



# The Carbon Footprint of Scotland's Household Waste

2017 Household Carbon Metric Report

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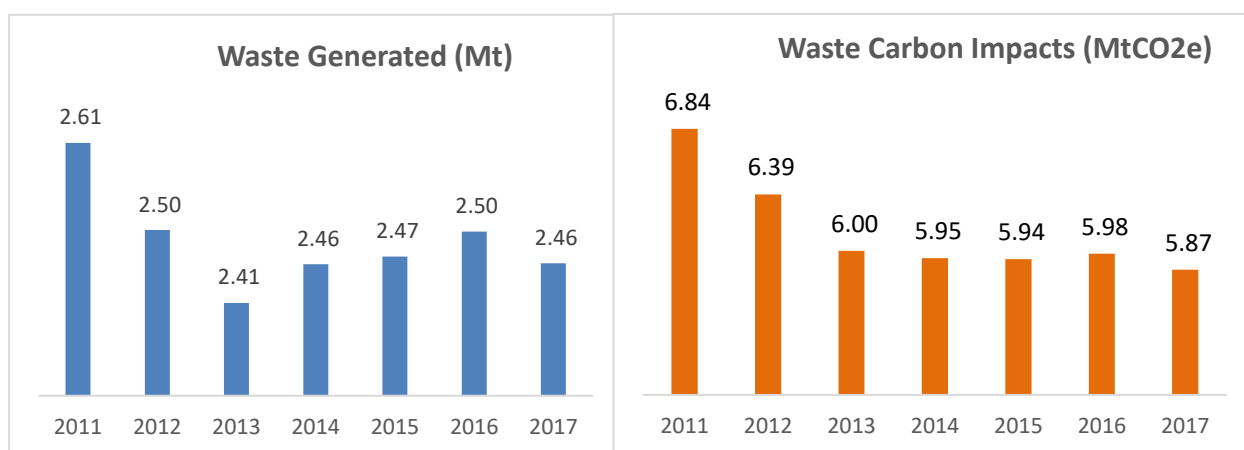
## Key Findings from the 2017 Carbon Metric for Household waste

The Scottish Carbon Metric is updated annually using the latest SEPA published waste data. The first edition, the 2011 Carbon Metric, was published in 2013, and new editions are released each year. This year, the 2017 Carbon Metric for Household waste will be published alongside the 2016 Carbon Metric. This report summarises the key findings from the 2017 Carbon Metric for Household waste.

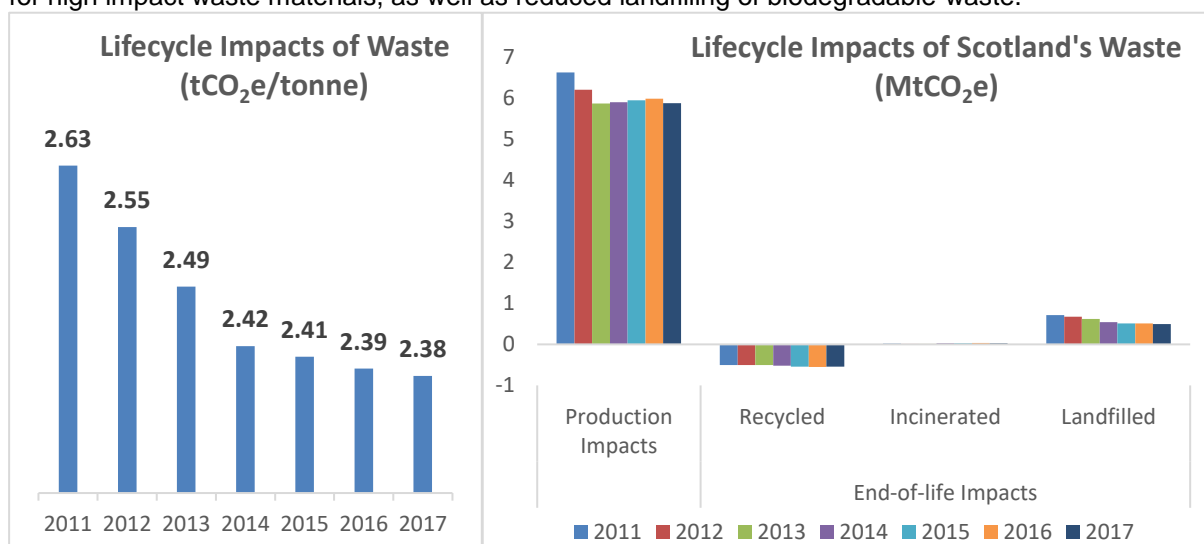
### Scotland's Household Waste and its Carbon Impacts (2011-2017)

In 2017, Scottish Household waste fell by 1% (38 kt) below 2016 levels, while the household recycling rate increased by 1% as Scottish households recycled a greater portion of their waste than ever before (47%). By preventing waste on the one hand, and recycling more of what waste remains, the carbon impacts of Scotland's household waste fell 2% (112 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e) from the 2016 level, **resulting in the lowest recorded carbon impacts for Household waste to date.**

From 2011 to 2017, the waste generated by Scottish households has fluctuated, but in 2017 it was 6% (approximately 0.15 Mt) below the 2011 baseline. In contrast, the carbon impact of Household waste in 2017 was 14% (0.98 M tCO<sub>2</sub>e) below the 2011 level. This decoupling of waste arisings from waste impacts is evidence that Scottish households are managing waste more sustainably.



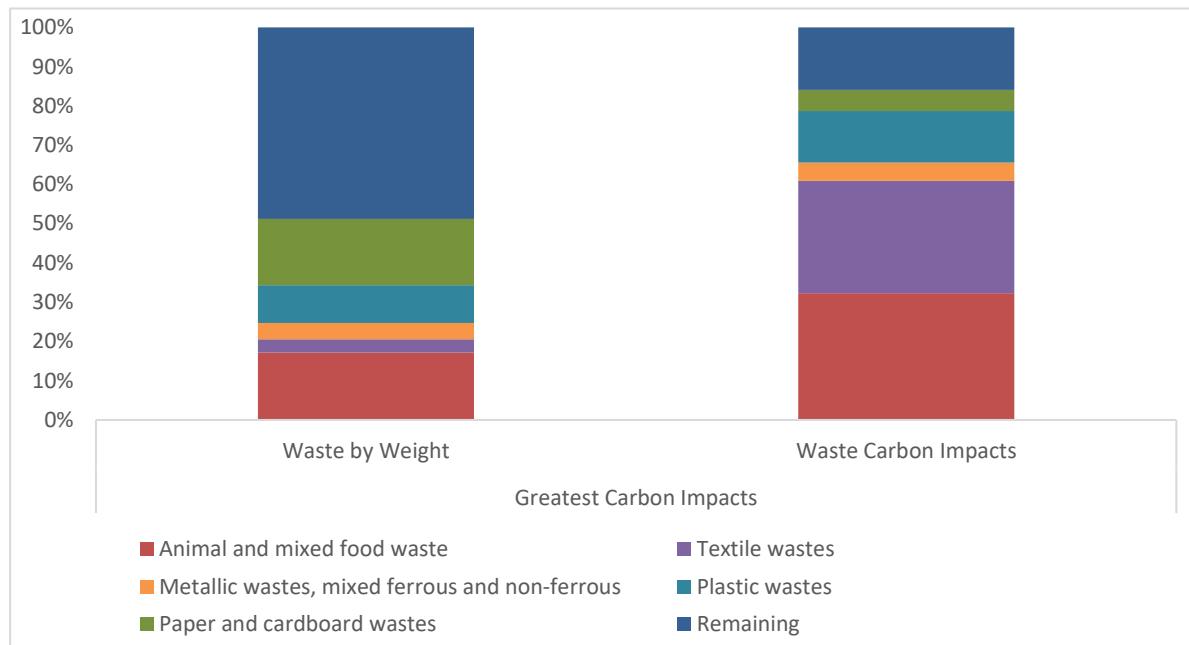
The lifecycle impact of a tonne of Household waste has been steadily declining since 2011, with a 9% decrease between 2011 and 2017. This was largely a result of improved recycling rates, particularly for high impact waste materials, as well as reduced landfilling of biodegradable waste.



## The Big Five Waste Materials: Weight vs. Carbon Impacts

Scotland's Carbon Metric shows that some materials in the Household waste stream have a particularly high carbon impact relative to their tonnages. To maximise the climate change benefits of waste and resource management, focus should be placed on these carbon intensive waste materials.

The top five most carbon intensive materials accounted for just under half (49%) of all Household waste in 2017, but 83% of Household waste carbon impacts. Food waste accounted for 16% of Household waste by weight, but 32% of Household waste carbon impacts. Textile waste made up just 3% of waste arisings, but 28% of the carbon impacts.



## Conclusion

This report describes the key findings from the 2017 Household waste Carbon Metric update:

- Due to a decrease in the amount of waste generated by Scottish households and an increase in the recycling rate, **2017 household waste achieved the lowest carbon impacts since the Carbon Metric began measuring in 2011.**
- The carbon impact of Scotland's household waste in 2017 was 14%, or 0.98 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> below 2011 levels
- The lifecycle impact of a tonne of household waste has fallen 9% between 2011 and 2017.
- The top five most carbon intensive materials accounted for just under half (49%) of all Household waste in 2017, but 84% of household waste carbon impacts.
  - Food waste accounted for 16% of Household waste, but 32% of waste carbon impacts.
  - Textile waste made up just 3% of household waste, but 28% of waste carbon impacts.

By increasing recycling, particularly for carbon-intensive waste materials, and reducing the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, Scottish households can continue to reduce the climate change impact of each tonne of waste they produce.

Further information on the Carbon Metric and archived documents relating to its development can be found on the [Zero Waste Scotland website](#).

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