

What do the Scottish Government's new waste plans involve?

The Scottish Government recently published its first Zero Waste Plan. Despite significant efforts to reduce the amount of waste which Scotland produces, and greater measures taken to recycle, there is still a significant tonnage which is not adequately dealt with. The Plan's intended to promote a change in the way we deal with waste, whether as households, businesses, or public sector organisations.

The Plan sets two new targets applying to all waste: by 2025, 70% of waste should be recycled, while only a maximum of 5% should be sent to landfill. An arsenal of measures are set out to be levelled at those targets, including:

- Landfill bans for specific waste types.
- Separate collections of specific waste types to increase reuse and recycling opportunities.
- Restrictions on the input to all energy form waste facilities.
- Encouraging local authorities and the resource management sector to work together to create consistent waste management services.
- Development of a Waste Prevention Programme for all wastes, making prevention and reuse central to actions and policies.
- Improved information on different waste sources and types highlighting further economic and environmental opportunities.
- Measurement of the carbon impacts of waste to prioritise the recycling resources which offer the greatest environmental and climate change outcomes.

The Plan is essentially a vision, a strategic background against which to take decisions to implement the numerous actions set out in the Plan. It is intended to create a stable framework to provide confidence for the necessary investment over the next 10 years. It's certainly ambitious and leaves a lot for the Scottish Government still to do, but the fact that it is committed to doing such things, following productive consultation process, gives reason to anticipate that the Plan has every change of hitting its targets.

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