

Place Select Committee
Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste
(Draft) Outline Scope

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<p>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</p> <p>This review will contribute to the following areas of the Council Plan 2023-2026 vision:</p> <p>A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive. This means we will enjoy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • great places to live and visit • clean and green spaces <p>A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve. This means that we will make sure that we provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial sustainability and value for money • dedicated and resourceful employees • strong leadership and governance <p>The project would contribute to the Councils Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy, specifically Aim 3 to “Maximise the use of existing resources, minimise waste and achieve high levels of re-use and recycling”.</p>	
<p>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</p> <p><u>Main Issues</u></p> <p>Waste and recycling collections impact every resident in the Borough and are a key service and a statutory duty that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) deliver to residents. The service is highly visible and impacts on every household. The Council’s waste and recycling provisions are very popular with residents and have regularly received excellent customer service feedback.</p> <p>However, collecting refuse weekly in a 240L bin does bring with it a negative effect on the overall household waste recycling rate which the council can achieve. Residents currently have access to a large residual waste disposal capacity of 240 litres every week. This amount of refuse disposal capacity acts as a key disincentive for residents to recycle due to the convenience factor which the 240L green wheeled bins provide. Generally, only those residents with a keen interest</p>	

in recycling, will recycle.

Due to new Government legislation, councils will need to rollout mandatory weekly food waste collections by 1st April 2026. As a result of this rollout date, which also aligns with the start date of the council's new waste disposal contract, SBC's current waste and recycling collection services should be reviewed to ensure an efficient, effective and resilient service in the future.

There are major financial pressures which local authorities will need to deal with over the coming years and, with the expected increase of gate fees from the new waste disposal contract on 1st April 2026, reviewing waste and recycling collections should be seen as an opportunity to help with the financial pressure on the authority.

The most common reason given for retaining weekly collection is the potential for food waste to create a smell and a hazard if it is uncollected for up to 2 weeks. This is particularly likely in warm weather. However, the introduction of mandatory weekly food waste collections from 1st April 2026, would resolve this issue and the benefits of alternative weekly collection of other residual waste may then outweigh the disadvantages.

The Council's continued failure to increase recycling and reduce its carbon impact could become the subject of national Government challenge and penalties as climate change accelerates.

Stockton's current recycling rate is the lowest in the Tees Valley at 24.3% in 2020/21, ranking SBC 328 out of 338 authorities nationally. This compares to the Tees Valley average of 30.58%, the northeast average of 32.84% and a national average of 42%.

Stockton's 240L weekly residual waste capacity has a significant impact on residual waste per household (KG/HH), which can be seen when compared to other Northeast Authorities, with Stockton having the highest KG/HH of the 7 authorities.

The Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS) and the *Tees Valley Outline Business Case (TV OBC)* has a target of a 45%-50% Tees Valley Recycling rate by 2027, with a national target of 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035. Without significant collection model changes this would not be achievable.

The requirements of the *Resources and Waste Strategy for England 2018* and the *Environment Act 2021* places a statutory duty on all waste collection and unitary authorities in England to collect food waste separately and to treat this waste by recycling. The Council is awaiting clarity around the details of start date and funding, however, after discussions with Defra it is expected that SBC will need to collect food waste by 1st April 2026.

Also, the Government has now released their response to the *Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)* consultation. DRS will be introduced nationally from October 2025 and will include single use drinks containers of plastic bottles and cans. Glass will be excluded from the scheme. Local Authorities will now need to understand how the introduction of DRS will impact the kerbside recycling collections, as any drinks container in scope that would have been placed in the kerbside recycling container will now find its way to a DRS drop off point. It is anticipated that a 'levy' of around 20p will be added to each drinks container upon purchase and this will be refunded to the customer once the item has been returned.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is another element of the strategy and places the responsibility onto packaging producers to cover the full net cost of dealing with the packaging they place on the market. It is expected local authorities will receive payments from 2024/25 for any packaging which finds its way to kerbside waste streams. The details of how this funding mechanism will work is not yet known, though it is believed to be based on the quality and quantity of collected material.

Consistency in Collections is another consultation which will impact SBC collections with legislation which has placed a requirement on councils to collect glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food and garden waste separately. Whether green waste collections should be free of charge or not is also the subject of discussions as part of this consultation.

Overall aim

Levels of recycling in the Borough are amongst the lowest in the country. The cost of the weekly collection of general waste is increasing rapidly. Food waste collection is likely to be a requirement in the coming years and a proactive approach could contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets. The free collection of garden waste/green waste also benefits some communities more than others.

Overall, the Council's approach to waste reduction could be improved to reduce the financial and carbon cost. Therefore, this review aims to take into account the potential public resistance but also give appropriate consideration to the importance of the environment, the costs of service delivery, and the direction of national policy over food waste.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What is the current waste management strategy for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and how does this align with the joint waste management strategy for the Tees Valley?
- What financial and strategic challenges does the authority face regarding waste management in the short, medium and long term?
- How do the key issues surrounding domestic waste, recycling and green waste vary across the Borough?
- How do SBC's recycling rates compare with other local authorities in the Tees Valley/ the North East/ nationally?
- What actions need to be taken following the Government's introduction of mandatory food waste collection?
- How will the introduction of the (Deposit Return Scheme DRS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) impact on kerbside waste and recycling collections?
- How can the anticipated rise in gate fees be managed to ease additional financial pressures?
- What are the viable options to alter the current system of kerbside waste and recycling collections?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Council, Cabinet, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Government, public.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

8 months (reporting to Cabinet in February 2024)

Approve scope and project plan – September 2023

Receive evidence – October – November 2023

Draft recommendations – December 2023

Final report – January 2024
Report to Cabinet – February 2024

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

HM Government, *Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England (2021)*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765914/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf

Environment Act 2021. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/enacted>

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Waste Management Plan for England (2021)*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955897/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021.pdf

Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy 2020 to 2035. Available at: https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/2591/Tees-Valley-Joint-Waste-Management-Strategy-2020-to-2035/pdf/Tees_Valley_Joint_Waste_Management_Strategy_2020_to_2035.pdf?m=637813895580900000

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, *Bins, rubbish and recycling webpages*. Available at: <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/bins-rubbish-and-recycling>

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), *Citizen Insights: UK Household Food Waste Tracking Survey 2022*. Available at: <https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/20230309%20Food%20Trends%202022.pdf>

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Community Services

- Background information (current waste management strategies, current and future challenges and opportunities)
- Data on Tees Valley authorities and other similar authorities (benchmarking)

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)

- National perspective and current challenges
- How does SBC compare to other Local Authorities?

How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)

Committee meetings, reports, research, benchmarking, site visits (TBC).

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?

Committee meetings, information submissions, site visits (TBC).

How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics. Public bodies must have due regard to the need to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Environment: ‘Waste and recycling’ is included as an aspect of the environment in Stockton-on-Tees that has an influence on public health and wellbeing.

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023: All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

Due to the introduction of mandatory weekly food waste collections, there are significant opportunities to deliver carbon reductions and environmental benefits across the whole service.

If changes are made from the review of waste and recycling collections, this would also help to support the Council’s aspirations to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

The review would also help in achieving the targets set out in the Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy (TVJWMS) which aims to increase recycling levels, reduce the carbon impact of waste management and reduce the amount of waste generated by households.

Project Plan			
Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	July 2023	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	24.07.2023	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	11.09.2023	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Background presentation and benchmarking	09.10.2023	Select Committee
		13.11.2023	
	Site visit & Evidence Session	30.11.2023	
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	11.12.23	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	TBC	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	21.12.2023	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	15.01.2024	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	05.03.2024	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15.02.2024	Cabinet / Approving Body