

WG / Exchange for Change meeting

Monday 9 March 2026

Summary of Discussion

Meeting Purpose

To discuss the Welsh Government's evidence requirements for assessing the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) application, review key issues set out in the letter issued on Friday, and identify the detail needed to support advice to Welsh Ministers.

Participants

Welsh Government and Local Partnerships

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Exchange for Change (UK DMO) Representatives

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1. Opening Remarks and Introductions

WG opened the meeting with greetings and brief introductions, noting that Will (WG Legal) had not previously met all DMO representatives.

WG thanked the DMO for the considerable work undertaken so far, especially on the regulations.

A correction was given for an error in the letter indicating a deadline on Tuesday 10 March, which should instead have been Friday 13 March. Welsh Government asked for responses by the correct deadline.

DMO acknowledged receipt of the letter.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

WG framed this session as a key follow-on discussion from the previous meeting, intended to:

- Explore key issues in more depth
- Clarify the evidence needed
- Support WG in preparing summary advice to Ministers
- Provide transparency around where more clarity is required

WG stressed that the letter to the DMO did not introduce new issues; it elaborated on areas already discussed and previously raised. It was proposed to follow the structure set out in the letter, beginning with the operational plan and providing clarity on operational assumptions and delivery mechanisms.

3. Evidence Required for the Application

WG emphasised that the application must clearly demonstrate:

- How the DRS will operate in practice, not just conceptually
- How requirements in the regulations will be delivered
- How the scheme will function for Welsh citizens
- How financial and operational assumptions support delivery
- Where details are missing, a credible pathway toward developing them

WG acknowledged that some details do not yet exist because the DMO is still developing them, but a roadmap must be provided.

WG highlighted that an incorrect financial assumption had been identified (related to reuse outputs) and had previously been returned to the DMO for correction.

4. Operational Plan

WG stated that they need clear operational detail showing:

- How the scheme will run day-to-day
- How materials will move through the system
- How return points will function in practice
- How the scheme interfaces with citizens in Wales
- How obligations will be met from the commencement date

This is necessary for WG to offer assurance to Ministers.

DMO asked WG to be specific about what evidence would be “sufficient” to give assurance and make the panel comfortable. This was the only substantive question asked by DMO in the transcript.

5. Financial Planning

WG restated the requirement for:

- A balanced financial plan
- Clear evidence supporting financial assumptions
- A roadmap for developing unknown or incomplete financial components
- Correction of the previously identified error (reuse output assumptions)

WG emphasised the need for financial clarity to support Ministerial confidence.

6. 2027 Requirements (including glass in Wales)

WG highlighted and reiterated a significant point:

The scheme in Wales will include glass as a material in-scope from 2027.

This differs from other UK nations and means WG requires:

- Detailed planning for glass collections
- Operational model for glass handling
- Financial modelling for glass streams
- Logistics, infrastructure, and storage implications
- Clarity on how obligations will be met from day 1

WG acknowledged the DMO is already working on 2027 requirements for other UK schemes but stressed that this does not replace the need for Wales-specific detail, because the inclusion of glass requires separate planning.

7. 2031 Reuse Obligations

WG clarified that they are **not** asking for a fully costed and finalised 2031 reuse plan at this stage.

However, they **are** requiring:

- A clear pathway to 2031
- Detail on trial (or pilot) design

- Explanation of how trials will meet regulatory requirements
- Early thinking on commercial models, infrastructure, and volumes
- Development timeline and dependencies

WG acknowledged that the DMO's reuse planning is still evolving.

8. Critical Gaps and Ministerial Assurance

WG stressed that multiple areas contain critical gaps that must be addressed before WG can produce summary advice for Ministers.

Specifically, WG must be able to say:

- How the scheme will meet each regulatory requirement
- Whether the DMO's plan is financially viable
- Whether the scheme is operationally deliverable in Wales
- Whether risks and unknowns are being managed

9. Meeting Structure and Next Steps

WG proposed working through the structure of their letter, starting with the operational plan.

DMO reiterated that detailed clarity from WG on "what is sufficient" would be helpful.

10. Closing Remarks

The meeting concluded with thanks exchanged.