

# Wiltshire Council

## **Household Waste Management Strategy: Forward Thinking Towards Zero Avoidable Waste**

2017-2027

Update 2019

Foreword

To follow

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# Executive Summary

To follow

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## Supporting Documents

Wiltshire Council's Household Waste Management Strategy 2017-2027 is made up of three individual documents.

1. The overarching strategy which presents the council's aims, goals and priorities for waste management services in Wiltshire for the ten year period 2017-27, updated to reflect the national legislative and policy framework for 2019.
2. An annual performance review which evaluates the council's performance against the priorities shown within the overarching strategy and the actions agreed for the previous year.
3. An annual action plan which documents the goals and priorities for the service to deliver for the coming year. This action plan will review the national and local context and clearly outline how the service will develop within the next year to meet the strategic aims and priorities documents within the overarching strategy.

The strategy will be updated and a performance review and an action plan will be produced annually and presented to the council's Environment Select Committee for consideration and comment.

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# 1. Introduction

Wiltshire is a thriving county with a strong community spirit. The council's vision set out in the business plan is to create strong communities in Wiltshire. This will be at the heart of the vision for the household waste management strategy. The waste strategy is an aspirational strategy which acknowledges the challenges faced by the council's waste management service whilst exploring new approaches and opportunities for managing Wiltshire's household waste over the next 10 years and beyond.

## **Our vision for Wiltshire's Household Waste Management Strategy 2017-2027 is working towards zero avoidable household waste in Wiltshire.**

This vision cannot be achieved by action from the council alone. In line with the council's business plan, it is essential that we work collaboratively with national, regional and local groups as well as our communities. Avoidable in this context means when a reusable or recyclable alternative could have been used instead, the household waste could have been reused or recycled, or when it could have been composted or biodegraded in the open environment.

The waste and recycling which we collect derives from the choices that residents make at home. We will work with residents to encourage them to take responsibility for managing their waste. The council must support local people so they feel informed and empowered to tackle local environmental issues within their neighbourhoods. The strategy will focus on delivering the business plan goal to achieve high recycling rates and reduce litter.

The council has a statutory duty to collect and manage waste produced by those resident within the council's administrative area and we will continue to offer a wide range of waste and recycling services for residents to access. We need to work with partners and residents in Wiltshire to help people to reduce the waste they produce. Where it is not possible to prevent waste being created, we will work with residents to encourage them to reuse and repair as much waste as possible. Wherever possible waste should be separated for recycling if it cannot be reused or repaired and it has reached the end of its life. In line with the waste hierarchy, it is the council's view that energy should be recovered from waste should it not be recycled or reused. Landfilling of waste is the least environmentally preferred option and should be further reduced to a minimum in Wiltshire.

## 2. Setting the scene

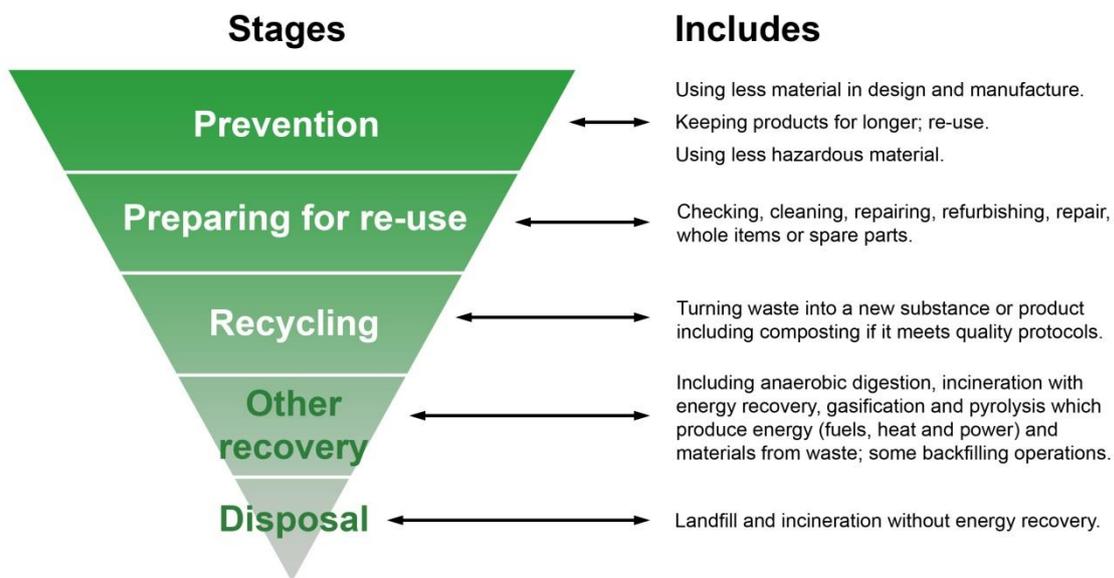
### 2.1 National policy and legislation

The EU Waste Framework Directive (revised 2008) obliges member states to manage waste in a way that does not have a negative impact on the environment or human health and to apply the waste hierarchy. In addition, the Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2011, as amended in 2012, set out the requirement for local authorities to manage all waste in accordance with the principles of the waste hierarchy and identify measures for continuous improvement.

#### 2.1.1 The waste hierarchy

The waste hierarchy ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place by refusing items which become waste or reducing the amount of waste we produce. When waste is created, the second priority is to prepare it for re-use, but if it has reached the end of its useful life the third priority is recycling. If waste cannot be managed in accordance with these priorities then energy should be recovered from it, and if all else fails it should be disposed of (i.e. to landfill). Departure from the hierarchy is permissible when the measures that would be required would not be reasonable in the circumstances or when departure will achieve the best overall environmental outcome in respect of that waste.

#### The Waste Hierarchy



#### 2.1.2 Environmental Protection Act 1990

As determined by the Environmental Protection Act (1990), the responsibility for household waste management in England lies with local authorities.

Under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) unitary authorities have a statutory duty to collect household waste which includes the collection of recycling from their local authority area and are responsible for the safe disposal and treatment of household waste collected.

Section 45 of the EPA states that local authorities shall

- Arrange for the collection of household waste in its area except waste:
  - i. which is situated at a place which in the opinion of the authority is so isolated or inaccessible that the cost of collecting it would be unreasonably high, and
  - ii. as to which the authority is satisfied that adequate arrangements for its disposal have been or can reasonably be expected to be made by a person who controls the waste
- If requested by the occupier of premises in its area to collect any commercial waste from the premises, to arrange for the collection of the waste.
- No charge shall be made for the collection of household waste except in cases prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State; and in any of those cases the authority may recover a reasonable charge for the collection of the waste from the person who made the request.

Section 46 of the EPA states that where an authority has a duty to arrange for the collection of household waste, the authority may require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified. The kind and number of the receptacles required shall be reasonable but this may include separate receptacles for waste which is to be recycled and waste which is not.

In reference to the receptacles, under section 46 of the act the authority may specify

- the size, construction and maintenance of the receptacles;
- the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them, and access to the receptacles for that purpose;
- the waste which may or may not be put into the receptacles and the precautions to be taken where particular substances or articles are put into them; and
- the steps to be taken by occupiers of premises to facilitate the collection of waste from the receptacles.

Section 51 of the EPA states that it is the duty of each waste disposal authority to arrange

- for the disposal of the controlled waste collected in its area by the waste collection authorities (in our case the unitary authority); and
- for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste.

In providing places for residents to deposit their household waste, the council must ensure that each place is situated either within the area of the authority or so as to be reasonably accessible to persons resident in its area, is available for the deposit of waste at all reasonable times and is available for the deposit of household waste free of charge by persons resident in the area.

### 2.1.3 High quality recycling

The EU Waste Framework Directive also recommends member states take measures to promote high quality recycling and, to this end, set up and maintain separate collections of at least the following materials from the household waste stream: paper, metal, plastic and glass to meet the necessary quality standards for the relevant recycling sectors, but only where doing so is technically, environmentally and economically practicable (“TEEP”). This requirement has been transposed into UK waste policy through the Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2011 as amended in 2012.

### 2.1.4 25 Year Environment Plan

In January 2018 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published a 25 Year Environment Plan which sets out government action to help the natural world regain

and retain good health. This plan sets out a wide range of ambitious proposals in order to tackle growing issues associated with waste management.

There are over thirty action points highlighted within the plan, half of which specifically relate to tackling plastic waste. Three action points relate to tackling waste food, a further two relate to reducing the amount and impact of litter and there are seven action points on recycling in general.

### 2.1.5 Resource and Waste Strategy for England

In December 2018 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England. The strategy sets out how government proposes to preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. Resources should be kept in use for as long as possible and maximum value should be extracted from them. Products and materials should be re-used, regenerated, recycled and recovered to prolong their life.

Government also aims to minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully and by tackling waste crime. The strategy gives a longer-term policy direction in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan aiming to eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan and eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050. Where existing legislation does not match government ambitions, new powers will be introduced to strengthen it.

### 2.1.6 Government Consultations

In February 2019 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published three consultations:

- Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system
- Consistency in household and business recycling collections in England
- Introducing a deposit return scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

At the same time HM Treasury published a consultation on the introduction of a plastic packaging tax.

The government responses to the results of the consultations were published in July 2019. Key points are set out in the paragraphs below.

Government intends to introduce an extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging in 2023. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has now taken primary powers in the Environment Bill to enable them to implement new extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems. They will bring forward detailed proposals on the specific nature of an EPR system for packaging and associated secondary legislation for consultation in 2020. This should lead to an increased demand for recyclable materials to be used in the production of new packaging.

In respect of consistency, government will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to develop more detailed regulations and guidance to implement consistency in recycling. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs anticipate bringing forward more detailed proposals early in 2020 and implementing the necessary changes to achieve greater consistency in household and business recycling as soon as possible thereafter. The target year for measures to come into effect from is 2023. The key impacts for Wiltshire Council would be the proposal to mandate weekly collections of food waste and the consideration being given to the provision of fortnightly free of charge garden waste collections.

Government also intends to introduce a deposit return scheme in 2023. The expectation is that there will be a further consultation on the detail of the scheme in early 2020. The key impact for Wiltshire Council would be the loss of plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans and glass bottles from the collection of dry recyclable materials.

For all areas of the plastic packaging tax design, government will continue to consider which approaches will best support the objectives of the tax, are most administratively feasible and do not have a disproportionate impact on business. HM Treasury will also continue to work closely with Defra to ensure that the plastic packaging tax complements the reforms to the packaging producer responsibility regulations and proposals for consistent collection of waste in England and a potential deposit return scheme for drinks containers. The government had proposed to set out the next steps at Budget 2019. HMRC will publish a technical consultation on the detail of the tax design at a later date, and publish draft legislation for consultation in 2020.

### 2.1.7 Environment Bill

The Environment Bill was introduced to Parliament on 15 October 2019. The bill establishes a regulatory body, the Office for Environmental Protection, to hold the government and public bodies to account and to set legally binding environmental improvement targets.

The bill aims to transform the way we manage our waste through providing powers to ensure that producers take responsibility for the waste they create, introducing a consistent approach to recycling, tackling waste crime, introducing bottle deposit return schemes and more effective litter enforcement. Powers to introduce new charges will minimise the use and impacts of single use plastics. It remains government's intention that measures come into effect in 2023.

The bill requires local authorities to collect the following recyclable household waste separately:

- a) Glass
- b) Metal
- c) Plastic
- d) Paper and card
- e) Food waste and
- f) Garden waste.

In addition, recyclable household waste which is food waste should be collected at least once a week. The explanatory notes to the bill state that the circumstances in which it is not technically or economically practicable to separate waste streams, or it would have no significant environmental benefit, will be set out in statutory guidance and subject to consultation.

Wiltshire Council will continue to engage with government on the further development and subsequent consultations on these proposals. Once there is certainty on the detail of implementation the council will review and amend its household waste management strategy and services to ensure compliance with new legislation.

### 2.1.8 Targets

The UK is currently working towards a target of 50% recycling by 2020, as required by the EU Waste Framework Directive. Wiltshire Council aims to achieve 50% recycling of household waste by 2020 in accordance with this target. The EU Landfill Directive has a target for the UK to by 2020 send to landfill no more than 35% of the biodegradable municipal waste landfilled in 1995. Wiltshire Council has developed a target of landfilling less than 25% of waste collected to enable us to achieve this target locally and so be within this national target. The EU commission have adopted a range of new targets for

consultation with member states including a common EU target for recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2030, a common EU target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030 and a binding landfill target to reduce landfill to a maximum of 10% of municipal waste by 2030.

We do not yet know whether EU targets on recycling or the circular economy would be transposed into UK policy as they are unlikely to be adopted in advance of the UK leaving the EU. As an alternative to a traditional make, use and dispose linear economy, a circular economy is much more in line with the principles of the waste hierarchy and focuses on keeping resources in use for longer to extract maximum value from them whilst in use, then to recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of life.

#### 2.1.9 UK's Exit from the EU

The core legislation which acts as the driver for sustainable waste management activities in England is derived from EU directives. These include The EU Waste Framework Directive, the EU Landfill Directive and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. These directives have been transposed into UK law and informed UK waste policy which has been updated to reflect the requirements on member states within these directives. Should the UK decide not to adopt future EU targets into UK law, the UK must review waste policy and set objectives accordingly. Timescales are unknown for this work.

The government's Resources and Waste Strategy is a key element in the government's environmental policy following the publication of the 25 year Environment Plan and the Clean Growth strategy. The Environment Bill was introduced to Parliament on 15 October 2019 which confirmed government's commitment to introducing a series of measures following the public consultations carried out earlier in 2019.

The council's future annual performance reports and action plans will reflect any changes in legislation which the council needs to plan to comply with.

### 2.2 Local Policy Drivers

The council will endeavour to meet residents' expectations and requirements while aiming to achieve the goals set out in the council's business plan within the resources available. In addition we must work collaboratively with other council departments to meet a wider range of aims and objectives set out within the council's business plan. A key area will be making the most efficient and effective use of the council's digital platforms for communication with our residents.

The waste management strategy needs to reflect the wider priorities of the council including growing the economy, developing stronger communities and protecting the vulnerable.

Residents' expectations reflect their knowledge of new products, services and waste streams. In addition, overall demand on waste management services will increase as the population and housing stock grows. Over time, an ageing population may increase demand for assisted waste and recycling collection services and clinical waste collection services.

#### 2.2.1 Financial Drivers

The council faces ongoing financial pressure. The substantial funding challenge will almost certainly continue into the near future and for the term of this strategy. The targets and actions agreed therefore must be affordable and reflect the need to make optimum use of the financial resources available.

In addition to the increasing service demand outlined above, future landfill tax rates beyond 2020 are not yet known. The landfill tax element of the costs of disposing of waste to landfill will increase until 2020 even if the tonnage of waste disposed of to landfill remains constant.

These demands reinforce the need for a strategy highlighting the waste management approach to dealing with these pressures, whilst ensuring we do not compromise performance against statutory targets and business plan goals.

### 2.2.2 Social and Environmental Drivers

Wiltshire Council's budget has been reduced and the number of households in Wiltshire has risen and will continue to rise. Projected future housing delivery is detailed in the council's Local Plan Core Strategy. This directly impacts on the amount of waste produced in Wiltshire and the demand on the council's waste services.

There is increasing media coverage of the impact of waste on the environment, which is reflected in resident's knowledge and awareness of the issues we are seeking to address. The social message regarding the importance of recycling is clearly informing residents' behaviour which shows in our current recycling performance and residents' attitudes and opinions expressed in response to the council's consultation carried out in 2017-18. We therefore have evidence that the majority of our residents would welcome a strategy for Wiltshire which would see all household waste managed in accordance with the hierarchy and diverted from landfill.

## 3. Vision and Priorities

### 3.1 Vision

Our vision for Wiltshire's Household Waste Management Strategy 2017-2027 is working towards zero avoidable household waste in Wiltshire.

We will work together to manage household waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

### 3.2 Priorities

To achieve our vision the council has identified a number of priorities based on the requirements of the waste hierarchy. Waste is a resource for us to utilise and we should aim to extract as much environmental and economic value from it as possible. Disposal to landfill should be our last resort as this is the least sustainable option for the vast majority of wastes.

Our first priority should be to prevent waste from being generated. Where we cannot prevent, we should repair and reuse, where reuse is not possible we should recycle and compost more. Any waste that cannot be reused, recycled or composted should be treated to recover any potential value, such as energy.

#### 3.2.1 Priority 1 - Waste Prevention

The council will work with national, regional and local partners to provide advice and information to encourage residents to reduce the amount of household waste they create.

We recognise that the household waste that residents produce is to some extent generated by packaging producers and retailers. This opinion is shared by our residents and elected members who echoed this sentiment during workshops and when responding to our consultation. Many commented that they felt that they were unable to buy goods without packaging, or in fully recyclable packaging. However those residents who have participated in waste reduction activities such as 'Waste Free February', a project focussed on waste prevention, have demonstrated that it is often possible to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste that they create.

The council will need to work with partners and community groups to help to inform people about the importance of managing their waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy and offering practical advice on how they do this.

There is public support for the council to work with town and parish councils through area boards to deliver local information, events or workshops. This demonstrates that our residents are keen for the council to focus on providing information to help them to move their waste further up the waste hierarchy.

In addition there was support from residents for the council to continue to work with schools and pre-schools to deliver workshops and assemblies with a focus on waste issues as residents and members all feel it is important to work with people from a very young age.

By working with area boards, town and parish councils and schools we hope to engage a wider cross section of Wiltshire residents. A significant proportion of avoidable household waste is food waste which residents could reduce. We will work with residents to identify ways of reducing this waste and will continue to subsidise the purchase of food waste composters. These food waste composters are capable of composting all food waste generated by residents at home, without the need for the council to incur the significant cost of collecting and managing this waste separately.

### 3.2.2 Priority 2 – Repair and Reuse

The council will work with local reuse organisations and contractors to increase the opportunity for items to be repaired and reused.

The council will continue to work with national partners and manufacturers to promote sustainable design so that items can be easily repaired rather than having to be replaced.

We will continue to work with local communities to host 'Repair Cafes' where residents learn from local volunteers how to repair a range of items, for example clothing, electrical items and bikes. We are aware that there is a proportion of clothing in the non-recyclable waste bins which could have been repaired or reused and so is avoidable household waste. Some items which are deposited at the council's household recycling centres or collected via the bulky household waste collection service may also have the potential to be repaired for reuse and we will work with our contractors to identify these opportunities.

Repair and reuse should be prioritised ahead of recycling or disposal. To do this we will need to work closely with contractors and partners to ensure that reuse is built into the council's services. In addition we have a role in working with our residents to ensure that reuse and repair are convenient options for them to choose.

### 3.2.3 Priority 3 - Recycling and Composting

The council will continue to ensure that cost effective and efficient recycling services are provided so that residents are able to recycle a range of materials as easily as possible. The council will continue to review the potential for expanding the range of items collected for recycling and composting where it is environmentally and economically practical to do so.

In July 2018 we increased the range of materials collected for recycling. This included the introduction of kerbside collections of plastic pots, tubs and trays, food cartons and drink cartons. We anticipated that this would increase our household waste recycling rate but have to recognise that these are lightweight materials so the impact may not be significant.

The council currently offers a chargeable kerbside collection service for garden waste. This is not a statutory requirement but Wiltshire has a high participation rate and it is a service valued by residents. The amount of garden waste composted makes a significant contribution to the council's household waste recycling performance.

Reprocessors of recyclable materials require high quality recycling to be delivered in order that they can produce high quality recycled material. We will encourage residents to purchase recycled items where possible to generate a sustainable market for these materials. We will work with residents to ensure that they only put materials which can be recycled out for recycling collections. We will work with government to encourage requirements for minimum quantities of recycled materials in the manufacture of new products and packaging.

The council will continue to work with national partners to promote design so that items and packaging can be easily recycled.

The council collects a wider range of recyclable materials, including garden waste, at its household recycling centres. The council will work with residents to encourage them to separate as many recyclable materials as possible when visiting the sites.

### 3.2.4 Priority 4 – Energy from Waste

Recovering energy from waste which cannot be reused or recycled remains strategically important for the council. The council will manage non-recycled household waste as a resource by delivering this to energy from waste facilities, rather than sending this waste to landfill. The council will continue to review the feasibility of constructing small scale energy from waste plants within Wiltshire.

### 3.2.5 Priority 5 – Litter and Fly Tipping

Two of the most visible forms of avoidable waste are litter and fly tipped wastes. In its Business Plan the council recognises that to continue sustainable growth in our communities we need clean, safe and attractive environments.

There were over 2,800 incidents of fly tipping on land for which the council is responsible in 2018-19 and the council responded with over 3,300 enforcement actions ranging from initial investigation to prosecution of offenders. We will continue to use all the tools available to us to tackle this criminal activity.

We will continue to respond to reports of litter. This activity cost the council in excess of £2.5m in 2018-19 – money spent on clearing entirely avoidable waste which could have been better invested in delivering the council's priorities. We will support community initiatives such as litter picks and work with the council's Communications team to build on the success of the Clean up Wiltshire campaign.

## 4. Goals and Outcomes

An action plan will be developed each year setting out goals and outcomes for the council to work towards in order to deliver the priorities within the overarching strategy.

The action plan will guide the implementation of the priorities set out in this strategy and will be subject to annual monitoring and review. The action plan will provide the council with an opportunity to review changes in national and local drivers as well as other changes in circumstances that may become apparent throughout the strategy period.

The annual performance report will enable the council to review what has been achieved against the priorities based on completion of the targets set out in the action plan for the previous year.

The action plan for the coming year will be developed based on the financial and staffing resource available to the council within the coming year in order to ensure that the goals and outcomes are achievable given the resources available. This will provide the council with the opportunity to review its priorities, goals and outcomes in line with changing drivers.

This strategy outlines the priorities that the council will work to achieve in order to deliver the vision of working towards zero avoidable household waste in Wiltshire by managing household waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, reducing litter and taking a zero tolerance approach to the criminal act of fly tipping.