

Appendix 2: update on waste reforms

Background

The government set out their ambitions to reform waste as part of their wider National Waste and Resources Strategy, published in 2018.

Since publication, consultations to develop policy have taken place, as well as the passing of the Environment Act 2021, to achieve the most significant change to the waste industry in a generation.

Further plans and waste reform proposals continue, through proposed changes to regulations and other plans introducing policy changes. The timescales for change and the impact of statutory requirements pose a tremendous challenge to local authorities, financially and operationally.

Simpler Recycling

After considerable delay, the government announced the policy position on Simpler Recycling, in October 2023. All local authorities in England will be required to collect a core set of dry recycling materials and a weekly food waste collection by 31 March 2026, except film and flexible plastics, which are to be introduced later in 2027.

It clarifies, co-mingled collections can continue, without any requirement to separate materials. It also clarified that garden waste can continue on a subscription basis where this already exists.

Brighton & Hove City Council currently collect some of the materials listed in the core set and will need to make provision for the additional materials.

The table below illustrates the current position:

Material	Detail	Currently collected?
Glass	glass packaging including bottles and jars	✓
Metal	steel and aluminium tins and cans	✓
	steel and aluminium aerosols	✓
	aluminium foil	✗
	aluminium food trays	✗
	steel and aluminium jars and bottle lids	✓
	aluminium tubes	✗
	metal jar and bottle lids	✓
Plastics	pots, tubs and trays made of PET (including amorphous, recycled and crystalline PET), PP (including expanded PP) and polyethylene (PE)	✗
	PE and PP plastic tubes larger than 50mm x 50mm	✗
Cartons	cartons for food, drink and other liquids, including aseptic and chilled cartons	✗
Plastic film	plastic film packaging and plastic bags made of mono-polyethylene (mono-PE), mono-polypropylene (mono-PP) and mixed polyolefins PE and PP, including those metallised through vacuum or vapour deposition (to be included from 31 March 2027)	✗
Paper & card		✓

Veolia, our waste disposal contractor, is developing updated options on the adaptations required to process the confirmed additional materials.

Food waste

A food waste collection service for all households must be in place by 31 March 2026. New burdens funding will enable the introduction, where it is not already in place. At the time of writing, only capital funds have been announced with resource/revenue and ongoing funding to be announced in due course.

Brighton & Hove City Council recruited a Project Manager in September 2023 to complete detailed costs and plan for the implementation. Given the number of households and the logistics of introducing a new service, this is a very complex the project. Implementation requires input from a wide range of stakeholders which adds to the challenge.

Defra has provided the council with the capital new burdens funding allocated to Brighton & Hove. Initial high level, cost projections have identified a funding gap in the capital required and we await further announcements on the resource/revenue and on-going funding allocations.

Further updates will be shared as the project progresses.

Extended Producer Responsibility Packaging

Extended Producer Responsibility Packaging (pEPR) is intended to incentivise producers to reduce their use of packaging, adopt reusable packaging where reduction is not feasible, or use easily recyclable packaging, and fund the recycling and management of single use packaging where it remains necessary. It will also assist consumers to recycle better through a consistent labelling system.

It is being developed to ensure producers pay the full costs of the waste they produce. This includes costs of:

- collecting, sorting, and recycling of packaging waste from households and businesses
- collecting and disposing of packaging in the residual waste stream from households only
- litter and refuse management in bins

The consultation outcomes were released 2022 but guidance on areas, such as local authority payments and the criteria of an effective and efficient service, are still outstanding.

Deposit Return Scheme

The response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation was published on 20 January 2023. The key points are:

- The DRS will be introduced from October 2025
- Single-use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litre containers will be in-scope. Materials to be captured are Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans
- A Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be appointed to manage overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme
- Local authorities can sort items intended for DRS when in the household waste stream and redeem deposits
- Retailers selling in-scope containers in store will be required to host a return point for consumers deposit refund

- Reverse Vending Machines will be included as permitted developments under planning rules
- The deposit amount will be set by DMO and variable (20p-50p or more)

The in-scope material movements will be analysed and modelled to help understand the impact on collections, the waste contract and recycling rates.

The Emissions Trading Scheme

In July 2023, it was announced energy from waste would be included in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), from 2028.

The scheme is designed to incentivise decarbonisation of the waste industry, setting a trade cap and introducing fees for each tonne of CO₂ released from the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF). The cap will decrease over time causing a rise in the fees and therefore costs to the parties involved in the emissions.

Some financial modelling has been undertaken by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) based on current ERF material inputs, resulting emissions, current known fees and potential fees in the future to understand any additional costs per year.

To mitigate against the potential impacts of the ETS, BHCC, ESCC and Veolia are planning for removal of fossil fuel derived materials, that are responsible for higher carbon emissions. Removal of these will be encouraged through waste minimisation activities and increasing recycling.

It is also likely, through Simpler Recycling, plastics will reduce. Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) tonnages will also reduce through the increase in container provision previously agreed by Committee. Other materials will also reduce through future policy changes.

An opportunity to provide feedback on the scheme through a consultation, is expected later this year.

Future reforms

Government published the Maximising Resources and Minimising Waste, National Waste Prevention Plan in July 2023.

There are seven areas of focus described for review and action to meet the ambitions of the plan and assist the move to a circular economy. The sectors listed include construction, textiles, furniture, electronics, vehicles, plastic and packaging and food and drink.

As part of changes required to the electronics sector, a consultation was launched in December 2023 to reform the existing WEEE Regulations. Through this, ways to increase collections of waste electricals from households and businesses for reuse and recycling will be explored, including how to increase levels of consumer awareness on producer-financed responsible disposal options. Proposals also include a free kerbside collection of WEEE from all households.

Further updates will be shared once detail becomes available on other proposed changes.

