

## Waste Sorting at Wiltshire's Household Recycling Centres

### Briefing Note No. 23-23

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#### **Provision of new facilities for residents to separate unsorted waste and recycling when visiting Wiltshire's household recycling centres (HRCs).**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 A clear direction is being set out by government under various legislative drivers to manage waste further up the established waste hierarchy. This requires capturing more waste to be utilised as a resource and significantly reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Many of these aspirations are also found in the council's Business Plan. This information note sets out the detail of an approved scheme aimed at achieving these objectives, specifically in the context of our household recycling centre (HRC) network.
- 1.2 Analysis of waste composition in January 2022 has shown that over a third of items put in the rubbish skips at the Wiltshire household recycling centres were recyclable. Many of these items had been disposed of in unsorted black bags. These unsorted bags contained materials that could have been separated for recycling on site, or at home through the kerbside recycling collection service.
- 1.3 All waste placed in the general waste skips at the HRCs is currently disposed of to landfill as it is mixed with bulky items and therefore unsuitable for energy recovery. As well as suppressing our recycling rate, disposing of waste to landfill costs the council £125.77 per tonne and is a cost that could be easily avoided.
- 1.4 The council is continuing to drive recycling efforts by supporting and encouraging people through the 'Let's Sort It' campaign and will now be asking residents to sort their materials before visiting their local HRC. Recently the council has:
  - Extended its messaging to update all residents on what materials should go into each kerbside bin. This has been delivered using a range of communication methods.
  - Rolled out small battery collection as part of its kerbside service.
  - Commenced a new kerbside recycling service which means small rechargeable electrical items can now be collected.

- 1.5 Officers have worked closely with Cabinet members to agree a proportionate approach encourage residents to sort their waste and help remove any recycling from bagged waste at HRCs. A phased implementation of new waste sorting facilities at the sites has been agreed, which will allow the council and its contractors to respond to any issues identified and make necessary amendments to the process to ensure that residents are best supported to increase recycling.
- 1.6 The introduction of additional sorting at the HRCs will be supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, using the established 'Lets Sort It' branding, aimed at encouraging residents to sort their recycling prior to visiting the HRCs, to help keep recyclables separate from non-recyclable waste and reduce the time required on site.
- 1.7 Many local authorities in England and Wales have established policies in place to require residents to sort mixed black bags, either before they arrive or when visiting their recycling centres. These councils have reported their experience to that rates of recycling on their sites have increased, and the majority of site users now sort their waste before travelling to their local HRC, with the measures leading to positive and lasting behaviour change.

## **2. Encouraging users of the HRCs to sort their waste.**

- 2.1 In the first instance, we will encourage residents to sort their waste and separate recyclable items at home rather than bringing mixed black bags of waste to the recycling centres. This will ensure that site users have the best experience when visiting the site and will make their visit more efficient, whilst contributing to actions to help reduce their own carbon impact.
- 2.2 This will be done through extending the recently established "Recycling – Let's Sort It!" communications campaign with the aim of ensuring that residents know exactly what can be collected for recycling at the sites, as well as providing 'hints and tips' on how best to separate their waste prior to their HRC visit. Public-facing communications will commence from mid-August.
- 2.3 Following a phased implementation of new onsite sorting equipment from 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and supporting onsite signage, residents bringing bags or containers of mixed waste for the general waste skip will be asked if their bags contain recyclable waste. If they do contain recyclable waste, residents will be invited to visit a sorting area whereby residents can remove the recycling from their bags. Site operatives will be on hand to help residents identify recyclable items so that they can be removed.
- 2.4 Items can be placed in the small recycling bins labelled by material type at the sorting area. Once residents have sorted their bags and removed any recycling that they choose, the remainder can be disposed of in the general waste skip.
- 2.5 In the first few weeks of waste sorting on site, it is acknowledged that the duration of site visits may take a little longer for some residents, as our site users and staff have more engagement regarding the contents of their bags. It is planned that additional site staff will be on hand to help residents and maintain a flow of visitors through the sites and reduce queuing. Information graphics around the bag sorting tables will also assist residents in their sorting.
- 2.6 Staff will be trained jointly by council waste officers and contractors' managers to ensure that a consistent, supportive, and educational approach is taken when engaging with site users. Appendix 1 documents some of the training information that staff will be provided, including how staff will be asked to communicate with a wide range of residents.

2.7 It is appreciated that some residents may have sensitive items within their bags and would not want to sort these items when visiting the sites. Site operatives are available on site and can help with enquiries with discretion and will be sensitive to such issues.

2.8 Where site staff determine that users may benefit from other council waste services to support their needs, such as the provision of additional recycling bins, site staff will be trained to provide users with relevant information and sign post them to the council to access these services.

2.9 Please see Fig 1 for an example of the waste sorting area set up in Bristol.



Fig 1. Sorting area at Bristol Waste recycling centre

### 3. Phased implementation

3.1. A phased implementation of onsite sorting facilities will begin from 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, with all sites having sorting facilities on site by 16<sup>th</sup> October. A full implementation schedule is shown in Appendix 3.

	<b>Implementation date</b>	<b>Sites affected</b>
Phase 1	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	Devizes, Warminster
Phase 2	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	Lower Compton, Purton, Marlborough, Melksham
Phase 3	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> October	Amesbury, Stanton St Quintin, Salisbury, Trowbridge

### 4. Approach taken by other councils.

3.1 A number of other local authorities are asking resident to separate their waste before visiting a recycling site, and while they are on site. Find below some other authorities which have this in place, and links to their webpages which contain details on how they communicate the requirement to sort.

- Hampshire - [Drive to boost recycling and reuse rates at Household Waste Recycling Centres | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/08/23-drive-to-boost-recycling-and-reuse-rates-at-household-waste-recycling-centres)
- East Riding - [Recycling sites \(eastriding.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/news/2023/08/23-recycling-sites)
- Cornwall - [Sorted! Help us recycle more by sorting your stuff before you visit the recycling centre - Cornwall Council](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/news/2023/08/23-sorted-help-us-recycle-more-by-sorting-your-stuff-before-you-visit-the-recycling-centre)
- Bristol - [Recycling centres - Bristol Waste Company](https://www.bristolwaste.com/news/2023/08/23-recycling-centres)
- Oxfordshire - [Visiting recycling centres | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/news/2023/08/23-visiting-recycling-centres)

- Pembrokeshire - [Waste and Recycling Centres \(WRCs\) - Pembrokeshire County Council](#)
- Newport - [Mixed Waste Sorting Guidance HWRC \(newport.gov.uk\)](#)
- Torfaen - [Bag sorting to restart at the Household Waste Recycling Centre \(HWRC\) | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)
- Somerset - [Recycling sites terms and conditions \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)
- Reading - [Bin bag splitting initiative at recycling centres aims to boost recycling rates - FCC Environment](#)
- Nottinghamshire - [Using our recycling centres | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)
- Hull - [Household waste recycling centres | Hull City Council](#)

## 5. Communications

### 5.1. Timescales

- 5.1.1. Implementing these changes on a phased basis will support a smooth transition, ensure we have an appropriate stakeholder engagement programme in place and allow the council and its contractors to enact any learning points during the implementation phase.
- 5.1.2. A comprehensive communications campaign will begin in early August to inform site users of the approaching changes and to start supporting residents to sort their waste before they visit the site.
- 5.1.3. Messaging to encourage residents to sort their waste before they bring it to an HRC was also included within the service leaflet distributed to all residents in May/June in support of the introduction of small rechargeable electrical item collections.

### 5.2. Communications plan

- 5.2.1. A far-reaching communications plan is being developed in support of this change utilising all channels available, including;
- social media and residents newsletters
  - community area board updates
  - community networks
  - promotional banners at HRCs
  - briefings for HRC staff, council customer services teams and the waste team.
- 5.2.2. Waste Services currently holds approximately 135,000 email addresses for Wiltshire residents who have agreed to receive information or service updates. These will be used to inform residents of the service change.
- 5.2.3. The waste sorting areas on the sites will provide an opportunity for informational graphics and messages to be displayed prominently within the sorting area. This will help promote the 'Recycling: Sort it' message and assist residents by providing useful tips.

### 5.3. Key communications messages

- 5.3.1. Key messages within the communication will be:
- Over a third of items put in the rubbish skips at the Wiltshire recycling sites are recyclable. Many of those have been disposed of in black bags.

- By asking people to separate their recycling either at home before visiting the HRCs, or while they are at the HRC, we are encouraging more recycling and reducing the waste going to landfill. This also helps residents reduce their own carbon emissions, and helps tackle climate change.
- Practical messages on what can and cannot be recycled at the HRCs to increase recycling and reduce time on site, as well as reinforce messages about items that can be collected at the kerbside.

## 6. Benefits from increased waste sorting

- 6.1. **Behaviour Change** - Experience from other councils that have implemented this policy has been that residents have adapted their behaviour quickly, with many residents now sorting their waste at home before they visit the site, and therefore come to site prepared with recycling already separated. Whilst there may be some residents who are unhappy about sorting their waste at first, the council and its contractors will work with residents both prior to the changes being introduced and following the implementation to ensure that this separation can become as efficient as possible and that they are aware of the expectation to sort prior to their visit.
- 6.2. **Increased recycling** - Wiltshire Council has undertaken a waste composition analysis on residual waste collected at HRCs which shows that 35.2% of the residual waste sampled could be separated for recycling, either at the sites or at home via the existing kerbside recycling services provided. A further 8.5% could have been diverted from landfill if placed in a more appropriate skip at the HRC. Therefore, the analysis showed that around 43.7% of the general waste at the HRCs could have been diverted from landfill through recycling or other specialised treatment options readily available for use by the public at the household recycling centres.
- 6.3. Evidence from other councils already operating this scheme suggest that waste sorting has resulted in significant reductions of residual waste being collected at the sites, with a corresponding increase in recycling collected. Based on modelled data, introducing bag sorting at Wiltshire's recycling centres could reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste managed by around 40%, removing 6,175 tonnes of waste from landfill and being sent to recycling instead.
- 6.4. **Carbon benefits** - Sending waste to landfill has a significant detrimental impact on the carbon produced by the council, due to methane being released from landfill operations being 25 times for polluting that carbon. Diverting 6,175 tonnes of waste from landfill would save over 2,500 tonnes of carbon emissions.
- 6.5. **Budget savings** -If the reduction of landfill waste and increase in recycling performance is achieved as modelled and is applied to the average HRC residual waste tonnes over the last 3 years, the saving in landfill gate fees and landfill tax as well as the increased income received from the additional recycling could achieve a £0.5m per annum saving. This initiative therefore makes a significant contribution to the medium-term financial plan savings commitments approved by full council in February 2023.

## 7. Briefings for local members

- 7.1. The waste team will be hosting several online briefings for local members in advance of sorting facilities being implemented at sites. This will provide local members with an opportunity to ask the waste team questions regarding HRC sorting in order to better respond to residents.
- 7.2. Online invitations through Microsoft 'Teams' will be sent in advance of the sessions, however, please see below dates.

23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2023 – 4pm	Devizes and Warminster Members
18 <sup>th</sup> September – 3pm	Marlborough, Melksham, Calne and Purton Members
3 <sup>rd</sup> October – 12 noon	Amesbury, Salisbury, Chippenham/Malmesbury and Trowbridge Members

## 8. Contact Details

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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1. Staff engagement processes

#### Brief:

- The council is introducing waste sorting at all Wiltshire site's during September and October 2023 to reduce the number of recyclable items that are put in general waste skips and sent to landfill.
- From analysis, we know that over one third of the items placed in general waste skips could have been recycled on site.
- An educational and support approach will be taken to encourage resident to sort their waste and separate recycling, either before they arrive on site or while visiting the site. Sorting tables will be provided for anyone wishing to sort their waste while on site.
- It is not mandatory for residents to sort their recycling. Even if residents refuse to sort their waste, the approach taken is likely to mean that they will better sort their waste before their next visit.

#### Role of site staff:

- Site staff should offer residents encouragement to separate recycling and to provide residents with information on why we are inviting residents to separate recycling on site.
- Site staff are there to offer guidance to the resident on recycling and council policies.
- Site staff are available to advise and guide residents on the correct disposal of different materials if they are not sure.
- Site staff should remain polite and respectful of residents disposing of sensitive waste and should be accommodating to residents who may not wish to separate their recycling on site due to sensitive waste streams.
- All near misses, incidents and accidents are to be reported at the time they occur. This includes any incidents of verbal or physical abuse. Abuse of site staff is not acceptable.

#### On site process:

1. Members of the public are greeted at the general waste area by site staff and asked if their waste contains any recyclable items, highlighting that our data suggests that one third of waste going into waste skips is recyclable and we are helping residents to recyclable as much as possible (referred to as 'bags' but could be any container).
2. If resident suggests that there might be recycling in the bag, site staff will invite them to the waste sorting area where they can help visually assess whether there are any recyclables present. Site staff WILL NOT rummage through the bag; a visual check is all that is required.
3. If no recyclables are visible, staff will invite the member of the public to put their bags in general waste skip.

4. If any recyclable item can be seen, the site staff will invite the members of the public to remove any recycling, and place these in the special containers provided.
5. Single use gloves and antibacterial wipes / gels are available for use.
6. Short-handled litter picking tools will also be available to assist residents in removing small recyclable items.
7. Once the recyclable material has been removed, the bag should then be disposed of in the general waste skip.
8. All the recyclables which have been removed should be taken to the appropriate skips or use the separate baskets available at the sorting tables.

**If a resident refuses to show content of bag, or sort any recyclables:**

1. Site staff should reiterate to the resident how the council is committed to increasing recycling and that separating recycling at recycling centres is important to help us do this.
2. Residents will be reminded that separating materials to allow more recycling diverts waste from landfill and helps tackle climate change.
3. Ensure that residents are aware that staff are on hand to help them recycle their waste, not police recycling.
4. If residents continue to refuse, site staff should advise that they can put their bags into the waste container but will encourage the resident to sort their waste at home before arriving at the site for future visits – advising them that information and maps on what can be recycled on site is available online (small amounts of printed information will also be available).
5. Note, if residents do not wish to engage with staff and want to dispose of their waste then please let them tip without challenge. Remember, we are taking an educational and support approach to bag sorting and residents are likely to reflect on their experience and better sort their waste next time.

**Appendix 2. Staff guidance notes**

The below advice will be provided to staff to support them help residents in a number of different situations.

<b>If a resident:</b>	<b>Staff should advise:</b>
Presents waste with large amount of sanitary products, nappies or waste created from medical procedures.	<p>If a resident tells site staff that they do not want to open their bag as it contains sanitary or medical waste, or nappies, they should be allowed to deposit their waste and given advice on how to obtain a larger or second bin for home.</p> <p>Resident may be eligible for a larger (or second) residual waste bin at home. This waste can then be disposed of at the kerbside and the resident will not need to visit the HRCs as often.</p>
Visit the site regularly with excess household black bag waste (more than once a fortnight).	<p>Resident may be eligible for a larger (or second) residual waste bin at home, subject to their family situations.</p> <p>Please advise them to contact the council for further advice.</p> <p>If they are not eligible for any additional waste capacity, a Waste Technical Officer may be able to advise them on some practical ways to reduce the waste they generate.</p>
Visits the site with large amount of recycling which could have been recycled at	Resident can have up to 2 blue lidded recycling bins, and 2 black boxes. This waste can then be disposed of kerbside and the resident will not need to visit the HRCs

the kerbside.	as often.  These can be ordered online or by calling the council.
Presents bagged waste with clinical or sharps waste included.	Resident must not dispose of any clinical waste at the HRCs. They should contact the council and a free collection service will be arranged, including for one off adhoc collections of clinical waste such as where a poorly individual is staying temporarily with relatives.  A sharps box will be available on site for residents to use if the present needles or other sharp items.
Is unwilling to sort waste as the waste is smelly/disgusting/unhygienic	Staff should offer residents access to gloves, hand sanitiser and litter pickers. Staff to invite residents to think about separating their waste at home before arriving on site. Provide information on what can/cannot be recycling and site maps for future use.
Has broken glass in their bags, or any other item which may harm them or staff.	Advise residents not to sort their waste but put it straight into the general waste skips.  Advise to separate before arriving on site in the future.
Has very high amounts of recycling in each bag/ container.	Invite residents to separate the recycling and support them in advising of the recyclability of each item, providing addition help in putting waste in the different containers (if appropriate).
Presents waste which they do not want to sort as they do not know the origins of the waste.	Staff should first ascertain where the waste has come from. If the waste is from a family member/friend who could not get to the site themselves then they should be allowed to deposit the waste in this instance.  If they have been paid to remove this waste or if it has come directly from a business, then it is classed as commercial waste and is not allowed to be deposited on site. Staff should advise this waste must be taken to an authorised waste disposal site.
Get aggressive, verbally, or physically abuses staff	Site staff should let the resident tip their waste without challenge.  Follow the established procedures for reporting abuse and complete near-miss paperwork. Collecting any information regarding the resident and incident for reporting.

### Appendix 3. Phased implementation programme

Note: Staff training will be completed face to face, on site, before/after the staff working day.

	Staff Training Schedule	Implementation date	Sites affected	Notes
Phase 1	Week Commencing Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> August	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	Devizes Warminster	Councillor's Mayes and Park to support implementation.  Communications to focus on these sites being the first in

				implementation programme.  Staff on both these sites are engaged and good communicators.
Phase 2	Week Commencing 18 <sup>th</sup> September	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	Lower Compton, Purton, Marlborough Melksham	Staff training to follow 2 weeks of lessons learnt from Devizes and Warminster.
Phase 3	Week Commencing 18 <sup>th</sup> September	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> October	Amesbury, Stanton, Salisbury Trowbridge	Busiest sites therefore more time to enact lessons learnt.  Note: opening hours change to reduced winter hours from 1 November

#### Appendix 4. Training programme

Site	Closed days	Date for training	Go live	Council Rep	Contractor Rep
Devizes	Thurs Fri	Wednesday 23 August	4 September 2023	Vicki Harris Amy Williams	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Warminster	Weds Thurs	Monday 21 August	4 September 2023	Vicki Harris Amy Williams	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Purton	Tues Weds	Monday 18 September	25 September 2023	Amy Williams	Henry Newbery (Contract Manager)
Lower Compton	Weds Thurs	Tuesday 19 September	25 September 2023	Amy Williams	Henry Newbery (Contract Manager)
Marlborough	Tues Weds	Thursday 14 September	25 September 2023	Vicki Harris	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Melksham	Tues Weds	Friday 15 September	25 September 2023	Vicki Harris	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Trowbridge	Fri	Monday 9 October	16 October 2023	Vicki Harris Amy Williams	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Stanton St Quintin	Thurs	Wednesday 11 October	16 October 2023	Amy Williams	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Amesbury	Tues Weds	Thursday 5 October	16 October 2023	Vicki Harris	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)
Salisbury	Thurs	Tuesday 10 October	16 October 2023	Vicki Harris	Mark Rowe (Contract Manager)

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