



## **NAWDO Statement: Call for Review of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)**

**21<sup>st</sup> September 2026**

[Start]

NAWDO supports the recent call from LARAC and other waste operators for a comprehensive review of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). NAWDO urges Government to fully assess the implications for local authorities, waste disposal authorities, and the wider resources and waste sector.

NAWDO shares concerns that the current evidence base does not adequately reflect the likely financial, operational, contractual, and infrastructure impacts on local government. The DRS Impact Assessment relies on historic data and assumptions that may no longer reflect current collection systems, material composition, consumer behaviours, or the cumulative effect of recent and forthcoming waste reforms.

Waste disposal authorities have invested substantially in treatment, transfer, sorting and disposal infrastructure based upon long-term policy objectives and waste composition assumptions. The removal of high-value aluminium and PET containers from local authority-managed waste streams has the potential to affect material revenues, increase processing costs, alter facility economics, and create contractual risks across existing infrastructure arrangements. These impacts require fuller consideration and quantification before implementation.

NAWDO is particularly concerned that DRS has largely been assessed in isolation from other significant reforms, including packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR), Simpler Recycling, Digital Waste Tracking and wider decarbonisation measures. A cumulative assessment is necessary to understand the combined effect of these policies on local authority finances, infrastructure planning, service delivery and statutory responsibilities.

NAWDO also believes there remains considerable uncertainty regarding actual scheme performance, public participation rates, impacts on recycling performance reporting, interactions with pEPR funding mechanisms and the practical consequences for existing waste management infrastructure. This calls into questions how environmentally beneficial the scheme will be in its current form.



Some overseas schemes have also seen widespread issues arising from scavenging of bins for material and significant extra expenditure to tackle vandalism and litter.

A precautionary approach to the scheme should now be adopted, supported by robust monitoring and review of arrangements involving local government representation.

NAWDO calls upon Government to:

- Publish an updated DRS Impact Assessment based on current local authority and industry data.
- Undertake a comprehensive cumulative assessment of DRS alongside pEPR, Simpler Recycling and related reforms.
- Ensure that waste disposal authorities are fully compensated for any loss of income, increased operating costs or contractual impacts.
- Review arrangements with meaningful local authority sector representation, and take into account local authority concerns.
- Consider whether implementation should be delayed until the impacts of pEPR and Simpler Recycling have been properly understood and evaluated.
- Assess the likely environmental outcomes of the scheme in its current form.

NAWDO remains committed to supporting measures that improve resource efficiency, increase recycling and reduce waste. However, any DRS must apply the above measures to ensure it is as beneficial as possible, and not implemented to the detriment of local authorities, who are working hard to achieve positive outcomes (both environmental and financial) for residents across the country.

[End]



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WASTE DISPOSAL OFFICERS

**About us:**

*NAWDO, the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers, is the primary network and voice for local authorities with statutory responsibility for waste treatment and disposal. NAWDO was formed in 1992 and its members include London Boroughs, Metropolitan, Unitary, Joint Waste Disposal Authorities, Waste Partnerships and County Councils from all UK regions (except Scotland) to keep up to date with the fast-changing waste and resources industry. Through NAWDO local authorities are provided with presentation on regional, national, international and strategic forums and groups to inform, influence and collaborate with key stakeholders and policy makers. NAWDO is entirely run by volunteers and through its Policy and Advisory (P&A) Committee it sets the direction of the organisation with member engagement. With over 80 members NAWDO represents around 80% of all local authorities with waste disposal duties in the UK. NAWDO holds quarterly meetings where its members, central government, regulators, waste industry and other affiliated groups discuss and debate challenges and current developments in the waste and resources industry, helping shape and influence (future) decisions and policy. It also provides an online forum where members can openly discuss and debate current and relevant issues facing senior officers with waste treatment and disposal portfolios.*

---

**Contacts:**

Eleanor Hayward, NAWDO Chair - [eleanor.hayward@nlwa.gov.uk](mailto:eleanor.hayward@nlwa.gov.uk)

Jarno Stet, NAWDO Secretary – [jarno@wrwa.gov.uk](mailto:jarno@wrwa.gov.uk)