

# Government appoint expert panel to fight throwaway society

The Scottish Government has appointed an expert panel made up from representatives of the retail, waste and chemical industries as well as the public sector and academia to join them in fighting against plastic pollution.

Dame Sue Bruce who is Electoral Commissioner and a former Chief Executive of Edinburgh council has been appointed to chair the panel which will look at everything from disposable cups to plastic straws.



Dame Sue Bruce and Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham

She will be joined by behavioural expert Professor Dame

Theresa Marteau, economist Professor Liam Delaney, Mike Barry, the director of sustainable business at Marks & Spencer, Roger Kilburn from the biotech and chemical industry, Professor Margaret Bates from the waste industry and Professor Aileen McHarg who will bring legal expertise.

SEPA chief executive Terry A'Hearn, Zero Waste Scotland chief executive Iain Gulland and disability adviser Professor Kate Sang will also sit on the group. A 2050 Climate Group representative will provide a young person's perspective.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: "Scotland has demonstrated leadership in tackling plastic pollution. We were the first country in the UK to commit to introducing a deposit return scheme and we are currently consulting on proposals to ban the manufacture and sale of plastic-stemmed cotton buds, one of the items most commonly found on our beaches.

"But I want to go further, and the creation of our expert panel is an important step towards seriously addressing this issue in Scotland. The panel's expertise and skills from across waste, legal, retail and public sectors as well providing a voice for young people and disabled people, will help us identify the bold actions we can take in Scotland to encourage long-term, sustainable changes in consumer and producer behaviour."

Dame Sue Bruce said: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Expert Panel in this important and fascinating work. Not one of us can have failed to be shocked by the coverage in recent months of the state of plastic pollution on our land and in our seas.

"While these might be global issues, action can be taken by all of us much closer to home. The panel will be asking questions about what we can do together in Scotland – as consumers, communities, producers, retailers and government – to radically change our attitudes and our use of single-use

items.”

## **Friends of the Earth Scotland**

Friends of the Earth Scotland Head of Campaigns Mary Church said:

“We welcome the announcement of the Expert Panel and the leadership the Scottish Government has shown to date on tackling plastic pollution. Commitments so far to introduce a deposit and return scheme for bottles and cans, a ban on plastic cotton buds, and the phase out of non-recyclable plastics by 2030 put us on the right track.

“However there is a huge task ahead to address the root causes of the plastics problem and find solutions that don’t simply shift the damaging impacts elsewhere.

“Plastics pollution is all too often simply one end of a long, environmentally damaging journey from resource extraction to litter on our beaches. The increase in single use plastics has coincided with a growing culture of hyper-consumerism, detrimentally impacting people and environments worldwide. As Europeans, we consume far more than our fair share of the Earth’s resources, far overstepping planetary boundaries. The plastics crisis is intrinsically linked to the climate crisis, with the vast majority of plastics derived from fossil fuels, including fracked gas.

“The Expert Panel and the Scottish Government must therefore take a holistic, joined up approach to tackling the growing tide of plastic. Solutions must be focused first on waste reduction and on developing a truly circular economy, with pressure brought to bear on manufacturers and retailers to fundamentally change their business models.”