

## Press Release - 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA), the trade association for waste management companies in Ireland has called on Government to incentivise businesses and producers to prioritise recycling and waste recovery so that Ireland can reach its ambitious waste management targets in 2025 and onwards.

Responding to the publication of the EPA's national waste statistics report, the IWMA noted that while Ireland's recycling rates have stagnated, householders are continuing to improve the amount they recycle with a significant increase in food waste recycling in particular. The roll-out of household brown bins has seen a 16% increase in brown bin tonnages collected year on year (2018 to 2019).

Conor Walsh of the IWMA said; "Householders have shown again and again that they are willing to recycle once we provide the infrastructure and education. Kerbside collections and the provision of waste, recycling and food waste bins make it easy for people to do the right thing. Continued education and incentives such as the introduction of a Digital Deposit Return App, proposed by the IWMA, where householders could reclaim deposits for certain materials put in their recycling bin would encourage higher levels of household waste recycling and reduced municipal waste.

"The figures published by the EPA today however point to the need for improved recycling by the business and construction sectors. Recycling and waste management are not given a high enough priority by these sectors and this is where there is the biggest potential to improve Ireland's recycling rates. We need to do more as a country to recycle these valuable materials in line with circular economy principals and climate change mitigation. Waste reduction and recycling should be a key focus for any company's ESG (Environment Social and Governance) goals".

Mr Walsh said that the IWMA has made recommendations to Government for radical changes to commercial waste collection to incentivise waste prevention and recycling. This includes the introduction of a voluntary recycling performance scheme. Businesses participating in the scheme would be voluntarily audited by independent auditors and those with high recycling rates would qualify for a discount in their commercial rates. "This is an area that needs particular attention as businesses need to be incentivised to make waste management a priority for their business", he said.

The IWMA also wants producers to do more to reduce the amount of non-recyclable material placed on the market. "We note the plans by REPAK to introduce eco-modulation of fees whereby those that put non-recyclable packaging on the market pay higher fees and we welcome that".

Mr Walsh said that a number of IWMA members were investing in re-processing infrastructure that would allow increased recycling of waste materials in Ireland, reducing reliance on exports and said that the organisation and its members were committed to playing their part, with government, the business community and the general public to help Ireland become a truly circular economy.

IWMA members collect 80% of the household waste currently managed in Ireland and the vast bulk of the commercial, industrial and hazardous wastes.

**Ends.**