



Circular Economy Route Map for Glasgow 2025 – 2030

Highlights 2020 – 2025

Progress on Circular Economy Actions

Since the declaration of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies in 2019, Glasgow has been on a journey to build a stronger, resilient and fair city. Communities, citizens, the environment and economy are at the heart of this journey. Across a range of priorities, progress has been happening across the city. Organisations across Glasgow have been coming together at different levels to develop and deliver projects aimed at demonstrating the benefits of circular economy. Many organisations, including Glasgow City Council, are embracing change and engaging in reuse, reducing their consumption of single-use items, creating networks to bring people and businesses together to exchange knowledge.

Glasgow City Council has reviewed activities undertaken since 2020 to understand progress and celebrate success, but also to recognise what more can be done moving forward. Below are some highlights of progress showcasing collaborative initiatives and efforts to enable the uptake of circular practices such as refill, food waste and single-use plastic reduction.

Highlights to date

Step up to Net Zero

The Step Up to Net Zero¹ programme was built to support small- and medium-sized enterprises equipping them with the tools they need to develop and drive forward action plans to maximise value of products, services and systems, and minimise waste within their business.

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Step Up 
to Net Zero



**Funded by
UK Government**



of Commerce, Step up to Net Zero offered work placements to help local organisations take action towards net zero and circular goals, ultimately supporting the city's net zero ambitions. The programme also offered opportunities to upskill and retrain staff while helping businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and grow green profits. It ran for two phases between 2022 and 2024. In Phase 1, 40 individuals were embedded in 39 organisations and in Phase 2, 29 organisations were accepted into the programme.

¹ Step Up to Net Zero (<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/2686/New-Step-Up-to-Net-Zero-programme-will-support-SMEs-in-Challenge-to-become-greener>)

Progress on Circular Economy Actions

Scottish Water Top-up Taps initiative

The Top-up Taps initiative² by Scottish Water installed outdoor water bottle refill stations with the aim to reduce plastic single-use bottle consumption, reduce waste and litter. Across Glasgow, nine top-up taps have been installed since 2018 in iconic city locations. The top-up taps have helped people stay hydrated, they are good for the environment helping avoid waste, and they are free helping people save money. So far, the taps have filled the equivalent of over 1 million plastic bottles (330ml) in Glasgow. Locations can be found on the top-up tap map (<https://www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/find-my-nearest-tap/>).



Plastic reduction in Council catering services

Glasgow City Council has developed a tool to help track its procurement of disposable catering items containing plastic. Understanding what we buy means we have been able to work out where we can improve. Use of single-use plastics has been significantly reduced, including 99.7% of non-recyclable plastic. The Council is also working with suppliers to encourage them to use re-usable alternatives to single-use plastics.



Grounds for recycling campaign

An estimated 388.7 million single-use cups are used in Scotland each year³. Fronted by Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, through the Circular Glasgow initiative, and in partnership with Glasgow Life, Zero Waste Scotland and the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, the Grounds for Recycling⁴ campaign supported over 60 of Glasgow's cycle-friendly coffee hangouts and local roasters to join forces and turn used coffee grounds into soil improver at the Glasgow's Botanic Gardens. A toolkit is now available to support businesses in Glasgow's hospitality, tourism, and food service sectors in addressing both coffee waste and food waste.



² Scottish Water, Top Up Tap (<https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns/top-up-tap-map>)

³ Zero Waste Scotland, Consumption of Single-use Disposable Beverage Cups in Scotland (<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/cups-consultation>)

⁴ Grounds for Recycling (<https://groundsforrecycling.co.uk/>)

Progress on Circular Economy Actions

Collaboration for a circular economy

Collaboration is essential for the delivery of the circular economy transition. A change in economic systems and mindsets is not something that anyone can achieve alone. Since the publication of the Circular Economy Route Map in 2020, we have built lasting partnerships at local, national, and international levels to support learning and influence action towards the circular transition. These include ongoing relationships with the following organisations:



- **Ellen MacArthur Foundation**, the non-profit organisation leading the circular economy transition
- **Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance**, an alliance of leading global cities working collaboratively to achieve carbon neutrality in the next 10-20 years
- **ICLEI – Local governments for sustainability**, a global network of over 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development
- **Zero Waste Scotland**, Scotland's circular economy public body, working with government, business, and communities to accelerate the circular transition

Glasgow has also signed the Circular Cities Declaration. This is a commitment designed to accelerate the transition from a linear to a circular economy in Europe, and thereby create a resource-efficient, low-carbon, and socially responsible society.

Glasgow Circular Supper Club and Mixers

A Circular Glasgow⁵ and Glasgow Chamber of Commerce initiative, the Circular Glasgow Network aims to bring together organisations from across the city to connect, build and share their knowledge of a circular economy and its role in reaching net-zero targets. The inaugural Glasgow Circular Supper Club event, hosted in May 2023 in partnership with SWG3, brought together a range of organisations from across the city. In 2024, Circular Glasgow also launched its Circular Mixer series. These monthly networking events provide businesses with a unique opportunity to engage in purpose-led conversations, exchange knowledge, and explore ways to embed circular practices into their workplace.

Circular Glasgow

⁵ Circular Glasgow (<https://www.circularglasgow.com/>)

Circular construction

In Glasgow, as in many cities across the world, it is essential to reduce the adverse impacts of construction and demolition as this significantly contributes to emissions and waste. Glasgow City Council has been working with institutions and organisations across Scotland, nationally, and internationally on projects that aim to decarbonise the construction sector using circular thinking and strategies, and create the enabling conditions for circular construction to flourish in Glasgow.



Connecting with ReLondon, Glasgow City Council participated in the CIRCuIT project as a follower city. This Horizon 2020 project aimed to bridge the implementation gap between theory, practice and policy and showcase how circular construction approaches can be scaled and replicated across Europe to support the creation of regenerative cities. Glasgow City Council has been learning from the outcomes of this project and is exploring how these can be effectively replicated in Glasgow.

Working with Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA) and learning from examples from other cities, Glasgow City Council has also been exploring ways to reduce emissions associated with materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of the Council's and all building across the city. Most recently, working with Zero Waste Scotland and local stakeholders, Glasgow City Council explored the feasibility of a construction material reuse hub in Glasgow. This early research looked at opportunities and challenges, and how to most effectively enable construction materials to be recovered and reused locally.