

Central Bedfordshire Council

04 September 2025

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny

Draft Waste Strategy

Report of:

Cllr Tracey Wye, Executive Member for Sustainability and Climate Resilience,
tracey.wye@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk .

Responsible Director:

Lorna Carver, Director of Place and Communities
lorner.carver@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

The following sections of this report are exempt: -

None

Purpose of this report

1. To provide an overview of Central Bedfordshire Council's first Waste Strategy
2. To seek the committee's feedback on the Draft Waste Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to:

1. Review the Draft Waste Strategy (attached as an appendix to this report) and provide feedback regarding the Draft Waste Strategy.

Executive Summary

2. Increasing costs of waste management and new Government legislation are driving changes to how waste services are being delivered to Central Bedfordshire residents.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. A public consultation is currently taking place regarding the Draft Waste Strategy. The public consultation is underway and is due to end in October 2025.
6. Feedback and comments received during the consultation period, including those from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee, where appropriate, will be used to shape the final Central Bedfordshire Waste Strategy. Prior to it being presented to the Executive Committee in January 2026 for final approval and adoption.

Background

7. 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).
8. CBC also provides additional kerbside collections for small electrical items, batteries and textiles, clinical waste collections and a chargeable bulky waste collection service.
9. All of these services are included within the scope of the Draft Waste Strategy.
10. 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 require 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 the end of March 2026 and plastic film collections (e.g. plastic wrappers/thin plastic coverings on food containers/plastic bags) from 2027.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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 manage non-recyclable waste.
14. 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 collection, treatment and disposal costs.

15. Central Bedfordshire's recycling rate of 46% (2023/24) is higher than the national average of 42.3%.
16. 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.
17. 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

18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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. This approach aligns CBC's waste services with the CBC Strategic and Sustainability Plans and the Government's ambitions.
21. 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.
22. 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).
23. The committee is asked to provide feedback on the Draft Waste Strategy's approach, objectives and proposed actions.

Council priorities

24. The Draft Waste Strategy contributes to the core aims of the Council's 'Our Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027' as listed below.

- 25. Core aim 3: Ensure that environmental, sustainability and climate resilience impact will be at the heart of all Council decision-making.
- 26. 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.
- 27. 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

- 28. 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.
- 29. The proposed Waste Strategy, currently subject to public consultation, aligns with current and upcoming legislative framework.

Financial and Risk Implications

- 30. There are no direct financial implications linked to the consultation of 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
- 31. The cost of landfill or Energy from Waste (EfW) recovery for residual waste is greater than recycling and composting waste. The proposals in the draft waste strategy that aim to reduce waste production and divert material from residual waste, if implemented, aim to mitigate the risk of waste services being unaffordable in the long term.
- 32. Any additional costs associated with the implementation of new statutory services or requirements will either be funded externally or internally, and subject to the medium-term financial planning process (as appropriate).
- 33. 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

- 34. 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.
- 35. The duty requires public authority 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.
- 36. An Equality Impact relevance test was completed and found that a full Equalities Impact Assessment was not needed at this stage, as there were no negative impacts

identified. A further Equality Impact relevant test will be conducted after the consultation, if required.

Biodiversity and Sustainability Implications

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

37. This report has provided background regarding the purpose of and context for the adoption of a Waste Strategy and provided an overview of the Draft Waste Strategy’s content and approach.
38. A public consultation is planned to take place between August and October 2025. Feedback is being sought from members of the public and other stakeholders, including through in-person and online engagement events.
39. The feedback from the public consultation will be analysed, and the Waste Strategy updated where appropriate, to incorporate into the final version, 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

Report author(s):

Alexandra Hope, Service Manager, Information & Strategy,
Alexandra.Hope@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Sue Smith, Head of Environment, Susan.smith2@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk