

## A Zero Carbon Plan for Zero Waste.

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**Target Zero Waste** over Business-as-Usual focus on recycling and burning waste.

We need an urgent transition to a local circular economy of materials (and water) applying the principle of 'zero waste, as part of a climate emergency plan for zero carbon.

### 1. *Take a Zero Waste approach to “reduce-reuse-recycle to a local circular economy*

**This means shifting investment.** From long-term contracts for incineration of waste to many alternatives that create a local circular economy. This includes investing in better collection, sorting and repurposing of products – through reuse enterprises and high-value recycling. It will also mean looking far beyond a council's responsibilities for waste and recycling.

**A Zero Waste strategy has the following benefits.**

- **Changes culture.** Reduce & reuse stops our throw-away culture (see [myzerowaste.com](http://myzerowaste.com)).
- **Creates local jobs.** Reuse and recycling saves the financial value of products from being thrown away as waste. This saves money and can support **many new jobs** and enterprises. *[Incineration (and landfill – including landfill tax) are more expensive per tonne].*
- **Cuts the carbon spent on new products.** Reuse saves embodied carbon and embodied workmanship of products. Recycling generally saves around 1/3 (glass) to around 1/2 (paper, metal). The financial and carbon value in both should support significant job creation.
- **Strengthens communities.** Supporting enterprises that salvage, share baby items, repair bikes, reuse furniture, community composting, etc helps strengthen community resilience.

### **Some suggestions for council waste management**

Better and Consistent Waste Management. For each district/borough council within a county area to act as if it were a unitary Waste Management Authority. That means agreeing decisions that are binding on all member authorities, while seeking consistency in strategies, policies and practices. The purpose would be to raise the performance of all members to the level of the highest performers, so far as local conditions allow. Offer the same (best) recycling to all properties. Set high standards for businesses and construction industry (including in the local plan and reflected in the waste plan).

For zero waste case studies, plan for zero waste councils etc see <https://zerowasteurope.eu>.

Incentivise Local Circular Economy of Materials (and Water) – in procurement (value of insourcing – see <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/stroud-district-council-begins-ubico-waste-contract/>), planning, regulation, financial support. To exercise the powers of the Waste Disposal Authority (Waste Management Strategy, Waste Plan and Minerals Plan - setting out need for recycling centres and quarrying etc.) and of the Waste Collection Authority to deal with surplus and used materials arising locally by such processes as will leave hardly any materials, by weight or climate change impact, for destruction and air pollution. Increase focus on reuse and recycling at household recycling centres.

For example, see Zero Waste Strategy for Derry City and Strabane District Council (Eunomia, November 2017): <https://tinyurl.com/yxppclch>

Measures beyond council collected waste. The waste collected and managed by councils is only around 1/7<sup>th</sup> of total waste. Most waste is either commercial and industrial, or construction and demolition waste. The plan for zero waste should extend to these areas.

For example, see [www.nef.org.uk/themes/site\\_themes/agile\\_records/images/uploads/WP4A12\\_-\\_Community-Led\\_Reuse\\_of\\_Resources.pdf](http://www.nef.org.uk/themes/site_themes/agile_records/images/uploads/WP4A12_-_Community-Led_Reuse_of_Resources.pdf), [www.salvoweb.com/](http://www.salvoweb.com/) and [www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk/](http://www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk/).

Behaviour change, including to:

- **Target reduction in the total ‘residual waste’** (eliminating burning and landfill). This needs a focus on “reduce and reuse” as well as “recycling”. This could include initiatives such as a ‘library of things’, men-in-sheds project, community composting etc, encouraging home milk delivery, support local markets (less packaging).
- **Zero waste households.** See challenges set out at <https://myzerowaste.com/>.
- **Eliminate single use plastics.**
- **Reduce contamination** of recycling.

## 2. Say No to Incineration.<sup>1</sup>

Because incineration is:

- **As bad as burning coal.** It has similar carbon emissions to burning coal to generate electricity (around half as efficient, but half could be considered as biogenic or renewable. This is not part of a renewable energy strategy).
- **Does not lead to zero waste.** It disincentivises recycling and encourages throw-away.
- **Air pollution.** Its emissions cause air pollution (tiny particulates, nitrous oxides, heavy metals etc.). We need to cut carbon and air pollution together. Incineration does neither.

See *Incineration and climate change report* - <http://ukwin.org.uk/files/pdf/UKWIN-2018-Incineration-Climate-Change-Report.pdf> and *how waste management can help a low carbon economy* - <https://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/the-potential-contribution-of-waste-management-to-a-low-carbon-economy/> and other resources at <http://ukwin.org.uk>.

## 3. Focus Beyond Waste: “about half our carbon emissions are in what we build and buy”.

... **to a Zero Carbon Circular Economy.** We need to reduce the scale of resource use to sustainable levels to stop exploitation of resources, and pollution of the environment – worldwide. We need to shift from three to one-planet-living (see <https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living>). This will mean retrofit/reuse/sharing rather than new/throw-away/private ownership as a theme across all sectors of our society – for construction sector (which uses most resources) and industry (which makes products).

See

[www.greenhousethinktank.org/uploads/4/8/3/2/48324387/make\\_do\\_and\\_mend\\_inside2\\_small.pdf](http://www.greenhousethinktank.org/uploads/4/8/3/2/48324387/make_do_and_mend_inside2_small.pdf) and [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lcdc\\_-\\_capital\\_consumption\\_report\\_2009.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lcdc_-_capital_consumption_report_2009.pdf).

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<sup>1</sup> There are different types, including gasification and pyrolysis. Anaerobic digestion and composting both use heat to manage waste sustainably. Burning waste is not sustainable.