

## **RGDATA's manifesto for the Independent Retail Grocery Sector**

### **1. A Town Centres First Policy**

Current initiatives on town centres while well-meaning are disjointed, lack co-ordination and are not properly funded. The following initiatives are urgently needed to support and sustain Irish town centres:

- a. Ireland needs a national **Town Centres First** policy across all Government initiatives and programmes. This would put town centres at the heart of decision-making by government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities. The prioritisation of town centres is a key enabler in securing the regeneration of communities, revitalisation of existing buildings and public spaces and represents a sustainable and efficient use of our finite land resources. A similar approach has been adopted in Scotland where all Government policies and initiatives must put the Town Centre to the fore of their planning, whether for retail, housing, tourism or community initiatives.
- b. A dedicated **funding stream** is required to support collaborative **Town Centre Health Checks** across each county. RGDATA & The Heritage Council and many other collaborators have piloted a very successful Collaborative Town Centre Health Check programme since 2018 and the results clearly demonstrate that this is a very effective and strategic way to bring town teams together and kick start sustainable town centre regeneration.
- c. A dedicated **Town Centre Partnership Office** should be established at Central Government level, within the Department of An Taoiseach, to co-ordinate initiatives impacting on town centres and to ensure the implementation of a Town Centres First policy.
- d. An **Irish Town Centre Portal** should be established to act as a resource for town centre organisations interested in building and developing town centre regeneration initiatives.
- e. Convenience/grocery retailers did not qualify for the Online Retail Scheme designed to assist bricks and mortar shops to deal with the online threat so the new Government needs to roll out a tailored **incentive scheme** to support convenience/grocery retailers to **boost their online presence, to successfully manage their businesses operate post Brexit and to develop their online capabilities.**

## 2. Insurance Reform

Real reforms are urgently required to reduce the cost of insurance for businesses. RGDATA is interested to hear the specific reforms that political parties are proposing and in particular would like to see the following reforms adopted as a matter of urgency:

- a. A new law to **rebalance the Duty of Care** imposed on business owners as occupiers of premises
- b. Legal changes to **reduce the pay outs** and settlements for **minor injuries**
- c. The **establishment** of a **Garda Insurance Fraud Unit** to root out insurance fraud
- d. The inclusion of **Employers Liability and Public Liability** data on the insurance claims **database**
- e. Introduce a **Supertax** on Insurance Company profits in the event that they continue to hike premiums while also making increased **profits**.

## 3. Climate Action

- a. Introduce a **ban** on **single use plastic cups and plastic bags**
- b. Improve the **waste recycling infrastructure** so that recycling initiatives can have a positive impact on the environment.
- c. The establishment of targeted incentive schemes by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to support retailers upgrading lighting, refrigeration and energy systems to more eco friendly options.