

# Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Housing and Environment

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Wards affected: All

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To: CABINET

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## Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy

### Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

- (a) approves the Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy as attached in Appendix 1.
- (b) delegates to the Head of Housing and Environment to make any minor changes to future versions of the strategy in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment/Environmental Services and Waste

<b>Implications (further detail within the report)</b>	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Climate and Ecological</b>	<b>Equality and diversity</b>
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Signing off officer</b>	<b>Anna Winship</b>	<b>Ian Chisnell</b>	<b>Heather Saunders</b>	<b>Abigail Witting</b>

## Purpose of report

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy, giving delegation to the Head of Housing and Environment to make any minor changes to future versions of the strategy in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Waste.

## Corporate objectives

2. 5. Working in Partnership and 2. Tackling the Climate Emergency

## Background

3. In August 2023, Cabinet was informally briefed on the need to develop a Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy ('the strategy') with South Oxfordshire. This briefing also indicated the process for creating the strategy and an outline structure.
4. Since that point, the following actions have taken place:
  - a. Opportunity for all councillors to provide their views on the waste resources and street cleansing approach. This included in-person and online sessions.
  - b. Meetings with joint Climate, Ecology and Environment Action Committee and the Climate and Environment Action Committee (CEEAC/CEAC).
  - c. Completion of online resident consultation sessions, coordinated by an external consultant.
  - d. Completion of the resident bin survey, aimed at getting quantitative data about how bins are used and how full they are.
  - e. Completion of the litter bin survey and analysis of the annual waste survey.
  - f. Engagement with a waste consultancy firm to provide advice on the waste industry market.
  - g. Discussion with Oxfordshire Resource and Waste Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the strategy complements existing waste strategies.
  - h. Announcement of the Simpler Recycling scheme by government, which aims to provide more consistency for the collection of waste and recycling.
  - i. Research into national best practice.
  - j. Consultation through Joint Scrutiny.
  - k. Sign-off by all key departments.
5. The strategy is a high-level document which sets the intended direction for waste and street cleansing for the district. It is designed to be a public-facing document that sets out simple themes, as well as explaining the council's direction of travel. A range of supporting information has been used in developing the strategy, including annual waste surveys, government policy, and resident and councillor feedback.
6. During the development of the strategy, a number of key principles became clear:
  - a. The council should follow the principle of the established waste hierarchy, as set out by government legislation.
  - b. The strategy is not solely about what the council is doing (this is established with the action plan) but what **everybody living and working in the district** can be supported to do. This is similar to other environmental change strategies.
  - c. The strategy needs to balance four main themes:
    - i. Legislation

- ii. Financial and commercial
  - iii. Customer demands
  - iv. Environmental drivers
- d. The published strategy needs to be clear in its communications and meet the needs of residents and the council.
  - e. A separate action plan will be developed that will outline the specific actions the council would take to deliver the strategy. This will be written and approved on an annual basis as part of the wider service action planning process.
7. The design of the document was completed by a graphic design company. They have developed engaging ways to create a document that is more 'alive and positive' for the public. The imagery can also be used in future waste-related work as campaign artwork for education and promotions.
8. The finalised strategy document is now being brought forward for approval and can be found as Appendix 1.

## **Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy overview**

9. A review of current waste services has shown that, over recent years, the services have performed well. High recycling rates and good customer satisfaction, in many areas, have led to well-regarded and well-used services.
10. However, change is required to maintain and improve the services. This will include the following actions:
- a. The councils directly providing a waste vehicle depot, and the vehicles required to perform the services.
  - b. Putting in place service delivery arrangements for when the current contract with Biffa ends in June 2026.
  - c. Ensuring the services are affordable and efficient.
  - d. Increasing satisfaction with street cleansing, which is currently low compared to waste collection.
  - e. Implementing new legislation, such as Simpler Recycling, Extended Producer Responsibility and the Deposit Return Scheme, will impact on the way the service is funded and the material volumes it collects.
  - f. Considering environmental measures that go much wider than recycling rates. The carbon footprint of the service and waste reduction targets also need to be considered.
11. Whilst the collection of waste and recycling, and street cleansing are statutory services, there is some flexibility in how these are delivered at a district level. The parameters that apply are carbon reduction, practicality, efficiency, legality, and cost. These pressures are referenced within the strategy.
12. The Waste Hierarchy is the guiding principle within the strategy, as this is the single simplest way to describe the overall intent of the council. This highlights the need to move away from disposal, by identifying much of what is considered waste as a resource, and encouraging the public to keep items they purchase or already own in use for as long as possible.

13. Stemming from the council's ambition to work more closely with the public and other partner organisations, and move towards a more circular economy; the strategy focusses on work areas supporting the public in managing their waste materials, in addition to direct council provision. This means providing support further up the waste hierarchy, not only for opportunities to recycle more, but also to repair, reuse, refill and rehome items, reducing waste in the first place.
14. For the street cleansing service, the strategy seeks to better understand cleansing needs, streamline processes, provide more opportunities for customer feedback and to encourage active joint-working with Town and Parish Councils, community groups and residents, to keep towns, roads and other public spaces clean (within the responsibility of the council).
15. To this end, consultation with community organisations and Town and Parish Councils is being progressed during the calendar year 2025.

## **Key Themes**

16. Based on the consolidated learning, eight key themes have been identified.

### **17. Household waste collection**

- a. Support residents to reduce waste and move the waste they do produce up the waste hierarchy.
- b. Maximise the visibility and clarity of educational messages on sustainability.
- c. Support residents to maximise the value and lifespan they get from their goods.
- d. Where items must be disposed of, have the most appropriate collection system, getting as many of the items that can be recycled into the recycling stream.
- e. Recycle and process materials in the most cost effective and sustainable way.

### **18. Street cleansing**

- a. Reduce litter through a localised, community-driven approach.
- b. Reduce fly tipping.
- c. Clean streets in partnership with and sensitive to, local needs.

## **Options**

19. The report recommendations are to approve the Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing strategy as shown in Appendix 1 and to delegate to the Head of Housing and Environment to make any minor changes to future versions of the strategy in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Waste.
20. The council could choose to not adopt any Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy. This would not show the leadership that the district would welcome on these issues, and could result in a lack of clarity on the direction to be taken on a wide range of operational, infrastructure and strategic decisions that will be required going forward.
21. The council could decide to develop separate waste collection and street cleansing strategies. As the service is combined and closely related operationally, in terms of the work undertaken, this would likely see two strategies with significant inefficient overlap and additional work undertaken for seemingly little additional benefit.

22. The council could decide not to develop a joint strategy with South Oxfordshire., However given the existing operational benefit to the service of working with South Oxfordshire, and the close similarity of requirements, this would also not be efficient or effective and is not recommended.

## **Financial Implications**

23. No changes are being recommended that would impact on the core waste collection and street cleansing services and therefore on the overall service costs, as a result of this strategy. This will need to be reviewed annually in line with any proposals coming forward as a part of the annual action planning process.

## **Legal Implications**

24. There are no direct legal implications in this strategy report, other than those referenced in the Strategy Document, for example, to the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Future reports will contain legal implications relating to the recommended direction of travel.

## **Climate and ecological implications**

25. As agreed with the Climate team, the Climate Impact Assessment Tool has not been used for the strategy as it covers too wide a range of work areas to represent the impacts effectively. As individual actions or projects from the strategy come forwards, these will be assessed using the tool to ensure that carbon emissions and other environmental impacts are mitigated against as much as possible.

26. Overall, we expect the strategy to have a positive impact on climate and ecology with work areas that support greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction, improvements to biodiversity and waste reduction. The guiding principle of the strategy is the waste hierarchy, and this is reflected in the themes and work areas identified. Residents will be supported to reduce waste and maximise the lifespan that they get from their goods, the Council will ensure that the collection systems enable as much waste as possible to be recycled and processed in a sustainable way, and litter will be reduced across the district.

## **Equalities implications**

27. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. See Appendix 2.

## **Risks**

28. With no current strategy for waste resources and street cleansing in place, having one that provides strategic direction and reflects national policy will mitigate against the risk of policy drift in these key service areas.

29. There are some areas referenced in the strategy that could lead to changes in the waste material collected from 2026/27 onwards. Some modelling has been done on this, but it is impossible to effectively plan for what are still largely unknown impacts, such as the scope and success of the Deposit Return Scheme and the funding position

following the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility payments for the capture of waste packaging.

## **Conclusion**

30. The Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy sets an exciting new direction for how resources can be better handled and streets can be cleaner in the district. It will guide the council's decisions as well as the work supported in the wider community and with partners, in relation to future waste service development. It will inform the annual action planning process. It will help maintain the position of the council as a leading authority for recycling in England and it will support the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

## **Background Papers**

Appendix 1. The Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy.

Appendix 2. Equalities Impact Assessment