

Resources and Waste Strategy

2025-2045



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This strategy for Cornwall Council sets out the aims, objectives, challenges and opportunities for the waste we manage over the next 20 years.

It focuses on how we will deliver effective and efficient waste services in line with national policy and legislation, and the timetable for those changes.

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Foreword

We have come a long way in the last couple of years.

In order to improve our poor recycling rates, we have introduced a new weekly food waste and fortnightly rubbish collection service, which will help us achieve a recycling rate of over 50%.

We have also improved the infrastructure of our waste management facilities to deal with the food waste and increased recycling. We have employed more staff to deliver the new services along with a new fleet of vehicles.

It is testament to the people of Cornwall that they have welcomed the new services and support the changes that enable them to recycle more. In fact, they have told us that they are eager to do even more.

We cannot rest on our laurels. New legislation, government targets and the journey to net zero carbon all combine together to keep us hard on the path of waste prevention and increased recycling.

This strategy identifies the challenges and opportunities we face and the path that we need to follow to achieve the commitments that we have identified. It also works towards one of the Council's key priorities to achieve a **thriving, sustainable Cornwall**.

Cllr Carol Mould
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods



Raglavar

Ni re dheuth fordh hir y'n diwettha diw vledhen.

Rag may hyllyn gwellhe agan kedradhow eylgyghyans drog, ni re gomendyas gonis kuntel nowydh rag atal boos orth an seythen hag atal kemmyn orth an dhiw seythen, hag a wra agan gweres ow trehedhes kevradh eylgyghya a voy es 50%.

Ni re wellhas ynwedh an gesframweyth a'gan komodytys dygthyans atal dhe dhygthya an atal boos hag eylgyghyans kressys. Ni re arvethys moy a vayni dhe dhelivra an gonisyow nowydh keffrys ha lu kerri nowydh.

Gormeladow yw dhe'n dus a Gernow i dhe dhynerghi an gonisyow nowydh ha skoodhya an chanjys a'ga gallosegas dhe eylgyghya moy. Yn tevri, i re dherivas dhyn i dhe vos men dhe wul moy hwath.

Ny yllyn powes war agan lowrwedhennow. Reythyans nowydh, kostennow governans ha'n fordh dhe sommen karbon mann a gesun war-barth dh'agan witha yn tynn war an hyns a lettya atal hag eylgyghyans kressys.

An strateji ma a aswon an chalenjys ha chonsyow a enebyn ha'n fordh yw res dhyn hy holya dhe hedhes an omgemeryansow re aswonyn. Ev a ober ynwedh war-tu hag onan a'n ragwiryow meur a'n Konsel dhe dhrehedhes **Kernow sewen ha sostenadow**.

Klr Carol Mould
Esel an Kabinet rag Kentrevethow



Why do we need a new waste strategy?

Cornwall Council adopted the **Resources and Waste Strategy “It’s in our hands”** in 2018. Since then we have invested and made significant improvements to our waste and recycling services so our residents can reduce, reuse and recycle more waste.

The Council declared a climate emergency in January 2019 and is committed to decarbonising our operations. We need to act on all levels for our services to adapt to an already changing climate.

We need to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to ensure our systems and services support our commitment to reducing emissions and achieving carbon neutrality.

Government has introduced new legislation and targets that will require further significant changes to how we will provide waste services in Cornwall. This new Resources and Waste Strategy explains what the new regulations and targets are and the opportunities these present. It sets out a timetable of when the changes will occur and what we plan to do to meet them, including adapting and becoming more resilient to the impacts of climate change. It also includes details of the delivery or action plans associated with each of these areas and the timetable of when these will be achieved.

This strategy sets out the strategic aims and objectives for resources and waste management for Cornwall Council. The strategy has been informed by the views of industry experts, contractors, local residents, officers and elected members as well as other stakeholders. It covers the period from 2025 until 2045 when our existing long-term contract for waste and recycling treatment and processing will have terminated.

The strategy will be reviewed a minimum of every five years, with the delivery plan updated



annually. This will ensure it remains relevant in the rapidly changing policy environment and provides the appropriate framework to drive our performance upwards and ensure that we are on track to deliver all of our targeted improvements.

Working with people who live in, work in and visit Cornwall, we aim to make it as easy as possible to produce less waste, and to reuse, repair and recycle more items and materials.

Alongside this strategy, the Council is working on the new **Local Plan**. This is a development plan that sets out land use planning policy, which is used to determine planning applications and to establish the policy framework for waste management facilities. These facilities could be used to treat agricultural, industrial and commercial waste as well as municipal waste. The Local Plan provides the basis for making consistent decisions about planning applications for waste management facilities.



Government has introduced new legislation and targets that will require further significant changes to how we will provide waste services in Cornwall.



Setting the scene

Cornwall Council's overarching mission set out in our 2022-2026 Business Plan is: **Working with communities for a carbon neutral Cornwall, where everyone can start well, live well and age well.**

This emphasises the work we are already doing on becoming carbon neutral and on tackling the inequalities that exist in our society, so that everyone can live a good life in Cornwall.

Underpinning the mission are our four priority outcomes. Each of the outcomes has an Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) which sets out how we are going to deliver.

- **A brilliant place to be a child and grow up**
- **A thriving, sustainable Cornwall** that offers a secure home, a decent income and a great environment for all
- **Vibrant, safe, supportive communities** where people help each other to live well
- **All supported by an empowering and enterprising Council** that secures great value for money and provides a consistently excellent customer experience



Delivering the goals of Cornwall Council's waste strategy is an important part for achieving a thriving, sustainable Cornwall. Cornwall faces key waste management challenges, many of which are linked to its unique geographical, economic, and social characteristics.

These include:

Seasonal tourism

Cornwall is a popular tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors each year, especially during the summer months. This seasonal influx of tourists places immense pressure on local waste management systems, as the volume of waste produced increases dramatically.

Geography and remoteness

Cornwall's rural landscape and isolated communities can make waste collection and recycling more difficult. Some areas are hard to access, requiring additional resources to ensure waste is collected and properly disposed of. This can lead to lower levels of competition for waste contract tenders.

Waste disposal costs and infrastructure

The financial and carbon costs of waste disposal and treatment can be higher in Cornwall due to its geographic location and the need to transport waste long distances to recycling or waste treatment facilities.

Our success since 2018

Our previous Resources and Waste Strategy was adopted in 2018. It set out plans to reduce waste and improve recycling rates through changing the services we provide to the residents of Cornwall, as well as reduce the carbon impact of providing waste and recycling services in Cornwall.

We have taken significant steps to increase the amount that we recycle with the introduction of a new food waste collection service and a move from weekly to fortnightly rubbish collections in wheelie bins or reusable sacks. The new collection service will reduce our carbon emissions by approximately 18,000t CO2e (12% of Cornwall's total waste emissions). The garden waste collection service is growing year on year, and we have 60,500 subscribers in 2024. To deliver the new collection service, we have expanded and improved the waste and recycling facility infrastructure to support the increased range and volume of materials collected.

We have also seen improvements in repair and reuse, through the development of the award-winning [Repair Café network](#). These community-run organisations enable residents to repair items so that they can continue to be used. They also improve repair skills and reduce social isolation in the local community. Over the last six years,

the network has grown from 4 to 25 community groups across Cornwall. We have also recently introduced reuse shops at the Truro, St Austell and Falmouth Household Waste Recycling Centres, with plans to expand further.

Reuse, composting and recycling rates have increased from approximately 30% to 44% in 2024/25 and we forecast this will increase to over 50% in 2025/26. We celebrate all of these successes, and they contribute towards a thriving sustainable Cornwall.

Although we have made excellent progress, we need to transform our services further to reduce our impact on the environment, become more resilient to the effects of climate change, minimise the waste we produce, recycle more, and comply with new legislation and targets. We cannot do this alone and will need to work with others to develop innovative solutions to the challenges we face.

Reuse, composting and recycling rates have increased from approximately 30% to 44% in 2024/25 and we forecast this will increase to over 50% in 2025/26.

Key statistics and future projections

We provide a range of waste services across Cornwall, collecting rubbish and recycling from households, operating Household Waste Recycling Centres, providing litter bins and street cleansing in our communities, and providing a service for our commercial customers.

For each of these activities, we record, analyse and report a large amount of data, which we use to improve and develop our services to help us meet our reuse and recycling targets.

In 2023/24...

Cornwall's population was
570,000 

We collected from
290,000 households 

268,500 total tonnes of waste and recycling

114,000 tonnes of recycling and compost collected

Total waste per household was **957kg** of which rubbish (residual waste) per household was **616kg**

160 tonnes of reuse 

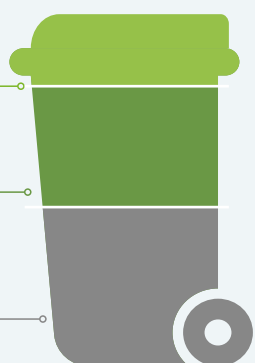
1,620,000 visits were made to Cornwall's HWRCs 

Black bin contents were...

22% recyclable

35% Food waste

43% non-recyclable



We generated electricity equivalent to power

26,000 homes



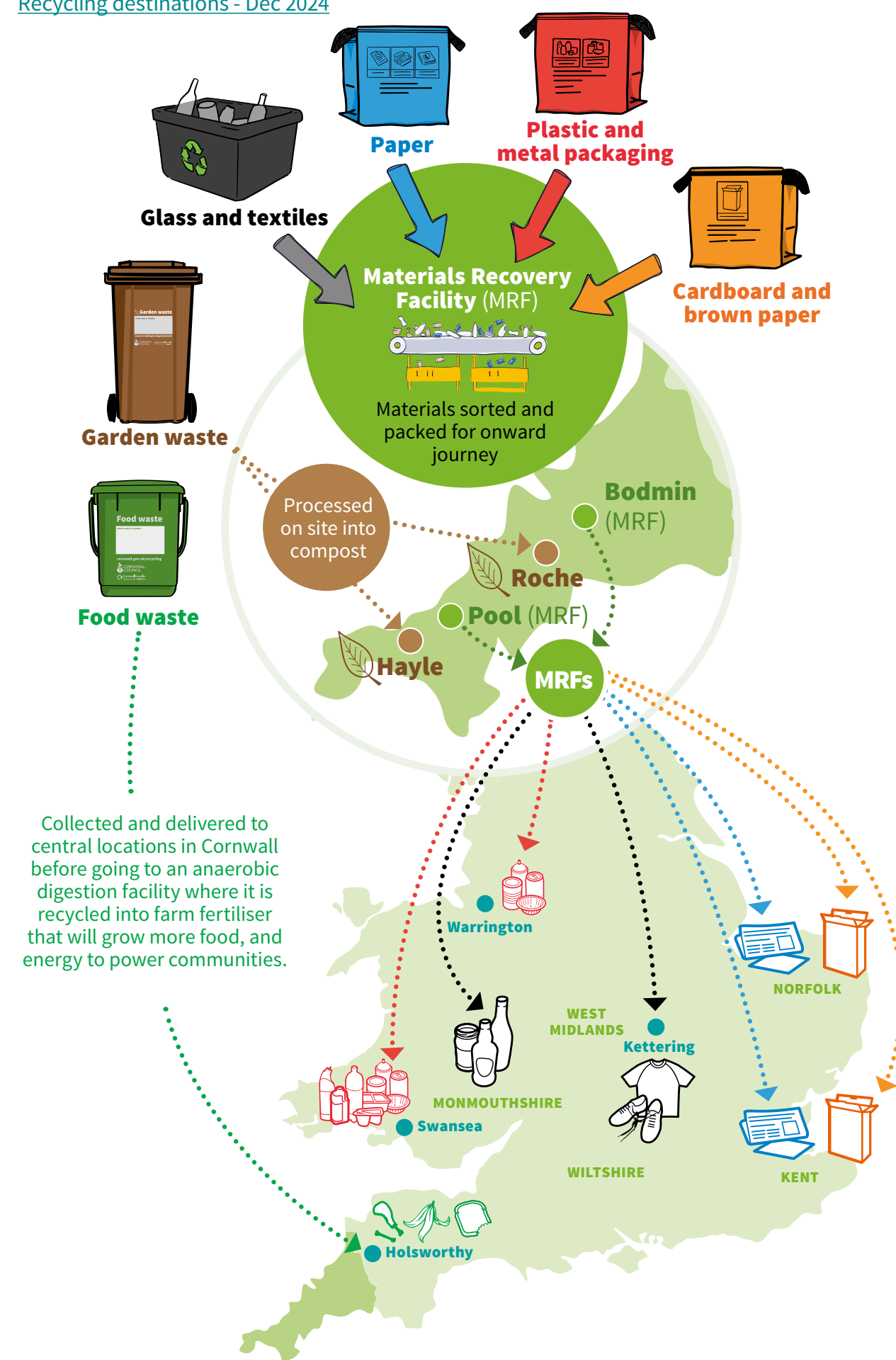
Total carbon emissions were approximately

110,000 t/CO₂e

6,000 t/CO₂e from the Collection and Cleansing Contract and 104,000 t/CO₂e from the IWM Contract

What happens to my recycling?

Recycling destinations - Dec 2024



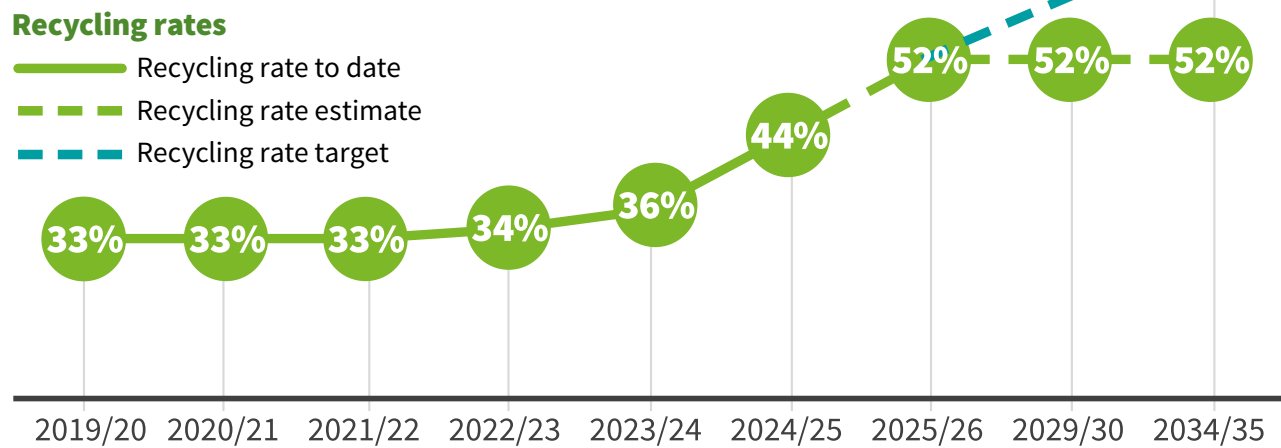
Where do we need to get to?

The future

As Cornwall's population grows, so does the amount of waste and recycling we produce. Cornwall's newly drafted Local Plan estimates around 4,500 new houses being built each year. At the current rate of waste production, this would mean we will have to manage an additional 4,300 tonnes of recycling and waste every year.

The challenge

We need to achieve a target recycling rate of 65% by 2035. Our current forecasts show that we will need to reuse and recycle an additional 35,000 tonnes of the waste we are currently producing.



2

We aim to meet the targets set by Government in the [Environment Act 2021](#) as a minimum:

Reuse, recycle or compost at least **65%** of Cornwall's household waste by 2035.

Ensure that rubbish (residual waste) does not exceed **287kg** per person by 2042.

3

We will ensure that the costs of providing waste services are **value for money** by providing effective and efficient, services appropriate to our communities.

4

We will monitor and **reduce the overall emission-based impact** of providing waste services in Cornwall, to meet our carbon neutral objectives.

5

We will continue to **educate and improve resource and waste awareness** in our communities, empowering residents, visitors and businesses to use our services and make informed and sustainable choices.

In order to meet our key principles, we are expecting financial support from central government to introduce additional recycling streams and invest in more waste prevention initiatives and education campaigns.

Our five key principles

To achieve our targets and plan waste services that work for us in Cornwall, we have set out five key principles.

1

We will improve, plan and develop services in line with the waste hierarchy:

PREVENTION
REUSE REPAIR
RECYCLING
RECOVERY
DISPOSAL

How we manage resources and waste

Waste contracts

The Collection and Cleansing Contract

The Collection and Cleansing Contract is provided by Biffa Municipal Limited. It is due to end in 2029 with an option for a two-year extension.

This contract has an annual value of £38 million in 2024/25.

This contract includes the provision of:

- Recycling, food waste, rubbish, garden waste, clinical waste, bulky waste, commercial waste and office waste collections for householders, commercial customers and Council offices
- Street and public open space cleansing services which include:
 - Manual and mechanical sweeping
 - Litter bin provision and emptying
 - Removal of fly tipping, dead animals, graffiti and flyposting

The contract includes:

6 main depots **22** smaller sites

26,321,000 collections each year on behalf of the Council

680 permanent and **100** casual staff

Using assorted vehicles from hand pushed street sweeping barrows to 26 tonne waste collection vehicles

The team covers approximately

2,000,000 miles every month.

The Integrated Waste Management Contract

is held with Cornwall Energy Recovery Ltd (CERL) and provides Cornwall with waste and recycling facilities and services required to manage the household rubbish and recycling. Suez provide these services on behalf of CERL. The IWM contract ends in 2039. It is a Private Finance Initiative contract, and the contract length is required due to the substantial amount of infrastructure investment that CERL are required to supply. The contractor is responsible for the treatment or sale of all of the waste and recycling material that we collect. The contract has an annual value of £51 million in 2024/25 and directly employs over 250 people, with additional services supporting the contract being sourced from local businesses.

The IWM Contract includes the operation of the following waste and recycling facilities:

- 1** Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre 
- 2** Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) 
- 4** Transfer Stations (TS) 
- 14** Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) 



Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre (CERC)

The CERC accepts all rubbish from waste collections and rubbish deposited at the HWRCs. It also accepts third party waste to ensure that it is operating at maximum efficiency.



Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF)

All of the recycling collected is taken to the Materials Recycling Facilities in Pool or Bodmin, where it is sorted, baled and sent for further processing at other UK facilities.



Transfer Stations (TS)

When rubbish is collected, it generally goes to one of the four Transfer Stations in St Erth, Pool, Connon Bridge and Launceston. Here it is bulked up and taken to the CERC for processing. Some waste is taken directly to the CERC.

Food waste is received separately at all of these transfer stations, bulked up and sent to an anaerobic digestion facility for recycling. St Erth and Launceston TS receive other recycling materials such as cardboard, paper, glass, mixed cans and plastics, and textiles, which are bulked up and sent to the MRFs.



Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

Cornwall's householders can take their recycling, composting and rubbish to one of the 14 HWRCs in Cornwall. These facilities are generally located near the main population centres of Cornwall. Their provision will need to evolve over time to respond to the demands of an increasing population, and the demands of new legislation.



Closed landfill sites

Cornwall Council directly manages a portfolio of nine closed landfill sites.

These are sites where rubbish was sent for disposal over a number of years, which no longer accept any material. There is a long-term need to continue to look after these facilities appropriately so they comply with their environmental permits.

Closed landfill sites are not directly relevant to achieving the overarching target of this strategy. However, their ongoing aftercare is vital to ensuring they comply with their environmental permits. They also offer opportunities to help achieve some of the Council's other aims, for example in solar capture and Forest for Cornwall development. Many of the sites also offer developing biodiversity havens and are carefully managed to meet planning permissions for specific habitats.



Planned transformation

We have delivered a strategic programme to transform the household recycling and collection service. We have introduced weekly food waste recycling and new containers for fortnightly rubbish collections. We have expanded and improved our waste and recycling facilities and improved our Household Waste Recycling Centres by introducing reuse shops. We have also undertaken significant community engagement.

We are building a **new Materials Recycling Facility and Transfer Station at Hallenbeagle**, near Scorrier, which when complete in 2026 will replace the existing, outdated and smaller facility at Pool.

We are also replacing the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre at Newquay, as the local population has outgrown the facility. The new centre, which includes a purpose-built reuse shop, is due to open in 2026.

A booking system is now being trialled at some of Cornwall's busiest Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). This helps manage demand, improve safety and reduce traffic congestion. This will be extended where necessary to manage service demand and improve the customer experience for all our residents.

Reuse is a key priority for our services in the future. We are developing and increasing reuse shops on each of our HWRC sites, which will serve as community hubs for residents to donate and purchase items that would otherwise be sent for disposal.

We are developing reuse facilities on our HWRC sites, which will serve as community hubs for residents to donate and purchase items for reuse.

Developing our reuse network creates additional social value. It brings new jobs and skills, increases the availability of affordable goods for residents, and keeps items within a circular economy.

We will develop an infrastructure delivery plan and investment strategy. These will take into account the size and scale of waste and recycling facilities needed for our future housing growth. We need to ensure our waste and recycling facilities can manage the increasing volumes and encourage the development of new waste and recycling facilities in Cornwall. This will mean we can treat waste locally and encourage economic growth and skills development.

Reuse is a key priority for our services in the future. We are developing and increasing reuse facilities on each of our HWRC sites.

New legislation

The Government has introduced several key pieces of legislation with targets that will shape our services. Our services will continue to change to meet the targets and deliver our climate goals.

The key legislation and associated targets are all linked, and shape how and when we deliver services.

The Environment Act 2021

This sets out the legal framework for significant reforms to waste and recycling services, including Simpler Recycling, Producer Responsibility and Deposit Schemes, as well as setting performance targets for resource efficiency and waste

reduction. These changes will make significant steps towards the ambition of recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2035.

We will review the skills, knowledge and logistics in operating waste and recycling facilities in Cornwall and work with other local authorities throughout the wider South West region. This will help us manage the materials we collect most effectively and efficiently while continuing to deliver to the targets set by national Government, including the drive towards a zero-waste circular economy by 2050.



The Environmental Targets (Residual Waste) (England) Regulations 2023

The Environmental Targets (Residual Waste) (England) Regulations 2023 commits England to ensure that by 2042, residual waste (rubbish) per person does not exceed 287 kg, reducing it by half compared to 2019 levels. There is also an interim target of 437 kg per person by January 2028. At the end of 2023/24 residual waste per person in Cornwall was 588 kg, although we do expect an improvement when the new collection service is provided to all homes. This is reflected in our forecasted waste arisings per household from next year.

Our waste collection service currently limits households to 180 litres of rubbish per fortnightly collection. This is a significant step in reducing the volume of rubbish produced by each household. Along with the new weekly food waste collections, it will help us move towards the targets. Residual waste (rubbish) per person is calculated by dividing total residual waste (rubbish) by the number of residents in Cornwall. It is likely to be artificially increased in Cornwall by visitors producing commercial waste and putting it in the household collection services. We are targeting the illegal use of household waste services by producers of commercial waste, particularly providers of self-catering accommodation.

Simpler Recycling

Through Simpler Recycling all householders will receive a comprehensive and consistent set of waste and recycling services. It defines the materials that need to be collected and still provides flexibility to meet local need. Cornwall will have delivered the separate collection of food waste to all homes by 2025. While we collect most of the materials listed, cartons will become mandatory from March 2026 and plastic film from March 2027. We will need to provide additional services to collect and manage these materials. This will include a review of the containers we provide and the frequency of our collection services to ensure we are operating in the most efficient and effective way, delivering services appropriate to our communities.

The introduction of weekly food waste collections across Cornwall has increased recycling levels and reduced the volume of rubbish. We expect to receive additional revenue funding from Government for costs incurred to deliver this new statutory service.

The collection of cartons from households will become mandatory from March 2026 and plastic film from March 2027.



The addition of **cartons and plastic film** may require further changes to our Materials Recycling Facilities (MRFs) to manage these materials, meet the targets, improve resource efficiency and create a more circular economy. We must also consider how we will collect the additional materials and whether we will need to provide additional containers to households, to enable these materials to be collected separately.

Businesses and non-domestic properties, that we collect from, such as churches and village halls, with 10 or more employees will need to ensure that they have separate food waste and recycling collections, including the recycling of cartons, in place by March 2025. Businesses with less than 10 employees (micro) have a two-year exemption before they will also have to comply with the rules in 2027.

Our **Commercial Waste Collection service** meets the needs of Simpler Recycling, by providing customers with separate recycling and food waste containers. However, cartons and plastic film must still be introduced as part of this service.

Simpler Recycling will provide us with **opportunities to increase the range of materials residents can recycle**, leading to less waste and a higher recycling rate. These changes will also support the drive to a more circular economy, which should increase employment in this sector. However, with these opportunities will come challenges. Our existing network of facilities are generally well-located to serve the population, but we will need to adapt quickly to changing legislation and the types and volumes of materials we collect.



The introduction of Simpler Recycling will impact on our finances, as well as the procurement of the next waste collection and cleansing contract, whether there are changes to the containment we provide, and the type and frequency of collections made.

We will assess the cost benefit of anaerobic digestion in Cornwall to see if it would be more effective and efficient to manage food waste locally and specifically whether there is sufficient food waste generated from other sectors e.g. hospitality and agriculture.

Following the commencement of Simpler Recycling there may be further opportunities to evaluate the need and feasibility of investing in other types of facilities. These would target materials that are harder to recycle or that currently have no or limited existing facility provision.



Overall, Simpler Recycling will have significant impacts on how we provide recycling and waste services in Cornwall.



Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR)

The national pEPR scheme will become effective in 2025. It aims to encourage producers of packaging to change the types of materials they produce. They will be financially responsible for the collection and processing their own packaging. Companies will pay a fee to the scheme administrator. This fund will be distributed to local authorities to pay for waste collection and disposal services.

This scheme may result in changes to the type and composition of materials we collect and process. This in turn may lead to changes to our collection services. This could include the containers we provide to households and how the materials are transported on the vehicles we provide. We may also need to alter our waste and recycling facilities to ensure that they are future-proofed as far as possible to enable them to manage these and any other changes to the materials we collect. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) will need to keep evolving to ensure they can also collect these materials.

pEPR is expected to have a positive financial impact for Cornwall Council, which should ensure that we can meet the national targets and provide the statutory services. pEPR funding will be received annually and will cover the net costs of collection and processing of packaging materials. To qualify for full payments under this scheme, we must show that our services are “effective and efficient” going forwards.

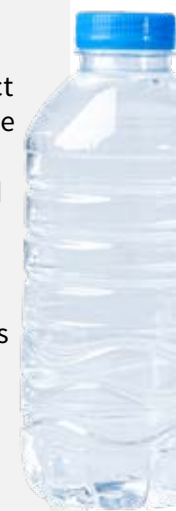
One of the key aspects of pEPR will be to provide high quality evidence of the materials that have been collected and processed, so that accurate payments can be made. Therefore, the management of our data with our contractors will need to be of an excellent standard.

The first payments from pEPR are expected in November 2025, with quarterly payments thereafter. It is this funding which will be vital for us to make the necessary changes to waste services required by the new legislation.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

The national Deposit Return Scheme is due to start in October 2027. It introduces a refundable deposit on drinks containers which can be claimed back by customers when returned to reverse vending machines. This will reduce litter, increase recycling rates, create high-quality recycled materials that drinks producers can use again, and encourage us to recycle more of the material we use. The scheme is still being developed. How it will interact with our collection service, and whether the additional recycling can be counted towards performance locally, remains unclear at present.

When the DRS is introduced, there may be a change in the composition of the waste we collect and process. Householders may choose to recycle these materials using the machines rather than our collection services. This could mean we need to redesign our recycling vehicles, collection rounds, containment and waste and recycling facilities due to lower volumes or different composition of the recycling being collected. This will have financial implications for the service in terms of contractual changes, and service modifications.





Emissions Trading Scheme

The revised Emissions Trading Scheme plans will expand in 2028 to include waste incineration and energy from waste. The scheme sets a cap on emissions that can be emitted by sectors covered by the scheme, and the cap reduces over time. It aims to make a significant contribution to Government's 2050 Net Zero targets. When implemented this will have a significant impact on the budgets of local authorities, like Cornwall Council, which operate energy from waste facilities. We do not currently know what the final cost to Cornwall Council will be from 2028, but is estimated to have an annual cost of £6 million.

As the aim of the scheme is to reduce the carbon being emitted from our facilities, the financial burden will reduce if we remove waste types that emit carbon, such as plastics and absorbent hygiene products. We can also consider carbon capture technology. We will lobby Government to add more materials, such as textiles and absorbent hygiene products, to the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme, so funding is received for managing them. This would mean that we could invest in carbon reduction disposal methods. We may also be able to reduce this additional financial burden, if we are able to find a source for the heat emitted from our energy from waste facility or reduce the total amount of household waste processed at the facility through waste prevention, increasing reuse, repair and recycling.

Household batteries and electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE)

There have been producer responsibility recovery routes in place for many years for household batteries and electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE). Retailers who sell over a certain weight of batteries or WEEE every year have to provide facilities for them to be collected for recycling. Batteries are one of the main causes of waste fires and when thrown away with household rubbish or recycling have the potential to be very dangerous.

Lithium batteries in particular can cause fires when crushed and cause a real issue for waste operations.

The increase in rechargeable products and vapes has increased the number of embedded batteries in many products that people may not be aware of and should be disposed of separately. There are valuable resources in these products that that could be recovered if collected separately for recycling. **Disposable vapes** will be banned from sale in 2025 but there will still be many thousands present in people's homes that will need disposal. Education and awareness of the correct disposal of WEEE, vapes and batteries needs to continue to help reduce the risk that these items can cause.



Other challenges and opportunities

Waste volumes

Despite improvements in recycling services and increased awareness, we still produce too much waste. Every household in Cornwall produces nearly one tonne of waste and recycling every year. This is higher than many other areas in our region, and a significant change is needed to achieve our targets. The increase in new homes being built, including the new garden villages, is forecast to produce an extra 4,300 tonnes of waste every year. This increase will require changes to our infrastructure and additional resources to collect the additional recycling and waste produced. Further changes and planning reforms may increase this forecast.

We have increased the proportion of waste recycled and composted from 30% to approximately 50%. However, by the time this service is provided to all homes, we expect this figure to plateau, in line with many other local authorities.

We must not only reuse and recycle more, we also must consume less and create less waste. Cornwall has a significant number of **self-catering properties and small businesses** that are operated out of domestic properties. Historically they have used the household waste collection services and HWRCs. The introduction of the new collection service has identified many of these properties and educated the owners of their need to use commercial waste services. This work will continue and will reduce the amount of waste collected on the household service.

The increase in new homes being built, including the new the garden villages, are forecast to produce an extra 4,300 tonnes of waste every year.



Cost and affordability

Council budgets are facing significant pressures, and waste from households in Cornwall cost the taxpayer more than £82 million a year to manage. Even if we don't make any changes to the waste services we provide, our costs will continue to increase in the future.

Reducing the volumes of waste we collect and manage will reduce the costs we incur, with the added benefit of making space available in our facilities for third party waste and generating income. **A waste prevention plan** will be key to realising this aim. It will build on the service changes made to date and the enforcement measures taken to ensure that commercial waste is not illegally deposited in the household waste streams.

The new legislation brings funding opportunities for us, and this should be invested into making our waste services efficient and effective. Producers that are paying through pEPR to have Cornwall Council manage their packaging will expect a high quality of service, which focuses on a reduced carbon footprint and materials of a high quality.



Collection and Cleansing Contract

Our Collection and Cleansing Contract is delivered in partnership with Biffa Municipal Limited. This contract will end on 31 January 2029 with the option to extend it for a further two years. We need to decide what our waste collection and cleansing services will look like and how they will be delivered in the future. This will include assessing what infrastructure we need, and whether we need to redesign the collection methods to meet the new legislative requirements.

We will also need to consider service scope, vehicle purchase and design including considering alternative fuels, operational depot locations and efficiencies, as well as investment and carbon reduction initiatives.

Options for delivery could include, for example, direct delivery, delivery through a Council owned company (either owned by Cornwall Council or a consortium of councils). A joint procurement with another council, a joint venture arrangement or a procurement by Cornwall alone.

Forward plan to end of Integrated Waste Management Contract (IWM)

The IWM Contract expires in 2039. Ahead of this date we will develop a Contract Expiry Plan to identify the disposal services required to ensure service continuity. We will also need to identify the amount of resource required in making the decisions and operational change. At the end of the IWM Contract, all disposal assets will transfer back to Cornwall Council. By then we will need to have decided the most appropriate way to deliver our services and put in place the necessary arrangements.

At the end of the IWM Contract, all disposal assets will transfer back to Cornwall Council.



Digital transformation and innovation

Digital opportunities that can be used to support and enhance the services we provide are constantly being developed and improved, creating innovative new ways of working. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems could be applied in the future to a range of functions, from waste sorting, data analysis and customer service, helping us to optimise our services and drive efficiencies.

The future introduction of a new national **Digital Waste Tracking** system will provide a comprehensive way to see what happens to materials in the UK. It will also help businesses comply with waste regulations and reduce the ability of criminals to operate and undercut legitimate businesses through systemic mishandling of waste, illegal exports and fly-tipping.

It will help businesses and government move towards a circular economy by providing a single comprehensive way of tracking the amount and type of waste being produced and where it ends up.

Climate Change

We face an unprecedented challenge from climate change. Cornwall Council is committed to building and supporting a sustainable waste economy that prioritises local waste management, resource efficiency and the reduction of waste sent to landfill. Our key aim is to create a circular economy where, in line with the waste hierarchy, waste prevention is a top priority, but following which materials are reused or recycled, and products are designed with their entire lifecycle in mind.

By improving and utilising local waste facilities, enhancing our in-county recycling options, and promoting waste prevention at the source, we aim to reduce our environmental impact, conserve natural resources, and support a more sustainable and resilient economy for the future. Waste prevention can also deliver benefits by reducing emissions in other sectors, such as agriculture, hospitality, retail and transport. This approach will help reduce reliance on disposal, increase local recycling rates, and create green jobs, all while supporting the region’s long-term environmental and sustainability goals.

Waste collection and processing is a major contributor to climate change and is currently responsible for about 4% of emissions in Cornwall. Improving environmental efficiency by making different choices about how we collect and treat waste will help reduce the emissions generated by the services.



The collection and processing of waste is a major contributor to climate change and is currently responsible for about 4% of emissions in Cornwall.

As part of the response to the climate emergency, we have been collaborating with stakeholders to co-develop a [Local Area Energy Plan for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly \(CIOS\)](#) that provides an evidence-based pathway for achieving a net zero energy system. This includes the processing of Cornwall’s waste. The CIOS LAEP project 2045 has an ambitious, yet realistic, timescale for decarbonising Cornwall’s energy system.

This will require Government to support Cornwall, and other areas of the UK which made similar commitments, through providing the long-term policy and funding required to accelerate our net zero transition. The plan also recognises that some sectors and organisations can and will decarbonise faster.

Cornwall Council remains committed to implementing the [Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan](#) and to becoming carbon neutral for the operational emissions that we directly control by 2030. We also recognise that emissions through the delivery of Council services by a third party (known as scope 3 emissions) present a further challenge. These will require close partnership working to identify the changes required and the support required from our supply chain.

We will need to put significant resource into assessing and analysing how we can contribute towards achieving net zero. This includes what this will mean for the way we collect and process recycling and waste in Cornwall and the systems and services we will need to change in order to reach these aims. Our plans will also need to enable us to adapt to climate events when they occur and make our facilities and services as resilient as possible to the effects of an already changing climate.

This will not be an easy or quick task and will require significantly reframing what we value alongside the more traditional metrics of cost and service quality.



The zero waste, circular economy

The best way to deliver change is to move towards a zero waste, circular economy where our finite resources are conserved and used efficiently. Most products are still designed and created using a linear economy model where resources are taken, manufactured, used and disposed of. We have moved into a recycling economy where a proportion of materials are recycled but not retained at their highest quality.

The transition to a circular economy requires us all to rethink how resources are valued and managed. The model relies on designing products that are durable, easy to maintain and repair. This encourages and enables individuals to reuse products many times. Finally, products should be designed to enable straightforward recycling when they can no longer be reused or repaired.

One of the key elements in developing a circular economy is ensuring that we have the necessary skills and resources available to deliver the aims and objectives of the strategy. We will work closely with all our stakeholder partners to ensure we follow the principles of good growth, enabling us to share skills and resources as we work towards the shared target of a zero waste circulate economy. This will include assessing the existing and new materials we need to collect and where these materials can be processed to maximise efficiencies and develop local markets and employment.



Recycling survey feedback

In November 2024 we undertook a survey to help inform this strategy and develop our future plans for waste management. We asked the residents of Cornwall for their views and feedback on a number of waste, recycling and litter services and what improvements or changes they would like to see. The full results of the Recycling and Litter Survey are available at <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/recycling>

The results of the survey were clear that the majority of residents feel strongly about the importance of recycling and reducing waste. Residents were clear that an increase in the materials that can be recycled, opportunities to access reuse and repair facilities, and greater engagement and communication would support them to make further changes.

This strong public support for recycling and waste reduction indicates that the 65% recycling rate target, set by the Government, can be achievable with the right level of resource, continued community engagement and effective waste management strategies. By addressing the barriers to recycling and enhancing public awareness, we can work effectively with residents to reduce household waste.

We have reflected our community's opinions and strong support for increased waste reduction and recycling opportunities in our forming this strategy and developing the commitments.



Our commitment

We are committed to collecting and processing waste in an efficient way that reduces its environmental impact and, where possible, is managed locally.

The waste hierarchy is a framework that rates waste management options according to how they protect the environment. In line with the waste hierarchy, waste prevention has the least impact. Products and materials should be kept in use, recycled when they are no longer usable and only sent for recovery or disposal as a last resort.

PREVENTION
PREPARING FOR RE-USE
RECYCLING
OTHER RECOVERY
DISPOSAL

We will engage and communicate with our residents and wider community, providing information about our services and how everyone can commit to achieving our objectives.

Your commitment

This strategy sets ambitious targets for waste prevention and recycling across Cornwall.

If we are to achieve them, we will need the help and support from everyone in Cornwall. We will need everyone to:

- **Understand the principles of waste prevention** and the steps you can take to reduce what you purchase and throw away.
- **Understand the importance of reuse and repair** and take advantage of the many opportunities that exist in Cornwall.
- **Be confident about what materials can be included on the recycling services** and use them comprehensively.
- **Keep up to date with new initiatives and opportunities** to reduce waste and recycle more.
- **Commit to doing this** at home, at work, in school and in everything you do.

Next steps

This strategic document sets out the key legislative changes, challenges, and milestones for resource and waste management in Cornwall over the next 20 years.

A detailed delivery plan will now be developed in 2025 setting out how we will reach each of these key principles. This delivery plan will be updated annually and will outline progress against our strategy.



Timeline of key changes and targets





**If you would like this information in
another format or language please contact:**

Cornwall Council, County Hall,
Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY

e: customerservices@cornwall.gov.uk
t: 0300 1234 100

 **Cornwall recycles**
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