WE'RE MOVING

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

2027 TO 2030 DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2026

ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

Foreword

Our vision for the future of our borough is simple: by 2050, Greenwich will be the borough that creates, for and with everyone who lives, works and grows up here.

A great neighbourhood is one with clean streets, thriving green spaces, friendly faces and places where we can come together. It's a neighbourhood we can be proud of.

Waste and recycling services play a vital role in making that vision a reality. They are essential services we all use every day, and they help to keep our neighbourhoods clean and attractive.

But waste is about more than keeping our streets tidy. Reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling, and making the most of our resources are all essential to responding to the climate crisis and building a more sustainable future. The choices we make about waste have a direct impact on our communities and our environment, today and in the future.

The draft strategy sets out how we will work with residents, businesses, and partners to reduce waste by consuming less, increasing repair and reuse of items, recycling more, and building a thriving circular economy. It is about how we will ensure an excellent service for residents, saving them money and protecting the environment by reducing waste and better managing that which is produced.

This is why our draft strategy is called 'Towards Zero Waste,' as our ambition is to prevent waste and preserve resources in our local communities, which will have environmental, financial and social benefits for all.

Our draft waste strategy outlines how we plan to achieve this, by:

- Providing high-quality waste services for residents and businesses
- Delivering services that support and promote a circular economy
- Minimising the environmental impacts of our waste management services
- Collaborating and working in partnership with communities, businesses, volunteers, schools, and neighbouring local authorities to move towards a zero waste future

And we want to hear from you about how we can deliver an excellent service that helps to sustainably build the kind of neighbourhoods you want to live in, right across the borough.

Councillor Calum O'Byrne Mulligan,
Cabinet Member for Transport, Climate Change, Waste and Streets

neighbourhoods:
safe and comfortable homes with useful things on your doorstep in every part of the borough

Executive summary

This draft waste strategy for the Royal Borough of Greenwich, 'Towards Zero Waste', sets out how we will collect and manage the rubbish and recycling produced by homes and businesses over the next three years.

At the core of this draft strategy is our vision for Greenwich in 2050. Sustainable, effective, and efficient waste services are central to the vision of building neighbourhoods we can all be proud of, and creating public spaces that are clean, attractive and a source of pride.

Alongside this, we are continuing to address the climate crisis, by minimising waste and building a more sustainable environment for the future.

This 3-year draft waste strategy will help us to create a cleaner and more sustainable Greenwich, for now and the future.

It is an update to the current waste strategy for Royal Greenwich, in place since 2016, and updated in 2020. Since then, there have been significant changes in the policy which guides how waste and recycling is managed by local authorities and how these services are paid for. One of the changes is to make producers of packaging such as plastic containers and cardboard boxes responsible for paying for the cost of collecting and disposing of it. Another change will be new charges for council's for plastic waste, that is left in rubbish collections and burnt through incineration, contributing to climate change.

There is also a UK-wide Deposit Return Scheme proposed for 2027, where cans and most plastic bottles will have a 20p deposit placed on them, which will be returned once the can or bottle is placed into a reverse vending machine, for example at a supermarket or shop. Some of these national policy changes risk negatively impacting on the volume and value of recyclable waste that the council is able to collect, and can potentially increasing the overall costs of the collection and processing of waste. New regulations on the collection of food waste also means that the disposal market is changing and it is becoming increasingly challenging, and may become impossible, to continue to jointly collect this type of waste with garden waste.

Our draft vision is to:

Work together towards a zero waste future.

This is supported by our draft mission:

We will deliver a reliable, cost-efficient service that helps improve environmental sustainability and tackle the climate crisis through reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling and following best practice in waste management.

The way we view rubbish (waste) has also changed. It is no longer only something to get rid of, items can be reused or repaired rather than thrown away or not purchased in the first place where possible. By living in this way, we can reduce the amount of new materials needed for making new things, which has environmental, social and financial benefits. This refreshed strategy brings a new focus to drive change, inform decision making and set out actions to meet our draft vision for Royal Greenwich.

We are facing significant challenges related to the borough's increasing population and housing growth, tackling the impact of climate change and managing costs of waste collection and disposal in a time where councils have less money available to deliver services. This draft strategy looks to the future in light of these challenges. It offers solutions and explores how we can improve our waste services and what those changes might mean for you, our residents and businesses.

We are proud of our achievements to date, but we know we can do more. We want to continually improve how we collect and manage our waste, supporting our residents and businesses to prevent waste, increasing the reuse, repair and sharing of items and recycling more.



ES Figure 1: Strategy Chapters

This will be achieved by working towards the following objectives:

- **Provide high-quality waste services for the residents and businesses of Royal Greenwich**
  - Deliver **efficient and affordable** waste services, including collecting bins on time.
  - Ensure collection and disposal services are designed to **meet the needs of residents and businesses**.
  - **Invest in the future of Royal Greenwich** by bringing social value benefits to communities, such as training and employment, reuse and repair initiatives, education and community engagement.
- **Deliver services that support and promote a circular economy in Royal Greenwich**
  - Promote **waste prevention and reduction** and minimise the amount of waste generated.
  - Encourage **reuse, repair and share** activities.
  - **Increase recycling** by providing services that are easy to use and include a wide range of materials.
- **Minimise the environmental impacts of Royal Greenwich's waste management services**
  - Reduce the use of landfill and work towards zero waste to landfill.
  - Explore policies and initiatives that focus on reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and helping to tackle the climate crisis.
  - Aim to manage all waste and recycling within London using local waste infrastructure where possible.

- **Collaborate and work in partnership with others to move towards zero waste in Royal Greenwich**
  - **Work closely together** with communities, businesses, schools and volunteers.
  - **Identify opportunities** to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and share best practice.

Through our strategy, we will work to ensure our residents and businesses receive a high-quality, efficient recycling and waste service that meets your needs, both now and in the future as we continue to respond to local and national challenges.



We commit to clear actions to help us achieve the vision of our strategy and support London-wide and national targets for recycling and reducing rubbish. This includes expanding the food waste collection service to all homes (including flats) by 2027, providing households with a full range of recycling services thereby increasing our recycling rate and exploring options for promoting reuse and repair opportunities across the borough. We will also continue to take action to minimise the environmental impacts of our waste management service, including reviewing low emission vehicles to decarbonise and reduce fleet emissions, supporting Net Zero ambitions. To help manage the costs and environmental impacts of the service we will be reviewing options for garden waste collections and encouraging composting at home.

Through this draft strategy we are setting out our ambitions to reduce the amount of waste across the Royal Borough of Greenwich. We will aim to increase recycling rates across the lifetime of the strategy, despite a challenging policy context and continue to reduce the need to send waste for energy recovery. We will also aim to virtually eliminate the use of landfill (aiming to keep this below 1% of rubbish sent to landfill).

Finally, this strategy is presented here as a draft. The final strategy will be informed by you, our residents, and updated following a public consultation period.

Contents

Foreword 2

Executive summary 3

1 Why have a waste strategy? 8

1.1 What is the best way to manage rubbish and recycling? 9

1.2 How is the strategy structured? 12

2 What are we trying to achieve? 13

2.1 Vision 13

2.2 Mission 13

2.3 Strategic objectives 13

3 Strategic objectives 14

3.1 Summary of policy and legislation 14

3.2 How much waste is there and what is in our rubbish bin? 16

3.3 Our recycling and waste service 16

3.3.1 Collections 16

3.3.2 Disposal 19

3.4 The performance of the current service 20

3.4.1 Statistics on performance 21

3.5 What have we achieved so far? 21

3.5.1 Financial pressures 22

4 What could the future look like? 22

4.1 Looking ahead to 2030 22

4.2 Climate change and waste management 25

4.3 Maintaining good local services 25

4.4 What are the solutions? 26

5 Making it happen 27

5.1 Monitoring 33

6 Your voice and influence 34

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - Waste hierarchy 9
Figure 2 – A linear economy and a circular economy 10
Figure 3 - Our strategy 11
Figure 4 - Draft waste strategy structure 12
Figure 5 - Policy timeline 14
Figure 6 - Waste breakdown 16
Figure 7 - Current household/street level property waste collections 16
Figure 8 - current communal / estate properties waste collection 17
Figure 9 - Balled aluminium at a MRF 17
Figure 10 - Mixed food and garden waste 17
Figure 11 - Waste recycling, treatment and disposal route 2023/24 19
Figure 12 - Recycling rates in Royal Greenwich over the last 10 years 20
Figure 13 - Facts and figures about the Royal Borough of Greenwich recycling and waste service 21
Figure 14 - Population trends and projection in Royal Greenwich 22
Figure 15 - A projection of the quantity of waste collected in Royal Greenwich 23
Figure 16 - The projected cost of waste management in Royal Greenwich to 2030 24
Figure 17 - How the things we buy and how they are managed affects climate change 25
Figure 18 - The four key strategy challenges and possible solutions 26
Figure 19 - Our draft strategy action themes 27

1 Why have a waste strategy?

This draft waste strategy, 'Towards Zero Waste', covers the period of 2027 to 2030. It is an update to our 2016 waste strategy, which was updated in 2020. This draft waste strategy, Towards Zero Waste, will set out how we will create sustainable, effective, and cost-efficient waste services in order to create neighbourhoods that we can all be proud of, with public spaces that are clean, attractive and a source of pride.

Alongside this, this strategy will set out how we will continue to address the climate crisis by minimising waste and building a more sustainable environment for the future. Our draft strategy sets out the future direction for rubbish and recycling collection, management and disposal services for Royal Greenwich. It helps us to plan your services for the longer term, taking account of future housing growth and other changes, like new laws and policy.

Our strategy is called 'Towards Zero Waste' because reducing our rubbish by buying less packaging and items, repairing and reusing items, and recycling more is good for the environment, helps us all save money and protects our planet's resources. Reusing, sharing and recycling activities help keep items in use for longer, rather than throwing them away, so less new materials need to be dug out of the ground or be manufactured, promoting a 'circular economy' (see figure 2). This also means that less emissions of damaging climate change gases like carbon dioxide and methane are released into the atmosphere.

What is waste and zero waste?

Municipal waste

This strategy is about 'municipal waste' which includes rubbish and recycling collected from homes (households), and similar waste from other sources (like shops or offices) and litter.

Zero waste

Zero waste is ensuring that all rubbish is recycled or reused, and this strategy sets out how we wish to move towards a zero waste future.

'Towards zero waste' means making it easier to prevent waste, and repair, reuse and share items, then recycle and compost, so our bins have less rubbish in them in the future. This is known as the 'circular economy' approach to managing our valuable resources and it aims to keep our resources (items) in circulation for as long as possible so that their maximum value is retained.

Some waste is unavoidable no matter how hard we all try to prevent it by reusing and repairing things, and this is referred to here as rubbish. We will always be collecting some rubbish for recycling or disposal, but we want this to be a small amount.

Councils across England, including the Royal Borough of Greenwich, are struggling with rising costs and we need to keep managing our services as efficiently as possible for residents and businesses in our borough. Reducing the total amount of rubbish, and recycling more, is one important way of helping. It costs less to recycle materials than to dispose of them and is better for the environment. It is even better to repair or reuse an item than recycle, as well as often being cheaper for you. It also saves the environmental impact of making a new item. Our draft strategy considers the costs of different collection, recycling and disposal options, to help us deliver good value for money services, both now and in the future.

We declared a **climate emergency** in Royal Greenwich in 2019, because of concerns of climate change. The delivery of this draft strategy, with the help of you, our residents and businesses, will help contribute to lower climate change emissions in the future.

1.1 What is the best way to manage rubbish and recycling?

In 1975, the 'waste hierarchy' was introduced. It prioritises the importance of minimising waste (rubbish) first, then reusing (or repairing) what we can, followed by recycling and composting as the next best thing and then recovering energy from burning rubbish, with landfill being the worst outcome.

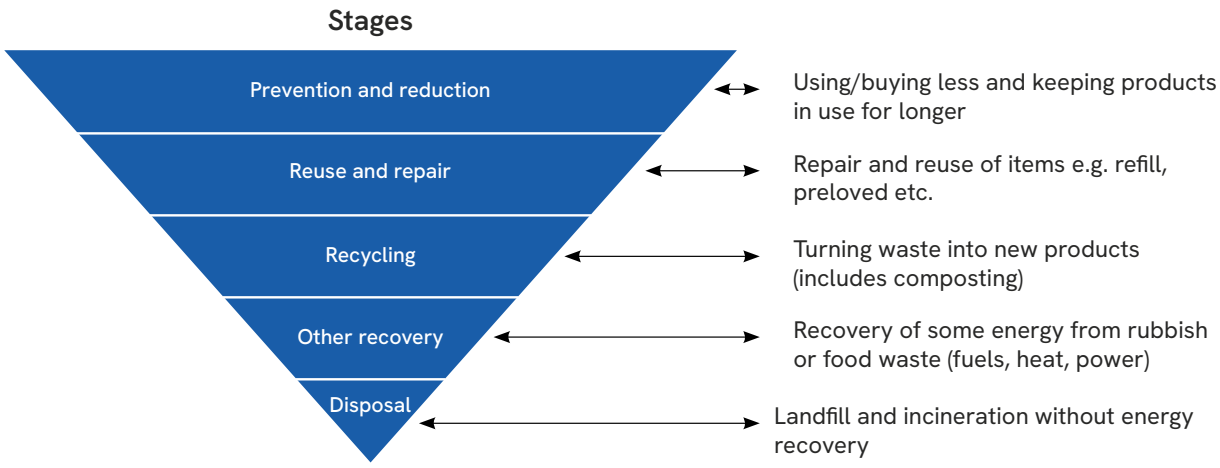


Figure 1 - Waste hierachy

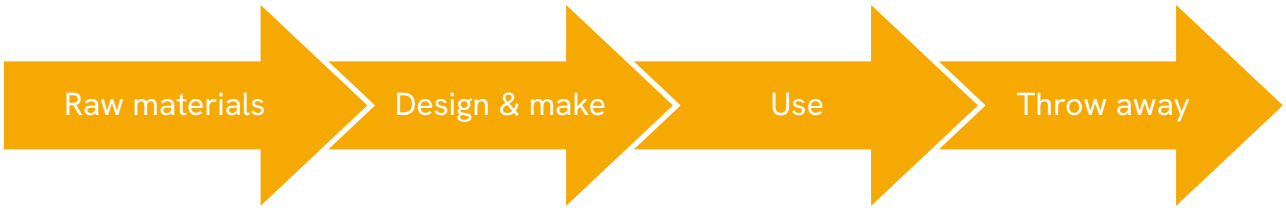
A circular economy uses less raw materials and produces less waste by:

- **Better design** and using recycled materials in products so less materials are needed
- Things are '**made to last**' and can be easily repaired
- **Leasing or sharing** rather than buying
- More **reuse & repair**, including **remanufacturing** (manufacturers repairing/upgrading an item
- A **circular economy** helps us to move towards **zero waste.**

The ‘circular economy’ is a newer idea. Instead of items going in a line from buying something, to throwing it away in our bin, we try to make them go around in a circle for as long as we can before they become rubbish. For example, this might be repairing a broken zip on a coat instead of buying a new one or using a reusable coffee cup instead of buying a disposable one.

Circular economy explains a system that minimises the use of natural resources, waste and carbon emissions by reducing the amount of stuff we buy and keeping products in use for as long as possible, for example by reuse and repair. This is one area where we can all contribute to climate action (see section 4.2). Reducing carbon emissions to combat climate change will benefit our society, through less extreme weather, improved health, benefits to nature and food production and farming.

Linear economy



Changing to a Circular economy

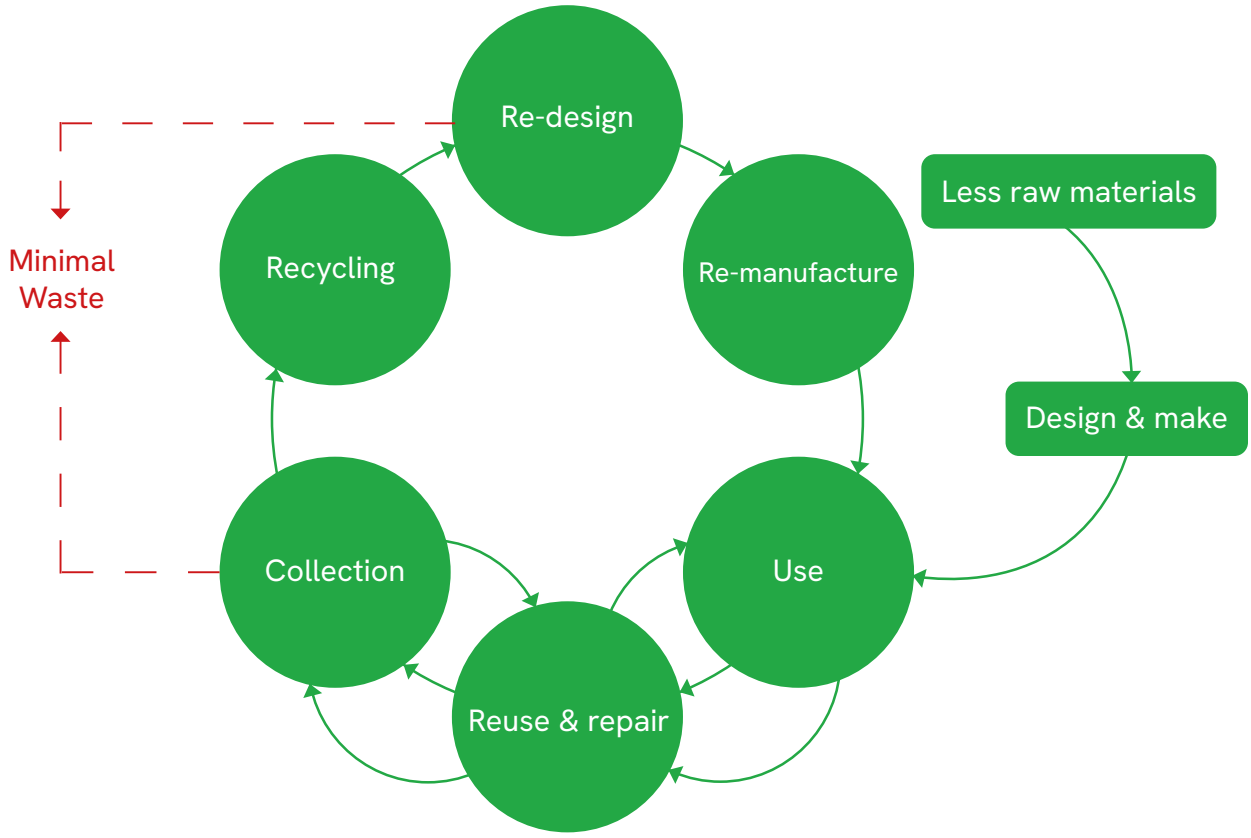


Figure 2 - A Linear economy and a circular economy

As residents and businesses, we are responsible for the rubbish we produce. The ideal situation is we minimise our waste as much as possible. This can be achieved at home, for example, by meal planning to reduce food waste, buying second-hand and products with less packaging, and repairing and re-using items rather than throwing them away and buying new. As well as environmental issues, the rising cost of living has also led to societal changes such as more furniture upcycling, buying from charity shops, minimising food waste and the use of 'pre-loved' apps.

The council is responsible for collecting and disposing of our rubbish and recycling and can support other aspects like reuse and repair, as explained in this strategy. We can also work with other councils and businesses to help meet the mission and vision set out in section 2.

It is the role of central government to set out laws around products that are sold in the UK which end up as rubbish and to decide environmental policy to help guide councils and producers of waste. All of us have a role to deliver better outcomes in waste management. The figure below shows what our draft strategy is aiming to do, and who is involved.



Figure 3 - Our strategy

1.2 How is the strategy structured?



Figure 4: 'Towards Zero Waste' structure

Section 1 Why a waste strategy?

Our strategy begins with this introductory section, explaining why have a strategy and what it covers.

Section 2 What are we trying to achieve?

This section presents the draft vision, mission and objectives of our strategy. .

Section 3 Setting the scene

Summarises how our waste service is delivered now, what law and policy influences your collection, recycling and waste management service going forwards, facts and figures about how much rubbish and recycling takes place in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and what we have achieved so far.

Section 4 What could the future look like?

Looks ahead to what we could do differently, how can we improve the service and what those changes might mean.

Section 5 Making it happen

Sets out draft actions and proposed priorities and targets for the service to help meet our strategic vision, mission and objectives together with activities to measure success.

Section 6 What do you think?

Finally, this is a draft document, so we explain the public consultation exercise which will be seeking your opinions on the ideas and direction of this strategy.

2 What are we trying to achieve?

This 3-year draft waste strategy will help us to create a cleaner and more sustainable Greenwich, now and in the future.

This means providing sustainable, effective and cost-efficient waste services that support cleaner neighbourhoods and public spaces that residents can take pride in.

Alongside this, we are continuing to address the climate crisis, by minimising waste and building a more sustainable environment for the future.

2.1 Vision

Work together towards a zero waste future.

2.2 Mission

We will deliver a reliable, cost-efficient service that helps improve environmental sustainability and tackles the climate crisis through reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling and following best practice in waste management.

2.3 Strategic objectives

To deliver the vision and mission outlined above, we have set out the following strategic objectives, grouped into themes.

- **Provide high-quality waste services for the residents and businesses of Royal Greenwich**
  - Deliver **efficient and affordable** waste services.
  - Ensure collection and disposal services are designed to **meet the needs of residents and businesses**.
  - **Invest in the future of Royal Greenwich** by bringing social value benefits to communities (e.g. training and employment, reuse and repair initiatives, education and community engagement).
- **Deliver services that support and promote a circular economy in Royal Greenwich**
  - Promote **waste prevention and reduction** and minimise the amount of waste generated.
  - Encourage **reuse, repair and share** activities.
  - **Increase recycling** by providing services that are easy to use and include a wide range of materials.
- **Minimise the environmental impacts of Royal Greenwich's waste management services**
  - Reduce dependency on landfill, and work towards zero waste to landfill.
  - Explore policies and initiatives that focus on reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.
  - Aim to manage all waste and recycling within London using local waste infrastructure where possible.

- **Collaborate and work together to move towards zero waste in Royal Greenwich**
  - Work closely together with communities, businesses, schools and volunteers.
  - Identify opportunities to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and share best practice.

3 Strategic objectives

Our draft strategy is based on the principles of the waste hierarchy and the circular economy (see section 1) and our vision, mission and objectives set out in section 2.

3.1 Summary of policy and legislation

Aiming for net zero is helping to tackle climate change.

Net zero means achieving a balance of the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere with the amount removed from it.

The strategy considers policies, set at a national, regional and local level. Many of these policies support the move to a circular economy, focusing on managing resources efficiently and keeping materials in use for as long as possible. It also supports the ambition of achieving net zero and tackling climate change. Many of these will directly affect our residents and businesses as shown below (for more information on policy and legislation, see Appendix A).

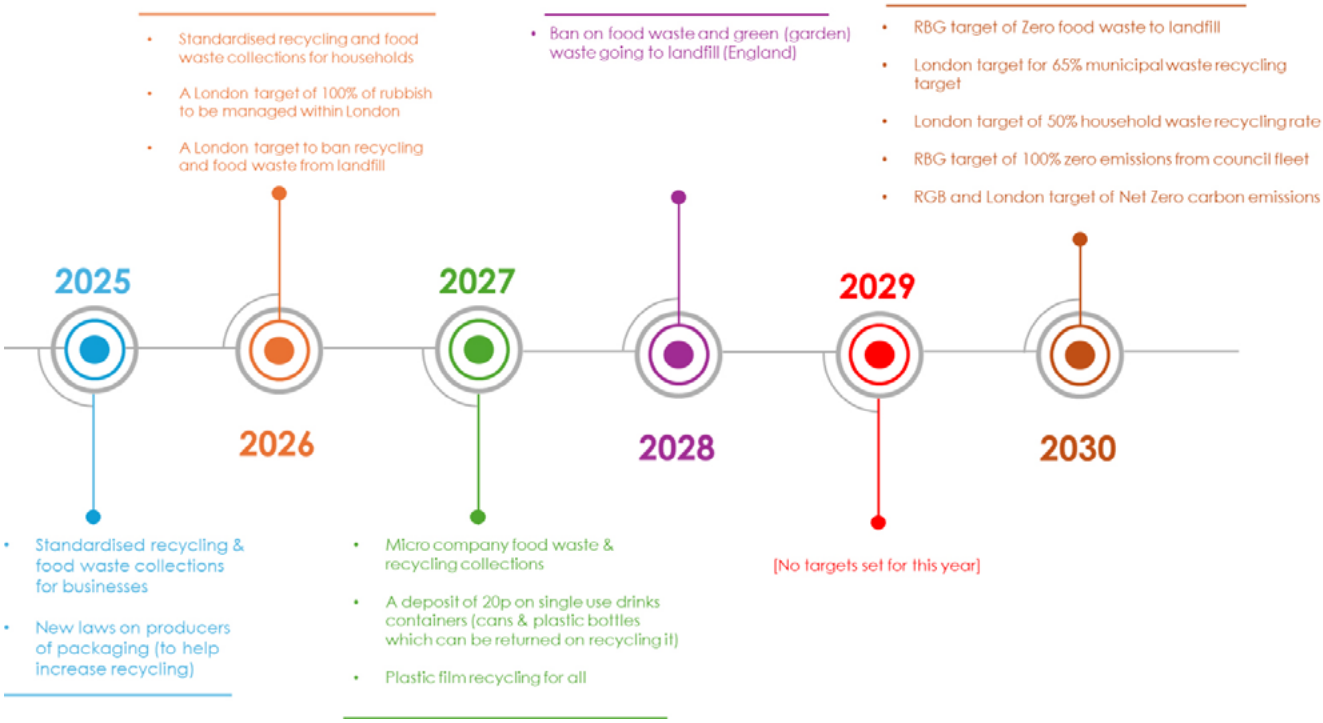


Figure 5: Policy timeline

So, what are the key waste policies?

2025 - Extended producer responsibility for packaging

Producers to design more sustainable and recyclable packaging to increase the amount of household packaging waste recycled.

2027 – Deposit Return Scheme

Single use drinks containers to have a returnable deposit on them, redeemed at stores or through "reverse vending machines", designed to reduce littering and increase recycling. This could have the effect of reducing council recycling rates as cans and plastic bottles will be collected separately from council collections.

2030 – UK Emissions Trading Scheme

Increased cost for carbon emitted from incinerators and energy-from-waste facilities burning rubbish (this will make waste disposal more expensive).

Simpler recycling in waste collections:

A national 'model' for recycling collections, based around a common set of materials, and a preference for paper and card to be collected separately from other recycling.

31 March 2025 Businesses/non household municipal premises to have recycling collections for cartons, plastics, glass, paper, card, cans, food waste.

31 March 2026 Households - to have recycling collections for cartons, plastics, glass, paper, card, cans, garden and weekly food waste.

31 March 2027 Businesses & households - to have separate collection of plastic film.

3.2 How much waste is there and what is in our rubbish bin?

Our strategy considers how much waste there is and what that is made up of. We collect and manage approximately 120,000 tonnes of waste each year (also see section 4.1). A large amount of the rubbish that is collected still has recyclable materials in it, as shown in the bin (see Figure 6).

This strategy aims to reduce waste and move any items that can be recycled out of our rubbish and into recycling.

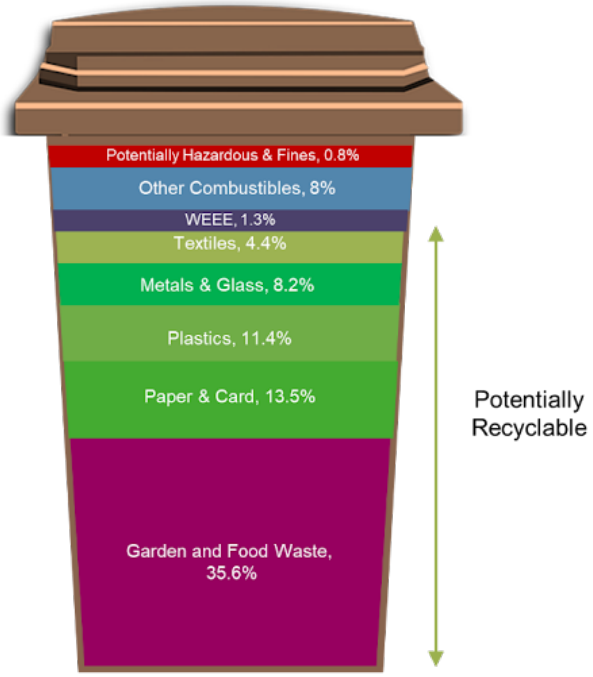


Figure 6: Waste breakdown

3.3 Our recycling and waste service

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is a unitary authority, which means we are responsible for both the collection of recycling and rubbish, and how the rubbish is managed after it is collected.

3.3.1 Collections

All our residents have access to household collections of recycling and rubbish. Most residents also have a collection of food waste or mixed food and garden waste. How we collect this varies depending on the type of property (i.e. house, flat, flat above shop).

	Week 1 of 2		Week 2 of 2	
Houses / Street Level Collections				
	Garden + Food waste	Recycling	Rubbish & Recycling	Garden + Food waste

Figure 7: current household/street level property waste collections

	Weekly Collection	
Communal / Estate Properties		
	Garden + Food waste	Recycling + Rubbish

Figure 8: current communal/estate properties waste collection

Recycling

Residents receive a weekly collection of dry recycling (metals, glass, plastics, paper and card), in one wheeled bin or sack depending on the kind of property. Once collected, your recycling goes to a materials recycling facility (known as an MRF). The MRF uses a range of technologies to separate the mixed recycling into its different streams (e.g. plastics, metals, glass) which are then sent for reprocessing and recycling.



Figure 9: Balled aluminium at a MRF



Figure 10: Mixed food and garden waste

Garden and food waste

The majority of residents[1] are provided with a small caddy to collect food waste inside the home, which is then either emptied into a wheeled bin along with the garden waste or into a communal bin (where there is no garden waste). The combined garden and food waste is taken to an In-Vessel Composting (IVC) facility and turned into compost for use on land.

The recent Simpler Recycling legislation has affected the market, making it more difficult to continue collecting food and garden waste together, with a government preference for separate collection. This has been shown to have strong environmental benefits including the generation of renewable energy from separate food waste treatment (in anaerobic digestion plant) and also resulting in lower carbon emissions. The separate collection of food also highlights to residents the amount of food waste that is thrown away helping change consumer behaviour.

Unlike recycling and residual waste, the collection of your garden waste is a non-statutory activity and is a discretionary service provided by your council. As such, councils can provide this service for free, ask residents to pay for its collection or decide to not collect it at all from your home. Over 80% of authorities in England already charge their residents

for garden waste collections and in London the average cost is around £85 per bin per year. This means that those households who generate garden waste pay for its management (unless they compost at home), whilst those households with no garden waste do not need to contribute to garden waste collection costs.

We are considering making changes to how we collect your food waste and garden waste. This includes introducing a charge for collections of garden waste for households that wish to receive this service in the borough, noting that many residents don't have gardens. We are considering charging for fortnightly collections of garden waste from April 2027. All residents, including those that do not currently receive a collection, will receive a free weekly collection of food waste, and may receive additional bins for this purpose[2]. The cost of garden waste sacks would also be reviewed to incorporate a collection charge.

See Section 6 for how you can have your say on the proposals within this draft strategy.

Rubbish

Some household waste cannot be recycled or composted. This is known as residual waste or rubbish. In Royal Greenwich, this waste is collected fortnightly in a wheeled bin for most kerbside properties (e.g. houses), and each week, in sacks or larger 4-wheeled bins, for properties with limited or no storage and communal properties (e.g. flats). This is then sent to an energy-from-waste (EfW) facility in Lewisham[3]. At the EFW facility, rubbish is burned and energy is generated in the process resulting in electricity exported to the electricity grid and heating for local homes.

Bulky waste

For larger items which are more difficult to dispose of, such as sofas, mattresses and large electricals, residents can book a bulky waste collection[4]. Other alternatives to a bulky waste collection include donating them to charity, gifting them to friends and family, or taking them to the Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC).

Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC) and other recycling points

Our Reuse and Recycling Centre (historically known as 'the tip') at Nathan Way is available for residents to dispose of any larger or additional recycling or waste that cannot be collected via the normal collection. Our RRC accepts a wide variety of items, including white goods (e.g. fridges, freezers), furniture and electrical items.

We also provided residents with access to a reuse shop for several years, RePurpose, which was situated next to the RRC but is no longer in operation. This initiative involved diverting unwanted items brought by residents to give them a second life through reuse, upcycling and recycling. We are now looking at new partners to work with the council on providing reuse opportunities across Royal Greenwich.

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[1] It is noted that some (c.25,000) communal properties across the borough are yet to receive this service.

[2] There will be no additional cost for this extra service and central Government are providing some additional funds to cover this collection.

[3] https://selchp.com/

[4] There is a usually a charge for this, see Book a bulky waste collection | Royal Borough of Greenwich

There are also other recycling sites in Royal Greenwich to help you recycle different types of items: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/recyclingcentre

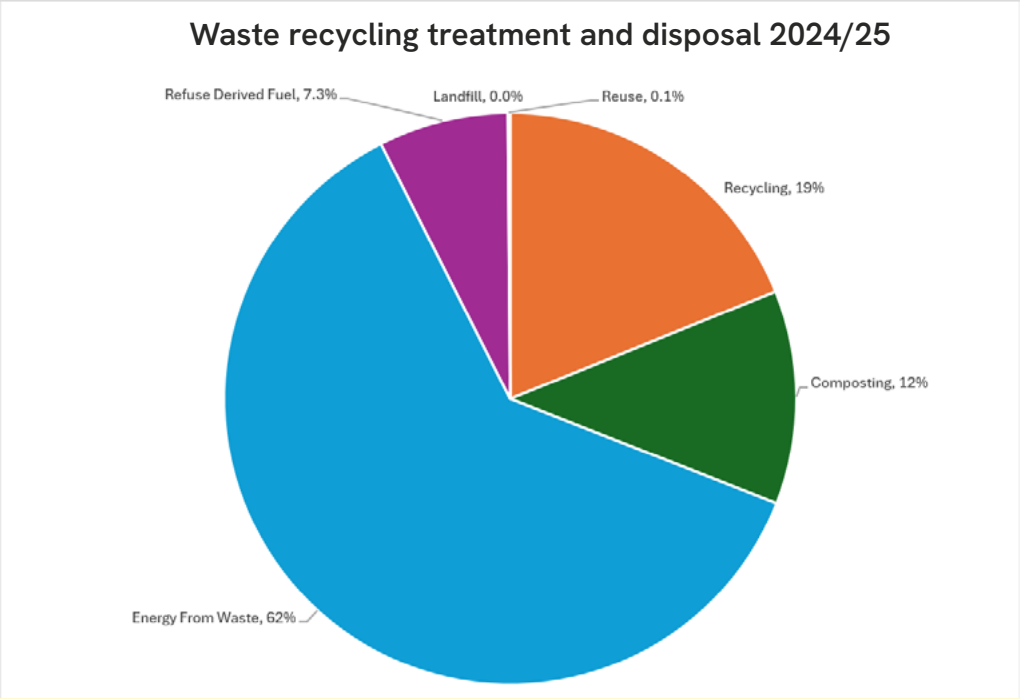


Figure 11: Waste recycling, treatment and disposal route 2023/24

Commercial/business waste

We also offer a recycling and waste collection service for businesses and certain non-household premises (e.g. schools, community organisations) within the area. Collection services are available for rubbish and recycling (paper, glass, plastics, metals), with a more extensive food waste service to be launched soon.

3.3.2 Disposal

Currently, our disposal services are contracted out to Veolia Environmental Services (UK) and SELCHP Ltd. The contracts with Veolia cover the management of a waste transfer station, the Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC) and a Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) facility[5]. These contracts are due to expire in 2028 and 2029, during the period of this strategy.

[5] A Refuse Derived Fuel plant, is a facility that sorts and (usually) dries rubbish, so that some recycling can be extracted and that the remainder can be used as a fuel in an industrial process (for example to provide the heat to make cement) or a waste management process (such as an incinerator/energy-from-waste plant).

Most of the waste generated in Royal Greenwich is sent to Energy-from-waste (at Lewisham) via a contract with SELCHP Ltd, due to expire in 2029, also within the period of this strategy. The Royal Borough of Greenwich has reduced its dependency on landfill significantly and now spends less than 1% of its waste to landfill, which is almost exclusively asbestos waste - with this being the safest means of disposal. As shown in Figure 6, the majority of our rubbish could be reduced, or sent for recycling or composting. If this happened our estimates suggests this could have saved the Royal Borough of Greenwich over £550K in 2023/24.

3.4 The performance of the current service

Lots of factors affect the amount of recycling from an area, including the way rubbish and recycling is collected, demographics and housing types.

In 2023/24 the recycling rate for Royal Greenwich was 33% (one item in three is recycled). Recycling performance reduced in 2020/21 due to the cost of living crisis and impact of COVID-19. It improved in 2023/24 probably due to the introduction of collecting rubbish every two weeks and a stricter contamination policy raising awareness of the importance of recycling and increasing performance (see section 3.5.1).

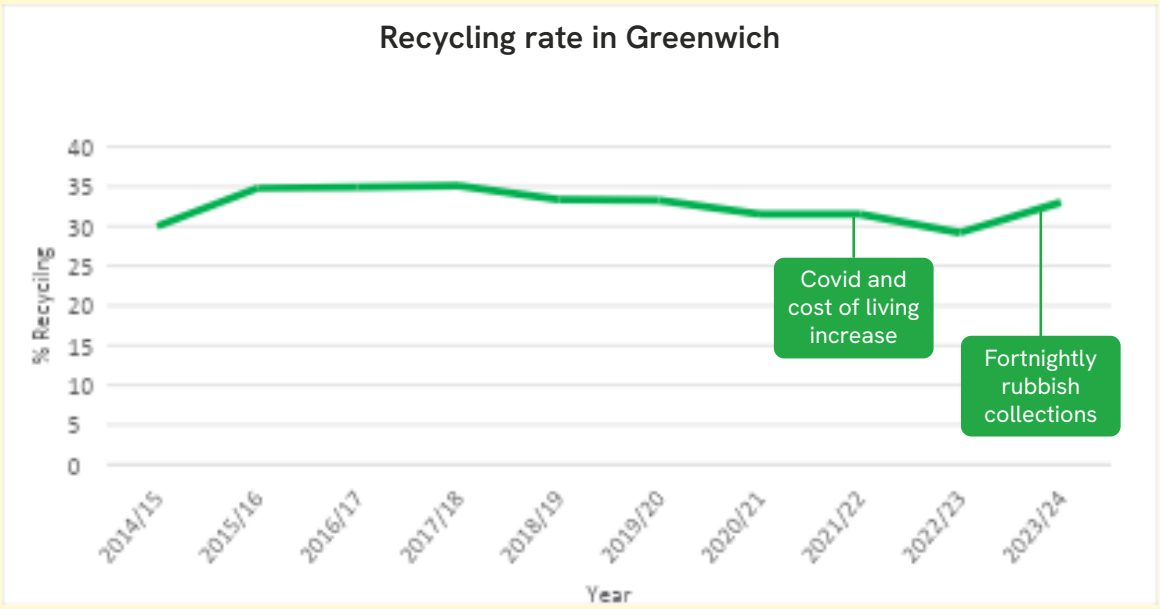


Figure 12: Recycling rates in Royal Greenwich over the last 10 years

3.4.1 Statistics on performance

Lots of rubbish and recycling services are offered by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The following figure provides our latest numbers.

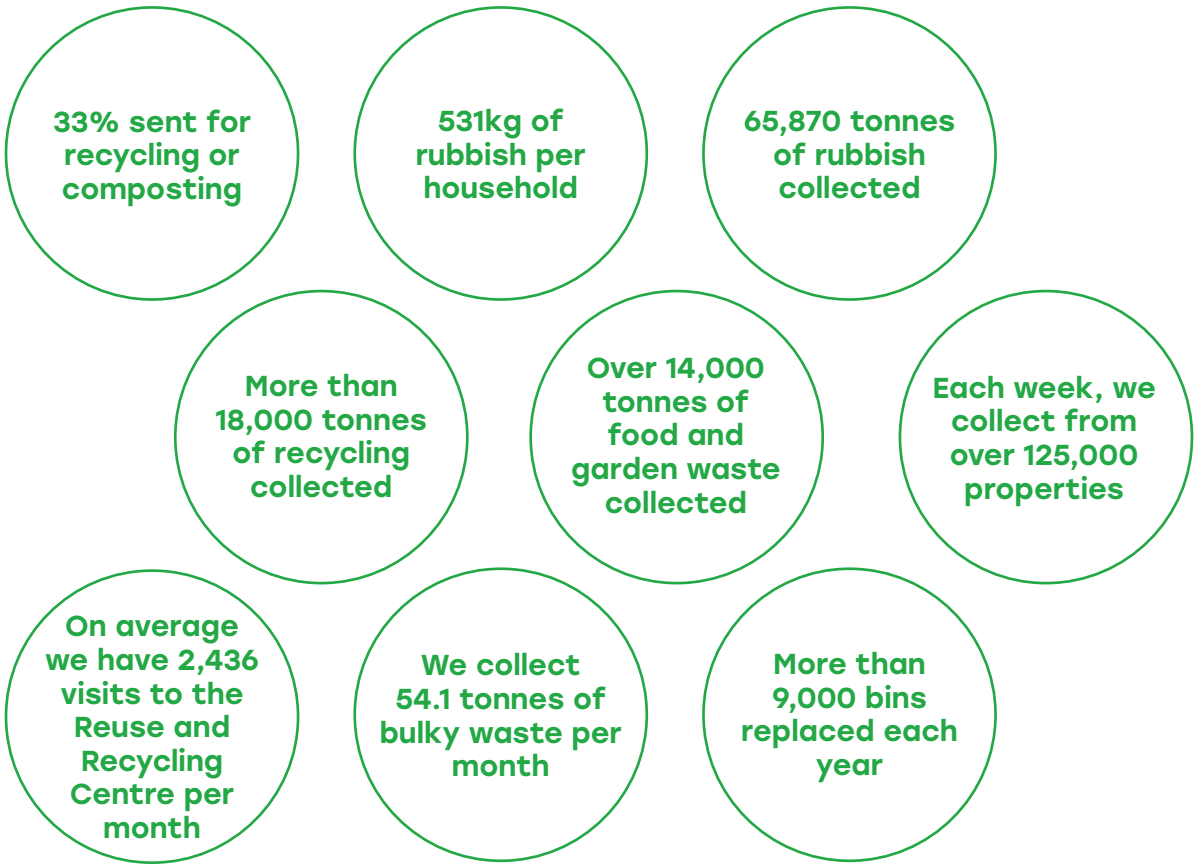


Figure 13: Facts and figures about the Royal Borough of Greenwich recycling and waste service

3.5 What have we achieved so far?

We want to keep improving our service to you. We have made good progress, to date, as shown in our February 2023 project called 'Towards Zero Waste'. This included:

- Introducing collecting rubbish every two weeks for kerbside properties (houses)
- No side waste policy (no extra rubbish by side of bins)
- Stricter contamination policy[6]
- Provision of clear recycling sacks to households

We were pleased with the results, including a decrease in rubbish of nearly **5%** between **2022/23 and 2023/24**. Our recycling rate also improved by **3.8%**.

Since **2016/17** we have also reduced the amount of waste we sent to landfill from **10.8%** to **0.02%** in **2025/26**. Maintaining this performance is important for Royal Greenwich to help tackle climate change.

[6] Using measures to promote the 'right stuff in the right bin', so that recycling does not get contaminated

3.5.1 Financial pressures

The funding of local waste services has been impacted by a combination of factors, including reductions in central government funding, increasing waste management costs, inflation and increased demand for waste management and our wider council services. Legislative changes may also have significant financial implications for all councils (see Appendix A and section 3.1).

Our strategy helps us manage our waste services to ensure that our residents receive a high-quality, effective service which provides value for money. More savings could be achieved if we work together to reduce our rubbish and recycle more. This could also help Royal Greenwich improve its recycling rate which is recorded as 33% for 2025/26. We will continue to review how we can make the services we provide to you as efficient as possible. This may mean some changes to our collections. We are consulting on this draft strategy and these potential changes (see Section 6 for more information).

4 What could the future look like?

This section looks ahead to the waste management service in 2030, explains what challenges we could face, and what our options are to move towards a zero waste future. This considers both the amount of waste and particular types of waste as there can be safety risks with disposal of certain materials e.g. vapes and other electrical items containing batteries.

4.1 Looking ahead to 2030

Population projections, housing and waste growth

The starting point of any strategy that manages recycling and rubbish is to think about how much there is, and what makes it up. This is considered in section 3. Here we look ahead to 2030, First, we look at how the population is projected to grow (Figure 14) and secondly what this might mean for waste generation (Figure 15).

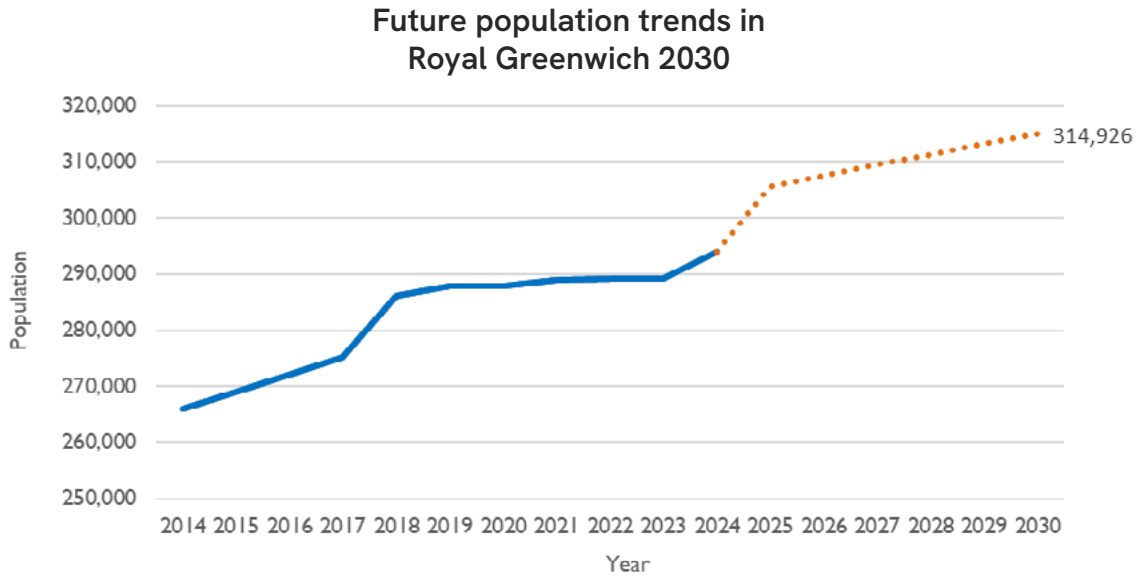


Figure 14: Population trends and projection in Royal Greenwich

The number of people living in Royal Greenwich is increasing. This is expected to continue to grow to a population of around 315,000 people by 2030, compared to around 300,000 at present. The amount of household rubbish and recycling is also therefore expected to increase (see Figure 15).

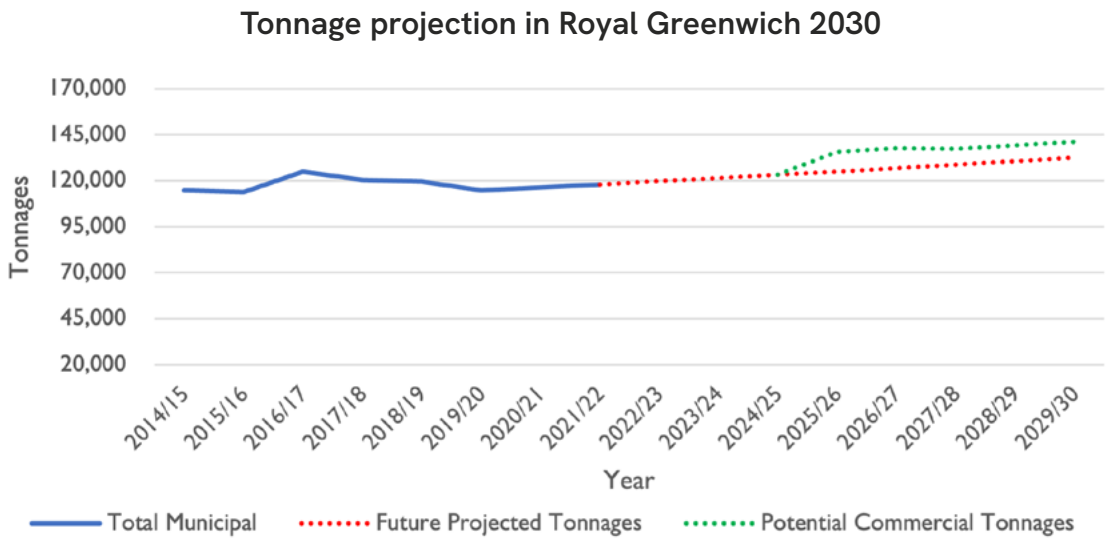


Figure 15: A projection of the quantity of waste collected in Royal Greenwich

As shown above, the amount of household waste (the red line) is anticipated to grow across the strategy period, and there is also the potential to increase the amount of commercial waste (e.g. waste collected from businesses - the green dotted line).

An estimated 1,700 new properties will be required across Royal Greenwich every year for the next 10 years to meet housing demand. The vast majority of these will be communal (flat or estate) properties. In general, the level of recycling is lower with communal properties when compared with kerbside properties (houses). As the proportion of flats across our borough increases, our recycling performance may be impacted.

Recycling and flats

In 2023/24 recycling (excluding food) from flats (communal properties) was 16%. This is more than the London average of 10%, but low compared with 41% from houses (RBG kerbside properties).

Our draft strategy aims to improve our recycling rate by making it easier for us all to do the right thing.

There are many reasons why recycling is challenging for flats and communal properties, including the lack of space in flats, the location of waste management facilities (communal bins), lack of adequate rubbish and recycling facilities, lack of motivation, inconvenience caused by transporting segregated recycling to bin stores, lack of ownership of bins. In addition, a highly transient population in London can leave households confused about recyclability as it can differ between boroughs.

As there are many factors to be considered, this can make it more challenging for us to recycle on an individual basis.

We are proud of our achievements to date but know we can do more. We want to encourage more separation of recycling by people living in flats and estates by ensuring that all our residents have access to good recycling facilities.

The change in recycling performance, to meet the London recycling target for 2030 is shown below. This is likely to require both improvements to our local recycling services and national changes through the new laws and policies explained in section 3 and Appendix A.

Looking ahead at the costs of waste management

There are lots of changes to laws and policy around rubbish and recycling expected over the next three years, and this will provide new challenges on the costs of managing our waste (see section 3 and Appendix A). The estimated cost of collecting and disposing of our rubbish, plus the extra costs associated with tax on waste incineration under the Emissions Trading Scheme[7] (ETS, from 2030, specific year of implementation to be announced) are shown in Figure 16.



Figure 16: The projected cost of waste management in Royal Greenwich to 2030

Effective ways of reducing these projected cost increases are by:

- Reducing the amount of rubbish from each household (also known as waste prevention or minimisation)
- Reusing and repairing items (to prevent them being thrown away)
- Recycling more (as it is cheaper to recycle materials than dispose of them).

[7] The Emissions Trading Scheme, in 2030 (if implemented for Incineration or Energy from Waste plant) could add significant extra costs for each tonne of rubbish burned through the waste treatment process. This is designed to encourage alternatives to burning of waste and further encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

4.2 Climate change and waste management

How we manage our waste (or rubbish) plays an important role in climate change and the carbon emissions we generate. More carbon emissions leads to a warmer atmosphere and a faster rate of climate change. Carbon (usually in the form of carbon dioxide or methane) is generated from the extraction, processing and transport of the raw materials which become the things we buy, use and ultimately dispose of as rubbish.

When we throw items away, the collecting and treating of our rubbish also generates carbon emissions (see Figure 17). We can lower our carbon emissions and contribute to climate action if we reduce our demand for new resources through reducing the amount of stuff we buy and increasing material reuse and recycling, which also reduces the amount of rubbish we need to manage. Figure 17 shows the relationship between the things we buy and the climate change impacts of what happens to them.

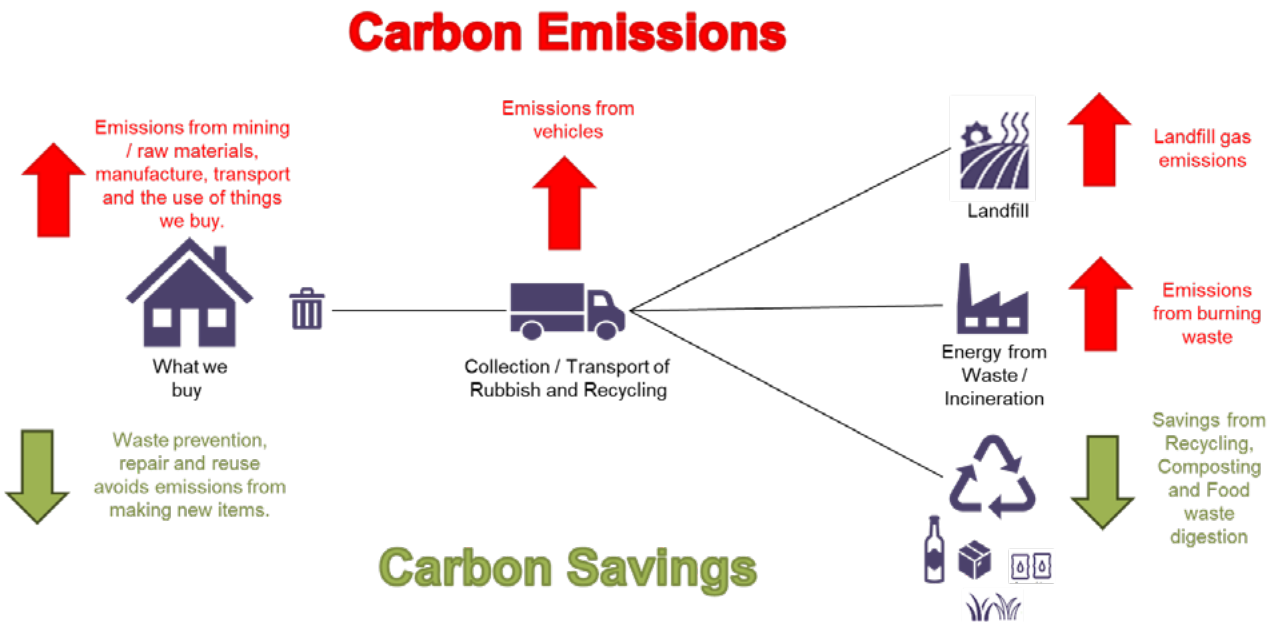


Figure 17: How the things we buy and how they are managed affects climate change

4.3 Maintaining good local services

There are pressures on our council around finances, meeting new recycling and disposal laws, increasing performance and lowering carbon emissions, as described above. When looking ahead, this will mean changes to how our recycling, collection and disposal services are run. It is important to residents and businesses to have a reliable set of services that are easy to access and meet their needs for managing rubbish and recycling. We will design our changes accordingly. This means that different situations might need different solutions (see section 4.4). For example, households without a car might need different services to those with a car, and residents who live in flats or flats above shops might need different services from those that live in houses.

A key part of this draft strategy is also about developing more services for residents and businesses to get items repaired, reused and recycled, which should save money for the council and those using the services, as well as lowering climate change emissions. All these activities need to be considered, taking in the views of both the users of the services (e.g. residents) and the providers of the services (e.g. the council, businesses or the voluntary sector). We want to ensure you receive the most efficient service that provides good value for money. This draft strategy is part of a public consultation, asking for your views on how services are delivered both now and in the future. Section 6 of this strategy sets out the consultation process and how to get involved.

4.4 What are the solutions?

The four key challenges facing our 'Towards Zero Waste Strategy' are:

- Lowering **waste**
- Lowering **carbon**
- Lowering **cost**
- Maintaining **good local services**

These are summarised in Figure 18, with the possible solutions which can help to deal with these challenges, listed in coloured boxes.

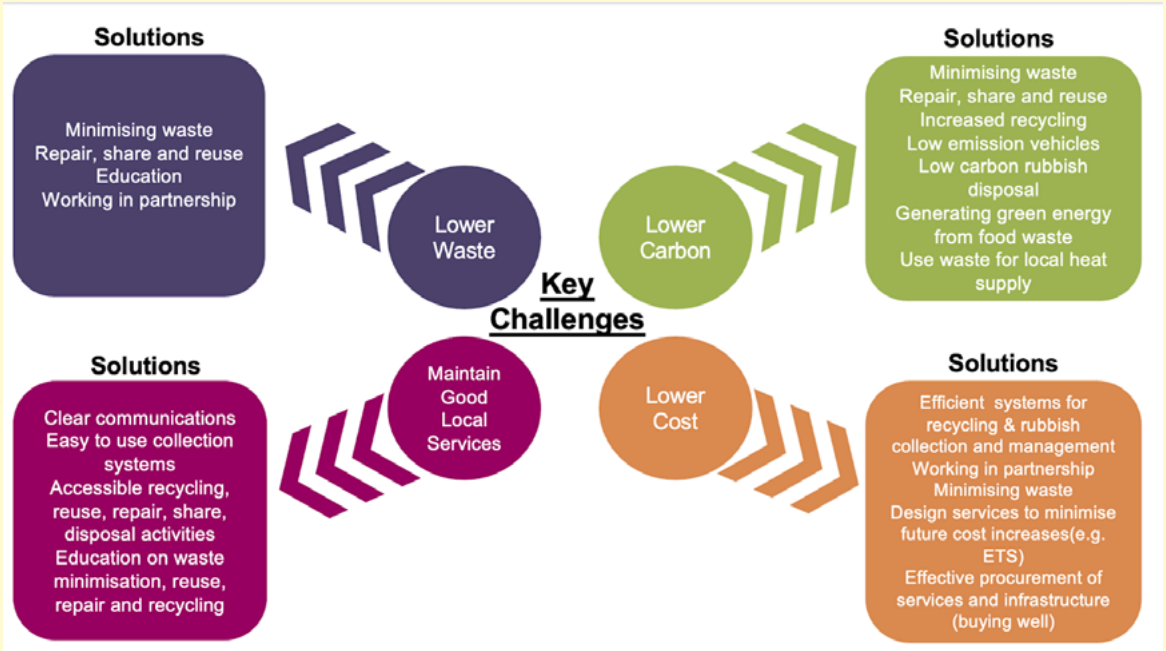


Figure 18: The four key strategy challenges and possible solutions

This draft strategy considers the solutions listed in Figure 18 for the four key challenges and sets out the suggested way forward for the Royal Borough of Greenwich below.

5 Making it happen

Delivering our vision towards a zero waste future

Through our strategy, we will work to ensure our residents receive a high-quality, efficient recycling and waste service that meets your needs both now and in the future as we continue to respond to local and national challenges, whilst aspiring to our vision of a zero waste society.

Achieving our vision will require significant changes to how resources are managed. Without changing our current services or behaviours, the increasing number of households in Royal Greenwich will increase our costs and the amount of rubbish that we generate across our borough. Our draft strategy is therefore important in contributing to reducing pressure on council budgets.

We will lead on the delivery of our waste strategy, however, it will require everyone to work together to achieve a future without waste. This includes community organisations, businesses, schools and our residents.

We will also support the government in the introduction of national changes to rubbish and recycling, and provide simple, accessible services – making it easier for everyone to do the right thing.

By achieving our strategy objectives, Royal Greenwich will be on the path towards zero waste.

We commit to clear actions that will help us achieve the vision of our strategy and support the London and national targets for recycling and reducing rubbish. These actions build upon the objectives of this strategy (see section 2.3) and are grouped into the four themes as follows:

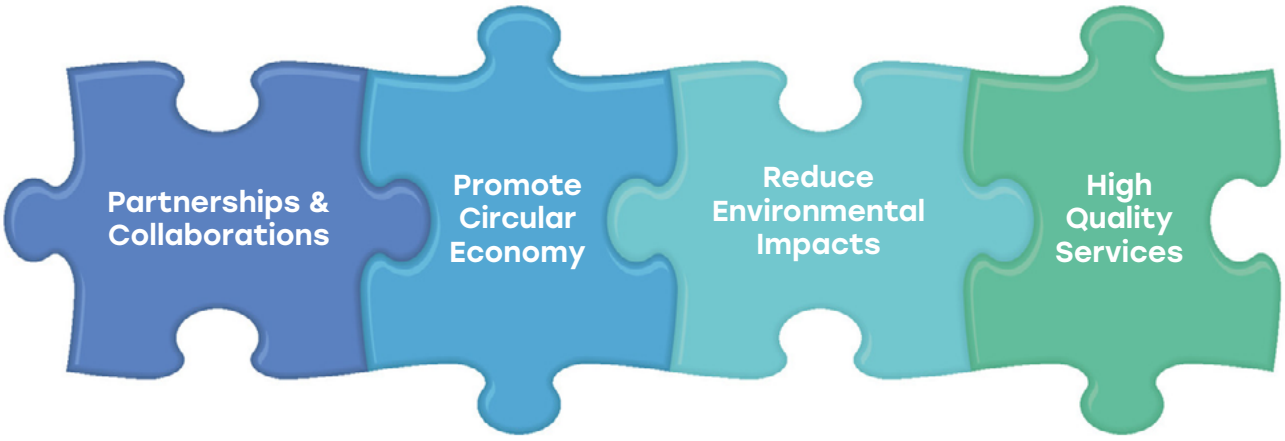


Figure 19: Our draft strategy action themes

Provide high-quality waste services for the residents and businesses of Royal Greenwich

Our top priority is to provide the highest quality waste services possible to the people of Royal Greenwich, whilst considering changing consumer behaviours, national laws and policies, financial pressures, and the need to tackle climate change.

We want everyone to participate in our services. We will continue to make improvements to get as many people as possible involved in waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling in our borough. This includes exploring how to expand our current collection services, reaching more homes such as flats and improving how people can access reuse and recycling centres. Ultimately, making it as easy as possible for our residents and businesses to do the right thing.



We will:

- **Ensure** households can receive a full range of **recycling services.**
- **Expand the food waste collection service** to all homes (e.g. flats) by 2027.
- **Consider expanding** textiles and waste electrical and electronic equipment (**WEEE**) recycling opportunities across the borough.
- **Explore opportunities to expand** the range of materials and services available at the **Nathan Way Reuse and Recycling Centre** (**RRC**).
- Consider **alternative arrangements** for accessing the **RRC**, including ease of access.
- **Improve bin infrastructure** and apply good practice methods to increase recycling from communal properties.
- **Review** the current business waste and recycling service to help contribute to the wider objectives of this strategy.

Deliver services that support and promote a circular economy in Royal Greenwich

We are committed to supporting the movement to a circular economy (see Figure 2) in Royal Greenwich. Waste management can help with the circular economy through increased reuse, repair and recycling. We can also help promote services like 'borrow not buy' schemes that reduce the amount of waste produced, leading to significant

environmental and cost savings. A circular economy could also lead to green growth, skills development and local jobs. We therefore want to support services and platforms that promote circular economy activity across the borough.

We will:

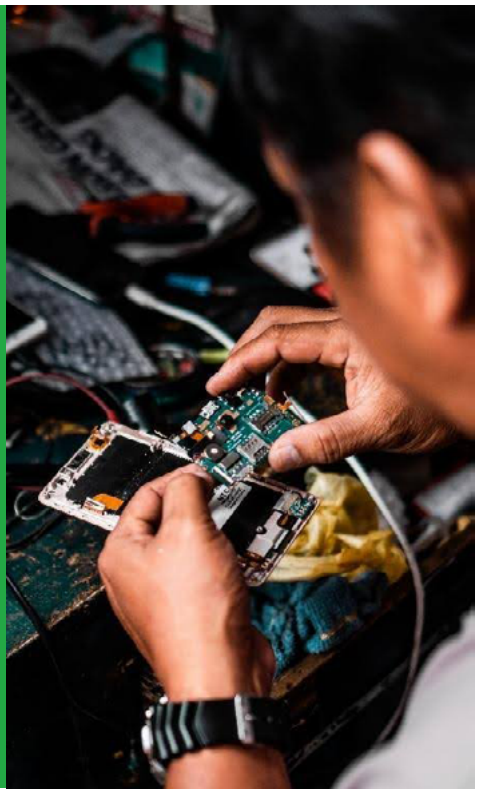
- Encourage a **reduction in consumption** and promote the benefits of **waste reduction and waste prevention**, in support of the target to reduce food waste per person by 50% by 2030.
- Aim to reduce household waste to **300kg/person per year by 2030**.
- Maintain and update our **annual service plan**.
- Signpost to and promote reuse and repair opportunities and networks across the borough.
- Support services and platforms to help the local community and businesses **share, exchange and repair locally**.
- Explore the **provision of a fund** to support reuse and repair activities.

RePurpose Initiative

Organised by the Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice (GBCH) in partnership with the council, the RePurpose shop opened in 2019, located at the reuse and recycling centre (RRC) in Nathan Way, Thamesmead.

The project diverted unwanted items brought by Royal Greenwich residents to the recycling centre which were rescued by the RePurpose team to give them a second life through reuse, upcycle and recycle. The income generated from the sale of items was channelled to the hospice.

Over 15 tonnes of waste was diverted from disposal during its time, saving £8,000 in disposal costs. The council are now exploring more reuse opportunities.



Minimise the environmental impacts of Royal Greenwich's waste management services

Reducing our carbon emissions is key to tackling climate change. Applying the principles of the waste hierarchy and supporting a circular economy:

- reduces the need to extract raw materials (e.g. aluminium ore from the ground)
- saves energy from new production (e.g. two people sharing an item avoids the need for making one each)
- maximises resource use (you can keep recycling a glass bottle many times)
- ensures minimal waste is sent to landfill.

This will all reduce the environmental impacts of our waste service.

When all other priorities of the waste hierarchy have been used (prevention, reuse, repair, recycle), then 'recovery' of waste, to create fuel, heat, power, is better than sending it to landfill. Where possible, when managing rubbish or food waste, we will seek to recover energy from it in the form of heat and/or electricity. We have made significant improvements in moving away from landfill and are proud to send less than 0.02% of our waste direct to landfill. Our left-over rubbish is burned and the heat generated used to make electricity, and to supply hot water for heating buildings around Lewisham (where the current Energy from Waste facility is).

We will play an active role in tackling the climate crisis by continually monitoring the climate emissions of the waste service, supporting the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. We will also explore other ways to reduce our emissions, including the vehicles used to collect our waste and recycling, how and where the material we collect is managed, seeking to do this within London where possible.

We will:

- Review our waste service fleet for conversion to **low/net zero emission vehicles** (e.g. electric) in line with London Environment Strategy and Royal Greenwich's target for 100% net zero emissions by 2030.
- Continually **reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal** through activities that support a circular economy (as outlined in the RRPs/zero biodegradable or recyclable waste sent to landfill by 2026).
- Continue to **keep waste sent direct to landfill to below 1%**.
- Where waste is treated (e.g. food waste digestion or incineration) seek to **recover electricity and/or heat**.
- Monitor and report **carbon emissions from our waste service** to support the achievement of net zero by 2030 (RBG climate plan).
- Aim to **ensure waste is managed within the London area** where possible and to reduce the transport for waste that cannot be treated within London (in line with London Environment Strategy).

- **Ensure reuse and recycling is considered** within all relevant waste and recycling **procurement activity** to support the principles of this waste strategy.
- **Protect strategic waste sites** in the borough identified through the planning process to ensure that there is sufficient land safeguarded for local resource and waste management services in the future.

Alternative fuels

Following a successful trial in the borough, we have moved our current fleet from using diesel to HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel. HVO fuel is a biofuel made from vegetable oils (often waste cooking oils). HVO can be used as a replacement for diesel, often without the need to modify or change our vehicles. This supports our transition to a zero waste future with an estimated 90% reduction in carbon emissions for each vehicle.



Collaborate and work in partnership with others to move towards zero waste in Royal Greenwich

We can achieve more when we work together, collaborating with others, sharing ideas and learning from each other. As part of delivering our strategy, we will work with others to identify new and innovative ways to communicate with and educate people, explore opportunities to reduce waste, recycle more and reduce the environmental impact of waste management. This will include working with the local community, businesses, schools to increase knowledge on recycling and rubbish. We also recognise the importance of developing partnerships with our neighbouring authorities and will seek to explore opportunities for sharing best practice and making efficiencies in the services we provide.

We will:

- Deliver and support **education and engagement** activities and campaigns for residents and businesses to increase knowledge and participation in recycling and zero waste initiatives (Olio, Good Food in Greenwich).
- Align with and **support national campaigns** that promote zero waste (Love Food, Hate Waste, National Recycling Week, etc).
- Apply proportionate enforcement activity to **combat fly-tipping** and other environmental crime.

- Work with the **local community to help reduce waste and recycle more** and support third sector (e.g. charity) organisations operating locally.
- Provide **support to schools** to embed zero waste principles (e.g. Junior Environmental Champions).
- Make better use of technology to enable targeted education and communications to residents/businesses/landlords/management organisations.
- Work with **neighbouring boroughs to share best practice and collaborate** (e.g. explore shared use of facilities and infrastructure).
- Continue to work with other **stakeholders** (e.g. ReLondon, Circular economy matchmakers, private sector).
- **Lead by example** in managing the waste and recycling from council buildings and in the delivery of services, following the principles of this strategy.

Woolwich Library of Things

Our Library of Things, is a social enterprise which, allows people to borrow household items, tools and equipment. Their mission is to promote borrowing across local communities and make sharing items more accessible. This reduces the need to buy new products which could otherwise be rented or shared. Residents can browse and reserve items online and collect from one of 19 locations across London, including Woolwich.

Items available for hire in include: garden equipment, cleaning equipment, household tools such as drills, sanders. Also available is camping equipment, party kits and PA systems.

5.1 Monitoring

Monitoring the key actions within our strategy will ensure that we keep on track and achieve our vision of working towards zero waste in Royal Greenwich.

We have highlighted several key actions with measurable indicators for monitoring the success of our strategy.

Action	Dataset/Unit	Target	Monitoring Frequency
Aim to reduce per person household waste by 2030. (Baseline of 345kg/person/yr 2022/23)	Local authority data returns Kg/person/year	300kg household waste/person/year by 2030	Annual
Reduce the amount of 'edible' food waste within residual waste stream	Waste composition analysis Kg/household/year	Annual reductions in annual food waste per household (73.7kg/hh/year baseline 2023)	Undertake waste composition analysis [in 2030]
Report the number of reuse, repair and share initiatives supported within one calendar year.	Number of initiatives supported £/saved per item reused or repaired	Five initiatives supported per year	Annual
Report number of education and engagement activities and campaigns supported	Number of initiatives supported	Five activities and campaigns per year	Annual
Keep the amount of residual waste sent direct to landfill under 1%	Local authority data returns Residual waste sent to landfill (% by weight)	<1% each year	Annual
Monitor and report carbon emissions from our waste service	CO2-eq emissions		Bi-Annual
Monitor and report number of fly tipping instances	Number of instances reported	An ongoing decline, on a three-year rolling average	Annual

6 Your voice and influence

This document presents a draft strategy for consultation. We are asking for views and feedback from our residents and communities, including businesses that use, or are affected by the proposed strategy.

The feedback obtained from our planned four-week public consultation campaign will be used to develop our final waste strategy. The consultation, which will be promoted both online and in public buildings such as libraries, will include a questionnaire hosted on Community Conversations, and printed copies of the questionnaire will also be available as well as translation services. There will also be three in person events in Eltham, Greenwich and Woolwich together. Details will be available on our website.

Appendix A National, Regional and Local Policy and Legislation

National Legislation and Policy

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act (UK's framework of environmental protection) aims to address key environmental issues for four priority areas including:

- Resource efficiency and waste reduction
- Air quality
- Water
- Biodiversity

It sets out long-term environmental targets in these four priority areas and will be enforced and held accountable by the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). Relating to waste and recycling, the Act includes: the implementation of a revised extended producer responsibility scheme for producers of packaging; a deposit return scheme (DRS) for single use drinks containers under two litre capacity; charges for single use plastic and drives for greater consistency in recycling collections in England.

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 25 Year Environment Plan 2018

'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' sets out the government's long-term management strategy to improve our environment. The policy for waste focuses on 'increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste' and sets out the following targets.

- An ambition of 'zero avoidable waste' by 2050.
- Working towards a target of elimination of avoidable plastic waste by 2042.
- Meet the existing targets (on recycling, reuse and landfill) and to develop further ambitious targets.
- Eliminate waste crime and illegal waste sites over the 25-year lifetime of the plan.
- Deliver a substantial reduction in litter.

Resources and Waste Strategy (RandWS) 2018

The RandWS is the national waste strategy and includes major reforms to the municipal waste collection and management services, and areas of focus include waste minimisation, improved recycling performance, resource efficiency and the transition to a circular economy. The key targets include:

- the proportion of municipal waste sent to landfill to be 10% or less by 2035
- an increase in the recycling rate of municipal solid waste by 2035.
- eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050.

The strategy also includes three parts which now sit under the 'Collection and Packaging Reforms' as follows.

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR):

The packaging EPR scheme is aimed at obtaining the full cost recovery of packaging that producers place on the market. Under the scheme, producers are obliged to pay local authorities a fee for the amount of waste packaging each authority manages. Payments will begin to be made to local authorities from December 2025.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS):

The Deposit Return Scheme aims to incentivise consumers into recycling and reducing littering, through introduction of a deposit (20p) on single use metal cans and plastic bottles. Deposits can be reclaimed by returning the drinks containers to takeback locations or reverse vending machines. DRS for England is due to be introduced in October 2027.

Simpler Recycling:

- Simpler Recycling aims to enable people across England to recycle the same materials regardless of their location. In December 2024, the government published their updated position, with a preferred (default) type of household waste recycling collections.
- For dry recycling[8] collections, the default collection system is a 'twin-stream' system, whereby paper and card are collected separately from the remainder of recycling (plastic, glass, metals, cartons).
- Food waste must be collected weekly from March 2026.
- Non-household organisations that produce similar waste (e.g. businesses, offices, schools etc) will be required to recycle the same range of materials, including food waste, by March 2025.
- Plastic film is to be included with dry recycling collections from March 2030.

[8] 'dry' recycling refers to paper, card, cans, plastics, glass (it excludes other forms of recycling like food waste digestion and composting of garden waste)

Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)

The UK ETS is a system which sets a limit on emissions from particular carbon intensive operations. In July 2023, the government set out the intention to extend carbon pricing to include Energy from Waste (EfW) technologies, no later than 2030. The majority of rubbish in the UK is processed through Energy from Waste facilities, and Royal Greenwich is no exception.

ETS requires local authorities and operators of EfWs to pay towards the cost of carbon emitted through their waste disposal operations. Although focussed on residual waste treatment, it offers an opportunity to improve recycling services through diverting more items from rubbish towards recycling, or to reduce and reuse items to avoid waste generation in the first place. All of these measures will reduce future costs to the Royal Borough of Greenwich. It is estimated to cost RBG between £3.5m to £10.5m per annum when the ETS scheme has launched, if preventative measures are not taken in a timely manner.

Regional Policy

The London Plan 2021 to 2041

The London Plan sets out the integrated economic, environmental, social and transport framework for the next 20 to 25 years across London. Reducing waste and supporting the transition to a circular economy is a key element of the plan, setting out targets which include zero biodegradable or recyclable waste to landfill by 2026.

The London Environment Strategy (LES)

The LES[9] sets out the Mayor of London's vision and direction for London through objectives, policies and proposals to improve London's environment between 2018 to 2030. Waste is an integral part of the strategy.

The strategy is based on the foundations of developing a 'circular economy' from design through to the end-of-life and proposes for London to become self-sufficient in dealing with waste generated within the city.

[9] London Environment Strategy

Local Policy

The Corporate Plan

The council's corporate plan (2026 to 2030), sets out what we are trying to achieve over the next 4 years to deliver our 19 priority outcomes and our first step towards our vision for 2050.

This draft strategy aligns with a number of the plan's priorities, including 'Theme 6: The Place for the Future, which seeks to create sustainable neighbourhoods and address long-term environmental challenges'. In particular, the strategy supports Outcome 6.3: "Continue to address the climate crisis, minimise waste and build a more sustainable environment for the future.

Carbon Neutral Plan

In response to the national climate emergency, the Royal Borough of Greenwich declared a climate emergency in June 2019. This led to the adoption of our Carbon Neutral Plan (CNP). The plan commits to targets across all the functions of RBG, including waste management, with the overarching aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Within the plan is a 70% municipal waste recycling target and a 35% reduction in municipal waste. The plan also stipulates 100% zero emissions from the council's transport fleet, all to be achieved by 2030.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Local Plan

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Local Plan is the council's primary planning document. The Plan supports growth and regeneration while protecting and enhancing the borough's heritage, environmental assets and communities.

The Local plan seeks to reduce waste and, where waste cannot be prevented, to manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy. It supports the development of sufficient local waste management capacity and contributes to the delivery of strategic waste objectives across London through joint working with neighbouring authorities and the safeguarding of existing waste management facilities.

In particular, the Local Plan:

- Supports the reduction of waste generation and the application of the waste hierarchy.
- Requires developers to demonstrate measures to minimise waste, incorporate recycled materials where appropriate, and provide adequate storage for recyclable materials.
- Supports the sustainable management of waste through collaboration with other London boroughs to meet strategic waste apportionment requirements.
- Safeguards existing waste management sites unless suitable alternative provision is available.

This strategy supports the objectives of the Local Plan by reducing waste generation, increasing reuse and recycling, improving resource efficiency, and ensuring sufficient and sustainable waste management arrangements are in place to meet the needs of a growing borough. The strategy also supports the council's wider ambitions to address the climate crisis, minimise waste and create a more sustainable environment for the future, as set out in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Corporate Plan 2026-2030, particularly **Outcome 6.3: "Continue to address the climate crisis, minimise waste and build a more sustainable environment for the future."**

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE



ROYAL borough of GREENWICH