of textiles was potentially a good revenue stream.
- Meg Pirie mentioned that there was a related report she could share at the end of the call.
- Lynn Wilson highlighted to Meg Pirie that a separate group had been set up following a previous meeting of the CPG on textiles to help build evidence in Scotland to support European legislation. The group would examine the key themes, such as acquisition, use and disposal and would also look at what was happening in Scotland and how best to exert influence in Scotland and across the UK.
- Izzie Erikson spoke about working with children's clothing and tackling social inequality. She spoke of her concerns about how some of the policy and legislation proposed was being pitched. That there was a focus on high volume rather than local impact important to cities and recognised by local

authorities, charities and social enterprises as helping tackling child poverty. She said that she would discuss this further with the Minister during a subsequent event later that week. Izzie also commented that Scotland had lots of SMEs in a market landscape and that they wouldn't be able to fully thrive until fast cheap fashion was removed from that landscape but that was an area for the UK Government to address. She further explained that Scottish SMEs would be unable to compete properly until consumption was slowed and there was some accountability for the corporations selling into the UK who did not have transparent supply chains.

- The Minister said she agreed with the points raised.
- Ifeyinwa Kanu said she was pleased to see the initial focus directed towards the food sector. She spoke of taking a systems approach with a need to look at the circularity of food systems. She explained that her own focus was on identifying problems and resolutions and; looking at how nutrients could be used to feed back into food production and that this was connected to health outcomes and the nutrient quality of food. As such, she asked how the CE Bill would prioritise nutrient recapture to increase produce quality and said it would require both a circular economy and public engagement. Ifeyinwa then went on to discuss procurement and particularly working with schools which were generating lots of food waste. She wondered how things could be done differently so children were more engaged on food, understood where it came from and how food waste could be moved from schools to local producers. She explained that, in terms of business, there was already a platform to help that capture of food waste and that support for that would be welcome.
- Reeni Kennedy from Fine Futures, based on the Isle of Bute, highlighted their areas of interest: running a re-style and re-use organisation, running Bute Produce which was growing fresh seasonal food and practiced composting. She also explained they supported textile recycling on the island and hoped to continue doing that and highlighted that they had a number of initiatives around active travel. Reeni said they were commenting on the consultation on these areas. Concern was expressed over there being no island impact assessment yet. Reeni said the carbon burden was being shifted to the islands with couches and furniture cited as an example. She felt there should be an island impact assessment and engagement with island sin the next phase and mentioned there were island networks able to help facilitate this. Reeni pointed out that mainland solutions could end up costing the islands in terms of both carbon and money being shipped out on waste disposal and potential waste disposal income streams. She wondered at what stage islands were going to get an impact assessment and how engagement would happen, particularly for the third sector who were trying to create on island solutions.
- The Minister addressed the points from both the previous speakers. She expressed interest in the reporting platform Ifeyinwa mentioned and asked for details on that to be shared. She went on to say that she was interested in learning what mechanisms already existed and that the Good Food Nation Bill

and Agriculture Reform Bill were also looking at some of those work areas. She said the Scottish Government wanted to help people do the right thing and that if local authorities could collect the same thing in the same colour bin, etc. there is a common experience. The Minister confirmed there would be an islands impact assessments on secondary legislation and gave an assurance those steps would be gone through.

- Jon Havens from the Civil Service explained that there was a screening assessment for island communities on the CE Bill which details high level impacts. Individual measures would have specific assessments. He said that as part of the engagement with the previous routemap consultation they hosted an island and rural community workshop and were keen to do that again with this consultation.
- In the Teams chat Meg Pirie linked a report from Fashion Roundtable for DEFRA on end-of-life strategies for the fashion and textiles sector. The report can be found [here](#).
- Also in the Teams chat Kim Pratt mentioned that for anyone interested in transition minerals, their role in Scotland's energy transition and the circular economy solutions available, they could take a look at [this](#) Friends of the Earth Scotland report.
- Also in the Teams chat Reuben Duffy provided a link to the consultation on Monica Lennon's [Proposed Ecocide Prevention Scotland Bill | Scottish Parliament Website](#).
- Also in the Teams chat Ifeyinwa Kanu provided a link to the platform she had previously mentioned which can be seen here: [www.worldfoodtracker.com](http://www.worldfoodtracker.com).
- Joanna Cloy raised the issue of tackling chemical and plastic pollution and was glad to hear the Minister had mentioned flame retardants. She said Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in waste, such as in mattresses, were a priority item and there was a need to make sure work on chemicals e.g. DEFRA chemical testing on flame retardants for mattresses and textiles and offered to share information.
- The Minister welcomed the offer to share information on this issue. She said that the Waste Routemap had identified high priority items for takeback and that mattresses were complicated for a variety of reasons as highlighted there.
- Matt Lewis asked in Teams Chat to please keep in consideration how to incorporate circular economy education into the CE Bill and the Waste Route Map. It was pointed out that Northern Ireland had embedded this into their Circular Economy Strategy, but there was no provision for this in the current CE Bill. In order for people to adopt a circular economy they needed to understand what it was and how it could be of benefit.

- Jannik Gieseckam asked about construction, best practice and re-use hubs. Would there be a general policy commitment to assess policy measures and interventions and would the Scottish building system keep pace.
- The Minister said she would write to Jannik on those points and would ask her to share what should be included in the assessment.
- Maurice Golden thanked the Minister for her time and answering questions before introducing the speakers for the next segment of the meeting.

## Agenda Item 3: Speakers' Views on the Circular Economy Bill

- **Andrew Murdoch and Duncan Simpson from RMAS** provided a slide presentation which can be viewed upon request.
- **Cheryl McCulloch from Circular Glasgow** discussed the innovation angle and how the CE Bill was good for both business and the environment. She said firms were moving away from asking why they should take action to asking how they can take action. Cheryl cited examples, such as re-use hubs in the construction industry and how hospitality was viewing food as an important conversation topic. Cheryl highlighted a number of potential business concerns, including regulations, time resources and reporting requirements with the question connecting each being how the CE Bill could become a carrot rather than stick. Cheryl concluded by speaking of the desire to maintain the sense of innovation and ensure that smaller business in particular are not disadvantaged.
- **Michael Lenaghan from Anthesis UK** focused his comments on the perspective of businesses and how they were integrating circular issues. He welcomed the intervention of a CE Bill, viewing a circular economy as essential for the survival of the planet but noted that policies to support the circular economy continue to nibble at the edges when the need was for transformational change to the economic status quo on a global scale.

He pointed out that the linear economy had been driven for centuries, and so it was hard to develop a competitive circular economy and that businesses were trying to develop circular solutions on their own within a linear system. The answer, he said, was massive and sustained leadership and change.

Michael highlighted how four decades of support to transition to renewables had gotten them to a point of now gradually competing. However, he said that what was really needed for greater transformation was not being applied and there was a need to stop focusing on waste where 90% of the impacts had already occurred.



Instead, the focus should be addressing the upstream system e.g. virgin resource pricing would be the key to change and likened it to carbon pricing as the key to movements on energy transformation. E.g. washing systems have been built for packaging systems so different companies can make use of shared assets.

Reflecting on the need for change, Michael stated that community initiatives would not be sufficient; he considered single use charging a good move; that material flow accounts required statutory targets, that leveraged public procurement was required for resources and that, overall, the public policy levers required were not being fully applied as yet.

- Maurice Golden thanked all the speakers. He highlighted waste reporting issues at different levels of business; as Cheryl had pointed out the impact of waste reporting for small businesses. He also mentioned how important government intervention was and gave the example of the whisky industry looking at moving spent grains from cattle to refinery: they couldn't make that move, so what were the alternatives for animal feed and who would build the refinery? It was only government who could come out and fix that market intervention. He explained that was the case even in waste e.g. where was the plastic recycling facility? Maurice went on to say that we were still just tinkering around the edges if CE Bill was going to rely on secondary legislation and that secondary legislation may or may not be delivered legislation before the next Scottish Parliamentary election in 2026. He said the next government after that election would relook at this and that we could see a decade before interventions are made.
- Maurice Golden then opened the meeting up for general discussion.

## Agenda Item 4: Open Discussion

- Wendy Rayner posted in Teams chat that she completely agreed with Michael Lenaghan and that we need to support 'systems'. She said this was this was a key barrier to increasing circularity in the NHS. She went on to say that circularity metrics had been looked at but there was no interest or uptake outside the NHS and also explained that of the £16 billion NHS budget around £3.5b each year went on goods and services.
- Phoebe Cochrane thanked everyone for their interesting contributions and said she would like to hear more from Andrew Murdoch or Nikki Souter on the network of academics mentioned in the RMAS presentation. She asked if this was the same one that Nikki has talked about bringing people together in localities.
- Nikki Souter mentioned a sector intelligence piece looking at what opportunities there were in circularity and said there was a sense within the sector that it needed to happen at pace and put things on the ground at the local and regional scale to build resilience. She highlighted that a comprehensive review of the academic institutions across the UK had just

been completed to look at where their areas of interest lie in circular thinking. Nikki said she was pulling that network together for free and was open to help signpost where those resources are. She said lots of people were doing multiple things but there was a need for centralisation and an open portal.

- Andrew Murdoch emphasised that waste was the end of the road, but the reality was the cost analysis and that we had bred a wasteful society. He said supermarkets were geared to encourage people to buy what they didn't want to buy and the same was true for the clothing industry. He said that, ultimately, all that material should be recycled as much as possible, explaining that waste operators would recycle about 90% of material they received with the remaining now going to waste to energy. He said he agreed with Michael Lenaghan that material should not get to the waste stage but that was not going to happen any time soon.
- Maurice Golden picked up on the issue of product design, noting that it was reserved to Westminster but that the UK was not big enough to implement change here without it having severe economic impacts; the US, EU and China would be needed for that. Maurice said that consumers could be encouraged to consume in a more sustainable manner though. He said that one aspect of product design we could action was for buildings through changing the regulations to standardise design for the construction sector.
- Lynn Wilson highlighted that she would be attending the Scottish Parliament the following day with Elrec and Friends of the Earth Scotland to help raise support for the CE Bill.
- Michael Lenaghan posted in Teams Chat that he agreed with Maurice Golden and highlighted how governments around the world were competing to out-subsidise each other to win gigafactories.
- Ifeyinwa Kanu posted in Teams chat that she wasn't convinced gigafactories would be a silver bullet saying that, in most cases, circularity requires local modular solutions that support and enhance overall circularity.
- Michael Lenaghan posted in Teams Chat that he agreed with Ifeyinwa Kanu and that his point was more to highlight the role of public funding in driving EV transformation and the need for similar funding support for circular economy solutions.
- Nicki Souter posted in Teams chat to confirm that the data capture for the academic network she had previously mentioned was still being finalised in order to build an access portal.
- Ifeyinwa Kanu posted in Teams chat to agree with a point made by Maurice Golden regarding rental models for goods and said that the challenge was on sustainable finance for such manufacturing.

- Toni Freitas raised the issue of perspective and how long it could be until we see the CE Bill in action. She wondered if it would be possible to use existing legislation creatively with initiatives that already fit. She also wondered if it were possible to be proactive in encouraging circular economy measures. Toni then picked up on a point made earlier by Michael Lenaghan regarding the energy sector and how that was just one industry when the challenge was to transform every industry. Toni concluded by saying that the challenge for everyone was how we could tweak what already existed.
- Maurice Golden signalled the meeting would end shortly and asked for the speakers' final thoughts.
- Michael Lenaghan picked up on, and strongly agreed with, Toni Freitas' general sentiment. Although he had used the examples of renewables and electric vehicles, he said they were so much simpler to achieve but that achieving a circular economy meant you couldn't just have a few great engineers creating something. Changing the whole system would involve every actor and every business getting involved. He also said demand had to change which would drive both innovation and the market.
- Cheryl McCulloch echoed what Michael Lenaghan had just said and reiterated the importance of innovation for business. She said that creating enabling conditions, through fiscal or other measures, was needed for a systems change approach to innovation and business support. The question was, she said, how we could change the system to enable businesses to innovate.
- Andrew Murdoch agreed with both the previous speakers. He highlighted a real scenario of his firm being the first waste company to put a fully electric waste lorry on the road in Scotland. He explained that there was a requirement to work with a tight radius to make it efficient given it was one and a half times the price of a diesel vehicle and there would be 6-7 years before seeing financial parity with a diesel vehicle. He said the firm could only operate 5% of its fleet on electric trucks which showed how much innovation was still needed to decarbonise diesel.
- Maurice Golden thanked the speakers and noted there was a plethora of things to do but that if he could pick three, they would be the relatively simple procedure of changing excel contracts to build in sustainability and thus make all public procurement circular economic; ensure enterprise agencies were built around the circular economy and invest in the enterprise landscape. Maurice said this would enable a transformation in how consumers engage in a variety of products e.g. instead of buying white goods move to a rental model which would provide higher quality. Such a rent and repair model would deliver economic growth and could start in public procurement and before transferring to a consumer setting. Maurice also raised the issue of increasing household recycling rates and cited the example of Wales. He pointed out that new legislation wasn't required to do any of this right now and he would like to see action as a result.

- Maurice concluded by noting that the next meeting would be a joint hybrid session with SPREE - the Renewables and Energy Efficiency CPG and that details would be issued in due course.
- The meeting was brought to a close with thanks to the speakers and the Minister for answering questions.