
REDUCE
REPAIR
REUSE
RECYCLE
Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2026–2031
Working together, nothing is wasted

The Kent Resource Partnership is made up of the 13 local authorities in Kent. These are the district, borough and city councils of Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling, and Tunbridge Wells plus Kent County Council.

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Introduction

As Chair of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board, I am proud to introduce the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for 2026–2031. This strategy comes at a pivotal moment for Kent. It sets out how we will respond to the most significant changes in waste policy for a generation, alongside preparations for local government reorganisation, while continuing to deliver services that protect our environment and provide best value for Kent residents.

Over the next five years, these changes will reshape how we collect, treat and fund waste services. They also create opportunities to do things differently: to reduce waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions and make better use of resources, moving beyond recycling. This will require a bold, innovative and collaborative approach.

Kent has already taken important steps towards a circular economy. Through the Kent Resource Partnership, we have launched reuse shops at household waste recycling centres, supported community repair cafés and piloted community initiatives that keep valuable items in use and out of the waste stream. These successes show what can be achieved when councils, businesses and residents work together.

This strategy builds on that progress, with a stronger focus on helping residents understand the value and impact of their actions, by supporting community-led initiatives and extending existing partnerships with business and the social sector. By doing so, we will not only reduce waste but also create local jobs, support skills development and help residents save money.

Success will depend on all of us working together and embracing these changes, to create a cleaner, greener Kent for future generations.

Councillor Clive English
Chairman of the Kent and Medway Environment Members Board

Background

The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is a collaborative framework developed by the Kent Resource Partnership, which includes Kent County Council (KCC) and the 12 district councils. Its purpose is to guide how household waste is managed across Kent, with a focus on sustainability, efficiency and compliance with national legislation.

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 requires councils in two-tier areas (like Kent) to produce joint waste management strategies. This legal requirement ensures that waste disposal authorities and waste collection authorities work together to meet landfill diversion targets and reduce environmental impact when managing household waste.

The first **Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy** – was adopted by all 13 councils in 2007, with an interim revision issued in 2018. This strategy sought to achieve strategic collaboration across the 13 councils aligning waste policies and practices, to reduce landfill usage and increase recycling rates.

The current strategy ended in 2020/21, with development of a revised strategy planned and then delayed, due to the ongoing operational challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and several years of significant waste reforms being planned with limited detail on the legislative requirements.

During 2024, the value and remit of the Kent Resource Partnership was endorsed by Kent's leaders and chief executives and, in January 2025, a strategic lead was appointed to re-establish the governance, partnership priorities and delivery structure, including the development of this interim strategy. This strategy will provide clarity of direction for the partnership in the years leading up to, and after, local government reorganisation, which is expected to be implemented from 2028.

2025 also heralded the start of a four-year implementation of significant legislative and policy change in England (Figure 1), including new financial mechanisms, that pave the way for the future and are designed to accelerate local action to deliver a circular economy. The impact of these changes locally and collectively is yet to be fully understood and remains under review by the partnership.

Now is the time to act. Working in partnership, we aim to deliver a system-wide approach to waste management, in line with the national circular economy goals. This is essential to deliver greater value for the Kent taxpayer, environmental benefits and local economic opportunities. Delivering well-targeted projects, interventions and campaigns will engage more residents and businesses so that they act to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle, and ensure the correct disposal of all wastes, including items not collected at the kerbside.

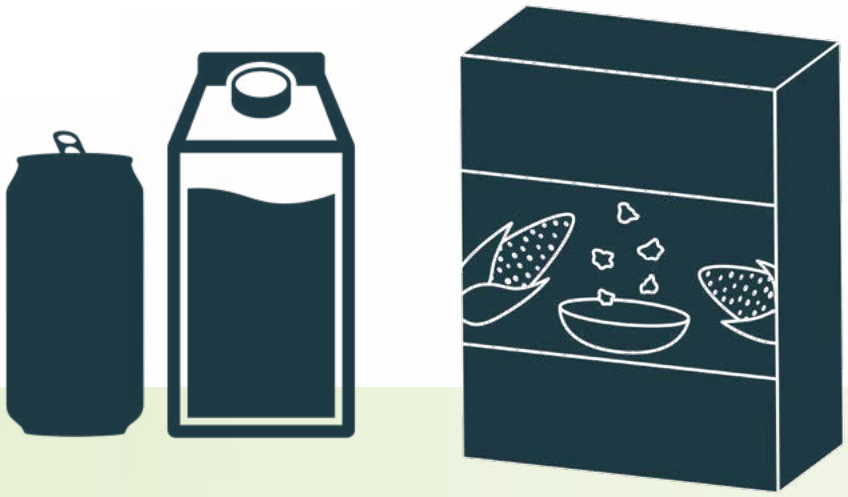
This will promote a shift in attitudes towards waste, reducing the throwaway culture. Along with commercial sector innovations and new approaches to product lifecycles, this approach will ultimately lead to changes in the way waste and recycling services are designed, delivered and funded.

This strategy sets the foundation for that transformation in Kent, as well as preparing services for the transition to unitary governance. It provides a framework for partnership delivery to 2030 to positively contribute towards achieving a circular economy in Kent.

National policy

Under current waste legislation, local authorities in England must collect and dispose of household waste, and do so responsibly and safely, maintaining accurate documentation (duty of care). This includes the separate collection of paper, metal, plastic and glass (where practicable), applying the waste hierarchy, with a preference for reducing, reusing and recycling. This aims to achieve nationally set targets to reduce residual waste, increase recycling rates and minimise waste to landfill (**see Appendix 1**)

Recent waste reforms introduce several key policies (**see Figure 1**) that are reshaping the cost, structure and operational requirements for local authorities:



Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging:

- From 2025, packaging producers pay into a scheme that is intended to cover the net costs of managing household packaging waste. This is providing significant funding and could supply financial relief to local authorities for packaging-related waste.

Simpler Recycling:

- This mandates the consistent collection of core materials (glass, metal, plastic, paper/card, food and garden waste) across businesses (2025) and households (2026), with the collection of plastic wrappers/films from 2027. For household waste collections, this legislation specifies that food waste is to be collected weekly. While this aims to increase the range of materials captured, it also introduces capital and ongoing revenue costs for new containers, vehicles and staffing.

Deposit Return Scheme:

- Expected to begin in October 2027, this introduces a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers with a capacity of between 150 millilitres and 3 litres and made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic or metal. Retailers must charge this deposit, host return points (exemptions apply) and pay back the deposit for each container returned. This is expected to reduce the amount and value of packaging recovered from the kerbside, and in turn increase packaging recycling (gate fees) and reduce the value of collections.

Emissions Trading Scheme:

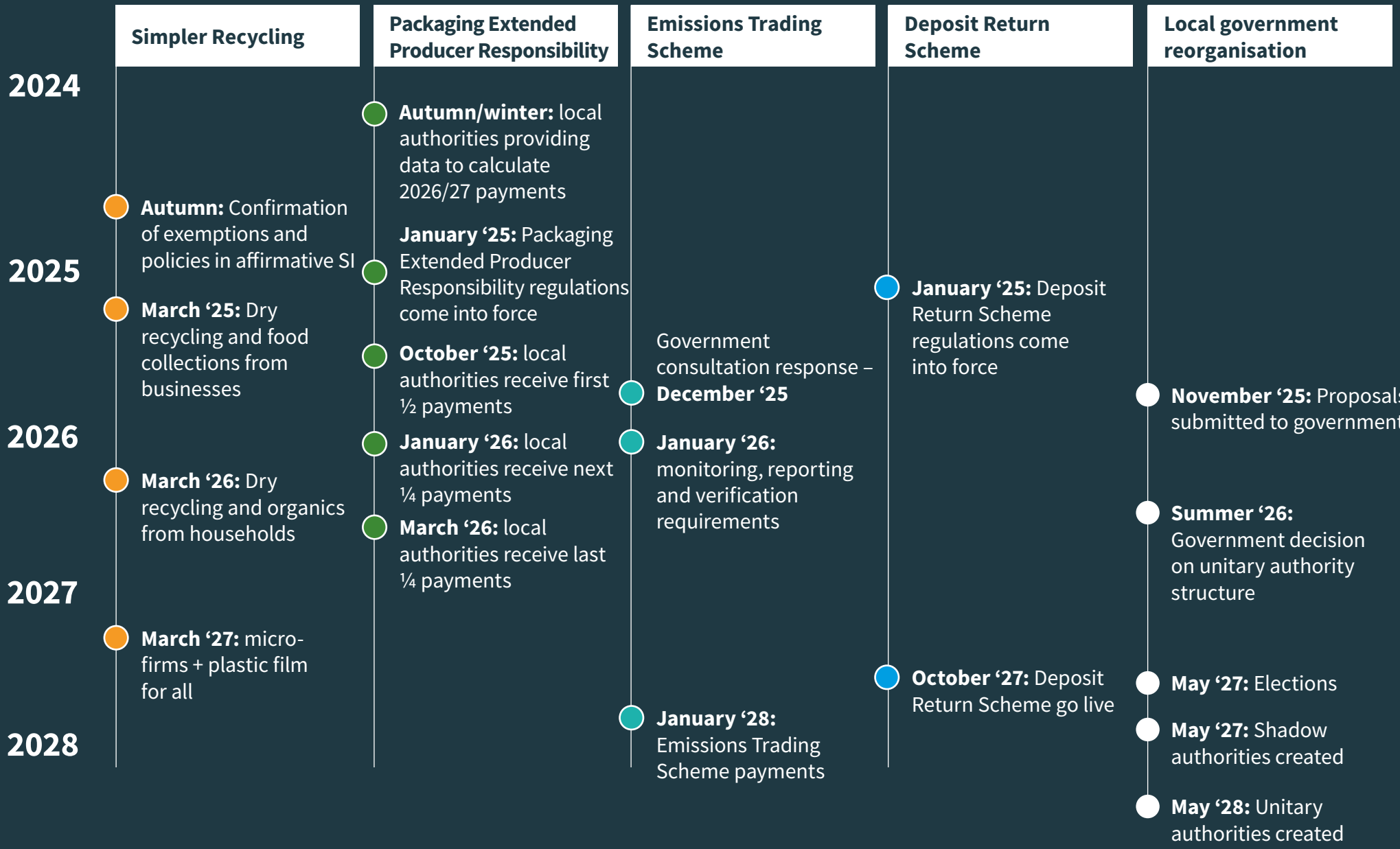
- From 2026, incineration and energy from waste facilities must begin to monitor and report their greenhouse gas emissions. From 2028, these emissions will have to be paid for, as an incentive to decarbonise. This will increase the cost of disposal of waste by incineration or energy from waste, further incentivising recycling and waste prevention.

On 1 December 2025, Defra published the revised Environmental Improvement Plan for England emphasising the need for partnership action. In **Chapter 3: Circular Economy**, Goal 5: Waste, it states ‘We will minimise waste by designing it out of the system, reusing and recycling materials wherever possible’ and ‘removing criminal threats to a circular economy’. This introduces Environment Act interim targets to 2030 for residual waste and per capita targets for residual municipal food, plastic, paper and card, metal and glass wastes, with commitments to reduce illegal waste sites and fly-tipping incidents over the same period.

Defra is set to publish the long-awaited UK Circular Economy Growth Plan in spring 2026, signalling a pivotal shift in policy aimed at embedding circularity into national and business sustainability strategies. This is set to expand upon the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), which introduced the policies now being implemented through new legislation.

The national waste management picture

Figure 1

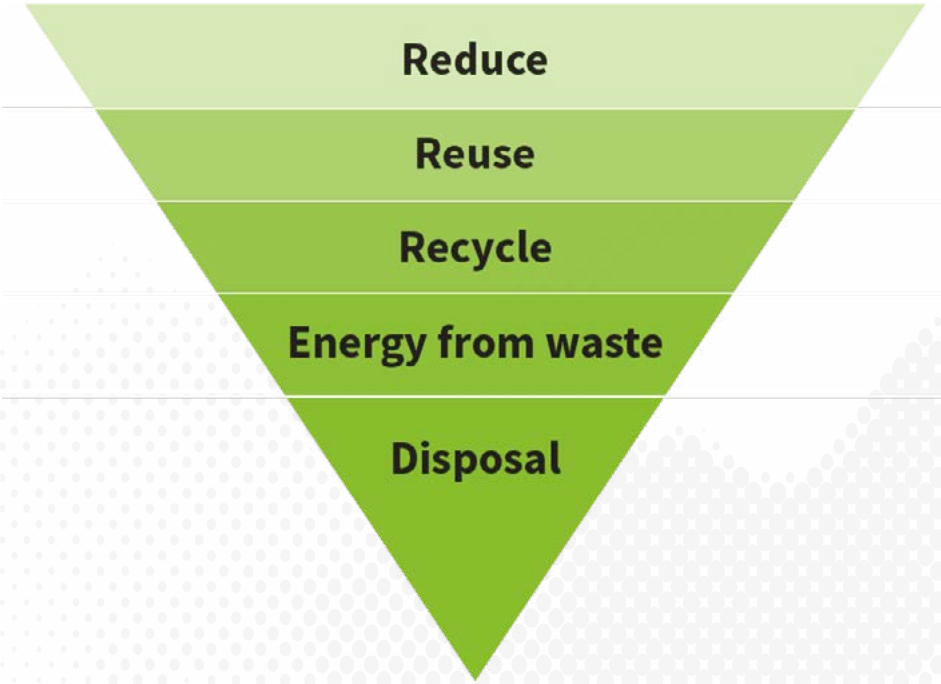


Local policy

The **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024–2039** (adopted March 2025) plays a significant role in shaping local waste management services, providing the waste planning strategy and development policies that are used in determining planning applications for new, or the expansion of existing, waste management and treatment infrastructure.

The plan's strategic objectives for waste management and relevant policy provisions underpins the partnership's commitment to managing waste sustainably in Kent by:

- applying the waste hierarchy to minimise overall household waste arisings and recover more value from discarded materials
- ensuring waste operations prevent adverse impacts on health and the local environment
- seeking to manage Kent waste arisings within the county or at the nearest available facility, achieving operational cost efficiencies and wider benefits such as local employment and reduced carbon emissions from transport
- ensuring that all development is designed in accordance with circular economy principles.



Current services

Each waste collection authority determines the frequency of collection of waste and recycling services, including charges to residents for specific services or for waste containers. Councils also offer, on request, collection services, such as clinical waste and bulky waste.

The waste services provided in each local authority area are summarised here and confirms, waste collections and frequency are broadly aligned with Simpler Recycling requirements, with service changes planned by two collection authorities in 2026.

Ashford BC, Maidstone BC and Swale BC (joint contract)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly (with other mixed packaging)
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):**

Canterbury CC (local authority traded company)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Dartford BC (contracted service)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Weekly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly (with other mixed packaging)
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** To be collected separately and weekly (Service implementation expected to start summer 2026).
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Dover DC and Folkestone & Hythe DC (joint contract)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Gravesham BC (in-house service)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly (With other mixed packaging)
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Sevenoaks DC (in-house service)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Weekly (Service frequency changes from weekly to fortnightly are expected during 2026)
- **Paper and card recycling:** Weekly (Service frequency changes from weekly to fortnightly are expected during 2026)
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Weekly (Service frequency changes from weekly to fortnightly are expected during 2026)
- **Food waste:** To be collected separately and weekly (Service implementation starts April 2026).
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Thanet DC (in-house service)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC (joint contract)

Waste collections:

- **Residual waste:** Fortnightly
- **Paper and card recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed packaging recycling:** Fortnightly
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Garden waste (charged for service):** Fortnightly

Locations managing household waste in Kent

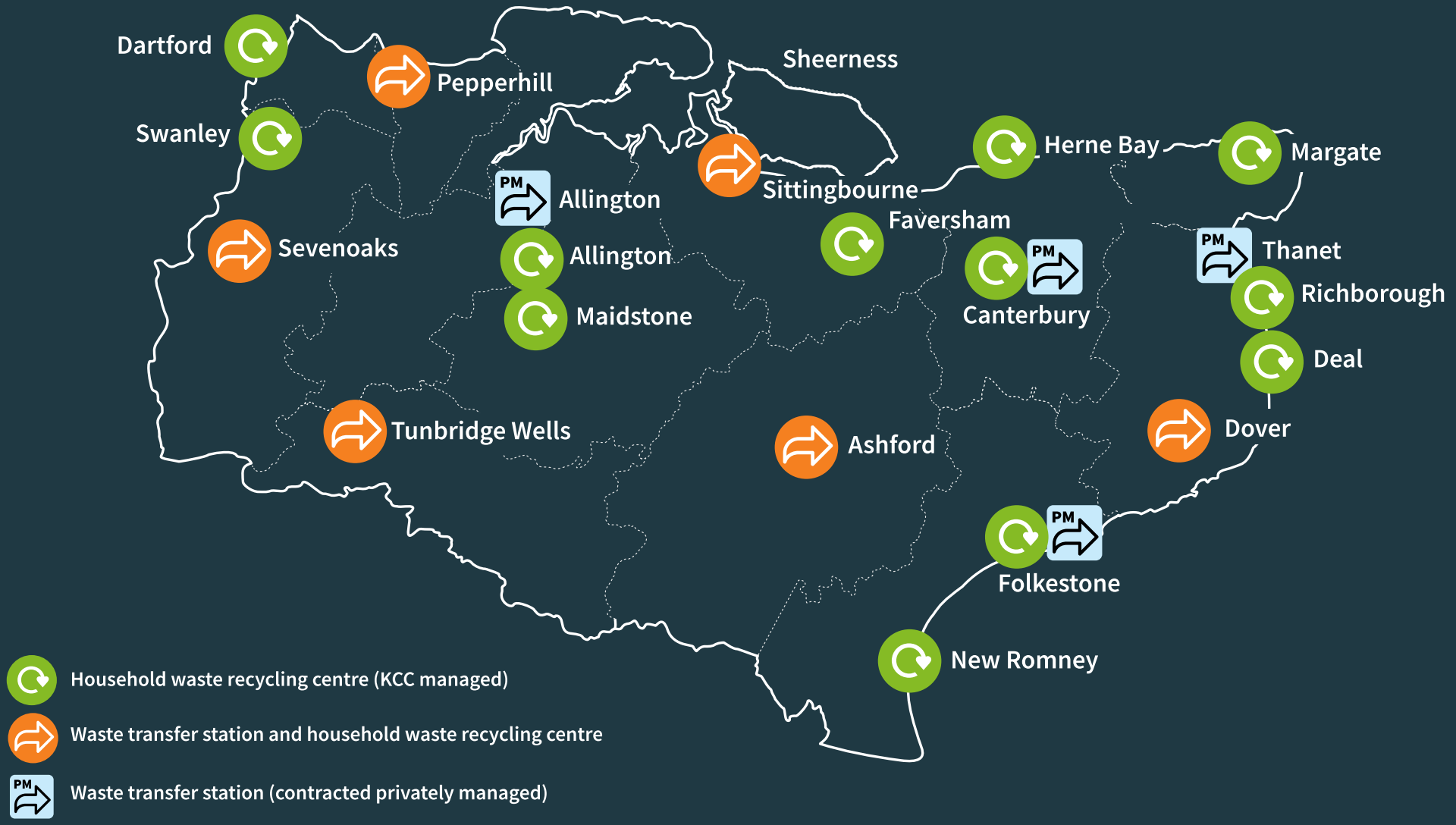


Figure 2: Locations managing household waste in Kent

As the county's disposal authority, KCC operates six waste transfer stations, which receive household waste (recycling and residual) collected at the kerbside.

In addition, **19 household waste recycling centres** are provided for Kent residents to bring household waste, including DIY waste, for safe disposal, recycling or reuse, which also helps to mitigate fly-tipping. These sites provide multiple separate waste collection bays or containers to maximise recycling and reuse. Some sites accept hazardous wastes such as oil, batteries, chemicals and asbestos, to provide householders with a safe disposal option and helping to prevent environmental pollution.

Multiple contracts are in place to get best value from the various waste streams, ensuring waste is sorted and processed to maximise reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery. There is a continued drive to minimise the waste processed by the energy from waste plant.

The remaining residual waste is processed and sent to an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant (an alternative to fossil fuels) which generates electricity, so that landfill is avoided for almost all household waste collected and disposed of.

Disposal Costs 24/25

Household Waste Recycling Centres = £7million

17% of all tonnes managed by KCC

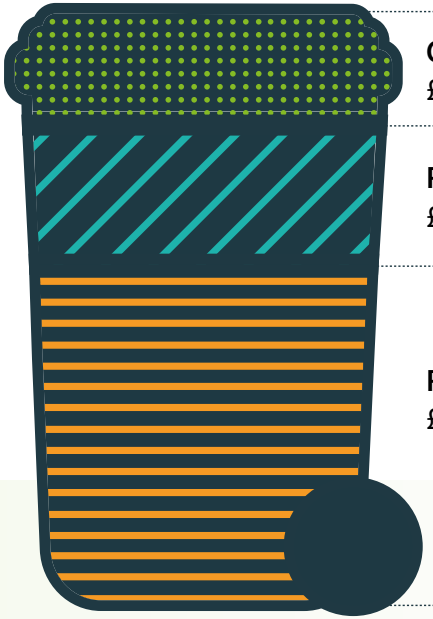
Composting
£1million (19kt)

Recycled/reused
-£625k (39kt)

Residual
£6.8million (56kt)

District/Borough Kerbside Collection = £53million

83% of all tonnes managed by KCC



Composting
£4.5million (105kt)

Recycled
£1.2million (128kt)

Residual
£47.1million (324kt)

Fly-tipping and littering (also known as waste crime)

All district, borough and city councils have statutory duties to enforce littering and individual (small-scale) fly-tipping offences. These duties include clearing waste from public land and public spaces, investigating incidents to identify those responsible and imposing fines or prosecuting where appropriate or possible to do so.

If fly-tipping is significant – where there is multiple loads in a single location, more than 20 tonnes or where the waste is known or suspected to be hazardous waste – the incident(s) will be referred to the Environment Agency, which also has enforcement powers and duties, and will determine the action to be taken.

Performance to date

Since April 2008, local authorities in England have been required to report data to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which enables monitoring of the following datasets: Residual waste per household (kg/hh), recycling and composting rate (%), municipal waste to landfill (%) and the number of fly-tipping incidents reported and actions taken.

These datasets provided a focus of the previous joint strategy which included Kent-wide targets. Performance up to 2023–24 is summarised in this section.

Residual waste per household

(Footnote 1)

Reducing the amount of residual waste per household is the desired trend.

Reviewing trends over the last 10 years, residual waste per household in Kent had been steadily reducing until 2020–21, the first year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, when household waste increased. Significant shifts in household habits and waste arisings continued after national lockdowns ended, for example as a result of increased online shopping and more people working from home. By 2023–24, residual waste had not returned to pre-pandemic levels and Kent is now underperforming compared with national and regional trends towards below pre-pandemic levels.

Positively, four Kent districts **(Footnote 2)** have achieved reductions in residual waste per household (between 7% and 20%) below 2018–19 levels.

Kent

- 2018–19 baseline **529kg/hh**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **549kg/hh (Increase of 20kg/hh)**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **537.5kg/hh (Increase of 8.5kg/hh)**

South-East

- 2018–19 baseline **521kg/hh**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **529kg/hh (Increase of 8kg/hh)**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **494kg/hh (Decrease of 27kg/hh)**

All England

- 2018–19 baseline **532kg/hh**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **553kg/hh (Increase of 21kg/hh)**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **494kg/hh (Decrease of 27kg/hh)**

Table 2: Previous strategy target (2018): A year-on-year reduction to Kent-wide residual household waste per household tonnage.

1 Source data **Local authority collected waste management – annual results - GOV.UK**

2 Canterbury City Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Residual household waste per household (kg/household) (Ex NI191)

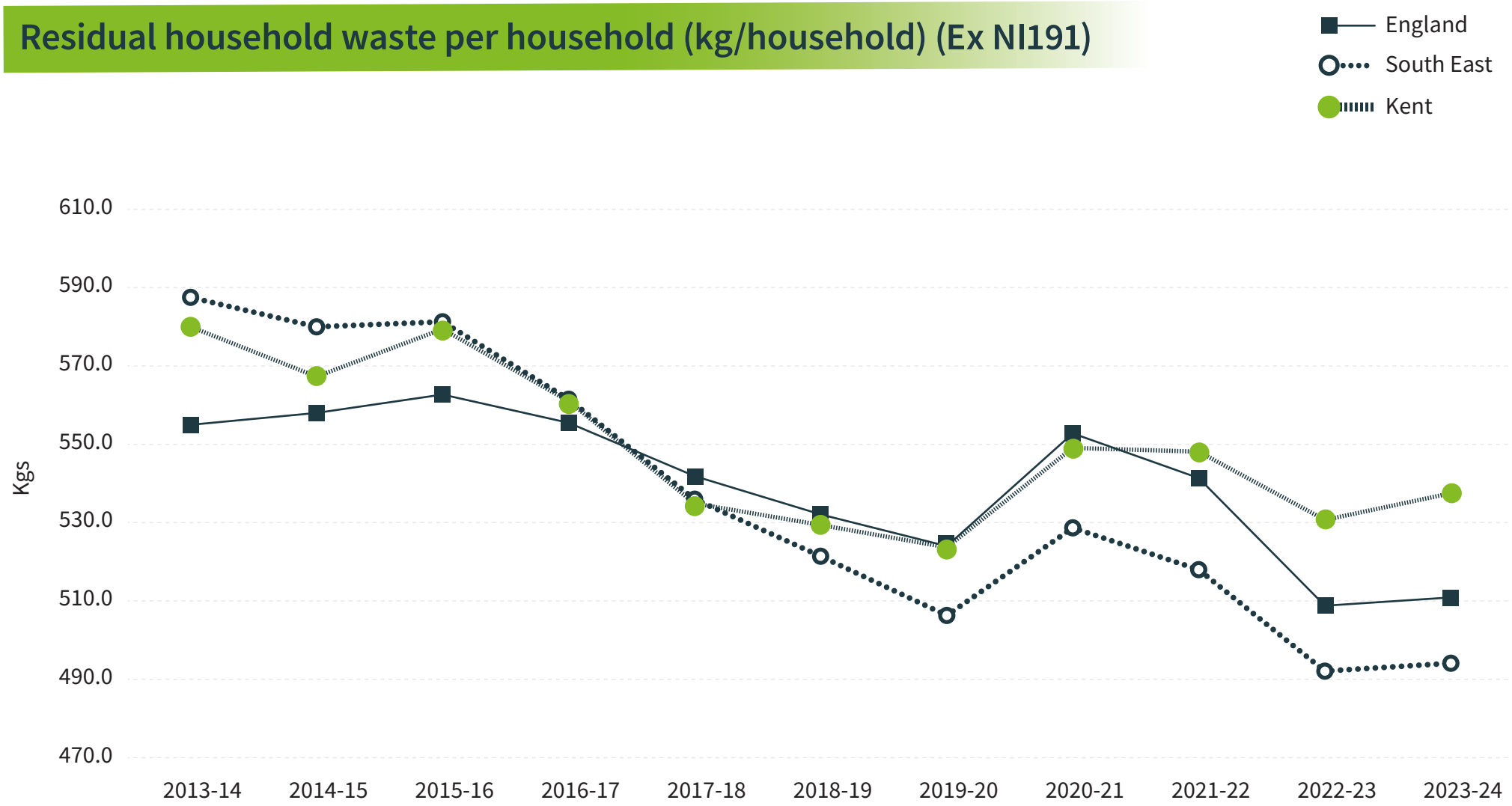


Figure 3: Trends for residual household waste per household

Reuse, recycling and composting rates

(Footnote 3)

Increasing the percentage of household waste that is reused, recycled and composted in Kent is the desired trend.

Like many authorities in England, reuse, recycling and composting rates have stagnated over the last 10 years. 2018–19 marked the peak of Kent's average recycling rate at 47.2%, followed by a sharper decline than other similar authorities in the South East. By 2023–24, Kent's average recycling rate had fallen to below the all-England average for the first time in a decade, indicating a need for a renewed focus on recycling initiatives, by drawing on the best practice of high-performing authorities in England that have achieved recycling rates above 60%.

Over the same period, three districts **(Footnote 4)** have been successful in increasing their recycling rates (by an additional 1%,4% and 6%), outperforming the England and South East region.

Kent

2018–19 baseline	**47.2%**
Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19)	**44%**
Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19)	**41.7% (-5.5%)**

South-East

2018–19 baseline	**47.2%**
Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19)	**46.1%**
Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19)	**46.2% (-1%)**

All England

2018–19 baseline	**43.5%**
Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19)	**42.3%**
Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19)	**42.3% (-1.2%)**

Table 3: Previous strategy target (2018): To recycle or compost at least 50% of household waste

3 Source data **Local authority collected waste management – annual results – GOV.UK**

4 Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting (Ex NI192)

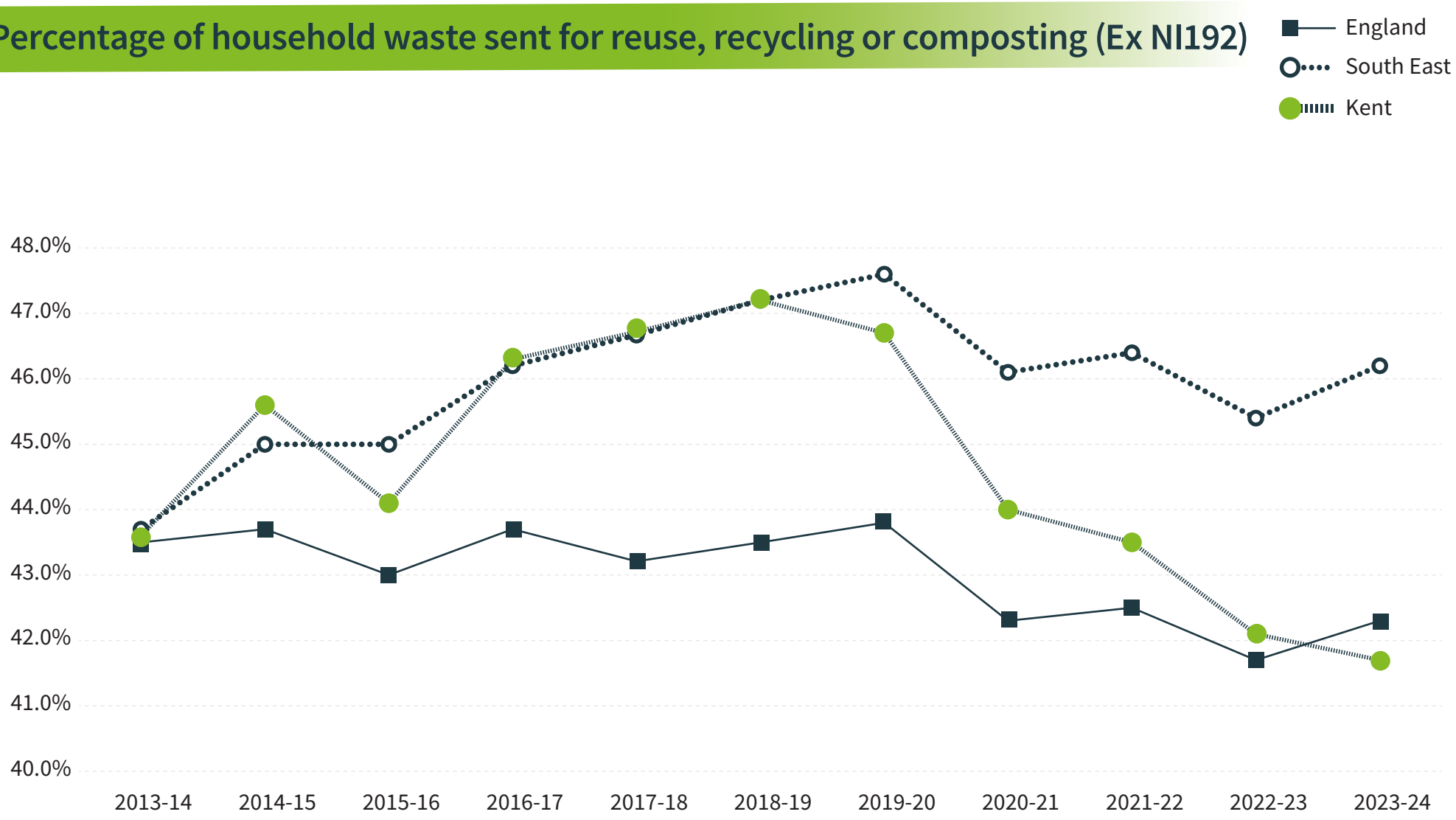


Figure 4 shows the county of Kent compared to the average for the South East and all England authorities (ex-National Indicator 192).

Municipal waste to landfill

(Footnote 5)

Reducing the amount of municipal waste sent to landfill is the desired trend.

In contrast to similar local authorities and the English average, Kent has achieved an exemplary low level of municipal waste to landfill, outperforming both national and regional averages. Almost all residual waste is sent to an energy from waste plant, generating electricity which is fed into the national grid or used to power the facility. This disposal route lowers the level of harmful greenhouse gas emissions, especially methane gas, compared to landfill. Despite this success, more needs to be done to reduce valuable resources being lost through this treatment method, by prioritising action to reduce waste and to reuse and repair materials, in addition to increasing the recycling and composting rate.

Kent

- 2018–19 baseline **2%**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **2.1%**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **0.4% (-1.6%)**

South-East

- 2018–19 baseline **9%**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **3.9%**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **2.2% (-5.1%)**

England

- 2018–19 baseline **11%**
- Performance at 2020–21 (compared to 2018–19) **7.8%**
- Performance at 2023–24 (compared to 2018–19) **5.5% (-5.5%)**

Table 4: Previous strategy target (2018): Ensure no more than 2% of Kent's municipal waste ends up in landfill

5 Source data **Local authority collected waste management – annual results – GOV.UK**

Percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (Ex NI193)

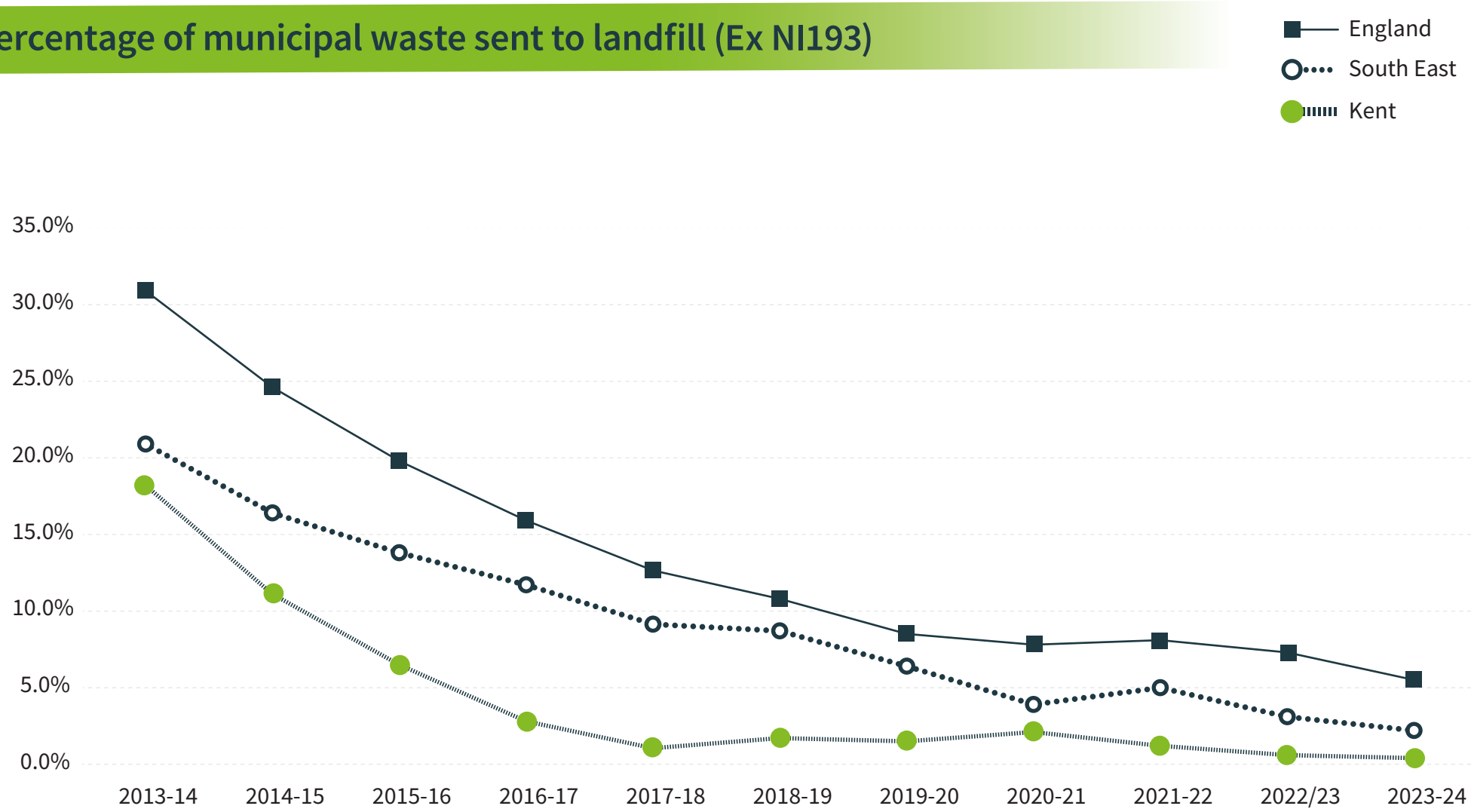


Figure 5: Trends for municipal waste sent to landfill

Fly-tipping

(Footnote 6)

Reducing the total tonnage and the number of fly-tipping incidents involving waste from households is the desired trend.

Most of the fly-tipping that is reported nationally involves waste from households, with the majority dumped on highways, footpaths and council-owned land. Over the past 10 years, the number of incidents reported by local authorities in Kent has increased from just over 12,500 incidents in 2013–14 to 14,540 in 2023–24, with a peak of 19,470 incidents in 2019–20. This trend contrasts with the South East and national trends, which show incidents are increasing, at a much higher rate nationally. This perhaps reflects the success of the multiagency partnership approach in Kent, sharing intelligence and committed to disrupting this illegal activity and, wherever possible, using the full enforcement powers available.

Kent

- 2018–19 baseline **16,909**
- Performance at 2020–21 **18,714**
- Performance at 2023–24 **14,540**

South-East

- 2018–19 baseline **84,479**
- Performance at 2020–21 **121,283**
- Performance at 2023–24 **101,694**

England

- 2018–19 baseline **957,157**
- Performance at 2020–21 **1,138,347**
- Performance at 2023–24 **1,152,617**

Table 5: Number of fly-tipping incidents

6 Source data **Local authority collected waste management - annual results - GOV.UK**

Intelligence-led enforcement

Tackling fly tipping

By using enhanced data-driven approaches across the partnership, local authorities are provided with comprehensive data and analytical insights to inform operational planning, prioritise enforcement actions, and coordinate joint activities, ensuring decisions are consistent and based on robust evidence.

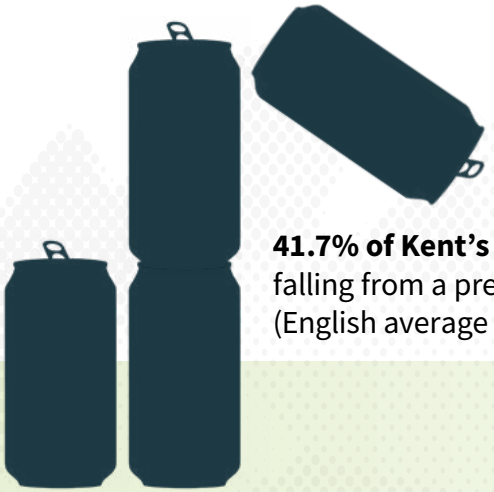
Since 2018 the Kent Resource Partnership has worked closely with Kent Police and other partner organisations to organise and coordinate targeted 'Days of Action'-enforcement operations aimed at individuals and businesses suspected of being involved in fly tipping. Through these collaborative efforts, the Kent Resource Partnership has delivered over 250 Days of Action, resulting in:

- more than 2,000 vehicles being stopped,
- over 250 vehicles seized,
- nearly 200 Fixed Penalty Notices issued, and over 250 Producer Notices served

Factors influencing performance

Multiple factors influence the amount of household waste arising and recycling rates. These include, but are not limited to, collection type and frequencies, demographics, population growth, rurality, housing types and consumer confidence. These factors also play a part in influencing residents' perceptions of waste management and levels of engagement, which impact the ability to achieve the desired performance levels.

In response to legislative and economic influences, packaging manufacturers have changed material type or density over time, reducing the complexity of packaging materials and in some cases reducing the weight, so that similar volumes of packaging items collected for recycling weigh less than they did in the past. This is most apparent in plastic drinks bottles. This is further influenced by the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) scheme, which provides a financial incentive to reduce the type or amount of packaging placed on the market.



41.7% of Kent's waste was recycled in 2023/24, falling from a previous high of 47% in 2018/19 (English average = 42.3% in 2023/24)

Food waste adds significantly to the weight of residual waste collected and this valuable resource is lost if it is not separated by residents for recycling. In the 10 districts that already offer a food waste recycling service, participation rates in food waste recycling have been low both in Kent and nationally, compared to participation in recycling packaging.

To be successful, local authority waste services rely on residents to act on information provided, to correctly separate their waste and use the correct disposal route for other wastes not accepted at the kerbside. Resident engagement requires continuous and consistent efforts to remain effective, especially in areas of high residential transience, such as areas with a higher proportion of rented properties and flats or significant student populations.

How we compare

Comparing Kent's performance to other counties in the South East, such as Essex and Hampshire, that have a similar population size and number of households, shows that residual waste per household in Kent has not returned to lower levels as quickly as these counties **(see Figure 7)**.

Note: data for England and the South East are not available prior to 2015–16.

Packaging recycling rates are similar across the three counties, whereas Essex has a higher rate for food and garden waste, at 25% compared to 20% for Kent, and 17% for Hampshire. Higher rates of recycled garden and food waste are also common factors for local authorities achieving the highest recycling rates in England, of over 60%.

In exploring these differences, it was noted that Essex County Council had successfully trialled a food waste recycling initiative. This led to a trial in the Dover and Folkestone and Hythe districts in autumn 2024, which increased captured food waste between 11% and 14%, with a subsequent roll out to a further six districts during 2025. This campaign has seen food recycling increase by over 20% on average, compared to the previous year, across the eight participating districts, with the highest increase in Swale Borough of 42%.

Contamination of mixed packaging recycling differs according to the collection method. In 2023–24, for co-mingled packaging recycling collections (including paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 11% to 15%, with food, textiles and wet paper being frequent contaminants.

For twin-stream packaging recycling collections (excluding paper and card), contamination rates ranged from 7% to 19%, with general waste (black bags), other mixed (hard) plastics and mixed/shredded paper being the frequent contaminants.

63% of food waste separately collected is avoidable (eg food gone past its date or rotted before eaten) and 3% of food waste was in packaging (2025 waste composition analysis)

Residual household waste per household (kg/household) (Ex NI191)

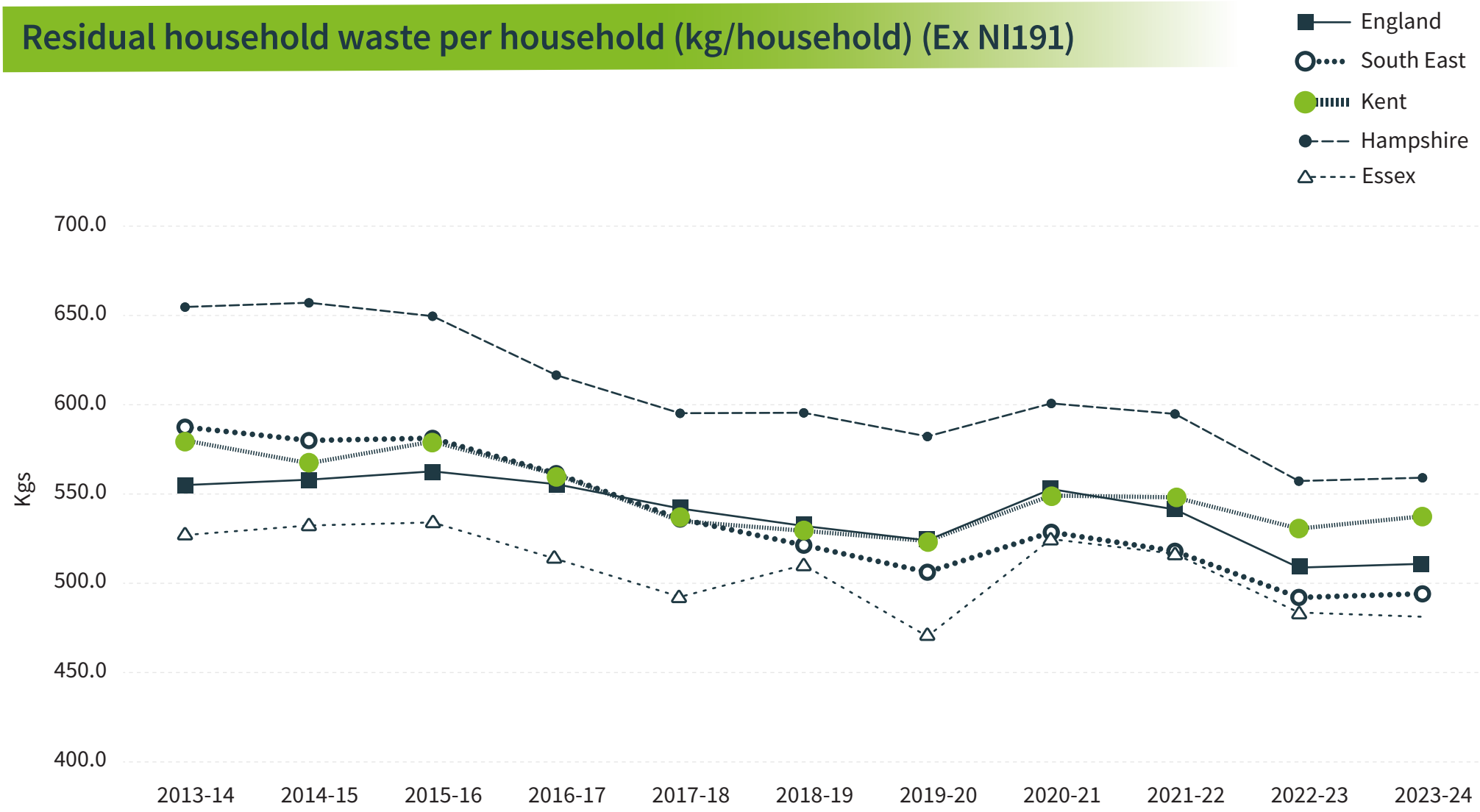


Figure 7: Trends for residual household waste per household (Kent and comparator authorities)

Collected household waste per person (kg) (Ex BVPI 84a)

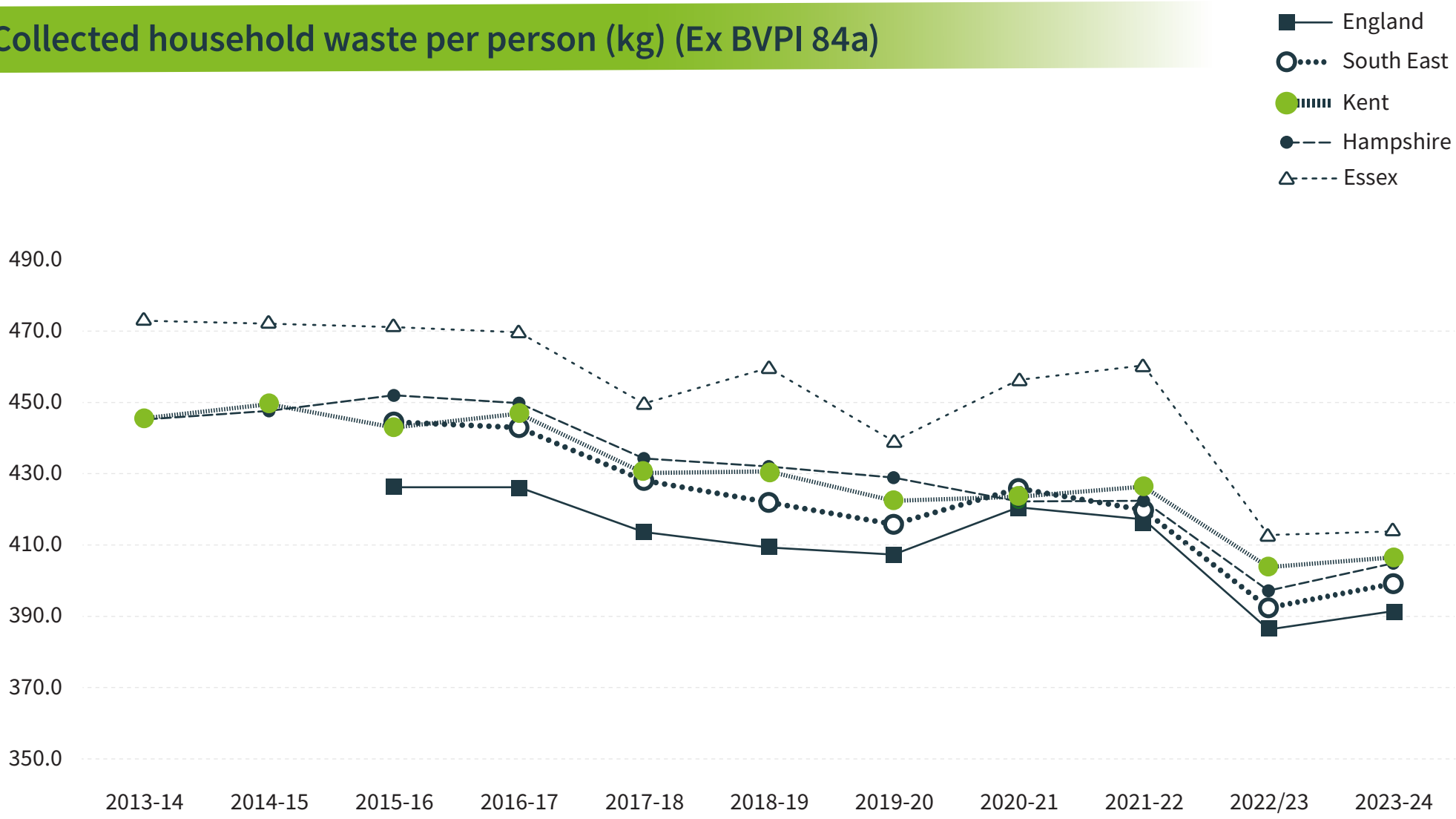


Figure 8: Trends for total collected household waste per person

Food waste

Collecting more food waste

A food waste recycling campaign was delivered in districts and boroughs during 2025. As a result, an additional 4068 tonnes of food waste was collected separately, increasing tonnages on average by almost 17% across Kent, compared to the same period in 2024. It is estimated this could save £550,000 (based on data April 2025-January 2026).

Eight districts took part in this campaign between September 2024 and December 2025. Two further districts are offering a food waste service for the first time in 2026.

Projected growth and impacts

(Footnote 7)

Kent is expected to see an increase in population of 96,600 people and 55,000 dwellings by 2030. If total household waste generation remains at the 2023–24 level of 955 kg per household, this could result in an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste per year.

Managing an additional 52,525 tonnes of waste annually will have substantial cost implications, especially as these costs will increase further from 2028, with the expansion of the scope of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to encompass greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from energy from waste processes such as the plant at Allington, which treats Kent's residual waste.

This level of growth will place significant pressure on existing waste collection, treatment and disposal infrastructure, requiring co-ordinated investment and planning across the partnership to ensure that sufficient collection regimes are in place and that both existing and planned infrastructure is sufficient to manage this increase.

26% of residual waste is expected to attract a GHG emissions tax under the Emissions Trading Scheme

To manage the projected waste growth and associated costs, Kent will need to consider:

- building new and or expanded waste facilities
- investing in recycling infrastructure to reduce reliance on incineration
- enhancing waste prevention and reuse initiatives to reduce per-household waste generation
- using data and evidence to design more impactful communications and behaviour change interventions that encourage more residents to reduce, reuse and recycle
- leveraging Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) scheme funding to offset the costs of packaging waste management monitoring Emissions Trading Scheme developments to anticipate future incineration cost increases and explore alternatives like carbon capture or heat network integration.
- monitoring Emissions Trading Scheme developments to anticipate future incineration cost increases and explore alternatives like carbon capture or heat network integration.

7 Source data **Local authority collected waste management – annual results – GOV.UK**

Reuse shops

Reuse shops at the Household Waste Recycling Centres

In 2025, KCC opened two reuse shops, one at New Romney Recycling Centre and the other at Allington. The permanent shops follow the success of a series of 'pop-up' shops held across several of the Recycling Centres in the network during spring / summer of 2024 and 2025.

Working in partnership with FCC Environment, the New Romney shop, opened in July 25, was Kent's first permanent shop. Operated from a repurposed shipping container, unwanted, usable items are brought to site by customers where they are quality checked, PAT and function tested (in the case of electrical items) and then put on the shelves of the reuse shop ready for visitors to buy.

In September, the Allington shop was opened. As well as items from Allington Recycling Centre itself, the shop is stocked with reusable items accepted at several other KCC HWRCs across the network. Items brought to these sites that are suitable for reuse are placed in designated reuse containers and are transported to Allington for resale.

Both shops give unwanted goods a second life, helping to reduce waste, making it easier for people to donate items to be reused by others and therefore supporting Kent's move towards a circular economy.

The shops take a variety of items, everything from A-Z: antiques, books and children's toys to xylophones, yoga mats and even zebra print rugs ready for a new home.

A portion of the profits from the shops go towards local charities, including the charities endorsed by the Chairman of KCC. The remaining profits are being reinvested into the service to support the expansion of KCC's reuse initiatives across the county.

The opportunities and challenges

This strategy has been informed by:

- a series of stakeholder engagement sessions
- knowledge of existing and planned new legislation
- existing data trends and insight
- new data and insight collected during 2025.

This identified a range of opportunities and challenges (listed in Appendix 2), some of which will be used to develop future annual partnership action plans.

The additional data and insight collected in 2025 has expanded the range of available data to use to design new behaviour change interventions, inform and assess the impact of projects, and ultimately measure the return on the investment of finance and staff resources.

The data includes:

- current collection and disposal service baseline costs and carbon impacts, and modelling to show the likely impacts on costs, recycling rates and overall levels of household waste due to Simpler Recycling and Deposit Return Scheme legislation
- waste composition audit and analysis of collected residual and food waste across all districts
- resident food waste survey (countywide)
- behaviour change research, comparing Kent with national data and insights
- trends in fly-tipping.

The analysis of this data has concluded with a continued focus on achieving efficient service delivery, including developing new service offerings that mitigate the costs of planned legislation changes and prepare waste services for local government reorganisation. It is essential to engage Kent residents and wider partners to make positive changes that unlock the environmental and economic advantages of delivering a circular economy. Some of the conclusions drawn from this analysis are described in more detail in this section.

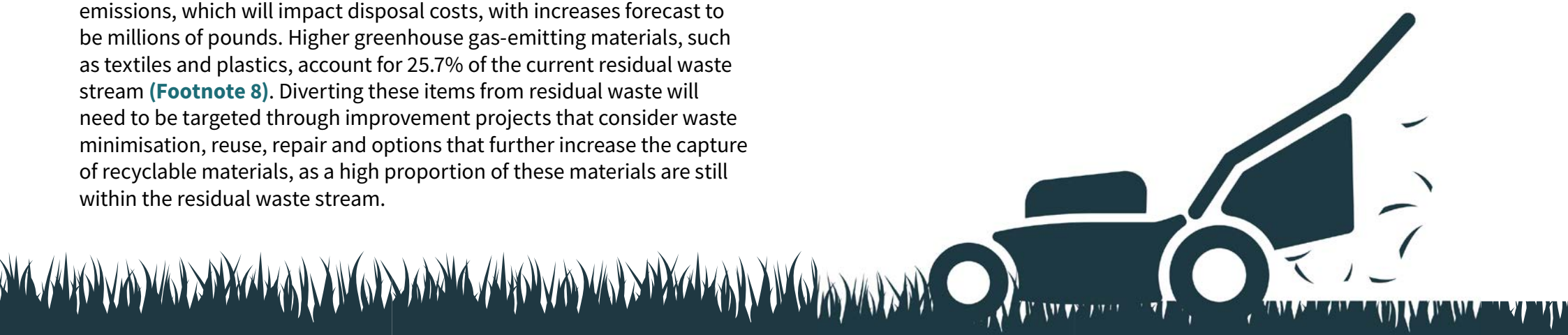
Modelling of future legislation, notably the Deposit Return Scheme 2027, indicates a likely negative impact on packaging recycling rates at the kerbside. This is due to drinks bottles and cans (plastic and metal) being captured separately through return points, reducing both the tonnage and relative value of recycled packaging collected at the kerbside.

This tonnage loss is unlikely to be offset by the addition of flexible plastics and films, which are due to be collected as a result of Simpler Recycling legislation in the same year.

This is likely to create waste disposal cost pressures as gate fees for recycling increase due to the change to the quality and commercial value of dry mixed packaging recycling that is collected.

With energy from waste processes planned to be brought within the scope of the Emissions Trading Scheme in 2028, a sharp focus is needed on the types of materials within residual waste that produce the most greenhouse gas emissions. A carbon price will be applied to these emissions, which will impact disposal costs, with increases forecast to be millions of pounds. Higher greenhouse gas-emitting materials, such as textiles and plastics, account for 25.7% of the current residual waste stream **(Footnote 8)**. Diverting these items from residual waste will need to be targeted through improvement projects that consider waste minimisation, reuse, repair and options that further increase the capture of recyclable materials, as a high proportion of these materials are still within the residual waste stream.

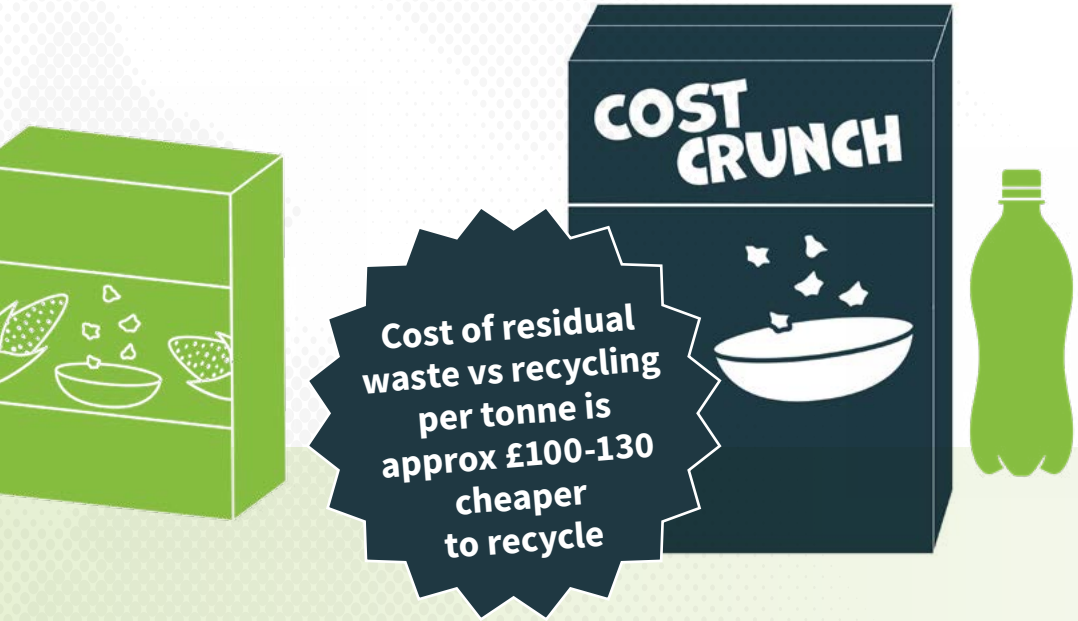
KCC's revised Disposal Strategy complements this Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, and aims to significantly reduce the amount of household waste sent for incineration (energy from waste). The aim is to reduce or mitigate the increasing costs of residual waste disposal, including the impacts of the legislation that is due to be implemented (see the 'National policy' section). Investing funds to influence resident behaviours is being prioritised, initially targeting food waste as the largest proportion of recyclable material in residual waste by weight. To be successful, initiatives need to be delivered through partnership action.



52% of residual waste could be recycled of which 28% is food waste and **5% garden waste** (2025 waste composition analysis full alignment with Simpler Recycling 2027)

8 Source data: 2025 Kent waste composition audit of residual waste (not published, available on request from Kent County Council)

A waste composition audit in 2025, which sampled waste across all local authority areas, confirmed that up to 52% of Kent's residual household waste could be recycled, in addition to the recycling that is already captured (when including all materials to be separately collected under Simpler Recycling legislation). It also identified that 63% of food waste currently collected separately is avoidable, such as cooked food or fruit and vegetables that have spoiled. To successfully improve the recycling rates of recyclable packaging and food, much more needs to be done to encourage and support residents to reduce the waste they produce and to separate waste correctly. Wasting less, especially food, will also help residents to save money.

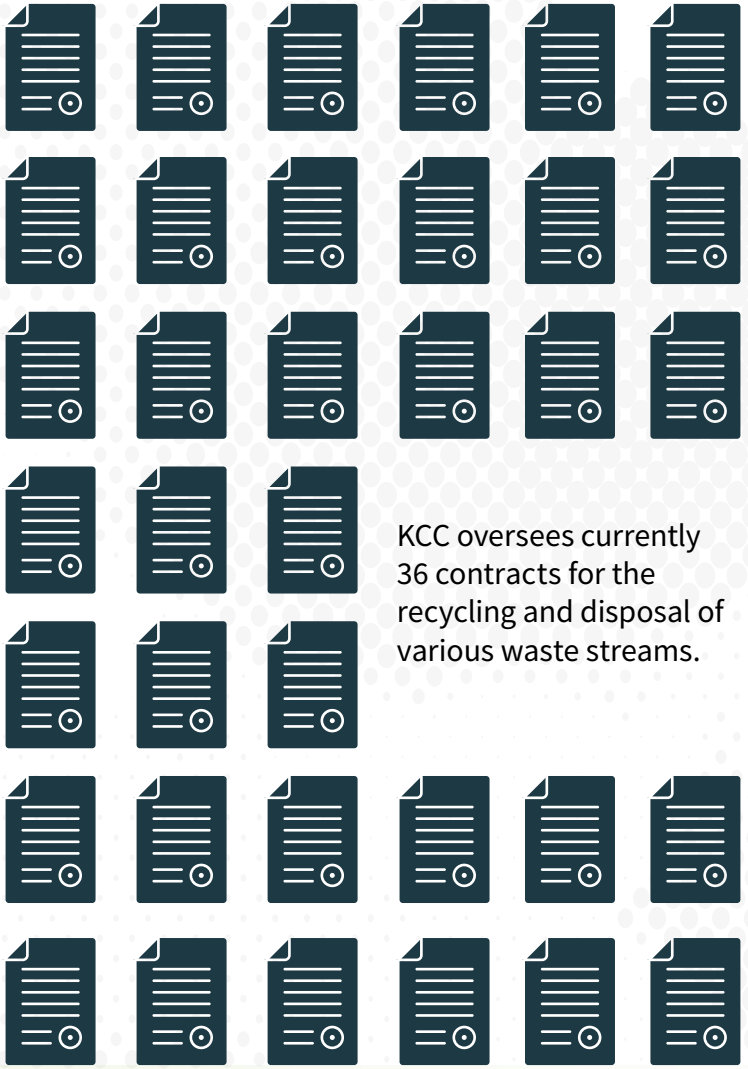


The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), supported by its behavioural science specialist subsidiary, **Behaviour Change**, was commissioned to complete research to understand Kent residents' attitudes and behaviours towards waste and recycling, and to compare these with national data. This research concluded that recycling behaviours are influenced by a mix of practical, emotional and informational barriers. It confirmed that Kent residents are largely satisfied with their waste management services, although there are key areas for improvement, such as food waste services. Some residents reported a lack of trust in their local council and did not actively seek out council information to inform their recycling decisions, leading to incorrect disposal choices. A lack of feedback on what happens to waste after collection, or a perceived lack of care by collection crews, also negatively affects residents' sense of the value of managing their waste, and this reduces the personal motivation needed to correctly separate waste for recycling.

In recent years, fly-tipping has continued to increase, with criminals perceiving it as a low-risk, high-profit activity, with the level of penalties not being an effective deterrent. Nationally, there has been an increase in unlicenced traders collecting waste illegally, with many advertising on social media, drawing in householders by offers to dispose of waste at low cost. This is coupled with householders' limited awareness of their duty-of-care responsibilities to check that companies are licensed to remove household waste.

There has also been an increase in the number of larger sites where multiple loads of waste are deposited, most likely the result of serious organised crime. The local ability to act on these is limited, as these cases require lengthy and complex multiagency approaches, and the use of enforcement powers is only available to the Environment Agency. A multiagency approach to disrupt fly-tipping and illegal waste activities continues, and is deemed an effective approach until legislative and other system-wide changes are introduced.

These insights highlight the importance of continued partnership working to develop countywide initiatives, coupled with a holistic approach to transforming waste systems and services, by prioritising and focusing efforts through a few strategic aims, as outlined below.



KCC oversees currently 36 contracts for the recycling and disposal of various waste streams.

Setting the future direction
Strategic aims

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) will lead the transformation of waste services in Kent to a circular, low-carbon waste system that protects the environment, delivers best value and empowers communities to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle through inclusive, efficient and innovative services.

By retaining the value of material resources flowing through Kent, we will generate green jobs, support skills and training, and deliver economic, environmental and wellbeing benefits to local communities and beyond.

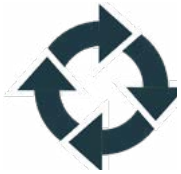
We will deliver integrated, high-performing, efficient waste and resource services across Kent, through collaboration, innovation, evidence-based decision making and investment in infrastructure, and by engaging and supporting residents to make sustainable choices.

The partnership is committed to developing plans framed by four strategic aims:

1. Delivering operational excellence

2. Supporting a pathway to a circular economy

3. Improving performance through behaviour change



4. Supporting the transition to unitary waste management system(s)

Strategic aim 1

Delivering operational excellence

- Deliver efficient, sustainable, high-quality waste collection and disposal services.
- Collaborate across tiers and with private/public partners.
- Reduce costs through efficiency and resource optimisation.
- Work towards the removal of any barriers to waste minimisation, recycling, reuse and repair.

Gravesham communities

Gravesham communities embrace electrical recycling

To make electrical recycling more accessible and convenient, Gravesham Borough Council installed 18 on-street bring banks within one mile of 106,900 households. Residents were encouraged to bring their unwanted electrical items for recycling at the bring banks, which were at high-footfall locations, such as supermarkets and leisure centres. An additional 20 containers were placed in independent living schemes, making it easier for older and disabled residents to participate.

The scheme was widely promoted via social media, leaflets, posters and in the borough-wide magazine, and residents embraced the new bring banks. In fact, more than 27,400 items of electrical equipment were recycled and nearly 25 tonnes of electrical waste diverted from landfill between November 2023 and November 2024.

Community engagement exceeded expectations, highlighting strong local support for recycling and showing how easy and convenient recycling can be.

The bring banks remain in place and continue to serve the community.

Strategic aim 2

Supporting a pathway to a circular economy

- Support sustainable economic growth.
- Create and raise awareness of green job opportunities.
- Promote efficient use of resources, retaining their highest value.
- Accelerate the transition to net zero emissions.
- Continue to minimise landfill.
- Increase recycling performance.

Bike repair

Encouraging bike use through repair and resale

Swale Cycle Recycle is a collaborative project which is actively making a difference to the lives of Swale residents by providing access to truly affordable, healthy and sustainable transport.

Swale is the second most deprived borough in Kent, and residents often face extra barriers to active travel, including the cost of equipment such as bikes. The borough also has a 2045 net-zero target. With 27% of emissions arising from transport, decarbonising transport is crucial to achieving this.

Through a partnership between Swale Borough Council, His Majesty's Prison Swaleside and the Canterbury Bike Project, residents are able to drop off unwanted bikes at donation points at two household waste recycling centres. These are taken to a workshop at HMP Swaleside, where inmates learn to repair bikes, upskilling themselves as part of their rehabilitation journey. Swale Borough Council then organises events with organisations like Sheppey Matters,

Faversham Town Council and Seashells Children and Families Hub where the bikes are sold to residents for just £10. This price ensures that the workshop can remain fully stocked with tools and spare parts.

The first event took place in June 2024 as part of Great Big Green Week, and since then 298 bikes have been returned the community.

Residents who have received bikes have commented: "Great prices. I can now teach my son to ride a bike as I could not afford a bike before."

Car seats

Car seat reuse programme

In 2025, a car seat reuse programme was launched at New Romney Recycling Centre to support a charity initiative.

The programme offers residents the opportunity to donate their no longer needed car seats to a charity which works with families who don't have access to the lifesaving equipment. Together with FCC Environment, KCC launched the scheme in partnership with international charity EASST (Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport). The charity, which is based in Kent, works to improve road safety, sustainable transport, and environmental standards in 14 countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Each collected car seat undergoes a rigorous safety checklist, devised with the support of the AA, to ensure it is fit for reuse, preventing unsafe items from re-entering circulation while ensuring the safety for redistribution. Correctly used child car seats can reduce the risk of being killed or seriously injured in a crash by up to 60% but in many countries, children still go without due to high costs and affordability. The donations will help children around the world and bring peace of mind to families.

The donations will help children around the world and bring peace of mind to families.

The scheme also helps to reduce waste with any car seats that are not used by EASST will either be recycled at sites with hard plastic segregation, or sent with bulky waste for Refuse Derived Fuel. It is hoped to expand the scheme to other Recycling Centres in the network, following a trial period.

Strategic aim 3

Improving performance through behaviour change

- Foster behavioural change through evidence-led education and communication.
- Ensure services are accessible, equitable and responsive.
- Promote and support local reuse and repair initiatives.
- Educate residents about their duty of care to reduce the environmental damage caused by the fly-tipping of household waste.

Low Carbon Kent

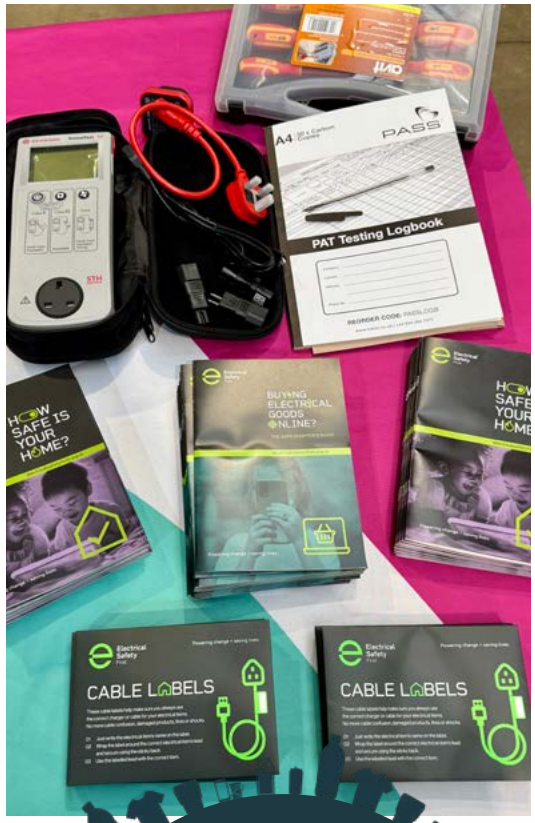
Low Carbon Kent and repair cafes upskill volunteers

Low Carbon Kent works closely with repair cafés across the county to strengthen community-led circular economy initiatives. These help residents to reduce waste through practical repair, reuse and upcycling activities.

The team monitors and promotes the Repair, Reuse and Upcycling Locator, an online tool that makes it easier for people to find local groups, businesses and community projects offering repair and reuse services.

Through the KESTREL (Kent Electrical Safety Training and Repairer Essential Learning) project, Low Carbon Kent has supplied 11 repair cafés with portable appliance testing (PAT) kits and funded online training for 29 repairers, so that volunteers can safely test electrical items and expand the range of goods they are able to repair.

Together, these initiatives help build skills, address the 'throwaway culture' within our communities, and keep valuable resources in circulation for longer.

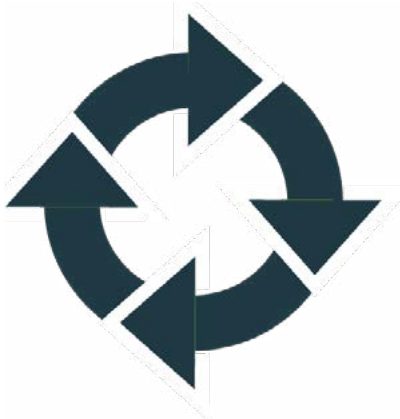


Low Carbon Kent works to build capacity, skills and demand in reuse, repair and remanufacture across the region.

Strategic aim 4

Supporting the transition to unitary waste management system(s)

- Enable strategic planning and investment by consolidating governance and accountability.
- Enhance data integration and performance monitoring across the waste value chain.
- Progress opportunities to align collection and disposal services to reduce duplication and improve service delivery.

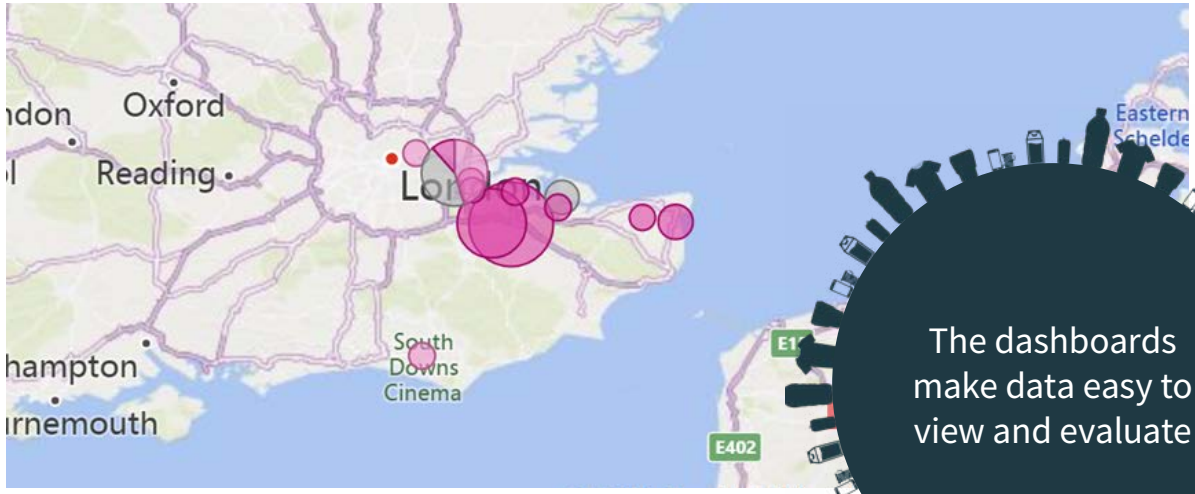


Transformative waste

Making data visual

Power BI, Microsoft's analytics and data visualisation platform, has been used to analyse Kent County Council's waste since September 2020. The dashboards make data such as the total tonnages collected, the amount recycled or composted, and levels of contamination in the recycled waste easy to view and evaluate. This helps Kent County Council and its partners, particularly district and borough councils, with clear, accessible views of their data, so that they can gain insights and maximise its value. Many of the dashboards are within the top 5% of viewed reports and on average feed from over 70,000 lines of monthly data.

These dashboards enhance decision-making, support project planning and evaluation, fostering collaboration and informing strategies. In addition, Kent Resource Partnership's End Destinations reports are now available as an interactive, publicly accessible map-based dashboard hosted on Kent County Council's website.



Delivery of strategic aims

Aim 1: Delivering operational excellence

Current position:

Seven district/borough councils have joint procurement contracts and continue to seek added value from these.

We are planning changes to services to meet Simpler Recycling legislation, by providing recycling services to all households.

Some districts do not have in-district waste transfer station facilities, requiring collected waste to be transported out of the area and/or to private sector-run facilities.

Future plans:

Short term:

- Review opportunities for consistent collections across the county, including conducting a technically, environmentally and economically practicable (TEEP) assessment of the recycling of paper and card, to enhance partnership work and work towards achieving or exceeding a 50% recycling rate.
- Investigate a system of shared risk and reward.
- Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improved services and trial new initiatives.
- Progress plans to establish new or improved waste transfer station facilities in Folkestone and Hythe district, and for the Dartford and Gravesham boroughs.

Long term:

- Use the opportunity of local government reorganisation to further streamline services.
- Explore further opportunities to reduce financial barriers for residents to achieving higher recycling rates, more reuse and less fly-tipping of household waste.
- Deliver efficient and effective services through a whole-system approach.
- Undertake more joined-up procurement and contract negotiations that seek to deliver additional social value.
- Further develop the approach to future infrastructure planning through the partnership.

Aim 2: Supporting a pathway to a circular economy

Current position:

Ten out of 12 districts currently offer food waste collections.

The county average recycling rate for 2023–24 was 41.7%, with two waste collection authorities recycling over 50%, one close to achieving 50% and six more achieving rates of between 42.9% and 46.8%.

KCC has been successful in securing grant funding to deliver education, reuse and repair initiatives, and continues to seek new opportunities and funding.

KCC is delivering reuse shops in partnership with one of its main contractors and continues to increase the number of separate recycling streams offered at the household waste recycling centres.

Future plans:

Short term:

- Align and adapt services to Simpler Recycling legislation:
  - Dartford Borough and Sevenoaks District Council will introduce food waste collection services for all residents.
  - Sevenoaks District Council will change residual waste collection frequency, which will further align with other areas in the county.
  - All other authorities will introduce packaging recycling and/or food recycling services where they are not currently offered. This will predominantly be to residents living in flats and homes of multiple occupation.
  - Take advantage of new funding and grants to invest in improving waste and recycling services.

Long term:

- Prepare for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme and Emissions Trading Scheme scope expansion.
- Develop a circular economy roadmap for Kent.
- Target the reduction of high-carbon-emitting wastes in the residual waste stream to reduce the financial burdens expected from the expansion of the scope of Emissions Trading Scheme legislation in 2028.

Toys and coffee pods

Continuing the toy story at Kent's household waste recycling centres

FCC Environment, which runs 14 household waste recycling centres in Kent, teamed up with Fibreuse on a new toy recycling initiative.

Six recycling toy containers have been installed at Ashford, Canterbury, New Romney, Margate, Dover and Sheerness household waste recycling centres to accept toys of any condition.

From well-loved teddy bears to dolls and action figures, residents can recycle soft or plastic toys. The items collected are sorted at the Fibreuse processing site where the toys are either repurposed, redistributed or recycled.

Plastic toys are shredded, processed and the plastic used for new products, helping to reduce the need for new plastic. Soft toys made from textiles, such as polyester or cotton, are separated and sent into the textile recycling stream on the Fibreuse site.

Giving toys a second life – whether through reuse, redistribution or recycling – not only reduces waste but also makes it easier for families to dispose of unwanted items responsibly. In addition, by capturing toys before they are thrown away as waste, it's possible to recover valuable materials and redirect them back into UK manufacturing.

Easier recycling of coffee pods

In July 2025, KCC introduced a new recycling facility for used coffee, tea and hot chocolate pods at all household waste recycling centres. Delivered in partnership with Podback, the Pod Recycling Service, this initiative means residents are less likely to throw their pods into their general waste bins.

Aim 3: Improving performance through behaviour change

Current position:

By March 2026, all Kent collection authorities currently offering a food waste service had delivered a food waste recycling campaign.

With the support of **Re:London**, a best-practice approach for communal recycling services has been used in upskilling waste and recycling officers across Kent, and developing local improvement plans.

In some areas, recycling is significantly contaminated with non-recyclable waste, leading to more rejected loads, lower recycling rates and higher costs as this waste is diverted to energy from waste plants.

The partnership established a refreshed communications group, involving officers from all authorities. This group identifies communications priorities in response to new data, insight and legislative changes, and then design and deliver campaigns and actions.

KCC has funded the development of a five-year Behaviour Change Strategy, commissioning expertise from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Behaviour Change unit.

Future plans:

Short term:

- Continue to increase the capture and recycling of food waste, building on the 2025 food waste campaign.
- Improve local authority-managed communal recycling facilities, based on proven best practice, and engage with social and private sector housing providers to deliver these.
- Trial new approaches to reduce the contamination of dry mixed-packaging recycling.
- Deliver a more joined-up approach to resident communications and campaigns.
- Deliver targeted campaigns, such as battery safety and fly-tipping prevention, to encourage residents to make good disposal choices, meet their duty of care and help reduce costs incurred by local authorities (due to the clean-up and enforcement of fly-tipping and losses from waste fires).
- Continue to develop the reuse shops initiative and bid for funding to pilot and provide proof of concept for new reuse and repair offerings.

Long term:

- Further build on the success of targeted behaviour change interventions and communications that reduce overall household waste and increase recycling and reuse.
- Build on reuse and repair initiatives and campaigns to achieve mainstreamed offers.

Aim 4: Supporting the transition to a unitary waste management system(s)

Current position:

Kent local authority leaders have developed several blueprints that propose the future administrative boundaries of Kent. These must be approved by central government, which has also set out the key milestones to be delivered as a route map to local government reorganisation.

Kent Resource Partnership members have contributed to the process to help identify critical risks and opportunities for waste systems and services.

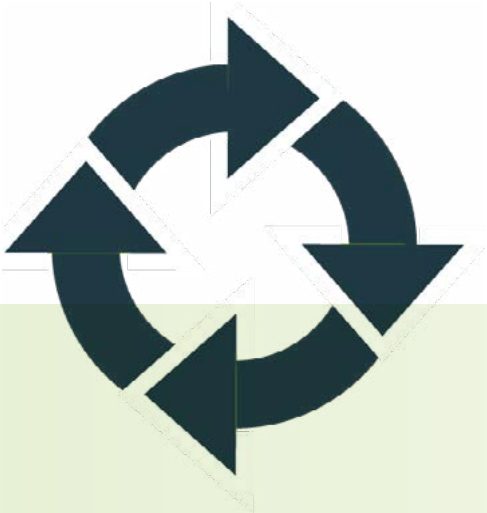
Future plans:

Short term:

- Kent Resource Partnership members play an active part in the development of the waste management system(s) under the new administrative boundaries (when known).

Long term:

- Support the implementation of the new waste management system(s).
- Develop new partnership arrangements, as required, to retain a Kent-wide focus on delivering efficient and effective services and enable new innovations.



e-Waste Warriors

The e-Waste Warriors: responsible electrical recycling and repair

After a successful bid for the Electrical Recycling Fund (Material Focus), the Low Carbon Kent team launched e-Waste Warriors, a pilot project promoting electrical recycling and repair skills training in schools.

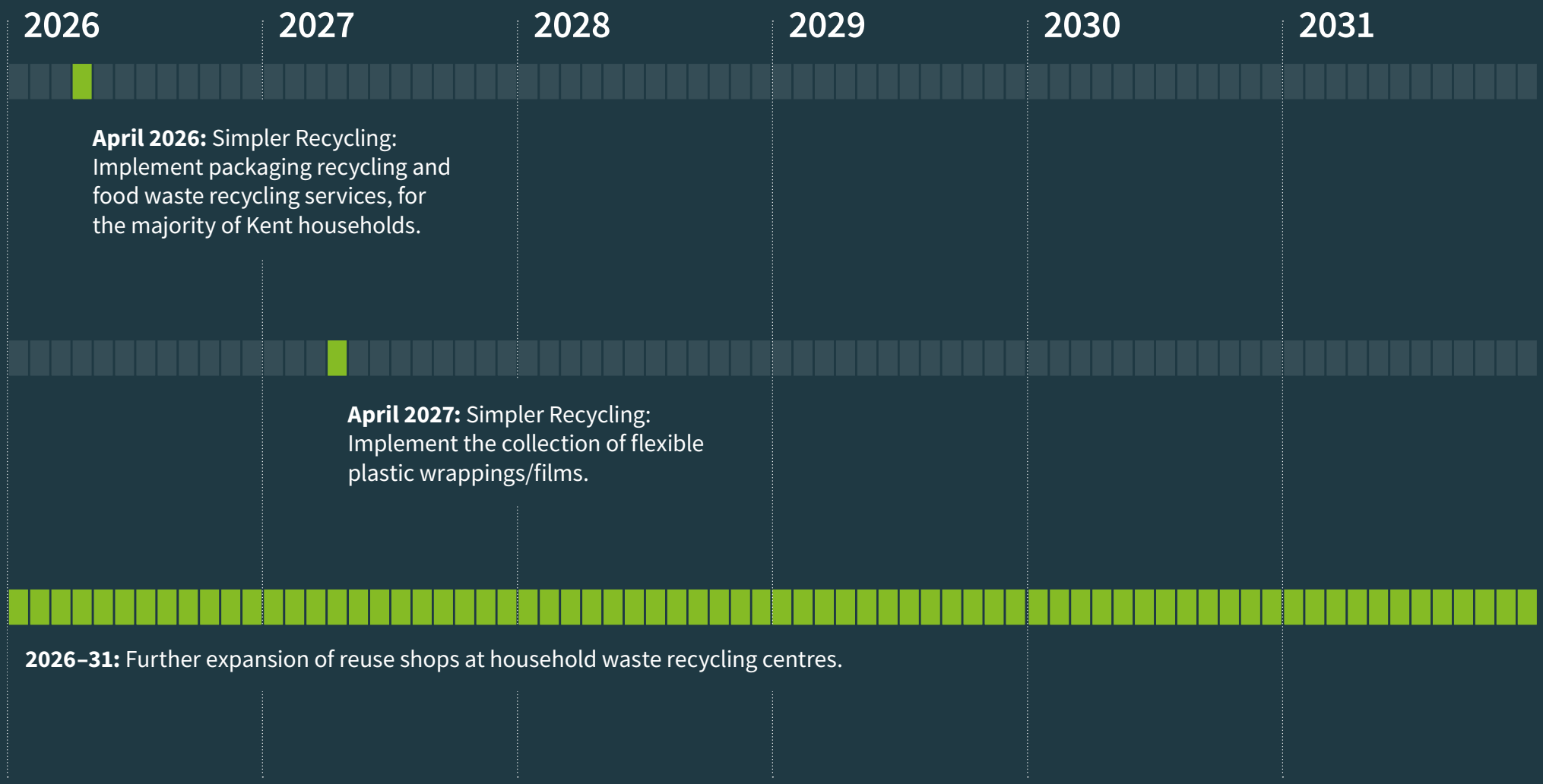
The project worked with 36 schools across the county, in six different districts, engaging 21,324 children and their families in responsible electrical recycling messaging. In total, 3,633 students were trained in repair skills using Team Repair kits, over 5 tonnes of e-waste was collected for recycling and 190 items (366kg of electricals) were repaired at events, equating to £13,077 of savings for community repair cafe users.

5 tonnes of e-waste was collected for recycling

High level action plans and measuring success

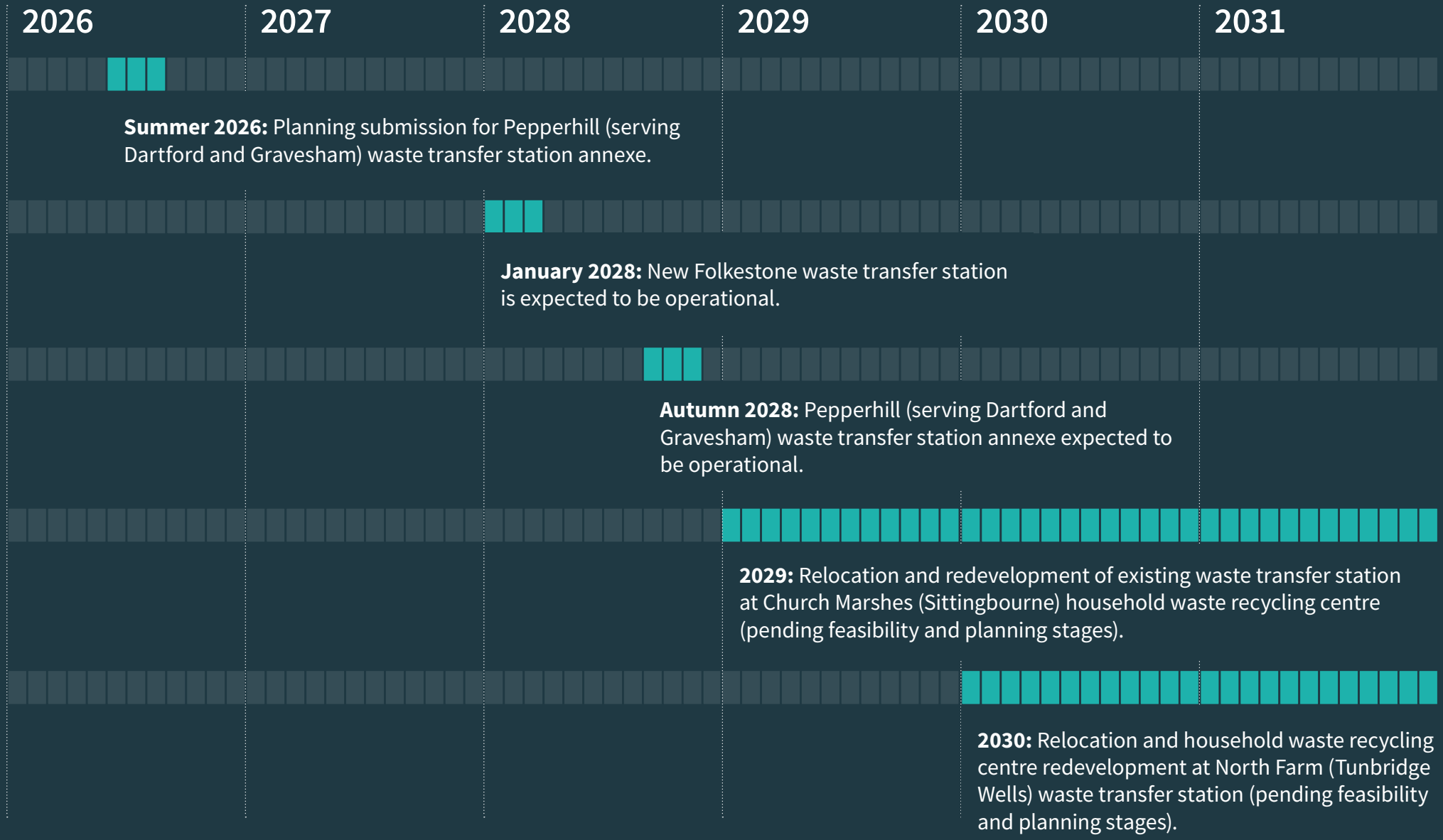
Service changes*

Kent Resource Partnership will agree priorities and deliver an annual action plan, in line with the strategic aims, drawing on identified opportunities (see Appendix 2), combined with new information, data and insight. Projects and additional resources will be primarily funded from the Kent Resource Partnership projects budget, and supplemented where needed by securing funds from external grants.

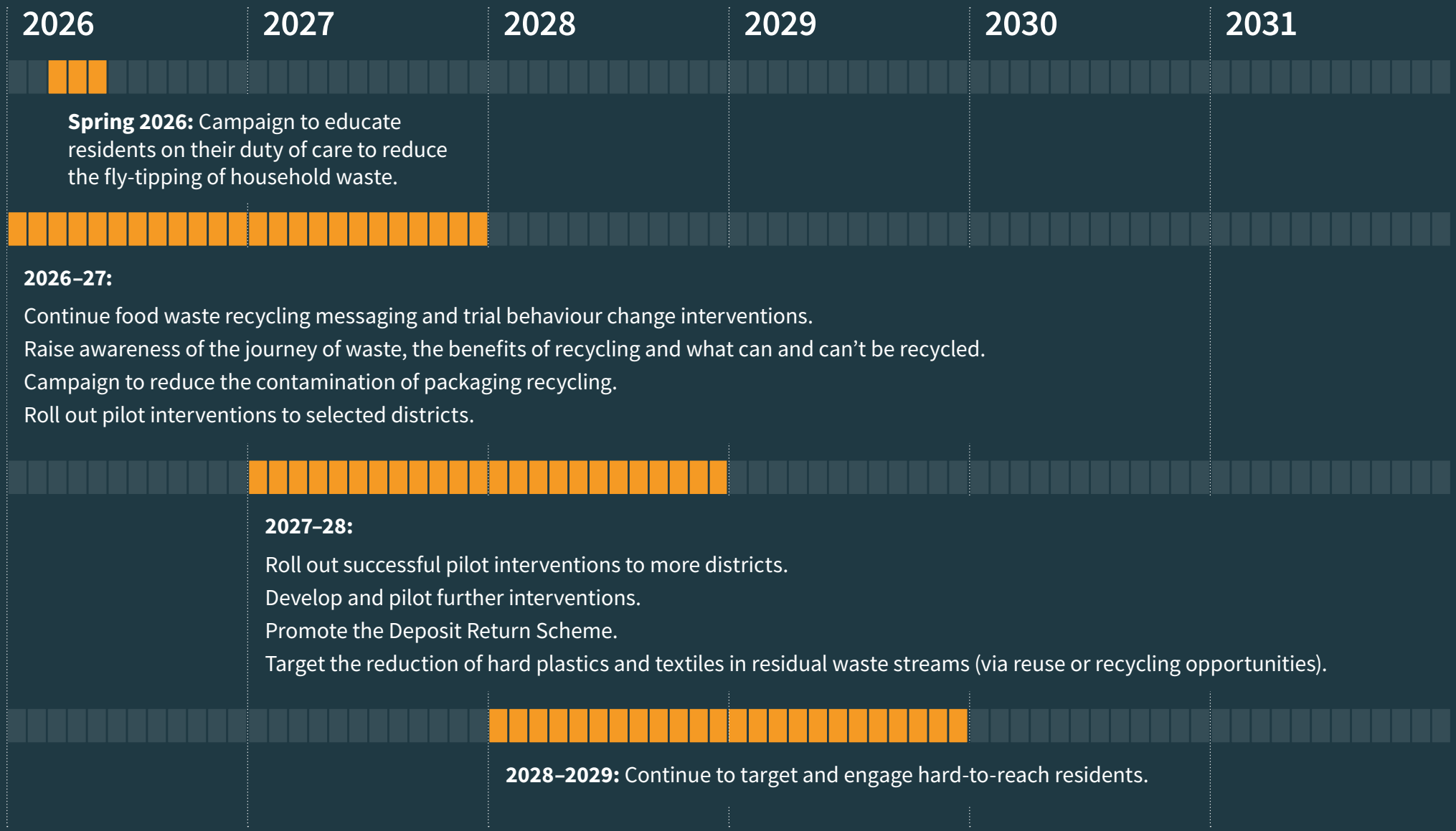


*subject to the current timeline

Infrastructure



Resident engagement and behaviour change



Measuring success

As outlined above, the previous strategy focused on measuring and reporting the data required by Defra (ex-National Indicators NI191, 192 and 193 plus fly-tipping data). These provide long-term trends and allow Kent authorities to benchmark performance against other similar local authorities, the South East and the all-England averages. This limited set of measures no longer satisfies the needs of the partnership or the legislation introduced since 2018.

The government's **Resources and Waste Strategy (2018)** reinforced and added to existing national targets to set more ambitious recycling rates, further reduce waste sent to landfill and reduce avoidable waste, specifically targeting plastics. In the same year, the **25 Year Environment Plan** was published, the first statutory **Environmental Improvement Plan** (further revised December 2025), followed by the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and the Environment Act 2021.

This framework introduces more ambitious targets up to 2050, which apply to waste collection and waste disposal authorities in England. These targets are summarised in Figure 9.

The Kent Resource Partnership members will continue to meet the reporting requirements required by Defra and commits to developing additional performance measures and targets, aligned with the aims of this strategy, as summarised in Table 9. (These measures will be refined further as more guidance is available, such as how to measure the term 'efficient and effective', which appears in the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Regulations, and in relation to the plans for local government reorganisation.)

The intention is to track local progress in influencing residents' behaviours to achieve higher levels of performance, such as reducing total and residual waste, diverting more waste to reuse and repair (where data is available), and reducing the number of incidents of household waste that is fly-tipped in Kent.

Targets set by waste legislation (England)

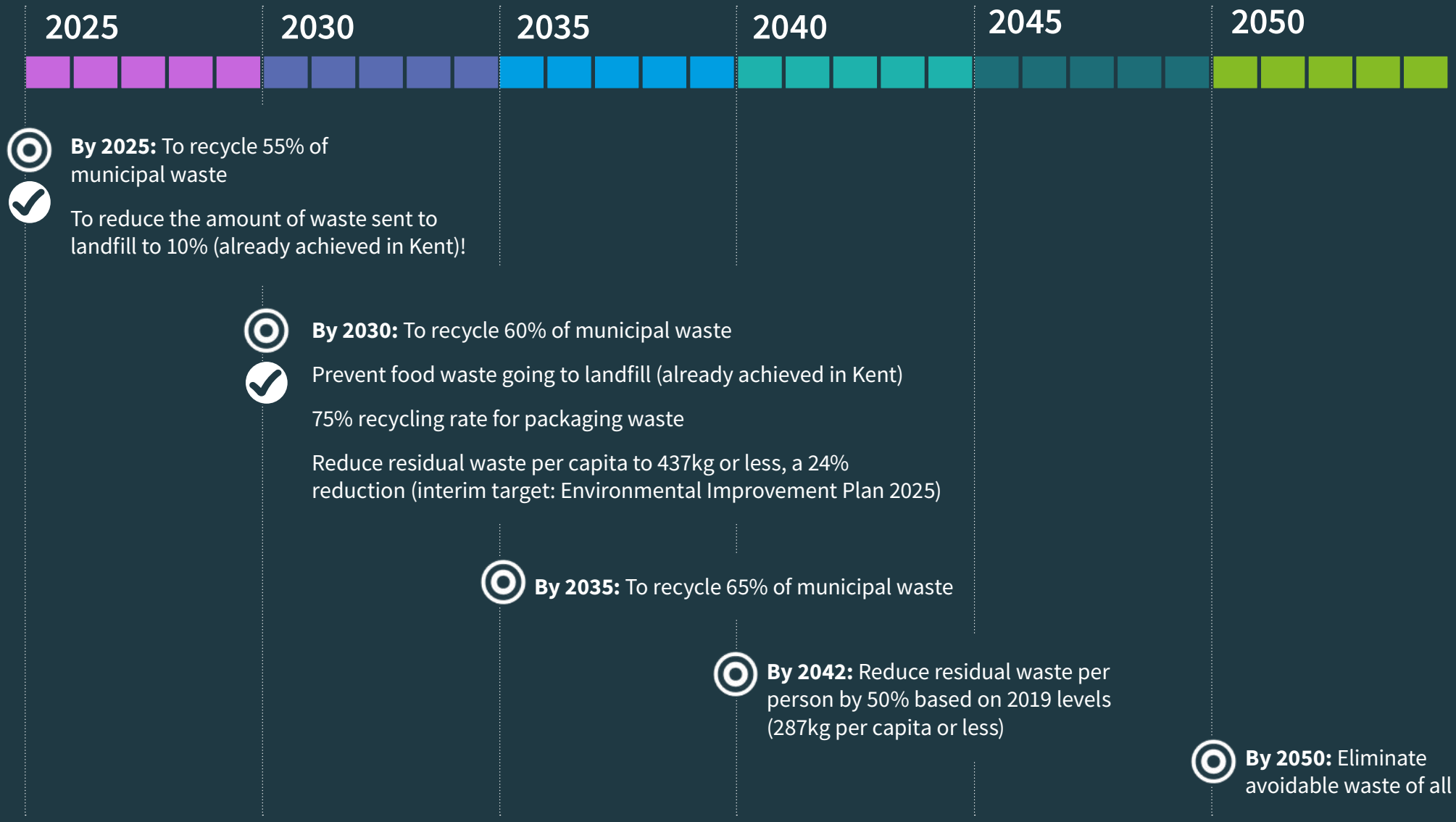


Figure 9

Monitoring achievement of the strategic aims

Strategic aim 1: Delivering operational excellence

Action

a. Develop improvement plans that deliver 'efficient and effective' waste management. (Use Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging assessments as the starting point for measurement)

b. Develop new waste infrastructure that allows the transfer of waste to the disposal authority within or close to the boundary of the district/borough it is collected from

c. Reduce the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste

Measure

a. Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging measure of 'efficient and effective' (as defined by Defra/Pack UK)

b. Number of collection authorities that paid tipping-away costs (and total £ paid)

c. Measure the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste plants (and the cost impact, in £ per tonne)

Target

a. Maximise the level of Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging annual payments awarded by avoiding performance-based deductions (based on 'efficient and effective' methodology)

b. Reduce the number of collection authorities eligible for tipping-away costs

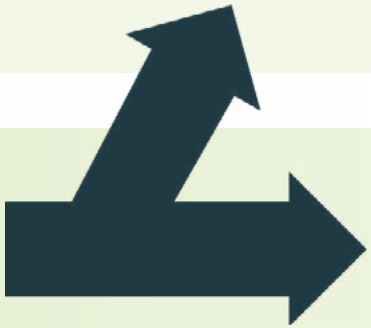
c. Reduce year-on-year the greenhouse gas emissions impact of residual waste sent to energy from waste plants

Strategic aim 2: Supporting a pathway to a circular economy

Action	Measure	Target
a. Deliver services aligned with Simpler Recycling legislation	**a.** Number of districts/boroughs compliant	**a.** Compliance with Simpler Recycling (TEEP assessments completed where required)
b. Develop targeted interventions that reduce overall waste collected	**b.** Total waste collected per household and per person (2023–24 baseline 932kg/hh and 406.5kg/person)	**b.** Aim for year-on-year reductions (no set target)
c. Develop targeted interventions that increase the capture of recyclable items	**c.** Proportion of total household waste collected for recycling	**c.** Increase the proportion of total household waste that is collected for recycling (adjusted for Deposit Return Scheme impacts)
d. Develop infrastructure and promote options that increase the capture of items collected for reuse	**d.** Tonnage of materials diverted to reuse (from kerbside and household waste recycling centres)	**d.** Increased reuse tonnage (at household waste recycling centress and kerbside)

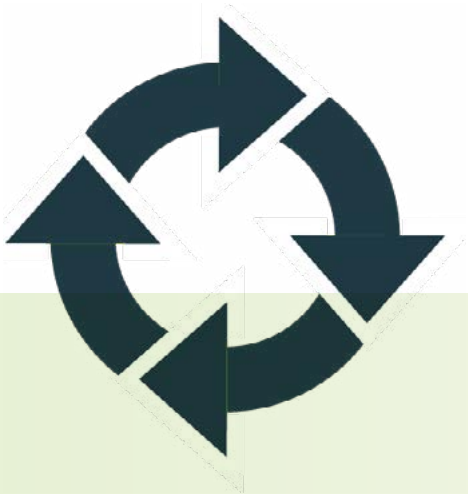
Strategic aim 3: Improving performance through behaviour change

Action	Measure	Target
Develop targeted interventions or campaigns that help residents to: **a.** reduce the waste they produce **b.** increase the number of items reused and recycled (prioritising food, textiles, electricals and hard plastics) **c.** correctly separate their waste to reduce the contamination of recycling **d.** increase the number of items repaired **e.** fulfil their duty of care to prevent their waste being fly-tipped	Number of successful interventions and campaigns delivered, and the results of each. Examples: **a.** Tonnage of separate food waste collected and % diverted from residual (using 2025 waste composition baseline) **b.** of residual waste diverted due to increased capture of electricals, textiles and hard plastics **c.** % of recycling that is contaminated **d.** Data for repaired items (not yet readily available) **e.** Number of reported fly-tipped incidents on public land	Performance target(s) set for each intervention or campaign



Strategic aim 4: Supporting the transition to unitary waste management system(s)

Action	Measure	Target
Kent Resource Partnership proactively engages with and contributes to a whole-system approach and prepares services for implementation	To be developed as part of the local government reorganisation planning process. **Example:** Deliver expected standards of waste collection and disposal services from day one (vesting day)	To be developed as part of the local government reorganisation planning process. **Example:** No significant interruption to service delivery for residents



Glossary of terms

Circular economy
A system where materials never become waste. It benefits the natural environment by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. Products and materials are kept in circulation through processes such as maintenance, reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.

Co-mingled collection
Clean and dry mixed recycling, including paper, cardboard, plastics, metal cans and glass, collected in a single recycling container.

Commercial waste
Waste generated by businesses and commercial activities, including from offices, schools, hospitals, shops, factories, agriculture, sport, recreation and entertainment. It also includes any business run from home, such as childminding, hairdressing, beauty treatments and dog grooming. This waste may be similar to household waste but must be managed and disposed of separately.

Communal waste/recycling
Waste services provided to properties, such as flats, where waste bins are shared by several households and normally sited in a bin store or a specific external location.

Composting
The degradation of organic wastes in the presence of oxygen to produce fertiliser or soil conditioner. This can either be an enclosed process (in-vessel) or operated as an 'open windrow' process.

Defra
The UK government's Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Dry mixed-packaging recycling
Recyclable materials that are clean, dry and free from food contamination, such as paper, cardboard, metal cans, plastic containers and glass.

The Environment Agency
The Environment Agency for England was formed by the Environment Act 1995 and established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment. It regulates emissions of, and pollutants, to air, land and water. This includes the regulation and enforcement of waste management activities.

Energy from waste
The conversion of waste into a usable form of energy, often heat or electricity.

Fly-tipping
The illegal disposal of household, industrial, commercial or other 'controlled' waste.

Food waste
All food that is discarded by households, including uneaten cooked food, fruit and vegetable peelings, meat/fish bones, eggshells, any food that is past its 'use by' date or food that is no longer edible (having been stored incorrectly or for too long).

Avoidable food waste
Discarded edible food that could have been consumed. It may be due to buying or cooking too much, or having been stored incorrectly or for too long so it is past its 'use by' date or is no longer edible because it has gone off or rotted.

Green jobs
Work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. This includes protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, conserving natural resources by reducing energy, materials and water consumption, and avoiding waste and pollution.

Greenhouse gas emissions
Gases released by natural or artificial processes that lead to heat being trapped within the earth's atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases.

Homes of multiple occupation
An individual building, or part of one, where two or more households, or at least three individuals who constitute more than one household, share a basic amenity such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities, and the building is the occupants' main residence.

Household waste (subset of municipal waste)
Waste from domestic properties, including waste brought to household waste recycling centres, material collected for recycling and composting, and street-cleansing waste.

Household waste recycling centres
Sites operated by the waste disposal authority where residents within a specified area can bring and dispose of their household waste, in particular bulky waste, normally free of charge (with some exceptions).

Kerbside collection
Any regular collection of household waste from private households, including flats with communal waste facilities, and from commercial or industrial premises (where provided). It excludes collection services requested ad-hoc.

Kent Resource Partnership
The body that is entrusted to develop and deliver the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. It is made up of senior officers reporting to a board of elected councillors representing the 12 district, borough and city councils, and KCC.

Landfill sites
Areas of land in which waste is deposited, often disused quarries. Where there are no readymade voids, the waste is deposited above ground and the landscape is contoured (land-raising).

Local government reorganisation
The process of restructuring local authorities and their boundaries in two-tier areas (a county council and district, borough and city councils), including those with existing unitary councils. This policy, being implemented by the UK government in England, is intended to achieve local government savings and efficiencies.

Municipal waste
(also known as LACMW – local authority-collected municipal waste)
Household and business waste collected by local authorities and which is similar in nature and composition to that required by the Landfill Directive. It includes all household waste, street litter/sweepings, waste delivered to local authority-managed recycling points/sites, and waste from municipal parks and gardens). **(Footnote 9)**

Per capita
Often used in place of 'per head' or 'per person'.

Product lifecycle
The four stages of a product: introduction, growth, maturity and decline.

Recycling
The processing of waste materials into the same product or a different product. Many types of household waste, such as paper, cardboard, glass, metals and some plastics, can be recycled.

Recovery
Obtaining value from waste through reuse, recycling, composting or other means, such as by anaerobic digestion (of organic wastes) or energy recovery.

Residual waste
Waste that is not recycled or reused, including recycling materials that are contaminated. When collected from households or commercial businesses, it is often called 'black bag' or 'general' waste. It also includes waste taken by residents to household waste recycling centres that cannot be recycled or reused, and is segregated in the waste-to-energy collection containers or bays.

9 Source: **Local authority collected waste – definition of terms – GOV.UK**

Reuse
Items that are designed to be used multiple times, such as refillable containers, reusable packaging and bags. This also includes items no longer of use to one person but, because it is still fully working or in a usable condition, it can be used by someone else.

Reuse, recycling and composting rate
The proportion of household waste collected by local authorities in Kent (through local authority collections and at household waste recycling centres) that is reused, recycled or composted.

Sustainable waste management
Using material resources efficiently to reduce the amount of waste produced. Where waste is generated, it is dealt with in a way that actively contributes to and balances the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.

Twin-stream collection
Clean and dry recycling that is separated into two streams: one for paper and cardboard and the other for mixed plastics, metal cans and glass. Each stream is collected in a separate recycling container.

Waste arisings
The amount of waste produced in a given area during a given period of time.

Waste collection authority
A local authority charged with the collection of waste from each household in its area on a regular basis. It can also collect, if requested, commercial and industrial waste from the private sector. In England, these are district, borough or city councils and unitary authorities.

Waste containers
Bins, caddies, boxes or bags provided to households or commercial premises for the separation and collection of different waste streams.

Waste disposal authority
A local authority charged with the disposal of household waste collected in its area (by waste collection authorities or at household waste recycling centres). In England, these are usually county councils and unitary authorities.

Waste hierarchy
An abstract framework introduced by the EU Waste Framework Directive that prioritises the options for waste management. It represents a sliding scale, starting with the most preferred, highest impact option (prevent) to the least preferred, lowest impact option (disposal): prevent, reuse, recycle, recover, dispose.

Waste or recycling infrastructure
Includes waste collection containers (bins/boxes/bags), vehicles, bulk containers and premises used to accept, store, sort and/or process different types of waste materials.

Waste management
The collection, sorting, treatment and disposal of waste.

Waste transfer station
A location that is permitted by the Environment Agency to accept and temporarily store municipal waste(s) delivered by waste collection vehicles, prior to bulk consolidation and onward transport via larger vehicles to a waste processing plant, energy-to-waste facility or landfill site.

Unitary governance
For waste services, a single local authority organisation that has a statutory duty to collect and dispose of municipal waste and deliver street cleansing and enforcement.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of relevant waste legislation and essential guidance

Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990)

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Waste collection authorities have a duty to arrange for the collection of household waste in their area and certain commercial waste on request.
- Apply a duty of care: waste must be stored, transported and transferred safely to authorised persons with accurate documentation.

Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Apply the waste hierarchy: prevent, reuse, recycle, recover, dispose.
- Requirement for separate collection of paper, metal, plastic, and glass (where practicable) by 2015.
- At least 50% by weight of waste from households to be prepared for reuse or recycled by 2020.

Controlled Waste Regulations 2012

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Defines household, commercial and industrial waste.
- Local authorities may charge for collection/disposal or certain non-domestic household waste (e.g. from schools, hospitals or care homes).

Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) (Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England)

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Confirmed 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020.
- Set a 65% recycling rate for municipal waste by 2035 and a 75% recycling rate for packaging waste by 2030.
- Aim to reduce municipal waste to landfill to 10% or less by 2035.
- All plastic packaging to be recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.
- Work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030.
- Reiterated goal to eliminate avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and eliminate avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050 (in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan).
- Strategies to crack down on waste crime.

25 Year Environment Plan (2018)

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Ambition to eliminate all avoidable waste within the UK by 2050.
- Target to end avoidable plastic waste by 2042.
- Commitment to meet or exceed existing waste targets on landfill, reuse and recycling (e.g. 50% recycling of household waste by 2020).
- Plan to develop new ambitious targets and milestones for waste reduction and resource efficiency.

Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Updated targets to recycle 55% of municipal waste by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035.
- Requirement to reduce landfilling of municipal waste to 10% or less by 2035.

(These amendments implemented the EU circular economy package targets in UK law, building on the 2011 Regulations.)

Environment Act 2021 (UK)

Targets and goals (relevant to local authority duties)

- Legally binding target to halve the amount of waste per person sent to residual treatment by 2042 (compared to the 2019 baseline).
- Overall goal is to support a shift towards less waste and more recycling.
- Introduces new policies: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging, consistent recycling collections across England (now called Simpler Recycling); Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers.

Appendix 2: Opportunities

Countywide approach to resident engagement, communication and behaviour change

Requirements

- All partners participate in the KRP communications group to develop joint campaigns

Actions

- Agree priority campaigns and action plans
- Refresh/simplify web resources
- Targeted behaviour-change interventions based on district insights

Realisation timeframe

- Continuous programme, priorities agreed annually

Resource required

- District/county

Extended Producer Regulations for packaging. New investment funding for packaging for all local authorities

Requirements

- Efficient and effective collections and disposal systems
- Improvements to quality and quantity of material
- Effective data capture and analysis
- Proactive and measurable behaviour change campaigns

Actions

- Complete modelling collection systems (Ricardo)
- Develop incentive scheme for one-system approach
- Apply insight from collection and disposal data to identify improvements
- Current investment from KCC and KRP
- Working with WRAP to develop 5-year Behaviour Change Strategy

Realisation timeframe

- Initial funding allocated 2025–26
- Ongoing (data gathering)

Resource required

- District/county

Simpler Recycling

Requirements

- Collection of core materials by March 2026
- Waste collection authority: bins/ vehicles/crews
- Waste disposal authority: infrastructure/contracts for disposal

Actions

- Ensure readiness of collection and disposal systems

Realisation timeframe

- March 2026

Resource required

- District/county

Flexible plastics

Requirements

- Market development and readiness

Actions

- Support infrastructure and introduce new collection systems

Realisation timeframe

- March 2027 – Future uncertainty

Resource required

- District/county

Deposit Return Scheme

Requirements

- 'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit, refunded on return to designated point

Actions

- Potential reduction in litter/street cleansing costs

Realisation timeframe

- October 2027

Resource required

- District

Local government reorganisation

Requirements

- Removal of two-tier system
- Creation of unitary system

Actions

- KRP to feed into waste workstream

Realisation timeframe

- March 2028 (development from late 2025)

Resource required

- KRP

Increase items captured within recycling streams

Requirements

- Services keep pace with market and materials developments

Actions

- Increase recycling offers at household waste recycling centres
- Communicate clearly to residents what can/can't be recycled at kerbside, and encourage the most cost-effective and environmentally sound means of disposal for different waste materials e.g. at household waste recycling centres, charities or community reuse and repair initiatives

Realisation timeframe

- Immediate and ongoing

Resource required

- District/county

Community repair

Requirements

- Public sector support for community repair, including repair café networks and linked activities

Actions

- Support and develop community repair initiatives

Realisation timeframe

- Immediate

Resource required

- County

Engage more residents to adopt positive actions and behaviours

Requirements

- Residents become part of the solution for achieving efficient and effective services
- Extend reach through wider partnership approaches, e.g. healthy eating and reducing food waste

Actions

- Use demographic data and insight to inform interventions and campaigns

Realisation timeframe

- 1–5 years

Resource required

- KRP

Community reuse

Requirements

- Support and promote initiatives, e.g. Library of Things, community and charity collection service

Actions

- Implement and expand reuse programmes, bidding for external funding

Realisation timeframe

- Within 1 year

Resource required

- District/county

Whole-system approach

Requirements

- Integrated planning across waste streams
- A consistent approach to waste charges that encourages positive resident behaviour

Actions

- Develop a holistic waste-management strategy.
- Revised mechanism for sharing financial risk and reward

Realisation timeframe

- 1-5 years

Resource required

- District/county

Supporting local businesses

Requirements

- Reduce, reuse, recycle initiatives.
- Industrial/business clusters and anti-littering campaigns

Actions

- Engage local authority economic development teams, BIDs and community groups

Realisation timeframe

- Ongoing

Resource required

- District/county

Influencing planning/housing development

Requirements

- Accessing developer contributions to support waste infrastructure
- Develop relationships with housing teams and through Kent Housing Group.
- Enhance Kent Design Guide

Actions

- Advocate for sustainable waste practices in planning

Realisation timeframe

- Ongoing

Resource required

- District/county

Improved reporting of fly-tipping (on public and private land)

Requirements

- Identify fly-tipping hotspots to enable better targeting of limited public sector resources (e.g. Environment Agency, police, local authority enforcement teams)

Actions

- Identify a single reporting or data-capture mechanism within existing budgets

Realisation timeframe

- 1–2 years

Resource required

- KRP and other agencies

Appendix 3: Challenges

Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

Requirements

- Compliance with ETS regulations (encompassing energy from waste treatment process)

Impacts

- Financial: estimated £12–£17m annual increase in disposal costs (government support to local authorities still uncertain)

Impact timeframe

- Jan 2028

Mitigations

- Behaviour change; lobbying (EPR); investigating new technologies (e.g., dirty materials recovery facility (MRF), district heat)

Simpler Recycling

Requirements

- Separate collection of paper and cardboard (2026) and flexible plastics/ film (2027); vehicles/bins upgrade

Impacts

- Operational: need for new collection infrastructure

Impact timeframe

- March 2026 and March 2027

Mitigations

- TEEP assessments; route optimisation; public engagement

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

Requirements

- 'On-the-go' drinks containers subject to deposit

Impacts

- Collection round review to address inefficiencies; disposal contract renegotiation; potential increases to disposal costs

Impact timeframe

- October 2027

Mitigations

- Modelling collection impacts; procurement strategy review; stakeholder engagement; increased capture of organics for recycling

Disruption from local government reorganisation

Requirements

- Strong partnership approach and coordination across new local governance structures

Impacts

- Operational: service disruption; planning delays

Impact timeframe

- Immediate–5 years

Mitigations

- Cross-authority planning; contingency frameworks; staff training

Flexible plastics readiness

Requirements

- Market development for flexible plastics

Impacts

- UK market readiness gap may require waste exports to EU; increased costs vs low tonnage capture

Impact timeframe

- Immediate–5 years

Mitigations

- Industry partnerships; pilot schemes; technology trials

Stretching government Environmental Improvement Plan targets

Requirements

- Meeting ambitious targets for recycling and waste reduction

Impacts

- Market unpredictability regarding plastics and textiles

Impact timeframe

- Immediate–beyond 2030

Mitigations

- Scenario planning; innovation funding; policy engagement

Political cohesiveness risk

Requirements

- Unified policy direction across stakeholders

Impacts

- Strategic misalignment means delays in decision making

Impact timeframe

- Ongoing

Mitigations

- Stakeholder forums; evidence-based lobbying; transparent reporting

Ageing disposal infrastructure

Requirements

- Investment in modern facilities

Impacts

- Increased risk of breakdowns and inefficiencies

Impact timeframe

- Ongoing

Mitigations

- Infrastructure investment plans; risk assessments; maintenance upgrades

Fly-tipping (waste crime)

Requirements

- Consistent enforcement and monitoring; improved reporting

Impacts

- Increasing serious organised crime; environmental pollution; public dissatisfaction; agricultural losses

Impact timeframe

- Ongoing

Mitigations

- Development of digital waste tracking; community engagement; enforcement campaigns

Fires in waste facilities and/or collection vehicles

Requirements

- Fire prevention protocols; material handling improvements; public communications about the safe disposal of batteries

Impacts

- Safety risks; operational disruption

Impact timeframe

- Ongoing

Mitigations

- Fire-risk audits; staff training; improved sorting and storage; explore potential of artificial intelligence camera technology that can identify waste types

For further information email: **krp@kent.gov.uk**