

# OUR CALL FOR A STRONG AND AMBITIOUS CIRCULAR ECONOMY BILL



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# Introduction

## Our call for a strong and ambitious Circular Economy Bill

Circular Communities Scotland is pleased to see the Circular Economy Bill progressing within the Scottish Parliament. We strongly support what this Bill is trying to achieve and look forward to it becoming law.

We are calling for a strong and ambitious bill which takes into full account the climate crisis and the need for an urgent response.

Circular Communities Scotland is responding to the current consultation by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee of the Scottish Parliament which ends on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. We have encouraged our members and stakeholders to offer their own responses as well.

This paper is consistent with our wider consultation responses and highlights three key areas where we believe the current bill and accompanying Route Map should be strengthened:

1. **Reuse Targets**

We welcome the power to set circular economy targets in the bill. Specifically, we believe preparation for reuse targets are needed to prioritise reuse alongside recycling.

2. **Restrictions on the disposal of unsold consumer goods**

We welcome this proposal progressing but want safeguards to ensure that the waste hierarchy (reuse over recycling) and social impacts are prioritised.

3. **Statutory code of practice to prioritise reuse over recycling**

We welcome the proposal to set the code of practice for recycling on a statutory footing. However, the code of practice needs to be reviewed to ensure it fully prioritises reuse provision over recycling.

The current co-design process set out in the forthcoming Route Map should review and improve the code of practice on this basis.

# Circular Economy Bill 2023

Circular Communities Scotland broadly welcomes the Scottish Government's proposed Circular Economy Bill and sees its potential to deliver significant progress towards a more circular economy.

In this policy paper we highlight three priority areas of the Bill where we believe there is an opportunity for it to be as strong as it needs to be for our sector.

## 1. Reuse Targets

In a 2022 policy paper Circular Communities Scotland noted that:

*“Scotland currently has no reuse target but does have a clear recycling target. This has resulted in poor prioritisation of reuse investment and systems change compared to recycling and other activities lower down the waste hierarchy.*

*We believe that clear and ambitious preparation for reuse<sup>1</sup> targets are necessary to support prioritising reuse over recycling, in line with the principles of the waste hierarchy.”<sup>2</sup>*

We welcome the Bill including powers for the setting of national and local circular economy targets. We call for these powers to be affirmed in the Bill and used to set specific preparation for reuse targets.

Preparation for reuse targets should be mandated at a local level and reported alongside existing recycling targets for local authorities. Where possible Local Authorities should learn from and partner with existing third-sector organisations who have longstanding expertise in reuse in Scotland. We should also work to learn from other European countries that are ahead of Scotland in setting reuse targets.<sup>3</sup>

Work should begin promptly to baseline current reuse activities within each local authority area. We believe the timetable of setting targets for Local Authorities from 2030 is far too slow considering the nature of the climate emergency we face.

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<sup>1</sup> Preparation for Reuse relates to taking items from the waste stream (e.g., an HWRC site) and diverting them for reuse. Reuse includes all reuse activities and is much broader and more difficult to measure. This is the language of the EU Waste Hierarchy. We are calling for Preparation for Reuse Targets to be implemented in Scotland even if we use the phrase Reuse Targets.

<sup>2</sup> [Policy Paper for Scotland's Circular Economy](#), May 2022, p

<sup>3</sup> See RREUSE's recent publication [Re-use targets, why they matter and what initiatives already exist in the EU](#)

We note the Route Map had set out to “investigate the feasibility of setting reuse targets by 2025”<sup>4</sup> and believe a more ambitious timetable would be appropriate.

## 2. Restrictions on the disposal of unsold consumer goods

In our 2022 policy paper we called for a ban on the destruction of durable goods noting that:

*“There should be clear measures in place to prevent the destruction of unsold or returned products”*<sup>5</sup>

We welcome that proposed restrictions in this area remain in the Bill. We note that Spain has recently approved new waste and circular economy legislation, banning the destruction of non-perishable unsold goods including textiles, electric and electronic products, and toys. This could be a starting point for similar measures here in Scotland.

We strongly support the restrictions on the disposal of unsold consumer goods in the Bill. However, it is vital that two key principles are protected in these restrictions:

First, it is vital that the principle of the waste hierarchy is followed and that reuse should be prioritised over recycling for example.

Second, social impact and local activity should also be protected as there has been some evidence of low value exporting being preferred over domestic reuse for example and this should be avoided.

A more environmentally and socially responsible solution is needed to guide businesses towards better waste management practices. This could be via direct mandated legislation or through the introduction of mandatory reporting, financial charges, or other strong deterrents.

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<sup>4</sup> [Consultation to deliver Scotland Circular Economy Route Map](#), Package 1, Proposal 6

<sup>5</sup> [Policy Paper for Scotland’s Circular Economy](#), May 2022, p

### 3. Statutory code of practice to prioritise reuse over recycling.

In our 2022 policy paper we noted that:

*“Currently local authority sites in Scotland are geared towards recycling rather than reuse. Many have no provision for reuse at all, whilst others are inadequate. Too many items which could be reused are being sent for recycling or even incineration and landfill.”<sup>6</sup>*

We welcome the proposal to set the current voluntary code of practice on household waste recycling on a statutory footing. However, we would like this to be expanded and strengthened to place far greater emphasis on reuse.

We believe that the forthcoming Route Map co-design process should also define strong preparation for reuse provisions required at each local authority site and set a plan to implement these via the statutory code of practice.

We welcome the wording in the proposed Route Map which sets out to:

*“Facilitate a process to co-design high quality, high performing household recycling and reuse services.”<sup>7</sup>*

This equal focus on reuse alongside recycling is essential to promote reuse going forward and to meet Scotland’s circular ambitions.

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<sup>6</sup> [Policy Paper for Scotland’s Circular Economy](#), May 2022, p

<sup>7</sup> [Consultation to deliver Scotland Circular Economy Route Map](#), Package 3, Proposal 1



# About Circular Communities Scotland

Circular Communities Scotland is the national membership body for the circular third sector in Scotland. Our vision is for a thriving circular economy in Scotland, with local communities benefiting from the social, environmental, and economic outcomes.

Our mission, as a national network, is to support and represent organisations who are delivering greater levels of reuse, repair, and recycling.

Our core network services are funded by Zero Waste Scotland. We have recently launched new programmes including a Share and Repair Network<sup>8</sup> and a Bike Reuse Project.<sup>9</sup>

Our growing membership of over 250 charities and social enterprises deliver significant repair, reuse, and recycling services across all 32 local authority regions in Scotland.

Our members prevent valuable products and materials from ending up in landfill, create local jobs, economic opportunities, and help promote and create social and environmental justice in their communities.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Funded by Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland

<sup>9</sup> Funded by Cycling Scotland

<sup>10</sup> Our 2022 Impact Report [Circular Solutions; Supporting Communities](#) highlights the impact of our member's work.