Next steps on deposit return scheme

Detailed work on how a potential deposit return scheme might operate in Scotland has been commissioned by the Scottish Government.

Deposit return schemes, in existence round the world, see consumers pay a small deposit that is fully refundable once the empty bottle is returned and this, it is believed, can reduce litter and increase recycling.

Roseanna Cunningham, Environment Secretary, confirmed Zero Waste Scotland will investigate design options and the associated costs and benefits of how a deposit return scheme could operate in Scotland's unique environment.

Options will then be put to the public for consultation before Ministers come to a final decision on the future of deposit return.

Ms Cunningham said: "I am grateful to Zero Waste Scotland for its work so far on deposit return and to everyone who provided evidence to help us better understand the benefits of deposit return for recycling and reducing litter, and potential impacts on retailers and local authorities.

"Clearly there are a number of issues for the Scottish Government to consider when it comes to deposit return schemes that can only be addressed by carrying out work to understand the design of a potential system. I have asked Zero Waste Scotland to start this work.

"Progress will be overseen by a steering group involving representatives from the packaging industry, retailers and

environmental groups, and followed by a full public consultation to ensure we are as well-informed as possible before any decisions are made."

Scottish Labour's environment and climate change spokesperson Claudia Beamish MSP said: "This is a great step forward. We need to do more to reduce waste in Scotland. That's why Labour wants to see plastic bottle deposit schemes across Scotland.
"It will be important to ensure that there is assessment of the need for any exemptions as well arrangements for shared collection points for rural areas.

"I look forward to to seeing the model that Zero Waste Scotland produce."