

APPENDIX A

London Borough of Southwark

Waste Management Strategy – Extension to 2025

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Executive summary

With the declaration of a national climate emergency in England and local climate emergency in Southwark, attitudes towards waste have begun to shift; from simply managing waste to managing it an environmentally sustainable way. Southwark Council has developed a Waste Management Strategy that is bold and ambitious. This updated draft Waste Strategy 2022-25 reflects this current thinking and describes the recycling and waste management services which will be delivered up to 2025. The Vision of this Waste Management Strategy extension is:

“To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 in Southwark. This means managing municipal waste within Southwark in accordance with the waste hierarchy to drive service improvements and efficiencies whilst minimising environmental impacts“

This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts.

This vision is supported by specific objectives and a range of actions that sit alongside national policy changes - setting a direction for long term management of material resources for the benefit of the residents and communities of Southwark.

The actions to be taken under this Waste Management Strategy Extension can be summarised by the following three overall principles:

1. Service improvements
2. Improved communication and information to service users
3. Higher levels of participation by residents in the services that are provided

These principles will form the basis by which Southwark will manage waste and meet national and local targets. There are challenging targets around recycling and reuse, aiming to enhance the recycling performance from current levels of around 35% to 40% by 2025 and 50% 2030.

The long term UK Resources & Waste Strategy is under development. While some legislation has been enacted, and the government has undertaken consultations on the detail of future waste policy requirements, the exact requirements and future funding streams are not yet clear. It is expected that this will be further developed in the next 2-3 years by the government. This Waste Management Strategy - Extension to 2025 sets out twelve specific projects to improve recycling and composting performance whilst the detail of future requirements from the Resources & Waste Strategy is determined. During the period until 2025 the Council will develop a long term Waste Management Strategy that includes the implementation of the requirements of the UK Resources & Waste, as well as plans for improvement in service delivery and performance within the lifetime of the current Waste PFI contract up to 2033.

Introduction

London Borough of Southwark's previous [Waste Management Strategy](#) covered the period 2003 to 2021 and was published in 2003. There have been substantial changes in the waste management sector since the adoption of the Waste Management Strategy and a number of new legislative and policy drivers have been introduced. Future options need to be considered in the context of emerging changes to the national policy landscape.

The long term UK national waste strategy is under development. While some legislation has been enacted, and the government has undertaken consultations on the detail of future waste policy requirements, the exact requirements and future funding streams are not yet clear. It is expected that this will be further developed in the next 2-3 years by the government, enabling the council to introduce the necessary changes.

The council does not intend to wait during this period as the need for urgent action calls for an immediate response. This strategy extension has been developed to set challenging targets for the next 3 years to increase recycling rates, particularly for household waste. By the end of this period, the council expects to have clarity from the government on new national requirements, and will develop a long term strategy to begin in 2025.

In 2019, the Council issued a climate emergency declaration to 'do all it can to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030'. This Waste Strategy extension focusses on higher recycling and will be delivered alongside a range of projects within the [Climate Strategy & Action Plan](#) which seeks the development of a more circular economy; reduced impacts of transport including for waste collection alongside sustainability and carbon reduction projects throughout all council services.

The vision of this Waste Strategy extension is:

"To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 in Southwark. This means managing municipal waste within Southwark in accordance with the waste hierarchy to drive service improvements and efficiencies whilst minimising environmental impacts"

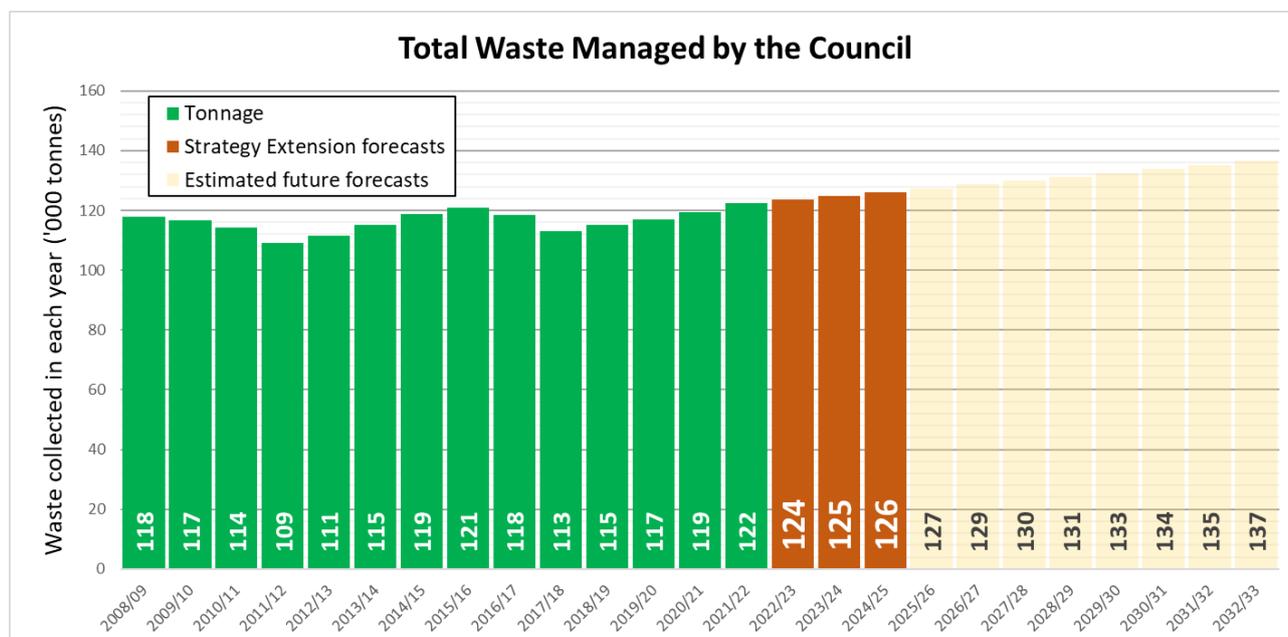
This vision is supported by specific strategy objectives and a range of actions to deliver them which will be carried forward from the original strategy to the extended date of 2025. This Waste Strategy extension sets out twelve specific actions to improve our performance up to 2025/26. These will require new approaches from residents and other stakeholders, including housing providers, managers, and registered social landlords; and businesses.

This strategy is ambitious and sets stretch targets for the period until 2025, when a long term strategy will replace it. The targets for recycling, composting and reuse, aim to increase Southwark's performance from current levels (around 35% recycling rate) to 40% by 2025, and 50% by 2030.

Waste managed by the council

For the year 2021/22, the council directly managed 122,396 tonnes. Almost all of this waste was from households, with the rest mainly from businesses, fly-tip clearances and street cleaning. A graph of actual and expected waste tonnages in each year is included below, with past tonnage shown in green, estimated future tonnage for the period of this strategy extension shown in dark brown, and long term future estimates appearing in yellow.

There has been only a small increase in tonnage from the start of the current waste management contract in 2008. Some waste growth is expected because the population in Southwark has increased. The number of households has increased by roughly 14% since 2008. Over this period, the amount of waste per household has reduced by roughly 6% per household. Most of this change is likely to be the result of changes in lifestyle and consumption habits – such as reduced buying of newspapers and printed materials because of online alternatives. The forecasts for future years assume that current levels of waste per household do not increase, but that overall waste levels increase in line with the growth in housing

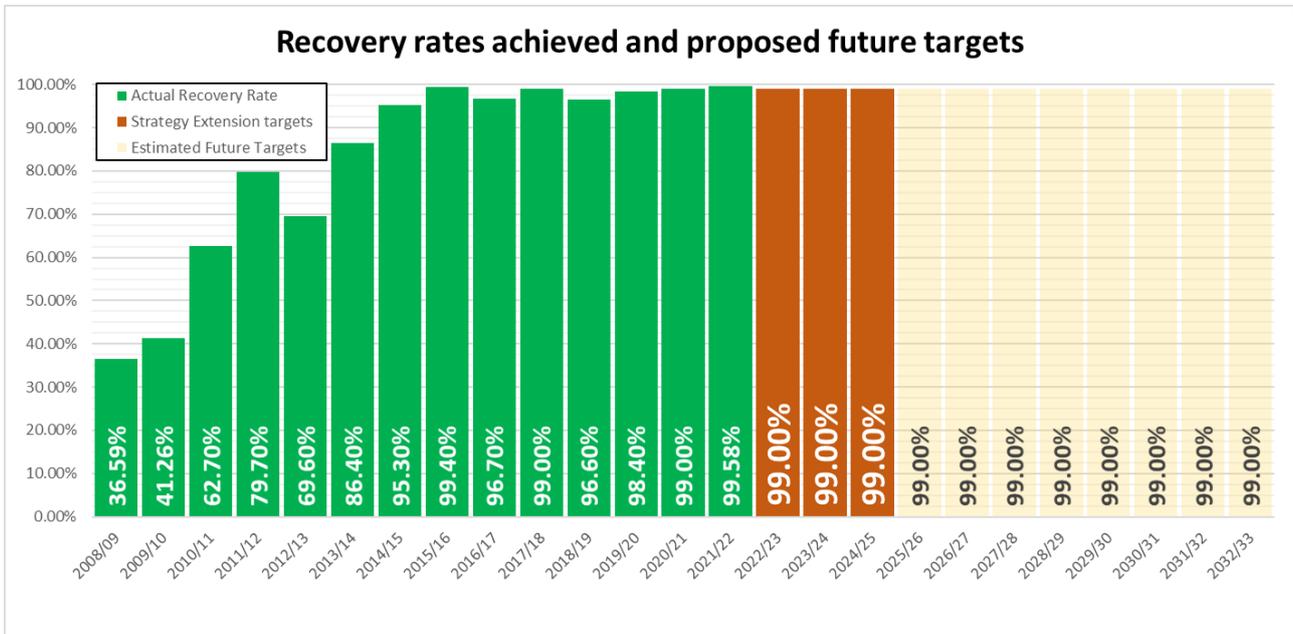


The largest change in the same period has been the way in which waste has been managed. In 2008, most of the council's collected waste was sent to disposal in landfill sites and a relatively small amount of waste was recovered. Recovered can be defined as waste which has had some value recovered from it as follows:

- Re-used, so that it did not require further treatment or disposal. This includes textiles and household goods that may be disposed of by their original owner, but are re-sold or given away to be used again.
- Recycled – where the materials are extracted for re-manufacture into new items. This includes glass, paper, card, and some plastics which are collected separately and sold on to re-processors.
- Composting – where food and garden waste is processed into a compost product that can be used in agriculture or by gardeners to add nutrients to soil.

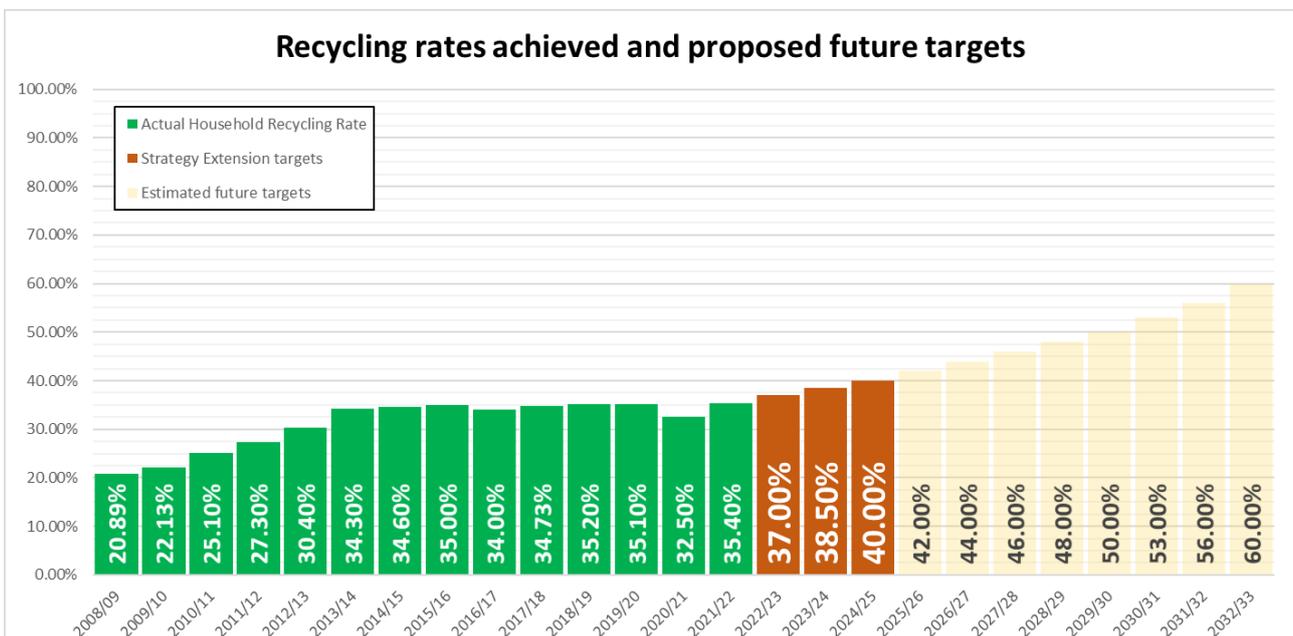
- Used for energy recovery – where waste is combusted in controlled conditions and used to generate electricity and heat that replaced fossil fuels.

By 2022, nearly all of the council’s waste was recovered with less than 1% of all waste being landfilled – this mostly consisted of inert non-recyclable materials such as concrete and other construction wastes. In recent years the council has consistently recovered very high levels of all wastes collected and expects to continue to do so in the future. The target has been set at 99% or more for future years.



The key priority for the council remains to increase the recycling rate. The graph below indicates the recycling rate achieved up to 2021/22 with target levels for the next three years, and longer term targets up to 2033. This demonstrates the improvement that needs to be achieved to reach a recycling rate of 40% by 2025, and 50% by 2030, increasing to 60% by 2033 – with target levels shown for each year.

Waste composition data from sampling of waste from incoming loads shows that there is a significant quantity of recyclable materials not being recycled at present.



Additional recycling required to reach targets

Based on the amount of waste that is collected and managed by the council it is possible to calculate how much more of the total collected waste would need to be recycled by residents and the council in order to reach the target levels.

- The council collects roughly 120,000 tonnes each year from households and household sources, such as the recycling centre, schools and housing estates.
- Including all waste sorting and processing, roughly 42,000 tonnes is recycled now of this waste to give a recycling rate of roughly 35%.
- The rest is collected as mixed general waste. Some waste can be sorted to remove recyclable materials, and that is already included in the recycled total.
- There is a fairly high level of materials that could have been recycled, but was not separated into recycling bins and was put into general waste bins. These materials would then generally be too contaminated to be recyclable.
- An increase in the recycling rate can be achieved if more residents put more of their recyclable materials into their recycling bin, without contamination, instead of their general waste bin.

For each 1% increase in the recycling rate, the council needs to recycle an additional 1,200 tonnes of the total collected waste. If waste amounts continue to rise at the present rate, the extra tonnages will in fact be slightly larger, but at these current levels, an increase in the recycling rate would be as follows

- Increasing from 35% to 40% will need an extra 6,000 tonnes to be recycled.
- Increasing from 40% to 50% will need an additional 12,000 tonnes to be recycled (ie 18,000 tonnes in total).

Either of these outcomes are possible to achieve using the services that are in place now, although some increases in capacity are likely to be needed. All of the recommended changes can be summarised by the following three overall principles.

1. Service improvements, including providing extra capacity for recycling services along with some service expansions to enable the services to collect the extra materials to achieve better recycling rates.
2. Improved communication and information to service users, to make sure that residents have all the information they need to use services correctly.
3. Higher levels of participation by residents in using the services provided, which will require placing a clear expectation upon residents to use the services and to use them correctly placing everything that is recyclable into the appropriate recycling containers.

Key short term barriers to increasing recycling

All households in Southwark already receive collections for some recyclable materials and are able to recycle, glass bottles and jars, paper and card, food and drink cans, aerosols and most hard plastic packaging. All households have access to the council's recycling centre which accepts a wide range of recyclable and non-recyclable wastes.

The aim of this strategy extension is to increase the range of materials that residents can easily recycle, and improve the collection services that enable them to recycle. It is recognised that different types of properties will face different challenges, and the implementation of these projects will need to take account of the practical and logistical barriers that some types of housing may present.

This particularly includes:

- Flats above shops, where there is often no storage space for waste bins and collection receptacles. This may limit the development of improved services in some locations until solutions are found to enable residents to participate.
- Higher density housing estates where there may be limited space for increased numbers of bins, and there is a need to keep costs and impacts of changes low.
- Locations where the storage and presentation of waste may present particular problems for managing fire risks – such as high rise housing blocks and others with a potentially higher risk of fire. We will work with property managers to ensure that the requirements of fire risk assessments are taken into account in developing new or changed services.
- Locations where the storage of waste between collections gives rise to other environmental concerns such as pest control. We will work with property managers to ensure that services are provided and used in ways that do not adversely affect existing pest control strategies.
- Any changes to services will link to existing strategies already in place and be sensitive to current expectations with regard to street accessibility, safety and visual amenity of locations; cultural and heritage factors including conservation areas and existing land uses.

This strategy extension assumes no significant changes to existing collection services ahead of the development of the longer term strategy from 2025. Changes during the transitional period will generally be limited to increasing the usage by residents of services that are already provided, along with improving access and expanding capacity of those services to make it easier for residents to do so. The key changes during this period will therefore be measures to encourage and support behavioural change by residents themselves to increase recycling performance, whilst longer term strategies are developed in line with the emerging national Resources & Waste Strategy, and associated legislation.

The waste collection service expects to work closely with stakeholders to develop and implement initiatives that align with existing ways of working, and minimise the impact on residents, so that changes and improvement can be implemented in ways that make it as easy as possible for residents to understand and use waste collection services. This will particularly include the council's own housing department, who manage over a quarter of all housing in Southwark and are the largest property manager in the Borough.

Longer Term Strategic Planning

The government has set out plans for a new [Resources & Waste Strategy](#) for waste management which will apply to England, with some new measures also included for the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. While some primary legislation has been passed to begin that process, it is not yet clear when the new requirements will begin, what changes will be required, or what funding is in place to implement them. It is expected that this will become clearer in the next 1-2 years, and the council proposes to develop a longer term strategy to cover the period beyond 2025 when the new requirements are known.

This strategy extension continues from the previous [Waste Management Strategy](#). The council continues to operate within the same Waste Service PFI contract that commenced in 2008 and continues until 2033, and which has supported the council's successful performance to date in increasing recycling rates and increasing the recovery of waste. The aims and approaches of the previous strategy therefore remain in place, and existing programmes and services will continue other than where changes are introduced through this strategy extension.

Prior to 2025 the council will develop a long term strategy document that both includes future plans up to the expiry of the current contracted services in 2033, and implements the requirements of the UK Resources & Waste Strategy. This will be subject to public consultation and will be both longer in duration and more extensive in scope than this strategy extension. While this extension is narrow in scope to focus on a small number of urgent and important priorities, this gives space for development of wider ideas that link more strongly with the Council's climate emergency strategy and the actions developing from that, including;

1. **A continued focus on high recycling rates** – As well as seeking increased household recycling rates in Southwark, the London Environment Strategy seeks to achieve a 65% recycling rate, which is not yet addressed by the Southwark strategy, and there also needs to be a higher focus on non-household waste
2. **More specific measures to address the circular economy** – the approach of circulating materials and commodities through recycling, re-use, repair and re-purposing alongside ideas like reducing consumption
3. **Much more action around minimisation of waste** - both to reduce the environmental impacts of waste and to save money for the Council.
4. **Making more sustainable consumer choices** – promoting the use of lower levels of resources such as containers that are refillable; devices that can be upgraded and repaired, borrowing items used occasionally instead of buying outright.
5. **Improving the sustainability of the collection process** – using fewer vehicles, introducing electric powered vehicles, route optimisation and adjustment of collection frequencies from blocks to match service need, measures which will reduce emissions, traffic and associated impacts.
6. **Community led actions** – such as local composting and growing schemes instead of collecting organic waste to be transported for central processing.
7. **Leading by example** – taking action to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the conduct of the council's own business and maximising the recycling of waste that is produced by the council.

Programme of Actions – Increasing the Household Recycling rate to 40% (and then 50% by 2030)

A total of 12 project areas are set out below. These together constitute a programme of action that is intended to increase the recycling level through a combination of information provision, policy changes, service improvements, efficiency improvements and expansions of existing activities. Each of these will be further developed with more detailed project proposals for cabinet member approval to either expand current activity or initiate new projects, and regular programme reports will be made to set out progress for the actions that are agreed and taken forward.

Potential Action	Estimated extra recycling potential (tonnes)	Details	Risks	Benefits	Indicative cost impact for the council	Needed for 40% recycling rate?	Needed for 50% recycling rate?
1. Recycling banks for textiles and small electrical appliances	500	Substantial increase in on street banks for textiles, including adding banks to all large estates & housing developments, and areas of high footfall – e.g. near parks, schools, shops etc. Would take up to 2 years to reach this level of tonnage. Intended for rollout during 2023/24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for some public opposition to banks located in the public realm. • Some risk of street ‘clutter’ – can be limited by careful site selection. • Fly- tipping risk and increased street cleaning costs – can be managed by monitoring and enforcement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much easier for residents to recycle these items. • Safety benefits – e.g. reduced vehicle fires from battery disposal. • Reduced journeys – e.g. less visits to Recycling Centre on Devon Street. • Limited services need expansion. 	Under £2k for comms and promotional work	Yes	Yes
2. Comprehensive review of all blocks to ensure they have adequate recycling capacity	3000	All property managers would be required to provide sufficient recycling bin capacity, and remove unnecessary excess residual waste capacity. It is anticipated that most managing agents will respond positively to the requirement to install more recycling facilities. Includes Southwark Housing estates where many estates require more recycling capacity. Intended for rollout during 2023/24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of some resistance to change - may require use of powers in some cases. • Lengthy process – several years to assess and upgrade recycling provision for all block and communal collection locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can give residents opportunities to get involved by contacting the council if they feel they need more recycling facilities. • Likely to reduce waste disposals (and associated costs). 	Under £15k - staff time for review	Yes	Yes
3. Review of schools collections	500	All schools to be required to use organic waste and recycling collection services – reviews of container capacity for each – standardised service terms to reduce costs and enable a common communication approach to ensure recycling levels are high. Reduced vehicle collection visits to improve safety in school zones. Intended for rollout during 2023/24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk - but potential of some resistance. • Would reduce flexibility of service – some schools have collections on multiple days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important audience for recycling and sustainability messaging and practice. • Reduced service admin costs for a standardised service. 	Under £15k - staff time for review	Yes	Yes
4. Reduce contamination of recycling collections	500	Communication with residents to reduce contamination, and notice to building managers where bins are contaminated. This would include more direct engagement by the council to support service delivery, with improved information to residents and building managers during the period to 2025. A future decision could be taken to not undertake collection of persistently contaminated bins. Includes Southwark Housing estates, some of which have high contamination rates. Implementation during 2023/24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires property managers to be more proactive to ‘own’ the contamination issues at their properties, requires them to engage more directly and regularly with their residents to address contamination issues. • Behaviour change is likely to take time to be achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced loss of good recyclable materials that have been correctly placed into recycling bins. 	Under £15k - some staff time and comms work.	Yes	Yes
5. Require the use of dry mixed recycling collection services by all	3000	Householders <i>required</i> to recycle dry mixed recyclable materials instead of <i>requested</i> to do so. Includes more direct instructions in communications to residents, requiring them to recycle. A future decision could be taken to not collect residual bins with persistently high levels of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be unpopular amongst residents who do not wish to recycle. • Behaviour change is likely to take time to be achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications likely to positively influence behaviour of ‘waverers’ who sometimes recycle or do not recycle all dry 	£10k to develop and £15k annually in staff time	Yes	Yes

Potential Action	Estimate d extra recycling potential (tonnes)	Details	Risks	Benefits	Indicative cost impact for the council	Needed for 40% recycling rate?	Needed for 50% recycling rate?
household properties		recyclable materials, but this is not intended at the current time. Proposals to be brought forward in 2023/24.		<p>mixed recycling that it is possible to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted at those who recycle least. 	and comms work		
6. Require the use of food waste collections by all household properties that receive the service	1500	Householders <i>required</i> to use food waste collection services correctly where provided to recycle food waste instead of <i>requested</i> to do so. This would include more direct instructions to residents requiring them to recycle food waste included in communications from the council to support service delivery during the period to 2025. A future decision could be taken to not collect residual bins with persistently high levels of food waste, but this is not intended at the current time. Implementation from 2023/24 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be unpopular with those who do not use the service now. Behaviour change is likely to take time to be achieved with food waste recycling services currently the least used recycling service. Some costs for caddies and liners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If scaled up to include more properties – the positive impact could be much higher than shown here in the long term. Significant positive carbon impacts from higher food waste diversion. 	£10k to develop and £15k annually in staff time and comms work	Yes	Yes
7. Sustained high profile communications activity by the council to educate, inform & persuade.	1500	High communications priority for recycling and waste messaging, including significant paid-for advertising using a consistent campaign theme. Current level of activity should enable 40% target to be reached in 2-3 years if other measures are agreed; higher level of activity would be likely to deliver further increases. Short to medium term multi-year project, beginning in 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained cost for uncertain outcomes. Higher spend needed for higher impact. Risk of diminishing return over time Not a quick fix – needs sustained activity to embed behaviour change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better informed residents are more likely to use services correctly. Ongoing communication is more likely to reach new residents and ensure awareness remains high. 	£10k to develop and £15k annually in staff time and comms work	Yes	Yes
8. Review of planning guidelines	1500	Ensure all new builds are required to have higher levels of recycling capacity and lower levels of residual waste capacity with building design that makes recycling easy and convenient for residents. This is a short term change expected during 2023/24.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low risk – designing in adequate facilities has a low cost when included at build stage. Slow impact – new builds add up to 2% per year, so most buildings are not affected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update new build standards to current best practice. 	Under £2k in staff time	No	Yes
9. On-street recycling and streetscene issues	1,200	<p>Improvement in on-street recycling facilities and properties with poor current recycling facilities such as flats above shops (FAS). Options could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of underground refuse storage (URS) options to improve street scene in busy areas. On-street recycling facilities in litter bin provision Increased separation of waste collected during street and estate cleaning to maximise recycling. Addressing ‘bins on streets’ issues to keep highways clear and reduce complaints. Much stronger push for recycling participation for FAS. Increased collection frequency and associated street cleaning actions. Aim to increase coordination between collection and cleaning operations at an operational level Higher levels of enforcement to match improvements in services – cleaner streets with better services and less excuse for fly-tipping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially long lead times for delivery of capital investment – eg URS 2-4 years. Significant ongoing revenue costs for service improvements and ongoing servicing. High risk of contamination of public facilities. Relatively low recycling increase for resources needed- although achieves other street scene aims as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves services to property types that have most difficult accessing recycling services. Reduces clutter on streets by moving waste out of sight. Keeps importance of recycling in the public eye constantly. Ensures inclusivity of all householders in better services. Cleaner high streets 	£30k-£50k per annum plus some capital investment required. Detailed proposals to be developed for approval during 2023/24 and later rollout	No	Yes

Potential Action	Estimate d extra recycling potential (tonnes)	Details	Risks	Benefits	Indicative cost impact for the council	Needed for 40% recycling rate?	Needed for 50% recycling rate?
10. Increase in food waste collection services	3600	<p>Extend food waste collection services to more blocks of flats and estates. This would only be possible where participation levels reached a level for food waste collections to justify the added service costs (ie following implementation of project 7 above).</p> <p>This is being explored for early implementation by 2025 for all households, with the possibility of significant service expansion during 2023/24. Funding is expected to be available from Central Government, and this is being actively pursued as result of planned changes in the law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high cost – would need more vehicles and crews. • May not be practicable prior to 2025 when food waste collections become mandatory. • High levels of diversion of food waste could render the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility at Devon Street obsolete, with implications for the viability of this facility. This risk is low as it is unlikely this would be achieved in the life of the Waste PFI contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents brought within scope of the food waste service that would be required post 2025, as a result of changes in the law.. • The successful completion of this action would place the council in a good position with considering alternative uses for the MBT post-Waste PFI, 2033 onwards. 	Net cost expected to be under £100k per annum with external funding sources.	No	Yes
11. Waste minimisation measures for residual waste	1200	<p>Reducing residual waste increases the recycling rate if the same amount of recycling is done. This would include controls on numbers and sizes of bins provided, along with promotion of waste minimisation messages. Medium term option - 1-5 years. The main means of reducing residual waste would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity and information to encourage minimisation of waste – mostly through correct diversion into recycling. • Food waste minimisation campaigns. • Repair and reuse promotional activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to monitor and assess and to attribute results to actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful waste minimisation would deliver service cost savings under the current contract arrangements, and would meet the council's overall aims to reduce waste and the environmental impacts of waste. 	Up to £15k per annum, mainly for comms activity, with some campaign costs from 2024 onwards	No	Yes
12. Mobilising community resources	2400	<p>Use existing community resources to distribute recycling and waste messaging, and collaborate with established groups to build commitment to recycling, waste minimisation. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling champions – individuals who can help promote services and recycling in their estate or block. • TRA/Resident groups – promoting recycling as part of their wider roles. • Councillors – identifying opportunities for siting new facilities, and working with community groups. • Voluntary groups, including litter picking initiatives. • Initial development during 2023/24. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need high buy in from a wide range of stakeholders to provide benefits at this scale. • Requires sustained commitment, and would require an additional staff resource to co-ordinate activity and undertake community engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once effective community mobilisation is in place, the commitment to recycling becomes much more resilient, so there are low ongoing costs. • 'Local' voices are often more effective at changing local behaviour than 'central' voices from the council. 	Up to £30k per annum for staff time - could link to other programmes, such as public health and Climate emergency action	No	Yes