

# **Closure Report: Delivering Resource Efficiency – The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2013**



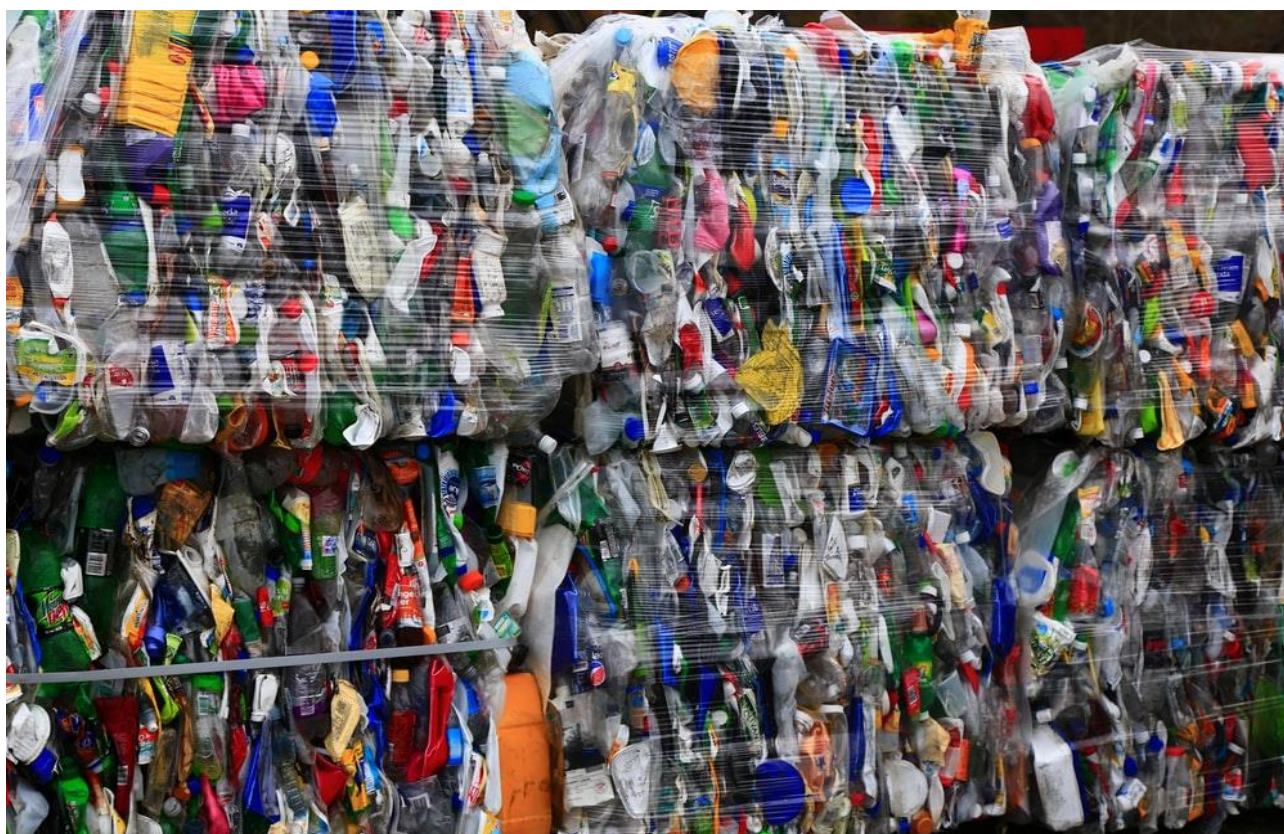
Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Closure Report: Delivering Resource Efficiency – The Northern Ireland  
Waste Management Strategy 2013**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://unsplash.com/photos/UKs\\_rzIYE6M](https://unsplash.com/photos/UKs_rzIYE6M)

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## Abbreviations

| Abbreviation  | Term  |
|---------------|---|
| DAERA         | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs                    |
| 2013 Strategy | Delivering Resource Efficiency – Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy |
| WFD           | The Waste Framework Directive   |
| LACMW         | Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste                                   |
| BLACMW        | Biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste                     |
| NILAS         | Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance scheme                                  |

## **Executive Summary**

This paper formally closes *Delivering Resource Efficiency* - Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy (2013 Strategy) which commenced in October 2013.

To move beyond objectives of previous strategies *Delivering Resource Efficiency* focused on using resources effectively while minimising environmental impacts. The strategy had an increased emphasis on waste prevention, including re-use, preparing for re-use, recycling and landfill diversion in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy. Increasing the efficiency of how we use our natural resources and facilitating increased re-use and recycling provides benefits for the NI economy and supports green jobs as well as improved environmental outcomes.

Following this vision the 2013 Strategy is structured to align with the priority order for waste treatment as set out in the Waste Hierarchy.:

- **Waste Prevention**
- **Preparing for Re-use**
- **Recycling**
- **Other Recovery**
- **Disposal**
- **Better Regulation and Enforcement**
- **Communication and Education** – with a particular focus on waste prevention

### **How the Strategy was delivered**

To deliver on its ambitions in each of the sections there are a total of 27 actions and 17 targets. Together these formed a plan for government action to meet the strategy's objectives as well as measurable indicators to monitor and evaluate progress. A full list of all actions and targets included in Annex A.

Implementation was predicated on working closely with key delivery partners including local authorities, private business and the community and voluntary sectors. A number of the actions and targets included elements of: regulation, fiscal incentives, schemes to promote producer responsibility, grant funding and communication and education.

### **Outcome**

Overall, of the 2013 Strategy's 27 actions and 17 targets, a total of 36 (82%) were either achieved, achieved beyond the target date, or superseded or alternative action taken. A full analysis of the delivery of the actions and targets is included in Annex B.

Over the lifetime of the Waste Management Strategy two headline objectives were achieved:

- To reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill to 35% of 1995 levels by 2020; and
- To achieve a recycling rate of 50% for waste from households by 2020.

The achievement of these targets meant that, during the lifetime of the Strategy, the percentage of municipal waste that is recycled overtook the amount sent to landfill with the result that we now recycle more than we throw away.

Another notable achievement was the introduction of the carrier bag levy which has resulted in an 80% reduction in the consumption of single use carrier bags.

### **Future Direction**

Any lessons to be learned from the Strategy, including where achievements fell short of targets, will be fed into a new waste management strategy following this report.

There have been many changes since the strategy was published in 2013 most notably new legislation and policy initiatives to develop a Circular Economy. The new Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy will take account of these developments.

### **Conclusion**

The vast majority of the actions and targets of the 2013 Strategy have been achieved or significant improvements have occurred over the lifetime of the Strategy. The new waste strategy will build on the success of *Delivering Resource Efficiency* and help move NI towards a circular economy.



## 1. Introduction

This report formally closes *Delivering Resource Efficiency* - Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy (2013 Strategy) which was published October 2013. In doing so the report formally finalises governance arrangements for the 2013 Strategy including completion of its monitoring and reporting arrangements. It also represents the starting point for DAERA's work to replace it with a new Waste Management Strategy.

The 2013 Strategy set the strategic direction for waste management in Northern Ireland. It focused on waste prevention (including re-use), preparing for re-use and recycling, and moved the emphasis of waste management to resource efficiency. The 2013 Strategy also informed the development of the three Council Waste Management Plans.

The purpose of the three Council Waste Management Plans was to set out the arrangements for the management of controlled wastes arising within the joint council geographical area. Each of the three Council Waste Management Plans provided key details regarding waste management infrastructure, including major disposal and recovery installations. They also covered the types and quantities of waste (household, commercial and industrial, including construction and demolition, hazardous, packaging etc.) managed in their council areas.



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The 2013 Strategy replaced the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy, *Towards Resource Management*, published in 2006 following the first Northern Ireland Waste

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<sup>2</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/YzSZN3qyHeo>

Management Strategy in 2000. In 2011 the then Department of the Environment<sup>3</sup> carried out a scoping exercise which included a review of the 2006 Strategy and it was agreed it should be revised to cover all relevant EU Directive requirements and provide a coherent approach to the waste policy framework for Northern Ireland. Following a period of extensive stakeholder engagement in early 2012, a public consultation which took place between October 2012 and January 2013 the new Strategy was published in October 2013.

The 2013 Strategy follows the priority order for waste treatment set out in the Waste Hierarchy, the cornerstone of waste management policy and legislation:

- **Waste Prevention**
- **Preparing for Re-use**
- **Recycling**
- **Other Recovery**
- **Disposal**
- **Better Regulation and Enforcement**
- **Communication and Education**

The 2013 Strategy moved beyond previous strategies to shift the focus of waste policy from resource management – in particular Landfill diversion – to resource efficiency – using resources effectively while minimising environmental impacts. This incorporated an increased focus on waste prevention (including re-use), preparing for re-use and recycling. Increasing the efficiency of how we use our natural resources by facilitating increased re-use and recycling provides benefits for the NI economy supporting ‘green jobs’ as well as improved environmental outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> Under the [Departments Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) the Department of the Environment was dissolved and its functions waste policy functions absorbed in to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)



## 2. Evolution of key waste indicators during the strategy

Below are set out graphs showing the changes in some of the key waste indicators over the life of the 2013 strategy. Overall it can be seen that there been significant high level improvements over the period in landfill volumes, recycling rates and Biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste (BLACMW). These improvements must also be considered against more detailed indicators as well as the targets and actions of the 2013 strategy.

**Figure 1: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting, 2005/06 – 2019/20**

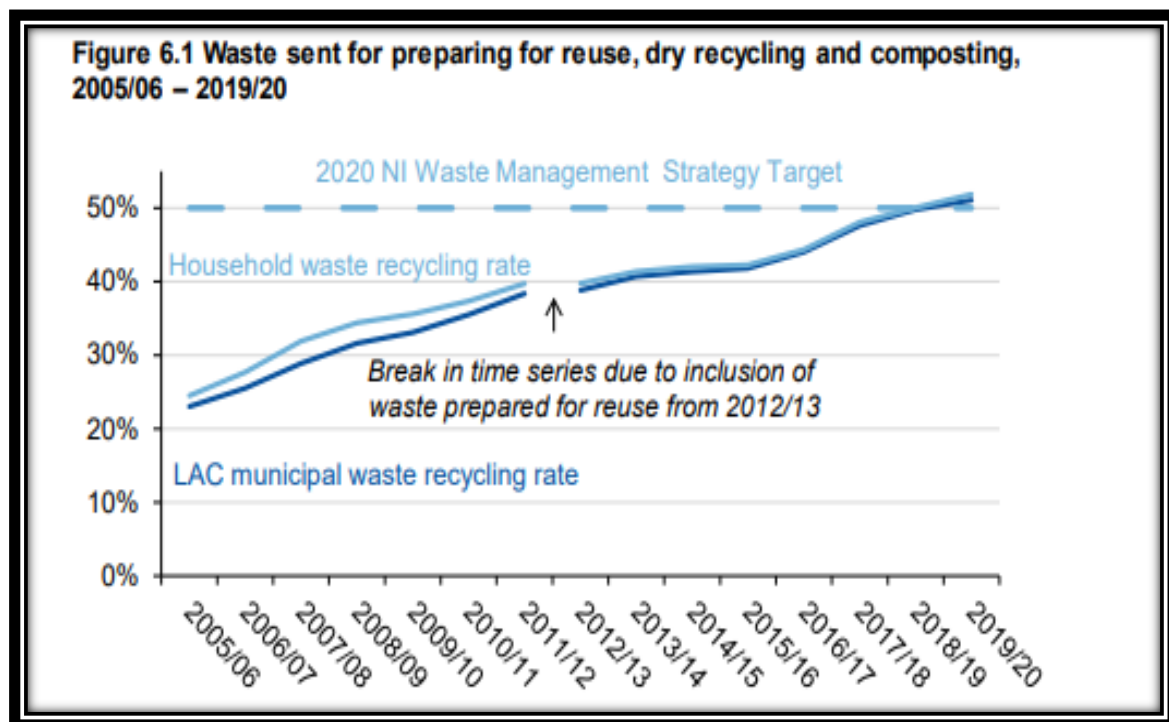
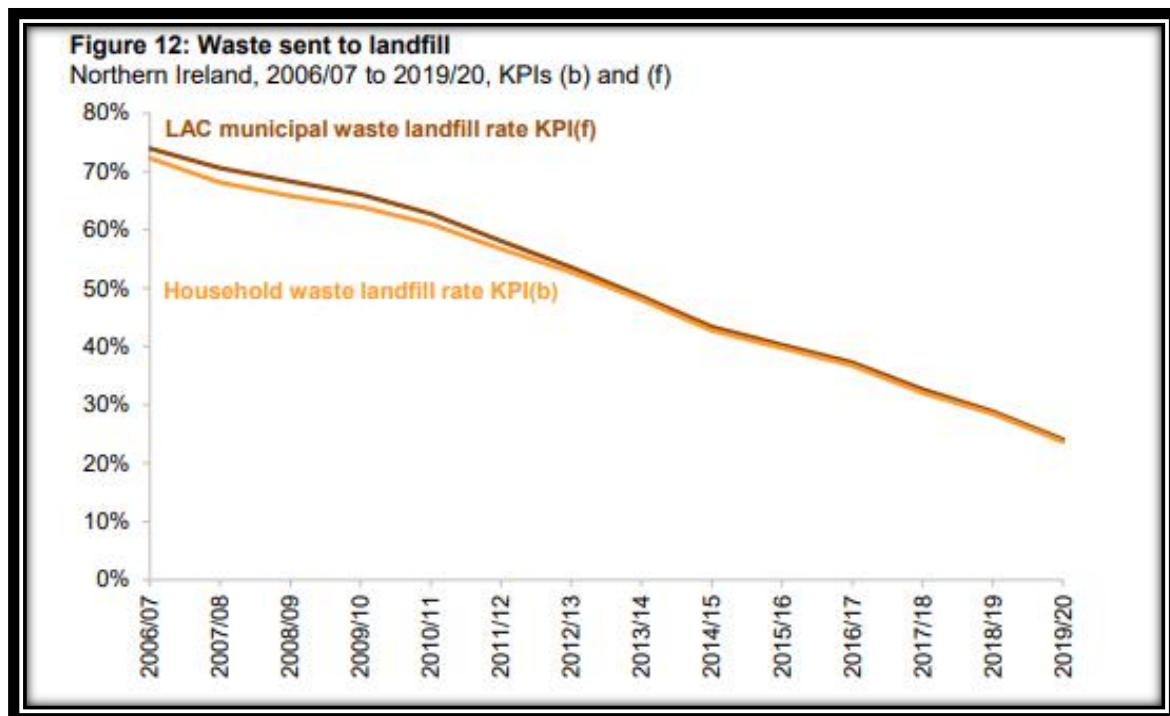
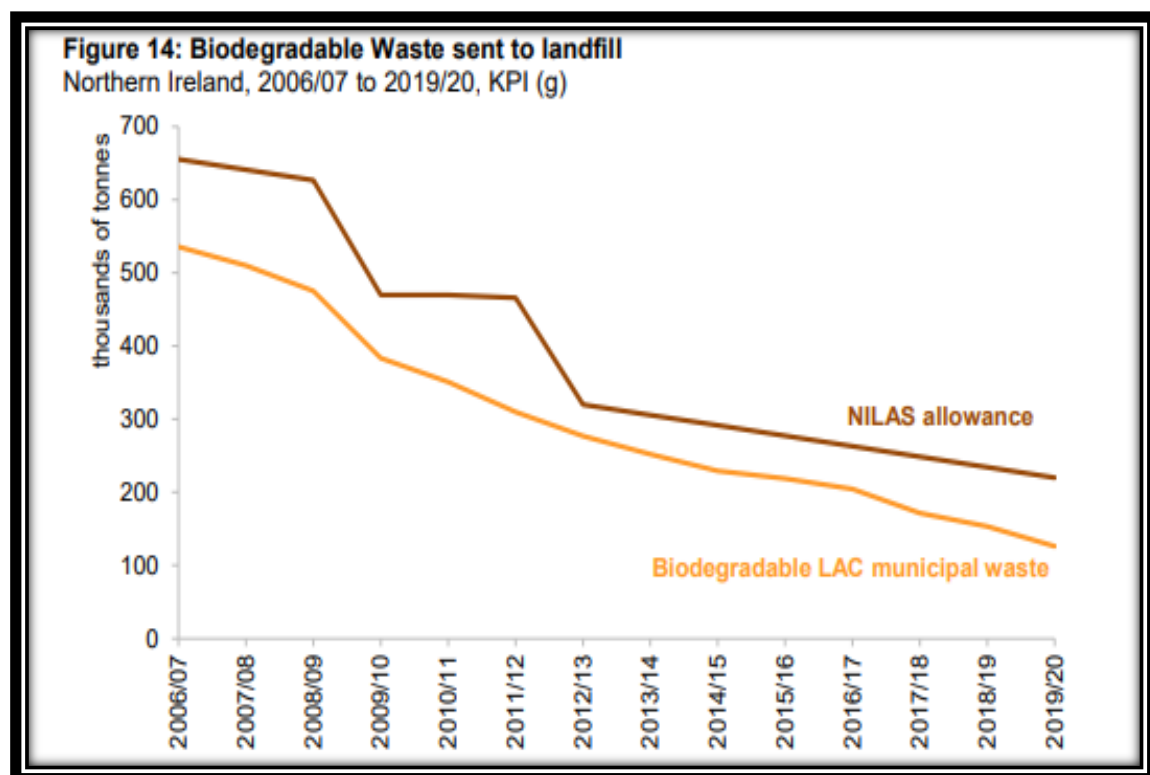


Figure 2: Waste sent to landfill Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2019/20, KPIs (b) and (f)



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Figure 3: Biodegradable Waste sent to landfill Northern Ireland, 2006/07 to 2019/20, KPI (g)



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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/lac-municipal-waste-2019-20-report.pdf> page 17

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/lac-municipal-waste-2019-20-report.pdf> page 19

### 3. Summary of actions and targets

The 2013 Strategy contains a total 27 actions and 17 targets split over the 7 sections as follows:

- **Waste Prevention:** (1 Target and 2 Actions);
- **Preparing for Re-use:** No specific targets or actions but a general commitment that the Department would support the development of a certifiable re-use voluntary quality assurance scheme and work with DECLG (now DECC) in Ireland in assessing the feasibility of introducing a scheme on an all-island basis;
- **Recycling:** (14 Targets and 9 Actions);
- **Other Recovery:** (7 Actions);
- **Disposal:** (2 Targets and 4 Actions);
- **Better Regulation and Enforcement:** (4 Actions); and
- **Communication and Education:** (1 Action).

The purpose of the majority of the targets was to improve resource efficiency, and meet EU requirements through a focus on improvements in waste prevention and enhanced recycling. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)<sup>7</sup>, councils, businesses and third sector organisations such as WRAP all play an important role in delivering these actions and targets. Some measures were:

- Regulation – legal targets for recycling, landfill, and local council guidance on separate collections;
- Schemes to promote producer responsibility in areas like packaging, batteries and electrical equipment;
- Fiscal incentives – introduction of the Carrier Bag Levy, NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS), producer responsibility schemes;
- Grant funding – funding to improve recycling through Collaborative Waste Programmes with councils, funding for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector repair and reuse programmes, support for Fairshare NI to reduce food waste;
- Communication and Education – Rethink Waste Campaign, Eco-Schools programme.

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<sup>7</sup> Prior to commencement of the [Departments Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016, delivery was the responsibility of the Department of the Environment



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<sup>8</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/ywVgG0IDbOk>

#### 4. Achievements

Of the 2013 Strategy's 27 actions and 17 targets a total of 36 (82%) were achieved, beyond the target date or superseded or alternative action taken. A full analysis of the delivery of the actions and targets is included in Annex B however key examples include:

##### Achieved

**Target 12:** To achieve a recycling rate of 50% (including preparing for re-use) of Household waste by 2020

This target was set by the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) and was a statutory target which must be met in order to comply with the WFD. The final published 2019/20 household waste recycling rate for Northern Ireland was 51.9%, up 1.9 percentage points from 2018/19. The target has now been met for the first 2 fully validated years.

##### Achieved beyond the action/target date

**Action 6:** 'The Department will consult on proposals for a code of practice for materials recycling facility operators by December 2013

This action was achieved, outside the target date as the relevant consultation was completed but in March 2015.

##### Superseded or Alternative action taken

**Action 20:** The Department will submit a business case to the Department of Finance and Personnel on the potential for Landfill Tax to be devolved by September 2014

This action was not progressed but was superseded as there were concerns that Northern Ireland would have to bear prohibitive fiscal consequences of any decision to devolve Landfill Tax from HM Treasury.

#### 5. Areas for improvement

In total 18% (8) of the actions and targets of the 2013 Strategy are not categorised as achieved. However, actions were taken and progress was made. Key examples include:

##### Partially achieved

**Target 2:** To achieve the recovery and recycling rates for individual packaging waste streams as set out in the table by 2017

This target was based on the 6 UK Business Targets for recycling and recovery across Steel, Wood, Paper, Aluminium, Glass and plastic. The Steel, Wood and Paper targets were achieved, however Aluminium and Glass were not achieved and plastic was partially achieved as its recovery figure met the relevant target but its recycling figure did not.

## Not achieved but Improvements made

**Target 1:** To reduce consumption of single use carrier bags by 80% within the first year of operation

This target was not achieved as although consumption of single use carrier bags dramatically decreased within the first year of operation (by 71.8%), it did not decrease by 80%.

**Target 14:** To achieve a recycling rate of 60% (including preparing for re-use) of Local Authority Collected (LAC) Waste by 2020.

This target was not achieved as the LAC waste recycling rate 50% in 2020/21. However this still represented an increase of 10.3% from the rate in 2012/13 at the beginning of the strategy.

**Action 26:** The Department, in partnership with key stakeholders, will implement a programme of action to repatriate illegally landfilled waste originating from Ireland.

This action was not fully achieved as there are still 5 sites which remain to be cleared and the waste repatriated to Ireland. Nevertheless there has been significant progress with 12 of the 17 successfully cleared prior to the Irish Government ceasing work in February 2016.

## **6. Changing challenges**

There have been many changes since the strategy was published in 2013. During the life of the strategy there have been reforms to both local and central government in NI with the merging of the previous 26 local authorities to 11 in 2015 and transfer functions (including waste) from DoE to the DAERA in 2016. EU Exit has also been a significant factor in terms of resource pressures – though existing legislation had been preserved.

Notably there have been new legislation and policy initiatives to develop a Circular Economy. Legislation to transpose the EU Waste Circular Economy Package in 2020 (The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020<sup>9</sup> have made important changes. The new Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy will take account of these developments.

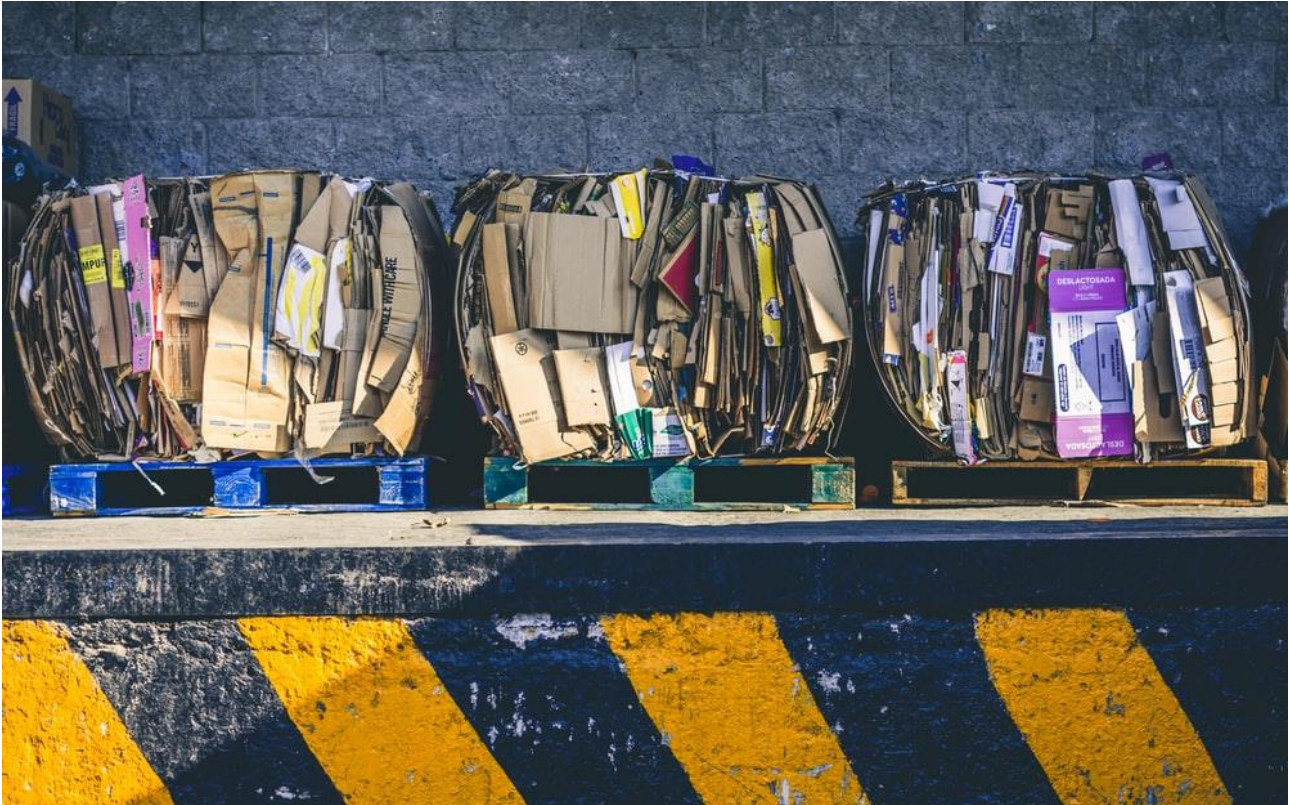
## **7. Lessons and future opportunities**

Overall in reviewing the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy and its 27 actions and 17 targets there are a number of lessons and opportunities for consideration in the development of the future Waste Management Strategy going forward, these include:

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/904/contents/made> and <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2020/285/contents/made>





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#### Difficulties of Multiple (compounded) targets in a single action or a target

Having multiple targets in one of the 27 actions or 17 targets makes the later monitoring an evaluation of the action or target difficult. It was observed this was more likely to happen with targets although there are also examples of it occurring with actions.

For example in the case of Target 4:

**Target 4:** To achieve a collection rate of 45% of Electrical and Electronic Equipment placed on the market by 2016 increasing to 65% of Electrical and Electronic Equipment placed on the market by 2019.

This means that if the first target a collection rate of 45% by 2016 (in Target 4) is achieved but the second target, a collection rate of 65% by 2019 is not achieved it is difficult to clearly present an overall evaluation of 1 target.

Target 3 is a further example:

**Target 3:** To achieve an overall recovery rate of 79% and overall recycling rate of 72.7% of packaging by 2017.

<sup>10</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/qph7tjfcDys>

As is Target 11:

**Target 11:** To achieve a reduction in food and associated packaging waste by 5% and to increase the overall rate of such waste which is recycled, sent to Anaerobic Digestion or composted to 70% by 2015.

In the next Strategy it is recommended that instead of being combined there should be both additional discreet actions and targets or they should be separated into distinct sub targets such as 1.A and 1.B. This could help the future assessment of improvements and achievements.



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<sup>11</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/eV2x6Cmflns>

## The use of static tables as opposed to references to the regularly updated versions

An example of this in the 2013 Strategy is Target 2 which states:

**Target 2:** To achieve the recovery and recycling rates for individual packaging waste streams as set out in the table by 2017

Below is the table referenced in the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy relation to this target:

| Material  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Paper     | 69.5% | 69.5% | 69.5% | 69.5% | 69.5% | 69.5% |
| Glass     | 81.0% | 81.0% | 81.0% | 81.0% | 81.0% | 81.0% |
| Aluminium | 40.0% | 43.0% | 46.0% | 49.0% | 52.0% | 55.0% |
| Steel     | 71.0% | 72.0% | 73.0% | 74.0% | 75.0% | 76.0% |
| Plastic   | 32.0% | 37.0% | 42.0% | 47.0% | 52.0% | 57.0% |
| Wood      | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% |

This table was based on the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (NI) 2007 ([link](#)) as last updated by the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 ([link](#)). However as legislation changes over the course of 5 years this table was updated in by The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 this meant that the collection targets in legislation were as follows:

**Table 2**  
**Recycling targets**

| Material    | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Glass       | 77   | 77   | 78   | 79   | 80   |
| Aluminium   | 52   | 55   | 55   | 55   | 55   |
| Steel       | 75   | 76   | 76   | 76   | 76   |
| Paper/Board | 69.5 | 69.5 | 69.5 | 69.5 | 69.5 |
| Plastic     | 49   | 51   | 53   | 55   | 57   |
| Wood        | 22   | 22   | 22   | 22   | 22." |

This meant that the glass and plastic targets in the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2013 were different from the targets in the relevant legislation referenced (copied overleaf). This served to hamper the relevance and usefulness of the target which was no longer linked to the latest obligations.



|   |     |   |     |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2013 targets |     | The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (NI) 2007 targets |     |
| Glass Target  |     |   |     |
| Glass target 2016                                       | 81% | Glass target 2016   | 77% |
| Glass target 2017                                       | 81% | Glass target 2017   | 77% |
| Plastic Target  |     |   |     |
| Plastic target 2016                                     | 52% | Plastic target 2016   | 49% |
| Plastic target 2017                                     | 57% | Plastic target 2017   | 51% |

In future actions and targets should be (where applicable) derived from directly referencing the relevant legislation, thus building in the flexibility to respond to changing obligations. Alternatively if this was problematic (due to extremely frequent changes) the action or target could be drafted so that any tables referenced are themselves reviewed regularly as obligations change.



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<sup>12</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/GjCx5KhulZI>



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<sup>13</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/7zocFMzvbp>



## 8. Conclusion

This report has identified that the vast majority of the actions and targets of the 2013 Strategy have been achieved. It has also examined the progress and improvements made in the actions and targets as well as suggesting lessons learnt for the development of the next Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy.



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Overall the closure report concludes that the 2013 Strategy has helped move Northern Ireland towards resource efficiency through waste prevention and enhanced recycling. This conclusion is supported by a number of examples; including:

- introducing legislation to reduce consumption of single use carrier bags from approximately 300 million bags in the year prior to the levy to 56.2 million bags in 2020/21 (the 8th year of the levy);
- a recycling rate of 50.6% (including preparing for re-use) of Household waste in Northern Ireland by 2019;
- a reduction in the landfill of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste from 251,951 tonnes in 2013/14 to 126,286 tonnes in 2019/2020; and
- Contributing to an overall re-use, recycling and recovery rate for end of life vehicles of 96.9% in the UK by 2015.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://unsplash.com/photos/F\\_EooJ3-uTs](https://unsplash.com/photos/F_EooJ3-uTs)



The report identifies a number of potential lessons around the formulation of targets, in the new strategy notably:

- Avoiding multiple actions or targets in one action or target, as this can make it difficult to judge overall success; and
- Ensuring an action or target that references something that can become out of date (for example a static table). Instead the action or target should try and reference the relevant legislation, acknowledging that this legislation may be subject to change.

Looking ahead, the Circular Economy package sets ambitious new targets for DAERA to go beyond the improvements achieved of the lifetime of the 2013 strategy. For example:

- Recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2035
- Only 10% of municipal waste is landfilled by 2035

.DAERA will begin planning and engagement with stakeholders on a new Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy in 2022.



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<sup>15</sup> <https://unsplash.com/photos/3FPtmyflfKQ>

## Annex A - Closure status – summary of 2013 actions and targets

**Table 1:** Categorisation of the level of achievement of the actions and targets

| Document Key                                  |  |
|---|--|
| Terms   | Meaning  |
| <b>Achieved</b>                               | <b>Achieved</b> means that the Action/Target has been achieved on target.  |
| <b>Achieved beyond the target date</b>        | <b>Achieved beyond the target date</b> means the Action/Target was not achieved within it's timeframe but within the time frame of the Waste Management Strategy 2013.               |
| <b>Superseded or Alternative action taken</b> | <b>Superseded or Alternative action taken</b> means in light of new evidence and/or circumstances alternative action was taken rather than the action detailed in the 2013 Strategy. |
| <b>Partially Achieved</b>                     | <b>Partially Achieved</b> means that the Action(s) / Target(s) contained multiple Actions / Targets and they were partially achieved by the target date.                             |
| <b>Not achieved but Improvements made</b>     | <b>Not achieved but Improvements made</b> means the Action/Target was not achieved but improvements were made towards achieving this action/target.                                  |
| <b>Not Achieved</b>                           | <b>Not Achieved</b> means the Target was not achieved and no clear improvements were made towards achieving this Target.   |

**Table 2** below shows the percentage of actions and targets achieved.

| Table 5 – Percentage of Actions and Targets achieved |        |                  |
|--|--------|------------------|
| Status of Action/Target                              | Number | Percentage total |
| Achieved   | 22     | 82%              |
| Achieved beyond the target date                      | 10     |                  |
| Superseded or Alternative action taken               | 4      |                  |
| Partially Achieved                                   | 3      | 18%              |
| Not Achieved but Improvements made                   | 4      |                  |
| Not Achieved   | 1      |                  |

**Figure 4:** Pie chart showing the percentage of actions and targets achieved

