

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL WASTE MINIMISATION STRATEGY 2015 - 2020.

“The Council is committed to reduce the growth of waste by promoting waste minimisation through re-use, recycling and composting and to minimise disposal.”

1. Introduction

It has never been more important to encourage residents and businesses to minimise the household and commercial waste that they produce. The Council has a duty to provide a framework within which we encourage a reduction in the amount of waste produced, improve re-use and recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste which is taken to landfill. This Waste Minimisation Strategy is being introduced now in response to significant pressures on budgets and resources created by the following factors:

- An increasing population with longer life expectancy.
- An increase in the number of households.
- An increase in the amount of household waste being produced as the economy recovers from the 2008 recession.
- Increasing landfill tax rates.
- A decrease in the rate of return on recycled materials.

This strategy sets out how we are going to pro-actively work with residents, stakeholders and partners to improve the way we manage our waste with a growing population and limited resources. It describes our current practice and performance, sets performance targets, identifies the challenges we face and defines our vision until 2020 and beyond. The Strategy is intended to be a working document which will be continually subject to review.

The Council is committed to Neighbourhood working and this is how the strategy will be delivered. It gives us the opportunity to improve both waste minimisation and service delivery at a local level and to encourage Neighbourhoods and communities to manage their waste more sustainably.

re3 Ltd is the waste management partnership between FCC Environment (UK), Reading, Bracknell-Forest and Wokingham Borough Councils which was

formed in 2008. This strategy has been developed under the umbrella of the re3 joint waste partnership and reflects the re3 Joint Waste Strategy with the aim of slowing, as effectively as possible, the projected growth in waste in the Borough. It aligns with the separate strategies being developed by Bracknell and Wokingham.

Waste management is a topical issue which attracts often negative media attention. It is up to the Council to raise awareness of the importance of separating waste and to consider all options for moving waste management up the waste hierarchy.

2. Context

2.1 The Corporate Plan 2014-2017 - Working Better with You,

Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan “An attractive, safe and well- kept town” commits the Council to improving the quality, cleanliness and safety of the street environment and ensuring waste and recycling are managed effectively through the following 2 aims:

- “Increase the amount we recycle and reduce the amount we send to landfill through education on recycling, re-use and waste prevention including the implementation of weekly collections in flats, improve recycling and introduce a recycling incentive scheme using funding from the DCLG (Department of Communities & Local Government) Weekly Collection Support Scheme”.
- “Implement the ‘Love Clean Reading’ project to improve the appearance and cleanliness of the public realm”.

These two commitments are central to the Waste Minimisation Strategy and form the basis of the Action Plan.

2.2 The re3 Partnership

The re3 partnership was formed under the 25 year Private Finance Initiative (PFI), to manage and develop solutions for the management of waste in Central Berkshire and to encourage people to reduce, re-use, recycle and compost more of their waste. re3 Ltd was formed as a special purpose company by WRG to manage the PFI Contract.

The partnership developed, built and operates the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) transfer station and Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Smallmead in Reading, and operating the HWRC at Longshot Lane in Bracknell.

The three re3 councils’ area covers 33,000 hectares and has a population of 423,280 (2011 Census) a figure which has risen by 12,700 over the life of the partnership to date, in 180,000 households.

Re3 produced a Joint Waste Strategy for the partnership members to cover the first 5 years (2008 - 2013) which set out the aims and objectives for waste management during this period. This is currently being updated and will remain the overarching strategy for the partnership. The advent of Neighbourhood Working requires a specific strategy for Reading, which builds on the good work done by re3, but reflects the unique challenges the Borough faces. The objectives and aims of the 2 strategies, to minimise the amount of waste produced by improving awareness and education, will complement each other focusing on controlling the rate of wastes produced and subsequent disposal.

2.3 Legislation

Legislation is the tool by which the EU or UK Government addresses the regulation of waste activity. The significant pieces of UK or EU legislation are as follows:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Controlled Waste Regulations 1992
- EU Landfill Directive 1999
- Revised EU Waste Framework Directive 2008
- WEEE Directive 2002 (and Recast 2014)
- Waste Regulations 2011
- Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003
- Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) Regulations 2014

More details are given in Appendix 4.

The revised EU Waste Framework Directive (revised WFD) entered into force 12 December 2008. The legislation to transpose the revised WFD into national law has been made by Parliament and the devolved administrations. The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 came into force from 29 March 2011.

2.4 The Waste Hierarchy.

Article 4 of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment and it gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. This is known as the Waste Hierarchy. (As shown in Figure 1).

When waste is created it gives top priority to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery and last of all disposal. The waste hierarchy is applied to all Reading's current waste management processes and it will continue to inform waste minimisation in the future.

The waste hierarchy has been transposed into UK law through the The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. The regulations came into force on

29 March 2011. The provisions relating to the hierarchy (set out at in Regulations 12, 15 and 35) came into force on 28 September 2011.

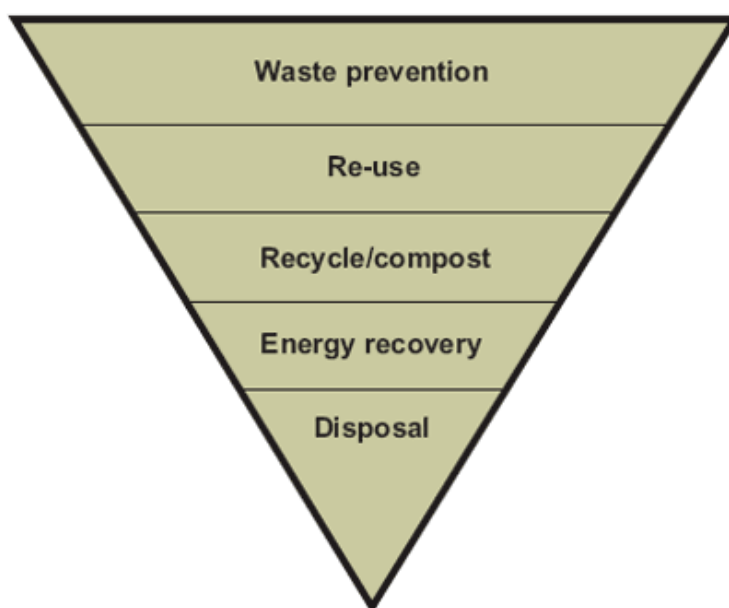


Figure 1. The Waste Hierarchy.

2.5 TEEP (Test of Environmental, Economic and Practicality of Separate Waste Collection)

TEEP emerges from the EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) Article 11 and Regulation 13 of the Waste England and Wales Regulations 2011) as amended whereby all Waste Collection Authorities (WCA's) will be required to collect paper, glass, plastics and metals separately and must apply the Necessity and "TEEP" tests by January 2015 to determine if this is needed in their circumstances.

Whilst it is accurate to say that the application of the Regulations is somewhat open to interpretation, Reading will carry out this work using the Route Map methodology produced by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which is based on the waste hierarchy, to assess the current collections and RBC's compliance.

3. Challenges. Why we need to change.

Change is a constant factor, particularly in Local Government and any strategy must be flexible enough to respond to dynamism in both the organisation and the environment. It is intended that the Waste Minimisation Strategy will be able to respond to change through annual review rather than being rigidly prescriptive.

3.1 Population and Housing growth.

Readings' population has grown by 11,300 or 8.8% from the year 2001 and was 155,698 at the 2011 census. If that rate of increase is sustained the population is forecast to rise to 169,400 by 2020.

The number of households stands at 69,700 but is predicted to rise to 73,200 by the year 2019/2020. Whilst creating a vibrant town with a strong economy this growth puts increasing pressure on the delivery of Council services and waste management in particular.

More demographic information is given in Appendix 5.

3.2 Legislation

Legislation defines the environment in which Local Authorities work and this strategy will react to any legislative changes which emerge, either following consultation or with little warning.

It is vitally important that RBC maintains its knowledge of and expertise in dealing with legislative changes, and this must be recognised in the allocation of management resource going forward.

3.3 Recyclate Contamination.

The effectiveness of the MRF (Materials Recycling Facility) at Smallmead is adversely affected by contamination of the recyclate that is collected. This must be reduced and will principally be addressed in 2 ways:

- By better information and education of residents and businesses about what can be recycled via a clear Waste Minimisation Communication Plan and an increase in door-stepping and face to face conversations.
- By better educating the waste crews to monitor recyclate contamination.

3.4 Food waste

Food waste still forms a significant percentage of the waste in residual bins and there is still a large amount of waste eg. garden waste and paper, found in residual bins which could be recycled or composted.

Increasing residents education and awareness of the need to and ways of recycling and composting food and garden waste is a key objective of the Waste Minimisation Strategy.

A review of how we can improve food waste recycling will be carried out in the first year of the Waste Minimisation Strategy.

3.5 Flytipping

Flytipping of waste continues to be a problem in Reading and clearing it diverts frontline staff from their normal duties. The Council currently works with the other agencies to identify the sources of flytipping and carries out investigations in most cases before the flytipped waste is removed. The way we treat flytipping will be reviewed as part of the Waste Minimisation Strategy with a view to improving the efficiency of collection but also of its disposal and recycling.

3.6 Landfill

We cannot keep landfilling the products we consume, and landfill as a method of waste disposal is under pressure as suitable sites are scarce and costs are rising as a result. Current legislation is aimed at reducing landfill for environmental reasons and the EU Landfill Directive seeks to reduce the environmental impact of landfilling by diverting BMW (Biodegradable Municipal Waste) from landfill. The most important aspect of the directive is to reduce the amount of BMW, which makes up a significant proportion of household waste and includes green waste from garden and kitchen wastes.

It is essential for Councils to focus their efforts on the reduction of BMW in the waste stream to reduce the reliance on and the costs incurred for landfill. The promotion of the reduce, re-use, recycle and compost message and the development of the recycling service is a key part of this.

3.7 Climate change.

Climate Change and the reduction of the carbon footprint is central to the Council's policies and direction, and this includes the management of waste. It is essential to reduce the amount of putrescible waste that goes to landfill as it is a significant producer of methane, one of the main damaging greenhouse gases, which is contributing to the effects of climate change.

Emissions from biodegradable waste in landfill contributes up to 40% of the UK methane emissions, whilst recycling of waste materials is estimated to save up to 18 million tonnes of another greenhouse gas, CO₂ through avoided primary material production.

It is also important to continually reassess collection activities to reduce the number of journeys undertaken as vehicle emissions are another key contributor to climate change and the cost of fuel is a major contributor to the cost of waste collection. The planned investment in the new fleet of fuel efficient refuse trucks will help to reduce the environmental impact of waste collection and demonstrate best practice.

The Council will continue to promote the ways in which residents can reduce their contribution to climate change and how they deal with their waste is one of them.

The Waste Minimisation Strategy will compliment and coordinate waste minimisation activities with the Reading Climate Change Strategy 2013 - 2020 and the activities of the Climate Change Partnership.

3.8 RBC waste minimisation- Example through sustainable behaviour.

The Council has a good record in ensuring that it recycles as much of the waste it produces as possible. This strategy will commit the Council to review all its current activities in conjunction with the Climate Change Strategy on a regular basis and to recommend changes to practice if they are necessary.

4. Elements of the strategy.

The Strategy is made up of the following documents:

- Waste Minimisation Strategy. The overarching document which sets out what we currently do, our key aims, our targets, the challenges the Council will have to deal with and how we will reassess and monitor progress and any changes.
- The Waste Minimisation Communication Plan sets out how we are going to communicate the key aims and actions of the strategy to residents, within Neighbourhoods and communities, partners and stakeholders and includes an Action Plan by which progress can be measured.
- Waste Minimisation Action Plan - Sets out clearly what we are going to do during the life of the strategy and allows us to monitor performance against our targets.
- Appendices 1-5. Glossary, Performance Summary, Location Of Recycling Sites, Current Legislation and Demographic Information.

5. Objectives

Reading Borough Council will strive to provide an efficient, sustainable and cost-effective operation for the collection and management of all municipal waste arising within the Borough through its continued commitment to the principles of sustainable development, best value and the waste hierarchy.

The Council will continue its partnering arrangements with neighbouring authorities through the re3 waste partnership, the community sector, the waste management industry and other partner agencies that will deliver sustainable waste management solutions.

The Council will deliver the measures defined in the strategy through Neighbourhood working, Love Clean Reading and the coordination of services to maximise efficiency and the resources available.

Objective 1. To increase recycling and re-use rates.

Objective 2. To minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Objective 3. To increase understanding and engagement in waste & recycling for the local community and key stakeholders.

Objective 4. To ensure effective, efficient value for money service delivery.

The delivery of the Waste Minimisation Strategy will be measured by way of the Action Plan which will remain a live document which will be used by all involved to monitor progress in a realistic way and react to a changing environment on an annual basis. The re3 Action Plan will sit alongside the Waste Minimisation Strategy Action Plan and the two documents will complement each other.

6. The Current Situation

This section describes how the Council currently manages its waste and its current minimisation initiatives.

6.1 Collection method

6.1.1 General Waste

Reading currently operates an alternate weekly collection system and collects residual waste from each household every 2 weeks while recyclables are collected on the alternative week. Currently it is Council policy to allow one grey general waste bin and one red recycling bin or box per household unless the resident can prove that they require additional bins.

6.1.2 Kerbside Recycling

The recycling bin or box can be used for mixed paper and card, food tins and drink cans, plastic bottles, newspapers and magazines and aerosol canisters. Domestic batteries can be presented in a sealed plastic bag placed on top of the recycling bin on collection day.

Residents can opt into the Green waste collection service by buying a green wheelie bin or bag which is collected on a given date.

The Council provides Recycling facilities (Bring sites) at 33 locations around the Borough which can accept metal, glass bottles and jars, tetra-pak, foil, batteries, shoes' books, textiles.

The location of Recycling Bring sites is shown in Appendix 3.

The Household Waste Recycling Centre at Smallmead accepts general waste which will not go in the grey general waste bin.

6.1.3 Bulky Waste collections.

The Council currently offers a bulky waste collection service to homes and businesses for items that are too large to fit into wheeled bins. This service will be reviewed as part of the Waste Minimisation Strategy.

6.1.4 Trade Waste Service

The Council currently offers a trade waste collection service to businesses in Reading. This service will also be reviewed as part of the Waste Minimisation Strategy.

6.2 Current Performance - Tonnages and Composition

The predicted, combined total municipal waste tonnage for Reading in the year 2013/14 was 59,134 tonnes from kerbside collections. It is important that we know the composition of the waste still destined for landfill as it allows us to plan further services and assess where the greatest gains are made. Figures from the MRF will be used to monitor composition going forward and they will be used to re-assess the waste minimisation strategy on an annual basis.

Packaging is another key element of the waste stream in Reading, and whilst there are producer responsibility arrangements in place with retailers and producers to reduce the amount of packaging they use, packaging will continue to be a main focus of the waste minimisation strategy.

6.3 Current performance and Targets

There are both statutory and non-statutory targets in place aimed at increasing the levels of recycling, composting and recovery of waste. The re3 Waste Strategy 2007 updated targets that were originally set by Government in 2000.

The average recovery rate for municipal waste across the RE3 partnership in 2012/2013 was 79.2%.

Table 1 shows the amount of waste disposed of by landfill, EfW, recycling and composting in Reading over the past 5 years as a percentage.

Reading	2009/10 (%)	2010/11 (%)	2011/12 (%)	2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)
Landfilled	54	28	25	21	29
EfW	13	38	38	38	36
Recycled	24	23	25	28	24
Composted	9	11	12	13	11

Table 1.

The figures generally reflect national trends but the reduction in the volume of waste sent to landfill as more waste is sent for EfW is most noticeable. The recession which began in 2008 has slowed economic activity and the volumes of waste have generally reduced in subsequent years. However, as shown by the volume for 2013/14, waste volumes are now starting to increase again as the economy recovers and as people begin to replace and renew, and as a result dispose of more items.

The volume of waste that has been recycled and composted has remained fairly constant and demonstrates the need for an effective Waste Minimisation Strategy to increase volumes in order to meet our targets.

The corporate plan commits the Council to achieve a recycling rate of 42% by 2017.

The EU Waste Framework Directive states that the UK must recycle 50% of household waste 2020.

Further information is shown in Appendix 2.

6.4 Disposal

6.4.1 MRF operation

The Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Smallmead sorts and bales mixed dry recyclables (MDR) collected from the kerbside and can handle up to 58,000 tonnes per year.

6.4.2 Landfill.

Non-recyclable Municipal Waste is sent to a licensed landfill site in Sutton Courtenay in Oxfordshire.

6.4.3 Energy from Waste (EfW)

The re3 partnership sends 70,000 tonnes of its Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to the Lakeside Energy from Waste facility in Colnbrook for energy recovery,

representing an important income stream and a means of offsetting costs. The power it produces is fed back into the National Grid.

6.4.4 Green Waste Composting.

Compostable green waste is taken to Sutton Courtenay where it is composted to produce useable growth media.

6.5 Education, campaigns and communications

The Council currently promotes waste minimisation by way of the following campaigns and promotions:

Working with Schools,
Advertising in the Green Pages,
Producing and distributing welcome packs to new Council Taxpayers,
Working with Managing Agents,
Carrying out promotional Roadshows,
The Flats project,
Promoting the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign,
Providing web based information for businesses and residents,
Enforcement activities through Neighbourhood Officers (NO's)'s and Waste Minimisation and Recycling Officers (WMRO's),
Providing and promoting community battery recycling points.

The Waste Minimisation Strategy Action Plan commits the Council to carry out reviews of all the current Waste Minimisation activities and its collection services with a view to assessing their suitability, success and whether they are sustainable with the resources currently available and in relation to Neighbourhood Services.

6.6 Reading has invested in modern, efficient fleet of refuse freighters which will be delivered in Spring 2015 demonstrating the Council's commitment to providing a high quality, reliable and efficient collection service.

7. Communications and Neighbourhood Engagement

The Waste Minimisation Strategy will further promote the 'Love Clean Reading' message in line with the aspirations of the Corporate Plan, Members and re3.

A clear communications strategy is essential to prevent people from becoming disengaged from the reduce, re-use, recycle and compost campaign message or waste management in general due to our consumer lifestyle and negative recycling myths.

The volume of waste produced seems to be linked to economic prosperity, and whilst budgetary pressures are increasing on public finances the general

economy is now emerging from recession and the upturn could mean that municipal waste increases.

8. Monitoring the Strategy.

The progress of the Waste Minimisation Strategy will be measured by way of the Action Plan on a continual informal basis as part of everyday operations, and annually on a more formal basis. Progress, successes, issues and pressures will be monitored by the Head of Transportation and Streetcare, Neighbourhoods and Streetcare Officers and Senior Management and will be reported to the relevant Lead Member, Programme Board and Council Committee.