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| Report subject             | <b>Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council 2026-2036</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Meeting date               | 17 December 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Status                     | Public Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Executive summary          | <p>With the UK Government progressing major waste legislation and policy reforms, the Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-36 has been drafted setting out clear ambitions and commitments, with consideration to the key drivers for change, to provide a pathway for enhancing our waste and recycling services over the coming decade.</p> <p>This strategy will direct the retender of a major waste disposal contract in 2027 and sets out ambitions and supporting actions for progressing towards achievement of our waste and carbon targets by 2035.</p>         |
| Recommendations            | <p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</b></p> <p><b>a) Notes the consultation report, summarising feedback from residents and stakeholders</b></p> <p><b>b) Recommends the Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2036 for adoption by Council</b></p> <p><b>c) Recommends the approval of the following service change to progress supporting actions set out in the Waste Strategy:</b></p> <p><b>i) removal of current separate kerbside battery collections where household batteries are collected in a clear bag placed on top of the kerbside recycling bin.</b></p> |
| Reason for recommendations | <p>Adoption of the Waste Strategy for BCP Council provides the framework for waste management across the conurbation for the next 10 years and demonstrates a commitment to the provision of high performing waste management services across our three Towns.</p> <p>Drafted, with consideration to the key drivers for change, to provide a clear pathway for progressing our waste and recycling services over the coming decade, offering flexible, comprehensive and efficient waste collections and supporting</p>                                                 |

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|  | <p>service that engage residents and commercial customers to effectively manage their waste.</p> <p>The strategy providing a key framework to direct the tender of our major waste disposal contracts and progress towards achieving our waste and carbon targets over the period of this strategy, whilst enabling greater engagement in reuse and repair activities and campaigns will reduce waste for BCP Council to manage and enhance community action.</p> |
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| Portfolio Holder(s): | Councillor Andy Hadley |
| Corporate Director   | Glynn Barton           |
| Report Authors       | Georgina Fry           |
| Wards                | Council-wide           |
| Classification       | For Decision           |

## Background

### BCP Council position

1. BCP Council manages over 188,967 tonnes of waste from households and businesses each year. In 2024/25, BCP Council reused, recycled or composted 43.9% of our household waste and diverted 89.7% of waste from landfill. Councils achieving higher rates are normally more rural with higher quantities of garden waste to compost than in the BCP area.

### National position

2. In England, recycling rates increased from 11% in 2000/01 to 42% in 2021/22. However, in recent years household recycling rates have plateaued around 42-44%, missing the 2020 target of 50%. The UK Government has set new targets to recycle 65% of municipal waste (household and similar commercial waste) and send less than 10% to landfill by 2035.
3. In the last few years, there has been considerable change in the UK Government's approach to waste management and the transition towards a circular economy, emphasising sustainability and resource efficiency through various legislative measures and strategies.
4. Simpler Recycling along with other waste reforms such as the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging are anticipated to drive packaging reduction and increases in recycling performance over the next 5-10 years. The inclusion of Energy from Waste facilities in the Emission Trading Scheme will also encourage the decarbonisation of waste, diverting and recycling waste from the refuse stream to avoid financial penalties.

### Our Waste Strategy journey

5. While Councils have some flexibility for services, much is now dictated by legislation and national policy, which going forward will impact how BCP Council is required to collect, handle and dispose of waste, substantially alter the waste composition available to collect and change how these collections are funded.

### Data & insight

6. To inform our approach, a comprehensive Waste Compositional Analysis was undertaken in 2023 of both rubbish and recycling bins, highlighting the waste materials in each bin that could be diverted from reuse or recycling. 51% of a household BCP refuse bin could have been recycled in either the kerbside recycling bin, a garden waste bin or a food waste container.

7. Detailed baseline and options modelling of BCP Council's waste collections have been undertaken by SLR consulting, funded by WRAP. Our current waste and recycling collections are comprehensive, easy to use and have a high level of public satisfaction (81% in 2023 Resident's survey). A review of collection routes across all waste streams is planned to rebalance collection rounds and maximise service efficiency.
8. Variations in design and frequency of residual and recycling collections have been initially modelled to consider operational service design for the future. Due to the unknown impact of the various government reforms on our waste composition and tonnages, and the introduction of food waste collections to Poole and flats in April 2026, further modelling and analysis will be needed and progressed before any substantial waste collection service redesign.
9. The Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-36 has been drafted, with consideration to the key drivers for change, to provide a pathway in uncertain times, for improving our waste and recycling services over the coming decade and directing the tender of our major waste disposal contracts during 2026.

### **Strategy development**

10. The following seven ambitions were developed prioritising waste prevention and service improvements to underpin our Waste Strategy for BCP Council aligning with national strategy and policy, refer to Appendix One for full strategy:
  1. Engage and enable residents and businesses to reduce waste and recycle more
  2. Use circular economy and waste hierarchy principle
  3. Achieve waste and carbon targets
  4. Deliver effective and efficient waste collections
  5. Dispose of waste sustainably
  6. Use modern waste infrastructure
  7. Deliver futureproof and safe services
11. To progress achievement of these ambitions, 35 supporting actions have been identified, which will be embedded through service and team plans and further developed during the strategy lifetime.
12. These supporting actions will encourage greater diversion of recycling, food waste and garden waste to the correct bins. Greater diversion will increase our recycling rate by up to 8% progressing toward the 65% target and offer financial savings of up to £1m.
13. Any major resulting policy or service changes required during the period of this strategy will be subject to further detailed financial, environmental and performance modelling and consideration, before the business case is presented separately for decision.
14. These ambitions, and supporting actions for achievement, were developed with insight from detailed baseline service and performance analysis of BCP Council waste collections, benchmarking with other local authorities and with consideration to key drivers for change within the waste management sector.

## **Strategy engagement**

15. A public consultation was held from 2-29 June 2025. The consultation provided an opportunity for respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the draft strategy, its priorities, targets, and approach to the management of waste. Respondents to the consultation were also able to provide comments and suggestions on the strategy and its approach.
16. Residents were able to respond online or request a paper version from a library. 312 responses were received, 303 online and 9 paper copies. These included over 940 comments in free text boxes. The Waste Strategy Consultation Report is provided in Appendix 2.
17. There was broad support from respondents for the ambitions. Residents were looking for recycling to be as straightforward and accessible as possible with clear instructions to minimise confusion regarding harder to recycle items. Residents were in favour of improving initiatives and schemes to facilitate the repair, reuse and rehoming of items but felt they needed further support to do this.
18. There was a strong view that services should be consistent across BCP and for better education and communication to help both residents and businesses understand how to recycle items correctly.
19. A full Council member briefing was held in May 2025 and an informal cross party member working group was established, following this briefing who met in October 2025 to consider the required legislative impacts, developed ambitions and public consultation results.

## **Battery collections**

20. Separate kerbside battery collections are currently operated where household batteries are collected in a clear bag placed on top of the kerbside recycling bin. Batteries are stored after collection in a plastic container on the outside of the recycling collection vehicle.
21. In 2025, batteries disposed of in kerbside recycling and rubbish bins have reportedly caused four fires at BCP transfer stations and five in collection vehicles.

## **Options appraisal**

22. Waste Strategy adoption

### **Option 1 - recommended**

- a. Cabinet recommends the new Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-36 for adoption to Council. This will provide a pathway for development of waste and recycling services, initiatives and campaigns prioritising waste reduction and highlighting priority spend of waste budgets. The long-term intentions for waste collection and disposal will also support the tender of our major waste disposal contracts.

### **Option 2**

- b. Cabinet rejects the new Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-36 for further development. This will negatively impact on the prioritisation and clarity of service delivery, allocation of limited waste collection and disposal budgets

and provide delay to any insight for prospect contractors bidding for major waste disposal contracts in 2026/7.

## 23. Removal of kerbside battery collections

### **Option 1 - recommended**

- c. To remove kerbside battery collections, reducing the risk of fires caused by batteries during transfer in collection vehicles or at transfer stations.
- d. Supporting communications with the fire service will advise of fire risks associated with putting batteries in any kerbside bin
- e. Residents will instead be directed to local battery recycling drop-off points in nearby shops and at recycling centres for separate and safe storage before recycling. Retailers that sell batteries must provide a free take back point in store.
- f. From Waste Strategy consultation, 71% of respondents had never used the kerbside battery recycling service, 16% of respondents had used the service in the last 6 months.

### **Option 2**

- g. To continue with kerbside battery collections with high fire risk. Batteries and vapes containing batteries disposed of in kerbside recycling and rubbish bins have caused four fires at BCP transfer stations in 2025, including a substantial fire at BCP Council's Hurn transfer station in July, and are suspected of causing five waste collection vehicle fires in the last year.
- h. Improved storage containers are needed on all recycling collection vehicles to comply with legislation and reduce fire risk.
- i. A comprehensive communication campaign (£20k) may encourage safer use of the kerbside battery collections; however this would need to be ongoing as arrangements for battery collections are difficult to communicate clearly, causing confusion for residents. Batteries should be put out on top of the recycling bin in a clear bag, not placed in the recycling bin.

## **Summary of financial implications**

- 24. The Waste Strategy for BCP Council and subsequent delivery plans are being developed in line with the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 25. Any resulting policy or service changes from this Waste Strategy will be subject to further detailed financial and performance modelling, before being presented for decision.
- 26. Capital (£1.537m) and transitional funding (£483k) has been awarded by DEFRA to introduce a food waste service for Poole and flats. Ongoing revenue costs should also be awarded under the new burdens doctrine to BCP Council from 1 April 2026 for food waste collections in Poole and at flats.
- 27. £9.447m of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments have been allocated to BCP Council in 2025/26 for the collection and disposal of packaging. Ongoing payment for future years is subject to change on the provision and evidence of effective and efficient waste collections and the tax received from the packaging industry

28. Battery disposal is free for Councils; however, removal of kerbside battery collections will reduce financial burden associated with service disruptions and fire. Fire damage to collection vehicles and transfer stations may result in hefty repair or replacement costs.
29. Any financial investment in enhanced commercial waste services will be balanced by the commercial waste income received as a result.

### **Summary of legal implications**

30. Waste management in the UK is governed by legislation and policies that prioritise the circular economy, reduce landfill reliance, eliminate avoidable waste and increase recycling and resource efficiency. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 set out legal duties concerning waste collections and management.
31. The Environment Act 2021 specifies requirements for Councils to offer improved recycling collections, with the introduction of statutory food waste collections from every household and business, collection of a core set of materials for recycling, including plastic film by 2027 and separated paper and cardboard, unless separate collections are technically, environmentally or economically unpracticable.
32. Officers will continue to remain informed, attend government briefings and collaborate with other Councils, industry networks and businesses to adapt BCP Council's waste services as needed to comply with legislation and future government policy.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

33. Appropriately skilled or trained officers will implement the service and team plans and any resulting policy and service changes, which will sit under the Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-36.
34. Any proposed service change, resulting from this Waste Strategy will consider the impact on staff engagement, recruitment, training, terms and conditions etc, as part of the modelling, planning and decision process.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

35. Sustainability is a central theme of this Waste Strategy and is woven throughout the ambitions and supporting action.
36. A full Decision Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed (Appendix 3) for this Waste Strategy, with all impacts as green/positive including for climate change & energy, waste & resource use, natural environment, communities & culture.
37. Any proposed service change, resulting from this Waste Strategy will consider the sustainability impacts, as part of the modelling, planning and decision process.

### **Summary of public health implications**

38. Any proposed service change, resulting from this Waste Strategy will consider the public health impacts, as part of the modelling, planning and decision process.

### **Summary of equality implications**

39. Two EIA screening tools have been completed and reviewed by the EIA panel – one for the Waste Strategy and one for the removal of the kerbside battery collections.

40. As a result of the Waste Strategy, several equality issues have been identified associated with age, disability and race.
41. Mitigating actions for the Waste Strategy impacts include:
- j. Use of plain language and pictorial information, where possible to aid understanding. A glossary has also been included to explain technical terms.
  - k. Once hosted on the BCP Council website, the Waste Strategy document can be adapted by use of text to speech and online translators.
42. As a result of removal of kerbside battery collections, several equality issues have been identified associated with age, disability, race, carers, socio-economic status and pregnancy and maternity.
43. Mitigating actions for the removal of battery collections include:
- l. Batteries can be deposited for recycling at BCP recycling centres and 50+ local shops that sell batteries. A postcode look-up will provide a list of nearby drop-off points linked from our website.
  - m. A mix of digital and non-digital communications will be used to clearly update residents on the service changes, including on the BCP Council website, social media and on bins. New bins will be embossed, and bins stickers will be used to advise against disposal of batteries in the kerbside bins.
  - n. The Customer team will be able to provide information about batteries collections, assist with location searches and answer queries via FAQs.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

44. There are risks associated with the unknown impacts of government legislation and policies on the type and amount of waste that BCP Council will be required to collect and dispose of in the future. Detailed modelling and further waste compositional analysis will be needed before any major policy changes or waste collection service redesign. A review of collection routes across all waste streams is planned to rebalance collection rounds and maximise service efficiency.
45. There are risks associated with not meeting government targets of 65% recycling rate by 2035. These supporting actions will encourage greater diversion of recycling, food waste and garden waste to the correct bins. Greater diversion of recycling may increase our recycling rate by up to 8%, food waste collections in Poole and to flats may increase by up to 7%, relaunching food waste collections in Bournemouth and Christchurch alongside other potential service changes will need to be progressed to achieve the 65% target by 2035.
46. There are risks associated with removing of the separate battery kerbside recycling service that more batteries will be disposed of in the kerbside bins. A supporting engagement campaign with the fire service will be run to divert batteries to the many local disposal points. Bin stickers will include messages about no batteries in bins. A postcode look-up for nearest battery drop-off points will be available online.
47. Any proposed service change, resulting from this Waste Strategy will consider risk impacts, as part of the modelling, planning and decision process.

## **Background papers**

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Kerbside waste and recycling compositional analysis: M.E.L. Waste Insights Alfred H. Knight Group 2022

WRAP (2022) & (2025) Waste and Recycling Technical Support to BCP Council

BCP Council's Residents Survey 2023

## **Appendices**

1. Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council 2026-36
2. Waste Strategy Consultation Report
3. Decision Impact Assessment – Waste Strategy for BCP Council.