

Appendix 1 – National Policy Review 2023-2024

Household Waste Management Strategy Update

1. Overview

This annual Household Waste Management Strategy Policy Review considers the regulatory and policy framework within which the strategy is delivered. Changes in national policy and legislation, as well as local policy, can affect the principles within the strategy and the ability to deliver actions.

At a national level, waste management policy is undergoing a period of unprecedented change, primarily with the introduction of the Environment Act 2021. Whilst local authorities and key stakeholders still await crucial detail to confirm how the Act will affect local authorities, this policy review will set out the known impacts and anticipated timescales for change.

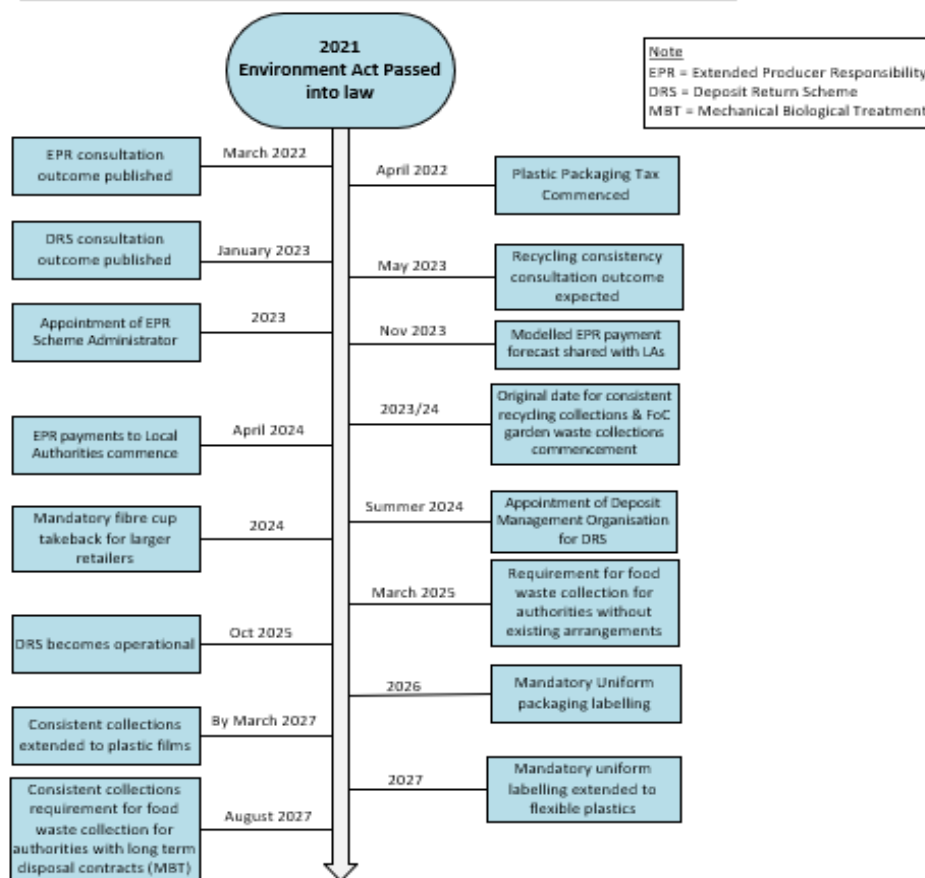
2. National policy and legislation

2.1 Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 (EA21) acts as the UK's new framework for environmental protection and aims to improve air and water quality, protect wildlife, increase recycling, and reduce waste.

DEFRA undertook public consultations on three key waste-focused elements of the Act in May/June 2021. There has however been a significant delay in information being published by government, including details on the new funding mechanisms, to allow local authorities and stakeholders to effectively plan the implementation of these changes. A summary of the timescales is in Figure 1.

Environment Act Impacts on Waste Services – Anticipated Timeline



Last Updated: April 2023

Timescales are subject to change as detail is released by Government

Figure 1. Estimated timescales for The Environment Act 2021

The key waste-related changes contained in the Environment Act are summarised below:

<p>Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)</p>	<p>Expected commencement by October 2025 (recent indications of further delays to this implementation date)</p>
<p><i>Changes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return scheme will apply to all drink containers (up to 3 litres) which are made of PET plastic, steel or aluminium cans. Glass containers will not be scope. • A small refundable deposit (estimated to be 20p) would be payable on each item in scope. • All retailers which sell in-scope items are required to operate as return points but will be able to apply for an exemption. • New DRS administration body to be set up to oversee and implement scheme by October 2025. 	<p><i>Anticipated impacts and outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected to increase the recycling of products in scope to 90% after three years of implementation. • Reduced local authority costs associated with collection and disposal of litter. Significant risk of reduced income to the council from sale of recycling that will be in scope of scheme as there is likely to be a reduction of these items collected in kerbside recycling collection services. Materials are high value materials which contribute to current recycling income.
<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)</p>	<p>Expected commencement from April 2024, (recent indications of further delays to this implementation date)</p>
<p><i>Changes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All producers of packaging to be made accountable for covering the full cost of the recovery and recycling of their products. • Estimated to facilitate an overall recycling rate for packaging of 73% by 2030. • Producers will pay fees based on material type and volume • Aims to encourage better packaging design, phasing out unnecessary packaging and incentivising producers to develop recyclable packaging. • Councils will be compensated for the costs of efficient and effective collections. • Introduces the requirement for mandatory uniform recyclability labelling on packaging. • Introduces mandatory retailer takeback of single-use fibre cups. 	<p><i>Anticipated impacts and outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the composition and reduction in non-recyclable waste collected and disposed of by the council. • Opportunities to collect and recycle more packaging waste as sustainable markets are created. • Expectation to expand kerbside collections to include plastic film and flexible plastics, from 2026/27, although this relies on rapid development of recycling capacity and technology. • Opportunity to receive funding from the EPR compliance scheme to cover collection and recycling/ disposal costs in respect of in-scope packaging materials.

<p>Consistency in recycling collections</p>	<p>Consultation proposed start from 2023 but no update provided by government. The national Net Zero Strategy mandates councils to collect food waste from 2025</p>
<p><i>Changes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly separate collections of food waste expected to be mandated by 2025. • Fortnightly free of charge collections of garden waste expected to be mandated in larger containers (240L) than are currently supplied in Wiltshire (180L). • Collections of four key dry recyclable materials (plastic, paper & card, glass and metals) to be mandated. These materials should be collected separately from each other unless it is not technically, or economically practicable or separate collections present no significant environmental benefit. • Recycling collections to be expanded to include plastic films and flexible plastics possibly from 2027. • Increased recycling of business waste expected to be mandated. 	<p><i>Anticipated impacts and outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government have indicated that the “full net additional costs” incurred by those councils needing to put new collection services in place would be met. If this is not the case, service delivery costs will increase. • In Wiltshire, a net increase in collection vehicles will be required to provide free garden waste and weekly food waste collections, resulting in higher costs. • A significant change in the composition of our residual waste (e.g. removing most bio-degradable waste) may mean that the waste input specifications for the Landfill Diversion Contracts cannot be met. • Potential requirement to further separate recycling at the point of collection. May require a review of current collection methods for kerbside collected recycling. • New collections for plastic films need to be put in place, with disposal arrangements. • The council may need to provide collections of waste and recycling from businesses. •

2.2 DEFRA Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 – First revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan

The Environmental improvement plan sets out additional targets and monitoring measures intended to contribute to the achievement of an “apex goal” of improving nature by halting the decline in biodiversity and so achieving thriving plants and wildlife. The plan builds on the vision set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan first published in 2018, and considers the goals originally set out in that document, outlining progress made, specifying additional targets and plans to deliver against these.

In support of the apex goal, the plan states an intention that avoidable waste will be eliminated by 2050. To achieve this, the plan contains commitments that the government will:

- explore options for the near elimination of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill from 2028.
- eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042.
- seek to eliminate waste crime by 2042.
- halve ‘residual’ waste (excluding major mineral waste) produced per person by 2042. For the purposes of the target, ‘residual’ waste is defined as waste that is sent to landfill, put through incineration or used in energy recovery in the UK, or that is sent overseas to be used in energy recovery.

The residual waste target is underpinned by a number of interim targets, which should be achieved by 31 January 2028. The council is awaiting details of how these targets will affect local authority waste management, including how they are going to be monitored.

2.3 DEFRA Consultation on preventing charges for DIY waste at household waste recycling centres

Waste Disposal Authorities (WDAs) are required to provide residents with a place to dispose of their household waste, under Section 51 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 (the 1990 Act). Councils in England are prevented from charging residents to deposit household waste under the Local Government (Prohibition of Charges at Household Waste Recycling Centres) (England) Order 2015.

Residents can dispose of household waste for free in their local area. Changes to the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 are anticipated in 2023, to clarify where construction waste should be treated as ‘DIY waste’. These regulatory changes are expected to prevent Local Authorities charging for the disposal of DIY waste from small-scale projects by householders.

A number of councils charge to accept what had been considered to be non-household waste (typically including waste arising from DIY activities) at their household recycling sites, and Wiltshire Council had resolved to apply such charges later this year, as part of savings measures agreed as part of the Full Council budget setting meeting in February 2023. For Wiltshire, this updated government guidance immediately places a further unbudgeted pressure on the council in the order of £0.6m PA from 2024/25, and potentially places additional risks on the delivery of additional associated MTFs commitments that had been based on reduced demand at recycling centres.

Government also intends to allow councils to continue their use of HRC bookings systems, however their impacts on the disposal of household waste will be kept under review.

3. Emerging national policy changes and consultations

There are several potential policy changes being consulted on which affect the council’s Household Waste Management Strategy. These include:

DEFRA Call for evidence to support the near elimination of biodegradable waste disposal in landfill from 2028	The Call for Evidence will help deliver the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee that the landfilling of biodegradable waste is discontinued as part of the net zero pathway for waste for Carbon Budget. This Call for Evidence does not set out new policy but will inform future policy.
DEFRA Consultation on potential amendments to the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Regulation.	Closed April 2023. Consultation on potential amendments to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations. This may result in lower limits for existing POPs which could affect materials not currently regarded as POPs waste, and also new POPs which may affect wastes such as carpets, clothes and textiles.
DEFRA Investigation into Persistent Organic Pollutants.	DEFRA are conducting projects looking at brominated chemical substances in landfill leachate. The substances have previously been used as flame-retardants to help protect textile applications, including furniture and carpets. The study aims to help identify items that are most at risk of containing POPs.

4. Local drivers

4.1 Local Policy Drivers

4.1.1 Wiltshire Council Business Plan (2022 to 2032)

The Council’s Business Plan (2022 to 2032) sets out our priorities and our work with communities.

As a council, we know our mission is to ensure:

- The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy and enriched lives.
- Our communities continue to be beautiful and exciting places to live.

- Our local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce.
- We lead the way in how councils and counties mitigate the climate challenges ahead.

Outcome 4 of the business plan focuses on Sustainable Environment. Of the aims within the plan, the main items related to the waste strategy are:

- Find and promote new opportunities for people and businesses to reuse and recycle.
- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, increase recycling and keep Wiltshire looking beautiful.
- Become a carbon neutral organisation by 2023.

4.1.2 Waste Service Plan (2023/24)

A Waste Service Plan 2023/24 is being developed to identify the key activities which the service will undertake to meet the priorities of the waste strategy and business plan. In addition, the waste service plan documents a number of overarching service aims:

- Collect and dispose of waste in accordance with our statutory duty.
- Help to protect and preserve the environment by managing waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, promoting waste prevention and reuse as the most environmentally sustainable waste management practices.
- Ensure that we deliver and maintain safe, efficient, and cost-effective waste services.
- Engage and inform residents about their waste services to ensure that high-quality and dynamic services that respond to changes in legislation, waste composition, consumer habits are provided.

4.1.3 Climate Strategy

Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy was adopted in February 2022. The Strategy sets out the next five years of the council's journey to becoming a carbon neutral county. The Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24 sets out how Wiltshire Council will deliver the objectives of its Climate Strategy. Separately, the "Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-2024", focusses on actions that the council will take to reduce its own emissions.

Resource and Waste is a delivery theme within the strategy and has three main objectives:

- Work towards a circular economy.
- Work towards zero avoidable waste in Wiltshire and decarbonising the waste management process.
- Manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, increase the amount and quality of waste recycled and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Action R1 to R7 of the Delivery Plan have been developed to help meet the main objectives. Progress against these actions is reported to the Climate Team and are contained within the 6 Monthly Carbon Report which is reviewed by Cabinet.

4.2 Financial drivers

Wiltshire Council faces significant financial challenges over the coming three years due to an increased demand on key services and increasing costs linked to higher inflation. The council adopted a medium-term financial plan in February 2023 which sets out plans to balance the budget.

The adopted medium term financial plan includes several savings to the Waste Services budget which will need to be planned and implemented between April 2023 and March 2026.

4.3 Social drivers

4.3.1 Wiltshire Council Area boards

Area Boards are asked to select up to five local priorities, which will be evidence led to ensure they have the greatest impact on the lives of those in our communities.

Currently 17 of the 18 area boards have 'protecting the environment' or 'addressing climate change' as one of their top priorities.

Area Boards provides an opportunity to engage with communities to deliver key strategy actions.

4.3.2 Changing demographics

Wiltshire has a current population of 504,070, which is projected to increase to 528,100 by 2028. Although Wiltshire is in the least deprived 30% of local authorities within England, 14,013 people are considered to live in the most deprived areas of Wiltshire.

As of 2021, Wiltshire's population aged 65 or over had increased by 1.6% over the previous 3 years, representing one-fifth of the population. Life expectancy of this age group also increased 0.5% during this time. Wiltshire resident who have a long-term health problem or disability is 16%.

Demographic	Wiltshire Percentage	Data Source
% Aged 65 and over (from Census 2021)	21.9% <i>Wiltshire</i> , 18.6% <i>National figure</i>	<u>Public Health Outcomes Framework – Data - PHE from Apr 2021</u>
Aged 65 and over: life expectancy (from PHE PHOF)	22.1yrs (Female) and 19.5yrs (Male) <i>Wiltshire</i> , <i>National figures</i> 21.0yrs and 18.4yrs respectively	<u>Population Census 2021</u>
% of people with a under the equality act (from 2021 census)	16.9% <i>Wiltshire</i> , 17.5% <i>National figure</i>	<u>Disability Census 2021</u>
Main language is English (from 2021 census)	96.5% <i>Wiltshire</i> , 90.8% <i>National figure</i>	<u>Language Census Data 2021</u>

This shows we have a large and increasing aging population, and proportion of residents who have health limiting conditions, whom we need to make sure can access and use our services effectively.