

Update on the Co-design of the Household Waste Recycling Code of Practice

APSE Waste & Recycling Meeting, Dundee 21st August 2026

Commitment to a New Statutory Code of Practice

- Stalled recycling rates - the overall recycling rate in Scotland of 62.2% in 2023 shows significant progress, but we know that more needs to be done to increase household recycling (44.3% in 2024).
- The Circular Economy Act gave powers to Ministers and local authorities to increase reuse and recycling rates and modernise services.
- A statutory Code of Practice for household waste recycling will set out clear guidelines for how local authorities should provide and manage recycling services, ensuring they are consistent, efficient, and accessible for residents.
- Our Circular Economy and Waste Route Map commits to a **co-design process with local government and other stakeholders** for high-quality, high-performing household recycling and reuse services.

Vision for co-design of new Code of Practice

Scottish Government and local government will work in partnership, and with communities and other key stakeholders, to evaluate the strategic context and infrastructure requirements to inform the co-design of refreshed standards for household recycling and reuse services that:

- maximise value of materials and economic opportunities for local authorities
- drive performance nationally and locally against climate and waste targets
- promote more consistent, high quality, deliverable and affordable services that take account of local circumstances and economics
- address specific challenges (e.g. rurality, communal properties)
- and make the right choices easier for householders and easier to communicate for local government.

Agreed by Local Government-Scottish Government Strategic Steering Group

Value for money and paying for the new Code

- Previous Scottish Ministers have acknowledged that there will be a capital and revenue cost to the new Code and confirmed that local authorities will receive funding to implement it.
- All new policy commitments or changes to existing policy, that have a financial cost for local government, must be approved through the formal financial governance process, requiring agreed recommendations from the joint Scottish Government and CoSLA Officers' Settlement and Distribution Group (SDG) and political agreement from Scottish Ministers and CoSLA political Leaders.
- A value for money assessment and full costing of the Code will be produced to support decision-making.



Co-design engagement summary

2025

23 June	In-person Workshop #1	26 Local Authority attendees
July	Online event 1	5 Local Authority attendees
20 November	Online information session for local authorities to introduce detailed co-design plan and check planned research	~50 Local Authority officer attendees

2026

21 January	Local Authority pre-briefing for Workshop #2	~30 Local Authority officer attendees
27 January	In-person Workshop #2	58 attendees (28 Local Authorities)
5 March	Online event 2	11 attendees (2 Local Authorities)
14 May	In-person Workshop #3	47 attendees (29 local authorities)
4 August	Local authority deep dive on organics	~30 Local Authority officer attendees
12 August	Local authority deep dive on communications	~25 Local Authority officer attendees

Key Emerging System Proposals

All emerging proposals are subject to further co-design and review by political decision makers

Material	System
Residual	Setting a maximum effective weekly capacity for kerbside properties, with some exceptions (i.e. large households or medical needs).
Dry Recycling	Twin-stream is favoured by the majority of stakeholders • Paper and card • Plastics, metals and cartons
Glass	No change to current requirements
Food waste	Expansion of weekly separate collections or fortnightly co-mingled, modelling pending
Garden waste	Continued flexibility to charge
Communications	Minimum mandatory communications standards for local authorities

Next steps

- Scottish Government, in collaboration with CoSLA, continues to refine the details of the draft Code of Practice. However, wider stakeholder engagement is now complete and will be confined to individual issues if required.
- Agreeing the final content of the Code moves to a political level, including discussion by CoSLA Environment and Economy Board and future engagement between Scottish Ministers and CoSLA.
- In the meantime, work to prepare consultation resources and impact assessments will progress and adapt to changes made as a result of political discussions.
- The aim continues to be public consultation by the end of 2026 on a draft Code of Practice.