

Official Statistics' Publication for Scotland – Household waste summary, waste landfilled, waste incinerated (Jan-Dec 2018)

17 September 2019

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) statisticians have published Official Statistics today (17 September 2019) which provide detail of Household Waste collected across all Local Authorities during 2018.

- Carbon impact of Scottish waste decreasing
- Total household waste generated in Scotland decreasing
- More household waste recycled than landfilled for second year in a row
- Plastic and glass recycling increase
- Paper and cardboard continues downward trend
- Total household recycling rate 44.7%
- Energy recovery of residual waste replacing landfill

CARBON IMPACT OF SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD WASTE DECREASING

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

The 2018 metric shows a 15% decrease in Scotland's household waste carbon impact from 2011 to 2018, following a decreasing trajectory since 2011. The longer trend is largely a result of increased recycling rates, particularly for high impact waste materials, as well as reduction in waste generated and reduced landfilling of biodegradable waste.

The carbon impact of household waste generated and managed in 2018 was 5.76 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – which is 1.06 TCO₂e per person. This was a decrease of 104,228 TCO₂e from 2017 and a decrease of 1,007,754 TCO₂e from 2011.

TOTAL HOUSEHOLD WASTE GENERATED IN SCOTLAND DECREASING

The total volume of household waste generated in Scotland fell a further 2% in 2018, from 2.46 million tonnes in 2017 to 2.41 million tonnes in 2018, a decrease of 55,574 tonnes.

MORE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED THAN LANDFILLED FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

2018 saw a further decrease of household waste sent to landfill, 7% or 75,491 tonnes down from 2017. This is the seventh consecutive decrease in household

waste landfilled since 2011 – and for the second consecutive year there was more Scottish waste recycled (1.07 million tonnes) than landfilled (1.03 million tonnes).

PLASTIC & GLASS RECYCLING INCREASE

Plastic recycling rose by 8,163 tonnes (5%) to 56,586 tonnes in 2018, continuing the trend of increasing each year for the last seven years. Glass remains the second most recycled material, with the rate up by 832 tonnes (0.8%) to 107,380 tonnes, in line with the longer term trend.

PAPER & CARDBOARD CONTINUES DOWNWARD TREND

Paper and cardboard remains the largest volume of material recycled at 209,120 tonnes (19%). However, there has been a general downward trend of paper and cardboard wastes recycled or reused since 2011. The reduction from 2017 was 16,374 tonnes (7%) – making a 31,226 tonnes (13%) reduction since 2011.

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING RATE 44.7%

Scotland's overall household waste recycling rate was 44.7%, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from the 45.5% rate achieved in 2016. [Data for every one of Scotland's 32 local authorities are available on SEPA's website along with additional commentary for the whole of Scotland.](#)

ENERGY RECOVERY OF RESIDUAL WASTE REPLACING LANDFILL

All waste landfilled and incinerated summary

Separately from household waste statistics, data has also been published specifically for [all Waste Landfilled and Waste Incinerated within Scotland during 2018](#). Official statistics for waste from all sources, which will include all waste generated and recycled in Scotland during 2018, are due to be published in March 2020.

The total amount of waste disposed of to landfill has decreased steadily since 2009, following large reductions between 2007 and 2009.

- 2018 saw a 2.2% reduction of waste from all sources landfilled in Scotland, down 84,876 tonnes to 3.74 million tonnes.
- This included a 6.1% decrease in the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed to landfill (a decrease of 67,040 tonnes to 1.02 million tonnes).
- 711,504 tonnes of waste was incinerated in 2018, an increase of 3,340 tonnes (5%) from 2017.
- The top three categories of waste landfilled in Scotland in 2018 were:
 - soils (42 million tonnes – 38%);
 - household and similar wastes (19 million tonnes – 32%);
 - sorting residues (745,403 tonnes – 20%).

Disposal of sorting residues (what is left when recyclable materials have been removed) to landfill fell by 68,166 (8%) between 2017 and 2018. This is

against the longer term trend and is consistent with more of these wastes being diverted from landfill to incineration, and an increase of infrastructure of waste sorting facilities in Scotland, such as Material Recovery Facilities.

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: