

# Template written assessment: collecting paper and card with plastic, metal and glass

Waste collection authorities and other waste collectors can use this template to create a written assessment to collect paper and card with other dry recyclable waste (plastic, metal and glass). You do not have to use this template and can choose to use a different format. You should retain a record of your written assessment and any supporting evidence.

You should read the [guidance on collecting paper and card with other dry recyclable waste](#) before you fill in this template.

## Information about your organisation

**Name of waste collector or waste collection authority**

Cherwell District Council

**Waste carrier number**

## Information about the assessment

**How many written assessments have you (the waste collector or waste collection authority) completed?**

**What geographical area, collection route or type of premises does this written assessment cover?**

All of the Cherwell District

**Which dry recyclable waste will you collect with paper and card?**

Plastic, metal and glass

## Exceptions you are relying on

Which exception, or exceptions, are you relying on (technical, economic or environmental)?

Technical, economic and environmental
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### 1. Collecting separately is not 'technically practicable'

If you are relying on this exception, add the technical reasons why

Cherwell District Council currently operates a co-mingled collection service for dry recyclable materials, which is supported by a well-established Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) contract. Based on some further assessment of our infrastructure, vehicle fleet, collection rounds, and available resources, we conclude that separate collection of individual material streams is not technically practicable, for the following reasons:

#### **Fleet Limitations**

Our current collection fleet is designed for co-mingled waste collection. Transitioning to a multi-stream collection system would require a complete redesign and replacement of the fleet with specialist compartmentalised vehicles, especially if we were to collect both streams on the same day/vehicle. The procurement lead times, and operational disruption involved make this approach technically unfeasible in the short to medium term.

#### **Operational Constraints**

Separate collections would require significant changes to collection rounds, increased collection frequencies, and more complex logistics, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. These operational constraints would result in inefficiencies, increased mileage, and practical delivery challenges.

#### **Infrastructure and Depot Capacity**

Our existing depot facilities do not currently have the physical capacity or layout to support the segregation, storage, and transfer of separately collected streams. Significant redevelopment would be needed, which is not currently deliverable within operational or spatial constraints.

#### **Service Disruption Risk**

Implementing separate collections would result in major service disruption during the transition phase, with a risk to consistent service delivery and resident engagement, potentially reducing overall recycling performance.

Based on the above considerations, Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclables is not technically practicable at this time. We will continue to monitor technological advancements, funding opportunities, and policy developments that may change this position in the future. This conclusion will be reviewed regularly in

line with our duty to achieve high-quality recycling where practicable, and we remain committed to maximising recycling performance within the constraints of our current collection system.

### **Communications to residents**

A primary logistical consideration is ensuring effective and clear communication of service changes to residents. While simplicity and clarity are our goals, significant adjustments to collection schedules require widespread updates to printed and digital materials, including collection calendars and associated literature. These updates, if not carefully managed, may lead to confusion among residents. Therefore, adequate lead time is essential to develop and implement well-structured, tailored communications that align with the scale of change.

### **What type of data have you used?**

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP (Waste and Resource Action Programme) data
- photographs
- floor plans
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

## **2. Collecting separately is not ‘economically practicable’**

If you are relying on this exception, add the economic reasons why.

As part of our commitment to assessing the feasibility of separate collections, Cherwell District Council has also considered the economic implications of transitioning from a co-

mingled recycling service to a fully source-segregated collection of dry recyclables (paper, glass, plastics, and metals).

Our assessment finds that separate collection is not economically practicable, based on the following factors:

### **Capital Investment Requirements**

A transition to separate collections would require substantial upfront investment in new collection vehicles with multi-compartment capabilities, additional bins or containers for residents, and infrastructure upgrades at depots and transfer stations. These capital costs would place a significant financial burden on the council at a time of continued funding pressures.

### **Increased Operational Costs**

Separate collections would increase operational costs due to:

- More complex and longer collection rounds.
- Increased vehicle mileage and fuel use.
- Additional staffing or driver hours to accommodate longer routes.
- Higher maintenance costs for more specialised vehicles.

### **Lack of Economies of Scale**

The low density of some areas within the district, particularly rural zones, means that separate collection rounds would not achieve economies of scale. This would lead to higher per-household costs and reduced cost-effectiveness of service delivery.

### **MRF Contractual Arrangements**

Cherwell District Council currently benefits from an established co-mingled materials contract with a local Materials Recovery Facility. This contract provides good value for money, and switching to separate collections would incur potential penalties, contract renegotiation costs, and the need for new reprocessing arrangements for each material stream.

### **Limited Financial Incentives**

While there may be marginal quality or value improvements from collecting materials separately, current market prices for recycled materials do not justify the additional cost of separate collection. The marginal financial gain would not offset the increased operational and capital expenditure.

### **Impact on Wider Council Services**

Diverting resources to support the switch to separate collection would place pressure on other frontline services. In the current financial climate, such a diversion is not sustainable or responsible.

### **Conclusion**

Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclable materials is

not economically practicable at this time. We will continue to monitor market conditions, funding opportunities, and national policy developments (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility and Consistency in Collections) that may change the economic case in future.

### What type of data have you used?

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP data
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

### 3. Collecting separately has ‘no significant environmental benefit’

If you are relying on this exception, add the environmental reasons why.

Cherwell District Council is committed to delivering services that support sustainable resource use and environmental protection. In assessing the environmental practicability of switching from a co-mingled recycling collection to fully source-separated collections for paper/card, the following considerations were made:

After review, we conclude that separate collection is not environmentally practicable at this time, due to the following factors:

#### **Marginal Environmental Gains**

Our co-mingled recycling system currently delivers high capture rates and acceptable material quality levels through processing at a contracted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). The environmental benefits of switching to source-separated collection—primarily slightly improved material purity—are not significant enough to outweigh the negative impacts of more complex logistics and resource use.

### **Increased Emissions from Collection Vehicles**

It is likely that separate collections would require more vehicles on the road, longer routes, and potentially increased collection frequencies. This would result in:

- Higher fuel consumption.
- Increased greenhouse gas emissions.
- Greater wear on road infrastructure.
- The net environmental effect of these changes would likely offset, or even exceed, the marginal gains from improved recycling quality.

### **Carbon and Resource Impact of System Changes**

The transition to separate collections would involve procurement of new vehicles and containers, and redevelopment of depot infrastructure. The carbon and resource footprint of this transformation must be considered as part of the overall environmental assessment and currently represents a significant upfront environmental cost.

### **Resident Engagement and Behaviour**

Introducing multiple separate recycling containers could risk confusion or reduced participation if not implemented carefully. A decline in participation rates or increase in contamination (due to user error) could undermine the environmental intent of separate collections.

### **Current Performance and End Destinations**

Materials collected co-mingled are sorted efficiently and sent to end markets that support closed-loop recycling. This contributes positively to the circular economy and demonstrates that good environmental outcomes can still be achieved without separate collections.

### **Conclusion**

Based on this assessment, Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclable materials is not environmentally practicable under current circumstances. We will continue to review this position in light of future changes to technology, government policy, carbon reduction targets, and public engagement strategies.

### **What type of data have you used?**

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP data
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

## Authorisation

By typing your name, you confirm that the information you have given is correct.

**Name**

Ed Potter

**Job title**

Assistant Director Environmental Services

**Signature**

**Date**

December 2025

**Date of next review**

November 2026