Official Statistics Publication for Scotland – Household waste summary (Jan-Dec 2019)

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) statisticians have published Official Statistics today (27 October 2020) which provide detail of Household Waste collected across all Local Authorities during 2019.

- Carbon impact of waste down 1.1 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent from 2011
- Less than 1 million tonnes of household waste sent to landfill for the first time
- Plastic and glass recycling increase, paper and cardboard continues downward trend
- Total household recycling rate 44.9%
- Scottish households generated the equivalent of 0.44 tonnes of waste per person in 2019

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) statisticians have published Official Statistics today (27 October 2020) which provide detail of Household Waste collected across all Local Authorities during 2019.

Scottish households generated the equivalent of 0.44 tonnes of waste per person in 2019, with 0.20 tonnes recycled, 0.14 tonnes sent to landfill and 0.11 tonnes diverted through other means such as incineration, composing and anaerobic digestion.

The total volume of household waste generated in Scotland remained largely the same as 2018, up 17,000 tonnes (an increase of 1%) from 2.41 million tonnes in 2018 to 2.42 million.

CARBON IMPACT OF SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD WASTE CONTINUES TO DECREASE

The Scottish carbon metric measures the whole-life impact of resources. A measure of national performance, the metric takes a holistic view, from resource extraction and manufacturing emissions, through to resource management emissions.

Measuring the true impact of waste and waste management is most accurate when viewed in terms of emissions. This is measured in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e). This provides a more accurate picture than merely looking at tonnage (glass weights a lot more than paper), and takes into account the emissions created when waste is disposed of, whether through recycling, incineration, composting, anaerobic digestion or being sent to landfill.

The 2019 metric shows a continued downward trajectory since 2011 in Scotland’s household waste carbon impact. This is largely due to increased recycling rates – particularly for high impact waste materials – as well as

reductions in waste generated and reduced landfilling of biodegradable waste.

The carbon impact of household waste generated and managed in 2018 was 5.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) – which is 1.0 tonnes per person. This was a decrease of 94,000 TCO_2e from 2018 and a decrease of 1.1 million from 2011.

LESS THAN 1 MILLION TONNES OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE SENT TO LANDFILL FOR THE FIRST TIME

2019 saw a further decrease of household waste sent to landfill – falling below 1 million tonnes for the first time – down 26% or 273,000 tonnes from 2018. This is the eighth consecutive decrease in household waste landfilled since 2011 – and for the third consecutive year there was more Scottish waste recycled (1.1 million tonnes) than landfilled (0.76 tonnes). Waste recycled included reuse and composting.

The total amount of Scottish household waste managed by other diversion from landfill was 577,000 tonnes, an increase of 93% from 2018 – 369% from 2011. Most was managed by incineration (78%, 454,000 tonnes), followed by other treatment (16%, 91,000 tonnes) and non-certified composting/digestion (6%, 32,000 tonnes)

PLASTIC, GLASS, PAPER AND CARDBOARD

Plastic recycling rose by 1,000 tonnes (1%) to 57,379 tonnes in 2019, continuing the trend of increasing each year for the last eight years. Glass remains the second most recycled material, with 107,000 tonnes, similar to 2018.

Paper and cardboard as a whole remains the largest volume of material recycled at 192,562 tonnes. However, there has been a general downward trend of paper and cardboard wastes recycled –in 2018 was down 17,000 tonnes (8%) – a 48,000 tonne (20%) reduction since 2011. Within this mix, segregated paper waste is in continual decline – while cardboard and mixed paper and cardboard wastes have remained constant or increased over time. This may be partly due to replacement of segregated paper collections with mixed paper and cardboard collections. It is also likely that a move away from print media to electronic media has decreased paper waste, while cardboard wastes have not decreased on the same scale, which could be a result of increased packaging materials as consumer habits move online.

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING RATE 44.9%

Scotland’s overall household waste recycling rate was 44.9%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points from 2018 and 5.4 percentage points up from the 39.5% achieved in 2011. Data for every one of Scotland’s 32 local authorities are available on SEPA’s website.

WASTE DATA COLLECTION

Data on waste are collected to monitor policy effectiveness, and to support policy development, particularly commitments in the Scottish

Government's Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland. Further details on the methodology used to produce the figures are provided in the "Household waste" section of the annual Waste Data Quality Reports.

The figures are accurate at the time of publication, however data may be updated if further revisions are necessary. Normally these revisions will be published concurrent with the next official release.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Skye corncrake partnership celebrates 10 years

A collaborative partnership to help secure a future for Skye's corncrake population is celebrating its tenth anniversary.

Detailed guide: Trading and labelling organic food from 1 January 2021

How rules for producing, processing, labelling and trading organic food will change from 1 January 2021.

National Statistics: Food statistics pocketbook

Publication giving an overview of statistics about food.

Research and analysis: Natural Capital Committee advice on government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and progress reports

Natural Capital Committee advice and recommendations on what the government should consider in developing their 25 Year Environment Plan.