

Draft Circular Economy Strategy

Scottish Government Consultation

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1. Executive Summary

The Scottish Government has published its draft Circular Economy Strategy, outlining how Scotland intends to move from a linear economic model to one where materials are used efficiently and kept in circulation for as long as possible. The strategy aims to support sustainable economic growth, strengthen supply-chain resilience, encourage innovation, and help meet Scotland's net-zero and nature-positive commitments by 2045.

It sets out a 2045 vision, outcome framework, seven cross-cutting policy mechanisms, five priority sectors, and a national monitoring and indicator system. The strategy aligns with wider national priorities spanning economic growth, net zero, nature recovery and regional resilience. It also builds on the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 and the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map.

For local authorities, the proposals have wide-ranging implications for waste and resource services, place-based programmes, procurement, skills development, economic support, and community initiatives.

Responses are due by **Tuesday 13 January 2026**.

[Click here](#) for further information and to submit your response.

[Click here](#) to read the full report.

2. Overview

The draft strategy sets a national vision for Scotland's transition to a circular economy and proposes seven policy mechanisms, five priority sectors and a new monitoring framework. The overall aim is to improve competitiveness while reducing environmental impacts and ensuring that the benefits of circularity reach all communities.

Why Local Authorities Should Engage

Operational impacts:

The strategy will shape a broad range of local authority responsibilities, including waste and recycling systems, reuse and repair provision, procurement, data reporting, business support, and local skills development.

Place-based delivery:

Circularity is recognised as inherently place-specific. Local authorities will be key partners in developing and delivering regional opportunities alongside communities, anchor institutions and local enterprise bodies.

Alignment with local strategies:

Local Development Plans, Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies, economic development strategies, just transition work and community wealth-building approaches will all need to align with the direction set by the draft strategy.

Key proposals Relevant to Local Authorities

Vision and Outcomes

The strategy proposes a 2045 vision supported by outcomes across four themes:

- **Economy:** maximise material value; increase resilience to supply-chain disruption; encourage circular innovation.
- **Environment:** reduce reliance on non-renewable materials; prioritise sustainable use of renewables; embed circular behaviours.
- **International:** reduce Scotland's global environmental impact from production, consumption and waste.
- **Social:** widen access to circular opportunities and support a fair transition for communities.

These outcomes form the basis of the monitoring and indicator framework and future statutory target-setting.

Policy Mechanisms

Seven mechanisms for delivering change:

- **Business Support:** creation of a new Business Information Hub (2026) and continued targeted support through Zero Waste Scotland.
- **Behaviour change:** system-wide actions to help households, organisations and public bodies adopt circular practices.

- **Place-based approaches:** expansion of locally tailored initiatives, including industrial transformation programmes such as Project Willow at Grangemouth which is an initiative to establish a low carbon manufacturing hub.
- **Procurement:** embedding circular requirements across public sector purchasing, including greater use of reuse, recycled content and circular asset management.
- **Skills and education:** development of circular skills pathways and a national Circular Jobs Tracker (2026).
- **Circular Economy Data:** improved availability and quality of circular economy data, supported by UK-wide digital waste tracking.
- **Policy alignment:** integration of circular principles across planning, climate, economic and industrial policy.

Priority Sectors

Five sectors have been selected for focused intervention due to their high material use, carbon impact and wider circular potential:

1. **Built Environment**
2. **Net Zero Energy Infrastructure**
3. **Textiles**
4. **Transport**
5. **Food System**

Product Stewardship

Current UK-wide schemes will continue (waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), batteries, end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) and end-of-life fishing gear). New research will identify additional products for potential stewardship, with clothing, mattresses and at least one further category expected. **A Product Stewardship Plan will be published in 2026.**

Monitoring and Indicator Framework

The strategy introduces Scotland's first dedicated circular economy indicator set, with around 25 indicators covering economic, environmental, social and international outcomes. These will support future statutory targets (to be set by 2027) and reporting under the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024.

3. Consultation Questions

Please note this briefing provides only an overview and organisations are strongly encouraged to review the full consultation documents before responding.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the vision and outcomes for the strategy?

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the vision?

Question 3: Do you have any comments on the outcomes?

Policy mechanism:

- Business support
- Behaviour change
- Place-based approaches
- Procurement
- Skills and education
- Circular economy data
- Policy alignment and systems thinking

Question 4: To what extent do you agree with the policy mechanisms identified?

Question 5: Do you have any comments on the policy mechanism identified?

Question 6: Do you have any comments on the associated plans and priorities?

Priority Sectors:

- The Built Environment
- Net Zero Energy Infrastructure
- Textiles
- Transport
- The Food System

Question 7: To what extent do you agree with the priority sectors identified?

Question 8: Do you have any comments on the priority sectors identified?

Question 8a: Do you have any comments on the plans and priorities for the built environment?

Question 8b: Do you have any comments on the plans and priorities for the Net Zero Energy Infrastructure?

Question 8c: Do you have any comment on the plans and priorities for textiles?

Question 8d: Do you have any comments on the plans and priorities for the transport?

Question 8e: Do you have any comments on the plans and priorities for the food system?

Question 9: Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to product stewardship?

Question 10: Are there any changes or additions that you would like to suggest in relation to the Circular Economy Monitoring and Indicator Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose?

Question 10a: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “The economic value derived from material use is maximised without increasing our environmental impacts”?

Question 10b: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “The Scottish economy is more resilient to disruptions in global supply of materials, including critical raw materials”?

Question 10c: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “Business and entrepreneurs have opportunities to develop circular economy innovations”?

Question 10d: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “Non-renewable resource extraction is minimised and renewable resource use is sustainable”?

Question 10e: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “The negative environmental impact of our production, consumption and disposal is minimised”?

Question 10f: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “The negative impacts experienced internationally from production, consumption and disposal are reduced”?

Question 10g: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “People and communities engage in and benefit from circular activities in a fair and inclusive way”?

Question 10h: Do you have any comments in relation to the indicators proposed for outcome “Circular behaviours are the norm across business and society”?

Question 11: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the accompanying equalities impact assessment

Question 12: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the accompanying Fairer Scotland Assessment

Question 13: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the accompanying Island Communities Impact Assessment

Question 14: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the accompanying Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

Question 15: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the accompanying Consumer Duty Impact Assessment

Question 16: Please provide any further information or evidence that should be considered in the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

Question 17: Do you have any views on whether there are likely to be any positive or negative environmental impacts from the draft Environment Strategy that have not been identified in the Strategic Environmental Assessment?

4. APSE Comment

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) encourages its Scottish member authorities to respond to the current consultation. As has been outlined earlier this draft strategy aims to support sustainable economic growth, strengthen supply-chain resilience, encourage innovation, and help meet Scotland's net-zero and nature-positive commitments by 2045. As the briefing also highlights there are several key areas for local authorities including waste and resource services, place-based programmes, procurement, skills development, economic support and community initiatives.

Local authorities across Scotland have already introduced a wide range of initiatives which all build towards meeting the goals of this and other related strategies. For example, Perth and Kinross Council have already begun the process of switching their diesel vehicles to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). With the council reporting in November that emissions have been cut by over 20%, saving an estimated 278 tonnes of carbon dioxide in the past year. Dumfries and Galloway Council have introduced a battery collection service to their waste collection streams. This initiative is providing a safe and effective way for residents within Dumfries and Galloway to recycle their lithium-ion batteries, which given the very serious risk of battery fires within refuse vehicles and HWRCs, is being welcomed by residents and council operatives alike. There are of course still challenges for local authorities in relation to the 2045 vision for example local authority catering services grapple with integrating local and seasonal produce which can bring with it supply and cost issues. However, initiatives such as Give Peas a Chance in Aberdeen City and Highland Councils are opening up a new route to market for this local, organic, nutritious and climate friendly plant protein, allowing pupils to access healthy and sustainable food.

We would also encourage our members to continue discussions on this consultation and the areas within by participating in our Scottish Network meetings such as our Waste and Recycling, Climate Change and Renewables or Soft Facilities Management Networks which are free to attend for APSE members. Information on these Networks can be found by [clicking here](#). APSE also runs Networks that meet to facilitate discussions between our members across the United Kingdom, more information on attending this can be found by [clicking here](#).

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Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE network meetings and would like to be added to our list of our contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk

Our national networks include:

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- Catering (School Meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authority Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation
- Parks, Horticulture and Ground Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing
- Armed Forces and Veterans Network

Visit www.apse.org.uk for more detail



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