

DRAFT SUMMARY

“Doing nothing is not an option”

A sustainable household waste management strategy for Kent

Every person in Kent generates more than half a tonne of household waste a year, a figure which is increasing by more than 4% every year. If this continues, the amount of waste produced in the county will have doubled by 2020.

This is a problem that has to be tackled now if our children and grandchildren are not to face a much greater problem in the future.

The Joint Household Waste Strategy - the first in Kent - sets out how local authorities in Kent will together, tackle the challenges ahead. This document is a summary of the full strategy produced by the Kent Waste Forum; a partnership of all the collection and disposal authorities in Kent. The full strategy is available from your local council and deals with the scope of the problems, the targets to be met and policies to achieve them.

The strategy stresses the need to follow the 'waste hierarchy'

– Reduce, Re-use, Recover and, if all else fails, Dispose.

It puts forward a number of actions, including:

- Reducing reliance on landfilling
- More innovative collection systems
- Alternative composting techniques
- Waste reduction via the Kent War on Waste campaign
- Improved joint working between councils and community groups
- Addressing abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping

The problem - where we are now

In 2001/2, the 569,000 households in Kent produced nearly 746,400 tonnes of domestic rubbish - an average of 1.31 tonnes per household. The amounts ranged from 1.17 tonnes per household in Shepway and Thanet to 1.47 tonnes in Tonbridge & Malling.

Every year, households in Kent produce an extra 4.3% or 30,000 tonnes of waste.

Garden waste makes up 16% of what we throw away, while 15% comes from kitchens; both could be collected and composted.

In total, more than 60% of Kent's waste is biodegradable and should be diverted away from landfill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet European Union laws.

In 2001/2, nearly 80% of the total was simply buried in the ground. Almost half of it - 48% - had to be taken to landfill sites in Essex because Kent is running out of suitable sites. There are currently no major waste-processing plants in Kent and Medway and none of the county's waste is converted to energy. The cost of collecting household waste, the job of district councils, was £25.7 million in 2001/2. The cost of getting rid of it, Kent County Council's problem, was £27.5 million. That's a yearly total of more than £53 million, or £1.80 per household per week in Kent.

The targets - what central government says must be done

The government's Waste Strategy 2000 set tough targets for dealing with waste and more recently each local authority has its own individual targets for recycling and composting.

Local Authority	Recycling Rate 2000/01	Statutory Standard 2003/04	Statutory Standard 2005/06
Ashford Borough	8.02%	14%	21%
Canterbury City	11.23%	20%	30%
Dartford Borough	6.06%	14%	21%
Dover District	4.51%	10%	18%
Gravesham Borough	8.88%	22%	33%
Kent County(excl. hardcore)	13.95%	20%	30%
Maidstone Borough	9.10%	12%	18%
Sevenoaks District	10.72%	20%	30%
Shepway District	8.67%	24%	36%
Swale Borough	11.27%	16%	24%
Thanet District	4.08%	14%	21%
Tonbridge & Malling Boro'	15.20%	20%	30%
Tunbridge Wells Borough	10.58%	20%	30%

Source: KCC Waste Management Unit (19.10.01) and Guidance on Municipal Waste Management Strategies: DETR (March 2001)

By 2010: We must reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill to 75% of the amount produced in 1995 with further tough targets for 2013 and 2020.

The partnership - working together to tackle the problem

The Kent Waste Forum, made up of KCC and the 12 local authorities in Kent, produced the waste strategy that has been summarised to produce this document. The strategy sets out county-wide initiatives as well as actions which individual local authorities plan to carry out. Medway Council is producing its own strategy.

The policies - how Kent is tackling the problem

Local councils in Kent have signed up to a number of policy statements that set out how they will deal with waste management issues. They cover the following issues:

- ◆ Working together to deliver cost effective use of public funds.
- ◆ Reducing the growth in waste by promoting waste reduction and the re-use of materials.
- ◆ Heeding Government policy and advice and exceeding government targets.
- ◆ A commitment to collecting and composting biodegradable waste.
- ◆ Buying recycled products wherever possible.
- ◆ Considering the environment when making decisions on waste management.
- ◆ Exploring innovative proposals for managing household waste.
- ◆ Creation of job opportunities and recognising the importance of community groups
- ◆ Award schemes to reward local achievements and encourage community involvement
- ◆ Recycling facilities need to be easy to use and reflect the needs of less able customers.
- ◆ New housing developments need to include storage space for recyclables.

The future - where do we go from here?

Waste minimisation

The Kent War on Waste Campaign, introduced in 1998 and involving the county and district councils, educates people about the need to reduce, re-use and recycle waste. This ongoing campaign will be expanded.

Recycling and separated collections

Although we will always need to use landfill to get rid of some of our waste, it is clear that it cannot continue to be used at the current high level. New methods of dealing with our waste, based on options higher up the "waste hierarchy" - Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, must be introduced.

Every local authority in Kent will have to bring in services for collecting source-separated recyclable materials, to achieve the recycling targets set by the government.

One of the highest priorities is expanding green waste composting.

New techniques including recycling and energy recovery

A waste facility which will remove recycleables from rubbish before turning what is left into energy is being developed at Allington. This should be operational in early 2005. It will deal with household waste from Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells

In East Kent a Solid Waste Energy Recovery Facility (SWERF) is planned at Shelford Farm, Canterbury. This materials recovery/gasification plant would initially receive waste from Dover and Shepway and could later serve other east Kent districts.

Existing composting facilities currently centred at Sevenoaks and Canterbury will be augmented in Kent, probably with enclosed composting.

Working with your community

Councils in Kent will work closely with you in the community to promote and encourage waste minimisation, re-use and recycling as part of a campaign to raise awareness, influence decisions, encourage ideas and participation and change behaviour.

Community groups will be supported in their recycling efforts by landfill tax credits and other practical and financial means.

Abandoned Vehicles and fly-tipping

The Operation Cubit campaign to remove abandoned and untaxed vehicles from the roads will be expanded in 2003.

The introduction of the landfill Tax has seen an increase in fly-tipping in Kent. The Kent Waste Forum will look for ways of tackling this problem, including increasing the number of prosecutions.

Hazardous Waste

The number of Kent's Household Waste Recycling Centres able to take small quantities of potentially hazardous household waste in order to keep chemicals such as pesticides out of the waste stream will increase from four to six.

What difference will all this make?

Currently about a quarter of Kent's household waste is recycled or composted and three quarters landfilled. By 2006/7 we intend to be recycling and composting nearly 40% with the rest being split equally between thermal treatment and landfill.