




**ANNUAL
REPORT
2025**

Contents

4



Chair's Report

5/6



Treasurer &
Accountant's Report

7/8



Policy + H&S Report

9/10



The LARAC Year

11



LARAC Northern Ireland

12



LARAC Scotland

13



LARAC Wales

14



England Regions

Vision

The leading voice for local authorities on recycling, waste and resource management.

Mission

- To influence UK resource and waste policy for the benefit of our members;
- To engage with key stakeholders;
- To provide membership services in a cost effective and quality manner so that our members are well informed and
- To provide local authority conferences and events that share information dissemination and promote best practice.

Origins

LARAC was founded by and is still run by an Executive of serving local authority recycling and waste management professionals from the whole of the UK. Their experience and working knowledge means they are well placed to represent our members.

Chair's report

Once again, the last 12 months have been busy for me and others in the LARAC Team. However, as this is my final year as chair of this amazing organisation, I'd like to reflect not just on 2025 but also on the past (nearly) four years of holding this privileged position.

A Privileged Role

And privileged is exactly how I feel about my time as Chair, having had the opportunity to work on some challenging but incredibly rewarding projects and meet some amazing people. LARAC is still and will continue to be 'The leading voice for local authorities on recycling, waste and resource management', and that's not just some clichéd phrase. LARAC goes above and beyond to ensure that Local Authorities are heard within the waste sector. As Chair of LARAC, I am a small cog within a larger mechanism, supported by a group of knowledgeable and hard-working staff and officers who make up the executive committee, each of whom has a passion for and commitment to their work. And of course, you – the members – comprising an impressive 80% of Local Authorities across the four nations, working tirelessly every single day to provide services in often challenging circumstances.

My Career Journey

My current role outside of LARAC is as a Senior Advisor at

ReLondon, where I help boroughs across London with policy support and project advice, so realistically, I am no longer on the 'frontline' delivering services, but in a supporting role instead. However, my career certainly did not start like that...

I have done all of the jobs in waste management from the ground up, from getting up at the crack of dawn to go out on the rounds with the crews, visiting residents to talk through their bin contents, grappling with the complexities and data consolidation for Waste Data Flow returns and even dressing up in oversized mascot costumes to educate school children about recycling!

Policy and Representation

Nowadays, I spend very little time engaging directly with school children and householders, and the majority of my time is spent engaging with politicians instead. My policy work over the past few years, especially since the publication of the Resources and Waste Strategy in 2018, has taken up a lot of my time. However, despite the complexities, frustrations, and challenges that policy work often brings, I thoroughly enjoy it as I am always aware that I am working on behalf of Local Authorities who need their voices heard.

The Challenges and Rewards

This is not lip service. I have worked in the Local Authority

space for 30 years, and I know exactly how hard it is to provide services, how budgets are stretched and resources are thin on the ground, and how it can often be a thankless task. But it can also be very rewarding. School children looking in amazement when you tell them a fact about recycling, and you know they are going to make a change, householders telling you that they are appreciative of a new service you have implemented, and politicians sometimes – just sometimes – understanding your concerns and starting to get on board with some of your ideas.

Why We Do This Work

It is in our nature as humans that we are more likely to remember negative rather than positive experiences; however, we all got into this industry for a reason, and I believe that it is because we have a passion for ensuring that our resources are used responsibly and trying to encourage others to 'do the right thing'.

LARAC has been doing this for 40 years and will continue to work tirelessly to support that goal for many more years to come, and I am so proud that I got to play my small part within this organisation.



Cathy Cook, LARAC Chair

Treasurer's report

It gives me great pleasure to present this year's treasurers report for 2024/25. As with our previous three years, these accounts have been prepared and verified by Thorne & Co and are detailed on the following page.

Conference Success and Engagement

I am pleased to report that 2024 has again been a positive year for LARAC, with our face-to-face conferences running to full strength, and the 2024 and 2025 national conferences being oversubscribed again. Regional and devolved government conferences have been well attended, with positive delegate feedback. We were also able to host our third joint conference with CIWM in Northern Ireland, which has been very well received, and will look to ensure this becomes a sustained annual event, the same as Scotland and Wales.

Income and Cost Management

Success with our conferences, webinars, and partner support programme has resulted in income continuing to perform well, and above budgeted predictions. However, costs for putting on our conferences continue to rise significantly, and we have worked hard to minimise these additional costs being passed on to you, our members. We know how important our conferences are to you and will always ensure we provide exceptional value for money in attending them, whether regional or national.

Financial Outturn and Position

LARAC's final outturn for the year is very positive from the original budget forecast resulting in achieving a minimal deficit of £1,231, of which we will pay no corporation tax. This confirms LARAC remains in a strong position and provides confidence moving forward, allowing LARAC to do more for you, our members.

For 2025/26, the Executive have agreed and set a deficit budget of £46,000, reflecting the continued risk due to current economic uncertainty whether income from conferences and partner sales can be relied on and therefore a prudent approach on setting the budget has been taken. Additionally, the change in employers' contributions to National Insurance, and the LG pay award have had to be considered.

Policy and Legislative Updates

After many years of waiting and speculation, the last year has at last seen the introduction of Simpler Recycling, and pEPR with the first payments being made this financial year. Although this is very positive, there remains a great deal of uncertainty, particularly around new burdens funding for food waste collection operations, and security of EPR payments moving forward. Many of you will be frantically introducing new services to comply with legislative requirements, particularly in England with the complexities and issues around supply of

vehicles, bins and staff, putting immense pressure on services. LARAC is here to ensure it fully supports and represents you, our members strategically with government and other key stakeholders, to ensure concerns are listened to and we work across industry to achieve the best possible outcome for you and the citizens of the UK.

Investment in Member Support

LARAC will again invest any surplus funds to allow us to do more to help in these uncertain times. We will continue to develop and deliver appropriate webinars, surveys, and producing policy positions. We will continue to strengthen our regional events, building on the successes we have in several regions, so we can engage with members on a more 'local' scale to help by presenting case studies, and other best practice initiatives, which members have said they wish to see more of. We will continue to develop our devolved government, and our national conferences, to ensure they are relevant and topical in supporting member's needs. LARAC will do all we can to maximise opportunities for income generation through sponsorship, and efficiencies in the way we operate to ensure we are able to provide the necessary support local government is going to need in the years ahead.

Andrew Bird, Treasurer



Accountant’s report

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2025		
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets		£2,523
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	£3,983	
Cash at bank	£279,618	
	£283,601	
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	£40,736	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		£242,865
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		£245,388
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES		£392
NET ASSETS		£244,996
RESERVES		
Other reserves		£160,089
Income and expenditure account		£84,907
MEMBERS' FUNDS		£244,996

For the financial year ended 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared and delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors and authorised for issue on 18 July 2025 and are signed on its behalf by A M Bird Director.

Filed at Companies House on 4 August 2025. Company Registration No. 13227697.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2025				
Turnover	2025		2024	
Other commerical activities	£750		£250	
Membership subscriptions	£129,718		£129,590	
Conferences	£61,736		£50,814	
Web	£35,858		£32,758	
		£228,062		£213,412
Cost of sales				
Conferences	£119		£120	
Exhibitions	-		-	
Features	£3,600		£10,350	
Website	£6,220		£13,626	
Secondees and business manager	-		£6,648	
Meetings	£17,600		£13,849	
Honoraria	£12,100		£12,100	
Administration/Wages	£169,271		£128,759	
Webinars	£3,000		£2,250	
Total cost of sales		£211,910		£187,702
GROSS SURPLUS	7.08%	£16,152	12.05%	£25,710
Other operating income				
Government grants receivable and released		£276		£277
Administrative expenses				
Insurance	£1,649		£1,555	
Sundry expenses	-		£104	
Accountancy	£1,720		£1,600	
Legal and professional fees	£14,081		£6,586	
Depreciation	£2,182		£2,811	
Staff training	£4,004		£160	
Bank charges	£91		£66	
Advertising	£35		£844	
		£23,762		£13,726
OPERATING SURPLUS		-£7,334		£12,261
Interest receivable and similar income				
Bank interest received	£6,103		£5,275	
Other interest received	-		£150	
		£6,103		£5,425
Interest payable and similar expenses				
Interest on overdue taxation				-
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	0.54%	-£1,231	8.29%	£17,686

Policy report

This Annual Policy Report marks my first full year in the role of Policy Officer since joining LARAC last summer, and it's felt very much a year of moving from talk to action.

Simpler Recycling in England, Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) and Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for waste have been constant topics of discussion for years now, and late 2024 felt like a turning point for these policies. Years in the making, and subject to numerous delays and disruptions, we have finally begun to see real steps in bringing the legislation to life. It has been far from perfect, but still a significant step forward.

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR)

In late 2024, DEFRA and PackUK shared pEPR payment information with UK local authorities, and the UK Government guaranteed a 'top up' payment to ensure these funds were available. Whilst the information was gratefully received, there was and remains a mixed reception around the amounts of the payments, complicated by the updated July figures. and uncertainty over elements of both the requirements and certainty of future payments.

Simpler Recycling in England

At the same time as the pEPR information, Simpler Recycling in England requirements were confirmed. This mandates local authorities to provide source-separate collections of paper and card, unless proven environmentally or economically unviable. In April 2025, business requirements began, requiring non-domestic premises with more than 10 full-time equivalent staff to separate its waste and organise recycling collections. Whilst rollout, enforcement and communication of this is ongoing,

attention now turns towards local authorities across England collecting food waste from households by next April.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

Each year the talk around DRS seems to change slightly, and in late 2024 the Welsh Government announced its intention to have a different system to the rest of the UK. Despite this, a UK-wide scheme is due to be in place by October 2027. Until then, items in-scope of DRS get a free ride for kerbside collection as they are not subject to pEPR costs. Questions remain about how the issues DRS creates for local authorities will be addressed, including how credit can be claimed for containers disposed of at kerbside, and if New Burdens will help to address the negative financial impacts it will have on recycling streams.

Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

In summer 2025, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) released a partial response to the consultation held in 2024 on introducing waste incineration to the UK ETS. The response focused solely on the voluntary monitoring period due to start in January 2026 and leaves huge concerns about the possible financial impact on local authorities, and one that industry and government must address prior to the changes going live.

What LARAC is doing?

LARAC has developed engagement with the likes of PackUK, DEFRA and the devolved administrations and enforcement bodies, we have been seeking to gain clarity and understanding on the requirements as policy changes. We have also continued to push for clarity in relation to financial concerns and the achievability of some implementation deadlines. This will

continue to be important as policies develop, hopefully resulting in similar successes as the drive to ensure 'restricted residual' collections was an option in respect of Simpler Recycling.

Consultations

Since August 2024, we have issued 20 briefing papers to members on various consultations, calls for evidence, national strategies, and plans across the four nations. We have responded to ten formal consultations on behalf of members.

Enjoy the conference everyone!



Tom McBeth, Policy Officer

Health & Safety Report

It's certainly been a turbulent, yet exciting year within the waste sector that's for sure! From a health and safety perspective though, there has been a continued decline in work-related fatalities as a whole, with a total of 3 across the waste sector in 24/25.

Progress and Remaining Challenges

This suggests we have come a long way, but we still have a lot to do to tackle poor performance and compliance across the waste sector. As a national LARAC representative for health and safety, I've continued to attend WISH Steering Group meetings to gain insights into key industry updates and developments, which LARAC have been able to share with the wider membership.

Guidance Revisions and Information Sharing

There has been a flurry of activity across the WISH Steering Group over the past year, with numerous revisions to guidance documents and publication of new reference documents and information sheets. LARAC continues to work hard to share consultation requests and revised documents with members as they arise, sharing best practice and ensuring maximum exposure for sector guidance.

Collaborative Partnership Working

The collaborative partnership working between LARAC, WISH and the HSE has provided members with invaluable insights and updates on a variety of key subject areas including HSE and ESA workplans and priorities; Waste fires, NOx Cylinders and the ongoing situation relating to bin lift safety.

Technology and Artificial Intelligence

We are already seeing how the use of Artificial Intelligence can be used to improve the safety of our workforce and vehicles, plant and equipment. Technology will continue to play a part in improving health and safety across the sector, but more is needed.

Looking Ahead

Watch this space for further developments on Bioaerosols, Supervisor competence, Artificial Intelligence and the future of WISH, but rest assured, LARAC will continue to work hard to ensure members are provided with sector updates and developments as and when they arise.



Ashley Wild, National H&S Representative

The LARAC Year

Throughout 2025, LARAC has focused on strengthening what we do and shaping the road ahead, as the new structure bedded in. Under the leadership of Executive Director Toni McNamara, the team has continued to grow in strength. Tom McBeth has developed the Policy Officer role, providing strong representation on key policy issues. Lucy Bennett has expanded her responsibilities as Business Support Lead, ensuring smooth day-to-day operations. Mariana McManus has continued in her role providing vital admin support, helping to keep member services and partnerships running efficiently. Together, the team ensures LARAC is well positioned to support members through a period of significant change for the sector.

Business Plan 2025-2027

In April 2025, the Executive signed off a new three-year Business Plan. This builds on the success of the 2023-24 plan while preparing LARAC for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The five priorities for 2025-27 are:

Policy & Representation: strengthening LARAC’s role as a trusted voice, shaping government and industry policy on waste and resources.

Membership Expansion & Retention: exploring new membership models and growing representation, particularly across devolved nations.

Training & Capacity Building: improving access to professional development, including signposting to discounted training opportunities.

Event Growth: expanding regional events and national conferences to ensure broad representation and strong member engagement.

Operational Efficiency: refining internal structures and ensuring continuity following the 2024 restructure, supporting future growth.

This plan will guide our work through to 2027 and ensure LARAC continues to deliver value for members while maintaining financial sustainability.

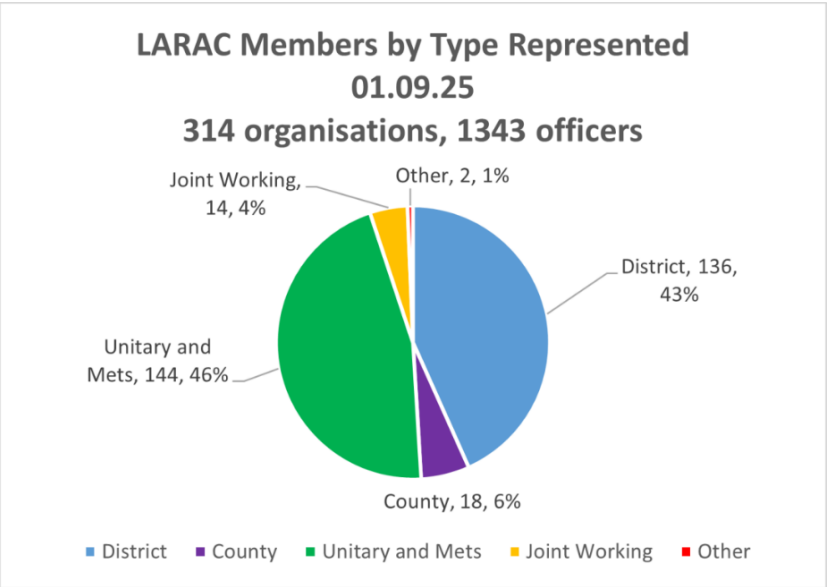
Membership Services

Membership remains strong and continues to grow. In 2025, we are proud to welcome 11 new members, bringing our representation to an impressive 80% of UK authorities. We now have 1343 individual officer contacts across our network, reflecting the diversity of councils we represent.

Value for Money

One of the central measures of our success is providing excellent value for money to our members, and 2025 was no exception. Over 16 years (2009/10–2025/26), membership fees have risen by just £65, from £380 to £445, averaging only £4.06 per year. Fees have remained frozen at £445 for over five years (2020/21–2025/26).

Had they tracked inflation, the 2025/26 fee would be around £615. In real terms, members are paying less than in 2009. This careful stewardship ensures local authorities continue to receive high-quality support and representation without facing unsustainable costs.



Toni McNamara,
Executive Director



The LARAC Year continued....

Webinars

LARAC webinars continue to provide members with valuable insights and practical guidance. The sessions held during 2024-2025 included:

September 2024 Collecting Non-Household Municipal (NHM) Recycling and Food Waste

February 2025 Top UK Councils Share Winning Waste Management Strategies

May 2025 Tackling Food Waste Collections from Flats

September 2025 The Future of Flexible Plastic Recycling

Members are encouraged to share suggestions for future webinar topics to ensure these sessions remain relevant and useful.

Policy & Representation

Over the past year LARAC has continued to play a central role in representing local authority views in national policy discussions and supporting members through significant developments in waste and recycling.

LARAC's policy work remains focused on ensuring members have access to timely information, clear analysis, and strong national representation. This combination of advocacy and support will continue as reforms move towards implementation, with the aim of achieving workable and financially sustainable outcomes for local authorities.

Events & Conferences

2025 has seen further growth in LARAC's events programme, providing valuable opportunities for networking, knowledge

sharing, and professional development. Key events this year included:

November 2024 LARAC/ROAR Health and Safety Event

8 May 2025 LARAC Scotland, Radisson Blu, Glasgow

15 May 2025 Northern Ireland Waste Management Conference, Titanic Conference Centre, Belfast (LARAC Sponsor)

8 July 2025 LARAC Wales, Park Gate Hotel, Cardiff

Regional meetings in England also continue to provide vital opportunities for local networking and knowledge exchange. For details of events and updates in your area, please visit the [LARAC website](#).

Communications

Our LARAC OnLine newsletters remain the main channel for member updates. Engagement with LinkedIn has continued to grow, with more followers and higher levels of interaction than ever before. Use of X (Twitter) has been decreasing with it now primarily used to advertise member job vacancies.

The discussion forum reminders are proving successful in driving more responses to member queries, helping members to connect and share good practice more effectively.

This year, our Chair and Executive Team have worked tirelessly behind the scenes, representing LARAC members at key meetings. They highlight members' challenges and ensure local authorities' perspectives are understood by industry and stakeholders. Meeting summaries are shared on our website wherever possible.

Looking Ahead - Celebrating 40 Years of LARAC

This year, 2025, is one of progress for LARAC, and also one of celebration as we mark LARAC's 40th anniversary as an organisation. Over the past four decades, LARAC has grown from a small group of committed officers into the influential national voice for local authority recycling and resource management. This milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey so far and to recognise the contributions of all those who have shaped LARAC's identity and achievements.

As we look to the future, we do so with renewed energy and purpose. With our new Business Plan, expanding membership, active role in policy debates, and an ongoing commitment to value for money, LARAC is in a strong position to support members through the next phase of sector transformation. The challenges ahead are significant, but with 40 years of experience behind us, a dedicated team, and a clear vision, we are confident in our ability to continue leading and supporting local authorities for many years to come.



Toni McNamara, Executive Director

Northern Ireland

Coming into my third year of being the Northern Ireland regional Representative, I feel that there has been incredible success in increasing the awareness and support to NI LARAC members and drive the NI representation in policy and strategic matters across the UK. There has been a significant positive shift to NI members at a time where there has been continued legislative uncertainty. The support provided by LARAC, to the Members through webinars, policy reviews, conference attendance and consultation responses, has helped establish LARAC within NI.

Policy Shift?

Northern Ireland Members have been (im)patiently waiting for the release of the results of the NI Rethinking Resources Consultation (Common Collections) since Autumn 2024. The response from the consultation will be used to shape the future collection, guidelines and regulations for the collection of waste/resource in NI in relation to the Climate Change Act 2022. Councils could see mandatory requirements to further separate their recyclables collections and reduce collection capacity of residual, shifting the policy of many kerbside collections and processes. It is hoped that direction will be published Autumn 2025.

Despite this void, other areas of policy has moved forward for NI and this year has seen further assistance on the many policy reviews and consultations hit by the Waste Sector, especially as NI policy change featured quite heavily in some of the proposals. LARAC provided responses to The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on the consultation on proposals for a new Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities in Northern Ireland. LARAC provided a briefing paper and pulled together a response that was submitted for the 12 November deadline.

A response was also submitted to DAERA on the consultation on a draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement for Northern Ireland. Again, LARAC provided a briefing paper and drafted and submitted a response for the 9 December deadline.

DAERA published the Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities (Jan 2025) in which LARAC provided a response to initial consultation.

Whilst some consultations coming from DEFRA are mostly affecting English Local Authorities, LARAC continues to represent to represent NI members in both the joint government consultations and the dedicated Northern Ireland government consultations and workshops. My additional role within the Policy Team as the NI Executive member, also ensures that NI is represented both in views and best practice.

Dedicated webinars such as EPR, ETS and Collections Best Practice etc. have been held for all UK members including NI, providing access to panels of technical and policy experts to assist in understanding and planning for proposed legislative and operational changes expected, with more specific webinars due in the Autumn months.

Northern Ireland Waste & Resource Management Conference CIWMNI & Recycle NI

Following the success of providing sponsorship for NI Member Councils to attend the CIWMNI & Recycle NI conference over the last few years, it was agreed that LARAC would again provide sponsorship for each Member to attend the “Driving Circularity – the way forward: Overcoming Challenges and Creating Opportunities” conference held by CIWMNI and Recycle NI at Titanic Conference Centre, 15 May. Tom McBeth represented LARAC by providing a presentation

on “Introduction of plastic film and flexibles for recycling”, a topic that was greatly discussed in the afternoon of the conference.

LARAC hosted two places per member Council to attend the conference, which were fully utilised. The feedback was extremely positive and showed that by offering these places it encouraged more council officers to attend in general. It has been agreed that this offering will continue for Northern Ireland LARAC Members as well as other collaborative opportunities where possible.

New Members

I am delighted to welcome both Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to the LARAC NI fold. Both Council became Members this year and are already benefiting from the opportunities to attend meetings, webinars and have assistance with their policy reviews.

General Meetings/Webinar

As always, I want to be able to continue to support all NI LARAC Members, therefore if there are any dedicated topics or best practice themes that NI Members would like covered through dedicated webinars or meetings, please let me know.

**Lynsey Daly, LARAC
Northern Ireland Rep**



Scotland

In a sustained approach to increase awareness and provide support to LARAC Scotland members, as well as the wider UK waste industry that continues to operate within an ever-changing policy landscape, I am pleased to say that the reception and engagement from members in Scotland has been nothing short of sensational. The willingness of Scottish members to share their perspectives, attend events, and contribute to consultations has strengthened LARAC's ability to represent and advocate effectively on their behalf.

As the devolved national representative in Scotland, I sit within LARAC's policy team alongside other devolved representatives, LARAC's policy officer, and senior LARAC members. In addition to my policy duties, I am also part of the Fly Tipping, Enforcement, and Aluminium teams. In these roles, I continue to engage with stakeholders across multiple industries, ensuring the Scottish context is heard while feeding back to members on developments that could affect their operations.

Engagement is central to this work. By liaising with a representative Scottish local authority population and planning the Scottish conference with other colleagues, LARAC ensures that members' views and concerns are addressed. Draft responses are shared with members for comment before submission, but this does not restrict Scottish members from responding individually. This strengthens collective representation while safeguarding independence.

Actions and Activities so far in 2025

The year has already seen significant developments. The Scottish Government has made strides toward tackling serious

and organised crime in the waste industry. A key step has been the draft Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) Scotland (Amendment) 2025, designed to align Scotland with England and Northern Ireland. Applications have also opened for Deposit Management Organisations (DMO) across the three nations.

On packaging, DEFRA and the Scheme Administrator launched the Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) Recyclability Assessment Methodology (RAM) UK-wide. At the same time, Highland Heritage Woodworks partnered with Recycl8 to expand sustainable facilities—an example of industry-led innovation complementing policy.

Further pEPR updates have been released, including new context around Regulation 60 and reporting obligations. The Scottish Government also opened a consultation on the future of the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF), acknowledging the forecast reduction in landfill as Scotland transitions to a circular economy.

Another consultation, "Changes to Waste Management Services," considers extending the ban on landfilling biodegradable municipal waste. It seeks views on whether rural food waste exemptions remain appropriate and how Scotland should approach textile collections.

Circular Communities Scotland published its Strategic Plan Summary 2025–2028, while the Binn Group expanded into the Highlands with its acquisition of R Finnie Skip Hire. EIS Waste Services Ltd also secured the waste and recycling contract for The Tall Ships Races 2025 in Aberdeen.

SEPA announced changes to regulating waste on land activities, requiring new Environmental Authorisations (EASR). A nationwide single-use vape ban also came into force. Other developments included analysis of the Scottish Aggregates Tax, mattress recycling in Aberdeenshire in partnership with Stella's Voice, and GAP Alba's opening of a fridge and insulation panel recycling facility in Perthshire.

Community-led work has also progressed. Keep Scotland Beautiful, with the Highland Community Waste Partnership and support from The National Lottery Climate Action Fund, delivered projects tackling food waste, share-and-repair schemes, and single-use packaging.

On the digital side, the Scottish Government is working with UK partners to deliver a Digital Waste Tracking System. Additionally, the government launched a £2 million Heavy Goods Vehicle Market Readiness Fund for 2025–26 to help hauliers decarbonise.

Conclusion

The Scottish Government, decision-making bodies, and local authorities have engaged positively throughout 2025. We are pleased to see innovation, collaboration, and implementation driving progress across Scotland. From legislative reforms to local recycling initiatives, momentum is strong, and success stories continue to emerge. LARAC Scotland remains committed to representing its members, amplifying their voices, and supporting them in navigating this dynamic policy environment.



Wales

Bore da or Prynhawn da if you're reading this in the morning or afternoon! I cannot believe I have had the privilege to be the Welsh representative for two years now, time has flown by!

As a national representative in Wales, I sit within LARAC's policy team alongside other devolved reps, LARAC's policy lead and other senior LARAC members. Being a voice for the local authorities in Wales and sharing our good practice being number two recyclers in the world has been great. I have been contacted on many occasions by LAs in England asking for advice and information on how we run things in Wales to aid recycling rates and good practices.

The great thing about LARAC is the contacts and information you can gather, I will continue to share information across borders and am always open to discuss waste matters and help.

Having Our Say

During the last year I have worked with the policy team on consultations and briefing papers giving Welsh input as much as possible. We invited local authorities to meet to discuss consultation on:

Three new and two amended standard rules permits - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space (cyfoethnaturiol.cymru) formulating a brief.

The lower rate of Landfill disposal tax.

Webinars

There have been dedicated webinars such as EPR, Top UK Councils Share Winning Waste Management Strategies (which

my LA presented) and recycle week have been held for all UK members, providing access to wide sets of information and expert advice from a panel of experts around the world of waste.

We are looking to work more closely with Welsh government arranging more regular meetings to discuss Welsh LA stances within waste policy.

LARAC Wales Conference 2025



It was great organising this conference, I personally felt it went extremely well and from feedback from attendees it seems so also. The venue/content and speakers were all excellent and the Q&A sessions were very informative.

A highlight of mine was session three where we managed to get a local authority perspective, particularly Newport council who have made significant changes to progress to 70% recycling rate. It was also great to have a representative speaking from North Wales at our conference to have a perspective of the difficulties they face at the top of Wales.

To the future

I am hoping to work closely with the policy team in anticipation of the Welsh DRS consultation that should shortly be making an appearance, keep your eyes peeled on meetings, we would love to hear other Welsh LA's opinions. I will be attending the UK LARAC conference, in which we have two scholars from Wales attending again! 😊

As always, I want to continue to support all Welsh members with anything so if there are any topics/webinars/fields you want to discuss please do get in touch with me and I can organise.

Diolch yn fawr!



Rob Lewis, LARAC Wales Rep

England Regions

South West – Ruth Edwards, SWISCo (Torbay Council)

The highlight of the last year in my position as the SW Rep for LARAC was the regional event arranged in partnership with the CIWM SW Centre and SWWRF, which took place in Taunton in June. You can't beat an in-person event and there are already informal plans for another partnership event in 2026.

Through contact with LARAC members in the South West I have helped to raise issues within the Executive, which in turn are raised with external agencies, helping local authority officers to feel reassured that their concerns are heard.

During the last year, I have assisted LARAC with consultation responses and policy position statements. It's been a pleasure to work alongside the other Executive members and the LARAC staff team. What a smooth transition to the new staff structure this year!



East Midlands - Elly Attwood, West Northamptonshire Council

Since 2024 the region has welcomed two new members, Derbyshire Dales and City of Lincoln Councils and we will

support them with all the fantastic membership resources and benefits that LARAC brings. We now have twenty two members across the East Midlands representing all tiers of local government, from small rural to large city Councils.



In the last year all Councils have received their estimate for pEPR funding for 2025/26. Each local authority is now working through their funding agreement to decide how the money will be spent on increasing packaging recycling and improving services. Questions remain on how the funding must be spent in light of the fact that it is not ring fenced but the LARAC team is working very hard to ask all the right questions of DEFRA and Pack UK so that our members are fully informed.

In the last year I have attended meetings about compostable packaging and more recently about commercial waste collections related to EPR funding.

Remember – LARAC is all about our members. Don't forget that the discussion forum already has a wealth of information and is the best place to pose a question on anything you are stuck on and remember, there is no such thing as a silly question!

East – Hilary Garlick, Suffolk County Council

This year, I've been proud to work with LARAC, as we continued delivering support and representation to authorities

across the Eastern Region and nationally to ensure LA voices are heard.

LARAC HQ staff have been working like machines for us! Alongside committee volunteers like myself, LARAC has posted over 40 detailed meeting reports and held behind-the-scenes discussions to influence policy and seek answers on key issues like pEPR and Simpler Recycling. Thanks to eastern region authorities who've reached out with questions—while we can't always provide answers, raising these concerns with policymakers is vital.

In March, I attended an LGA workshop on fair approaches to the Emissions Trading Scheme, a topic other LARAC committee members are also tackling. I also joined a Circular Economy workshop on microplastics in anaerobic digestate—an eye-opening session that helped explain to academics and government the realities of LA control over feedstock.

We've appreciated LARAC's webinars on food waste from flats and insights from top-performing councils. The popular Q&A section of the webinars highlights the value of sharing ideas (and challenges!). We're always open to suggestions for future topics - or volunteers to speak! So please do get in touch.



England Regions

Yorkshire and Humber – James Ward, Hull City Council

As the date for the introduction of Simpler Recycling for households looms on the horizon, the importance of LARAC engaging directly with its regions to fully understand the range of issues being faced by our members on the road to its implementation becomes increasingly important.

The opportunity to engage direct with Yorkshire and Humber councils at regional meetings provides LARAC with a view from the “coalface” which helps to identify the key issues in the development of LARAC policy and lobbying positions with the Government and the wider industry.

The strength of the regional network in the Yorkshire and Humber continues to grow with quarterly face-to-face meetings which are attended by member authorities and wider industry representation including regular update slots from WRAP, the LARAC Policy Team and more recently Alupro. I firmly believe that giving members the opportunity to engage directly at these sessions offers enormous value and the industry understand the benefit of accessing this two way process.

Further events are planned for the coming year and the strength of LARAC’s regional representation has been recognised by DEFRA. They will be tapping into this to gain a better understanding of the local authority sector’s readiness for Simpler Recycling and what its introduction will really mean for Councils.

As a member led organisation, LARAC’s focus will continue to be on delivering events which provide value for its membership and support in the understanding and delivery of waste policy.



James Ward, Vice Chair & Y&H Rep

North West – Jo Oliver, Tameside MBC

This year has seen nearly all of us busy with procurement of food waste vehicles and containers to launch the service from March 2026. Speaking to other authorities I know there will be a fair few of us who won’t go “live” with this until later in 2026 as we wait for vehicles to arrive along with caddies.

October 24 saw the soft launch of the inclusion of plastic pots, tubs and trays into the recycling collections for all the Greater Manchester authorities who are part of the GMCA contract. This has been welcomed by the public but whether this results in an increase in recycling rates we wait to see.

The need to separate WUDs waste from other bulky waste has caused operational concerns for some. In Greater Manchester it goes to an energy from waste facility but for those authorities who are using landfill it will lead to significant additional costs in handling and treatment. We’re also trying to address concerns about manual handling and ensure we can still provide a timely service to residents.

In April 2025 the North West Resource Forum (NWRF) was launched for both local authorities and businesses working in the waste and recycling sector. A further meeting was held in July in Leyland, Lancashire. For details of future events please visit [North West Resources Forum \(NWRF\) | England](#)

We heard in July 25 about the final pEPR payment for 25/26 from DEFRA. As usual there are winners and losers though thankfully the initial amount in the November 2024 letter is guaranteed. Most of us have experienced some wranglings with our Finance teams on if this money can stay within waste services, good luck with any ongoing negotiations.

As I type this just booked my train ticket down to the NEC for this year’s LARAC conference. Looking forward as always to meeting up with colleagues from the North West at this year’s event.



England Regions

North East – Vicki Burrell, Durham County Council

Over the past year, North East councils have made significant strides in advancing sustainable waste management practices. National reforms such as Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility have further shaped local strategies, encouraging councils to improve recycling rates and reduce residual waste over future years. These changes have prompted councils to enhance resident engagement, refine waste data collection, and develop financial strategies to mitigate risks.

While the NE councils deliver the day to day waste management service, planning for the future is also taking place. For many this includes the implementation and rollout of separate weekly food waste collections to householders from April 2026 (following the successful introduction of local authority trade waste food waste collection services from April 2025), planning service changes to collection systems and procuring residual waste treatment. Introducing the affordable collection of films and flexibles from kerbside recycling collection schemes from 2027 will be challenging and the NE councils welcome solutions from Government and industry to achieve this.

The North East Councils continue to engage with each other and across the waste management sector. LARAC sponsors and supports the North East Recycling Forum (NERF) which has been operating for over 35 years. It offers an opportunity for the public, private and community sector to share best practice on waste and recycling issues. The forum is supported by the sector via 'the Friends of NERF' enabling our quarterly meetings to be free of charge for delegates to attend. The NERF annual conference is held in November.



I am looking forward to the annual LARAC Conference in October and supporting the scholarship programme once again. LARAC is here to represent you, our members. If I can help in any way regionally or nationally, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Vicki Burrell, Vice Chair & North East Rep

London – Cindy Gardener, Richmond upon Thames and Wandsworth Councils

The focus for waste professionals has changed significantly in the past decade not least in the last few years with Simpler Recycling legislation, and the EPR policy that holds packaging manufacturers responsible for the costs of collection, sorting, recycling and disposal of their products. Whilst we are all checking our own calculations for EPR payments, with the first payment expected to land this year, this marks a positive change in direction for waste management. Having joined the Ecogenesys Repic Conference and AGM In June, it was interesting to hear about this change and the impact from the other side. It's not a pretty or glamorous industry but we

remain passionate about delivering services that support our residents to do the right thing with waste.

LARAC continues to represent its members in industry meetings, webinars and in person. You can keep up to date using the LARAC website for policy, and the Exec meeting updates shared throughout the year. You can look back at webinar recordings at any time, so as materials become relevant to your borough you can check in on past reports and recordings.

For London, delivering a separate weekly food waste service to all households remains a challenge particularly for Flats above Shops (FLASH). There are several trials taking place for this property type across London, with no surprises in finding 'a one size fits all' service is not possible, so a range of service types will be needed if we are to meet the simpler recycling commitment. ReLondon have set up a new waste officer network group for London officers (first meeting in person on 24 September) I'm sure this will be a hot topic!

I'm very much looking forward to the LARAC Conference 2025 and welcoming the new scholars. I can't believe it's a year already! Hope to see you there.



England Regions

West Midlands – Alison Wainwright, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

I can't believe how quickly this year has gone. It is hard to imagine that I have been a Regional Representative for almost 12 months. I feel like I have learnt so much from the LARAC team and feel honoured to represent my region.

The past year has certainly been interesting with DEFRA publishing the outcomes and guidance for Simpler Recycling in England in November. It was good news that local authorities will retain the ability to decide on the frequency of their residual waste collections. Local authorities received their EPR payments. Then in December we were told about the English Devolution White Paper, which sets out the government's plans to widen and deepen devolution across England. I have worked in local government for over 32 years and whilst this has been talked about before, it seems set to finally happen and I suspect that there will be many changes ahead for anybody working in local government.

In the West Midlands, Local Authorities have been busy implementing the changes from simpler recycling with the majority starting to procure caddies and vehicles for weekly food waste collections.

In June 2025 it became illegal to sell single use vapes in the UK. In a move designed to combat environmental damage and their widespread use by children. The ban appears to have decreased the number of disposable vapes discarded and littered, however, it seems to have had a limited impact on vaping overall as users are switching to reusable alternatives.

In February I attended the Communications Conference in London. I was asked to Chair the Behaviour Change session. Something that I had not done before but I enjoyed it, and it was a very interesting conference.

The West Midlands conference hosted in Telford by Craemer was in June. Although I have attended this event in the past this was my first time helping to organise it. The title of this year's event was 'Now we know; what comes next' and as usual it was well received and attended.



I am looking forward to the annual LARAC Conference in October, my first time as a LARAC representative. If I can help in any way regionally, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

South East – Ian Upstone, Cherwell District Council

Well, another year has flown by, and I'm writing the annual report piece for the Southeast region. I have reflected on what I wrote last year, and it was a waiting game, well we wait no more, EPR funding has been agreed and confirmed. Some authorities in the Southeast are happy, some are disappointed, but we all have increased funds. Will this additional funding


find its way into the waste and recycling budgets? Again, it's a mixed picture of uncertainty. Some authorities in the Southeast are expecting the Waste and Recycling teams to present business cases to access the funding, some haven't agreed a process yet.

With LARAC being instrumental in securing the additional funding from the processors, we are now busy ensuring the funding is used to improve waste and recycling services for residents. We will continue to be involved on behalf of the southeast members in direct discussions with DEFRA in relation to the EPR funding, to ensure it will create improved services. I have also represented the southeast members in meetings with the trade press, processors and representative from the waste industry in the last 12 months.

The next 12 months will be just as busy with LARAC continuing to be the voice for local authorities that DEFRA and processors listen to.



The LARAC Executive 2024/25

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES						
						
Cathy Cook Chair (ReLondon)	Andrew Bird Treasurer (Newcastle-under-Lyme)	Gareth Rollings (West Sussex)	Ashley Wild Health and Safety (Basingstoke & Deane)	Edward Raj Yendluri (Westminster)	Rachel Melvin (South Staffordshire)	Robert Lewis Wales (Blaenau Gwent)
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES						
						
Solomon Ede Scotland (West Lothian)	Lynsey Daly Northern Ireland (Antrim & Newtownabbey)	Cindy Gardener London (Richmond & Wandsworth)	Victoria Burrell North East/Vice Chair (Durham)	Jo Oliver North West (Tameside)	Alison Wainright West Midlands (Newcastle-under-Lyme)	James Ward Yorkshire & Humber/Vice Chair (Hull)
CO-OPTED REPS						
						
Eloise Attwood East Midlands (West Northamptonshire)	Ian Upstone South East (Cherwell)	Ruth Edwards South West (Torbay)	Hilary Garlick East (Suffolk)	Dr Wendy Fail Outstanding Contribution to Recycling 2021 (Northumberland)	Anthony Morris Co-Optee (Staffordshire Moorlands & High Peak)	Nicola Percival Recycling Team of the Year 2024 winner (Herefordshire)
LARAC Staff						
						
Toni McNamara Executive Director	Tom McBeth Policy Officer	Lucy Bennett Business Support Lead	Mariana McManus Support Officer			

