



Minutes: 30th Meeting of the Retail Forum

22 March 2023, 11.00am-13.00pm

*(via video / tele conference and Room 110, Kildare St)
Meeting held under Chatham House Rules*

Chair: Neale Richmond TD, Minister of State for Employment Affairs and Retail Business, Attendance at Appendix 1.

Item 1: Welcome and Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed Retail Forum members to the meeting and new members to the Retail Forum.

Item 2: Government initiatives

The Chair invited Ms Bernie Kiely, Principal Officer, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications to give an overview on the introduction of an environmental levy on single-use disposable cups and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

Comments arising:

- *Retailers requested a sufficient lead in time on the implementation of both the levy and DRS.*
- *Clarification sought from DECC as early as possible on planning exemptions.*
- *A retail representative body asked if takeaway soup was excluded (DECC advised that soup is not included under this scheme)*
- *A retailer expressed security concerns in relation to the use of cash in the DRS machines.*
- *No feedback on the results of the SME test, who will be affected (DECC advised that the SME test results will be published along with the consultation report).*

Action: Copy of the presentation to be forwarded to the Retail Forum members,

Item 3: Government Supports

Ms Maedhbh Cronin, Principal Officer, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment gave an update on the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS) and advised that statistics on the TBESS are available on [Cost of living supports \(revenue.ie\)](#) and referred to the [How-To video's on Revenue's website](#) that were already circulated to Retail Forum members.

Ms Cronin also advised that a new call of the Online Retail Scheme (ORS) is due later this year, and highlighted the new [Retail sector in Ireland - DETE \(enterprise.gov.ie\)](#) webpage on the Department's website.

Comments arising:

- *A retail representative body congratulated the Department for the new Retail Sector in Ireland webpage which they said was a step in the right direction.*
- *General concerns over recent announcement from electricity company about profits for last year*
- *Retail Representative body asked that the ORS should apply to retail businesses that don't export.*
- *Clarification was sought about launch of new ORS call. (DETE advised that sanction is awaited and the call is due later this year)*

Action: Link to TBESS stats on revenue website to be forwarded to Retail Forum members.

Item 4: Climate Adaption

Ms Aideen O'Hora, Sustainability Works presented on adapting to climate change for the retail sector.

Comments arising:

- *Funding for district heating is available.*
- *Insurance will be an issue.*
- *Need to ensure Public sector bodies are leading by example.*
- *Public/Private partnership approach might be needed.*
- *Any funding scheme needs to be simple.*
- *All local authorities obliged to have a Climate Plan.*

Action: Copy of the presentation to be forwarded to the Retail Forum members.

Item 5: Digitalisation

Ms Grainne O'Carroll, Principal Officer, Digital Economy Policy and Data Access, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment gave an update on the Department's Digitalisation Policy.

Comments arising:

- *There needs to be a focus on cyber security. (DETE advised that DECC are developing a strategy for cyber security and DETE are feeding into that).*
- *Too many portals, need to ensure that pathways for access to information is simplified for small businesses. (DETE highlighted that the Supporting SMEs toolkit is one point of contact and does signpost to the Climate Toolkit and other supports for SMEs).*
- *Issue raised in relation to businesses changing banks and setting up new accounts. The transition, which is done manually is very time consuming.*

Action: Copy of the presentation to be forwarded to the Retail Forum members.

Item 6: Retail Forum Work Programme

Ms Deborah Dignam, Assistant Principal, Secretary to the Retail Forum updated members on key achievements of the Retail Forum including the new Retail Sector in Ireland webpage, draft legislation tracker, information on energy and skills supports, the new Retail Tab on the DETE dashboard, and relationships established in relation to the TCF and NTE working group.

Ms. Dignam thanked members for their participation on the Working Groups.

Members were asked to inform DETE of any updates they were aware of that could be added to the new Retail Sector in Ireland webpage.

Item 7: AOB

Items arising included

- *Harassment in the Retail sector (The Chair advised that he was due to have a meeting with Minister Harris that afternoon).*
- *Defamation Laws.*
- *New amendments to the Agricultural and Food Supply Chain Bill broadening the powers of the new Agri-Food regulator to request sensitive commercial and personal information from entities coming within the scope of the new legislation.*
- *Free Schoolbook Scheme and its impact on relevant retailers. Retail representative body asked for a review of the scheme after a year.*
- *Grants for accommodation over shops.*
- *Broaden consultation on changes to such as Living wage from LEEF to representative bodies.*
- *DETE advised the Forum of the Building Better Business events.*
- *The Chair thanked Ms. Deborah Dignam, Secretary to the Retail Forum for her work to date and wished Deborah well on her move. The Chair welcomed Ms. Marian Cassidy as the new Secretary to the Retail Forum.*

Appendix 1 – Attendees

Company	Name	Title
.IE	David Curtin	CEO
Chambers Ireland	James Kiernan	Director of Relationship Management
CSNA	Vincent Jennings	CEO
Digital Business Ireland	Lorraine Higgins	Secretary General
Dublin Town (BID)	Richard Guiney	CEO
Eason	Liam Hanley	Managing Director
ISME	Neil McDonnell	CEO
ISME / Sligo BID	Finbarr Filan	
Hardware Association of Ireland	Martin Markey	CEO
Irish Pharmacy Union	Jim Curran	
Kilkenny Group	Marian O’Gorman	Chairperson
Musgrave	Edel Clancy	Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs
Primark	Emma Ormond	Head of Government Affairs
RGDATA	Tara Buckley	Director General
Retail Excellence	Duncan Graham	Managing Director
Retail Ireland	Arnold Dillon	Director
Small Firms Association	Elizabeth Bowen	Director Interim
Technological University Dublin	Damian O’Reilly	Senior Lecturer - Retail Management
Tesco Ireland	Rosemary Garth	Corporate Affairs Director
Waterford City and Co. Council (Local Government Management Agency Rep)	Michael Quinn	Director of Service
LEO Network	Padraic McElwee	Head of Enterprise, LEO Clare
Enterprise Ireland	Kasia Sobkow	Retail, Consumer/ Online & ICT Technologist Team
Enterprise Ireland	Teri Smith	Manager of Retail, Consumer/ Online & ICT Technologist Team
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Pauline Mulligan	Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Enterprise Division
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Maedhbh Cronin	Principal Officer, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Deborah Dignam	Secretary to the Retail Forum
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Marian Cassidy	AP, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit
D/Rural and Community Development	Tara Taheny	Assistant Principal
D/Social Protection	Eimear Hayes	Employer Support Services Unit
D/Taoiseach	Fiona Curran	Economic Policy

Presenters

Company	Name	Title
D/Environment, Climate and Communications	Bernie Kiely	Principal Officer, Circular Division-Strategic Policy
Sustainability Works	Aideen O'Hora	
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Grainne O'Carroll	Principal Officer, Digital Economy Policy and Data Access