

‘Beyond Waste’? – Our Policy Landscape

The development and delivery of Carbon Net Zero and Circular Economy ‘Roadmaps’, and policy and regulatory drivers for the resources and waste sector in the UK.



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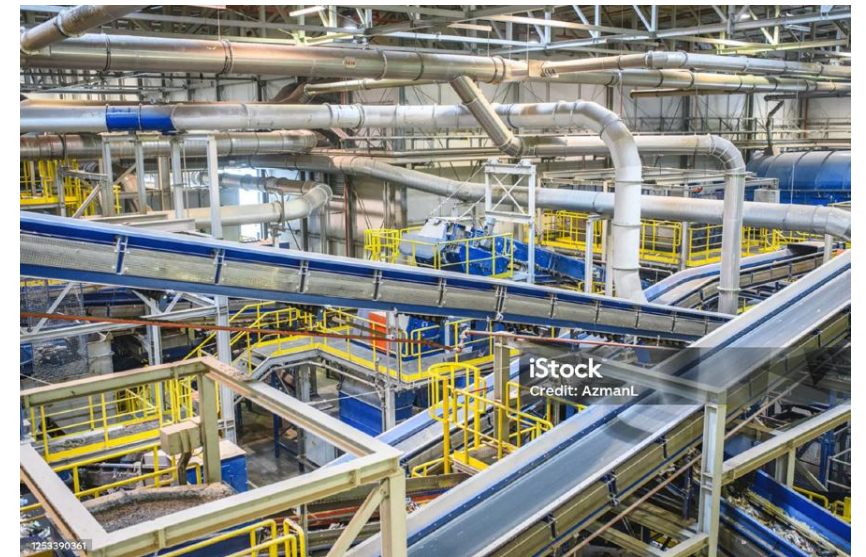
Dan Cooke: CIWM Director of Policy,
Communications & External Affairs

APSE Annual Fleet, Waste and
Ground Services Seminar, Aviemore

May 2026



The UK's policy and regulatory framework for the resources, recycling and waste sector is progressive (with world-class potential).



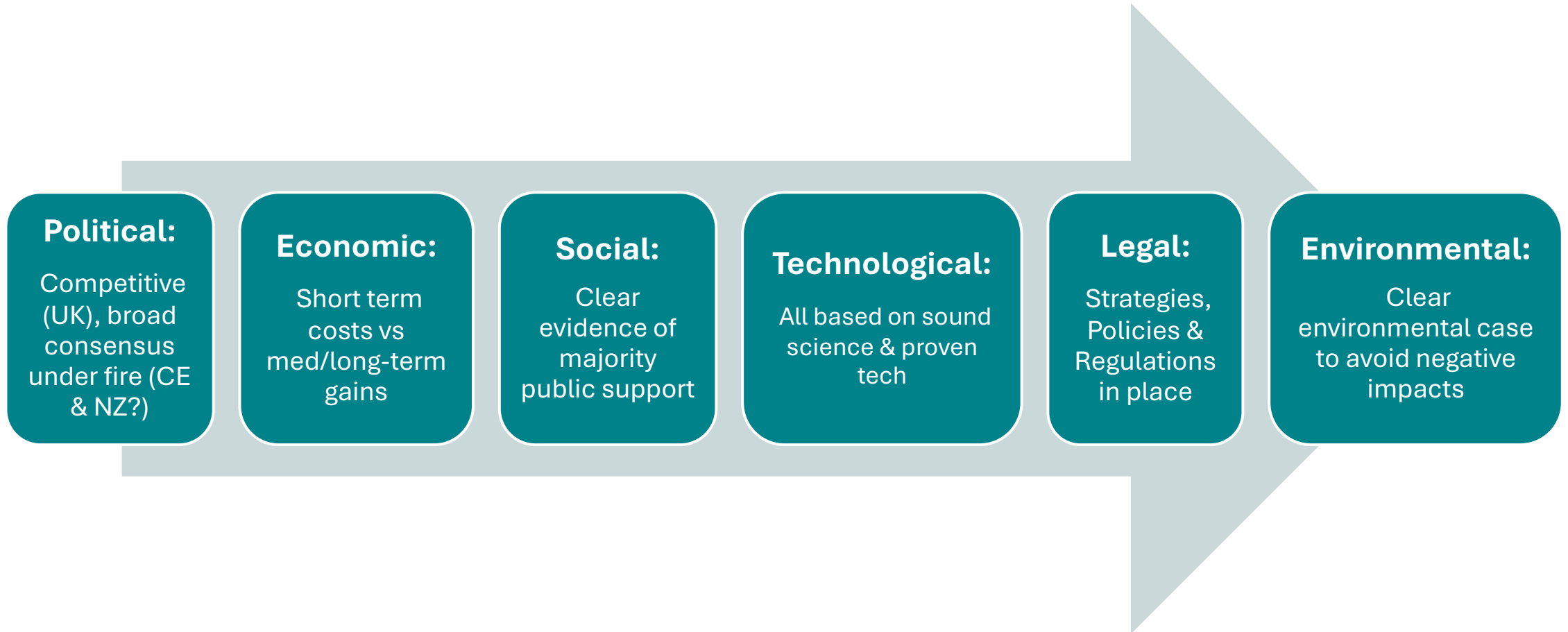


The UK is set on a clear direction of travel towards greater resource efficiency (circularity) and net zero.





PESTLE analysis of current UK resources and waste sector policy and regulatory drivers provides clear context



The key components are in place for a roadmap to a Circular Economy in the UK



(EU CE & Waste Frameworks)

UK 25 Year Environment Plan Targets

Environmental Improvement Plan 2025

Resources & Waste Strategy 2018 (& equivalents)

Primary & Secondary Legislation & Regulations

Environment Act 2021, RWS Reforms, et al

CE Strategies and Growth Plan 2026...?



HM Government

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment



HM Government

OUR WASTE, OUR RESOURCES: A STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND

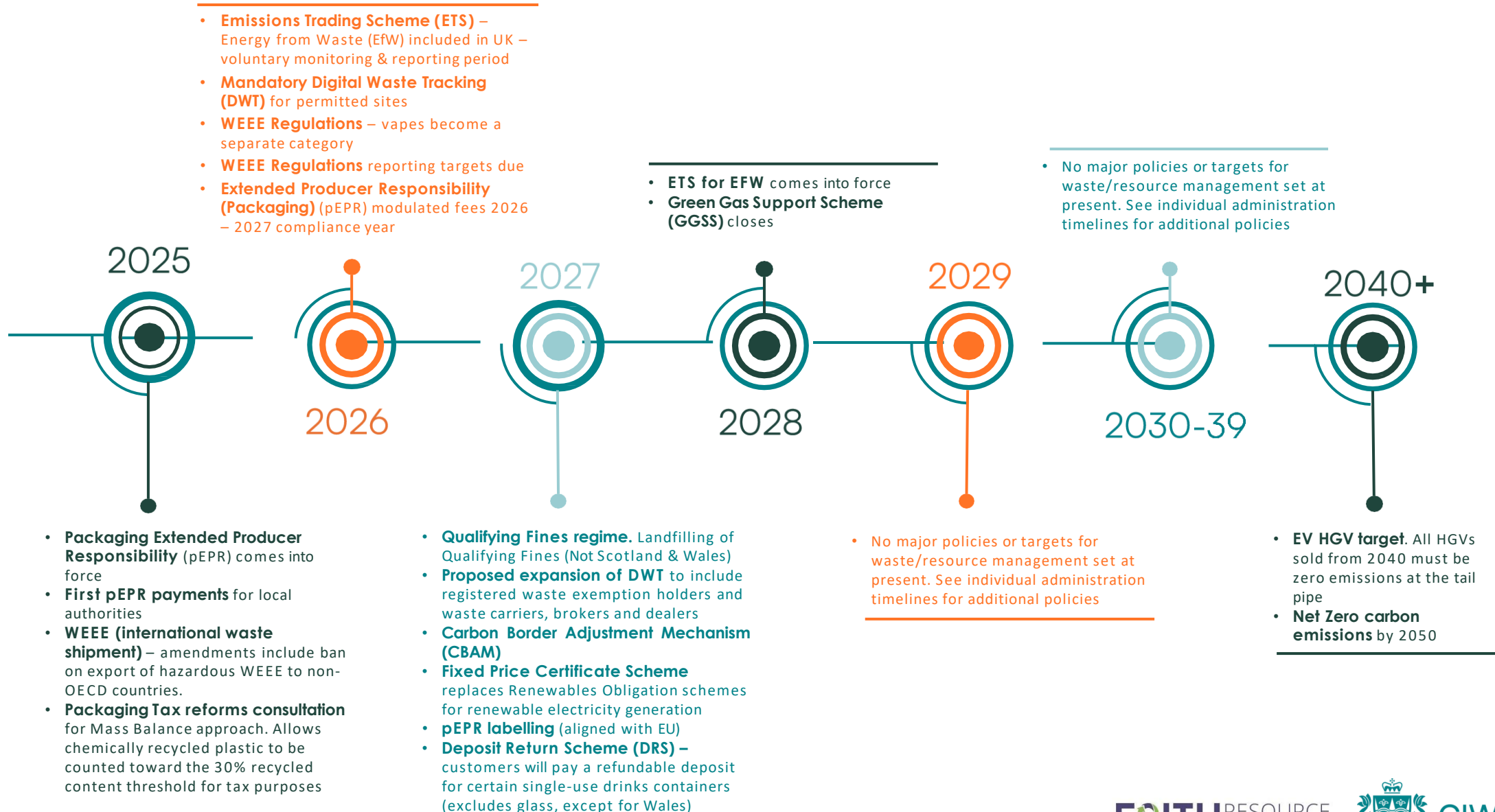
A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland

March 2026

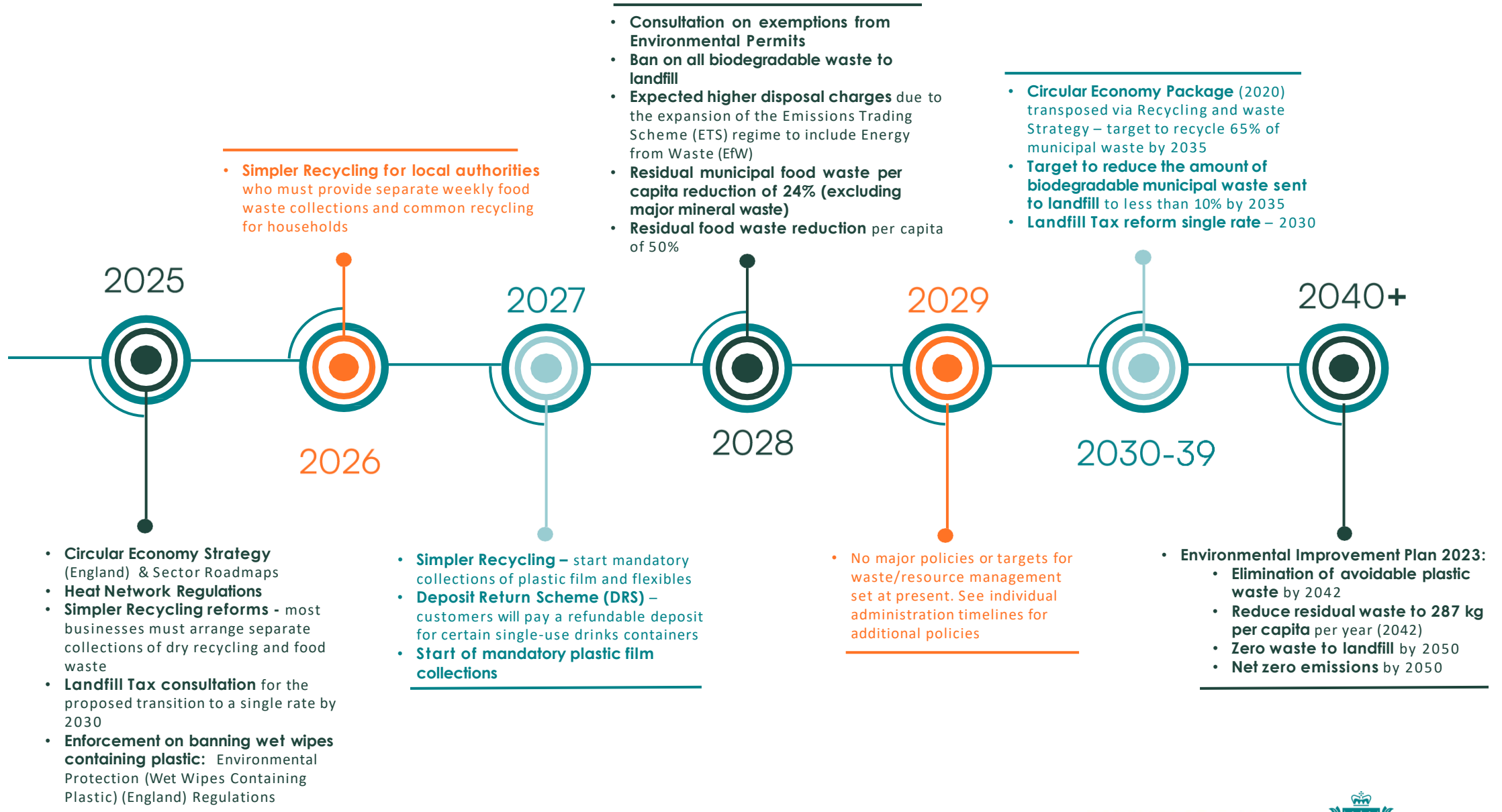


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

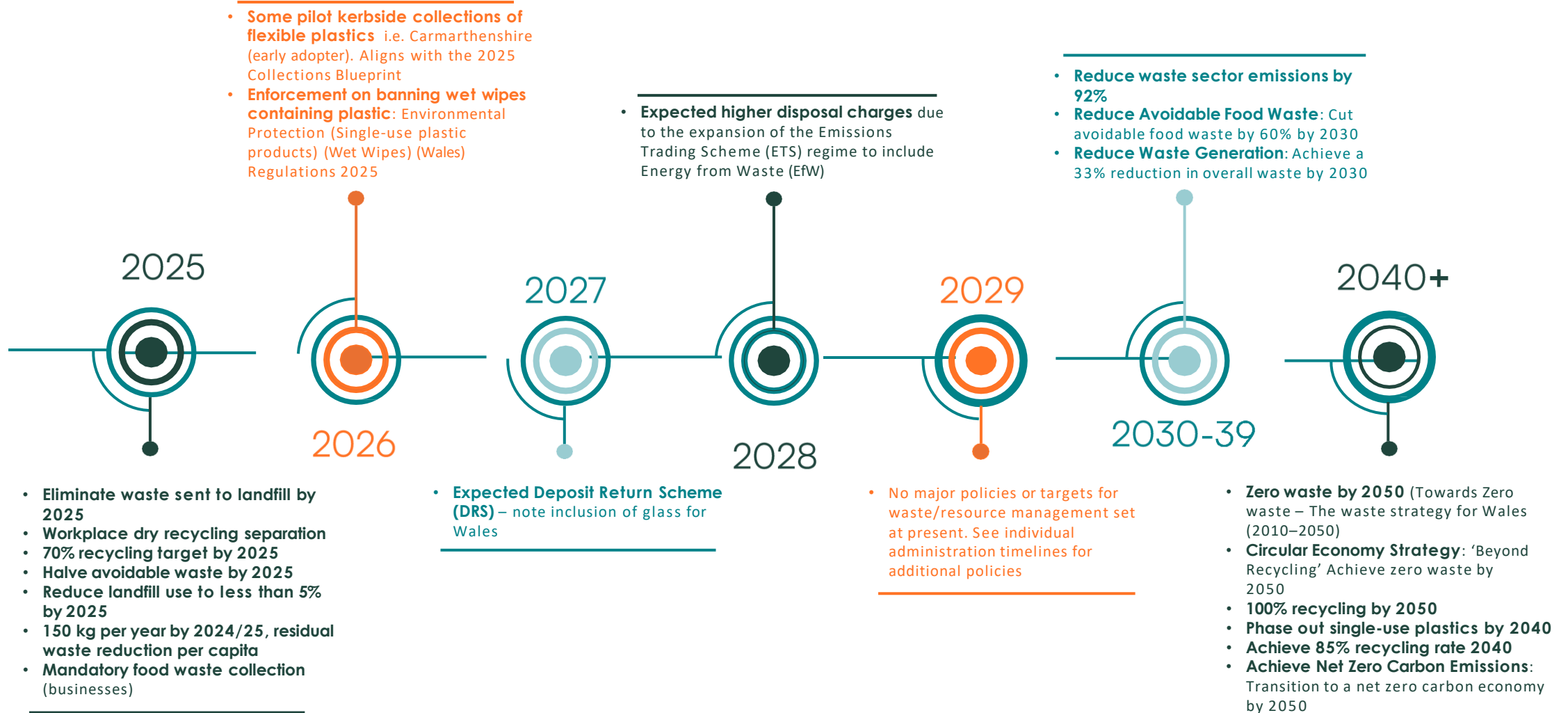
UK Waste Policy Milestones



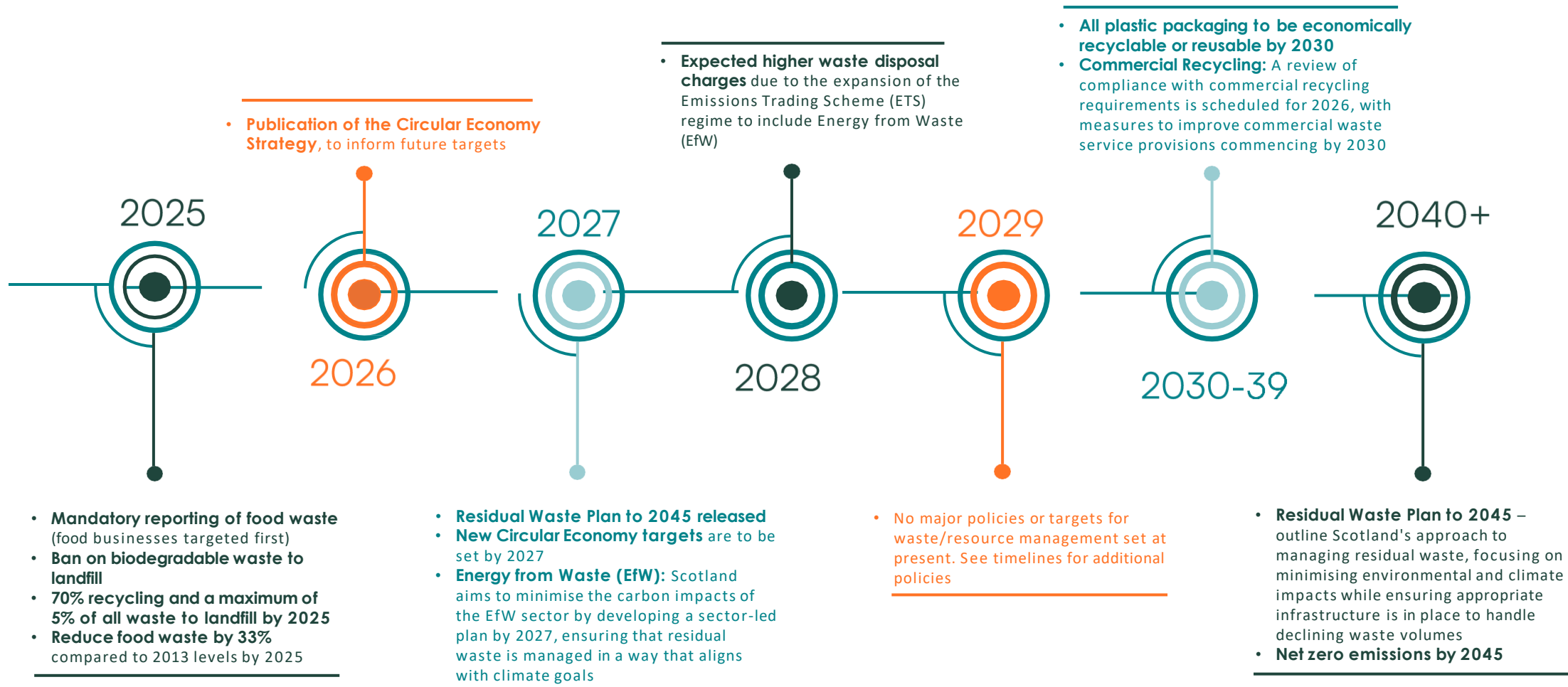
England Waste Policy Milestones



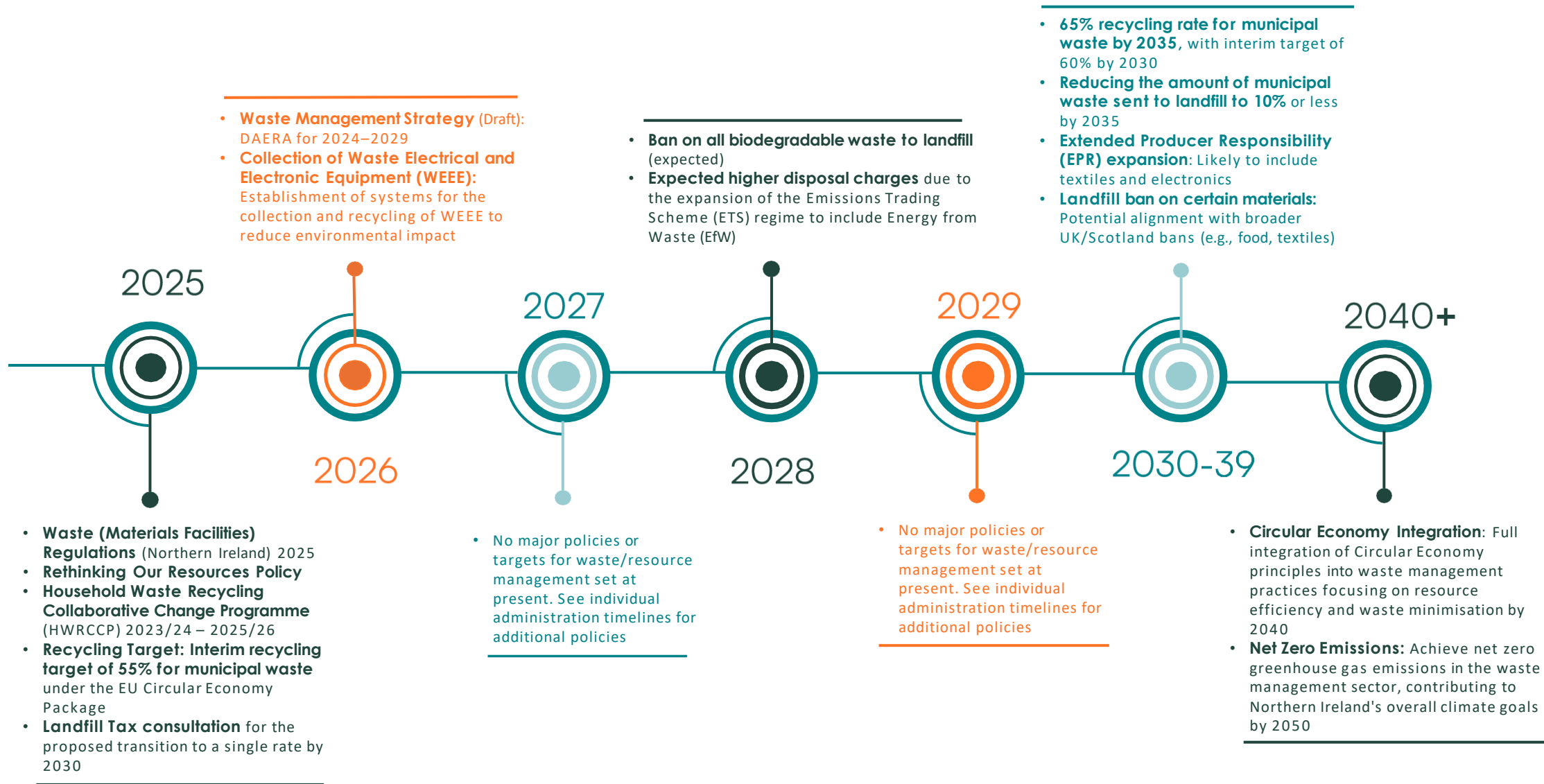
Wales Waste Policy Milestones



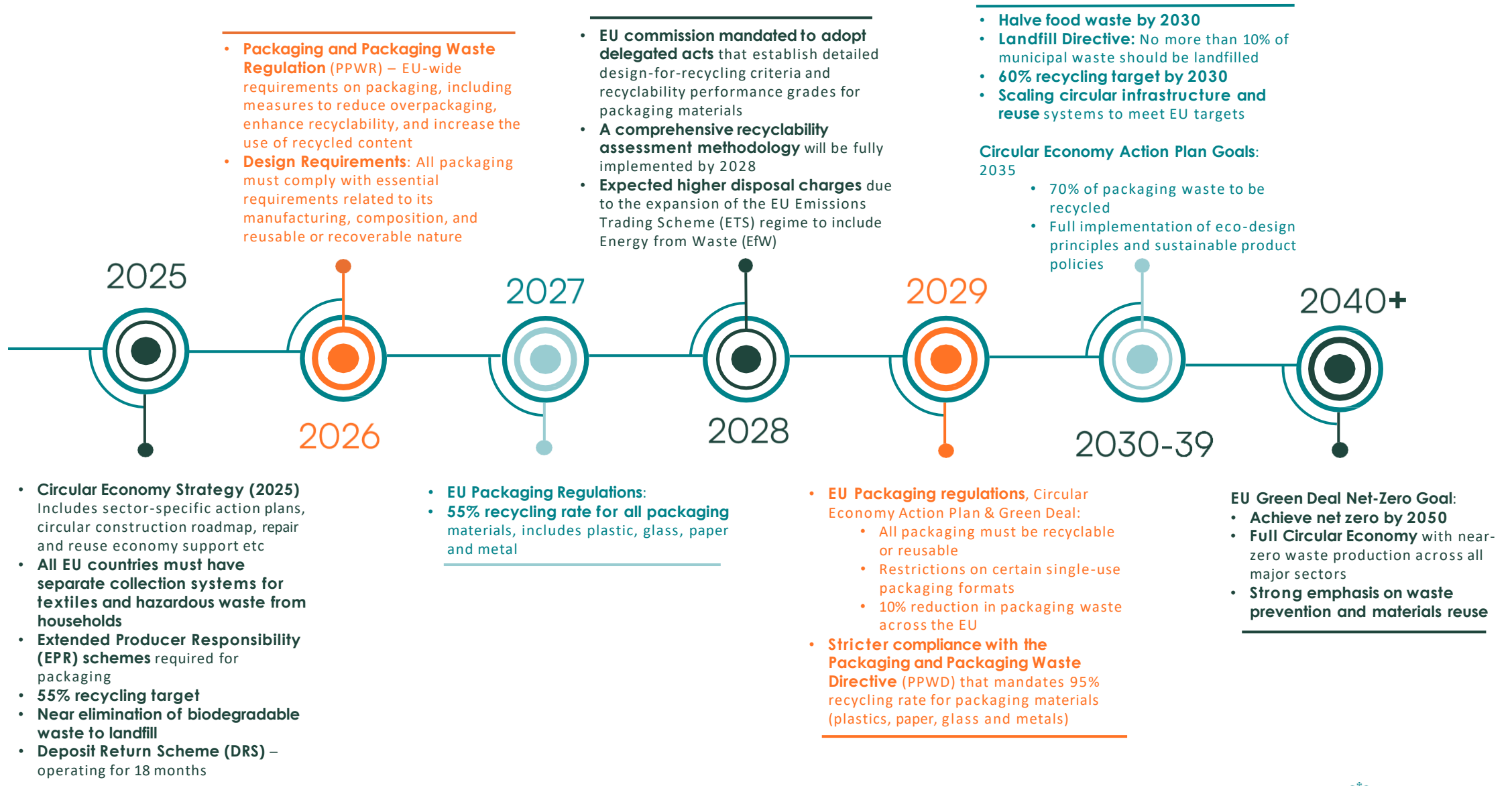
Scotland Waste Policy Milestones



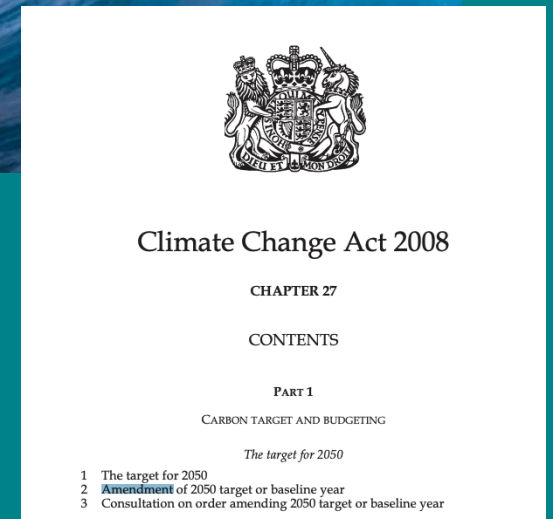
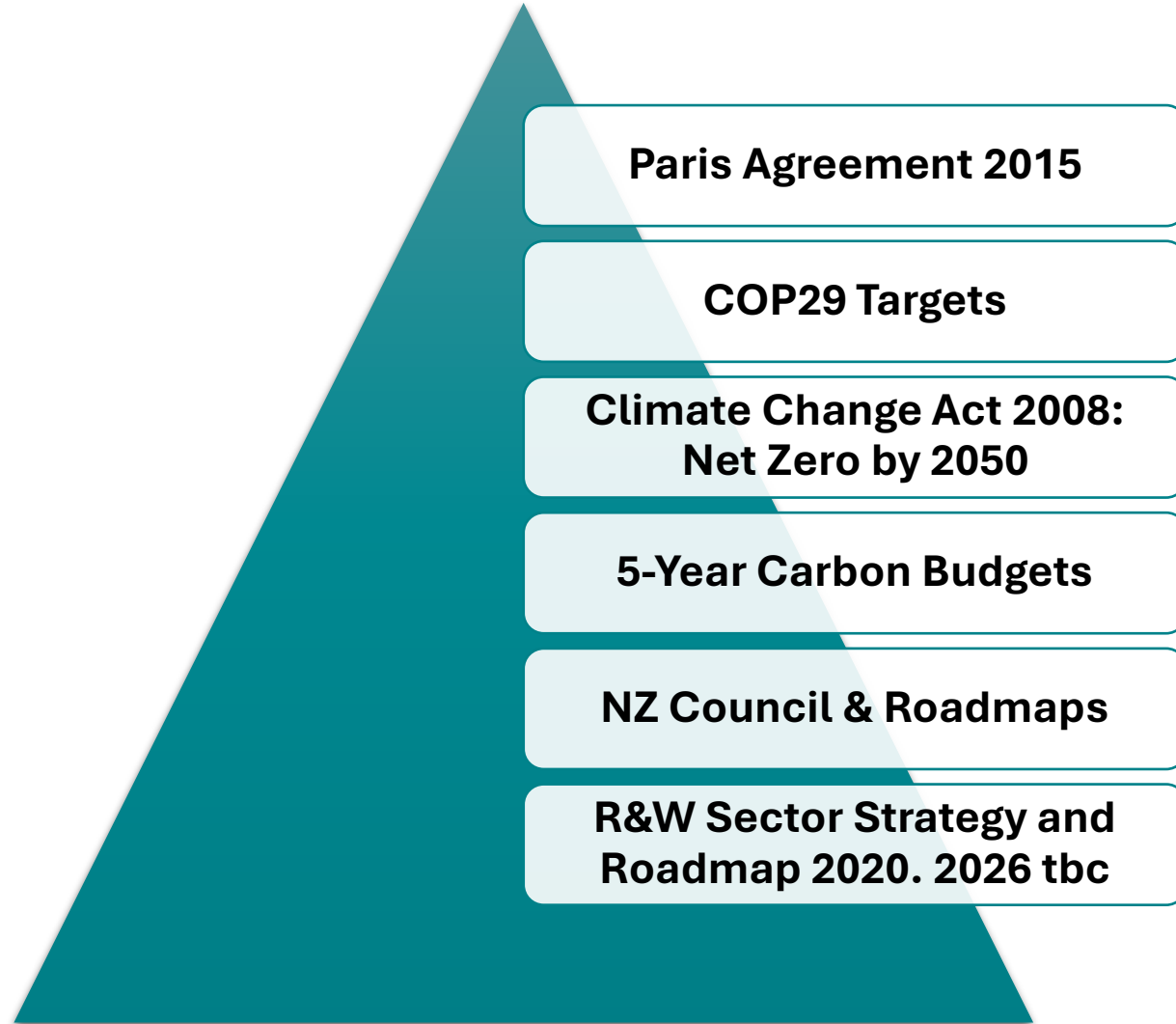
Northern Ireland Waste Policy Milestones



Ireland Waste Policy (including EU) Milestones



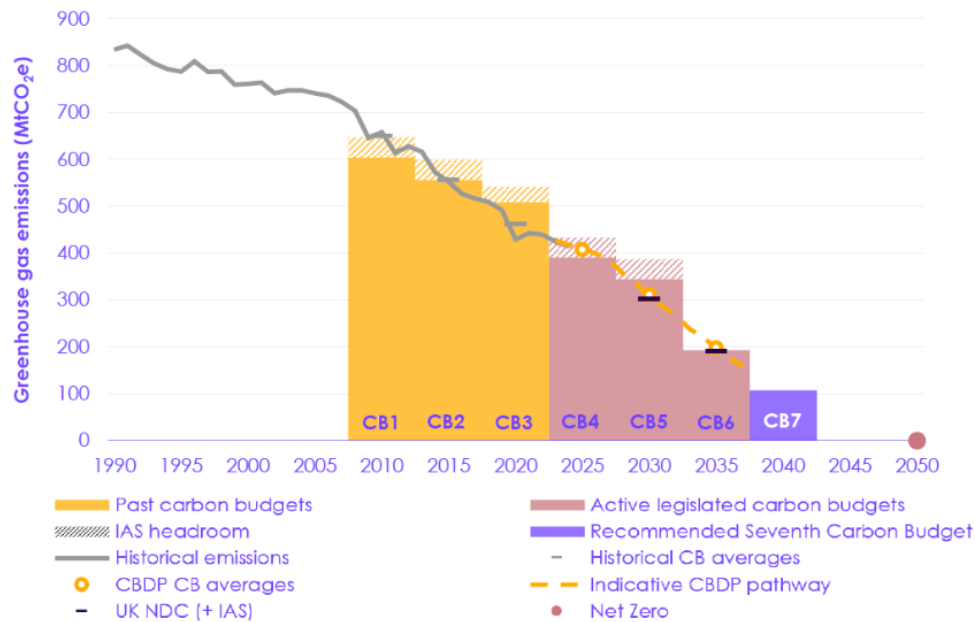
The key components are in place for a roadmap to continued carbon reduction and net zero in the UK





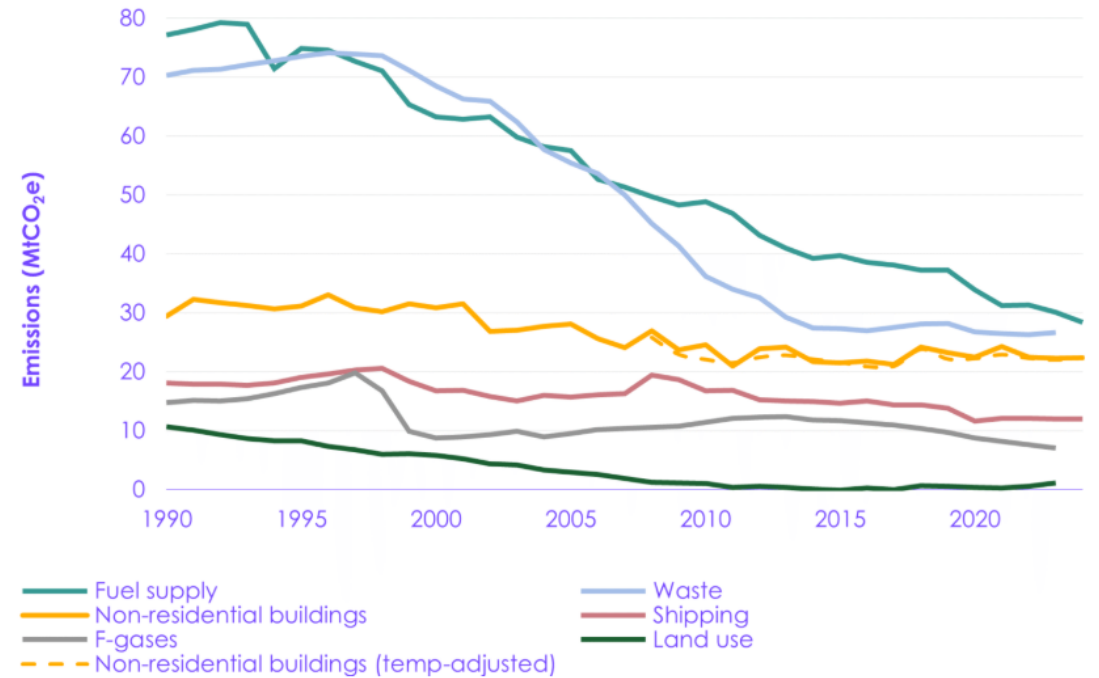
Good progress is being made on carbon reduction, with notable decrease in emissions from the waste sector.

Figure 1.1 UK historical emissions, the Government's existing pathway, and the UK's targets



Description: UK emissions have halved since 1990, and the UK met its first three carbon budgets.
Source: DESNZ (2025) Provisional UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2023; DESNZ (2025) Final UK

b) Other sectors



Description: Large reductions in emissions have been observed since 1990 in the electricity supply, industry, fuel supply, and waste sectors, with smaller changes across other activities.

Source: DESNZ (2025) Provisional UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2024; DESNZ (2025) Final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 1990 to 2023.

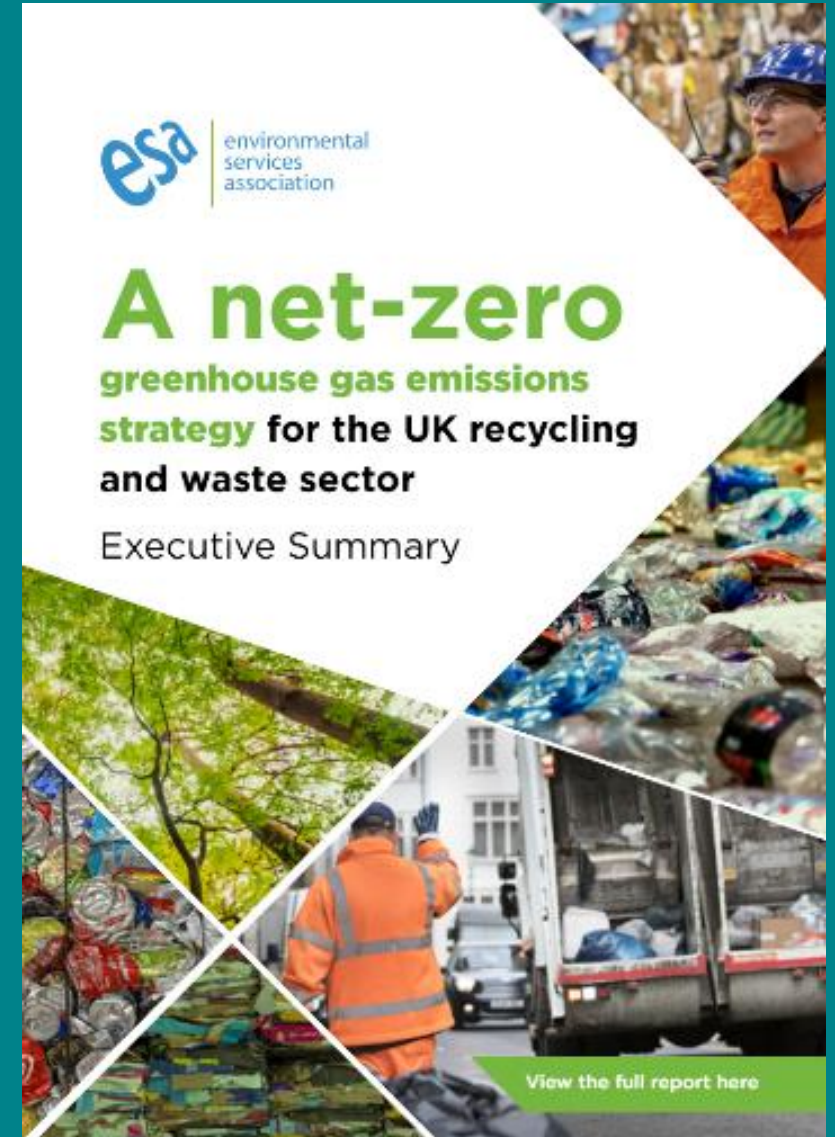


Three clear priority actions for the waste sector to move towards net zero:

Increase recycling to 65%

Decarbonise non-recyclable waste – remove organics from landfill and plastics from EfW, plus enable CCUS

Transition collections fleet and site plant to zero emissions vehicles



Risks to the 'roadmaps' (bumps along the road)?



Lack of alignment between Government priorities.

Delays in implementing RWS, CEGP, and associated measures

Political competition and divergence between devolved UK nations

Global and national political trends - 'populism, tariffs, lack of net zero/climate change consensus, wars, etc.

Sector Health & Safety Performance – inc. battery fires, etc

Waste crime leakage



Key learnings & recipe for progress?



Political commitment required (clear economic, social and environmental benefits)

Clear strategies and targets

Enabling legislation, regulatory enforcement and monitoring

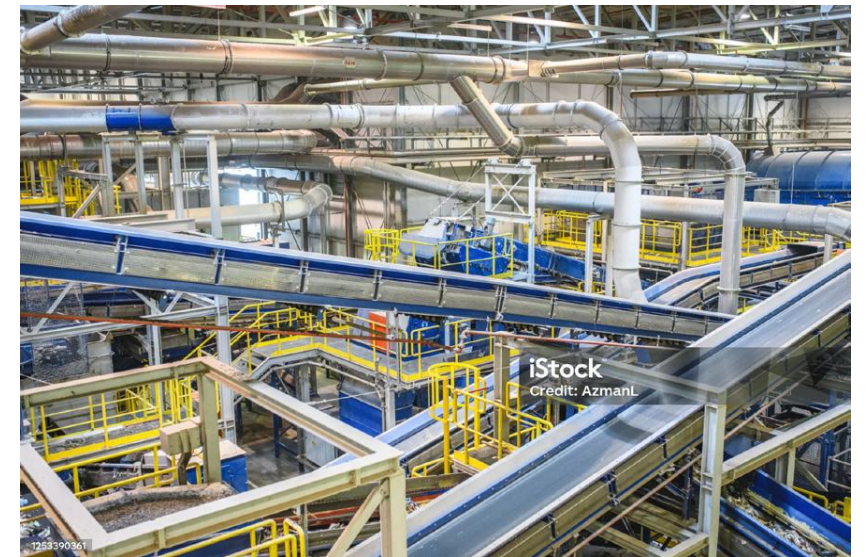
Combination of public/private sector partnerships

Risk management and mitigations (80:20 rule?)





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Thank you

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