



WASTE, RECYCLING AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Reducing food waste, recycling legislation and sustainable waste management

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Advertorial

Supporting essential waste services

Efficient waste and recycling operations are critical to maintaining clean and sustainable communities. Rising waste volumes, evolving environmental targets and increasing operational demands necessitate machinery that can perform reliably, day after day.

JCB works with local authorities, waste management organisations and contractors to deliver tailored solutions that support materials handling, transfer, sorting and recycling operations. Through a combination of specialist machinery, attachments and consultative guidance, we help our customers improve site safety and efficiency. We design and build our machines to excel in arduous applications, helping to protect operators from potential hazards and limiting environmental impact.

Find out more here



Editorial



Bonni Jee, Principal Policy Lead

All Change

Since our last bulletin in June, we've welcomed a new Prime Minister, seen a wave of policy announcements and continued preparations for DRS, while councils continue to work hard to deliver new food waste and recycling collections and respond to the fridge recycling capacity shortage - tell us all about it!

Thank you to everyone who attended and spoke at our Seminar in Sheffield and our recent Annual Seminar, where delegates explored topics including environmental services insourcing at Rushcliffe and reducing food waste in school catering in Torfaen, Wales. Congratulations also to this year's APSE Service Award winners, Lancashire County Council, for their innovative and truly circular Reuse Hub - read all about it below.

APSE continues to meet with Defra and PackUK on a regular basis, ensuring your views are heard and you are kept up to date. We are also meeting with Defra's National Fly-tipping Prevention Group to play our part in making real collaborative change to tackle this scourge that blights our communities.

Looking ahead, don't miss our webinar on 29th October, where we'll hear from councils that have introduced three-weekly residual waste collections and share their lessons learned.

Finally, did you know this week is Circular Economy Week? Running from 12-18 October, ReLondon's circular economy showcase returns for a ninth year - have a look at their events taking place in the capital and online here

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Waste Bulletin!

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DEFRA announces delay to Simpler Recycling requirement to collect plastic film for recycling



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Following concerns raised by APSE and the wider local authority sector, Defra has announced a delay to the mandatory implementation of the collection of flexible plastics, from 31 March 2027 to 1 April 2030.

Households and businesses in England had originally been required to implement the kerbside collection of plastic film by 31 March 2027.

However, concerns have continued to grow across the local government sector about the practical challenges of delivering the changes within the proposed timeline.

Through engagement with local authority members, the State of the Market Survey and the Defra Change Network, APSE found clear concerns around the collection and availability of end-markets for the recycling of the flexible plastic material. These challenges raised concerns over whether local councils would be able to meet the 2027 deadline.

Many councils questioned whether the necessary infrastructure, processing capacity and market demand would be in place to support a successful rollout by 2027. In response to these concerns, APSE joined wider calls from across the local authority sector for a more realistic implementation timetable.

Following ongoing engagement with councils and industry stakeholders, Defra subsequently announced a delay to the mandatory introduction of kerbside flexible plastic collections, acknowledging the challenges associated with developing a robust collection, sorting and reprocessing system capable of handling the material at scale.

The delay means that local authorities are now no longer required to collect flexible plastics by the 31 March 2027 deadline. Instead, Defra has confirmed that it will begin stakeholder engagement activities to explore the changes needed to support the successful rollout of flexible plastic collection by 2030.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will not be affected by the delay, as each devolved government have their own policies in place to mandate the collection of flexible plastics by 2027.

While the nationwide rollout of flexible plastic collections have been delayed, 45 local authorities in England already collect flexible plastic collections from the kerbside. A variety of methods are used, including separate bags collected as part of kerbside sort, survival bags sorted at the MRF and residents' own collection bags.

Local councils are also encouraging residents to recycle their flexible plastics at front-of-store collection points at local supermarkets. The

outlets have become an important route to prevent flexible plastics being disposed of in mixed recycling bins.

To raise awareness of the scheme, local authorities have delivered engaging social media campaigns to encourage residents to use the collection points and increase flexible plastic recycling rates.

APSE welcomes the delay to the mandatory collection of flexible plastics for recycling.

Commenting on the announcement, APSE said:

“Although the intention of the original rollout was to boost recycling rates and capture more material, it is evident that the UK’s reprocessing capacity is unable to cope with the amount of material likely to be collected for recycling.”

Findings from the APSE State of the Market Survey 2025 revealed widespread concern among local authorities about the practical implications of introducing flexible plastic collections. In particular, councils highlighted the need for more advanced sorting technology at materials recovery facilities (MRFs) to effectively separate and process the material.

The survey also found that many authorities are tied into long-term waste management contracts, potentially limiting their ability to make the infrastructure upgrades required within the original implementation timeframe.

APSE added:

“The delay is welcome to give the industry and flexible plastics reprocessing market time to mature, for new sites to be built and for investments to be made. In recent years, it has become apparent that the UK market has weakened, with several plastics and recycling facilities becoming unviable and closing down. Therefore, significant infrastructure investment is required to create a domestic market for this material.”

UK Emissions Trading Scheme authority announces delay to the expansion of UK ETS to waste



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

The UK Emissions Trading Scheme authority has announced a delay to the expansion of UK ETS to waste incineration

Following a government consultation in 2024, the UK ETS Authority set out plans to bring the waste sector into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) from 2028. Under the proposals, waste incineration and energy-from-waste facilities would be brought within the scope of the scheme, with a sole focus on 'fossil-fuel based carbon' incineration.

The Local Government Association (LGA) estimated that the cost of the scheme for EfW operators and waste disposal authorities could be between £364 million and £747 million per year.

Two years on from the initial government consultation, the UK ETS authority confirmed that the expansion of the UK ETS to waste incineration would not take place in 2028, with an updated timeline yet to be announced.

The government acknowledged that uncertainty around the policy had made it difficult for local authorities to plan and budget effectively for the future, and said a new timeline would be set out in due course.

APSE welcomes the proposed delay to the ETS expansion to include waste.

Commenting on the announcement, APSE said:

“Whilst there is consensus on the need to reduce emissions and maximise recycling before incineration and landfill, the additional costs that were expected to be incurred by local authorities were significant.

The original 2028 implementation date offered little time for local authorities to consider the impact of the policy on budgets, many of which are set years in advance.

APSE added:

“It was felt that there is significant concern with uncertainty about the costs, at a time of already increased strain on local authority budgets, which are already being set for the period. The cost burden was unwelcome at the same time, as other competing priorities for councils, such as social care, SEND funding, housing, and temporary accommodation costs.”



Lancashire County Council's award-winning Reuse Hub



Lancashire County Council was awarded the Best Service Team of the Year: Recycling, Waste and Circular Economy at the APSE Service Awards in Liverpool, recognising the positive social and environmental impact of their Reuse Hub initiative.

The Reuse Hub was created to respond to two growing challenges in the region: the increasing numbers of local families struggling to access essential household goods and the volume of good-quality items being discarded at recycling centres.

A central element of the Hub is collaboration and partnership working across the council and beyond. Initially, the council's waste services team and children and family wellbeing service team recognised the potential for discarded coats to benefit local children who were regularly attending school without adequate warm clothing.

The Reuse Hub team was able to rescue reusable items from recycling centres and redistribute them free of charge to those in need. Since then, the Reuse Hub has supported many council services by keeping valuable items in use for longer. Reusable items are sourced from recycling centres and redistributed free of charge, helping to provide practical support to people in need.

The Reuse Hub's collaboration with the Child and Youth Justice Service further highlights its commitment to supporting the local community. Online orders are delivered by a youth worker accompanied by young people undertaking court-ordered reparation work who gain meaningful and practical work experience.

The service has also partnered with the local prison service, which professionally launders all reused textiles, ensuring they are clean and ready for use. The Reuse Hub supports a broad range of council services to make cost savings and to promote better outcomes. The team worked with the Refugee Integration Service to coordinate a collection of suitcases from recycling centres, helping to provide refugees with suitable luggage, as well as storage and kitchen equipment for young people leaving care.

Choice and autonomy are also at the heart of the initiative. The scheme initially began as a Facebook Marketplace page, where professionals could view the available items alongside the people they were supporting, enabling individuals to choose the items that best meet their needs.

Following a rapid increase in demand, the council developed a bespoke website to help manage stock, monitor outcomes and provide users with a more accessible and intuitive experience. Now, eight years on from its launch, the Reuse Hub has evolved into a successful online shopping style platform with a wide variety of free items for service users to choose from.

Simple to access and easy to use, the Reuse Hub connects council and local voluntary services with reusable items that can make a real difference to people in need. Alongside its wide-reaching social benefits, the Reuse Hub has significantly reduced waste and contributed towards the organisation's goal to advance the circular economy.

Between January to December 2024, the Reuse Hub kept 18.8 tonnes of items in circulation, rising significantly to 22.7 tonnes in 2025, and generated 98.5 tonnes of carbon savings.

Staff members in recycling centres are now specifically trained to identify suitable reusable items, understand their value and ensure a supply of good quality items are available to service users.

Demand for the Reuse Hub has grown rapidly, with 2,730 people supported through the service in 2024 and a further 2,822 people supported in 2025. Looking to the future, the council hopes to broaden its reach, enhance its capacity and build on its strong network of partnerships, maximising both its environmental impact and the support available to local communities.



How Dundee's MVV Energy from Waste Facility contributes to a more sustainable future



Baldovie has a long history of managing waste in the Dundee and Angus area. In the 1970s, the site operated an incinerator with no energy recovery. However, as thinking around waste management developed during the 1990s, plans were created for a new Energy from Waste (EfW) facility. The aim was not only to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, but also to recover energy from waste and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Boiler Lines 1 and 2 were commissioned in early 2000. Together, they were designed to process and divert up to 120,000 tonnes of waste from landfill each year. This represented a significant step forward in waste management for the local area, providing a reliable alternative to landfill while also allowing energy to be recovered from non-recyclable waste.

In 2013, furnace upgrades and improvements to the boiler and waste-feed systems further enhanced the facility's operational performance and efficiency. These improvements allowed the site to generate electricity for the National Grid, supplying power to thousands of homes and demonstrating the potential for waste to become a valuable source of energy.

As Lines 1 and 2 approached 20 years of service, their closure was anticipated. In November 2017, MVV Environment, a German company specialising in energy from waste, began a 25-year partnership with Dundee City Council and Angus Council to manage the councils' non-recyclable waste.

SEPA approved MVV Environment Baldovie's application in November 2020 to vary its environmental permit. This allowed the existing facility to continue operating in parallel with the construction and commissioning of a new third line.

Line 3 was developed alongside the two legacy lines and began burning waste in January 2022. The new facility was designed to be highly efficient and, when all three lines were operating, the site had the capacity to

process up to 220,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year. With MVV's continued investment and the expertise of the operations and maintenance team, Lines 1 and 2 continued operating for a further six years beyond the point at which their closure had originally been anticipated. They closed in June 2026, marking the end of more than 25 years of service from the original Energy from Waste facility.

Today, MVV Environment Baldovie operates its highly efficient Line 3. The facility can divert approximately 110,000 tonnes of waste from landfill each year and produces around 10 megawatts of electricity for the National Grid. This is enough electricity to supply approximately one-third of the homes in Dundee.

MVV supports the waste hierarchy and encourages the community to reduce, reuse and recycle. Through its community programme, the company focuses on local supplier development, employment and skills activities, environmental awareness and sponsorship.

The facility welcomes members of the community, nurseries, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities to visit and learn more about how waste is managed and energy is recovered.

Its outreach activities aim to inspire the next generation by providing opportunities to learn about waste minimisation, the waste hierarchy, the circular economy and STEM careers. Through these activities, MVV hopes to inspire young people to consider the skills and careers that can help create a more sustainable future.

All APSE members have access to our dedicated Recycling, Waste and Street Cleansing Network, offering webinars, events, briefings and research to support your service.



From School Meals to Sustainable Futures: How Torfaen County Borough Council reduced food waste



Louise Gillam, Dietitian at APSE Council of the Year 2026 winner Torfaen County Borough Council, shares how they have achieved a significant reduction in food waste through pupil voice, sustainable choices and transparent communication.

In Torfaen, sustainability is not something that is done to our pupils, it is something we do with them. Our Sustainable Schools Roadmap was developed to ensure that the School Meals Service remains accountable to the children and young people we serve, while delivering against wider environmental, social and economic objectives. Rather than setting targets in isolation, the roadmap provides a framework for continuous improvement that is shaped by evidence, measured through outcomes and informed by pupil feedback.

The roadmap was created in response to Torfaen Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and our belief that school meals can contribute to much more than nutrition alone.

Through the roadmap, we have brought together a series of practical commitments covering climate action, waste reduction, local procurement, workforce development and pupil wellbeing. Most importantly, it provides transparency about what we have set out to achieve, the progress we have made and where further improvement is needed.

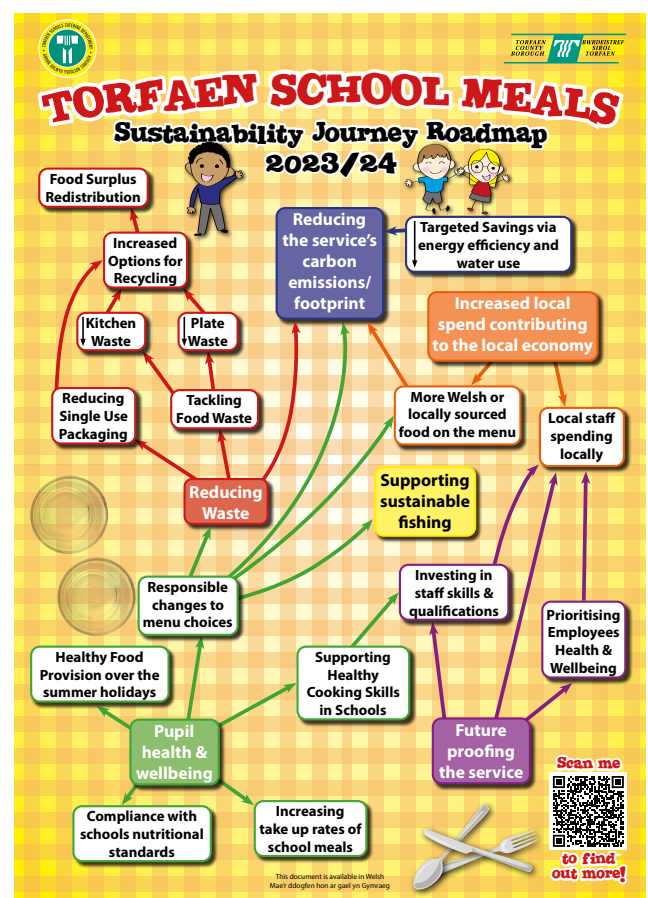
What makes the roadmap distinctive is the central role of pupil voice. Throughout its development and delivery, pupils have challenged us, questioned our decisions and helped shape our priorities.

School Councils, Eco Committees and pupil-led initiatives have provided valuable insights into what works, what does not and where we should focus our efforts next. In this way, the roadmap acts as a living document that keeps us accountable to the very people our service exists to support.

This principle of accountability can be seen throughout the programme. When pupils told us they wanted more flexibility to choose plant-based meals without committing to a fully vegetarian menu, we redesigned our menus so that at least half of the main meal choices are vegetarian options.

When Eco Committees encouraged us to explore Fairtrade sourcing, we reviewed our supply chains, confirmed that all sugar used within the service is Fairtrade-certified and introduced a pilot of Fairtrade bananas.

When pupils wanted greater information about sustainability, we worked with academic researchers to calculate the carbon footprint of every meal and introduced a logo, chosen by pupils themselves, to identify lower-carbon menu options.



Nowhere has pupil involvement had a greater impact than through the Waste Warriors Competition, which has now been running successfully for four years. Rather than simply telling pupils that food waste is a problem, we handed ownership of the issue to them.

Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy

Pupils measure plate waste, analyse the results, develop campaigns and challenge their peers to waste less food. As an added incentive, the two winning schools receive a highly sought-after prize: a full-day healthy cooking experience delivered by an external provider.

The competition has achieved impressive results, with participating schools reducing plate waste by an average of 19% in 2023 and 32% in 2024. These achievements demonstrate the power of empowering young people to lead change, while combining sustainability, practical food education and pupil voice to deliver lasting environmental improvements

The roadmap also enables us to hold ourselves publicly accountable for the environmental impact of the service. Working with leading academics, we established clear baseline measurements for our carbon footprint and identified the areas where action would have the greatest effect.

As a result, despite serving 35% more food following the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals, we achieved an overall reduction in carbon emissions of 8%, equivalent to a 32% reduction per kilogram of food served. These are measurable outcomes that demonstrate real progress, not simply good intentions.

External recognition has reinforced the success of our approach. The pupil-led Waste Warriors programme won the LACA Wales Innovation Award and was shortlisted for the Waste2Zero Awards. The Sustainable Schools Roadmap also received the LACA Nan Berger Memorial Award and later the APSE Best Climate Action or Decarbonisation Initiative Award, recognising its innovative, evidence-based approach to sustainability and climate action within school catering.

These awards are important, but they are not the destination. Instead, they provide independent validation that the roadmap is delivering meaningful outcomes and offer encouragement to continue improving. They also demonstrate the value of empowering pupils and staff to become active participants in shaping a more sustainable future.

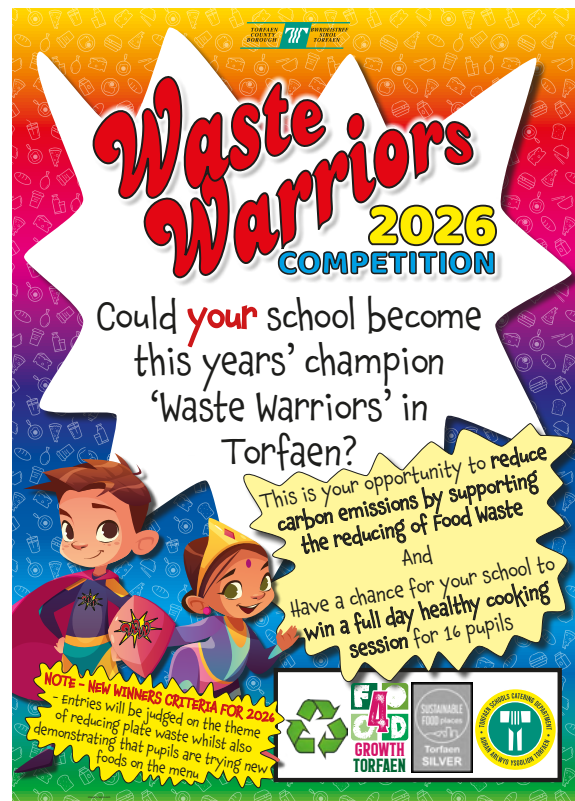
The roadmap extends beyond environmental sustainability. It commits us to supporting pupil health and wellbeing, providing healthy food during school holidays, investing in local staff, increasing the use of Welsh produce and strengthening local supply chains. It also captures our commitment to workforce development through training,

qualifications and wellbeing initiatives, ensuring we have the skilled and motivated teams required to deliver a high-quality service into the future.

Ultimately, the Sustainable Schools Roadmap is much more than a sustainability plan. It is a mechanism for accountability, evidence-based decision making and continuous improvement.

It ensures that the voices of Torfaen's pupils remain at the heart of the School Meals Service, helping us to measure progress, celebrate success and identify new opportunities for change.

By continuing to listen, learn and adapt, we aim to demonstrate how school catering can deliver healthier children, stronger communities and a more sustainable future for generations to come.



Recycle Week 2026 reaches millions across the UK



Last month Recycle Now launched another successful Recycle Week campaign burst, reaching millions across the UK.

Hundreds of local authorities, brands, retailers, businesses, schools and organisations came together to mark the nations' biggest recycling moment - officially sponsored by Boots for 2026. The campaign came to life across TV, social media, press, and in person, with the call to action to 'Rescue Your Recyclables' and remind citizens that their recycling really is worth it.

The campaign was designed to tackle decreasing feelings of worthwhileness which is showing to have an impact on recycling behaviour, identified by WRAP's latest research. This year's recycling tracker results showed that once again, people's feelings that their recycling efforts are worthwhile is remaining stagnant. The Recycling Tracker also revealed once again the 18-34 year olds are less likely than older age groups to feel that their individual recycling efforts and worthwhile. To address this, Recycle Now focused the majority of Recycle Week activity on this age group, with local authorities and other partners targeting a wider range of citizens.

On social media and through partners, this was achieved through the 'Rescue Me, Recycle!' campaign creative bringing to life commonly binned recyclable items. Each campaign character is based on missed capture data from the UK, showing audiences that many of the items they commonly miss could have live again. Like Spritz the perfume bottle, who can be recycled into a champagne bottle.

In the press, Recycle Now opened up the recycling conversation with a 'bin behaviours' survey, lifting the lid on the things we can all relate to about recycling. Local authorities engaged local and regional press up and down the UK, celebrating local recycling performance and sharing key messages on what can and can't be recycled in each area.



Local authorities and waste management companies took audiences behind the scenes, showing that happens after material gets recycled at kerbside or at a household waste recycling centre – shown in the Recycling Tracker to be a crucial driver of worthwhileness. Brands, retailers and other businesses showed their support highlighting recycled products, packaging, processes and takeback schemes such as Recycle at Boots, offering customers the opportunity to recycle a wide range of items which can't be recycled from home.

This year, Recycle Week reached TV screens with a new 'Rescue Me, Recycle!' TV ad, featuring a moving interview with Rolly the toilet roll tube, urging audiences to give him a second chance at life and be rescued from the rubbish. The ad was broadcast on Sky channels following WRAP's success in winning funding through Sky's Zero Footprint Fund.

Across all channels, the campaign reached over 30 million adults. Initial post-campaign survey suggest that over one third of 18-34 year olds surveyed recalled seeing something about Recycle Week 2026, exceeding both 2024 and 2025 recall figures.

Attention now turns to maintaining the momentum achieved during Recycle Week, reinforcing messages of worthwhileness, and ensuring citizens have the information to recycle correctly where they live. Follow WRAP on LinkedIn for the latest opportunities to get involved with the campaign.



HSE puts waste and recycling sites on their inspection plan



Local authorities operating waste transfer stations and recycling facilities may want to take a fresh look at their noise management arrangements following HSE's recent focus on occupational noise and hearing protection.

While most dutyholders associate noise inspections with hearing loss, inspectors are increasingly interested in another question: Can workers hear safety-critical warning signals while wearing hearing protection?

This issue is particularly relevant in large scale waste and recycling environments, where employees often work alongside loading shovels, telehandlers, reversing vehicles, compactors as well as large transfer machinery. In these settings, hearing protection may be essential, but if it prevents workers from detecting reversing alarms, vehicle movement warnings, fire alarms, or communications, it could introduce a safety risk. HSE guidance specifically warns against over-protection that reduces sound at the ear to unnecessarily low levels and may make warning signals difficult to detect.

Recent HSE inspections found that many employers had not checked whether workers wearing hearing protection could still hear the warning signals that keep them safe. According to HSE, this was one of the most common gaps identified during visits to noisy workplaces. HSE reported that around 95% of employers inspected had not verified that workers could detect important warning alarms while wearing their hearing protection. That finding is likely to attract attention from inspectors visiting larger waste and recycling facilities. Ask your workers "can you hear safety critical signals while wearing your hearing protection, if they say yes that is good, if they say no, then review their hearing protection or your safe systems of work.

HSE, has also been promoting the CUFF approach as a simple way for employers to assess whether hearing protection is working in practice. The message asks employers to check the Condition of hearing protection, whether it is being Used correctly, whether it is Fit for Purpose, and whether it properly Fits the Ear. HSE inspection findings suggest that shortcomings in all four areas remain common across industry.

Noise inspections are also examining broader compliance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations. Inspectors may ask whether workers receive suitable information, instruction, and training, and whether employers have introduced health surveillance for workers regularly exposed to high levels of noise.

Importantly, inspectors are unlikely to view hearing protection as the complete solution. HSE continues to emphasise that personal hearing protection is the last line of defence and should not be used instead of engineering or organisational noise controls. Employers should be prepared to explain what steps they have taken to reduce noise at source and minimise exposure wherever reasonably practicable.



Derry City and Strabane District Council's award-winning Halloween Costume Swap is back for another year

One year on from winning the APSE Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy Innovation award for the Halloween Costume Swap initiative, the scheme is set to return for



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSraitha Báin**

Derry Citty & Strabane
Destrack Council

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Derry Halloween and the fourth year of the initiative, which encourages local people to donate unwanted costumes, accessories and props, giving them a second life while helping others find inspiration for their Halloween creations. The costume swap will run right through until Halloween, offering a sustainable and affordable way to prepare for the festivities.

The scheme has grown in popularity each year, helping families reduce waste, save money and embrace the spirit of reuse and creativity that has long been associated with Derry Halloween.

Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor Grace Uí Niallais, encouraged people to support the initiative and also join in the celebrations.

"As we prepare to celebrate 40 years of Derry Halloween, this is a wonderful opportunity for people to get involved in the festival while also doing something positive for the environment.

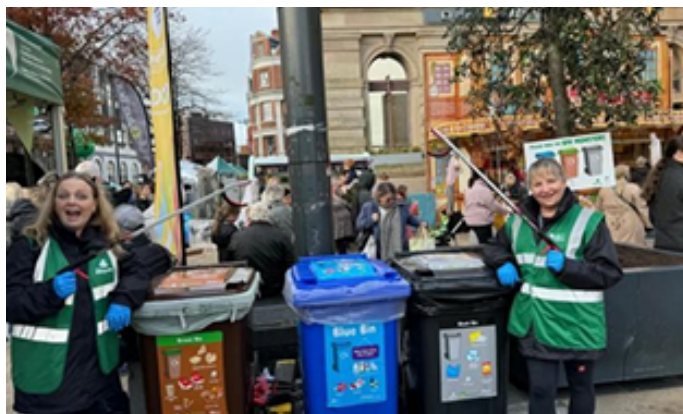
"The Costume Swap has become a hugely popular part of our Halloween preparations, encouraging people to recycle old costumes, share ideas and spark their imagination for this year's celebrations.

"Derry has always had a proud tradition of creativity when it comes to Halloween costumes, with generations of local people making their own outfits and props. I'd encourage everyone to call in to the Guildhall or Riversdale Leisure Centre, see what's available and perhaps find the inspiration for their next Halloween masterpiece."

Council's Waste and Recycling Officer, Julie Hannaway, said the initiative demonstrates how small actions can make a positive environmental impact.

"The Halloween Costume Swap is a fantastic example of how we can reduce waste while still enjoying all the fun and excitement of the season.

"Every costume, accessory or prop that is reused is one less item going to landfill, helping us to reduce our environmental footprint while promoting a more sustainable approach to Halloween.



"We would encourage anyone with unwanted costumes or Halloween items sitting at home to donate them and give someone else the opportunity to enjoy them. Equally, if you're looking for inspiration for this year's celebrations, call in and see the range of costumes and props available."

The Costume Swap is open to anyone wishing to donate or collect Halloween-themed costumes, accessories and props. Residents can drop off clean, reusable items at either location and browse the collection for ideas and costume pieces throughout the festival season.

As the city prepares for the Derry Halloween milestone 40th anniversary celebrations, the Costume Swap offers another opportunity for local people to embrace the community spirit and creativity that have helped make Derry Halloween one of the world's most celebrated Halloween events over the past four decades.



Cardiff Council student recycling scheme reaches record levels



This summer, Cardiff Council successfully supported students to reuse and recycle their unwanted items at the end of the academic year.

The Council worked with landlords, universities and students' unions to help thousands of students move out of Cardiff for the summer holidays, to remove waste, increase recycling, donate unwanted items to charity and keep the streets of Cathays and Plasnewydd as clean as possible.

Extensive engagement work was also carried out before and during the move-out period to inform as many students as possible about the additional services available. Officers visited student neighbourhoods, provided advice on recycling and waste collections, and promoted the range of disposal options available.

In total, the Council engaged with 5,029 students throughout the campaign through outreach events, door-knocking and visits to pop-up recycling sites.

A key part of the programme was The Big Takeaway, a reuse and recycling initiative that provided convenient drop-off locations in Cathays and Plasnewydd between 15 June and 5 July. The scheme gave students an easy alternative to leaving unwanted items on the street and ensured materials could be reused by local charities and community organisations.

The Students on the Move campaign delivered its strongest recycling performance to date, collecting 17,493kg of unwanted items from students across the city. This included 12,592kg in Cathays and 4,901kg in Roath. The total is a significant increase on previous years, rising from 6,422kg in 2024 and 7,131kg in 2025. Students also donated an impressive 587kg of non-perishable food to Cardiff Foodbank.

The campaign was supported by enhanced cleansing operations across both Cathays and Plasnewydd, with dedicated teams carrying out additional waste removal while monitoring known waste hotspot locations during the busiest periods.

Waste enforcement officers were on hand to tackle waste-related issues. More than 1,280 engagement and education letters were sent to landlords across Cathays and Plasnewydd, giving information on how waste should be presented.

As a result, more than 250 properties will receive Community Protection Warnings as part of the Council's ongoing efforts to ensure that both Cathays and Plasnewydd remain clean and tidy. 11.68 tonnes of residual waste and 3.78 tonnes of bulky waste were removed as part of the operation.

West Berkshire celebrates record recycling rates



West Berkshire Council is celebrating some of its best recycling results ever, following the move to three-weekly black bin collections.

The council's provisional recycling rate for 2025/26 stands at 55% - the highest the district has ever achieved. And the progress doesn't stop there. Comparing the most recent reporting period with the same time last year shows just how much of a difference residents are making:

Residual black bin waste has dropped by 1,049 tonnes. That's a huge 15% reduction. That means far less waste ending up in landfill or energy used from waste facilities.

Food waste recycling has surged by 22%, with 260 extra tonnes collected and transformed into soil conditioner instead of going into landfill.

Dry recycling is up by 199 tonnes (6%), showing that more materials are being sorted at home and given a new lease of life. These figures reflect an impressive community effort. Every rinsed can, every separated plastic pot, and every caddy of food scraps is helping West Berkshire to recycle even more.

Exploring the future of waste and recycling at the APSE Simpler Recycling and Beyond: Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy Seminar

On Thursday 18 June, APSE welcomed local government colleagues from across the recycling, waste and circular economy sector to Sheffield Town Hall for our Recycling, Waste and Circular Economy Seminar 2026.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for delegates to explore the future of waste management, covering a wide range of topics from recycling electricals and food waste interventions to Simpler Recycling legislation and local government reorganisation.

After a warm welcome to Sheffield from Cllr Mark Rusling, Chair of the Environmental Services and Regulation Policy Committee at Sheffield City Council, the keynote presentation was from Dr Henry Irving, Senior Lecturer in Public History at Leeds Beckett University, who explored Sheffield's rich history as the UK's first 'Recycling City'. Henry shared the origins of Sheffield's title as a recycling city, dating back to 1989, and highlighted the lessons local authorities can learn from their pioneering approach to recycling. The importance of working in collaboration with the community and stakeholders, and communications campaigns, were key and issues that remain to this day.

Policy updates and regulatory change

The first session of the seminar focused on recycling policy updates, with DEFRA and PackUK sharing insights into Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Chris Mills, Local Authority Business Change Lead at Defra, outlined the timeline of the Simpler Recycling rollout, the legal requirements on local authorities and the support available to local councils throughout implementation, including the 'Change Network' which APSE has supported with promoting to local authorities.



Jane Martin, Head of Communications and Engagement at PackUK, outlined what Extended Producer Responsibility means for local councils, examined the rating system used for packaging, LA payments and use of EPR funds, and highlighted the opportunities presented by pEPR funding for local authorities with some case studies including MRF upgrades and improvements to collection vehicles.

Sector challenges and emerging innovations

Following a comprehensive overview of the policy landscape, delegates explored the key issues, trends and innovations shaping the future of the sector.

Chris Jones OBE, former Chair of WISH Forum (Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum), Director of Management and Compliance at Cory Group, provided an update on the Health and Safety challenges facing local authorities, including the operational implications of increased collections and vehicle movements resulting from Simpler Recycling.

Niamh McBride, Environmental Partnerships Lead at Material Focus, shared insights into the successful delivery of the 'Stop Battery Fires' campaign. The campaign drew on consumer behaviour attitudes and industry briefing papers, shared investment schemes such as the Circular Electricals Fund and Community Recycling Fund and inspired the public through engaging communications, news coverage and social media campaigns.





Jenny Robinson, Recycling Partner at Zero Waste Scotland, presented the findings of a Zero Waste Scotland-funded intervention delivered with South Ayrshire Council and compared the results with similar projects elsewhere. Measures included targeted communications, free food waste caddy liners and residual bin stickers, all of which helped to support food waste reduction, with the residual bin stickers being one of the most effective interventions.

Alain-Charles Lauriano de Rego, UK Country Lead at Vizzia, APSE Approved Partner, demonstrated how artificial intelligence can help local authorities tackle rising levels of fly-tipping through enhanced monitoring and incident management.

Interactive workshops

In the third session of the seminar, delegates had the opportunity to participate in a series of interactive workshops. Ruth Hunter and Sally Wilson, Local Authority Technical Consultants at WRAP delivered a behaviour change workshop, exploring the barriers to recycling participation, the power of messaging and the importance of tailored communication strategies.

ASPE Associates Craig Denmark and Paddy Knowles' workshop explored the impact of LGR on waste operations, including staffing structures, collection methodologies and vehicles. The workshop also covered Derby's successful rollout of food waste collections and looked at the scale of the service, the challenges of major mobilisation and the use of technology to transform the service..

Local authority best practice

Session four showcased best practice case studies from local authorities across the UK, including Cumberland Council, Kirklees Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Neil Dixon, Assistant Director for Waste and Open Spaces at Cumberland Council, shared the council's waste service transformation journey, highlighting the cultural, operational and digital changes that have helped reshape the service and improve outcomes for residents. The case study provided a valuable insight into the journey of an authority that has undergone Local Government Reorganisation, having been formed from the former districts of Carlisle, Copeland and Allerdale, and Cumbria County Council.

Stacy Townend and Phillipa Hather, Recycling Officers at Kirklees Council, outlined the council's community engagement and outreach activities, including the Recycling Champions scheme. The initiative gives residents the opportunity to volunteer and promote recycling and reducing waste reduction within their communities. The programme included community groups, site visits to MRFs, school engagement and the Recycling Champion awards, all of which supported their goal to increase recycling rates and reduce waste.

Julie Lewis, Head of Environmental and Neighbourhood Services at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, shared how the council became the leading recycling authority in England through their 123+ collection model. Central to this success was a comprehensive communications programme designed to inform, engage and encourage residents to recycle, a three-weekly residual waste collection service, alongside a long-standing partnership with Sherbourne Recycling. These efforts helped Stratford-on-Avon achieve a recycling rate of 63.9%, placing the council at the top Defra's latest local authority table for England.

Looking to the future

The seminar concluded with a forward-looking exploration of the future of waste and recycling, focusing on digital transformation and circular economy innovation.

Fiona Dear, Co-founder of Restart Project, highlighted the environmental, economic and social benefits of repair and reuse, including reduced carbon emissions, lower costs for consumers and the creation of skilled jobs. Drawing on her experience, Fiona showcased a range of initiatives designed to extend product lifecycles and reduce waste, including community repair events, Fixing Factories and repair voucher schemes.

Mark Mohun, Lead Business Analyst at Newcastle City Council, illustrated how they had harnessed data and technology to improve collections through the SmartSuite Web software, from Integrated Skills. The software includes a live map and captures vital service information, monitors route progress and generates daily location-based reports.



APSE Comment

The seminar highlighted both the scale of the challenges facing the sector and the opportunities available through innovation, collaboration and digesting the policy changes. From behavioural change and community engagement to health and safety, digital transformation and circular economy initiatives, delegates left Sheffield with practical insights and new ideas to help shape the future of waste and recycling services in their own authorities.

APSE members can continue the conversation by joining our Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing networks throughout the year, asking Network Queries and getting in touch with our Principal Policy Leads with any questions they may have. APSE Solutions offers consultancy and interim management services, APSE Training for upcoming training courses and Performance Networks for benchmarking services for Waste and Streetscene, including the LAMS Street Cleansing apps.

Upcoming events

Do you want to share best practice, network with local government colleagues and keep up to date with the latest developments in waste policy? Explore our upcoming events:



Tackling Fly-Tipping Together: Technology, Enforcement and Community Action
APSE Street Cleansing National Network Online Meeting

Thursday 15 October 2026, 10:30 - 12:30

FREE for all APSE members!

Scan the QR code to book



So you want to go three-weekly?
APSE Waste and Recycling Network

Thursday 29 October, 11.00 - 12.30

FREE for all APSE members!

Scan the QR code to book





FREE for APSE Scotland members!

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