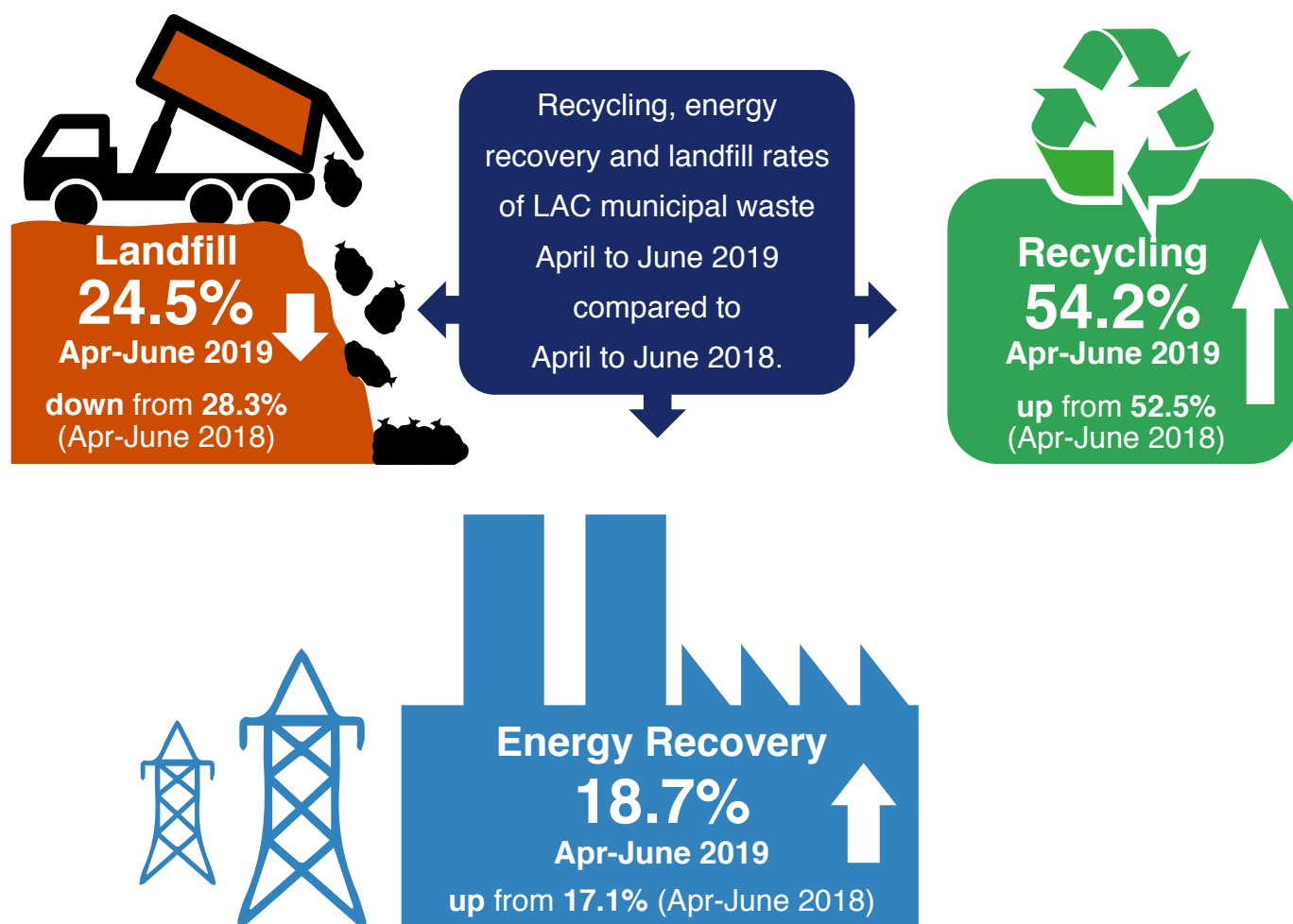


LAC Municipal Waste Collections by NI Councils

April to June 2019



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Aspiring to a future where plastics are used and reused more sustainably

ADRIAN THOMPSON

DID you grab a take away coffee this morning as part of your daily commute? Did it have a plastic lid? Is your lunch in a plastic bag, or maybe you will buy a sandwich or hot food which comes on a polystyrene container, to be thrown away after the contents devoured.

You may not fall into these categories and many of us now do reuse our own coffee cups and recycle our shopping bags, but too many don't.

Today leading members of the waste and resources industry in Northern Ireland will meet at Titanic Belfast to put the question of 'The Future for Plastics' at the centre of the Chartered Institute of Waste Management Conference.

The use of plastics and the continuing damaging impact on our environment is a global issue, and one which at the moment is never far from the global headlines.

As chair of the Northern Ireland Centre of the Institute, I will welcome speakers and

delegates to today's event to exchange ideas and to contribute positively to the global issue of how we manage

plastic waste.

Our event is well timed. This issue has become very emotive, helped I am sure by the *Blue Planet* BBC series which has helped a new more sustainable way of living enter the mainstream.

A real shift in public opinion and engagement is occurring as people now try and live life in a more sustainable manner through recycling at home and making more informed decisions on the purchase of goods.

The issue of global warming and climate control is also ventilated in a high-profile way in the Extinction Rebellion protests and Greta Thunberg inspired Friday school strikes.

As technical director of WDR & RT Taggart I've seen great changes in industry as we step away from just the management of the wastes that we create to realising the value of the materials we discard. I have seen this first hand in the support we

provide to many of the local Councils across Northern Ireland as they continue to make huge efforts and see significant progress in increasing recycling rates.

In 2018/19 many Councils set to exceed the 50 per cent recycling target, and Mid-Ul-

ster District Council looks set to achieve a recycling rate of over 60 per cent.

But there is more work to do as we assist the waste and resource industry in developing new technologies and infrastructure to ensure that materials that were once viewed as a waste are now recycled, recovered and put to economic and business use.

As chair of CIWM Northern Ireland, I would like to see a future where not only plastics but all materials are used and reused in a more sustainable manner.

We live in a small region, but that should not stop us from setting a leading example on one of the burning questions of the day.

■ **Adrian Thompson is a Technical Director with WDR & RT Taggart and Chair of CIWM Northern Ireland**



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BLIGHT ON OUR LIVES: The use of plastics and the damaging impact on the environment is a global issue