



Cyngor
Gwynedd

Waste and Recycling Strategy

2025 - 2030

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1. Foreword

As a county, we have seen a reduction in the waste we produce, and at the same time an increase in the percentage we recycle. Over the last decade, the proportion of our waste that is recycled has risen from 55% to 65%, and that is mainly thanks to the efforts of our residents, businesses and our wider communities.

However, we have now reached a point where we will all have to go a step further to manage our waste more responsibly. We know that over half the contents of our green bins can already be recycled through services available from Cyngor Gwynedd.

At the same time, we are facing a global climate crisis. The Council recognised this in March 2019 by declaring a climate emergency, and since then we have been working to align all our services - including waste - with our wider environmental responsibilities.

The challenges ahead are significant, and tackling them will require innovation, ambition and an open attitude to change. That means not only continuing to reduce and recycle waste, but completely rethinking how we consider it - as a valuable resource rather than as a problem to be disposed of. Repair, reuse and adjustment must become the norm before considering recycling or disposal. We have already shown that this can be done locally, by turning food waste into electricity here in Gwynedd. Currently, 47% of our recycling materials go across the border to England, 1% to other countries in Europe, and 52% stay in Wales. However, apart from food and garden waste, only a very small proportion of the recycling materials are processed here in

Gwynedd. If we are serious about creating a local circular economy, this must change.

A truly circular economy would not only reduce our environmental impact but also bring direct economic and social benefits to our communities. Environmental justice goes hand in hand with social and economic justice - you cannot have one without the others. By keeping more of our waste local and treating it as a resource, we can support jobs, strengthen resilience and build community wellbeing. As they have been saying in England for a long time: "where there's muck, there's brass". This will require long-term thinking and cultural change, but it is essential if we are serious about the future of our communities.

This Strategy is just the beginning of the journey. By working together - as residents, communities and organisations - we can move towards a Gwynedd that is greener, fairer and truly circular.

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Councillor Craig ab Iago
Environment Cabinet
Member

2. Vision and strategic objectives

Our vision is to create an environment where circular practices are common, residual (non-recyclable) waste is minimal, and Gwynedd plays a significant role in a greener Wales. As we look to the future, we recognise various specific issues and challenges that we, as a council, must address. Our aim is for Gwynedd to become a visionary council in preventing waste, maximising resources and managing our waste service efficiently. Working with our residents, businesses, and partners, we want our Waste and Recycling Strategy to enable a sustainable and green local economy, reducing the impacts of climate change, and safeguarding our future generations.

Gwynedd's current recycling performance stands at 65.3%, creating a significant financial risk of approximately £600,000 if the statutory target of 70% is not achieved. To close this gap and strengthen the long-term resilience of the service, seven strategic priorities have been identified to drive improvement across the service.

Strategic Priorities

1. Reducing general (residual) waste.
2. Increase reuse and repair.
3. Meeting Welsh Government targets to recycle, reuse and compost 70% of our waste by 2025 and beyond.
4. Delivering a high-quality service where the health, safety, wellbeing and values of our staff—alongside customer care and satisfaction—are central to our core principles.
5. Becoming a Low Carbon service.
6. Investing in our waste infrastructure to meet future service needs and development.

Financial Risks and Opportunities

- Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS): This may create additional cost pressures due to carbon pricing on waste disposal.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): A potential opportunity to secure significant income to offset collection costs, subject to final scheme details.
- Avoiding fines: Achieving the 70% target will avoid substantial financial penalties and protect the Council's budget.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

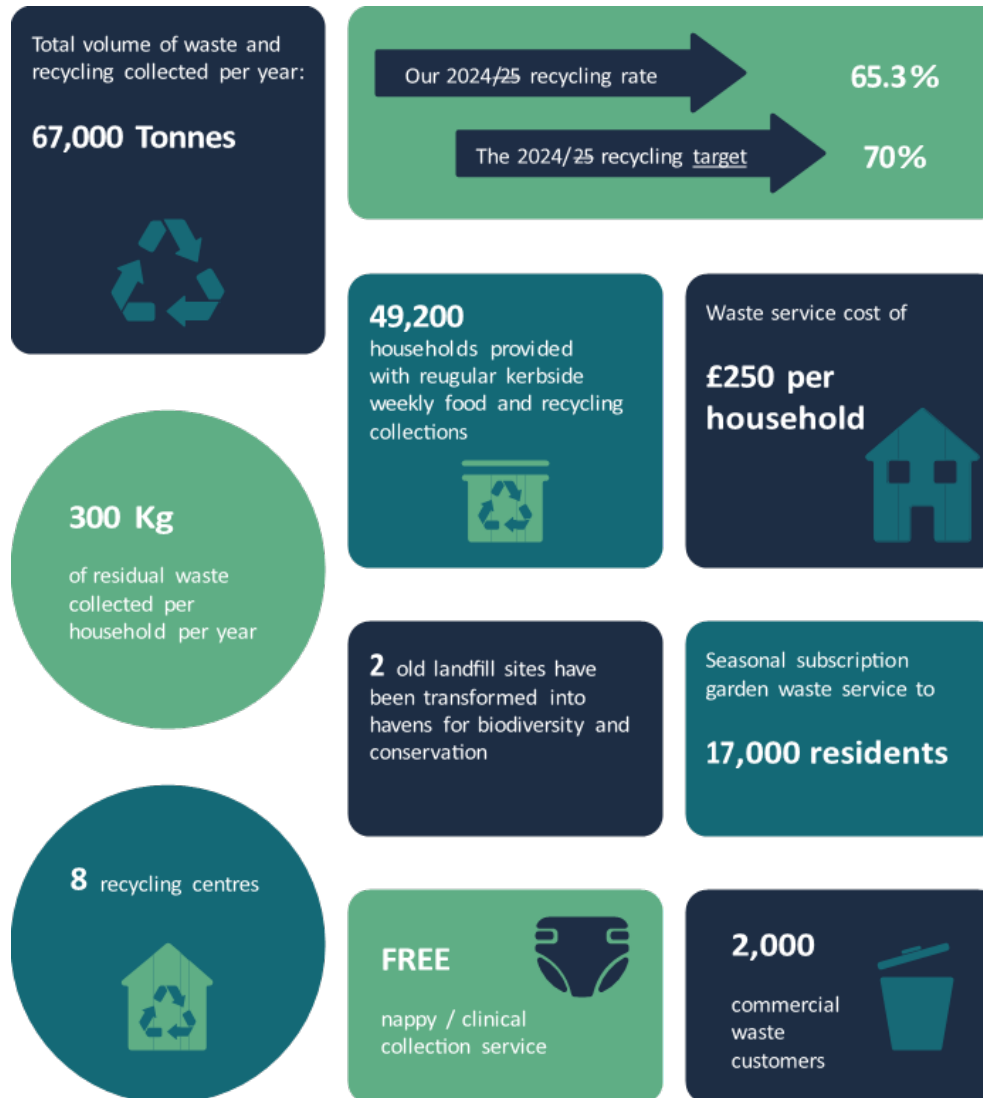
- Clearer guidance and more consistent services across the county.
- Greater emphasis on correct separation of materials.
- Possible changes to collection frequency or container types.
- Stronger enforcement where there is persistent non-compliance.
- Businesses may face new requirements under national recycling regulations.

What Success Will Look Like by 2030

- Recycling consistently above 70%, with year-on-year improvement.
- A measurable reduction in residual waste per household.
- A modern, efficient collection service supported by digital systems and a low-carbon fleet.
- High levels of public participation and confidence.
- Gwynedd recognised as a leader in sustainable waste management in Wales.

This Waste Strategy has been shaped by public consultation and independent analysis of the responses. The feedback confirmed strong support for the overall strategic direction, particularly the focus on waste prevention, reuse and improved recycling. The consultation also highlighted the importance of clear communication, careful implementation and ongoing engagement with residents and businesses. These insights have informed the development of the Strategy and will continue to guide its delivery.

Current Performance



3. Context and drivers for change

In Gwynedd we have made considerable progress in reducing the amount of waste we produce whilst increasing the amount we recycle. Between 2014/15 and 2024/25 our recycling rate has increased from 55% to over 65% whilst our 'black bag' waste has dropped by 10.9%.

We would like to thank residents, business and the community for their support and contribution to the success so far. As a council we no longer send any of our waste to landfill for disposal.

We have ambitions to build on this success, not only to increase Gwynedd's recycling rate but also manage our waste more sustainably. Our goal is to enhance reuse, repair and moving to a circular economy. In this system, materials are valued as resources, kept in circulation for as long as possible, and disposal is minimised. This supports our efforts to protect and conserve the natural world and its limited resources. The circular economy has been shown to have significant benefits through saving money and creating new jobs in the areas of reuse, remanufacturing, and materials innovation. It is an opportunity to reduce emissions, so protecting human health and increasing biodiversity. Circular economy and waste minimisation is also an opportunity for the council, to manage the waste and recycling services more economically, especially in a climate where all councils are facing uncertain financial outlooks with ever-increasing demand for core services.

We want to ensure that the building blocks are in place to enable change. We want to drive more circular activity and help residents and businesses to produce less waste. This will also reduce our carbon emissions and improve other environmental indicators.

Most of all, we want the people and businesses of Gwynedd to take pride in their waste services and actively participate in achieving our goals. Below is a summary of the context and drivers of change that will shape the direction of this strategy and the actions we need to take to mitigate them.

Waste hierarchy

The waste hierarchy is a globally recognised principle, legally defined in the EU Waste Framework Directive (2008) which underpins legislation for waste management. It establishes an order of preference for managing and disposing of waste, prioritising actions that prevent waste generation and minimize environmental impact and moving down to disposal as the last resort. Currently, our service manages waste through recycling, recovery, and disposal. We need to shift away from disposal and towards reuse, aiming for prevention and minimisation. Our strategy outlines how we intend to do this.

- Prevention – the prevention of waste centres on minimising the amount of waste we create as a society, purchasing less and using fewer materials during design and manufacturing processes.

- Reuse – reusing materials and products extends their lifecycle and prevents them from being disposed of unnecessarily or potentially turned into a less sustainable product.
- Recycling – recycling focuses on the conversion of waste materials into new materials and products.
- Other recovery – the process of recovering some value from waste materials, for example food waste being turned into compost.
- Disposal – the last resort, where waste is landfilled, incinerated or turned into energy from waste.



Linear economy vs circular economy

As part of this strategy, we want to support Gwynedd in a shift towards a circular economy approach.

Shifting towards a circular economy and away from the linear 'take-make-use-dispose' model will deliver benefits through reduced waste and improved resource. A circular economy approach embeds the values of the materials we use as a resource by focusing on the need to keep the products or material in use for as long as possible. Reducing our consumption of raw materials supports efforts to tackle climate change, pollution and enhancing biodiversity. A circular economy approach also has the potential to deliver wider benefits to our communities, such as green jobs, better health and well-being and cleaner neighbourhoods.

Global context

Globally we are facing a climate emergency with sea levels rising at unprecedented levels, severe weather events are on the increase, all having an increasing negative impact on communities across the world, creating economic and environmental devastation.

Collectively we must take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the increase in global temperatures to below 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels to reduce our impact on the environment. This strategy will support efforts to value resources by keeping them in circulation for longer and avoiding unnecessary consumption where possible, reduce the emissions from our operations so that the environment is protected for future generations.

National context

Beyond recycling

The Welsh Government is committed to creating a circular economy and ensuring a zero-waste Wales by 2050. To reach this ambitious goal, they are implementing a series of strategic measures, including developing specialist infrastructure for materials that are difficult to recycle, supporting businesses to strengthen their recycling efforts, and working with local councils and key partners to set clear recycling targets aligned with Wales's zero-waste pathway.

This effort reflects a sustainable vision for Wales's future, placing emphasis on responsibility, innovation, and community commitment.

Our strategy aims to help residents and businesses manage their waste in the most sustainable way possible. By reducing waste, avoiding over-consumption, and ensuring that materials are valued and kept in use for as long as possible, we promote a more effective approach to resource management. This approach will underpin our efforts to move Gwynedd towards a circular economy, aligning with the Welsh Government's vision through the 'Beyond Recycling' Strategy, in order to build a more sustainable future for our communities.

Towards zero waste

The Welsh Government's Toward Zero Waste strategy outlines a set of objectives aimed at boosting recycling rates, minimising avoidable food waste, and reducing waste sent to landfills. It also establishes mandatory recycling targets for local authorities in Wales. By the 2024/25 period, Welsh councils are required to achieve a 70% recycling rate, with financial penalties imposed for each tonne below this target.

As a council with our current recycling rate of 65.3% we face a potential fine of £200 per tonne if we do not achieve the 70% target. This is equivalent to £750,000 based on 2022/23 tonnages. This strategy will therefore take steps towards increasing our recycling rate to 70% and beyond to avoid this cost, but most importantly to ensure that we are doing what is right.

Workplace recycling regulations

The Workplace Recycling Regulations came into effect on 6 April 2024 and is a legal requirement for all workplaces including businesses, the public sector, and charities to separate recyclable materials including food, paper, card, glass, metals, plastic, cartons, unsold textiles, and unsold small electrical equipment. The Regulations also impose a ban on food waste to sewer.

In April 2026, the Workplace Recycling Regulations will be expanded to collect small waste electronic equipment and textiles by April 2027.

As a council we will provide a compliant workplace recycling service to all business sector across Gwynedd. The service wants to create opportunities to improve our commercial waste collection service and support more businesses to recycle their waste.

We have over 2,000 commercial customers in Gwynedd, and we collect all waste streams typically generated by businesses, including paper and card, plastics and cans, food waste, glass, and residual waste. Our customers range from small corner shops and cafes to larger businesses and caravan parks. We currently collect 8,600 tonnes of commercial waste of which 53% can be recycled; we will work with businesses to increase this proportion and increase recycling levels to encourage a greener economy within Gwynedd.

We want to increase our base level of customers as well as retaining our loyal customers by providing efficient, reliable, and a locally focused service.

As part of this strategy, we aim to continue to provide a compliant service, increase the number of business customers that we collect from and ensure that we are prepared for the expansion of the regulations to include small electricals and textiles.

Emissions trading scheme

Currently, our non-recyclable waste is sent to the Parc Adfer energy-from-waste facility in Deeside, Flintshire. At this facility, the waste is incinerated to generate electricity, which is then fed into the national grid. This process recovers energy from our waste, but also creates greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major contributor to climate change. From 2028 the UK Emissions Trading Scheme will be expanded to include the burning of fossil-based materials by energy from waste incinerators, including Parc Adfer. The intention of the emissions trading scheme are to reduce emissions and carbon footprints and should encourage the transition away from fossil-based fuels and promote cleaner and renewable technologies.

As a council this scheme will impact us if we do not take action to reduce the quantity of fossil-based materials such as plastic film, dense plastic, and textiles sent to the Parc Adfer facility.

The current cost to dispose of our residual waste is almost £5m per year. With the new proposed charges from ETS, it could cost an extra £1.5m each year if we do not take action to reduce fossil-based content from the non-recyclable waste.

Therefore, in this strategy we will seek to reduce the fossil-based materials from our non-recyclable waste stream to reduce the environmental and financial impacts of this scheme.

Extended Producer Responsibility

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) places the responsibility for managing the full lifecycle of packaging back onto producers. EPR aims to incentivise producers to design and produce packaging with recyclability and waste prevention in mind. This should increase the amount of household waste that can be recycled over time. The EPR framework means that producers of certain types of packaging pay into a fund to support councils with the cost of treatment or disposal of packaging that is not easily recyclable. The amount Cyngor Gwynedd receives depends on how efficiently and effectively we manage waste, and we could receive a penalty if we do not meet the required standards for this.

Extended producer responsibility for packaging (pEPR) was implemented on the 1 April 2025, and we need to consider the impacts of this reform. Gwynedd may see an increase in the amount and type of packaging we can recycle increasing the volumes of recycling that we collect. We therefore need to ensure that our waste transfer stations at Caernarfon and

Harlech, where our collection vehicles unload the materials collected from the kerbside, can accommodate an increase in recycling volumes. Therefore, this strategy will set out how we intend to prepare for an increase in material volumes and types.

Deposit Return Scheme

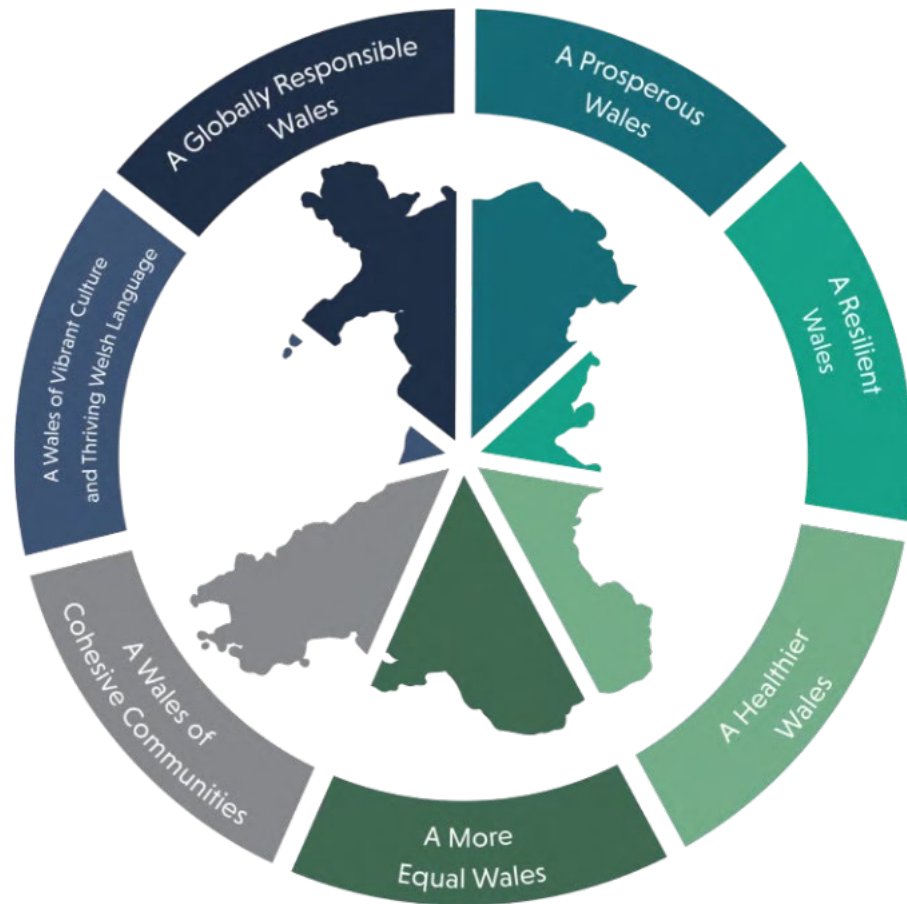
The Welsh Government will introduce a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) targeting both single use and reusable drinks containers with a small deposit, which is refunded upon the return of the container.

The DRS will help reduce litter in Gwynedd by placing a financial value on drinks containers, making them less likely to be carelessly discarded. By including reusable drinks containers in Wales's DRS, our community will be supported to move towards a circular economy where containers are used repeatedly before being recycled into new containers at the end of their life. The DRS can divert containers away from street-waste streams and conventional recycling, directing them instead to return points in local shops. As a result, it is essential that we understand the impact on the Council's services to ensure this process is effectively coordinated.

Wellbeing and Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act aims to ensure that future generations in Wales have at least the same quality of life as we do now.

This strategy aims to focus on managing waste in line with the highest principles of the waste hierarchy which include waste prevention, reuse and recycling and moving materials towards a circular approach rather than linear. This is being done to preserve natural resources, reduce or eliminate the harmful release of greenhouse gases and protect the environment and nature for future generations. In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and published the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan in March 2022, and one headline from the plan is for us to reduce the carbon emissions from waste collections and processing

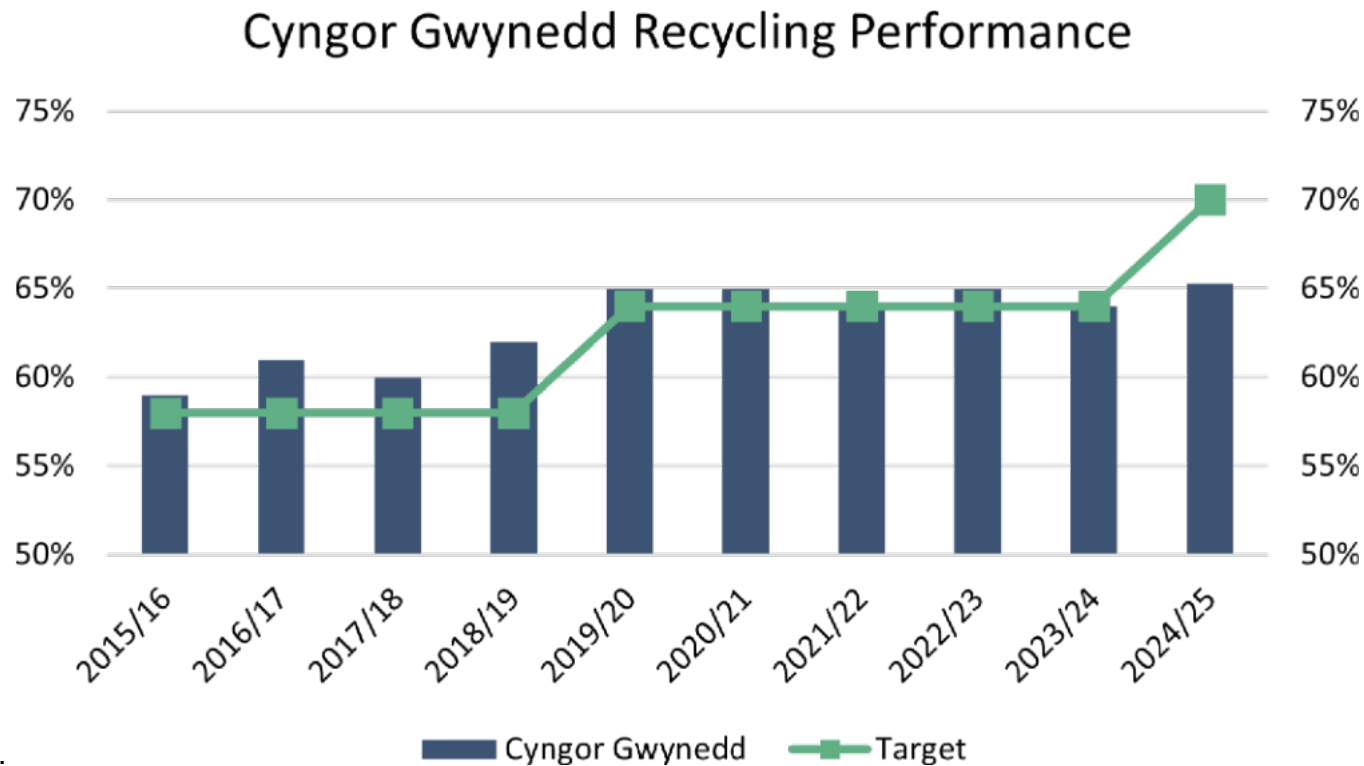


Local context

Recycling performance

The table below shows the recycling performance rate for Gwynedd between 2015 to 2024. The Welsh Government statutory recycling targets are now set at 70% with potential fines for councils that fail to meet this target. Our current rate of 65.3% means that should we fail to increase our recycling rate to 70%, Gwynedd could have to pay significant fines for every tonne that is under the target rate

We therefore need to take action to increase our recycling rate and ensure that Gwynedd reaches the 70% target and avoid these fines

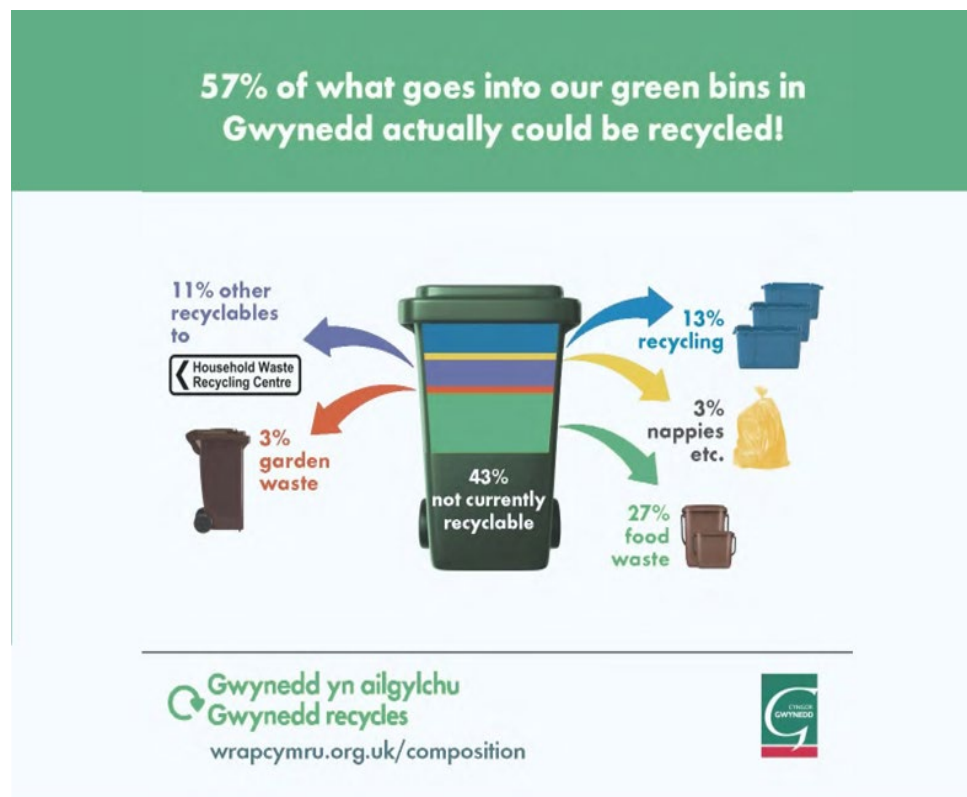


Composition of non-recyclable waste in Gwynedd

A national study by WRAP Cymru in 2023 found that 57% of the materials that Gwynedd households disposed of in their green bin or black sacks could be recycled using existing services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd. The breakdown of the materials in the non-recyclable green bin/black sacks can be seen in the diagram below. The largest proportion of this waste stream was food waste which represented 27% of non-recyclable waste bin.

Disposing of recyclable material in the non-recyclable waste bin not only means that valuable resources are lost but also contributes to the release of greenhouse gas emissions, an unnecessary cost to dispose of this material and a potential loss in sales income from recyclable materials.

Each tonne of waste sent for disposal typically releases between 0.7 and 1.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂), with this including the emissions from burning plastics, wood, paper, and food. Too much valuable material is being disposed of and as part of this strategy we want to work with households to focus on diverting and collecting more recyclable materials from the non-recyclable bin to support our aims to increase our recycling rate to above 70% and beyond ensuring that only items that cannot be recycled are discarded into the green bin.



Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28

The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 outlines the vision and priorities for the council, with the delivery of several priorities linked to the waste and recycling service, which includes:

- A Green Gwynedd - supporting a reduction in carbon emissions, ensuring the service is prepared and resilient for the effects of climate change, as well as committing to the introduction of a new waste and recycling strategy to increase the county's recycling level to meet the national target of 70% by 2025.
- A Prosperous Gwynedd – supporting sustainable tourism for the benefit of communities, collaborating with partners to help promote and develop a more sustainable visitor economy.
- An Efficient Gwynedd – supporting the council in making the best use of all financial resources, including the impact of budget cuts.

Climate and Nature Emergency Plan

Our Waste and Recycling Strategy will look to support this ambition in the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan throughout, whether it be addressing operational carbon emissions through starting to electrify our fleet, or to the wider impacts resource consumption has on society, such as minimising the food we waste.

Our ambition for mainstreaming more repair and reuse within the county by supporting borrowing and repair café's is a key step in lessening Gwynedd's contribution to the climate and nature emergencies.

Financial

The cost of running all our council Services are increasing annually, leading to tough choices to balance the budget. Local authority budgets are getting tighter each year, so we need to find more savings. In waste and recycling, we must find ways to be more efficient and increase revenue while managing financial risks from not meeting recycling targets or emissions trading costs. This strategy aims to reduce these financial risks and find ways to boost our income whilst also delivering a comprehensive service such as maximising the potential of payments from the packaging EPR fund by ensuring our waste and recycling service is efficient and effective and meets the required standard to avoid penalties.

Waste infrastructure and fleet

The waste transfer stations in Harlech and Caernarfon play a vital role in our work to collect and process waste and recycling. As the demand for efficient and environmentally friendly treatment increases, it is essential that these sites are upgraded to meet modern standards. These improvements will enable the handling of more recyclable materials, strengthening our ability to operate a net-zero-carbon service that supports a local and sustainable circular economy.

We have nearly 60 heavy-goods vehicles and another 40 vehicles in our fleet. We need to find ways to reduce or eliminate emissions from these vehicles while still providing effective services.

Our future service needs to be delivered against the agreed objectives. The following key drivers align with each of these objectives and provide the additional detail for a delivery plan to be formulated alongside the strategy.



4. Key objective 1: Communications and engagement

Effective engagement with the residents, businesses and communities of Gwynedd is essential to achieving our strategic objectives. To reduce waste, increase recycling rates and lessen our environmental impact, cooperation and commitment from everyone is required. Only through collective effort can we create a sustainable service that contributes to a net-zero future for the county.

Key Objective 1 focuses on developing an effective communication and engagement plan to support residents, workplaces and communities as they transition to a more resource-efficient and sustainable economy that contributes to a net-zero carbon future for Gwynedd.

Proactive engagement and communication with residents

We will develop an annual communication and engagement plan that will:

- Set out key activities and events.
- Identify the main messages and promotional themes.
- Explain how we will reach residents and businesses across the county.

The consultation showed that 80% of Gwynedd residents rely on the Cyngor Gwynedd website or app for information about collections and recyclable materials. While the website received relatively positive feedback, the app and our social media channels received more mixed responses. It was also noted that communication preferences vary significantly between age groups, confirming that there is no single communication method that suits everyone — whether printed or digital.

However, one clear message emerged: there is a need for clear, simple and accessible communication, with guidance specifically targeted at those who are not currently recycling, households that produce excessive waste, and residents who do not use social media. This highlights the need for a varied and inclusive communication approach that reaches every part of the community.

Engagement methods with residents

- Face-to-face visits through door-knocking.
- Roadshows and community events.
- The Council website and social media channels. Ongoing communication campaigns on food waste, including education programmes in schools.
- Using surveys, feedback and focus groups to measure impact and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Promoting national campaigns such as Love Food, Hate Waste.

- Using technology to support key messages and resolve issues on site.
- Working with community groups to improve waste management and increase recycling.
- Ensuring that our messages are clear, accessible and simple, and appropriately targeted wherever practical.

Kerbside Collection Service

We are committed to ensuring that residents and businesses clearly understand which materials can be recycled.

We will:

- Use data to identify low-performing areas and carry out targeted engagement campaigns.
- Empower collection crews to identify households or workplaces that need additional support.
- Work with Bangor University to improve engagement with students and raise awareness of the service.

Recycling Centres

Our recycling centres are a key part of the service, especially for items that cannot be collected at the kerbside.

Feedback from the consultation about our recycling centres was generally positive. However, several constructive suggestions were raised, including the need to review the booking system, improve access for residents without transport, and give further consideration to opening hours.

We will:

- Train staff to provide clear advice on sorting, reuse and recycling.
- Communicate clearly about any new measures, such as opening bags to improve sorting.
- Improve signage and visual communication to reduce any ambiguity.
- Review the accessibility of the centres, including options such as a 'quiet hour'.
- Look for opportunities to improve health and safety and increase the range of materials that can be recycled.

Tourism

A thriving local economy is essential to making Gwynedd an attractive place to live, work and visit. As one of the most popular tourism destinations in the UK, Gwynedd received around 7.8 million visitors in 2022, compared with a permanent population of 117,400. While tourism contributes significantly to the county's economy, the high number of seasonal visitors places substantial pressure on our waste-management systems.

During the peak season, from March to October, when visitor numbers more than double, the total waste collected through the Council's commercial collection service increases by almost 70%. As a result, it is vital that we provide a commercial service capable of responding to this increased demand in an efficient, sustainable way that complies with the Workplace Recycling Regulations.

We are committed to supporting tourism businesses to increase their recycling rates and manage their waste more effectively. Our aim is to ensure full compliance with current legislative requirements and upcoming policy changes, while providing clear and practical support to businesses at every stage of the journey.

To achieve this, we will:

- Empower our collection crews to proactively engage with businesses, highlighting the services available and the opportunities to improve recycling and reuse.
- Ensure that the commercial service is accessible, simple and efficient, reflecting the high standards of public service in Gwynedd.
- Promote responsible waste-management practices that support our wider ambitions to reduce carbon emissions and improve environmental sustainability.

By working closely with local businesses, particularly within the tourism sector, we can ensure that the increase in seasonal waste is managed effectively, contributing to a waste and recycling service that reflects the very best of Gwynedd.

Enforcement

Every individual and every workplace has a responsibility to manage their waste in a sustainable way. We will work proactively to engage with households and businesses, providing appropriate support when they face challenges with this process.

Where residents, despite support and guidance, fail or refuse to manage their waste effectively, we will implement a three-stage enforcement process that is fair, proportionate and compliant with statutory requirements. This process will include:

- Sending an information leaflet to explain the requirements and expectations.
- Issuing a formal warning letter if no improvement is seen.
- Using the statutory powers available under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 46, including issuing Fixed Penalty Notices where appropriate.

Our aim is to achieve compliance through education and support first, using enforcement only when necessary to protect the fairness and sustainability of the service.

5. Key objective 2: Reduce, reuse and repair

In line with delivering Strategic Objective 2, our ambition is to reduce general waste and increase reuse and repair in order to support a local circular economy that is green, efficient and sustainable. This requires managing resources in accordance with the waste hierarchy, shifting away from disposal and encouraging residents and businesses to reduce, reuse or repair products wherever possible. By extending the lifespan of items and preventing unnecessary waste, we can reduce our carbon footprint and strengthen the environmental resilience of the county. Below is an outline of our key aims to support this transition.

Reducing General Waste

The consultation showed that 98% of respondents recognise that reducing waste is important, but 69% stated that they do not know how to do more or that they need more information.

In addition, 20% said that the presence of non-recyclable materials is a barrier to reducing waste, while 18% expressed concerns about the high levels of packaging being produced. Although behaviour change plays a key role in reducing waste and encouraging recycling, behaviour change alone is not sufficient to deliver the transformation required. It is essential to implement structural measures and national interventions to address the systemic factors that influence waste generation, such as product design, packaging, and the infrastructure available to support reuse and repair.

By combining behaviour change with structural changes, we can create a waste system that is more efficient, sustainable, and enables residents and businesses to make the right choices more easily.

To respond to these challenges, we will:

- Reduce the amount of general waste produced per person — currently around 300kg per household — through collaboration, encouragement and sharing messages such as “let us help you prepare”.
- Target food waste, which accounts for around 27% of residual household waste. We will work closely with residents to raise awareness of the environmental and financial benefits of reducing food waste, promoting positive behaviour change. We will also address the barriers that prevent people from recycling food — such as concerns about odours — and encourage small, practical changes that can make a significant difference over time.

Reducing food waste in the residual stream would be one of the most effective opportunities to reduce the total amount of material placed in the green bin and to lower our carbon emissions. This is because:

- Recyclable food waste is processed at the GwyrAD anaerobic digestion facility in Gwynedd, generating renewable energy.
- Non-recyclable waste is transported to the Parc Adfer energy-from-waste facility in Flintshire, creating additional emissions from transport and treatment.
- By reducing this waste, we can lower disposal costs, reduce carbon emissions and build a waste system that is more efficient and more sustainable.

Increasing Reuse and Repair

Our ambition is to develop and support reuse and repair hubs that use materials coming directly from our Recycling Centres. To do this successfully, it is essential that these facilities are strategically located, operate on a sustainable commercial basis, and offer good-quality items at fair prices, while being accessible to everyone in our communities.

A number of ideas have already been identified in our Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, and we are building on these by considering additional initiatives to promote reuse and repair across the county.

This work will include:

- Exploring the possibility of opening a reuse shop at a Recycling Centre or in a town-centre location. We will continue to seek partnership arrangements, internally or externally, with organisations that have the skills, experience and social value to operate this initiative effectively.
- Promoting water refill locations across Gwynedd to reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles.
- Continuing to promote the use of reusable nappies, including providing starter packs to new families.
- Engaging with and supporting households and businesses to reduce their waste and increase reuse opportunities.
- Increasing the amount of bulky waste that is reused rather than sent for disposal or recycling only.
- Developing 'drop-off' points or reuse shops for items coming through the Recycling Centres. While recycling is important, reducing, repairing and reusing are higher-priority steps in the waste hierarchy.
- Developing a specific communication approach for students, particularly during move-in and move-out periods between academic terms, to ensure sustainable waste management in student areas.
- Working with other departments on initiatives such as lending libraries, food hubs and repair cafés, strengthening the local infrastructure for a circular economy.

Key objective 3: Increase recycling

In line with delivering Strategic Objective 3, our aim is to ensure full compliance with the Welsh Government target to recycle, reuse and compost 70% of waste by 2025.

To achieve this, we will focus on diverting the 57% of materials currently placed in the non-recyclable waste bin which are, in fact, suitable for recycling through our comprehensive weekly kerbside collection service.

Disposing of recyclable materials through the general waste stream not only leads to unnecessary costs, but also means losing opportunities to recover valuable resources that can be recycled, contributing to a local circular economy and generating income for the service.

To ensure that recyclable materials are not disposed of incorrectly, we have set the following objectives to collect and recycle more materials from households and businesses.

Maximising household recycling

The consultation showed that 84% of respondents recognised the importance of meeting the target of recycling 70% of waste, and 91% agreed that it is important to recycle as much as possible. However, 40% of residents stated that their residual waste bin is full by collection day.

Although many respondents claimed they recycle everything possible, this is contradicted by analysis of the residual waste bin's contents. It is essential for this Strategy to acknowledge the gap between perception and reality, and to address the issue of "hidden waste" — food and recyclable materials that continue to be placed in the green bin.

To increase recycling by households, we will:

- Make recycling from home easier by providing reusable bags for paper, cardboard, plastic and cans, improving organisation and presentation at the kerbside.
- Explore the possibility of collecting additional materials, including flexible plastics, textiles, small electrical items (e.g. kettles, toasters, hairdryers) and household batteries.
- Improve recycling facilities in blocks of flats and shared houses, with the aim of collecting a wider range of materials such as textiles and small waste electrical and electronic equipment (sWEEE), reducing contamination and improving the quality of collected materials.
- Identify flats where improvements are needed by gathering data and conducting research, then developing targeted engagement plans to improve recycling quality in partnership with landlords and housing management agencies.

- We will also work with partners in the higher education sector to improve engagement and understanding among students, collaborating with Bangor University to promote the importance of the recycling service and increase direct engagement and targeted marketing to this demographic.

Since 57% of the materials currently placed in the residual bin are recyclable — including 27% food waste — it is essential that we review how residual waste is managed. We will consider reducing the capacity or frequency of residual waste collections as part of our efforts to encourage more recycling across Gwynedd. This will be done alongside supporting households with a genuine need for additional capacity, ensuring fairness and proportionality.

Although a significant proportion of households reported having space left in their green bin by collection day, the consultation showed opposition to reducing collection frequency. As a result, if we tighten residual waste arrangements, we will do so gradually, based on evidence, and with appropriate support for households.

Additionally, we will ensure we facilitate recycling more effectively by:

- reviewing and providing more suitable containers for households, and
- expanding the range of materials collected at the kerbside, including new materials where practical.

By combining a gradual, evidence-based approach with improvements to the recycling service, our aim is to reduce reliance on the residual waste bin and increase.

Recycling centres

Our ambition is to improve the experience for residents when using our Recycling Centres, increasing the amount of material that is recycled and reducing the amount of recyclable material that is disposed of incorrectly. By improving accessibility, organisation and consistency across the sites, we can strengthen recycling rates and ensure that valuable resources are recovered.

To achieve these aims, we will:

- Reintroduce the practice of opening bags at Recycling Centres in order to separate more recyclable materials, increase recycling rates and prevent items from being unnecessarily thrown away.
- Improve the layout, markings and signage of the sites to ensure they are easy to use and make the process of sorting and recycling simpler for residents.
- Review the provision of reuse shops and drop-off sheds at Recycling Centres, ensuring that residents can donate reusable items easily and confidently.
- Ensure that every site, as a minimum, accepts and can separately store the full range of the following materials: glass, metal, paper, cardboard, wood, green waste, aggregates, soil, plastic packaging, hard plastics, textiles, mattresses, carpets, mineral oil, vegetable oil and reusable items. We will ensure that we can recycle a high proportion of these materials in future, especially wood.
- Provide facilities at at least one site to accept hazardous waste, including Waste and Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), paint and solvents, cement-bonded asbestos and other hazardous household waste.

- Consider accepting specific commercial recycling materials at certain sites where this is practical and sustainable.

By implementing these actions, our aim is to ensure that Gwynedd's Recycling Centres are accessible, easy to use and play a central role in our ambition to create a more efficient and sustainable local circular economy.

Maximising business recycling

We recognise the importance of our local businesses and services to our communities, and we are committed to supporting them to comply with the Workplace Recycling Regulations. The business sector has a key opportunity to contribute to Gwynedd's ambition to be a Net Zero council, improve recycling rates, and increase the amount of valuable materials that are recovered.

A recent survey (March 2026) showed that 58% of recyclable materials are still being placed in residual waste bins by commercial businesses. This represents a loss of resources, unnecessary disposal costs, and a significant opportunity for improvement.

Our aim is to make the transition to a more sustainable and resource-efficient model as simple as possible for businesses across the county. To enable this, we will improve and develop our commercial waste collection service in line with the Workplace Recycling Regulations and commit to recycling much more commercial waste. We will focus on reducing barriers, increasing participation and encouraging the separation of recyclable materials from general waste.

We will achieve this by:

- Proactively engaging with every commercial waste customer to encourage recycling separation, identify barriers and provide tailored support to overcome them.
- Carrying out regular audits and providing guidance, Support and practical Solutions to enable businesses to recycle more.
- Monitor recycling rates by sector and location and targeting poorly performing areas with specific interventions.
- Working with business associations and the chamber of commerce to improve recycling services at commercial sites.
- Launching targeted awareness campaigns on the benefits of recycling and how to do it effectively.
- Supporting commercial sites facing challenges to identify practical solutions that make participation easier and more effective.
- Collecting regular feedback from commercial customers through day-to-day communication and surveys to inform service improvements.
- Ensuring timely and efficient collections, with containers and clear information that meet business needs and enable them to recycle as much as possible.
- Preparing businesses for the expansion of regulations to include the collection of a wider range of materials such as small Electrical items and textiles.
- Exploring the possibility of expanding business access to our Recycling Centres where practical and sustainable.
- Helping businesses reduce their waste, and repair and reuse more items as part of a circular economy approach.

6. Key objective 4: Service delivery

We are committed to providing a high-quality service that offers value for money and meets the needs of our residents and our business customers. Upholding the core values of the service is essential, as we serve our communities and play a key role in their wellbeing. At the same time, we will not hesitate to take advantage of opportunities to drive improvement and innovation in order to strengthen the service further.

Our aim is to ensure high satisfaction rates, a reliable service and a positive experience for everyone who uses our services.

Below we set out our priorities to ensure that we deliver a high-quality service for our customers.

Providing a high-quality waste and recycling service was a top priority among consultation respondents. This Strategy will focus first on ensuring a reliable, high-quality service that residents trust and understand, recognising that this is the key enabler for higher recycling performance and waste reduction.

Ensuring a High-Quality Collection and Recycling Service

To maintain high service standards, we will place greater emphasis on monitoring quality and gathering feedback from our collection crews. Our aim is to ensure that every collection is carried out neatly and efficiently, including picking up any materials that may be dropped during the collection process and leaving areas clean after each visit.

We will:

- Collect bins only with closed lids and accept no side waste. This policy ensures that materials remain in the correct containers, prevents litter on the streets and encourages residents to recycle as much as possible.
- Empower collection staff to identify households or businesses that are struggling to manage their waste, so that proactive and tailored support can be provided.
- Use technology to improve the monitoring of collections, enhance transparency and strengthen operational performance.

Managing and Improving Recycling Centres

To ensure that our Recycling Centres can deliver the objectives set out in this Strategy, it is essential that they are managed effectively and used appropriately by Gwynedd residents. This includes preventing use by individuals who do not live in the county, unless formal arrangements are in place with neighbouring authorities.

We will:

- Improve the use of the booking system, ensuring that only Gwynedd residents use the service. This will help reduce waiting times and enable staff to provide better support to site users.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the eight existing sites and their opening hours to ensure they are suitable for current and future needs.
- Explore the possibility of introducing a mobile recycling centre, considering affordability within the current financial situation, to improve accessibility and provision in areas where the need is greatest.

7. Key objective 5: Achieving Net Zero

This Strategy sets out Gwynedd's commitment to supporting the Council's carbon-emission reduction strategies. Cyngor Gwynedd adopted its Climate and Nature Emergency Plan with the ambition that the Council will be net-zero carbon and ecologically positive.

We intend for the waste and recycling service to play a central role in this work by introducing the changes that, in our view, reduce carbon emissions and improve the service for the communities we serve. At present, direct waste services contribute almost 10% of the Council's total carbon emissions (2019/20), making this an important priority area for action.

By transforming the way we prevent, collect and treat waste, we can significantly reduce our carbon footprint and contribute directly to the Council's wider goals for nature recovery and tackling the climate emergency.

Transitioning to Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)

To operate the waste collection and processing service in the most efficient and environmentally sustainable way, we are committed to modernising our vehicle fleet. This goal is a key part of our effort to achieve Net Zero Carbon status.

Currently, almost 100 diesel vehicles support the delivery of waste and recycling services across Gwynedd. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve environmental performance, this fleet needs to be gradually replaced with

modern, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). As part of this transition, two electric telehandlers have already been introduced to the fleet, marking a positive step towards adopting cleaner technology. This provides a foundation for expanding the use of electric and hybrid vehicles in a strategic and sustainable way.

We will carry out a trial period using ULEV collection vehicles in the north of the county to assess their operational capability in a rural context. The results of the trial will inform decisions about expanding this provision, including working with the Welsh Government to secure appropriate financial support.

To enable a ULEV fleet, suitable charging infrastructure will be required, including overnight charging points. This will form part of our wider infrastructure review, with locations planned strategically to ensure the best possible range and efficient connectivity with collection routes and disposal sites.

Improving the Efficiency of Collection Routes

We will use asset-management software to monitor and optimise service efficiency, including tracking missed collections. This will help us reduce unnecessary carbon emissions from our current fleet and identify opportunities to improve routes and operational performance.

Investing in Renewable Energy

To deliver a service that moves towards carbon neutrality, we recognise the need to explore every opportunity to reduce carbon emissions. Our buildings and land holdings offer significant potential to support this transition by generating renewable energy to power service infrastructure and potentially contribute energy to the local grid.

As part of our infrastructure review, we will carry out feasibility studies on existing and potential future sites to explore the use of renewable energy sources, such as photovoltaic solar panels. We will work closely with the Welsh Government Energy Service to realise this ambition where practical and sustainable.

By investing in renewable energy, we can reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, lower long-term operating costs, and contribute directly to the Council's wider goal of being net-zero carbon and ecologically positive.

Restoring and Transforming Landfill Sites in Gwynedd

We will continue to support the transformation work already underway at two former landfill sites in Gwynedd: Llwyn Isaf and Ffridd Rasus.

These sites are examples of how land previously used for landfill can be restored to create rich natural habitats that contribute to biodiversity and to our commitment to be Net Zero .

Llwyn Isaf

Llwyn Isaf consists of two areas that were filled with waste during the early 1980s, with a total of around 600,000 tonnes

of household and commercial waste. The site also includes 32 acres of improved grassland.

Significant restoration work has transformed the area:

- The wet meadow on the surface of the landfill has been expanded, enhanced and enriched, creating a habitat that supports a wide range of wildlife.
- 15,000 trees and shrubs have been planted, along with extended hedgerows, creating a connected mosaic habitat across the site.
- Four new ponds and wetland areas have been created, leading to a substantial increase in aquatic species.
- The wildflower meadow provides a productive habitat for pollinating insects and small mammals.
- A significant number of bat and bird boxes have been installed across the site, strengthening the natural habitat.

Ffridd Rasus

Ffridd Rasus consists of two closed landfill sites that began receiving waste in 1981, with a total of around 1.26 million tonnes of household and commercial waste. The site borders an area of 79 acres of rare acid grassland, a habitat of high ecological importance.

Restoration work has included:

- Planting over 5,000 trees, creating a variety of habitats across the landfill surface.
- Developing around 40 acres of wildflower meadow and mixed scrub habitat.

- Creating a series of large, connected ponds in the drainage lagoon, lined with dry slate waste. As there was previously no standing water on the site, this has led to a dramatic increase in aquatic life and measurable biodiversity gains.
- Installing bat and bird boxes across the site, including a nesting platform for ospreys on the western boundary. We will continue to support the work that has already been done to transform two former landfill sites in Gwynedd at Llwyn Isaf and Ffridd Rasus.

8. Key objective 6: Infrastructure for the future

Investing in Our Waste Infrastructure to Meet Future Needs

Our current infrastructure plays a central role in supporting our operations to store, treat and dispose of waste and to bulk-recycle materials. This network includes:

- Four vehicle depots, where waste and recycling collection vehicles are kept overnight.
- Two waste transfer stations in Caernarfon and Harlech, along with the use of a private transfer site for waste and recycling from households, workplaces and Recycling Centres before being sent on for processing.
- Caergylchu, a materials recycling facility established in 2005 in partnership with Antur Waunfawr and Cwmni Gwastraff Môn-Arfon Cyf. The facility processes around 15,000 tonnes of paper, plastic, cans and cardboard every year, but we recognise that it is now operating at capacity.
- GwyrAD Biogen, an 11,500-tonne anaerobic digestion facility at Llwyn Isaf, which processes food waste from homes and businesses to produce valuable fertiliser (digestate) and enough renewable electricity to power over 700 homes each year.
- Eight Recycling Centres across the county for household waste.
- Three closed landfill sites at Cilgwyn, Ffridd Rasus and Llwyn Isaf, where we have worked with Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Government to create new ecological habitats.

Challenges and Ambitions for the Future

In the consultation survey, 76% of respondents said that treating and processing waste locally is important, with clear support for the local economic benefits that result from this.

This Strategy aims to collect and recycle a wider range of materials, as well as increasing the volume of those materials. In addition, we must meet our target of becoming Net Zero carbon.

To achieve this, it is essential that we modernise our existing infrastructure to ensure it is:

- able to cope with increased capacity,
- compliant with licensing and regulatory requirements,
- supportive of the transition to a net-zero-carbon service, and
- capable of enabling a more efficient, reliable and integrated service.

Our Commitment to Investment

To support the strategic aims of this Strategy, we will seek to invest in our waste infrastructure to ensure it is fit for the future.

This will enable us to:

- provide an effective service,
- comply with legislative and regulatory requirements,
- improve environmental performance, and
- achieve the objectives set out in this Strategy.

Waste Transfer Stations

- Investing in redeveloping the Harlech and Caernarfon waste transfer stations to ensure they are suitable for receiving the expected increase in the volume and types of materials in the future, comply with modern licensing requirements, and maintain material quality to secure the best possible income prices.
- Redeveloping our infrastructure to enable us to decarbonise our operations, ensuring it supports ultra-low-emission vehicles and exploring opportunities to use solar farms to power our operations directly where practical.
- Embedding energy-saving measures when redeveloping sites, ensuring our facilities are more efficient and contribute to our net-zero targets.
- Adapting existing and future sites so they are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including reducing risks associated with extreme heat or excess water.

- Exploring innovation and the use of technology to make our processing sites as efficient and effective as possible, improving operational performance and increasing the capacity to treat materials sustainably.

Recycling Centres

- Making it easier for residents to donate items for reuse at our Recycling Centres and expanding our partnerships with local organisations to recover and redirect reusable items.
- Reviewing the provision of our Recycling Centres to ensure an effective and efficient service that increases recycling rates. This will include improving accessibility, layout and consistent signage to enhance the customer experience. The review may also consider alternative ways of delivering the service, such as introducing mobile recycling centres where appropriate and practical infrastructure fit for the future

9. Monitoring and evaluation

We want to ensure that our strategy provides for the people of Gwynedd and sets a pathway for future services. We recognise that there is a great deal of work to do if we are to operate more effectively. Our delivery plan will seek to build on our existing strengths but also address the areas we need to develop. We will commit to an annual programme of evaluation and monitoring that will assess the performance of the strategy against the agreed measures.

The main aim of this strategy is to clearly set out the principles and key ambitions that the Gwynedd recycling and waste team will deliver.

It is a blueprint that conveys how ambitious we intend to be in providing a service that meets the challenges of achieving a 70% recycling target and becoming a net-zero service. The only way we can achieve that ambition and make a strong contribution to tackling the climate and nature emergencies for future generations is by encouraging creative and innovative solutions to the challenges we currently face.

Statutory and Strategic Performance Framework of the Waste Strategy

This performance framework defines the key measures that will guide, monitor and govern the delivery of the Waste Strategy. It provides a clear link between statutory compliance, financial sustainability, service performance and carbon reduction, ensuring that the Strategy is robust, measurable and accountable.

1. Core Measures and Outcomes (Statutory and Strategic)

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Household Recycling Rate (%)	Percentage of household waste that is recycled, reused or composted	Statutory fines (£600k–£750k per year), loss of public confidence, reputational risk	Avoiding fines; strengthening funding case; increasing public confidence	↓ disposal costs; ↑ EPR income	Maintain $\geq 70\%$ by 2026 and throughout the Strategy period to 2030
Residual Waste per Household (kg/household/year)	Kg of residual (black bin) waste per household per year	Increased exposure to ETS; higher treatment and disposal costs; higher carbon emissions	Supports corporate decarbonisation targets; reduces reliance on EfW; long-term savings	↓ EfW and ETS costs	Reduce from around 300kg to ≤ 250 kg per household by 2030.

2. Measures that drive the 70% target – The plans below are expected to contribute a minimum of 6.5pt towards the 70% recycling target

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Reducing Recyclable Materials in Residual Waste	Reduce the proportion of recyclable materials in residual waste from 57% to ≤35%.	Structural failure to reach 70%.	Clear evidence base for service change; increased recycling income; reduced costs.	↓ ETS and EfW costs; ↑ income	Increase recyclable materials by 12%.
Food Waste Capture Rate of 25%	Percentage of food waste captured compared with WRAP composition.	Loss of AD value; high-carbon disposal.	Improve efficiency and local value of GwryriAD.	↓ EFW and ETS costs; ↑ AD efficiency	Capture >80% of available food waste.
Reduce Waste Generated by 12%	Reduce residual bin capacity to 60L per week.	Structural failure to reach 70%; resistance to change.	Waste prevention and capacity limits drive behaviour change and sustain high performance.	↓ ETS and EfW costs	12% reduction in waste sent to the Recovery Park by 2030..
Commercial Recycling & Business Compliance	Percentage of businesses complying with separation requirements and the commercial recycling rate.	Business non-compliance leading to enforcement pressure and income loss.	Clear evidence base for service change.	↑ income; ↓ disposal	Increase commercial recycling from ~47% to ≥60%.
Street Waste Recycling	Percentage of street waste that is recycled.	Structural failure to reach 70%	Clear evidence base for service change.	↓ ETS and EfW costs	Recycle 50% of street bin waste, contributing up to 1%.

Soft Plastics Collection	Percentage of soft plastics captured through separate collection.	Structural failure to reach 70%; public pressure.	Helps divert waste from residual bin.	↓ ETS and EfW costs.	Capture >80% of soft plastics by 2028; ≥1% contribution.
Opening Black Bags at Recycling Centres	Percentage of residual waste at HWRCs identified as recyclable and diverted.	Structural failure to reach 70%.	Clear evidence base for service change.	↓ ETS and EfW costs.	Recycle ≥85% of waste; ≥1% contribution.
Developing New Recycling Markets (Wood & Mattresses)	Percentage of wood and mattresses recycled or reused.	Structural failure to reach 70%; recycling market behaviour.	Clear evidence base for service change.	↑ contribution to statutory target; ↓ disposal costs.	Recycle ≥50% of wood by 2028; ≥1.5% contribution.

** not part of this Strategy

3. Service and Customer Performance Measures

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Missed Collections	Missed bins per 100,000 collections	Complaints; erosion of trust	Increase participation and compliance	↓ complaints ↓ re-collection costs	≤60 missed collections per 100,000 by 2027
Financial Sustainability	Delivering the service within budget and enabling investment and change	Overspend	Shift from “cost control” to managing long-term financial risks	Savings opportunities	Achieve a budget-neutral financial position by 2028 through efficiency, income and cost reduction
Commercial Customer Growth	Number of active commercial customers and retention rate	Losing market share to the private sector	Economies of scale	↑ net income	Increase the number of businesses with commercial contracts

4. Circular Economy and Reuse Measures

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Reuse Tonnage	Tonnes of waste diverted to reuse per 1,000 households through HWRCs, community partnerships and third-sector initiatives	Loss of social value	Job creation; community benefit	↓ disposal costs; ↑ social value	High carbon benefit
Number of Reuse / Repair Initiatives	Number of active reuse and repair initiatives, with impact measures (tonnes, jobs, volunteers)	Fragmented provision	Increased visibility of the circular economy	Low cost / High impact	Cultural change

5. Carbon and Cost Management Measures

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Carbon Emissions from Waste	tCO ₂ e emissions per tonne of waste collected and processed	Failure to meet Net Zero target	Funding leverage; leadership	↓ fuel	Low Carbon Service
Low/Zero-Emission Vehicle Fleet (ULEV) (%)	Percentage of the fleet that is low- or zero-emission, with interim milestones	Fuel price instability	Long-term savings	↓ fuel and maintenance costs	Low Carbon Service

6. Infrastructure Improvement Measures

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Definition / Measure	Main Risks	Opportunities if Achieved	Cost Impact	Contribution to target
Improving Waste Processing Infrastructure	Percentage of waste-processing capacity that fully complies with legislative, operational and future requirements	Failure to comply with legislation; loss of income; dependence on external funding	Innovation with AI	↑ high investment	Ensure Ffridd Rasus and Caergylchu are fit for purpose



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