

Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026 - 2031

The Kent Resource Partnership is made up of the thirteen local authorities in Kent. These are the district, borough and city councils of Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells and Kent County Council

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Introduction

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As Chair of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board, I am proud to introduce the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for 2026–2031. This strategy comes at a pivotal moment for Kent. It sets out how we will respond to the most significant changes in waste policy for a generation, alongside preparations for local government reorganisation, while continuing to deliver services that protect our environment and provide best value for Kent residents.

Over the next five years, these changes will reshape how we collect, treat, and fund waste services. They also create opportunities to do things differently; to reduce waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and make better use of resources, moving beyond recycling. This will require a bold, innovative and collaborative approach.

Kent has already taken important steps towards a circular economy. Through the Kent Resource Partnership, we have launched reuse shops at Household Waste Recycling Centres, supported community repair cafés, and piloted community initiatives that keep valuable items in use and out of the waste stream. These successes show what can be achieved when councils, businesses, and residents work together.

This strategy builds on that progress, with a stronger focus on helping residents understand the value and impact of their actions, by supporting community-led initiatives, and extending existing partnerships with business and the social sector. By doing so, we will not only reduce waste but also create local jobs, support skills development, and help residents save money.

Success will depend on all of us working together and embracing these changes, to create a cleaner, greener Kent for future generations.

Our vision is clear: a county where waste is reduced by keeping resources in use for longer, where communities are empowered to recycle, reuse and repair, and every household plays a part in protecting our environment. I invite you to join us in making this vision a reality.

Councillor Clive English

Chairman of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board

Background

The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a collaborative framework developed by the Kent Resource Partnership, which includes Kent County Council and the 12 district councils. Its

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purpose is to guide how household waste is managed across Kent, with a focus on sustainability, efficiency, and compliance with national legislation.

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 requires councils in two-tier areas (like Kent) to produce joint waste management strategies. This legal requirement ensures that waste disposal authorities and waste collection authorities work together to meet landfill diversion targets and reduce environmental impact when managing household waste.

The first [Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy](#) was adopted by all 13 councils in 2007, with an interim revision issued in 2018. This Strategy sought to achieve strategic collaboration across the 13 councils aligning waste policies and practices, to reduce landfill usage and increase

The current Strategy ended in 2020/21, with development of a revised Strategy planned, and then delayed, due to the ongoing operational challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and several years of significant waste reforms being planned with limited detail on the legislative requirements.

During 2024, the value and remit of the Kent Resource Partnership was endorsed by Kent Leaders and Chief Executives and in January 2025, a Strategic Lead was appointed, to re-establish the governance, partnership priorities and delivery structure, including development of this interim strategy. This strategy will provide clarity of direction for the partnership in the years leading up to and post local government reorganisation, which is expected to be implemented from 2028.

2025 also heralded the start of a four-year period of implementation of significant legislative and policy change in England (Figure 1), including new financial mechanisms, that pave the way forwards and are designed to accelerate local action to deliver a circular economy. The impact of these changes locally and collectively is yet to be fully understood and remains under review by the partnership.

Now is the time to act. Working in partnership to deliver a system-wide approach to waste management, in line with the national circular economy goals, which is essential to deliver greater value for the Kent taxpayer, environmental benefits and local economic opportunities. Delivering well-targeted projects, interventions and campaigns that engage more residents and businesses to act, to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle, and ensure the correct disposal of all wastes, including items not collected at the kerbside.

This will promote a shift in attitudes towards waste, reducing the throw away culture, which along with commercial sector innovations and new approaches to product lifecycles, will ultimately lead to changes in the way waste and recycling services are designed, delivered and funded.

This strategy sets the foundation for that transformation in Kent, also preparing services for the transition to unitary governance and provides a framework for partnership delivery to 2030 to positively contribute towards achieving a circular economy in Kent in the future.

National Policy

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Under current waste legislation, local authorities in England must collect and dispose of household waste, and do so responsibly and safely, maintaining accurate documentation (duty of care). This includes the separate collection of paper, metal, plastic and glass (where practicable), applying the waste hierarchy, with a preference to reduce, reuse and recycle. This aims to achieve nationally set targets to reduce residual waste, increase recycling rates and minimise waste to landfill. (Appendix 1)

Recent waste reforms introduce several key policies (see figure 1) that are reshaping the cost, structure and operational requirements for local authorities:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR):** From 2025, packaging producers pay into a scheme, intended to cover the net costs of managing household packaging waste. This is providing significant funding and could provide financial relief to local authorities for packaging-related waste.
- **Simpler Recycling:** Mandates consistent collection of core materials (glass, metal, plastic, paper/card, food and garden waste) across businesses (2025) and households (2026), with collection of plastic wrappers/films from 2027. For household waste collections, this legislation specifies that food waste is to be collected weekly. While this aims to increase the range of materials captured, it also introduces capital and ongoing revenue costs for new containers, vehicles and staffing.
- **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS):** Expected October 2027, introduces a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers between 150 millilitres and 3 litres made from PET plastic or metal. Retailers must charge this deposit, host return points (exemptions apply) and pay back the deposit for each container returned. This is expected to reduce the amount and value of packaging recovered from the kerbside, and in turn increase packaging recycling (gate fees) and reduce collections efficiency.
- **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS):** From 2026, incineration and energy from waste facilities must begin to monitor and report their greenhouse gas emissions. From 2028, these emissions will have to be paid for, as an incentive to decarbonise. This will increase the cost of disposal of waste by incineration or energy from waste, further incentivising recycling and waste prevention.

On 1 December 2025, Defra published the revised [Environmental Improvement Plan for England](#) emphasising the need for partnership action. Within chapter 3: Circular Economy, Goal 5: Waste, it states ‘ We will minimise waste by designing it out of the system, reusing and recycling materials wherever possible’ and ‘Removing criminal threats to a circular economy’. This introduces Environment Act interim targets to 2030 for residual waste and per capita targets for residual municipal food, plastic, paper and card, metal and glass wastes, with commitments to reduce illegal waste sites and fly tipping incidents over the same period.

Defra is set to publish the long-awaited UK Circular Economy Strategy early in 2026, signalling a pivotal shift in policy aimed at embedding circularity into national and business sustainability

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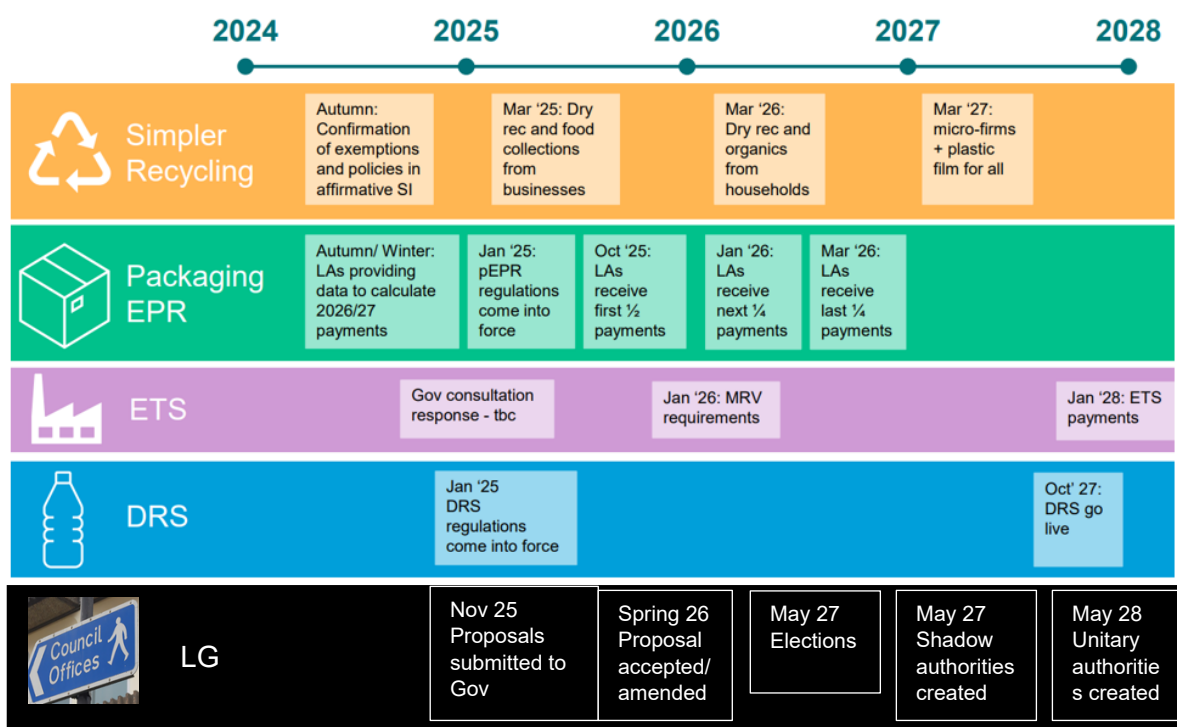
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strategies. This is set to expand upon the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), which introduced the policies now being implemented through new legislation.

Figure 1 : National picture



Local Policy

The [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039](#) (adopted March 2025) plays a significant role in shaping local waste management services, providing the waste planning strategy and development policies that are used in determining planning applications for new, or the expansion of existing, waste management and treatment infrastructure.

The plan's strategic objectives for waste management and relevant policy provisions underpins the partnership's commitment to managing waste sustainably in Kent:

- by applying the waste hierarchy to minimise overall household waste arisings and recover more value from discarded materials,
- ensuring waste operations prevent adverse impacts on health and the local environment,
- seeking to manage Kent waste arisings within the county or at the nearest available facility, achieving operational cost efficiencies and wider benefits such as local employment and reduced carbon emissions from transport and,
- ensure that all development is designed in accordance with circular economy principles.

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Current services

Each waste collection authority determines the frequency of collection of waste and recycling services, including charges to residents for specific services or for waste containers. Councils also offer on request collection services, such as clinical waste and bulky waste services.

As shown in Table 1, waste collections and frequency are broadly aligned with Simpler Recycling requirements with service changes planned by two collection authorities in 2026.

Table 1 Waste collection services provided

| Waste Collection Authority | Residual waste | Paper & card recycling | Mixed packaging recycling | Food waste | Garden waste (charged for service) |
|--|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Ashford BC Maidstone BC Swale BC (Joint contract) | Fortnightly | Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging) | Fortnightly | Weekly/ Mix of charged for or free food caddies | Fortnightly |
| Canterbury CC (LA Traded company) | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Weekly/ Charges for food caddies | Fortnightly |
| Dartford BC (Contracted service) | Weekly | Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging) | Fortnightly | No separate food waste collection## | Fortnightly |
| Dover DC and Folkestone & Hythe DC (Joint contract) | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Weekly/ Charges for food caddies | Fortnightly |
| Gravesham BC (in-house service) | Fortnightly | Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging) | Fortnightly | Weekly/ Free food caddies | Fortnightly |
| Sevenoaks DC (in-house service) | Weekly# | Weekly# | Weekly# | No separate food waste collection## | Fortnightly |
| Thanet DC | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Weekly/ | Fortnightly |

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| | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| (in-house service) | | | | Free food caddies | |
| Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC (Joint contract) | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Fortnightly | Weekly/ Free food caddies | Fortnightly |

#Service frequency changes from weekly to fortnightly are expected during 2026

##Food waste to be collected separately and weekly from 2026 (Implementation dates set by each local authority)

As the county's disposal authority Kent County Council operates six waste transfer stations, which receives household waste (recycling and residual) collected at the kerbside.

In addition, [19 Household Waste Recycling Centres](#) are provided for Kent residents to bring household waste, including DIY waste for safe disposal, recycling or reuse, also helping to mitigate fly tipping. These sites provide multiple separate waste collection bays or containers, to maximise recycling and reuse. Some sites accept hazardous wastes such as oil, batteries, chemicals and asbestos, providing householders with a safe disposal option, helping to prevent environmental pollution.

Multiple contracts are in place to get best value from the various waste streams ensuring waste is sorted and processed to maximise re-use, recycling, composting and energy recovery, with a continued drive to minimise the waste processed by the energy from waste plant.

The remaining residual waste is sent to the energy from waste plant at Allington, which generates electricity, avoiding landfill for almost all household waste collected and disposed of.

Locations managing household waste in Kent

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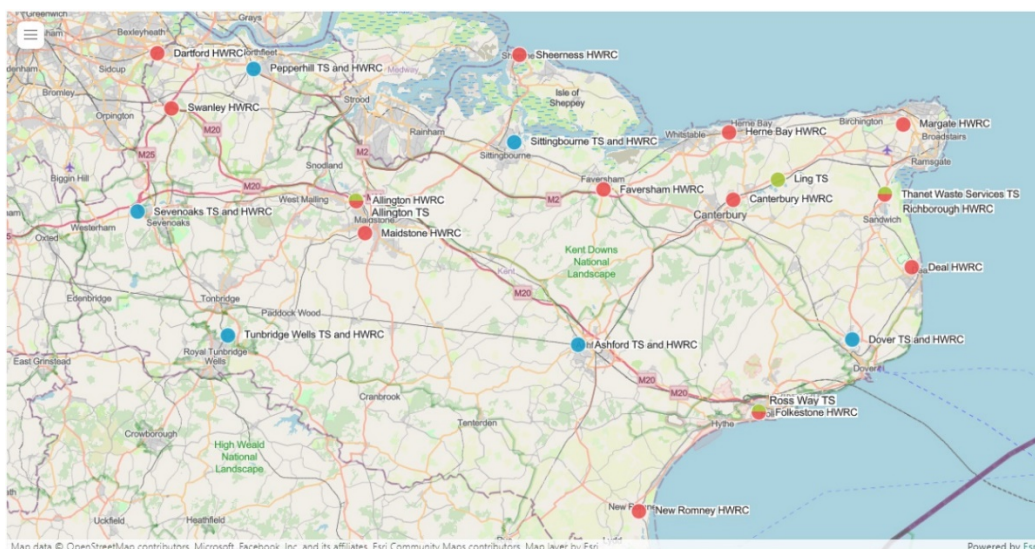
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Key

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ● | Household Waste Recycling Centre (KCC managed) |
| ● | Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre (KCC managed) |
| ● | Waste Transfer Station (privately managed) |

Fly tipping and littering (also termed waste crime)

All district; borough and city councils have statutory duties to enforce littering and individual (small-scale) fly tipping offences. These duties include clearing waste from public land and public spaces, investigating incidents to identify those responsible and to impose fines or prosecute where appropriate/able to do so.

If fly tipping is significant, involving multiple loads in a single location, usually more than 20 tonnes or where it is believed the waste is known or suspected to be hazardous waste, the incident(s) will be referred to the Environment Agency, which also has enforcement powers and duties, and will determine the action to be taken.

Performance to date

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Since April 2008, local authorities in England have been required to report data to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which enables monitoring of the following datasets; Residual waste per household (kg/hh), recycling and composting rate (%), municipal waste to landfill (%) and the number of fly tipping incidents reported and actions taken.

These datasets provided a focus of the previous joint strategy which included Kent-wide targets, performance up to 2023-24 is summarised below.

Residual waste per household¹

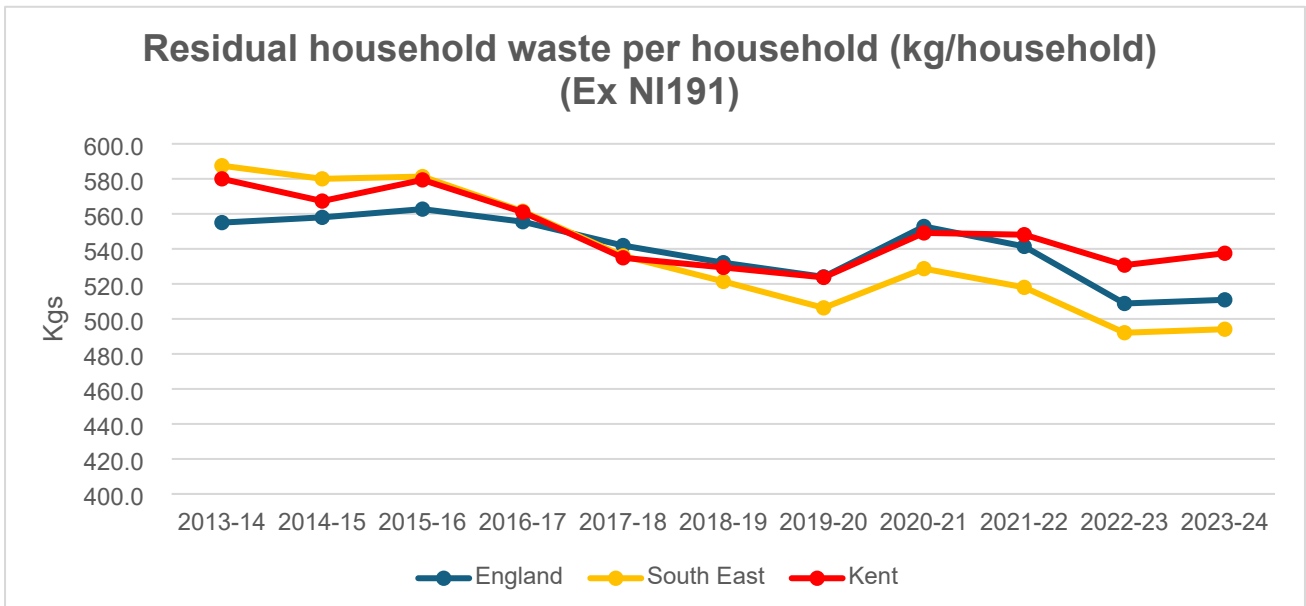
Reducing the amount of residual waste per household is the desired trend.

Reviewing trends over the last 10 years, *residual waste per household* in Kent had been steadily reducing until 2020-21, the first year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, when household waste increased. This gave rise to significant shifts in household habits and waste arisings, continuing after national lockdowns had ended, this includes increased online shopping and more people working from home. By 2023-24 residual waste had not returned to pre-pandemic levels and Kent is now underperforming compared with national and regional trends, which have seen reductions to below pre-pandemic levels.

Positively, four Kent Districts⁶ have achieved reductions in residual waste per household (between 7% and 20%) below 2018-19 levels.

Figure 2: Trends for residual household waste per household

Kent County average compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National indicator 191)



Previous strategy target (2018): A year-on-year reduction to Kent-wide residual household waste per household tonnage.

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| Area | 2018-19 Baseline | Performance at 2020- 21 (compared to 2018-19) | Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19) |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Kent | 529 kg/hh | 549 kg/hh Increase of 20kg/hh | 537.5kg/hh Increase of 8.5kg/hh |
| South-east region | 521kg/hh | 529kg/hh Increase of 8kg/hh | 494kg/hh Decrease of 27kg/hh |
| All-England | 532kg/hh | 553kg/hh Increase of 21kg/hh | 511kg/hh Decrease of 21kg/hh |

Reuse, recycling and composting rates¹

Increasing the percentage of household waste that is reused, recycled and composted in Kent is the desired trend.

Like many authorities in England, *reuse, recycling and composting rates* have stagnated over the last 10 years. 2018-19 marked the peak for Kent's average recycling rate at 47.2% followed by a sharper decline than other similar authorities in the south east. By 2023-24 Kent's average recycling rate had fallen to below the all-England average for the first time in a decade, indicating a need for a renewed focus on recycling initiatives, drawing on the best practice of high-performing authorities in England who have achieved recycling rates above 60%.

Over the same period three Districts⁷ have been successful in increasing their recycling rates (by an additional 1%,4% and 6%) outperforming the England and south-east region.

Figure 3: Trends in reuse, recycling and composting rates

Kent County compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National Indicator 192)

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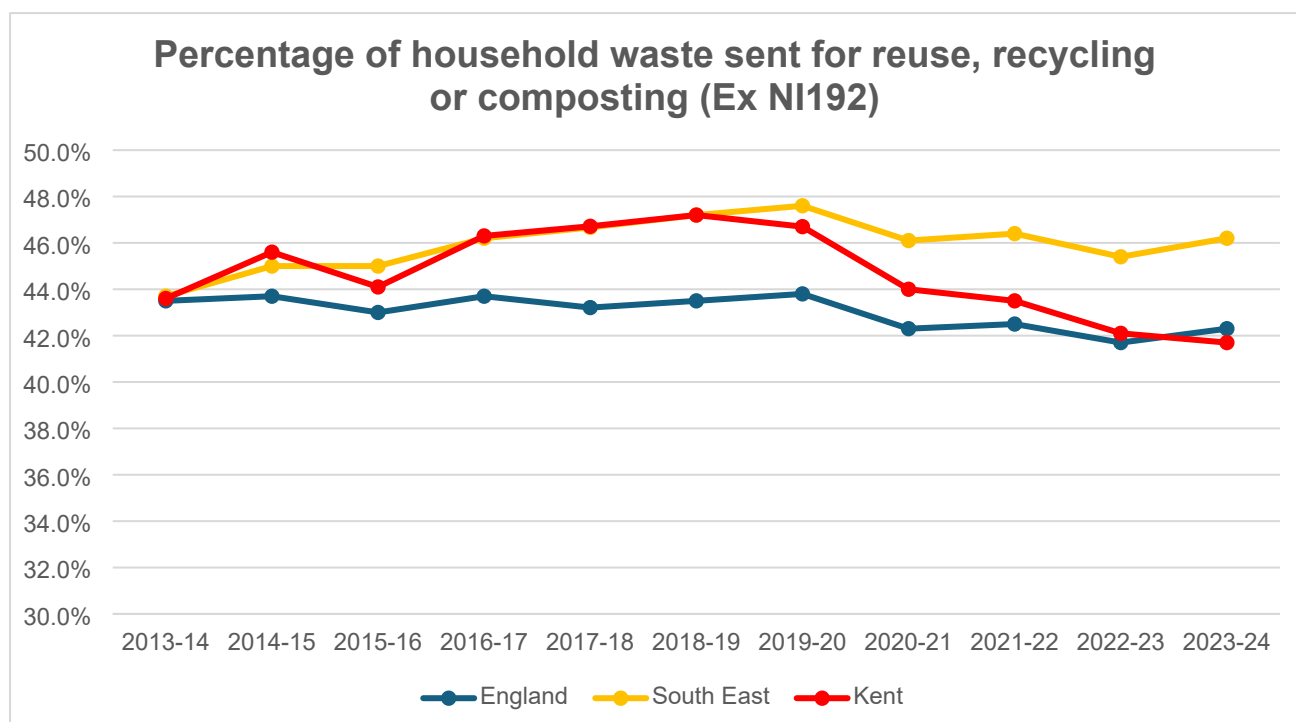
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Previous strategy target (2018): To recycle or compost at least 50% of household waste.

| Area | 2018-19 Baseline | Performance at 2020-21 (compared to 2018-19) | Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19) |
|-------------------|------------------|--|--|
| Kent | 47.2% | 44% | 41.7% (-5.5%) |
| South-east region | 47.2% | 46.1% | 46.2% (-1%) |
| All-England | 43.5% | 42.3% | 42.3% (-1.2%) |

Municipal waste to landfill¹

Reducing the amount of municipal waste sent to landfill is the desired trend.

In contrast, Kent has achieved an exemplary low level of *municipal waste to landfill*, outperforming both national and regional averages. Almost all residual waste is sent to an energy from waste plant, generating electricity, which is fed into the national grid or used to power the facility. This disposal route lowers the level of harmful greenhouse gas emissions compared to landfill, especially methane gas. Despite this success, more needs to be done to reduce valuable resources being lost

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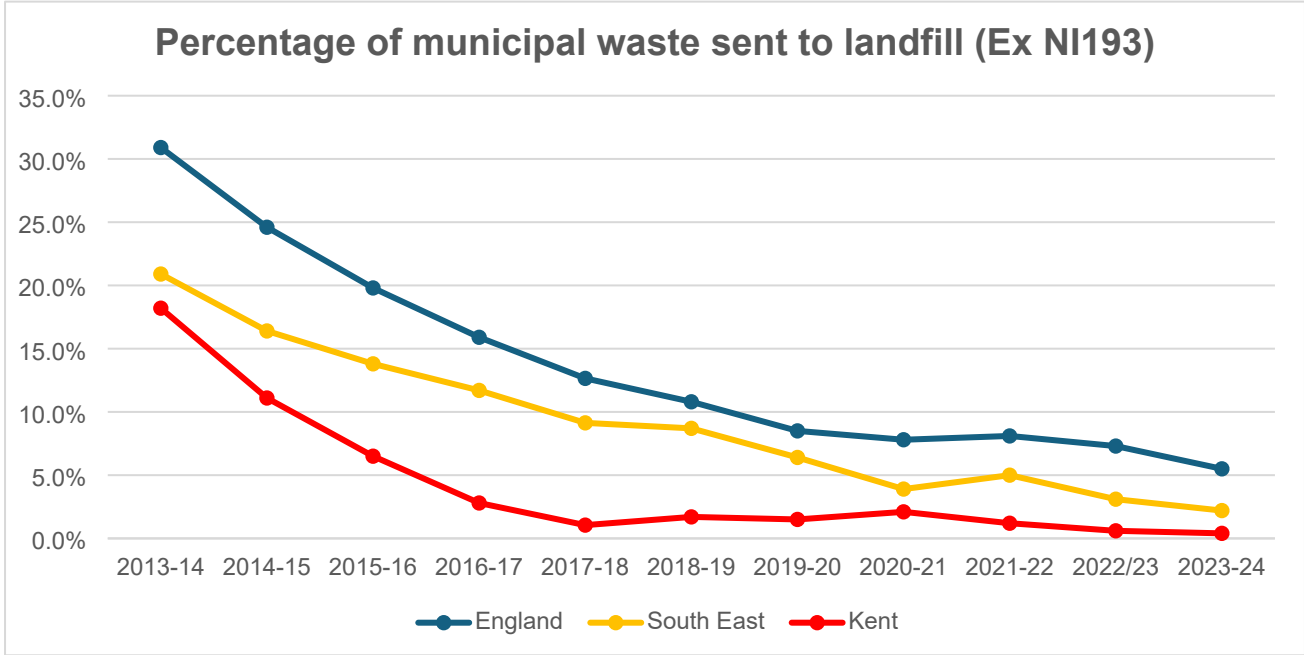
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through this treatment method, prioritising action to reduce waste and to reuse and repair materials, in addition to increasing the recycling and composting rate.

Figure 4: Trends for municipal waste sent to landfill
 Kent County compared to average for south east and all- England authorities (ex-National indicator 193)



Previous strategy target (2018): Ensure no more than 2% of Kent’s municipal waste ends up in landfill.

| Area | 2018-19 Baseline | Performance at 2020-21 (compared to 2018-19) | Performance at 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19) |
|-------------------|------------------|--|--|
| Kent | 2% | 2.1% | 0.4% (-1.6%) |
| South-east region | 9% | 3.9% | 2.2% (-5.1%) |
| All-England | 11% | 7.8% | 5.5% (-5.5%) |

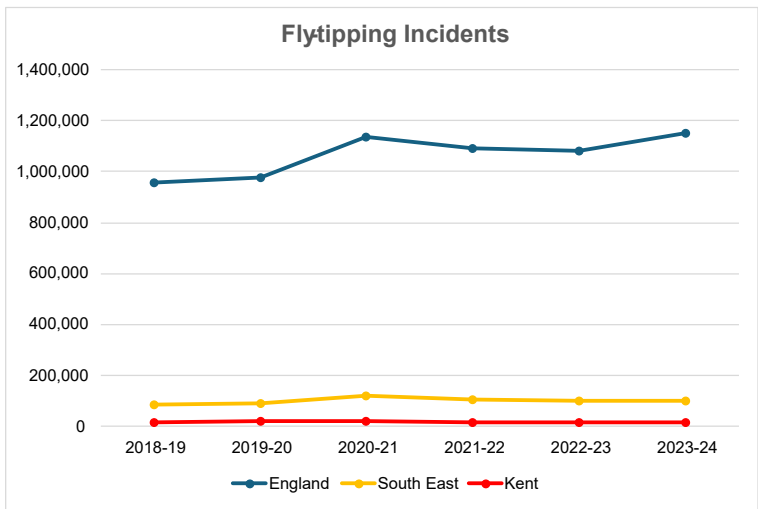
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Fly tipping⁴

Reducing the total tonnage and the number of fly tipping incidents involving waste from households is the desired trend.

Most of the fly tipping that is reported nationally involves waste from households, with the majority dumped on highways, footpaths and council-owned land. Over the past 10 years the number of incidents reported by local authorities in Kent has increased from just over 12,500 incidents in 2013-14 to 14,540 in 2023-24, with a peak of 19,470 incidents in 2019-20. This trend contrasts to the south east and national trends, which shows incidents are increasing and at a much higher rate nationally. This perhaps reflects the success of the multi-agency partnership approach in Kent, supported by a dedicated intelligence analyst, committed to disrupting this illegal activity and wherever possible, using the full enforcement powers available.

Figure 5 Number of fly tipping incidents reported by local authorities



Number of fly tipping incidents

| Area | 2018-19 Baseline | Performance at 2020-21 | Performance at 2023-24 |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Kent | 16,909 | 18,714 | 14,540 |
| South-east region | 84,479 | 121,283 | 101,694 |
| All-England | 957,157 | 1,138,347 | 1,152,617 |

Factors influencing performance

There are multiple factors influencing the amount of household waste arising and recycling rates. These include but are not limited to collection type and frequencies, demographics, population

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growth, rurality, housing types and consumer confidence, and these factors also play a part in influencing resident perceptions of waste management and levels of engagement, which impact the ability to achieve the desired performance levels.

In response to legislative and economic influences, packaging manufacturers have changed material type or density over time, reducing the complexity of packaging materials and for some items reducing the weight, so that similar volumes of packaging items collected for recycling weigh less than they did in the past. This is most apparent in plastic drinks bottles. This is further influenced by the Extended Producer Regulations for Packaging, which provides a financial incentive to reduce the type or amount of packaging placed on the market.

Food waste adds significantly to the weight of residual waste collected and this valuable resource is lost if not separated by residents for recycling. In the 10 Districts who already offer a food waste recycling service, participation rates in food waste recycling have been low both in Kent and nationally, compared to participation in packaging recycling.

To be successful local authority waste services rely on residents to act on information provided, to correctly separate their waste and use the correct disposal route for other wastes not accepted at the kerbside. Resident engagement requires continuous and consistent efforts to remain effective, especially in areas of high residential transience, such as those with a higher proportion of rented properties and flats or significant student populations.

How we compare

Comparing Kent's performance to other counties in the south-east, such as Essex and Hampshire, who have similar population size and number of households, shows that residual waste per household in Kent has not returned to lower levels as quickly as these counties.

Figure 6: Trends for residual household waste per household (Kent and comparator authorities)

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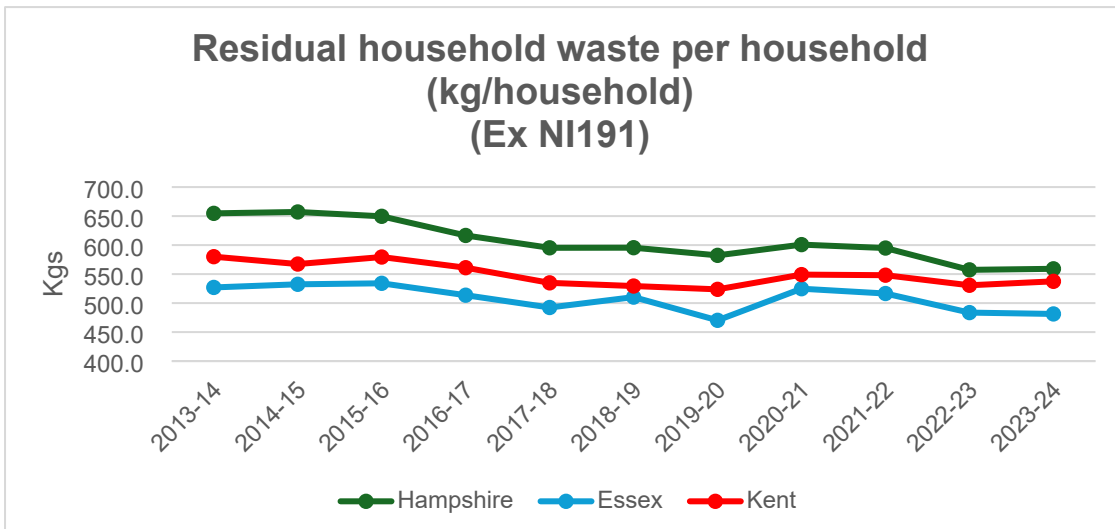
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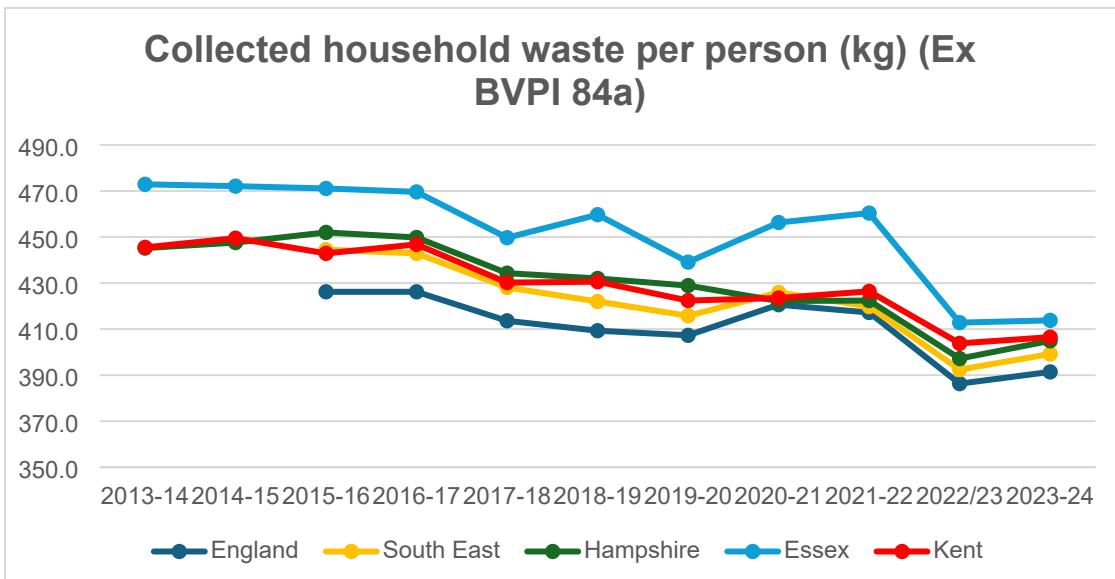
Footnote 5 Canterbury City Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

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In 2023/24 Kent’s per capita waste generation (406.5kg total waste per person) was slightly lower than that of Essex (414kg), suggesting relatively better waste minimisation efforts, and marginally higher than Hampshire (405kg), which may reflect differences in population behaviour and service models. As can be seen in Figure 6, Kent and the comparator authorities Essex and Hampshire are higher than the south east and England averages, confirming more needs to be done to reduce total household waste arising.

Figure 7: Trends for total collected household waste per person



Note: data for England and the south east are not available prior to 2025-26

Packaging recycling rates are similar across the three counties, whereas Essex have a higher rate for food and garden waste at 25% compared to 20% for Kent and 17% for Hampshire. Higher rates

Footnote1 Source data [Local authority collected waste management - annual results - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results)
 Footnote 2 Source data [Population forecasts - Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/council-and-democracy/population-forecasts-kent-county-council) KCC Housing Led Forecast 2021
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of garden and food waste recycled are also common factors for local authorities achieving the highest recycling rates in England of over 60%.

In exploring these differences, it was noted that Essex County Council had successfully trialed a food waste recycling initiative. This led to a trial in the Dover and Folkestone & Hythe Districts in autumn 2024, increasing food waste captured between 11% and 14% with a subsequent roll-out to a further six districts during 2025. This campaign has seen food recycling increase by over 20% on average, compared to the previous year, across the eight participating districts.

Contamination of mixed packaging recycling ranges differs due to collection method. In 2023-24, for co-mingled packaging recycling collections (including paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 11% to 15% with food, textiles and wet paper being frequent contaminants.

For twin-stream packaging recycling collections (excluding paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 7% to 19% with general waste (black bags), other mixed (hard) plastics and mixed/shredded paper as the frequent contaminants.

Projected growth and impacts²

Kent is expected to see an increase in population of 96,600 people and an increase of 55,000 dwellings by 2030. If total household waste generation remains at the 2023/24 level of 955 kg per household, this could result in an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste per year.

Managing an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste annually will have substantial cost implications, these costs will increase further from 2028, with the expansion of the scope of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to encompass greenhouse gas emissions from Energy from Waste (EfW) processes such as the plant at Allington, which treats Kent's residual waste.

This level of growth will place significant pressure on existing waste collection, treatment, and disposal infrastructure, requiring co-ordinated investment and planning across the partnership to ensure that sufficient collection regimes are in place and that infrastructure both existing and planned, is sufficient to manage this increase.

To manage the projected waste growth and associated costs, Kent will need to consider:

- Building new and or expanded waste facilities.
- Investing in recycling infrastructure to reduce reliance on incineration.
- Enhancing waste prevention and reuse initiatives to curb per-household waste generation.
- Using data and evidence to design more impactful communications and behaviour change interventions that encourage more residents to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Leveraging Extended Producer Regulation funding to offset costs of packaging waste management.

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- Monitoring Emissions Trading Scheme developments to anticipate future incineration cost increases and explore alternatives like carbon capture or heat network integration.

The opportunities and challenges

This strategy has been informed by:

- a series of stakeholder engagement sessions
- knowledge of existing and new legislation planned
- existing data trends and insight
- new data and insight collected during 2025

This identified a range of opportunities and challenges (listed in Appendix 2), some of which will be used to develop future annual partnership action plans.

The additional data and insight collected in 2025 has expanded the range of available data to use to design new behaviour change interventions, inform and assess the impact of projects, and ultimately measure the return on the investment of finance and staff resources.

The data includes:

- Current collection and disposal service baseline costs and carbon impacts, and modelling to show the likely impacts on costs, recycling rates and overall levels of household waste due to Simpler Recycling and Deposit Return Scheme legislation
- Waste composition audit and analysis of collected residual and food waste across all districts
- Resident food waste survey (countywide)
- Behaviour change research, comparing Kent with national data and insights
- Trends in fly tipping

The analysis of this data has concluded a continued focus on achieving efficient service delivery, including developing new service offers that mitigate the costs of planned legislation changes and prepare waste services for local government reorganisation. Essential to this is engaging Kent residents and wider partners to make positive changes that unlock the environmental and economic advantages of delivering a circular economy. Some of the conclusions drawn from this analysis is provided in more detail here:

Modelling of future legislation (Deposit Return Scheme 2027) indicates a likely negative impact on packaging recycling rates at the kerbside. This is due to drinks bottles and cans (plastic and metal) proposed to be captured separately through return points, reducing both the tonnage and relative value of recycled packaging collected at the kerbside. This tonnage loss is unlikely to be offset, by the addition of flexible plastics and films due to be collected through Simpler Recycling legislation in the same year.

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This will likely create waste disposal cost pressures, as gate fees for recycling increase, based on the change to the quality and commercial value of dry mixed packaging recycling collected.

With energy from waste (EfW) processes planned to be brought within the scope of the Emissions Trading Scheme in 2028, a sharp focus is needed on the types of materials within the residual waste, that produce the most greenhouse gas emissions. There will be a carbon price applied to these emissions, impacting disposal costs, with increases forecast in the £millions. Higher greenhouse gas emitting materials, such as textiles and plastics accounts for 25.7% of the current residual waste stream³ and diverting these items from residual waste will need to be targeted through improvement projects considering waste minimisation, reuse, repair and options that further increase the capture of recyclable materials, as a high proportion of these materials are still within the residual waste stream.

Kent County Council's revised disposal strategy complements this strategy and aims to significantly reduce the amount of household waste sent for incineration (energy from waste), to reduce or mitigate the increasing costs of residual waste disposal, including impacts of legislation due to be implemented (refer to National Policy section). Investing funds to influence resident behaviours is being prioritised, initially targeting food waste as the largest proportion of recyclable material in residual waste by weight. To be successful, requires initiatives delivered through partnership action.

A waste composition audit in 2025, sampling waste across all local authority areas, confirmed that up to 52% of Kent's residual household waste could be recycled, in addition to the recycling that is already captured (when including all materials to be separately collected under Simpler Recycling legislation). It also identified that 63% of food waste currently collected separately is avoidable food waste, such as cooked food or fruit and vegetables that have spoiled. To be successful in achieving improved recycling rates of recyclable packaging and food, much more needs to be done to encourage and support residents to reduce the waste they produce and separate waste correctly. By wasting less, especially food, will also help residents to save money.

[The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#), supported by their behavioural science specialist subsidiary - [Behaviour Change](#) - were commissioned to complete research to understand Kent residents' attitudes and behaviours towards waste and recycling and compare this with national data. This research concluded that recycling behaviours are influenced by a mix of practical, emotional and informational barriers. It confirmed that Kent residents are largely satisfied with their services, although there are key areas for improvement, such as food waste services. Some residents reported lacking trust in their local council and do not actively seek out council information to inform their recycling decisions, which leads to incorrect disposal choices. A lack of feedback on what happens to waste after collection, or a perceived lack of care by collection crews, also negatively affects residents' sense of worthwhileness and this reduces the personal motivation needed to correctly separate waste for recycling.

In recent years, fly tipping has continued to increase, with criminals perceiving it is a low risk-high profit activity, with the level of penalties not delivering an effective deterrent. Nationally, there has been an increase in unlicensed traders collecting waste illegally, many advertising on social media, with householders drawn in by offers to dispose of waste at low cost, coupled with limited awareness of their duty of care responsibilities, to check that companies are licensed to remove

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household waste.

There has also been an increase in the number of larger sites, where multiple loads of waste are being deposited, most likely the result of serious organised crime. The ability to act on these locally is limited, as these cases require lengthy and complex multi-agency approaches, and the use of enforcement powers only available to the Environment Agency. A multi-agency approach to disrupt fly tipping and illegal waste activities continues and is deemed an effective approach, until legislative and other system-wide changes are introduced.

These insights highlight the importance of continued partnership working to develop countywide initiatives, coupled with a holistic approach to transforming waste systems and services, prioritising and focusing efforts through a few strategic aims, outlined below.

Setting the future direction

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) will lead the transformation of waste services in Kent, to a circular, low-carbon, waste system that protects the environment, delivers best value, and empowers communities to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle through inclusive, efficient, and innovative services.

By retaining the value of material resources flowing through Kent, we will generate green jobs, support skills and training, and deliver economic, environmental, and wellbeing benefits for local communities and beyond.

We will deliver integrated, high-performing, efficient waste and resource services across Kent, through collaboration, innovation, evidence-based decision-making, investment in infrastructure, and by engaging and supporting residents to make sustainable choices.

The partnership is committed to developing plans framed by four strategic aims:

1. Delivery of operational excellence

- Delivery of efficient, sustainable, high-quality waste collection and disposal services.
- Collaborate across tiers and with private/public partners
- Reduce costs through efficiency and resource optimisation
- Work towards the removal of any barriers to waste minimisation, recycling, reuse and repair

2. Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy

- Support sustainable economic growth
- Create and raise awareness of green job opportunities
- Promote efficient use of resources, retaining their highest value
- Accelerate the transition to net zero emissions

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- Continue to minimise landfill
- Increase recycling performance

3. Improving performance through behaviour change

- Foster behavioural change through evidence-led education and communication
- Ensure services are accessible, equitable, and responsive
- Promote and support local reuse and repair initiatives
- Educate residents about their duty of care to reduce the environmental damage caused by the fly tipping of household waste

4. Support the transition to unitary waste management system(s)

- Enable strategic planning and investment by consolidating governance and accountability
- Enhance data integration and performance monitoring across the waste value chain
- Progress opportunities to align collection and disposal services to reduce duplication and improve service delivery

Delivery of aims

Aim 1 Delivery of operational excellence

Current position:

Seven District/Borough councils have joint procurement contracts and continue to seek added value from these.

Planning changes to services to meet Simpler Recycling legislation, providing recycling services to all households

Some Districts do not have in-District waste transfer station facilities, requiring collected waste to be transported out of area and/or to private sector run facilities

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Future Plans:

Short term:

- Review opportunities for consistent collections across the county, including Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable (TEEP) assessment of the recycling of paper and card, to enhance partnership work and work towards achieving or exceeding 50% recycling rate
- Investigating a system of shared risk and reward
- Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improving services and trial new initiatives
- Progress plans to establish new or improved waste transfer station facilities in Folkestone & Hythe District and for Dartford/Gravesham Boroughs

Long term:

- Use the opportunity of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to further streamline services
- Explore further opportunities to reduce financial barriers for residents, achieve higher recycling rates, more reuse and less fly tipping of household waste
- Deliver efficient and effective services through a whole system approach
- More joined-up procurement and contract negotiations that seeks to deliver additional social value
- Further develop the approach to future infrastructure planning through the partnership

Aim 2 Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy

Current position:

Ten out of twelve districts currently offer food waste collections

The county average recycling rate for 2023-24 was 41.7% with two waste collection authorities recycling over 50%, and one close to achieving 50%, six more achieved rates between 42.9% and 46.8%

KCC has been successful in securing grant funding to deliver education, re-use and repair initiatives, and continues to seek new opportunities and funding

KCC is delivering re-use shops in partnership with one of its main contractors and continues to increase the number of separate recycling streams offered at the household waste recycling centres.

Future Plans:

Short term:

- Align and adapt services to Simpler Recycling legislation

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- Dartford Borough and Sevenoaks District Councils will introduce food waste collection services for all residents
- Sevenoaks District Council will change residual waste collection frequency, which will further align with other areas in the county.
- All other authorities will introduce packaging recycling and/or food recycling services where these services are not currently offered. This will predominantly be to residents living in flats and homes of multiple occupation (HMOs).
- Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improving waste and recycling services

Long term:

- Preparing for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme and Emissions Trading Scheme scope expansion
- Develop a Circular Economy roadmap for Kent
- Target the reduction of high carbon-emitting wastes in the residual waste stream to reduce the financial burdens expected from the expansion of the scope of ETS legislation in 2028

Aim 3: Improving Performance through behaviour change

Current position:

By March 2026, all Kent collection authorities currently offering a food waste service had delivered a food waste recycling campaign.

With the support of [Re:London](#), a best practice approach for communal recycling services has been used in upskilling waste and recycling officers across Kent and developing local improvement plans.

In some areas, recycling is significantly contaminated with non-recyclable wastes leading to more rejected loads, lower recycling rates and higher costs as this waste is diverted to energy from waste.

The partnership established a refreshed communications group, involving officers from all authorities. This group identify communications priorities in response to new data, insight and legislative changes and design and deliver campaigns and actions.

Kent County Council has funded the development of a five-year Behaviour Change Strategy, commissioning expertise from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Behaviour Change unit.

Future Plans:

Short term:

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- Continue to increase the capture and recycling of food waste, building on the 2025 food waste campaign
- Improve local authority managed communal recycling facilities, based on proven best practice and engage with social and private sector housing providers to deliver the same
- Trial new approaches to reduce contamination of dry mixed packaging recycling (DMR)
- Deliver a more joined-up approach to resident communications and campaigns
- Deliver targeted campaigns, such as battery safety and fly tipping prevention, to encourage residents to make good disposal choices, meet their duty of care and help reduce costs incurred by local authorities (due to fly tipping clean-up & enforcement and losses from waste fires)
- Continue to develop the re-use shops initiative and bid for funding to pilot and provide proof of concept for new re-use and repair offerings

Long term:

- Further build on successes with targeted behaviour change interventions and communications that reduce overall household waste, increases recycling and re-use
- Build on re-use and repair initiatives and campaigns to achieve mainstreamed offers

Aim 4: Support the transition to a unitary waste management system(s)

Current position:

The Kent local authority leaders have developed several blueprints, proposing the future administrative boundaries of Kent. These must be approved by Central Government, who have also set out the key milestones to be delivered as a route map to Local Government Reorganisation. The Kent Resource Partnership members have provided inputs to the process helping to identify critical risks and opportunities for waste systems and services.

Future Plans

Short term:

- Kent Resource Partnership members to play an active part in the development of the waste management system(s) under the new administrative boundaries (when known)

Long term:

- Support the implementation of the new waste management system(s)
- Develop new partnership arrangements, as required, to retain a Kent-wide focus on delivering efficient and effective services and enable new innovations

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) will agree priorities and deliver an annual action plan, in line with the strategic aims, drawing on opportunities identified (Appendix 2) combining this with new

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information, data and insight. Projects and additional resources will be primarily funded from the KRP projects budget, supplemented where needed by securing funds from external grants.

Service changes

April 2026 Simpler Recycling – Implement packaging recycling and food waste recycling services, extending to the majority of Kent households

April 2027 Simpler Recycling – Implement collection of flexible plastic wrappings/films

2026-31 Further expansion of re-use shops at household waste recycling centres

Infrastructure

Summer 2026 Pepperhill (Gravesend) waste transfer station annexe planning submission

Autumn 2027 New waste transfer station (Folkestone & Hythe) expected operational

Autumn 2028 Pepperhill (Gravesend) waste transfer station annexe expected operational

2029 Church Marshes (Sittingbourne) household waste recycling centre relocation and redevelopment of existing waste transfer station (pending feasibility and planning stages)

2030 North Farm (Tunbridge Wells) waste transfer station relocation and household waste recycling centre redevelopment (pending feasibility and planning stages)

Resident engagement and behaviour change

Spring 2026 Campaign to educate residents on their duty of care to reduce fly tipping of household waste

2026-27 Continue food waste recycling messaging and trial behaviour change interventions; Raise awareness of the journey of waste, the benefits of recycling and what can/can't be recycled; Campaign to reduce contamination of packaging recycling/District pilot interventions

2027-28 Roll out successful pilot interventions to more Districts/Develop and pilot further interventions; Promote DRS; Target reduction of hard plastics and textiles in residual waste streams(reuse or recycling opportunities)

2028-2029 Continue to target hard to reach/engage residents and high-carbon waste streams in residual waste.

Measuring success

As outlined above, the previous strategy focused on measuring and reporting the data required by Defra (ex-National Indicators NI191, 192 and 193 plus fly tipping data). These provide long-term trends and allow Kent authorities to benchmark performance against other similar local authorities, the south-east region and all-England averages. This limited set of measures no longer satisfies the needs of the partnership or legislation introduced since 2018.

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The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) reinforced and added to existing national targets to set more ambitious recycling rates, further reduce waste sent to landfill and reduce avoidable waste, specifically targeting plastics. In the same year, the 25 Year Environment Plan was published, the first statutory Environmental Improvement Plan (further revised December 2025), followed by the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and the Environment Act 2021.

This framework introduces more ambitious targets up to 2050, relevant to waste collection and waste disposal authorities in England. These targets are summarised in Figure 7:

Figure 8 Targets set by waste legislation (England)

By 2025

! To recycle 55% of municipal waste

✓To reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to 10% (already achieved in Kent)

By 2030

! To recycle 60% of municipal waste

✓Prevent food waste going to landfill (already achieved in Kent)

75% recycling rate for packaging waste

Reduce residual waste per capita to 437kg or less, a 24% reduction (interim target - Environmental Improvement Plan 2025)

By 2035

! To recycle 65% of municipal waste

2042

Reduce residual waste per person by 50% based on 2019 levels (287kg per capita or less)

By 2050

Eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds

The Kent Resource Partnership members will continue to meet the reporting requirements as required by Defra and commits to developing additional performance measures and targets, aligned with the aims of this strategy, as summarised in Figure 8 (These measures will be refined further as more guidance comes forward such as the measurement of pEPR 'efficient and effective' and the plans for Local Government Reorganisation).

The intention is to track local progress in influencing residents' behaviours to achieve higher levels of performance, such as reducing total and residual waste, diverting more waste to re-use and repair (where data is available) and to reduce the number of incidents of household waste that is fly tipped in Kent.

Figure 9 Monitoring achievement of the strategic aims

| Strategic Aim | Action | Measure | Target |
|---------------|--------|---------|--------|
|---------------|--------|---------|--------|

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| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Delivery of operational excellence | 1a Develop improvement plans that deliver 'efficient and effective' waste management (Use pEPR assessments as the starting point for measurement) | 1a pEPR measure of efficient and effective (as defined by Defra/Pack UK) | 1a Maximise the level of pEPR annual payments awarded by avoiding performance-based deductions (based on efficient and effective methodology applied) |
| | 1b Develop new waste infrastructure that allows the transfer of waste to the disposal authority, within or as close to the boundary of the District/Borough it is collected from | 1b Number of collection authorities paid tipping away costs (and total £s paid) | 1b Reduce the number of collection authorities eligible for 'tipping away' costs |
| | 1c Reduce the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste | 1c Measure the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste (and cost impact, £s per tonne) | 1c Reduce year-on-year the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste |
| 2. Supporting a pathway to a Circular Economy | 2a Deliver services aligned with Simpler Recycling legislation 2b Develop targeted interventions that reduce overall waste collected 2c Develop targeted interventions that increase the capture of recyclable items 2d Develop infrastructure and promote options that increase the capture of items collected for reuse | 2a Number of Districts/Boroughs compliant 2b Total waste collected per household and per person (2023/24 baseline 932 kg/hh and 406.5 kg/person) 2c Proportion of total household waste collected for recycling 2d Tonnage of materials diverted to re-use (from kerbside and HWRCs) | 2a Compliance with Simpler Recycling (TEEP assessments completed where required) 2b Aim for year-on-year reductions (no set target) 2c Increase the proportion of total household waste that is collected for recycling** **Adjusted for DRS impacts 2d Increased reuse tonnage (at HWRC and kerbside) |
| 3. Improving performance through behaviour change | Develop targeted interventions or campaigns that help residents to: 3a reduce the waste they produce | Number of successful interventions and campaigns delivered and the results of each Examples: | Performance target(s) set for each intervention or campaign |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>3b increase the number of items reused and recycled (Prioritise food, textiles, electricals and hard plastics)</p> <p>3c correctly separate their waste to reduce contamination of recycling</p> <p>3d increase the number of items repaired</p> <p>3e fulfil their duty of care to prevent their waste being fly tipped</p> | <p>3b Tonnage of separate food waste collected and % diverted from residual (using waste composition baseline 2025)</p> <p>3b % of residual waste diverted due to increased capture of electricals, textiles and hard plastics</p> <p>3c % of recycling that is contaminated</p> <p>3d Data for repaired items not yet readily available</p> <p>3e Number of reported fly tipped incidents on public land</p> | |
| 4. Support the transition to unitary waste management system(s) | Kent Resource Partnership proactively engages with and contributes to a whole system approach and prepares services for implementation. | To be developed as part of the Local Government Reorganisation planning process Example: Deliver expected standards of waste collection and disposal services from day one (vesting day) | To be developed as part of the Local Government Reorganisation planning process Example: No significant interruption to service delivery for residents |

Glossary of terms

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Circular Economy | A system where materials never become waste with benefits to the natural environment by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. Products and materials are kept in circulation through processes such as maintenance, re-use, repair, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting. |
| Co-mingled collection | Clean and dry mixed recycling, including paper, cardboard, plastics, metal cans and glass, collected in a single recycling container. |
| Commercial waste | Waste generated by businesses and commercial activities. Including from offices, schools, hospitals, shops, factories, agriculture, sport, recreation and entertainment. It also includes any business run from home such as childminding, hairdressing, beauty treatments and dog grooming. This waste may be similar to household waste but must be managed and disposed of separately. |

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|---|---|
| Communal waste/recycling | Waste services provided to properties such as flats, where waste bins are shared by several households and normally sited in a bin store or specific external location. |
| Composting | The degradation of organic wastes in the presence of oxygen to produce fertiliser or soil conditioner. This can either be an enclosed process (in-vessel) or operated as an 'open windrow' process. |
| Defra | The UK Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| Dry mixed recycling (DMR) | Recyclable materials that are clean and dry and free from food contamination, such as paper, cardboard, metal cans, plastic containers and glass. |
| The Environment Agency | The Environment Agency for England was established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment (formed by the Environment Act 1995). It regulates emissions of and pollutants to air, land and water. This includes the regulation and enforcement of waste management activities. |
| Energy from Waste (EfW) | The conversion of waste into a useable form of energy, often heat or electricity. |
| Fly tipping | The illegal disposal of household, industrial, commercial or other 'controlled' waste. |
| Food waste | All food that is discarded by households, including uneaten cooked food, fruit and vegetable peelings, meat/fish bones and egg shells, any food that is past its 'use by' date or food that is no longer edible (stored incorrectly or for too long) |
| Avoidable food waste | Discarded edible food that could have been consumed. May be due to buying or cooking too much, stored incorrectly or for too long so the food is past its 'use by' date or is no longer edible/has gone off or rotted. |
| Green jobs | Work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. This includes protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, conserving natural resources by reducing energy, materials and water consumption and avoidance of waste and pollution. |
| Greenhouse gas emissions | These are gases released by natural or man-made processes that lead to heat being trapped within the earth's atmosphere. Gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. |
| Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) | An individual building or part thereof, where two or more households or at least 3 individuals who constitute more than one household, share a basic amenity such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities, and the building is the occupants' main residence. |
| Household waste (subset of municipal waste) | Waste from domestic properties, including waste brought to Household Waste Recycling Centres, material collected for recycling and composting and street cleansing waste. |
| Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) | Sites operated by the waste disposal authority where residents within a specified area can bring and dispose of their household waste, in |

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| | particular bulky waste, normally free of charge (with some exceptions). |
| Kerbside collection | Any regular collection of household waste from private households, including flats (with communal waste facilities) and from commercial or industrial premises (where provided). It excludes collection services requested ad-hoc on demand. |
| Kent Resource Partnership | The body that is entrusted to develop and deliver the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. It is made up of senior officers reporting to a board of elected councillors, representing the 12 district, borough and city councils and Kent County Council. |
| Landfill sites | Areas of land in which waste is deposited, often disused quarries. Where there are no ready-made voids, the waste is deposited above ground and the landscape is contoured (known as land-raising). |
| Local Government Reorganisation | The process of restructuring local authorities and their boundaries in two-tier areas (a County Council and district, borough and city councils), including those with existing unitary councils. A policy being implemented by the UK Government in England intended to achieve local government savings and efficiencies. |
| Municipal waste (also known as LACMW - Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste) | Household and business waste collected by local authorities and which is similar in nature and composition as required by the Landfill Directive. (includes all household waste, street litter/sweepings, waste delivered to local authority managed recycling points/sites and municipal parks and gardens wastes). Local authority collected waste – definition of terms - GOV.UK |
| Per capita | Often used in place of per head or per person. |
| Product lifecycle | The four stages of a product: Introduction, growth, maturity and decline. |
| Recycling | The processing of waste materials into the same product or a different product. Many household wastes such as paper, cardboard, glass, metals and some plastics can be recycled. |
| Recovery | Obtaining value from waste through re-use, recycling, composting or other means such as anaerobic digestion(organic wastes) or energy recovery. |
| Residual waste | Waste that is not recycled or reused including recycling materials that are contaminated. When collected from households or commercial businesses it is often termed as 'black bag' or 'general' waste. It also includes waste taken by residents to the Household Waste Recycling Centres that cannot be recycled or reused and is segregated in the waste to energy collection containers or bays. |
| Re-use | Items that are designed to be used multiple times such as refillable containers, re-usable packaging and bags. This also includes items no longer of use to one person but is still fully working or in a usable condition and can be used by someone else. |
| Re-use, recycling and composting rate | The proportion of household waste collected by local authorities in Kent (Local authority collections and at Household Waste Recycling Centres) that is re-used, recycled or composted |

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| Sustainable waste management | Using material resources efficiently to reduce the amount of waste produced. Where waste is generated, dealing with it in a way that actively contributes to and balances the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations. |
| Twin-stream collection | Clean and dry recycling, which is separated into two streams. One for paper and cardboard and the other for mixed plastics, metal cans and glass. Each stream is collected in a separate recycling container. |
| Waste arisings | This is the amount of waste produced in a given area during a given period of time. |
| Waste Collection Authority (WCA) | A local authority charged with the collection of waste from each household in its area on a regular basis. It can also collect, if requested, commercial and industrial waste from the private sector. In England these are district, borough or city councils and Unitary Authorities. |
| Waste containers | Bins, caddies, boxes or bags provided to households or commercial premises for the separation and collection of different waste streams. |
| Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) | A local authority charged with the disposal of household waste collected in its area (by waste collection authorities or at Household Waste Recycling Centres). In England these are usually County Councils and Unitary Authorities. |
| Waste hierarchy | Introduced by the EU Waste Framework Directive is an abstract framework that prioritises the options for waste management. It represents a sliding scale, starting with the most preferred, highest impact option (prevent) to the least preferred, lowest impact option (disposal): Prevent→re-use→recycle→recovery→ disposal. |
| Waste or recycling infrastructure | Includes waste collection containers (bins/boxes/bags), vehicles, bulk containers and premises used to accept, store, sort and/or process different types of waste materials. |
| Waste management | The collection, sorting, treatment and disposal of waste. |
| Waste transfer station | A location that is permitted by the Environment Agency to accept and temporarily store municipal waste(s) delivered by waste collection vehicles, prior to bulk consolidation and onward transport via larger vehicles to a waste processing plant, energy to waste facility or landfill site. |
| Unitary governance | For waste services, a single local authority organisation that has a statutory duty to collect and dispose of municipal waste and deliver street cleansing and enforcement. |

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Appendix 1 Summary of relevant waste legislation

| Legislation / Policy | Targets and Goals (relevant to local authority duties) |
|---|--|
| Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) | Local authorities must collect household waste and certain commercial waste on request. Apply a duty of care : waste must be stored, transported and transferred safely to authorised persons with accurate documentation. |
| Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011 | Apply the waste hierarchy : prevention → reuse → recycling → recovery → disposal. Requirement for separate collection of paper, metal, plastic, and glass (where practicable) by 2015 At least 50% by weight of waste from households to be prepared for re-use or recycled by 2020 |
| Controlled waste Regulations 2012 | Defines household, commercial and industrial waste. Local authorities may charge for collection/disposal of certain non-domestic household waste (eg schools, hospitals, care homes) |
| Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) <i>(Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England)</i> | Confirmed 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020 Set a 65% recycling rate for municipal waste by 2035 and a 75% recycling rate for packaging waste by 2030 Aim to reduce municipal waste to landfill to 10% or less by 2035 All plastic packaging to be recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025 Work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030 Reiterated goal to eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050 (in line with the 25 Year Plan Strategies to crack down on waste crime |
| 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) | Ambition to eliminate all avoidable waste within the UK by 2050 Target to end avoidable plastic waste by 2042 Commitment to meet or exceed existing waste targets on landfill, reuse, and recycling (e.g. 50% recycling of household waste by 2020) Plan to develop new ambitious targets and milestones for waste reduction and resource efficiency |

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| | Pledge to eliminate waste crime and illegal waste sites and achieve a “substantial reduction” in litter and marine plastic pollution over the plan’s lifetime(to 2043) |
| Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 | Updated targets to recycle 55% of municipal waste by 2025, 60% by 2030, and 65% by 2035 Requirement to reduce landfilling of municipal waste to 10% or less by 2035 <i>(These amendments implemented the EU Circular Economy Package targets in UK law, building on the 2011 Regulations.)</i> |
| Environment Act 2021 (UK) | Legally binding target to halve the amount of waste per person sent to residual treatment by 2042 (compared to 2019 baseline) Overall goal is to support a shift towards less waste and more recycling Introduces new policies: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging, Consistent Recycling collections across England(Now called Simpler Recycling); Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers. |

Appendix 2 – Opportunities and Challenges

| Opportunities | Requirements | Actions | Realisation Timeframe | Resource Required |
|---|---|--|--|-------------------|
| Countywide approach to resident engagement, communication and behaviour change | All partners participate in the KRP communications group to develop joint campaigns | Agree priority campaigns and action plans Refresh/simplify web resources Targeted behaviour change interventions based on District insight | Continuous programme, priorities agreed annually | District/County |
| Extended Producer Regulations for packaging (PEPR) New investment funding for packaging for all local authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and effective collections and disposal systems • Improvements to quality and quantity of material • Effective data capture and analysis • Proactive and measurable behaviour | Completed modelling of collection systems (Ricardo) Develop incentive scheme for one system approach Apply insight | Initial funding allocated 2025/26 Ongoing (data gathering) 2-year plan to 2027 | District/County |

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|--|--|--|---|-----------------|
| | change campaigns | from collection and disposal data to identify improvements Current investment from KCC and KRP Working with WRAP to develop 5-year behaviour change strategy | | |
| Simpler Recycling | Collection of core materials by March 2026 WCA: bins/vehicles/crews WDA: infrastructure/contracts for disposal | Ensure readiness of collection and disposal systems | March 2026 | District/County |
| Flexible Plastics | Market development and readiness | Support infrastructure and introduce new collection systems | March 2027 - Future uncertainty | District/County |
| Deposit Return Scheme | 'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit Refund on return to designated point | Potential reduction in litter/street cleansing costs | October 2027 | District |
| Local Government Reorganisation | Removal of two-tier system Creation of unitary system | KRP to feed into waste workstream | March 2028 (development from late 2025) | KRP |
| Increase items captured within recycling streams | Services keep pace with market and materials developments | Increase recycling offers at HWRCS Communicate clearly to residents what | Immediate and ongoing | District/County |

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| | | can/can't be recycled at kerbside, and encourage the most cost effective and environmentally sound means of disposal for different waste materials e.g. at HWRCs, charities or community reuse and repair | | |
| Community Repair | Public sector support for community repair, including repair café networks and linked activities | Support and develop community repair initiatives | Immediate | County |
| Community Re-use | Support and promote initiatives e.g. Library of Things, community and charity collection service | Implement and expand reuse programs, bid for external funding | Within 1 year | District/County |
| Engage more residents to adopt positive actions and behaviours | Residents become part of the solution to achieving efficient and effective services Extend reach through wider partnership approaches eg healthy eating and reducing food waste | Use demographic data and insight to inform interventions and campaigns | 1-5 years | KRP |
| Whole System Approach | Integrated planning across waste streams A consistent approach to waste charges that encourages positive resident behaviour | Develop holistic waste management strategy Revised mechanism for sharing financial risk and reward | >3 years | District/County |

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|---|---|---|-----------|------------------------|
| Supporting Local Businesses | Reduce, reuse, recycle initiatives Industrial/business clusters and anti-littering campaigns | Engage local authority economic development teams, BIDs and community groups | Ongoing | District/County |
| Influencing Planning/Housing Development | Accessing developer contributions to support waste infrastructure Develop relationships with housing teams and through Kent Housing Group Enhance Kent Design Guide | Advocate for sustainable waste practices in planning | Ongoing | District/County |
| Improved reporting of fly tipping (public and private land) | Identify fly tipping hotspots to enable better targeting of limited public sector resources (Environment agency/Police/Local authority enforcement teams) | Identify a single reporting or data capture mechanism within existing budgets | 1-2 years | KRP and other agencies |

| Challenges | Requirements | Impacts | Impact Timeframe | Mitigations |
|--------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|---|
| Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) | Compliance with ETS regulations (encompassing energy from waste treatment process) | Financial – Estimated £12–£17m annual disposal cost increase (Government support to LA's still uncertain) | Jan 2028 | Behaviour change; Lobbying (EPR); Investigating new technologies (e.g., dirty MRF, district heat) |
| Simpler Recycling | Separate collection of | Operational – Need for new collection | March 2026 and March | TEEP assessments; |

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| | paper and cardboard (2026) and flexible plastics/film (2027); Vehicles/bins upgrade | infrastructure | 2027 | Route optimisation; Public engagement |
| Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) | 'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit; | Collection round review to address collection inefficiencies; Disposal contract renegotiation/potential disposal cost increases | October 2027 | Modelling collection impacts; Procurement strategy review; Stakeholder engagement Increased capture of organics for recycling |
| Disruption from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) | Strong partnership approach and coordination across new local governance structures | Operational – Service disruption, planning delays | Immediate–5 years | Cross-authority planning; Contingency frameworks; Staff training |
| Flexible Plastics Readiness | Market development for flexible plastics | UK market readiness gap. May require waste exports to EU Increased costs vs low tonnage capture | Immediate–5 years | Industry partnerships; Pilot schemes; Technology trials |
| Stretching Government Environmental Improvement Plan Targets | Meeting ambitious targets for recycling and waste reduction | Market unpredictability – plastics, textiles | Immediate– Beyond 2030 | Scenario planning; Innovation funding; Policy engagement |
| Political Cohesiveness Risk | Unified policy direction across stakeholders | Strategic misalignment – delays in decision-making | Ongoing | Stakeholder forums; Evidence-based lobbying; Transparent reporting |

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| Fly tipping (also termed waste crime) | Consistent enforcement and monitoring Improved reporting | Increasing serious organized crime Environmental pollution Public dissatisfaction Agricultural losses | Ongoing | Development of digital waste tracking; Community engagement; Enforcement campaigns |
| Aging Disposal Infrastructure | Investment in modern facilities | Increased risk of breakdowns, inefficiencies | Ongoing | Infrastructure investment plans; Risk assessments; Maintenance upgrades |
| Fires in Waste Facilities and/or Collection Vehicles | Fire prevention protocols; Material handling improvements Resident communications about the safe disposal of batteries | Safety risks; Operational disruption | Ongoing | Fire risk audits; Staff training; Improved sorting and storage Explore potential of AI technology |

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