

Central Bedfordshire Council

05 August 2025

Executive Committee

Draft waste strategy

Report of:

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Responsible Director:

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This report relates to a decision that is: Non-Key

Purpose of this report

1. To provide an overview of Central Bedfordshire Council's Draft Waste Strategy
2. To seek Executive approval to launch a public consultation on the Draft Waste Strategy

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Executive is asked to:

1. Review the Draft Waste Strategy
2. Approve the launch of a public consultation regarding the Draft Waste Strategy

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Waste Strategy as part of the public consultation, following Executive Committee approval of the planned public consultation.

Executive Summary

4. Increasing costs of waste management and new Government legislation are driving changes to how waste services are delivered to Central Bedfordshire residents.
5. The Council's Draft Waste Strategy is a long term (i.e. 25 year) strategic document that sets out three broad objectives and the direction of travel and priorities for waste

services in the future. It has been developed in the context of national legislative and policy change which will affect how future services are funded and delivered.

6. The Draft Waste Strategy focuses on applying the waste hierarchy and circular economy and seeks to support local groups and individuals to engage with residents and encourage behaviour change to facilitate reduction in residual waste production and increased reuse and recycling.
7. A public consultation will take place regarding the Draft Waste Strategy between August and October.
8. Following public consultation, it is intended that the Draft Waste Strategy will be presented to the Executive Committee in January 2026 for final approval and adoption.

Background

9. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) is a statutory Waste Collection and Waste Disposal Authority. CBC is responsible for the collection and disposal of household waste within the area. This includes the collection of a number of bins/containers from each household including dry recycling, food waste, chargeable garden waste and residual (black bin) waste, and the provision of four household waste recycling centres (HWRCs).
10. CBC also provides additional kerbside collections of small electrical items, batteries and textiles, clinical waste collections and a chargeable bulky waste collection service.
11. All of these services are included within the scope of the Draft Waste Strategy.
12. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, published in 2018, and other Government proposals means there will be changes to how local authority waste services will be delivered and funded in the future. The Environment Act (2021) and Simpler Recycling measures will obligate councils to expand kerbside recycling services to include a core set of materials and services for recycling in all areas. In Central Bedfordshire, this will mean, alongside all of the currently provided services, there is the requirement to expand food waste collections to include flats and kerbside glass collections to all households by March 2026 and plastic film collections (e.g. plastic wrappers/thin plastic coverings on food containers/plastic bags) from 2027.
13. A national deposit return scheme for plastic and metal drinks containers is also planned to be introduced in England from 2027. This is likely to change the composition and value of kerbside recycling collected by CBC as consumers recycle their drinks containers via different routes rather than via kerbside bins.
14. The Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging aims to increase the amount of packaging that is recycled and encourage the 'designing out' of unnecessary and/or difficult to recycle packaging. The funding and potentially, cost of CBC's recycling services will be impacted by this scheme.
15. From 2027/28 the Emissions Trading Scheme is due to be extended to include carbon emissions from Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities. This is likely to cost CBC more to dispose of non-recyclable waste.
16. CBC is an area of housing growth and the amount of waste in Central Bedfordshire over recent years has also increased. In addition, the cost of waste treatment and

disposal has also increased. These two issues are resulting in a year-on-year increase in waste disposal costs.

17. Central Bedfordshire's recycling rate of 46% (2023/24) is higher than the national average of 42.3%.
18. CBC provides comprehensive waste services for residents. There is scope for improving the quality of recyclable waste contained in kerbside recycling bins, which would save money and result in higher recycling rates.
19. The Waste Strategy will guide the future delivery of waste services in Central Bedfordshire to ensure that they are financially and environmentally sustainable during a period of legislative change.

Central Bedfordshire Waste Strategy

20. The Draft Waste Strategy addresses the need for reducing residual waste production and reusing, recycling and composting as much waste as possible to minimise the environmental and financial impacts of waste in Central Bedfordshire.
21. The Draft Waste Strategy has three objectives: reduce the amount of residual waste that is produced, collected and treated; maximise reuse, repurposing, recycling and composting; and deliver effective cost-efficient and compliant services that are robust, reliable and resilient to change.
22. The Draft Waste Strategy aims to put the waste hierarchy and the circular economy at the heart of decision-making and behaviour. The waste hierarchy treats waste according to a hierarchy of actions with better environmental outcomes at the top of the hierarchy and aims to drive waste up the hierarchy. It gives priority to avoiding (preventing) waste, reducing, reusing, recycling, treating and finally disposing of it. In this way, the council's waste services will align with its Strategic and Sustainability Plans and the Government's ambitions.
23. The circular economy challenges the traditional linear 'take-make-consume-dispose' model of production and consumption, instead, keeping resources in use for as long as possible by recycling, reusing and repurposing items. This prevents waste production at its source, resulting in the council being responsible for less waste.
24. The Draft Waste Strategy describes the crucial part played by Central Bedfordshire residents and identifies the need to support and signpost to empower individuals, groups or organisations best placed within the community to ensure activities remain self-sustaining and effective within communities now and in the future. Furthermore, by encouraging more collaborative working with partners and others, the council will support and encourage behaviour change that results in reduced waste production in the first place (for example by providing information about challenging consumer behaviours such as only buying what is needed).
25. As a universal service, accessed by all residents, waste services are high-profile and affect everyone. As such, a full public consultation will be undertaken to enable residents to scrutinise the Draft Waste Strategy and provide feedback.
26. The consultation documents will present the Draft Waste Strategy, inviting feedback from residents and stakeholders on its approach, objectives and proposed actions.
27. A public consultation is planned between August and October.

Council priorities

28. The Draft Waste Strategy contributes to the core aims of the Council's 'Our Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027' as listed below.
29. Core aim 3: Ensure that environmental, sustainability and climate resilience impact will be at the heart of all Council decision-making.
30. An objective of the core aim is that it will be achieved by 'Promoting recycling, reusing and repurposing', a key part of the waste strategy.
31. The Draft Waste Strategy provides a framework for future decision-making, to ensure the council's contracts and future activities are guided by applying the waste hierarchy and circular economy principles

Legal Implications

32. There are no direct legal implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.
33. There is no legal requirement for a local authority to have a waste strategy, but it is good practice to have an approved document to guide decision making and the future direction of services provided to residents.
34. CBC's Draft Waste Strategy outlines how the council will comply with recent and upcoming legislative requirements.
35. General principles for the conduct of consultations have been established by case law. These are:
36. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage
37. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
38. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response

Financial and Risk Implications

39. There are no direct financial implications linked to the Draft Waste Strategy as it does not commit the council to any future spending and the development of the Draft Waste Strategy will be undertaken within existing resources.
40. The cost of landfill or Energy from Waste (EfW) recovery for residual waste is greater than recycling and composting waste.
41. The implementation of the Emissions Trading Scheme (i.e. per tonne charge for the fossil carbon element of waste delivered to an EfW facility) due to be implemented in 2027/28 is anticipated to cost CBC c. £3,500,000 per annum. Reducing, reusing, recycling and composting more waste aims to form some mitigation for this financial risk.

Equalities and Fairness Implications

- 42. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relationships in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- 43. The duty requires public authorities to demonstrate that they are making financial decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different members of their community.
- 44. An Equality Impact Assessment Relevance Test was completed and found that a full Equalities Impact Assessment was not needed at this stage, due to the nature of the proposals within the waste strategy.

Biodiversity and Sustainability Implications

- 45. The Draft Waste Strategy addresses section 4.1 of the Sustainability Plan, Support thriving Sustainable Communities – ‘To allow flourishing communities access and the means to improve local sustainability and decrease local area emissions, support conscious consumerism, and reduce waste’. Progress in this area is reported on an annual basis via the Council’s Sustainability Progress Report.

Conclusion and next steps

- 46. This Executive Committee report discusses the need for a Central Bedfordshire Waste Strategy to help manage waste in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner.
- 47. A public consultation, including presentation at Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be carried out between August and October 2025.
- 48. The feedback from the public consultation will be incorporated into the final version of the Waste Strategy, which will be presented to the Executive Committee in January 2026 to seek approval for adoption.

Appendices

Appendix A: Central Bedfordshire Draft Waste Strategy

Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment Relevance Test Form

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