

The logo for Zero Waste Scotland, featuring the text 'ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND' in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a white circular border. The background of the slide is a blue sky with white clouds and a sun setting behind a mountain range.

**ZERO
WASTE
SCOTLAND**

Supporting Shetland Island Council

Communicating the benefits of household recycling

Michael Lenaghan
Environmental Policy Advisor

zerowastescotland.org.uk

 [@zerowastescot](https://twitter.com/zerowastescot)

The Context

In August 2017, Shetland Islands Council announced it would rollout household recycling services.

Councillors back isles-wide recycling scheme



MEMBERS of the SIC's environment and transport committee have unanimously backed a plan to introduce fortnightly kerbside recycling collections throughout the islands from next summer.

The Problem

- At 10%, Shetlands had the lowest recycle rate of any Council but,
- Many Shetlanders took to Facebook to express their concerns that:
 1. It was more sustainable sending recyclates to Shetland's EfW plant to generate 'green' energy
 2. Transporting recyclate off-island would negate any environmental benefits...
- Shetland Islands Council asked ZWS to help

Was the current system more sustainable?

Calculate total carbon impacts of Shetlands' waste

(Waste Data + ZWS Waste Comp Data) * Scottish Carbon Metric

Compare with rest of Scotland

Per Tonne

Highest carbon impacts/tonne waste in Scotland 3.25tCO₂e/tonne

Per Capita

Second highest impacts/capita in Scotland (1.44tCO₂e) despite 8th lowest amount of waste (0.44t/capita)

Conclusion: No. Shetlands' existing waste management system was generating some of the highest carbon impacts in Scotland

Would transport impacts negate benefits of recycling?

Compare impacts under BAU and recycling scenarios for plastics and fibres:

- materials likely to be collected under a new recycling system,
- are flammable
- have a very different calorific values
- have very different non-biogenic carbon contents

Conclusion: No. The carbon benefits of recycling are significantly greater than those of EfW. To neutralise these benefits, you would need to ship:

- Paper around the world 2.6 times.
- Plastics around the world 15.6 times

Outcome

Exporting isles' waste for recycling is by far the greenest option, ZWS data shows



PLASTIC recycled in Shetland would have to be shipped around the globe more than 15 times in order for landfill or incineration to be a more environmentally friendly option, according to figures from Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS).

[Shetland Islands Council will introduce isle-wide recycling collections from next July](#), with materials previously fed into the Gremista-based Energy Recovery Plant instead being shipped south for recycling.

Some have suggested the emissions involved in transporting the waste would override any ecological

Shetland News, September 12th, 2017

Councillor Thomson busts recycling 'myth'



Shetland Islands Council introduced isle-wide recycling earlier this year, but more people are making efforts to reduce the amount of waste they produce - recycled or not. Photo: Shetland News

“The claims that emissions involved in transporting waste would override any environmental benefit are false. Indeed, Zero Waste Scotland calculates that plastics from Shetland would need to be shipped around the world 15.6 times to override the emissions saved in recycling,”

Shetland News, July 25th, 2018

Thank you.

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