TORBAY COUNCIL

Resource and Waste Management Strategy

2020 – 2025

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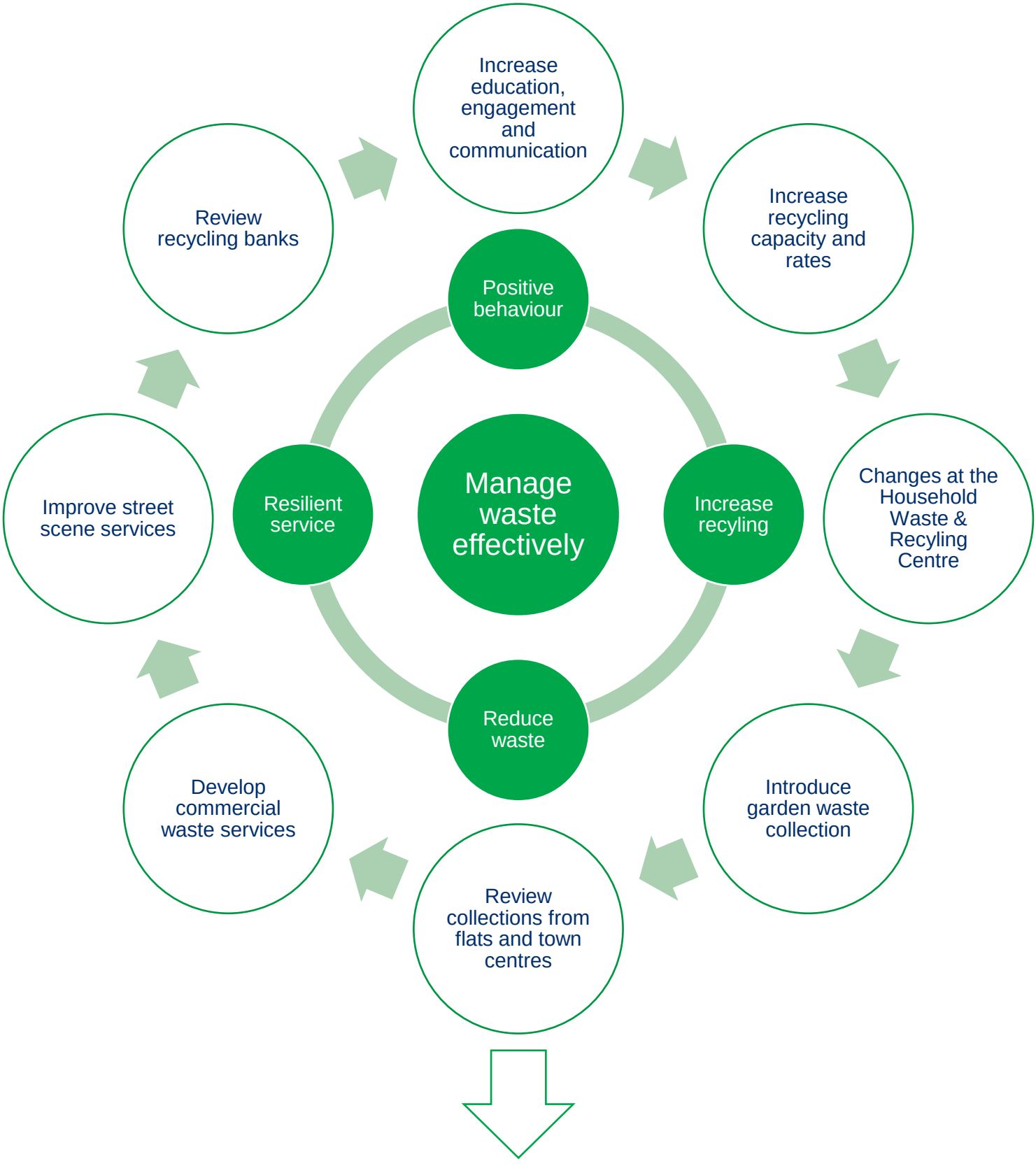
Summary



Increase our recycling rate to 50% by the end of 2022/2023

Introduction

Torbay Council's previous waste strategy covered the period 2008 to 2025, but in this fast moving sector a refresh is long overdue.

> Torbay's recycling rate as at year end 2019/20 is 40.2%. We want to increase this to 50% by the end of 2022/2023.

Torbay Council has achieved Zero Waste to Landfill with the formation of the South West Devon Waste Partnership, including partners Plymouth City Council and Devon County Council.

All of Torbay's recycling waste is processed within the UK and the residual municipal waste is treated at the Combined Heat and Power Energy from Waste facility in Plymouth under contract with MVV Umvelt. The heat and energy produced is used at the local Ministry of Defence, Devonport Dockyard, to achieve maximum environmental benefit (which is twice as good for addressing climate change as landfilling would be).

No waste generated by Torbay's householders is sent to landfill.

In 2019, Torbay Council declared a Climate Emergency alongside at least 230[1] other councils. We are all taking action to reduce our own carbon emissions, and working with partners and local communities to tackle the impact of climate change on their local area. The positive changes outlined in this Strategy will link to the priorities and actions within the Council's Energy and Climate Change Strategy as we work towards our ambition of becoming a Carbon Neutral Council.

We will continue to learn from others, including as a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network. Our dedicated Climate Change Officer will work closely with the waste team to ensure any gains are maximised and that the communities and relevant Climate Change bodies are consulted going forward.

Across Torbay, we have invested in specialised vehicles, with the most up-to-date energy efficient engines, which are used to collect weekly dry recycling in two 55 litre boxes and food waste in a 23 litre caddy. Residual waste is collected fortnightly, also in new vehicles with the most up to date energy efficient engines in a 240 litre wheeled bin.

The new recycling fleet can collect more material in one pass, reducing the need for return trips to offload, saving time, fuel and carbon emissions.

As soon as electric vehicles are available that can cope with Torbay's hilly terrain and have a battery life that will operate at the required capacity, we will look to replace the current fleet with the most efficient and climate friendly vehicles available.

[1] As at 28 August 2020

On 1 July 2020, Torbay Council formed an Arm's Length Company called SWISCo to directly manage not only the recycling and waste service, but all other services previously delivered by TOR2 (including Highways, Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, and Fleet Management). We are committed to ensuring that SWISCo deliver the best possible services within Torbay and will work to promote continuous improvement and excellent service delivery for our residents and businesses, as well as the community as a whole.

In accordance with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, this Resource and Waste Management Strategy will provide the framework to:

- Provide sustainable integrated waste collection and disposal services that protect human health and the environment.
- Identify efficiencies and deliver high quality, value for money in all waste management services, while achieving and exceeding government targets for waste.
- Manage materials as far as possible in accordance with the waste hierarchy, maximising the amount managed at higher levels of the hierarchy.
- Manage municipal waste, as far as possible, within the UK and seek to support the development of new local markets.
- Enable flexibility to allow for new technology developments and changing legislation.
- Continue to develop regional partnerships with other local authorities to achieve shared objectives, with a consistent approach.

The Waste Hierarchy

The Waste Hierarchy (Figure 1) ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created, the hierarchy gives priority to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery and last of all disposal (such as landfill).

The Waste Hierarchy is central to strategies around recycling and waste management. Its application has also been established in legislation in the UK.

Throughout this Strategy we will seek to ensure that we are taking action at the highest level of the Waste Hierarchy as is possible. Ultimately, we are seeking to prevent the creation of waste in the first place and we will continue to work with our communities and local businesses, and add our voice to regional and national campaigns, to ensure that we prevent as much waste as possible.

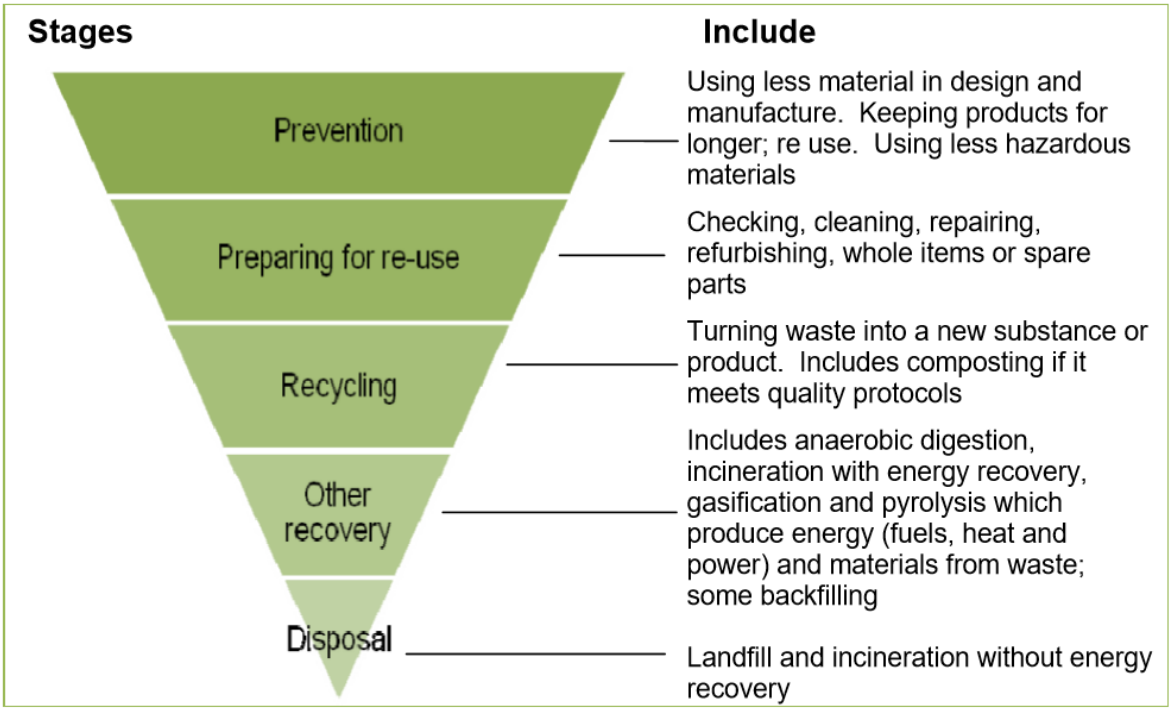


Figure 1: Waste Hierarchy

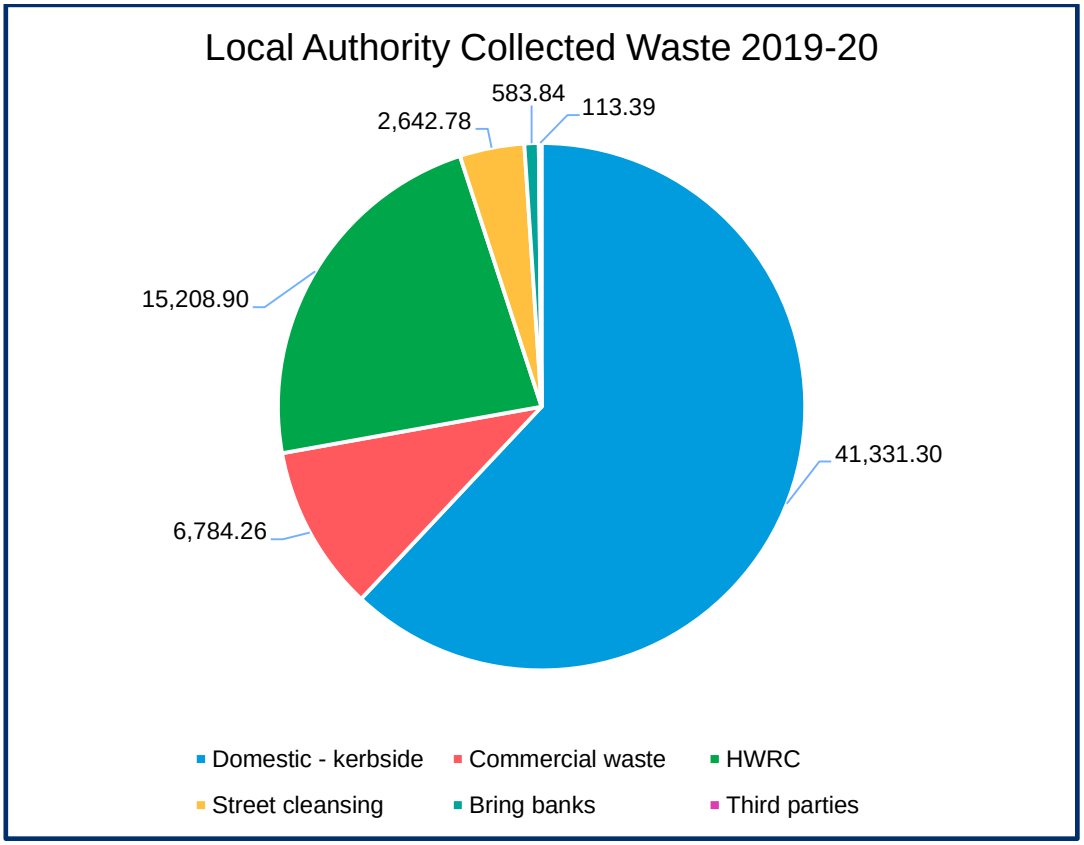


Figure 2: Municipal Waste Arisings 2019-20

In 2019-2020 Torbay Council managed over 65,000 tonnes of waste. Over 41,000 tonnes of this (62%) was collected directly from households using the kerbside collection services. A further 23% of the waste and recycling was brought to the Household Waste Recycling Centre. 10% is waste and recycling from commercial sources; 4% generated by street cleansing and 1% from bring banks and third party sources.

The amount of residual waste each household in Torbay disposes of each year has decreased from 754 kg per household in 2006/07, to 523 kg per household in 2019/20, a decrease of nearly a third.

This improvement is not unique to Torbay and can be attributed, in part, to the overall economic downturn of recent years. However, the change in recycling collection services (such as the introduction of weekly collections and expansion of materials collected for recycling) and introduction of food waste collection to households across Torbay in 2010, has also caused the amount of residual waste generated to decrease.

During this period, Torbay Council has run a variety of waste minimisation schemes, often working within partnerships. Notable successes include: The 'Watch Your Waste-line' and 'Love Food Hate Waste' food waste campaigns as well as a joint contract with the authorities who form the Devon

Authorities Strategic Waste Committee for face to face engagement with individual households, to encourage waste reduction and increased recycling. Torbay Council has also secured funding for the following projects, with the aim of increasing recycling levels and participation: WRAP food waste, Unilever increased plastic collections, DTS Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment collections from the kerbside, Department for Communities and Local Government's Green Points recycling rewards, and Alupro metal recycling.

The percentage of household waste being reused, recycled, and composted in Torbay has increased from 28.08% in 2007/08 and stands at 40.2% in 2019/20. Although this increase is significant and should be celebrated, it should be noted that the recycling performance has not increased to the level that was anticipated and predicted at the time. The recycling rate for England in 2018/2019 was 45.1%

The amount of municipal solid waste being sent to landfill steadily decreased from 2006/07 until 2015/16, when a dramatic reduction in the amount of municipal waste being disposed of in landfill was experienced. This was due to the opening of the South West Devon Waste Partnership combined heat and power, energy from waste facility at Devonport in late April.

2016/17 was the first full year of operation of the facility and a further reduction in municipal waste landfilled resulted. In 2019/20 Torbay Council achieved the accolade of 'Zero to Landfill', demonstrating a movement of Torbay's waste management up the waste hierarchy.

A recent agreement with the South West Devon Waste Partnership means that all of Torbay's residual municipal waste (except asbestos) will be treated as part of the joint contract, which is expected to further improve Torbay's performance against this indicator. Prior to this the commercial waste was not included in the contract.

We have introduced an online appointment based booking system for the Household Waste and Recycling Centre and this gives intelligence relating to the number of residents using this site. It also allows control over vans using the site, limiting them to bringing the same amount of waste that could be put into a family car. The system allows for the monitoring of the frequency of visits to the site by any one household, acting as a deterrent for abuse of the site by commercial enterprises, helping to generate additional commercial waste income.

Housing growth within Torbay needs to be taken into account and the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 identifies the provision of 8,900 new dwellings. This is an average of 500 new properties per annum. As the number of properties increase there will be a need to expand the waste and recycling services including the purchase of new collection vehicles and employing additional staff.

As a Council and wider organisation, we are committed to working with our residents and communities and we recognise that this is essential if we are to increase our recycling rates. How we communicate with our residents will be improved and will include a number of different methods – from improving our website and increasing the use of social media (including new and emerging platforms such as Next Door) through to leaflets sent to residents and articles in local print media. We will work with partners across Torbay, including our schools and the business

community, in order to reduce the amount of waste we generate and increase the amount we recycle.

SWISCo, a Torbay Council wholly owned company, delivers waste and recycling services on behalf of Torbay Council.

The SWISCo business plan identifies the following strategic objectives;

- Increase the recycling rate.
- Create a performance focussed culture
- Innovate through greater use of technology
- Contribute to the climate emergency response by reducing carbon emissions.
- Empower residents, communities and partnerships to work together through community focussed educational campaigns and activity.

The Regional Context

This strategy aligns with the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee's Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay, as well as that Committee's Waste Reduction and Reuse Strategy. Torbay is an active member of the Committee although Torbay's Resource and Waste Management Strategy is presented in a separate document to the rest of Devon's, as Torbay differs from the rest of the partnership as it is a Unitary Authority.

With the potential for future local government reorganisation, Torbay will continue to seek to align its waste and recycling services with neighbouring authorities, so that collection methods and materials collected are more and more consistent. Within the Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay, an aligned waste and recycling collection service is mooted as an aspiration for all local authorities forming the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee.

The Figure 3 shows the most recent position regarding alignment of collections in all of the Devon district collection authorities including Torbay. If, in the future, there was to be the formation of a combined Devon Waste Authority having consistent recycling collections with very similar fleets of kerbside sort vehicles would help to ensure a smooth transition of services.

Figure 3: Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee Aligned Option

At the moment East Devon are the only Devon Authority to have a three weekly residual collection, but others are doing trials (for example, West Devon Borough Council) or planning them (for example, Exeter City Council).

East Devon District Council found that by ensuring increased levels of education and advice, residents found this collection methodology was possible even though there had been some initial opposition. East Devon now have one of the best recycling rates in the country at around 62%.

The National Context

The UK Government has published a number of strategies which provide the basis for Resource and Waste Management across England for the next 25 years. These include:

- A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment
- Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England and consultations on Extended Producer Responsibility, Plastic tax, Consistency of recycling services, Deposit Return Scheme
- Clean Growth Strategy
- Litter Strategy for England
- Rural Crime Strategy
- EU Circular Economy package
- Climate Emergency

The key high level UK targets arising from these documents include:

- Eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050
- 65% recycling rate by 2035
- Work towards all plastic packaging to be recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025
- Eliminate avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 year plan
- Double resource productivity by 2050
- Eliminate all biodegradable waste to landfill by 2030

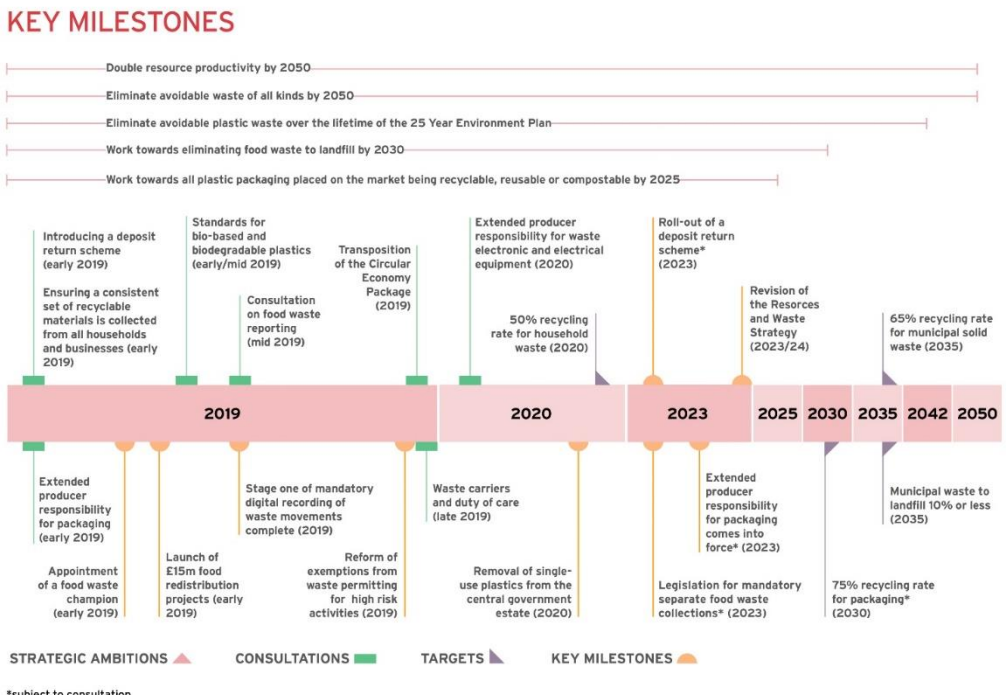


Figure 4: Government's Key Milestones for progress

In spring 2019 Central Government ran consultations on some of the key proposals within the strategy. A second round of consultations are expected in spring 2021. Responses to the consultations may change some of the detail of the proposals, but it has been made clear the cost of any new burdens for local authorities will be funded by central government through payments from those organisations that initially generate packaging.

The four proposals which are being consulted on are:

Consistent recycling collections

To help drive up household and commercial recycling levels, the government will identify a consistent set of recyclable materials for collection in England (including separate food waste collection), no matter which part of the country people live in.

Deposit Return Scheme

The government has proposed a Deposit Return Scheme that could operate for beverage containers, seeking to drive up their recycling rate as has been experienced in a variety of other countries.

Extended producer responsibility for packaging

The cost of recycling or disposal of packaging will be borne by those that produce packaging waste and place it on the market. This will encourage large organisations like supermarkets to be innovative and reduce how much packaging they use for all of their products so that the consumer and, ultimately the local authority, will have less to recycle or dispose of. If these organisations fail to reduce their packaging they will have to pay for its collection and onward processing.

Plastic Packaging Tax

From April 2022 a world-leading new tax on the production and import of plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content will be introduced.

Objectives, Principles and Aims

Objective

> We will manage municipal waste within Torbay in accordance with the waste hierarchy to drive service improvements and efficiencies.

This means that, in order of priority, we will work to prevent waste being produced in the first place, enable the reuse of products, improve how much we recycle, ensure we recovery energy from waste and, as a last resort, dispose of waste.

Principles

Reflecting on the principles with the Community and Corporate Plan, our approach in delivering this Resource and Waste Management Strategy is described below.

Enable our communities: We will involve and empower Torbay's residents to take positive action to reduce the amount of waste we generate, increase the reuse of products and increase our recycling rates.

Use reducing resources to best effect: We will work to reduce the amount of waste that we generate in Torbay, reusing goods and materials wherever possible.

Reduce demand through prevention and innovation: We will put in place initiatives and mechanisms (including improved education, engagement and communication) which aim to reduce the amount of waste we generate, in particular reducing the amount of residual waste that we dispose of.

Integrated and joined up approach: We will work to meet the Government's plans for resource and waste management and will seek to enable adoption of new legislation as and when it is introduced. We will work to ensure consistency of collections across neighbouring local authorities, aligning our Strategy with the Devon Resources and Waste Strategy and providing opportunities for partnership working towards shared objectives.

Aims

In implementing this Strategy, Torbay Council aims to:

- Encourage positive behaviour change in order to facilitate management of waste further up the waste hierarchy within Torbay's households.
- Increase the recycling rate and contribute towards the national targets of 55% recycling by 2025 and 60% by 2030.
- Reduce the amount of waste sent for energy recovery and disposal, thereby reducing carbon emissions and the associated financial costs
- Develop a resilient service which can adapt to new technology and changing legislation.

Reasons for Change

The Climate Emergency

In 2019, Torbay Council declared a 'Climate Emergency'. Torbay Council is a partner of and supports the work of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, which is aiming to produce a collaborative Devon-wide response to the climate emergency to help us get to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest and also prepare Devon for the necessary adaptation to infrastructure and services required to respond to climate change. This means that we have to create a truly circular economy which is more balanced, sustainable and with its main focus on a perspective that allows both humans and our planet to thrive.

The Energy and Climate Change Strategy for Torbay describes how we aim to help minimise the economic, social and environmental costs of climate change in the Bay by demonstrating leadership and providing encouragement in working toward emission reductions and resilience to our changing climate.

The Torbay Resources and Waste Strategy will seek to support a path towards carbon neutrality by 2050 and will seek to consider the amount of embedded carbon in the materials that are collected for recycling and the environmental benefit of recycling as opposed to extraction of raw materials to produce new products.

The actions described in the next section will enhance Torbay's position with regard to its Climate Emergency targets and already being a Zero to Landfill authority shows that we have started to move in the right direction.

With the Waste Hierarchy being one of the principle drivers, we want to work with our residents and communities so that they rethink how we use resources. Can we do without something we have always taken for granted? If we do still need it, how can we make sure it is reused or recycled when we no longer need to use it?

Our waste service will drive this behaviour change and through proper education and advice we want to work with our residents, businesses and communities so that they strive to help us to achieve these aims.

Improved customer experience

We recognise that the recycling and waste service our residents have received in the past has not been good enough. Part of the reason for setting up SWISCo was so that, as a Council, we can have a better control of the services we provide.

Through improved management and better use of technology, the recycling and waste service will be improved. We have in place a new, more efficient fleet of vehicles with in-cab technology. This will mean that we will be able to gather data in real time – allocating resources quickly to deal with missed collections and any unexpected increases in recycling and waste.

We will improve how we communicate with our residents, customers and communities, including how we engage to encourage changes in behaviour. Our customer services will be improved and we will provide up-to-date information in a range of formats.

We also recognise that this will not be a five minute fix. We are committed to ensuring that we reach our recycling targets as well as providing a resilient, sustainable service going forward.

Financial benefits

Waste disposal is one of the biggest costs faced by Torbay Council. Reducing the costs of disposing of waste, whilst at the same time ensuring that the true cost of services are charged appropriately, will enable that money to be spent on other services valued by our residents. Reduction of the residual waste stream has the greatest potential for delivering savings whilst also pushing the management of waste further up the hierarchy.

Recovering more materials for recycling will immediately reduce costs, and gives a double benefit because in most cases the material is recovered as recyclate which will have an associated income.

For example for every tonne of aluminium that is diverted from residual waste to recycling a saving of approx. £95 is made and an income of £818 gained, giving a total net gain of £913. Materials prices are specific to each material type and are also subject to market forces, which can affect the price obtained. Aluminium has the highest material value, but as shown in figure 5 below, even if there is no income to be gained from the recyclate, recycling is a more cost effective option than disposal in all these material cases.

Factors such as haulage costs and additional collection resources would impact on the total cost saving that could be achieved. In addition, recycling helps to prevent the extraction of raw materials, resulting in carbon savings.

Material	Disposal Cost/Tonne £	Income/Tonne £	Total Net Gain £
Paper	95	55	150
Cardboard	95	13	108
Textiles	95	0	95
Glass	95	12	107
Plastics	95	44	139
Steel cans	95	109	204
Aluminium cans	95	818	913
Food waste	95	-10	85
Green waste	95	-22.50	72.50
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment	95	0	95

Figure 5: Cost Benefits of Recycling

With the current recycling rate of 40.2%, every 1% improvement in the recycling rate means we capture approximately an extra 500 tonnes of waste so to get to 50% recycling rate would be a realistic target.

Therefore a 5,000 tonne improvement over a period of two to three years should be achievable and this would not only give a financial benefit of £475k in disposal savings, but would also provide an income benefit from the sale of recycled materials. The income predictions over the next few years are extremely difficult to forecast, as the markets are highly volatile, especially with the uncertainty of COVID-19.

The disposal saving is much more certain due to the disposal contract that is in place with the Energy from Waste plant in Plymouth, but what is clear is that by recycling more the financial gains are significant.

Making the Changes

Action 1: Increase education, engagement and communication

We will develop and deliver a new education programme to be delivered across the whole Bay. By improving the way that residents separate and present their recycling for collection, collection round efficiencies can be achieved.

New Recycling Co-ordinators will be the first point of contact for residents with problems with the collection of any of their waste. They will be available by phone or email and will make a face-to-face visits if required. The Recycling Co-ordinators will advise how each household can recycle as much as possible and will help with issued when service changes are introduced.

The Recycling Co-ordinators will be part of the Collection Team and will be available to ensure that collections are as efficient and as clear to residents as possible. Their goal will be to achieve more recycling and reduce disposal at our Energy from Waste plant.

We will provide clear information (in a range of formats) to explain to residents the variety of items which can be recycled. In particular we will promote food waste collections more widely and work to facilitate increased uptake of the service. We will also promote the range of services available in order to make recycling and waste disposal as effective and efficient for our residents as possible. This will include the option for further recycling containers and the bespoke options that are available to dispose of nappy and/or medical waste.

New technology will identify those households who recycle very little and help and support to increase participation in recycling services will be provided in a way that is tailored to their needs.

Current high performing recyclers will be provided with more detailed information about the recycling service so that their recycling behaviour can be maximised and to encourage reduction of waste through changes to their consumer behaviour. We will work with these households to help to increase efficiency of recycling and waste services, for example by providing stickers for their recycling containers showing how materials can be separated to aid collection.

We will give confidence to our residents that the material that is presented for recycling is in the majority of cases recycled within the UK and is made into new materials, saving the production of raw materials and positively supporting the Climate Emergency.

We will work with our residents to make it as easy as possible for our collection crews, thereby increasing the efficiency of the collection rounds. In turn this will increase the tonnages that can be collected on each round, meaning that the rounds will be more resilient to anticipated increases in the amount of materials that are separated for recycling by residents.

We will improve engagement and communication with collection crews, helping them to understand why we are making changes and what the desired outcomes are – our crews are pivotal to the success of service changes.

We will work to make the collections as fast as they can safely be and gain further efficiencies that can only be achieved from the investment in both vehicles and technology.

Enforcement will be a method of last resort as it is hoped that with the right communications and help offered to all, that the majority of households will assist us to achieve better recycling rates as we work together to become carbon neutral.

Action 2: Increase recycling capacity and rates

We will introduce an additional recycling box which will increase the capacity of containment per year by 940 litres (which is a 15% increase).

Practical advice will be given to help with containment capacity, such as squashing plastic bottles and flattening cardboard, to reduce the volume of the recycling which will then fit into less containers.

We will raise awareness of what households are wasting and help them to reduce the amount of waste that they generate. In particular, we will focus on encouraging residents to separate food waste from their residual waste. Food waste will continue to be collected weekly, meaning that issues around odours, maggots and vermin will be reduced to a minimum.

We will work in partnership, both locally with the Devon Authorities Strategy Waste Committee's 'Don't Let Devon Go to Waste' campaign and nationally, as part of the Waste and Resources Action Programme's 'Love Food Hate Waste' Campaign.

If residents find that they do not have sufficient capacity in the recycling containers for all of the materials they present, additional containers will continue to be supplied. We will ensure that the sorting and collection of recycling containers is as efficient as possible.

Whilst we will maintain fortnightly residual waste collection, we will develop operational waste collection policies. This will include a robust side waste policy with associated reporting by collection crews, which will help to target support to the correct households. Controls over residual waste delivered to the Household Waste Recycling Centre will also be implemented.

Action 3: Changes at the Household Waste and Recycling Centre

We have brought Torbay into line with the rest of Devon through the introduction of charges at the Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) for certain types of non-household waste. Charges are applied for the disposal of construction, demolition and other non-household materials (including plasterboard, rubble, tyres, asbestos, plastic guttering and downpipes, plastic replacement windows and bathroom and toilet fixtures and fittings, such as toilets, sinks, baths and showers).

We will also prohibit the disposal of black bags at the HWRC and instead require that all waste is separated for recycling prior to arrival at the site. Again, this will bring Torbay in line with the rest of Devon.

The frequency of the visits to the HWRC has been increased to four in any one month to allow for properties who generate large amounts of garden waste. Anyone generating more waste than this will need to make contact with SWISCo and discuss their requirements.

Action 4: Introduce a garden waste collection service

We will introduce an opt-in, charged-for garden waste collection service which will bring about further consistency of services with neighbouring local authorities. This will reduce the amount of green waste that is put into the residual bin and will lead to an improvement in Torbay's recycling rates.

This will require further investment in vehicles and containers as currently the fleet does not have the capacity to make these collections. Additional drivers will also be required to facilitate this service.

Action 5: Review collections from flats, multiple occupancy buildings and town centres

We will review the waste and recycling collections from flats, buildings of multiple occupancy and town centre properties.

We will work with residents and landlords to overcome the barriers to recycling which may include difficult access to storage areas, poor design of waste storage areas, bad signage to guide separation, lack of space inside the properties to store recycling separately from residual waste, social deprivation and contamination by other residents.

We will continue to provide standing advice to developers who are looking to build or convert properties into flats, helping to ensure that new developments are provided with adequate space and suitable design to encourage high levels of participation in recycling.

Action 6: Develop commercial waste services

We will work in partnership with SWISCo to develop the commercial waste and recycling customer base within Torbay.

We will work to manage commercial waste further up the waste hierarchy, encouraging the prevention of waste in the first place and making the recycling service more desirable to commercial customers. We will work with partner organisations in the public, private and community sectors to promote recycling so that we provide a model for changing behaviour.

As a Unitary Authority, Torbay Council has a statutory responsibility for the collection and disposal of commercial waste from businesses who are unable to find any other collection contractor. SWISCo will review commercial waste collection charges in these circumstances to ensure that the true cost of collection and disposal is recovered from the charges made.

SWISCo will also consider the range of materials that are accepted for recycling from commercial customers at the Tor Park Road site, with a view to reducing the commercial waste disposal cost as far as possible and diverting as much commercial waste as possible for recycling.

Investment in in-cab technology for commercial waste and recycling services will provide SWISCo with more intelligent data to inform service developments and to help manage customer expectations.

We will review the charging structure to ensure that the true cost of collection and disposal is recovered from all customers. This will include identifying self-catering holiday accommodation to ensure that domestic services are not used.

Action 7: Improve street scene services

We will undertake a complete review of our litter, street cleansing and fly tipping services, which are also undertaken by SWISCo on behalf of the Council. We will make use of new technology and innovation to make these services more efficient, as well as more reactive to immediate emergency needs. They are intrinsically linked to the household waste collection service and as such each service needs to complement each other by working closer and sharing of reduced resources.

We will ensure that litter bins in high traffic areas allow for the separation of waste, ensuring that our residents and visitors can recycle their waste when they are out and about.

Through our new Environmental Enforcement Service, we will proactively challenge fly tipping and littering across Torbay, enforcing as necessary to ensure that our built and natural environment is protected.

Action 8: Review of recycling banks

We will review the current recycling bank provision and consider putting additional recycling banks for materials such as cardboard, plastic and cans. This could help those with little room in or outside their property, but who want to do their bit for the climate emergency and recycle as much as they can.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.

For more information please contact waste&recycling@torbay.gov.uk

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