

Sutton's Waste minimisation strategy

and waste reduction and
recycling action plan

2019 - 2026

Introduction

Being a Council that is Ambitious for Sutton we have committed to becoming London's most sustainable borough by 2025 through the adoption of an ambitious Environment Strategy. Our ambitions include supporting the transition to a circular economy - an economy where materials are kept in use for as long as possible at their highest value. This means reuse, remanufacture and repair.

In the shorter term, we'll still need to recycle things we no longer need, and dispose of the items that cannot be recycled. This strategy sets out how we will do this, but staying focused on the longer-term aim of a zero waste Sutton.

Vision

Our vision is to create an environment in which we can reduce waste, maximise recycling, reduce the environmental impact of waste, maximise the use of local waste sites, be innovative and lead by example with our own waste.

Objectives

To implement this strategy, the council has produced a Waste Reduction and Recycling Action Plan. This is a requirement from the Mayor of London, and it will be updated every four years. The objectives it covers are to:

Reduce waste

- A) Promote ways to produce less waste and encourage reuse instead.
- B) Develop Sutton as a testbed for the circular economy.
- C) Reduce avoidable food waste by 20% by 2025.

Maximise recycling

- A) Keep Sutton's recycling rate at 50% or higher.

Reduce the environmental impact of waste

- A) Encourage civic pride and local ownership of recycling and waste minimisation by making it easy for the community to develop solutions.
- B) Reduce and seek to improve waste and litter in the street environment.

Maximise the use of local waste sites

- A) Promote recycling and reuse at Kimpton Household Recycling and Reuse Centre.
- B) Continue to treat waste locally.

The council will achieve the above objectives by:

Being innovative

- A) Taking a 'continuous improvement' approach to waste management and minimisation.
- B) Applying for funding to undertake 'behavioural insights' projects.

Leading by example with our own waste

- A) Reducing council waste and increasing recycling.
- B) Increasing material streams collected for recycling or reuse where this is financially viable, with a long-term aim of achieving zero waste.
- C) Including the circular economy and managing waste in line with the waste hierarchy as part of our procurement processes and contracts.

Policy Context

Local context

Reducing waste isn't new for Sutton. Between 2009/10 and 2017/18 household waste reduced by 7%. At the council's civic offices waste reduced by 37% between 2009/10 and 2018/19.

In 2016 the council reviewed its waste policies and found that in some cases residents had multiple bins and were generating excessive amounts of side waste. We introduced a one bin policy and reinforced our "no side waste policy" alongside distributing information about our recycling services.

In April 2017 we introduced a new kerbside collection service. This included a food waste collection service for all houses and purpose-built flats at the same time as moving from a weekly to fortnightly collection for general (residual) waste. The new service included the introduction of a two stream recycling collection service, moving from a fortnightly commingled service to a separate paper and card, and a dry mixed collection (collected on alternate weeks) service. We also introduced kerbside collections of textiles and batteries.

Collectively these changes meant a reduction in general household waste from 48,320 tonnes in 2016/17 to 35,815 tonnes in 2017/18.

The introduction of a food waste collection service diverted 7,363 tonnes of food waste from landfill, which was sent for recycling and in-vessel composting from 2017/18.

Although recycling capacity at the kerbside has increased, household dry recycling/reuse has decreased by 1,108 tonnes in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17. This is in line with our overall ambition to minimise household waste.

The green garden waste subscription collection service changed from a 9 month service in 2016/17 (from April to December), to a 12 month subscription collection service in 2017/18. As a result there was an 8% increase in garden waste collected in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.

Overall, the borough has continued to reduce the waste it produces. This is evidenced by a reduction of 24.1 kilograms of waste per household produced in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17. Communications about how to recycle correctly, together with an annual service reminder to residents, continue to help keep the recycling rate high.

Ambitious for Sutton

[Ambitious for Sutton is the council's corporate plan for 2018-2023](#). The council has five priorities:

- **Being active citizens:** all residents live healthy lifestyles and are enabled to be economically, socially and physically active.
- **Making informed choices:** individuals, families and communities are able to access a diverse range of information, advice and guidance to make informed choices and enable them to sustain change.
- **Living well independently:** building on individual and community resilience to help people maintain their independence for as long as possible.
- **Keeping people safe:** a joined approach by all public services to ensure that vulnerable residents are supported and kept safe.
- **Smarter ways of working:** transforming our ways of working to manage reduced budgets and increasing demand.

Waste management and minimisation principally sits within the Being Active Citizens priority. Within this priority are three areas of focus:

04 - Continue to reduce litter and fly tipping across the borough through:

- *Effective contract management of the borough's street cleaning contract;*
- *Delivering a programme of education and enforcement to encourage people to look after their local area.*

12 - Aim to become the top UK borough for recycling:

- *Management of waste collection, street cleaning and parks contracts to ensure effective delivery of the service.*
- *Keep Household Re-Use and Recycling Centre (HRRC) free for residents and ensure waste is managed sustainably and the costs of waste disposal reduced.*
- *Communication campaigns to encourage people to reduce waste and increase the amount they recycle.*

13 - Commission and deliver a new Energy Recovery Facility on behalf of the South London Waste Partnership and deliver sustainable renewable energy via Sutton Decentralised Energy Network (SDEN), our decentralised energy network.

Although not directly linked, waste management and minimisation relates to the remaining corporate priorities in the following ways:

- **Making informed choices:** what and how to reuse and recycle, and making it easy for people to put the right thing in the right bin.
- **Living well independently:** by providing assisted collections, we can contribute to helping people stay in their own homes for longer.
- **Smarter ways of working:** making it easy to report issues and problems as part of our digital programme; continuing to identify ways to improve the service offer for residents; identifying opportunities to recycle more items which may also increase income.

Sutton's Environment Strategy

The ambition in the Environment Strategy is to become the most sustainable London borough by 2025. Waste minimisation is part of the Creating a Circular Economy chapter. This has two focus areas and three targets:

- *Undertake circular economy pilot projects.*
- *Maximise opportunities to procure goods and services sustainably.*
- *Promote recycling and keep Sutton's recycling rate at 50 per cent or higher.*
- *Help people throw less away and achieve year on year reductions in the amount of rubbish (residual waste) produced by each household.*
- *Help people reduce the amount of avoidable food waste they throw away by 20 per cent by 2025.*

This strategy supports the achievement of these.

Waste and Street Cleansing Business Plan

The waste and street cleansing service is responsible for the contract management of the council's waste collection and street cleansing contractors. The team has the following objectives:

- *Implement waste strategy and policies with the council's key contractors;*
- *Improve the planning and design for waste management in residential properties;*
- *Seek more efficient waste and recycling collections for properties with communal collections;*
- *Work with key stakeholders to increase recycling rates and reduction in contamination;*
- *Ensure effective and more efficient street cleansing services for the authority.*

National and Mayoral context

The government and Mayor of London have a renewed interest in tackling waste and promoting recycling, in the context of a circular economy. The focus on single use plastics has led to the potential for deposit return schemes and changes to extended producer responsibility. The government is also exploring changes to household waste collections and the services councils have to provide.

The council has very limited ability to influence the waste it can recycle by the time it is collected. We will lobby government to take action so that manufacturers of goods and products use packaging that is recyclable.

There is a degree of uncertainty about what waste services in the future might look. This has financial implications for the council as well. In the meantime, this strategy focuses on setting out the waste collection and disposal services the council will provide to the 83,150 households in the borough of Sutton, and the waste policies that support this.

This strategy takes a 'cradle to grave' approach to waste management. It includes how we will help people reduce their waste in the first place and help people put the right thing in the right bin, through to how we collect waste and recycling right first time, and how we dispose of our waste in the most environmentally friendly way possible. It also covers the enforcement action we will take when people dispose of their waste illegally.

Why a new strategy is needed

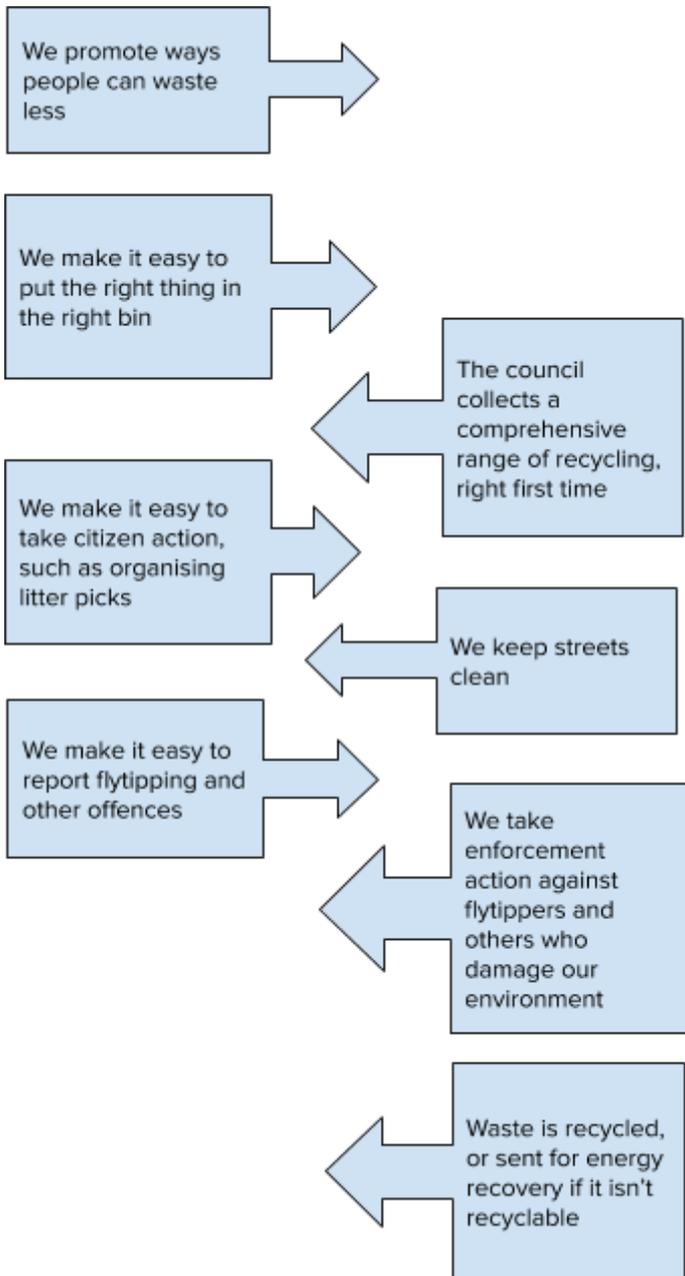
The council last produced a waste management strategy in 2003. Since then, major service changes have taken place, and public and national political awareness about waste and the impact we are having on the planet has increased.

This waste minimisation strategy sits beneath the council's Environment Strategy, adopted in 2019. This sets our vision to become London's most sustainable borough by 2025, and moving towards a circular economy is an important part of this.

As part of the Mayor of London's Environment Strategy, the council is required to produce a Waste Reduction and Recycling Action Plan, updated every four years. This forms the action plan of this strategy.

Our approach

The council has a statutory role to collect and dispose of waste, but we want to work in partnership with residents to achieve this.



Faced with this challenge, we recognise that better and more cost-effective solutions could be reached by working together. By pooling finances, resources and expertise, the four boroughs could save money and deliver a more efficient waste management service on behalf of council tax payers. The South London Waste Partnership was formed in 2003.

The partnership has an Inter Authority Agreement which clearly defines the roles that each of the four boroughs plays and ensures that all boroughs gain equal benefit from being involved.

The SLWP is producing its own waste strategy for the partnership. The South London Waste Plan is also being updated. Waste authorities (Sutton is one) have a responsibility to plan for sufficient space for waste sites in their area. This is for all forms of waste that can be created and need treatment and disposal, for example from business waste, and not just from household waste.

Key challenges

- Population growth and preventing a growth in waste;
- Concern about single use plastics, how recyclable plastics are, and the impact of plastics on wildlife and habitats;
- An increase in the number of flats in the borough and how we collect waste and recycling from these households;
- Addressing contamination in recycling, which needs special treatment before it can be recycled.

Working in partnership

Sutton Council is part of the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP). We have joined with neighbouring boroughs Kingston, Croydon and Merton to work together to provide improved and more cost-effective waste management services to residents.

The partnership started from the realisation that the days of being able to bury our waste in large holes in the ground are gone. All local authorities must be more innovative and find sustainable ways to recover, re-use, recycle, treat and dispose of waste. The environmental and financial cost of getting it wrong is huge.

Current arrangements

The waste hierarchy sets out the council's approach to reducing waste and increasing recycling.



Collections from households

The government and Mayor of London want councils to collect a 'core minimum' of six recyclable materials, including food. Sutton already collects this from all properties with a 'kerbside' collection. The main properties that are excluded from this are flats above shops who do not yet have a food waste collection.

Dry mixed recycling

The council collects plastic, cans and glass from every household in the borough.

Paper and card

The council collects paper and card separately from dry mixed recycling from every household in the borough.

Food waste

The council collects food waste from all kerbside properties in the borough and the majority of flats weekly.

Garden waste

The council has a paid-for subscription service for households with gardens that want this collection.

Textiles and batteries

The council collects textiles and batteries from all households. These items need to be placed in separate clear plastic bags separately from other recycling.

Residual waste (rubbish)

The council collects waste that cannot be reused or recycled from kerbside properties fortnightly.

Other types of collection

Assisted collections

These are provided free of charge to anyone who is unable to place their bins, boxes or bags at the edge of their property on collection day.

Bulky waste collections

The council can collect furniture, large electrical items and white goods for a charge. The cost depends on the number of items for collection.

Christmas trees

In January the council provides a free Christmas tree collection from the kerbside.

Sutton's Waste and Recycling Policies

The council has a series of Waste and Recycling Policies, originally adopted in 2016, which set out how the service operates, the benefits of implementation, and how harmonisation of the service increases recycling and minimises waste.

The policies have been reviewed and updated as part of this strategy, since the commencement of new waste collection services in 2017 provided by Veolia through the South London Waste Partnership. The updated policies can be found in the [Recycling and Waste Policies 2019](#).

The policies include:

- Standard Container Policy - this sets out the containers (bins/boxes/bags) each household will have.
- Exemption of Wheeled Bin Policy - this gives the reasons a property would be exempted from the use of wheeled bins.
- Exceptions Policy – this recognises there may be circumstances where special arrangements are required.
- Contamination Policy - this gives the materials which can and cannot be placed in each of the containers provided.
- Side Waste Policy - this sets out restrictions regarding the collection of side waste and when is it accepted.
- Use of Container Policy - this lists how residents should present their containers for collection.
- Access Policy - detailing how bin stores must be accessible and safe for the collection of waste and recycling.

- Flats and Communal Property Policy – this gives information about the collection of waste and recycling from flats and other communal properties.

Other ways to dispose of items

Recycling banks or 'bring banks'

There are a number of these in the borough, as well as at the reuse and recycling centre. These accept a range of items including clothes, shoes, towels and bed linen; as well as DVDs and computer games.

Household Re-Use and Recycling Centre

The council's reuse and recycling centre is on the Kimpton Industrial Estate. Residents can dispose of recycling and waste for free. There is also a reuse shop for donating and buying furniture.

Household Reuse and Recycling Centre Policies

The Household Reuse and Recycling Centre policies were reviewed in 2019 with the other South London Waste Partnership boroughs and the contractor to improve the operations of the site and harmonise the policies across the boroughs. The updated policies are:

- A restriction on the amount of DIY rubble that can be brought per visit to six rubble bags.
- A restriction on the number of visits per calendar year that can be made by residents in vans.
- A requirement on residents wishing to visit in a van to pre-book.
- Further information on what constitutes a 'large and heavy vehicle' which cannot access the site.

Case study

In 2019 the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre trialled a number of policies aimed at preventing use of the site by commercial traders, which is illegal. This aimed to restrict van access, by requiring vans to pre-book, but still enabling residents with access only to a van to visit the site. Alongside pre-booking, a limit of 12 visits per calendar year was introduced. Data monitored throughout the trial showed 58% of vehicles only visited once, and 97% of vehicles visited four times or fewer.

Waste disposal and treatment

Recycling that is collected is taken to Croydon, Crayford and Rainham. From there it goes to numerous 'off takers' who process the recycling into new materials.

Food waste is processed in Chertsey, Surrey.

Garden waste is processed by various off takers in the south east of England.

Waste that cannot be recycled or reused is thermally treated at the Energy Recovery Facility in Beddington. By no longer using landfill, the borough reduces the amount of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere. Energy recovery is a more preferable treatment in the waste hierarchy as the waste heat from the process is used to generate electricity and hot water.

Waste enforcement

The council contracts environmental enforcement for littering, as well as employing a small number of dedicated and trained officers who undertake environmental enforcement investigations. This includes fly-tipping and other forms of environmental damage.

Street cleansing

Street cleaning services are provided all year round and the council is responsible for ensuring the borough's streets and parks are kept clean and tidy. This includes;

- Sweeping, litter picking, weeds, leaf and blossom removal;
- Emptying and maintenance of the 1000+ litter bins throughout the borough;
- The removal of fly tips, graffiti and fly posting;
- Gully cleaning;
- Winter gritting;
- The removal of dead animals;
- Emergency clearance works.

Existing waste minimisation initiatives

Waste arrangements audits

We are working with housing associations and managing agents to review the waste arrangements for flats where they are not working properly. This includes looking at whether flats have the right number and type of bins. The aim is to improve the experience of residents and the amenity of their block of flats, increase recycling and improve the efficiency of the waste service they receive.

Case study

In December 2017 an audit was carried out at Denmark Gardens for the 116 properties managed by Sutton Housing Partnership. This looked at:

- whether there were enough recycling bins;
- how frequent waste collection was and how the flats and communal property policy was being applied;
- the impact of missed collections and how overflowing bins were contributing to the overall appearance of the area.

As a result, recycling capacity was increased, with an extra 6,960 litres to be made available to all residents in the estate, alongside a 60% reduction in the number of residual containers.

Waste planning guidance

A document produced in conjunction with the Royal Borough of Kingston in 2019 provides guidance on the waste storage and collection requirements that should be considered for residential developments in the borough.

It sets out minimum standards that planners, developers, architects and property managers should be aware of to assist in designing and developing systems that will improve recycling, reduce waste and sets out storage and collection recommendations.

Nappy cashback scheme

The council has offered new parents cashback when they purchase reusable cloth nappies rather than using disposable ones for a number of years. This scheme is currently being reviewed to check it still meets parents' needs, and with a view to promoting it more widely, for example through health visitor and other primary care networks.

Refill Sutton

The council is working with the Refill campaign, which encourages businesses and other outlets to offer free drinking water refills to people who have their own water bottle. We have been promoting the idea and the app to businesses in the borough's main high streets. This helps reduce the amount of single-use plastic bottles bought and discarded each year.

Litter bin use

Case study

In August 2019 funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was used to trial ten solar compactor bins around Sutton High Street, replacing 14 standard litter bins.

In the first four weeks there was a 90% reduction in collections, with 43,949 litres of waste collected. Cleanliness has not been affected whilst there has been a significant decluttering outside of Sutton station and along Brighton Road leading to The Quadrant, due to fewer bins.

Targeting grot spots, improving local environmental quality

The council takes a multi agency approach to tackle areas where there is known fly tipping and continual littering impacting on the local environmental quality and amenity of the area. Taking an approach to target the cleaning up of the area with existing contractors and in some cases local volunteers, whilst reinforcing the message with sustained communications and enforcement action if necessary has seen real results.

Case study

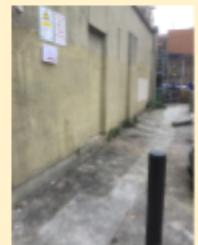
There are pockets of land and service roads around the perimeter of Sutton High Street that are not maintained by the council, but are blighted by littering and flytipping.

Utilising funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government the council launched its Spick and Span campaign in the spring of 2019. This included a programme of pavement washing, a community litter pick in September 2019 with local volunteers around St Nicholas Church and in verge and shrub bed areas not maintained by the council. 32 bags were collected in the space of two and a half hours.

Actions led by Neighbourhood Services were also taken with the town centre management group, environmental enforcement and Veolia. It included sustained communication with local residents and business on how waste should be presented, so as to not attract further fly tipping and littering. Additional signage and service information being provided, revised collections, fixed penalty notices and continual monitoring including cctv.



May 2018



Sept 2018

Data and baseline performance

Municipal waste 2009/10 to 2018/19

Municipal waste is defined as waste collected from households or similar institutions. This includes bulky waste, waste from offices and small businesses that are similar to households, garden waste, street sweepings and the contents of litter bins. It does not include sewage waste or waste from construction and demolition activities. Not all of this waste is collected by the council - waste from commercial properties can be collected by private waste services.

The table below shows the amount of municipal waste produced since 2009/10 and the general trend of a reduction in waste.

Year	Total Municipal Waste (tonnes)
2009/10	87,413
2010/11	87,139
2011/12	85,498
2012/13	83,158
2013/14	83,753
2014/15	81,731
2015/16	84,100
2016/17	85,528
2017/18	79,681
2018/19	80,233

Household Waste 2009/10 to 2018/19

Household waste is waste collected by the council from homes in the borough. The table below shows the amount of household waste since 2009/10. This shows the positive impact on recycling caused by the introduction of a food waste collection service and a one bin policy for residual waste in 2017/18.

Year	Total household waste (tonnes)	Total household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	Recycling Rate
2009/10	77,075	28,911	37.5%
2010/11	77,337	29,067	37.6%
2011/12	75,802	28,323	37.4%
2012/13	74,133	27,080	36.5%
2013/14	74,225	27,504	37.1%
2014/15	73,350	27,556	37.6%
2015/16	75,114	26,080	34.7%
2016/17	76,133	27,813	36.5%
2017/18	71,700	35,884	50.0%
2018/19	72,603*	35,624*	49.1%*

* Awaiting audited figures.

Street Cleansing Data 2012/13 to 2018/19

A breakdown of Street Cleansing tonnages have been provided for 2012/13 to 2018/19. Data prior to this is not currently available to this detail.

These tonnages are already accounted for in the total municipal waste and breakdowns for household waste and other municipal waste.

Year	Street Tonnes	Roadsweep Tonnes	Fly Tip Tonnes	Total tonnes
2012/13	2,989	292	963	4,244
2013/14	3,261	206	978	4,445
2014/15	3,057	222	1,088	4,367
2015/16	2,592	297	1,066	3,955
2016/17	2,726	122	1,333	4,181
2017/18	1,777	1,164	350	3,291
2018/19	1,934	1,821	293	4,048

Commercial Waste 2009/10 to 2018/19

Commercial waste is waste from premises used for trade or business, but excluding industrial waste.

Year	Commercial Total Tonnes	Residual tonnes	Recycling Tonnes	Recycling Rate
2009/10	6,924	6,854	70	1.01%

2010/11	6,287	6,231	56	0.89%
2011/12	6,450	6,370	79	1.24%
2012/13	6,404	6,299	105	1.64%
2013/14	6,575	6,469	105	1.61%
2014/15	5,137	5,084	52	1.02%
2015/16	5,741	5,728	13	0.24%
2016/17	6,099	6,099	0	0%
2017/18	5,141	4,607	534	10.39%
2018/19	5,308	4,684	624	11.75%

Other Municipal Waste 2009/10 to 2018/19

Other municipal waste is waste not classed as household or commercial waste. This includes waste collected as fly tips, rubble and plasterboard and parks waste.

Year	Total Other Municipal Waste
2009/10	3,414
2010/11	3,515
2011/12	3,246
2012/13	2,621
2013/14	2,953
2014/15	3,244
2015/16	3,245
2016/17	3,296
2017/18	2,840
2018/19	2,322

Baseline Data - Household Waste Tonnages 2017/18

In 2017/18 Sutton recycled 50% of its waste for the first time. The table below splits out our waste composition for the year.

Household waste tonnes in 2017/18	
Waste stream	Tonnes
Recycling (paper, card, glass, plastic, tins)	18,345
Garden waste	9,751
Food waste	7,363
Reuse	423

Total household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	35,884
Household rubbish collections	29,023
Non-recyclable from HRRC	4,171
Street cleansing detritus	1,777
Recycling rejected as too contaminated	843
Total non-recyclable waste	35,815
Total household waste collected	71,700
Recycling rate	50%

Most of the recycling the council collects is from homes (68%), but 25% is collected at the reuse and recycling centre (HRRC), 6.25% of it is recyclable street sweepings and 0.75% is collected at recycling banks around the borough.

We want to understand better how we can help people recycle more. It is likely that in the rubbish put out for collection there are still recyclable items. Undertaking a waste composition analysis is included in the Reduction and Recycling Action Plan that accompanies this strategy. This will inform future actions and communications activity and provide a baseline from which improvements can be measured.

Waste from council offices

The council recognises its role in leading by example and reducing waste from its own activities. During the period 2009/10 - 2018/19 the total amount of waste produced at the Civic Offices in Sutton town centre reduced by 37% (50 tonnes) and 49.8% of the waste produced was recycled or composted.

Looking ahead: Mayor of London’s Targets for 2030

The London Environment Strategy sets a target for 65% of London’s municipal waste to be recycled by 2030. As set out in the previous chapter, this includes waste collected by the council as well as waste the council does not have any involvement in - from businesses, for example.

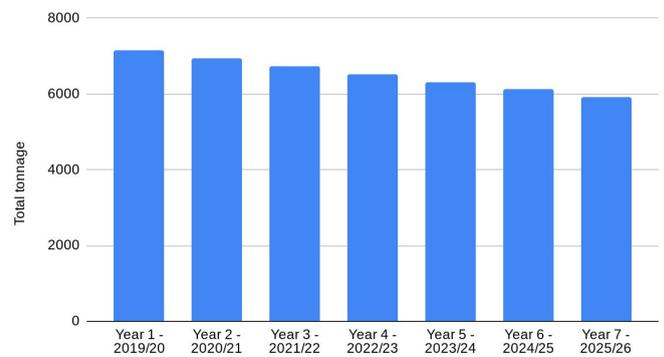
Sutton has achieved step changes in waste minimisation and increased the borough’s recycling rate following major service changes. Sutton is now a leader in London, but as other boroughs catch up, it seems likely that at the end of the lifetime of this strategy, further service change may be required. Such changes are not proposed in this strategy’s lifetime. What is proposed in this strategy is a continued focus on reducing waste and increasing reuse and recycling. An overview of how this will be achieved is set out in this section.

Reducing food waste

The Mayor of London has set a London-wide target to reduce food waste tonnes per household by 20% by 2025. This is a target Sutton has adopted in its Environment Strategy. Reducing wasted food is the way to achieve this. In Sutton, the total amount of food waste needs to reduce by 1,462 tonnes, which is equivalent to 18kg per household, compared to the 2017 baseline.

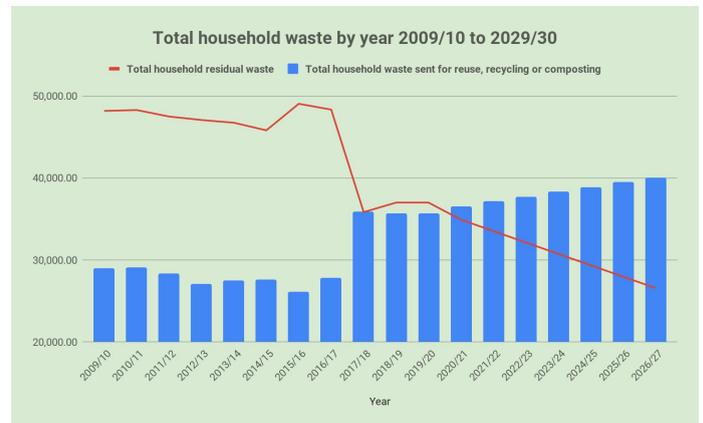
Year	Forecast tonnage	Forecast reduction (tonnage)
2017/18	7,392	
2018/19	7,239	-135
2019/20	7,163	-229
2020/21	6,941	-451
2021/22	6,723	-666
2022/23	6,517	-875
2023/24	6,315	-1,077
2024/25	6,120	-1,272
2025/26	5,930	-1,462

Food waste reduction



Reducing residual waste (rubbish)

Between 2009 and 2019, household residual waste has reduced by 11,185 tonnes. This is equivalent to 162 kg per household. Further reduction of residual waste will be key to meet waste minimisation and recycling rate targets. To achieve a 65% household recycling rate by 2030, residual waste would either need to reduce by 50% against baseline data (i.e. the borough would produce 50% less waste) or residual waste would need to reduce by 38%, with 12% more waste recycled or reused. This would mean a 7,520 tonne reduction overall in household waste for the year 2029/30 compared to 2017/18.



A significant reduction in residual waste will be possible if changes are made to packaging so that more packaging is recyclable; and if new reprocessing options become available, recycling materials that cannot currently be recycled. General awareness about wasting less and reusable alternatives will also help.

Reuse

The introduction of textiles collections from households in April 2017 has seen some improvement in reuse in the borough, and the reuse shop at Kimpton Household Reuse and Recycling Centre also contributes. There are many charity shops and furniture reuse shops in the borough, and these options will need to be used more.

Recycling

Recycling has increased due to food waste collections being introduced in April 2017 that diverted 7,363 tonnes of waste from landfill/energy recovery.

Introducing a separate collection of paper and card from dry mixed recycling collections (plastics, tins, glass) has improved the quality of recycling.

Analysis of recycling rejects in 2017/18 suggests that 442 tonnes of recyclable waste is being put in the wrong recycling bin or should be taken to the reuse and recycling centre for recycling instead. Whilst the overall tonnage is small, we need to improve communications to help people understand what to put in the right bin.

Working with our waste contractors the council will continue to remind residents what needs to be done by placing tags on contaminated bins, followed by targeted letters if the contamination continues.

Government proposals for changes

In 2019 the government consulted on proposals that could make significant changes to the way recycling is collected. These include a Deposit Return Scheme, whereby people pay a small levy on a drinks container, which is refunded when it is returned. Extended Producer Responsibility would place more duties on manufacturers to increase the recyclable content of their packaging. Greater consistency in collections could see greater similarity in the types of materials collected and the bin types and colours of bins across the country. The government also consulted on whether councils should be required to provide a free garden waste collection service. Sutton Council responded to the consultation and will await any further announcements from the government. As the timescales proposed were 2022 onwards, the council will wait for the implementation of these proposals before making any service changes after the lifetime of this strategy.

Enforcement

The council is looking at whether its enforcement efforts for littering, fly-tipping and other environmental crime can be increased. It is envisaged that a higher level of enforcement will lead to greater compliance and a reduction in littering and fly-tipping.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Action Plan

More detail setting out what the council is already doing to achieve waste minimisation and increase recycling, together with outline proposals for new actions, are found in the borough's Waste Reduction and Recycling Action Plan. New initiatives will be consulted on as required prior to implementation.

Factors outside our control that may impact on our ability to meet our targets

Reducing the amount of waste produced in totality requires individuals to use fewer disposable items and instead use reusable items. Ultimately, whilst it is much better to recycle than to throw away, recycling is not the ideal state. It is much better for goods to be reused and remanufactured than recycled.

The circular economy is not a new concept internationally, but it is fairly new to Sutton. Success will be dependent on there being a business case for the organisations who get involved. Reuse networks require financially sustainable business models, independent of government or council funding.

Reducing the amount of waste that cannot be recycled is dependent on manufacturers changing packaging materials to be recyclable. The alternative is for additional markets to open up that accept these materials for recycling. Neither is within the council's control.

Reducing food waste requires households to take a different approach to their food, by freezing or using up leftovers before they go mouldy. Greater confidence in use by dates and home cooking is needed nationally, not just in Sutton.

Having a high recycling rate means people are recycling correctly. People who choose not to recycle or recycle incorrectly causing contamination and rejected loads cannot be made to do it correctly. Likewise littering and fly-tipping are personal choices and there is a limit to what the council can do. Effective enforcement requires evidence that is robust enough for court.

The government's Resources and Waste Strategy sets out bold plans for Extended Producer Responsibility, consistency of council collections, and a Deposit Return Scheme, and the Treasury is looking at a packaging tax. Depending on the results of consultation, there could be significant changes to the way council waste services operate and are funded. The Deposit Return Scheme would add a surcharge to a bottle of drink which would be reimbursed if the item is returned for recycling. If people choose to recycle in this way rather than through council waste services, the recycling rate could reduce by as much as 5%.

The wider fiscal envelope for local authorities remains challenging. Sutton is particularly reliant on external funding for work on communications.

Funding

The council's existing waste budgets will be used to deliver the majority of the proposals in the Reduction and Recycling Action Plan. It is usually cheaper to recycle than to send waste for energy recovery, therefore projects that increase recycling or reduce waste have the potential to pay for themselves.

Where existing resources are inadequate to match the council's ambition on waste, it will be necessary to apply for funding grants as well as secure funding through developer contributions. Therefore some projects may not proceed if funding cannot be secured.

Monitoring and review

It is recommended that this strategy is reviewed and updated in 2026 and 2031.

Progress will be monitored against the targets and the focus areas on waste and the circular economy set out in the Environment Strategy, as well as those in the council's Corporate Plan. Success in achieving waste minimisation and high rates of recycling will be demonstrated in waste tonnage data and the recycling rate.