

This report is public	
Simpler Recycling	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	1 November 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Environmental Services, Ed Potter

Purpose of report

This report sets out the possible options and the proposed recommendation for the waste collection service, following new requirements driven by The Environment Act.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the completion of a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment covering paper & cardboard (Appendix 1) until the implications of DRS on the kerbside recycling service is fully understood.
- 1.2 To support a review of the frequency of residual waste collection.
- 1.3 To approve that any changes in the waste collection service should involve consultation with our Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP) partners.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A number of legislative changes will mean significant changes to the waste collection service residents receive. These legislative changes include
 - Simpler Recycling
 - Deposit Return Scheme
 - Extended Producer Responsibility
 - Emissions Trading Scheme
- 2.2 Simpler Recycling is being implemented to ensure that five main materials are collected from all councils across the country. For domestic collections from April 2026 the default position is for residents to receive the following materials collected at the kerbside- paper, cardboard, cans, plastic bottles & glass. This may result in residents having at least four containers. A bin for residual waste (non-recyclable waste), a bin for food waste recycling, a bin for paper & cardboard and a bin for dry

mixed recyclables. For those who pay an annual subscription a bin for garden waste is also provided. The details for Simpler Recycling were only revealed in late November 2024. To fully comply, residents will need to be issued with a container for paper & cardboard and glass will be added to the dry mixed recycling from January 2026. To collect paper & cardboard separately will require significant investment. The likely cost for new bins for each property will be around £1.5 million in capital. The new bin would have an average lifespan of 40 years plus. In addition, it should be noted that there is a requirement in Simpler Recycling for plastic film to be collected from the kerbside by the end of March 2027.

- 2.3 Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is being implemented in October 2027. Drinks containers including plastic bottles and cans will have a deposit taken at the point of purchase. This deposit will be fully repaid once the can or plastic bottle is returned. The full details of the scheme have yet to be completely developed, but are likely to be released during 2026. However, it is likely that the number of drinks cans and drinks bottles in the dry mixed recycling will be substantially reduced from October 2027. It should be noted that glass drinks bottles do not fall under DRS.
- 2.4 Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (PEPR) pushes the costs of recycling packaging from local authorities to the retailers & the producers of packaging. In November 2025 this Council started to receive £1.7 million (for 2025/26) from the packaging industry for collection & treatment costs. To continue to receive significant payments the collection service must be judged to be 'effective & efficient'. If the service is not effective & efficient up to 20% of this payment (£350k) could be removed. The packaging industry are paying significant sums to local authorities so they will be looking to see improvements in collection rates of packaging materials & quality of packaging collected. The government have also indicated that they expect these payments to be utilised in improving recycling systems. Next year (2026/27) the indication is that the payment will be £1.75 million.
- 2.5 The Emissions Trading Scheme will cover Energy from Waste Plants from 2027. For the County Council this scheme could cost £3 million in extra disposal costs. By reducing the amount of residual waste delivered to Ardley and increasing the amount of recycling this extra disposal cost could be minimised. However, the current flow of funds between the disposal authority and the collection authorities means that to do more recycling will cost the collection authorities more, with all the financial benefits being received by the disposal authority. As a consequence, the County Council is proposing an incentive scheme with the collection authorities. The incentive scheme is designed so that much of the financial benefits will sit with the collection authorities.
- 2.6 The above changes have been considered by the Simpler Recycling Project Board in addition to the introduction of kerbside glass collection which commences in January 2026. Also, it is proposed, in the future that the service could move to a reduction in residual waste collections. To achieve future waste targets of 65% recycling, a restriction on residual waste is likely to be required to encourage residents to recycle more. Currently 40% of the contents of the residual waste bin could be recycled, if residents chose to fully utilise the recycling services.
- 2.7 The new waste collection service has a number of challenges:

- Introduction of kerbside collection of glass from January 2026

- Removal of bring banks across the district as bring bank tonnages fall as residents use the kerbside collection service instead
- Consideration of collecting paper & cardboard separately and the need to complete a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment before March 2026
- Introduction of plastic film collections from 31 March 2027
- Consideration of reduced residual waste collections to encourage residents to fully use the kerbside recycling services including the weekly food waste collections.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		The financial impacts of collecting paper & cardboard separately are not yet understood. Capital investment of £1.5 million is required but the change in revenue cost is difficult to calculate due to a number of uncertainties such as DRS. Leanne Lock, Strategic Finance Business Partner, November 2025		
Legal		The Council has a statutory responsibility to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Council also has to comply with the Environment Act 2021 to ensure that certain recyclable materials are collected appropriately. The proposals set out within this report will help to ensure that we remain compliant with our obligations. Denzil Turbeville, Head of Legal, November 2025		
Risk Management		The Council has to carry out most of the functions of Waste & Environmental Services as they are statutory services. A robust governance & risk management framework will be implemented to ensure a successful service change. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, November 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
		Commentary		
Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			X	
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the			X	

lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
Climate & Environmental Impact				Increasing recycling has a positive impact on the environment. Using recycled materials rather than virgin materials develops a circular economy and helps to address climate change
ICT & Digital Impact				No impact
Data Impact				No impact
Procurement & subsidy				Any purchase of wheeled bins would be through existing framework agreements
Council Priorities	Supporting Environmental Sustainability			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council collects around 60,000 tonnes of waste each year from around 73,000 properties. The number of properties is increasing by 1000 properties per year. The current service has an alternate week residual waste bin (green), an alternate week dry mixed recycling bin (blue), a weekly food waste recycling bin (silver) and for those who pay a subscription, an alternate week garden waste recycling bin or bins(brown).
- 3.2 The current alternate week collection service was introduced in 2003/04. The main changes to the service since then, has been the introduction of food waste collections. Initially food was added to the garden waste service in around 2010. Then, in 2022, a garden waste subscription service was introduced with a weekly separate collection of food waste. Other smaller services such as the collection of batteries, small electrical items and coffee pods have been successfully introduced over a number of years.
- 3.3 The national waste strategy which was launched in December 2018 has brought about a need to change and to move towards a circular economy. The process to consult & engage with all stakeholders has been long winded. It was only in November 2024 that most of the requirements for change became clear. Even now

details on areas such as Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), are difficult to fully assess the resulting impact on the waste collection service.

Simpler Recycling

- 3.4 Simpler Recycling brings a requirement on collection authorities across the country to collect the same materials and to deliver similar services. The key elements are that collection authorities must collect at the kerbside - paper, card, plastics, steel & aluminium cans and glass. In addition, collection authorities must collect food waste on a weekly basis. The details of the waste collection service & frequency provided by collection authorities are the responsibility of individual councils. From 31 March 2027 plastic film needs to be added to the range of collection materials. A late addition to the collection requirements was collecting paper & cardboard separately from the other dry recycling materials.
- 3.5 To meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling, there are two changes required before the end of March 2026 & one further requirement before the end of March 2027. Firstly, collection of glass at the kerbside is required, this was approved by the Executive and will commence in January 2026. In addition, paper & cardboard needs to be collected separated from the rest of the recycling materials. However, implementing separate collections of paper & cardboard cannot be achieved by 31 March 2026 as a number of barriers exist and so a TEEP assessment is proposed. The one future requirement is collecting plastic film by 31 March 2027.
- 3.6 A TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment which will delay the implementation for collecting paper & cardboard separately until after October 2027. This is because of a number of reasons including
- The current recycling processing contract does not financially reward separate collection of paper & cardboard.
 - The financial impact on collecting paper & cardboard separately has yet to be fully understood
 - The impact on the recycling collection service from DRS will not become clearer until later in 2026
 - The lead time for changing our current recycling scheme and delivering a new bin is significant and will take around 12-15 months
 - Understanding the views of our partners in the WESP project to ensure efficiencies from joint action are secured.

4. Details

Glass recycling

- 4.1 At present glass is recycled through an extensive network of glass banks. This offers the lowest cost for the recycling of glass and also minimises CO2 emissions. The glass is colour separated and turned back into bottles and containers. Around 70% of household glass is captured and recycled through this collection method. The banks are sited at well over 100 sites so that residents can recycle their bottles at supermarkets, at local shops and at village halls and community centres. It is a low-cost collection method and requires one staff member with a specialist crane

lorry. The glass produces an income stream. The bring banks in some areas can be a focus for fly tipping with materials being dumped around bring banks.

- 4.2 Collecting glass at the kerbside will be launched from 01 January 2026. Glass will be added to the existing blue bins. This will make it easier for residents to recycle their glass and should increase the amount of glass recycled by around 500-700 tonnes/year.
- 4.3 The amount of glass going through the bring banks will rapidly fall and most of the bring bank sites will close in the early months of 2026. This should help to reduce fly tipping problems, at a number of sites, where fly tipping has become common.
- 4.4 The overall financial impact on collecting glass at the kerbside is in excess of 400k/year. The main issue being glass through the bring banks gave a good income and moving to add glass to the blue bin removes the income. It is a requirement of Simpler Recycling that glass is collected at the kerbside. As a result of collecting glass at the kerbside it will be easier for residents to recycle their glass and an extra 500-700 tonnes of glass is likely to be collected.

Separate Collection of Paper & Cardboard

- 4.5 A late addition to the requirements of Simpler Recycling was the introduction of separate collection of paper & cardboard. The paper industry has always discouraged the collection of glass and paper in the same bin. This is due to the possibility of shards of glass getting caught up in paper. The presence of glass in paper for recycling can cause damage to paper processing equipment.
- 4.6 Paper & cardboard should have a lower gate fee than commingled dry recycling. However, our current recycling processor does not offer a better gate for paper & cardboard only. There is likely to be around 5000 tonnes present out of 15,000 tonnes of commingled dry recycling (once glass is added). The need to collect paper & cardboard separately will require resident to have another container; this is likely to be a wheeled bin. Delivering 73,000 new wheelie bins to each property will require a capital investment of £1.5 million. The expected life of a wheelie bin for paper & cardboard is at least 40 years.
- 4.7 Consideration on how the overall recycling scheme will operate needs to be examined. DRS could divert 2000 tonnes of cans & plastic bottles from the blue bin. Taking a further 5000 tonnes of paper & cardboard out of the blue bin should reduce the blue bin tonnages to 8000. The 8000 tonnes would likely be made up of 4000- 4500 tonnes of glass with the remaining 3500 – 4000 tonne being food cans, plastic detergent bottles and other plastic non drinks bottles.

Residual Waste Collections

- 4.8 With two different recycling containers the frequency of emptying needs to be modelled. In addition, with a very comprehensive recycling service, how often should residual waste collections take place? To achieve both National targets and Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership targets of 65% recycling, residual waste capacity for residents will need to be restricted. Currently 40% of the waste within residual waste bins (green bins) could be recycled using the current kerbside recycling services. By limiting residual waste collections the amount of recycling, including food waste recycling, will increase and residual waste tonnages will fall.

- 4.9 Reduced residual waste collections will increase the recycling rate and needs to be considered. Reducing frequency of residual waste collections does not reduce the amount of waste households produce, but it does encourage the full use of recycling services. More use of the weekly food waste recycling scheme (currently only 50% of food waste is captured) and the other kerbside recycling services (currently around 70- 75% of dry recycling captured) results in less residual waste being presented. Less residual collection reduces the number of crews for residual waste collections. However, these crew resources will be transferred to increase the resources on increased food waste recycling and dry recycling collections. The County Council financially gains as treatment of food waste and processing of dry recycling is much cheaper than disposal of waste through the Energy from Waste Plant. To avoid future increased disposal costs from Energy from Waste (EfW), due to the Emissions Trading Scheme, the County Council has indicated it is developing a scheme to encourage collection authorities to reduce the residual waste delivered. The proposal from the County Council has very recently appeared.

Local Government Reorganisation & the Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP)

- 4.10 This Council has been working closely with both Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council on waste collection. Work commencing in late 2024 identified some potential financial efficiencies by the three councils working more closely together on waste & other associated front-line services. This work is proceeding as there is a potential for significant financial savings. Since this work commenced Local Government Reorganisation indicates the three councils could potentially operate in a new unitary council covering all three authorities.
- 4.11 Currently the three councils have very similar waste collection services. All carry out separate weekly food waste collections, alternate residual waste collections and chargeable garden waste on a two-weekly basis. The dry recycling services are similar too, collecting the same materials with the exception of glass. In Oxford City glass is collected with the other recyclables, in this Council the glass is collected via bring banks. This changes in January 2026 when glass is collected at the kerbside and the network of glass banks will quickly be reduced.
- 4.12 If the financial benefits of working together are to be realised then it is important that the three councils operate in a similar manner. Consequently, when considering the kerbside recycling the methods employed by our partners need to be carefully considered and our partners should always be consulted.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Implement separate collection of paper & cardboard as soon as possible. This has been dismissed due to the uncertain financial impact – investing capital of £1.5 million plus and a great uncertainty about the impact on revenue costs

Option 2: Implement collection of plastic film as soon as possible. This has been rejected because our recycling processor, N&P, have yet to set out their specification regarding plastic film.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The decision to introduce glass recycling from the kerbside in January 2026 was made by Executive in November 2025. To fully comply with Simpler Recycling by 31 March 2026 either paper & cardboard needs to be collected separately at the kerbside or a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment carried out. It is recommended a TEEP assessment is carried out and the decision to move to collect Paper & cardboard separately is delayed until the financial implications are fully understood when DRS operations become clear. A draft assessment is attached in Appendix 1.
- 6.2 Plastic film needs to be introduced into kerbside collections before 31 March 2027. The decision on when to commence collections cannot be made until our processing recycling contractor indicates what plastic film is acceptable and what is unacceptable. This information is likely to be forthcoming before the summer of 2026.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment for separate collection of paper & cardboard
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Ed Potter Assistant Director Environmental Services
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services