

# Government praise for recycling – but councils ‘could do better’

Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead has praised all 32 Scottish councils for their efforts to increase recycling but made clear more progress is required.

The latest household waste statistics show the percentage of household waste recycled in 2013 was 42.2 per cent, up 1 percentage point on 2012, and 10 percentage points on 2007.

At the same time the amount of household waste generated has decreased by 20 per cent between 2007 and 2013, dropping from 3 million tonnes in 2007 to 2.4 million tonnes in 2013.

Mr Lochhead also welcomed that out of Scotland’s 32 councils, nine have met the 50 per cent recycling target, but whilst many other councils are improving their record on recycling he made clear that all councils need to meet the target, and urged further improvements. He also highlighted that the Scottish Government expect further improvements in recycling rates will result from a range of recently introduced waste regulations, which require additional action from councils.

Edinburgh did not meet the government target of recycling half of its waste in 2013 according to the figures released by [SEPA](#).

Edinburgh council recycled 38.1% of its waste and sent 114,172 tonnes of waste to landfill. But this was an improvement on the figure of 36.7% recycled in the previous year, 2012.



Courtesy of City of  
Edinburgh Council

In its pledges the council has a stated aim of recycling 75% of waste produced in the city by 2020. The latest scheme is to reduce the size of general waste wheely bins and improve the kerbside recycling service which was [rolled out in certain areas](#) on 1 September 2014. In addition the [Millerhill](#) site which will deal with food and mixed residual waste from Edinburgh and Midlothian is expected to be operational by 2015. The council said this will be an important piece of the infrastructure to ensure that less waste goes to landfill in the future.

Environment Secretary Mr Lochhead said:

“It’s good to see nine local authorities exceeding 50 per cent recycling, and I also want to congratulate those who have made significant improvements on their 2012 performance. These local authorities are showing what can be achieved and are a good example to the others who still have more work to do. The Scottish Government makes no apologies for being ambitious in this area. It’s important that the targets we set should be genuinely challenging and we expect all council areas to show willingness to prioritise recycling.

“In the long run we still have one of the most enviable improvements in recycling rates in Europe: from less than 5 per cent prior to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, to 42.2 per cent in 2013. Whilst the improvement in the recycling rate is not at the level we would like it is still a positive achievement that we are continuing to make progress and importantly I am pleased to see the reduction of 88,000 tonnes in the waste we are generating. I expect the larger local authorities, and indeed all local authorities, to rise to the challenge of achieving the target via compliance with the regulations, innovation and collaboration. This will be key in improving our national performance.

“I expect the results from councils around the country to improve further next year, as there are a number of measures

we have put in place which we will not see the impact of until next year's statistics, including our landmark waste regulations which require councils to provide recycling services to all households; as well as the food waste collections now being rolled out across Scotland. In addition we are taking wider action to cut litter and waste such as the introduction of carrier bag charges from October 20th this year. Whilst carrier bags are only a small percentage of waste it is one more initiative which can help make a difference.

"I will be convening a further meeting of the Zero Waste Taskforce to help councils to create local economic opportunities while ensuring local delivery against national recycling targets and if more progress is not made I am not ruling out statutory targets in future."