

Members will wish to be aware that the draft Single Use Carrier Bag Charge (Wales) Regulations 2010 will be laid today. Single use carrier bags represent an iconic symbol of our throwaway society and are an environmental problem. In Wales we took home an estimated 350 million carrier bags last year from the major supermarkets alone, equivalent to 273 bags per household in Wales. And this figure under-represents the full picture since it does not include the millions of bags given out on the high street, corner shops and all other retail outlets. Carrier bags make up an estimated 2.7% of litter by weight and costs approximately £1 million annually to remove in Wales. This is seemingly a very small amount by weight, but carrier bags are light, highly visible and dangerous to wildlife

The proposals to introduce a charge on single use carrier bags in Wales have been the subject of two consultations – one on the general policy direction and a more recent one on the detail. As a result of the consultation process I am pleased to announce some key changes to the proposals as follows:

The statutory minimum charge will be 5p. I am satisfied that this level of charge will bring about significant behavioural change, without presenting an unwarranted obstacle in circumstance where a person genuinely forgets their reusable bag

The charge will come into force on 01 October 2011. I believe that extending the implementation timetable, and bringing it in line with common commencement dates for business, will provide for a smoother and more successful introduction of the charge. It should

allow sufficient time to ensure that all retailers are fully aware of the requirements of the legislation and have sufficient time to make physical changes to stores, IT changes, staff training and other changes needed to the core aspects of their business operations in Wales before the charge comes into force.

I will be bringing the regulations forward for consideration by the National Assembly for Wales on 30 November 2010