

Number: WG39588



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Beyond Recycling

A strategy to make the
circular economy in
Wales a reality

Date of issue: 19 December 2019
Action required: Responses by 24 April 2020
Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



Overview

This is not just a consultation on our approach to waste, or on our efforts on recycling. It is about building on the foundation of successful action over the last 20 years; taking the next steps towards a more circular economy, eliminating waste and addressing the climate emergency. We want to move from making and disposing of things to re-using and recovering products and materials wherever possible. This requires a fundamental shift in how everyone thinks of and acts with the products we make and use. We want your views on how we can make this shift and support the circular economy in Wales.

How to respond

We will be holding a number of events around Wales for different citizens, stakeholders and communities and will promote these widely. There will be opportunities to engage online and on social media too.

There are a number of questions within this consultation document. You can submit responses to these and add your own comments by post or by email to our dedicated consultation mailbox – or you can respond via our online questionnaire.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

<https://gov.wales/circular-economy-strategy>

Contact details

For further information:

ResourceEfficiencyAndCircularEconomy@gov.wales

Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Division
Welsh Government
Crown Buildings
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

email:

BeyondRecycling@gov.wales
MwyNagAilgylchu@llyw.cymru

/

telephone: 03000 060 4400

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ

e-mail:
DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113
Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Beyond Recycling

Making the circular economy a reality in Wales

What we want to achieve

Move towards a circular economy to:

- Become zero waste by 2050
- Reduce emissions
- Realise our economic potential
- Make resource efficiency part of our Welsh culture

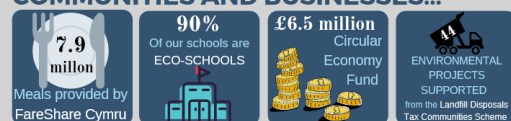
Circular Economy: Our aim is to keep resources in use for as long as possible and avoid waste.

Achievements

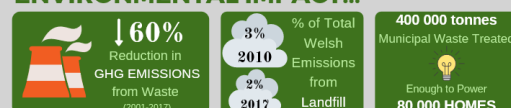
RECYCLING RECORD...



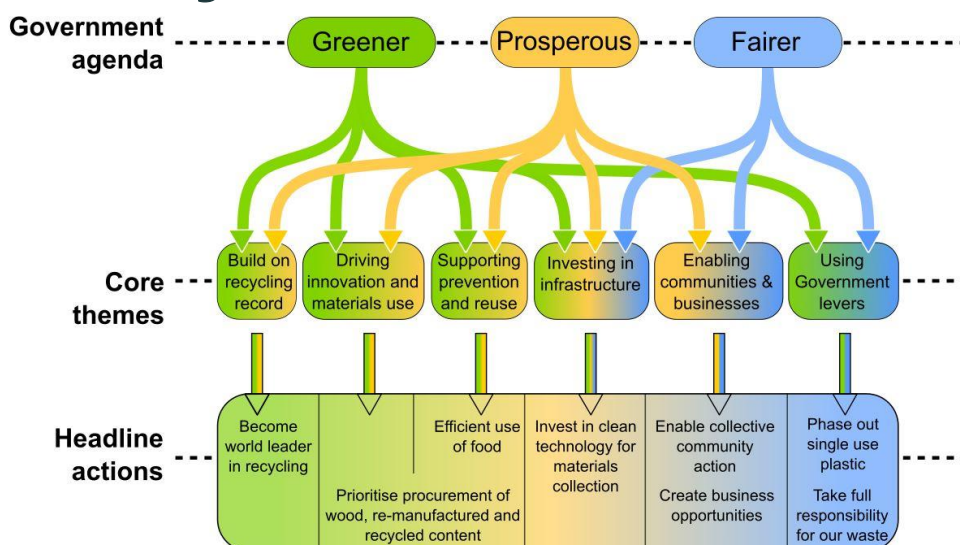
COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES...



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT...



How we will get there



Our joined-up agenda

Prosperity for all: the national strategy for Wales		Key Resource efficiency Economic opportunities Reducing carbon emissions
Economic action plan		
Delivering on the Well-being of Future Generations Act Goals		
Natural Resource policy		
Prosperity for all: A Low Carbon Wales		

Headline Actions

We are proposing eight ambitious headline actions to accelerate our journey towards a circular economy:

1. **Become the world leader in recycling:** We will work to achieve the highest rates of household recycling in the World, working with local government, and transform the recycling of commercial, and industrial and construction waste.
2. **Phase out single use plastic:** We will make Wales the first country to send zero plastic to landfill. We will press ahead with game-changing reforms including introducing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging, a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, and applying bans or restrictions to phase out the use of unnecessary, highly littered, single use plastic.
3. **Invest in clean technology for materials collection:** We will modernise the way we collect the material from our homes and businesses to reduce transport emissions of carbon dioxide and improve air quality, by introducing zero emission vehicles and investing in the infrastructure to renewably charge and power them.
4. **Make more efficient use of our food:** We will lead the way in eradicating avoidable food waste by looking at the whole supply chain and working with businesses from farm to fork to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency.
5. **Prioritise the purchasing of wood, remanufactured and recycled content:** We will prioritise the use of wood and recycled content as well as prioritising re-used and remanufactured content in the goods that the public sector purchases.
6. **Enable communities to take collective action:** We will support citizens and communities to do the small things that add up to making a big difference. We will engage young people so they can actively learn about and be part of resource efficiency action through the education sector and beyond.
7. **Create the conditions for business to seize the opportunities:** We will support all businesses in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient. This will enable our businesses to save and make money, as well as being more resilient and able to compete in new and emerging markets whilst also achieving positive environmental outcomes.
8. **Take full responsibility for our waste:** We will take full responsibility for our waste in Wales, ensuring that we do not export waste to be a problem elsewhere. We will work in partnership with other parts of the globe to help them to tackle their waste issues.

Contents	Page
Ministerial Forewords	7
What we want to achieve	9
How we want to get there	11
Building on our recycling record	12
Supporting prevention and re-use	14
Driving innovation and materials use	16
Using Government levers	18
Enabling communities and businesses	20
Investing in infrastructure	22
Consultation approach and how to respond	24

Since devolution, Wales has become a global leader in recycling. Every household has played its part, showing how small steps can lead to fundamental change. It's now a part of who we are, embedded in the culture of 21st century Wales. Recycling is what we do.

This achievement has taken a clear, long term vision, strong partnership working, significant investment and clear milestones along the way. Although the last strategy that put these in place has aged well, in the ten years since, much has changed.

How we manage our waste and the resources we use has become even more crucial; the need to tackle climate change has become the single greatest challenge of our time; awareness of the impact of what we buy and the waste we generate is growing; economic opportunities for more environmentally-friendly solutions are rapidly expanding.

Making Wales a greener, more equal, and more prosperous country is what as a Government we are working to deliver. Within this strategy, the objectives of zero waste, zero net carbon and living within the planet's resources come together. As a nation we value our environment and are mindful of our impact on the wider world. We have a duty to future generations that we must discharge.

We are also focussed on realising the economic potential that building on our progress in recycling can bring. Innovation across Wales is already seeing companies using more recycled material, increasing efficiency, shortening supply chains and operating in new markets. Moving to a more circular economy – one which keeps resources in use for as long as possible and avoiding waste – unlocks the potential for Wales to compete in new markets and derive greater economic benefit. The disruption brought by Brexit has also highlighted the need for greater resilience in our economy and it is a key way in which we can provide it.

In declaring a climate emergency, as a Government we are committed to making a circular economy a reality. This consultation sets out how we will work across and align our areas of responsibility and influence others to bring about change. This strategy is about more than delivering on the Programme for Government commitment, it is also about implementing our Low Carbon Delivery Plan and our Economic Action Plan.

Wales led the way in the first industrial revolution. We can do the same in the next. Earlier this year, for example, Merthyr Tydfil was ranked as number one in the UK for having delivered the greatest reduction in its carbon footprint through recycling.

Over the last 20 years we have come together to make recycling the norm. Over the next decade we need to go beyond recycling to make a circular economy a reality.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Mark Drakeford'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mark' and last name 'Drakeford' clearly distinguishable.

Mark Drakeford AM
First Minister of Wales

In 2018, Sian Sykes circumnavigated Wales by paddleboard, collecting discarded plastic every day on her two month journey. Her achievement sent a clear message: by doing what we can to take action and by making small changes, together we can make a big difference.

Citizens, schools, community groups, businesses and enterprises across the country, like Sian, are inspiring action. The steps that people are taking in places the length and breadth of Wales in order to sustain our planet, should be a source of great national pride and it's been a privilege to have the opportunity to meet many of these inspirational individuals and organisations.

Our communities are what makes Wales and they are leading from the front in effecting the change needed to become sustainable places. From schools taking action to cut their waste, to repair cafes sharing the skills to keep items in use, local action is enabling and empowering people to think about the resources we use and to take steps to bring about change.

The innovation being seen in companies and local enterprises shows how changes - like being more efficient in the materials we use and remanufacturing products that would otherwise have gone to waste - can deliver key economic and social benefits by saving money and supporting people into work.

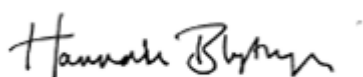
As a nation, our efforts on recycling have become renowned across the World, whilst at home it has become part of our culture. This success has been down to partnership working. As a Government we have set a clear framework, but it is our local authorities who have delivered the improvement in services across the country, and every household in every community in Wales that has recycled the everyday materials that has seen us become a global leader.

This consultation supports an active dialogue in Wales on how we take the next steps on our journey in moving to a more circular economy. It is your chance to let us know your views on the action we need to take and how best we can work together to deliver it.

To kick things off, we have set out six key themes that as a Government we believe we need to focus on. We have also proposed a number of headline actions that we will take forward, recognising the need for accelerated action, particularly in the face of a climate emergency.

We want your views not just on our proposals, but also on any new ideas or aspects you feel are missing. We also want from the outset of this consultation to work with you to take action – we all need to play our part in shaping Wales' future and working to improve our communities in the short term whilst also improving the legacy we leave to Wales' future generations.

By making small changes, together we can make a big difference.



Hannah Blythyn AM
Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government Foreword

What we want to achieve

What we want to achieve is ambitious, but we are building on solid foundations. In the twenty years since devolution, Wales has transformed from a nation which recycled less than 5% of its municipal waste, to become an international leader that recycles 63%¹. Put simply, it's what we do.



Earlier this year we declared a climate emergency. This call to arms for accelerated action means that we need a new strategy to help meet this generation-defining challenge. Inaction is not an option. Between 2001 and 2017, the Welsh waste sector's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 60%² but in going forward it's clear that we need to do more.

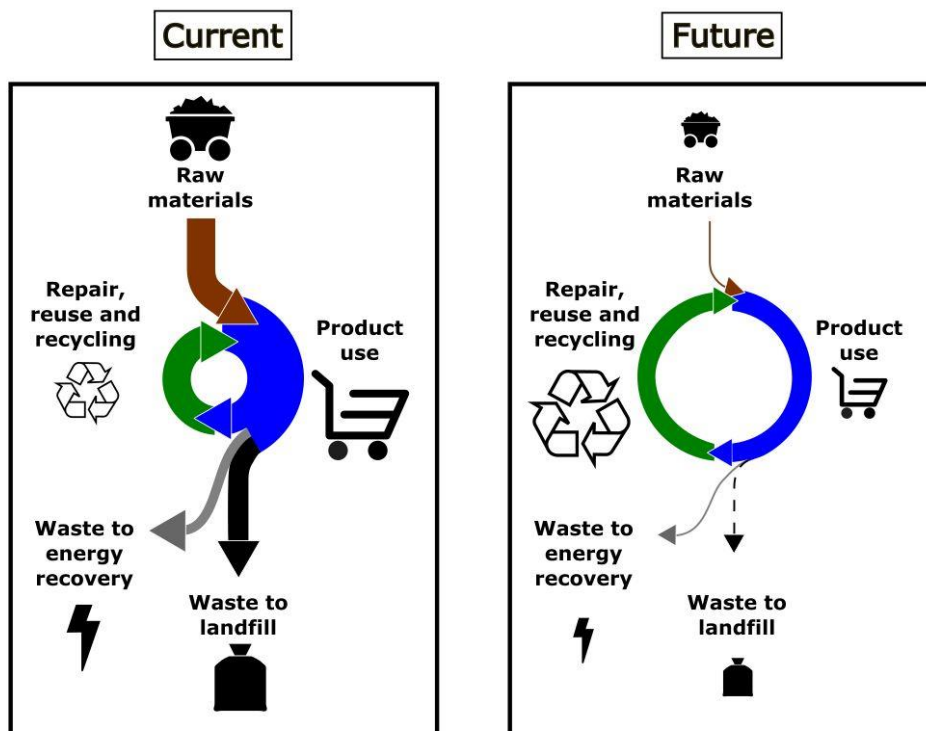
This consultation is focussed on Wales' journey to a more circular economy. Our aim is to become a country where we avoid waste, keep resources in use as long as possible and use our fair share of the earth's resources

We want to continue this success by taking the next steps towards a more circular economy, with an approach that goes beyond recycling. That means ensuring that no waste goes to landfill, that the materials we use are continually re-used or recycled – either through direct re-use or being recycled and used as a material for new products – and reducing the quantity of waste that arises in the first instance

¹ Welsh Government (2019) Local Authority municipal waste management: April to June 2019, <https://gov.wales/local-authority-municipal-waste-management-april-june-2019>

² Welsh Government (2019) Prosperity for all: a low carbon wales; https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/low-carbon-delivery-plan_1.pdf

Box 1. What is a more Circular Economy?



The way we currently use materials is unsustainable. If everyone in the world were to consume the same as the average Welsh citizen, 2.5 planets would be required to produce global resources. Moving to a more circular economy will encourage repair, re-use and recycling and needs to reduce the amount of raw materials we use so that economic growth is 'dematerialised'. This will contribute significantly towards ensuring Wales uses only our 'fair share' of global resources.

This strategy is not just about meeting the challenges we face; we want to seize on the opportunities that come from a new approach to resource use. Economic opportunities are already being created through re-thinking the materials we use and keeping products in productive use for as long as possible. Evidence has shown that this shift also has the potential to make savings of up to £2bn for the Welsh economy³, creating 'green' jobs, increasing Wales' resilience against rising costs and improving security in the supply of global material resources.

In tackling these challenges and capitalising on the opportunities, this strategy will put our Government agenda for a fairer, greener and more prosperous country at its core. In terms of fairer, this includes using only a fair share of resources and ensuring equal provision of waste management services across Wales. Greener includes taking crucial steps to reduce emissions and minimise other environmental impacts. More prosperous includes taking actions to seize on the economic opportunities that come from a shift towards a circular economy by 2050, such as shortening supply chains to improve resilience and supporting Welsh businesses to compete in the emerging markets and industries of the near future.

³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Wrap (2013) Wales and the Circular Economy – Favourable system conditions and economic opportunities <http://www.wrap.org.uk/node/17570>

How we want to get there

This is a strategy about the next steps in our pathway towards a circular economy. Our aim is to become a zero waste, net zero emissions nation that uses a fair share of the earth's resources whilst realising the economic potential this transition brings.

We have structured the strategy around core themes and actions to lead us on a path towards a more circular economy and we would like your feedback on how we can most effectively achieve this. There are questions at the end of each core theme, but please do not feel constrained by these. We would encourage you to suggest other actions that could help deliver on the aims and what you think we should prioritise.

This consultation proposes six core themes for focus. These are explored in more detail later in the document. They have been developed from the evidence we have gathered, both in terms of learning from the previous strategy and the analysis underpinning our work to date.



This consultation has been developed to deliver on our Programme for Government commitments, particularly *'for a more resource efficient economy, building on our success in recycling and reducing the environmental impacts of production and consumption'*. It is integrated with our key strategies and plans, including the Economic Action Plan with its Economic Contract model, which includes decarbonisation and resource efficiency as key elements. This consultation also aims to maximise our contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals which reference resource efficiency. It also aligns to key areas of the Environment (Wales) Act and the priorities set out in our statutory Natural Resources Policy.

Our approach is based on evidence and we are committed to ensuring that an evidence base underpins the final strategy and future actions.

Building on our recycling record

Our aim is to build on our success to date by driving the transformational change needed to further improve recycling. This includes how we manage household, commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste.

Where we are now:

Wales has increased its household recycling rate from 5.2% (1998-99) to 60.7% (2018-19)⁴ meaning that Wales has the third highest household recycling rate in the world⁵. Alongside that, over the same period, our municipal waste recycling rate went from 4.8% to 62.8%, the fourth highest municipal recycling rate in the world (behind Germany (first), Austria and South Korea).

We have robust recycling collection regimes around Wales with consistent items collected from every household. Thirteen of our twenty-two local authorities currently follow the same approach - the Welsh Government's Collections Blueprint - and we will work with all local authorities to develop it further to maximise the effectiveness of recycling in all our communities. We have also seen innovation around Wales in the items collected for recycling including mattresses and hygiene products such as nappies. But we know that half of the household residual waste that remains can still be recycled, with half of that being food waste⁶.

Where we want to be:

We want to achieve our aim of Wales being a zero waste nation by 2050. This means that any discarded materials are recycled and re-circulated within the Welsh economy, with no loss of materials from the system – effectively a 100% recycling rate from all sectors.

Our interim targets for the recycling of waste are 70% recycling by 2025 for waste from households and commercial and industrial businesses, and 90% recycling of construction and demolition waste by 2020.

For food waste, we want to fully utilise the infrastructure we already have in place to achieve further reductions. To promote higher recycling of business and public sector waste, our aim is to require recycling in all non-domestic settings, separating waste in the way households already do.

What do we need to do?

⁴ Welsh Government (2019) Local Authority municipal waste management: April to June 2019, <https://gov.wales/local-authority-municipal-waste-management-april-june-2019>

⁵ Eunomia and European Environmental Bureau (2017), Recycling – who really leads the world? <https://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/recycling-who-really-leads-the-world-issue-2/>

⁶ WRAP (2016), National municipal waste compositional analysis in Wales; <http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Wales%20Municipal%20Waste%20Composition%202015-16%20FINAL.pdf>

Become the world leader in recycling: We will work to achieve the highest rates of household recycling in the World, working with local government, and transform the recycling of commercial, and industrial and construction waste.

- We will develop additional infrastructure to treat materials which are currently not widely recycled which could include nappies and mattresses.
- We will review our Collections Blueprint to seek to ensure that a consistent set of high quality recyclable materials are collected and continue to encourage the kerbside sort of materials.
- We will put in place further minimum statutory recycling targets for local authorities beyond 2025, to support the trajectory to achieve zero waste by 2050.
- We will work with the waste industry in Wales to further improve consistency in the range of waste materials collected for recycling.
- We will work with local authorities and others to take measures to support citizens to recycle both at home and through local recycling centres.
- We will broaden our recycling focus beyond household recycling by better collecting other items such as waste electrical and electronic equipment.
- We will bring forward regulations to require all non-domestic premises to separate key recyclable materials like households already do.
- We will support business to innovate in design by tailoring our support and advice.

Question 1: Are the suggested actions the best way to help us recycle more?

Question 2: Should recycling arrangements across Wales be consistent?

Question 3: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy?

Supporting prevention and re-use

To move to a more circular economy we will need to radically improve on reducing the amount of waste that households, and the industrial and commercial sectors produce, and meet our waste prevention targets. Our aim is to spark a cultural change where consumption is reduced and unnecessary waste is prevented, and any discarded materials we do produce are thought of as a resource rather than waste.

Where we are now:

Wales is already a country where re-use and preventing waste is widespread. It is a place where people use 'apps' to collect surplus food from going to waste and swap and sell clothes often using re-use shops, diverting waste from landfill and supporting skills development. We have reduced household food waste by 12%⁷ (2009-2015) and were the first country in the UK to place a charge on single use carrier bags.

We are already working to halve avoidable food waste by 2025 in Wales by working together with WRAP to promote the Love Food Hate Waste campaign which raises awareness of the need to reduce food waste. Alongside this we have supported Local authorities to provide consistent weekly household food waste collection to 99% of households⁸.

In our communities, repair cafes are popping up, and the concept of the sharing economy is beginning to spread across the country – we support this and other initiatives which not just prevent waste but reduce the amount of items which could be littered or fly-tipped.

Businesses are also getting more actively involved with reducing and preventing waste, and we support them in this with business support programmes such as Business Wales, Food and Drink Wales and Farming Connect.

Despite the progress we have made, a 2015-16 analysis identified that 180,000 tonnes of Local Authority collected municipal waste was potentially re-usable⁹. Of this only 10,000 tonnes were actually prepared for re-use - so we have a long way to go, but the opportunities are there.

Where we want to be:

More needs to be done to reduce waste in the first place, in our households and businesses. We want to support the many waste prevention initiatives across Wales to come together, share practice and hear from them about what support they need. We know that the value of these is not just preventing the waste but there are potential economic gains and social benefits too, as people are supported to learn skills and

⁷ WRAP (2015) Household Food Waste in the UK;

http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Household_food_waste_in_the_UK_2015_Report.pdf

⁸ Welsh Government (2015) Towards Zero Waste <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/towards-zero-waste-progress-report-july-2015.pdf>

⁹ WRAP Cymru, 2018, Cardiff, Preparation for re-use: a roadmap for a paradigm shift in Wales, prepared by Resource Futures, <http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/CCP104-014%20-%20PfR%20Technical%20Report%20final%20-%20English%20-%20July%202018.pdf>

take steps to enter employment. We want good practice examples that exist across Wales to become the norm within their sectors. In order to do that, we need to ensure that we are learning from innovative projects.

What do we need to do?

Make more efficient use of our food: We will lead the way in eradicating avoidable food waste by looking at the whole supply chain and working with businesses from farm to fork to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency.

Prioritise the purchasing of wood, remanufactured and recycled content: We will prioritise the use of wood and recycled content as well as prioritising re-used and remanufactured content in the goods that the public sector procures.

- We will ensure that all businesses in Wales have access to advice on reducing their own waste and eco-designing the products they make and sell so that products use fewer resources and generate less waste at end of life.
- We will develop a target for the minimum preparation for re-use target for Local Authorities for the intermediate period leading to zero waste by 2050.
- We will actively work with our communities and businesses to promote prevention and re-use and support the re-use, repair and remanufacturing sectors to grow.
- We will build on the success of the eco-schools programme and work to genuinely engage young people in the actions we need to take and broaden the focus beyond learning about recycling.
- We will develop a target and actions to halve avoidable food waste by 2025 and further targets to go beyond that after 2025.
- We will focus on preventing food waste by working with partners from 'farm to fork' to prevent, reduce and find other uses for waste.
- We will work with Food and Drink Wales to give practical support to businesses on reducing waste and seizing on the economic opportunities that can come from this.
- We will spark a culture change by prioritising the use of re-used and remanufactured materials in the goods that the public sector procures.
- We will encourage the public sector to donate valuable and useful surplus equipment, including to other countries that cannot access such equipment and who can benefit from its use.
- We will ensure that public sector construction projects produce less waste during construction, during any change of use and at the end of the project.

Question 4: What actions could we take to further promote the work on prevention and re-use that occur in our communities?

Question 5: Do you agree we should develop and expand the work we do in schools on waste prevention and re-use?

Question 6: What do you think are the key steps that we need to take to further reduce avoidable food waste?

Question 7: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy?

Driving innovation and materials use

Currently we are consuming materials at a far higher rate than is sustainable which causes negative environmental and social impacts. We will look at the long-term need for key materials in Wales, whilst also reducing the carbon footprint (decarbonise) of supply chains, and drive the use of innovative materials that can be in use for as long possible. This will bring opportunities for Welsh businesses to compete in shorter and more resilient supply chains.

Where we are now:

The production of everyday products including cars, clothes and food account for 45% of global carbon emissions¹⁰. Our level of consumption uses far more than our fair share of the earth's resources.

The full environmental and social impacts of the materials present in products we consume are largely hidden from us, often because the raw materials in them are mined and processed in other parts of the world. The amount of energy and associated greenhouse gas emissions used to extract, process and transport them also have the same problem.

Evidence shows that litter, including micro-plastics, is having a significant impact on the marine environment. We have been working with the other governments of the UK to take measures to address the issues caused by plastic pollution and marine litter including bringing forward bans on single use plastic items.

Where we want to be:

To achieve our aims, the amount and type of material we use will need to change. We need to reduce the overall quantity of materials we use and think carefully about the materials from which our goods are made. This could mean sourcing more sustainable, local and low carbon materials such as timber. We will need to move away from those materials with the highest carbon footprint and ensure that prevention and re-use are considered first.

We want to increase the use of recycled and remanufactured content, building on our £6.5m Circular Economy Fund which provides support to businesses to increase the recycled content in their products and work with public bodies to lead the way. With a particular focus on plastic, we want to see a Wales free from unnecessary, single use and problematic plastics whilst recognising some uses of plastic, such as in medical settings, will remain important. We want to prevent plastic from becoming litter or ending up in landfill by limiting its unnecessary use and supporting innovation in areas like bioplastics.

¹⁰ Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019), Completing the picture: How the circular economy tackles climate change;
https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/Completing_The_Picture_How_The_Circular_Economy-_Tackles_Climate_Change_V3_26_September.pdf

What do we need to do?

Prioritise the purchasing of wood, remanufactured and recycled content: We will prioritise the use of wood and recycled content as well as prioritising re-used and remanufactured content in the goods that the public sector procures.

- We will commission analysis to better understand the market, supply chains and long-term need for key materials in Wales and how we can decarbonise these.
- We will prioritise the use of sustainable and low carbon materials in construction in Wales, and apply this to the Innovative Housing Programme and the refurbishment of the social housing stock in Wales.
- We will ask all public sector bodies funded by the Welsh Government to follow this hierarchy and report the level of recycled content in the buildings they procure.
- We will continue to support businesses to find uses and markets for materials currently considered waste and provide investment to enable this through our Circular Economy Fund.
- We will create a pathway which will see Wales become the first country to send zero plastic to landfill with an ambitious strategy to prevent plastic from entering our natural environment, including game-changing reforms ranging from support for innovation through to the use of legislation.
- We will significantly reduce unnecessary single use plastic items on our way to phasing these out completely.
- We will use more bioplastic from renewable sources where the use of plastic is still needed.
- We will increase the range of plastic materials collected for recycling and develop more recycling infrastructure in Wales to reprocess it, including developing markets for recycled plastic in Welsh manufacturing.
- We will reduce the export of our plastic waste and eliminate plastic litter from our natural environment.
- We will also act to support innovation in developing innovative and better alternative materials whilst working to use lower carbon alternatives for the materials we use.

Question 8: Are the materials we have listed ones we should focus attention on?

Question 9: Are design changes in products using the materials listed an area to focus on?

Question 10: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy? Are there other materials we could focus on and why?

Using Government levers

By using Government levers such as funding, legislation, taxation and procurement to maximum effect, we will align our actions to achieve maximum benefit. In doing so, we will both demonstrate our own commitment and support wider public sector action to support the move to a more circular economy. This recognises that continuing our progress towards becoming a zero-waste nation, reducing waste and keeping resources in use for as long possible will require action across all parts of Government.

Where we are now:

Since the publication of the last strategy, Wales has gained the devolved responsibility for more areas and the Welsh Government is now able to draw from a wider set of levers to effect change. However, as the flow of materials is part of the wider global economy, there are limits to what we can do to effect change. Because of that, we have been actively working with other governments, particularly with those in the UK, to effect that change collectively.

There have been some notable achievements over recent years. These include using our legal powers to introduce a charge on carrier bags and to ban microbeads. We remain the only country in the UK to place statutory minimum recycling targets on local authorities, a step which has been key in supporting our progress to date. We have also gained fiscal responsibility for measures such as the Landfill Disposals Tax and have used government funds to support innovation in local and regional circular economies through the Foundational Economy Fund and Better Jobs Closer to Home initiative.

Our foundational economy approach is focussed on using our levers to harness local resources for the benefit of the local economy and re-using and recycling is an important element of this. The Better Jobs Closer to Home projects in paper recycling and remanufactured paint are key examples and we want to scale up successful projects.

Where we want to be:

We want to use government levers to clearly support and drive Wales forward on our pathway to a more circular economy. In doing so, we will support the delivery of our Programme for Government and support the wider response to the climate emergency. We want to make sure that our approach to the resources we use as a Government, and where they are sourced from, supports our move towards a circular economy. In doing so, we want the money that we spend to drive good practice, including in considering whole lifetime costs, the materials used, their carbon impact and the local and regional supply chains involved.

We will also work to make the best use of fiscal powers building on schemes like our Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme, to deliver innovative, scalable projects that prevent waste and recognise surplus materials as a resource. We will also work to ensure that we take full responsibility for our waste.

What do we need to do?

Phase out single use plastic: We will make Wales become the first country to send zero plastic to landfill. We will press ahead with game changing reforms including introducing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging, a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, and applying bans or restrictions to phase out the use of unnecessary, highly littered, single use plastic.

Take full responsibility for our waste: We will take full responsibility for our waste in Wales, ensuring that we do not export waste to be a problem elsewhere. We will work in partnership with other parts of the globe to help them to tackle their waste issues.

- We will work to make sure that the public sector in Wales does not purchase products that adversely affect the human rights or the environment in other countries. We will also encourage Welsh businesses to adopt the same principle.
- We will work with the other governments of the UK in developing legislation for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging and to develop an EPR approach for additional products such as tyres, textiles, bulky wastes (for example furniture, mattresses and carpets) and products used in construction.
- We will work with the other governments of the UK in developing legislation for a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers.
- We will introduce a mandatory electronic waste tracking system to provide annual information on industrial and commercial waste produced in Wales.
- We will legislate to ensure that separated key recyclables are banned from energy recovery or landfill.
- We will produce a Litter Prevention Plan for Wales, and continue to deliver our Fly-tipping Strategy “A Fly-tipping Free Wales”.
- We will introduce bans and restrict the sale of commonly littered single use plastic items.
- We will review our ground breaking charge on carrier bags in Wales and consider whether we need to take further action on these items.
- We will work across Government on proposals for a tax or charge on disposable plastic cups and food containers in Wales.
- We will consider banning single use disposable cups from stadia in Wales.
- We will work with Public Service Boards to identify local opportunities to take a circular economy approach.
- We will work with UK Government to explore whether an incineration tax would be desirable as a further means to increase recycling.

Question 11: Is our focus on improving resource efficient procurement within the Public Service a priority area?

Question 12: Is our focus on materials used and resource efficiency in construction a primary consideration to implement for the future?

Question 13: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy?

Enabling communities and businesses

We recognise that we all play important roles, and that the Government cannot act alone. That is why we wish to harness the energy of businesses who are already making great strides to reduce waste, and the many community initiatives across Wales from plastic free communities to food surplus redistribution organisations. Together we can make a huge collective difference.

Where we are now:

Our communities and businesses in Wales are already making a difference – and they are leading from the front on effecting local environmental change and sustainable enterprises. Initiatives such as plastic free and zero waste communities are inspiring everyone from young people to local businesses to take action to reduce waste. Wales has a proud track record of community-led initiatives in this area and we have supported initiatives such as FareShare Cymru, who since 2011 have provided almost eight million meals to vulnerable people through the redistribution of surplus food. The Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme has funded 44 environmental projects, often focussed on re-use and recycling initiatives. We have also seen the widespread roll-out of almost 1,700 refill water points to date across Wales as part of the Refill Nation initiative.

Where we want to be:

We want to build on the considerable momentum across Wales and use this as a foundation to encourage and facilitate more communities and businesses to take positive action - particularly around resource efficiency, waste prevention, re-use and recycling. In particular, we want to harness the passion and enthusiasm of young people through our eco-schools programme and other initiatives to effect change.

In doing so we will aim to bring communities together to develop initiatives relevant to their area and particular needs, in particular those which reduce waste and promote re-use and repair.

We want our businesses and enterprises to be at the vanguard of change and support them to save and make money, while becoming more resilient by using local and regional supply chains. This will also unlock economic potential through an ability to compete in new and emerging markets whilst also achieving positive environmental outcomes.

We have achieved a lot over the last two decades since devolution and we want to share our learning and resources to help other countries adopt best practice.

What do we need to do?

Enable communities to take collective action: We will support citizens and communities to do the small things that add up to making a big difference. We will
--

engage young people so they can actively learn about and be part of resource efficiency action through the education sector and beyond.

Create the conditions for business to seize the opportunities: We will support all businesses in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient. This will enable our businesses to save and make money as well as being more resilient and able to compete in new and emerging markets whilst also achieving positive environmental outcomes.

- We will support our communities in their endeavours to be more resource efficient and build on the success of the eco-schools programme so that young people can actively learn about and participate in resource efficiency action.
- We will work to give consumers information that will seek to value green and sustainable products.
- We will actively engage communities to review what support is needed, and help them come together to make a bigger collective difference.
- We will look at the model of zero waste towns and work towards implementing effective mechanisms to support towns and cities to take action and recognise the steps that they are taking.
- We will work to support businesses to take the opportunities from a more circular economy by making a clear offer of advice and support. We will also expand our innovation support and increase the number of businesses signed up to the Business Wales Green Growth pledge.
- We will support manufacturers, particularly the food and drink industry, to plan ahead for the forthcoming game-changing reforms to packaging.

Question 14: Is our continued business support to make them more resource efficient a priority action?

Question 15: How would you view starting a Zero Waste Town area?

Question 16: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy?

Investing in infrastructure

To ensure that we have the physical infrastructure in place to support people to act, we will continue to invest in infrastructure so that we are ready for the transition to a zero-waste, resource efficient, low carbon nation. This means continuing to fund the infrastructure necessary to reduce, re-use and recycle materials and to accelerate Wales' progress.

Where we are now:

Wales is a high recycling society, with high quality collection infrastructure, well-developed re-processing infrastructure and a worldwide reputation for achievement.

We have already invested £1 billion on household recycling including infrastructure across the country to transform how we deal with our waste. We now have the infrastructure in place so that 61% of household waste is recycled and 99% of our households have their food waste collected separately and treated.

As a responsible nation, we are committed to dealing effectively with our non-recyclable waste in a way which prevents it from either polluting the environment or becoming a problem elsewhere. For this reason we have invested in infrastructure which generates electricity and heat from this material and disposes of it safely to the highest environmental standards. The long term solution is to move away from non-recyclable materials that are currently incinerated like single use plastic.

Investment is growing in re-use, repair and remanufacturing infrastructure. Across Wales we have seen the development of infrastructure to divert food surplus away from landfill to those who need it. We have also seen re-use and repair cafes, scrap stores and community compost initiatives develop across the country.

Where we want to be:

To deal with the additional materials collected due to increased recycling, we will need access to additional waste management infrastructure to ensure we can maximise the return from collected materials. Investment in infrastructure must also help to address affordability pressures and to tackle the more difficult material streams.

We will also need infrastructure that goes beyond recycling, by supporting re-use, repair and remanufacturing. We will also need to ensure that the infrastructure we have is decarbonised and that future investment supports the infrastructure we need in a more circular economy.

What do we need to do?

Invest in clean technology for materials collection: We will modernise the way we collect the material from our homes and businesses to reduce transport emissions of carbon dioxide and improve air quality by introducing zero emission vehicles and investing in the infrastructure to renewably charge and power them.

- We will work in partnership with local authorities to develop regional hubs of recycling, reprocessing, and remanufacturing technologies to capitalise on the economic opportunities that arise in a more circular economy.
- We will invest in the handling and processing infrastructure to address priority materials including absorbent hygiene products, wood, plastics and waste electrical and electronic equipment.
- We will bring forward regulations that require business to separate recyclable materials to minimise waste and maximise their resource efficiency and support business to innovate with waste materials through initiatives such as the Circular Economy Fund.
- We will promote community infrastructure that helps citizens reduce waste, including zero waste and zero plastic shops, surplus food redistribution, refill, community hire shops, material-lending libraries and other related initiatives.
- We will work to align our regional economic development initiatives from City Deals, the Foundational Economy and Valleys Taskforce to encourage the development of resource efficient, circular economy infrastructure.
- We will review the infrastructure we need as we continue to progress towards zero waste and increasingly keep resources in use for longer whilst avoiding waste being landfilled.

Question 17: Are the initiative actions mentioned here those we should aim to provide supporting infrastructure for?

Question 18: How can we work regionally to ensure resource efficient decision making?

Question 19: Are the suggested actions in this theme the right ones? If not, why? What other actions could we consider to achieve the aims of the strategy?

Consultation approach and how to respond

We want to hear your views. We have intentionally made this consultation document short and accessible. Your views will shape how the actions we take over the next decade will continue that trajectory towards zero waste.

Along with the specific questions in each section, we are also interested in your views on the impact that the strategy could have on the Welsh language:

Question 20: We would like to know your views on the effects that our proposals in this document would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Question 21: Please also explain how you believe the proposed strategy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

We also want your general views on the strategy:

Question 22: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to address them.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please let us know in any postal or email response, or by ticking the appropriate box in the online form.

If responding by post or email, please include your name, organisation (if applicable), phone number and address along with your response.

In addition to being available in Welsh, we have also prepared an easy-read format and a standard presentation. These have been designed to be used by communities, schools, businesses and others to help you respond to the consultation.

We will be holding a number of events, both geographically around Wales and with a focus on different stakeholder groups. There will also be opportunities to engage online and on social media too.

We want to hear from as many people and organisations as possible. Your responses will make a difference.

Once the consultation is closed we will analyse the responses and our aim is to publish a final strategy in 2020.