

# SHAPING SCOTLAND'S RECYCLING FUTURE: CO-DESIGN IN ACTION

ALEX QUAYLE, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT  
CHARLIE DEVINE, DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

20 MAY 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.

# 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)

## 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*

# 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper and card</li><li>• Plastics, metals and cartons</li></ul>
Glass	No change to current requirements
Food waste	Expansion of weekly separate collections, including in more rural areas
Garden waste	Separate collections, with flexibility to charge

The background features several thick, overlapping curved lines in shades of green and blue. One large blue curve starts from the top left and curves towards the center. Another large green curve starts from the top left and curves towards the bottom right. A third large green curve starts from the top right and curves towards the bottom right. The text is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the page.

# **View from the Waste Management Officers Network**



# Co-Design – The Waste Manager View

Unique opportunity to critically influence what future mandatory kerbside collections may look like

Consistent approach to kerbside collections

Challenge of ensuring inclusivity for all authorities

Scottish Government led with WMON and CoSLA involvement

Cost effective solutions

How Dundee can act as an example of how the current code of practice has performed

# The Co-design Process – What's Proposed

Move towards a more aligned collection system with flexibility

Emerging proposals for waste service design what can be universal and what needs to be flexible in approach

Residual waste – reduced capacity and/or frequency

Dry recycling - twin stream, co-mingled

Organics - weekly food waste collections, co-mingled with food

Glass - kerbside, co-mingled, bring banks, DRS influence

Communications



# The Practicalities

Integrity of the costs  
benefit analysis data  
model

Is the model workable  
in terms of costs,  
tonnage increase and  
carbon benefits?

What will the business  
case say

Costs are indicative at  
this point

One solution will not  
suit all

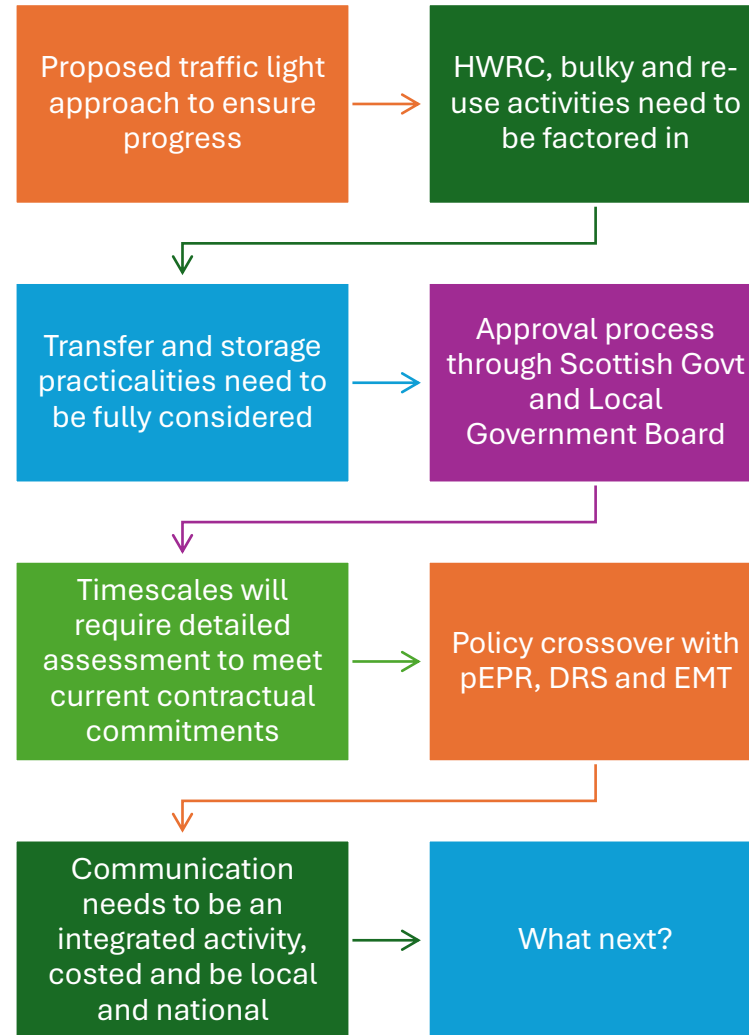
Difficult to access and  
remote properties  
consideration

Derogations or delays  
to enable alignment

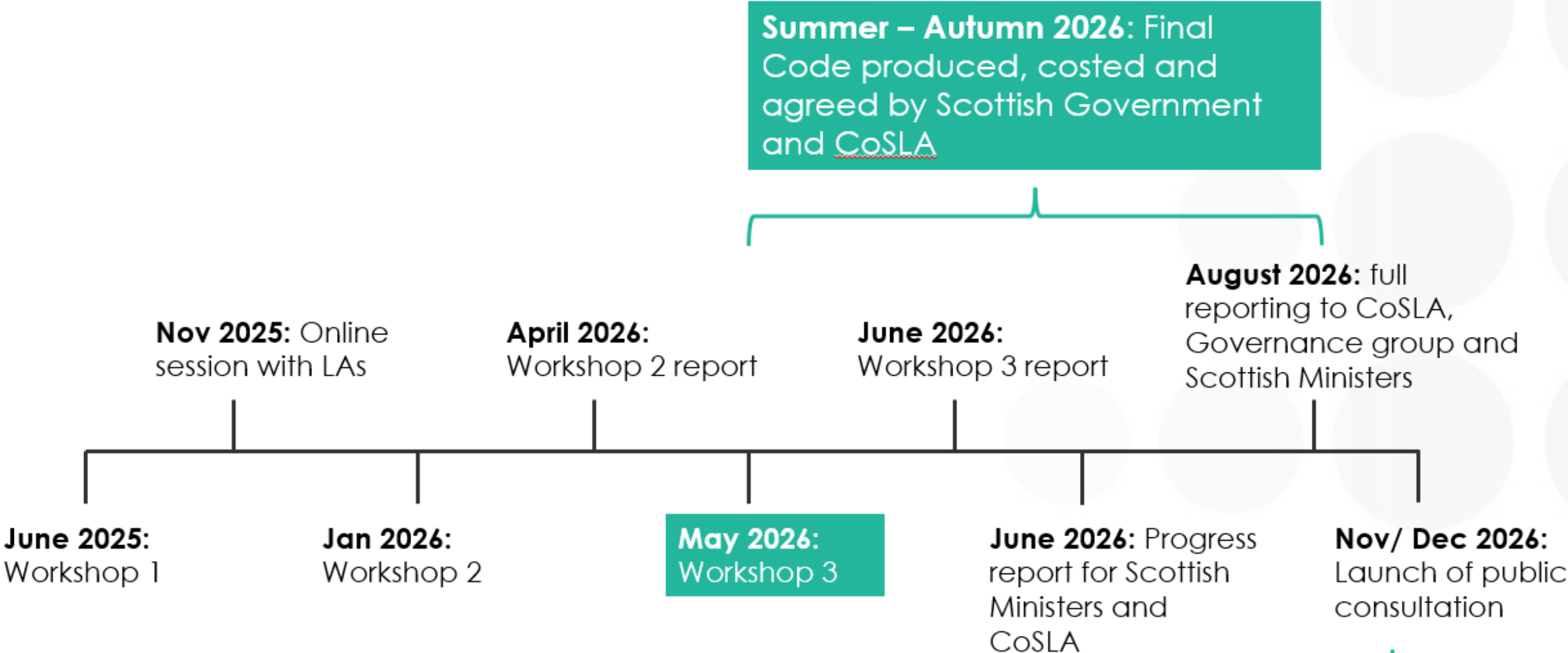
Transition planning

Capital versus  
revenue to ensure  
long term viability of  
changes

# Going Forward



# Timeline



# 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.



# Related policy matters and co-design

## Flexible plastics

- The requirement for local authorities to collect flexible plastics from households is to be introduced on an initially voluntary basis from March 2027 and is to become mandatory when the statutory household recycling Code of Practice is implemented.

## Review of service charging

- Current co-design assumptions are based on local authorities continuing to have flexibility to charge for services if they choose to.

## Textile collections

- Scottish Government consulted in 2025, but feedback on kerbside measures was inconclusive. Co-design has not supported new local authority responsibilities for textile collection or management.

# Thank You

- **Contact details**

- Alex Quayle – [Alexander.quayle@gov.scot](mailto:Alexander.quayle@gov.scot)
- Charlie Devine - [Charlie.devine@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:Charlie.devine@dundeecity.gov.uk)