

Bury Council - Zero Waste Strategy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Waste carries with it a significant cost to society and everyone has a collective responsibility to create less and recycle more. Bury's ambition is to reduce the amount of waste sent for treatment and disposal and to maximise recycling through ongoing education and awareness raising.

Recycling rates for collected bin waste in Bury have increased from 29.4% in 2010/11 to 47.6% in 2013/14. This is now the third highest rate in Greater Manchester. However we recognise that we can, and must, do better. Increased recycling is good for the environment as less waste requires treatment and disposal. It also makes sound financial sense and has saved the Council **£2.54 million** since 2011/12. The challenge now is to encourage more residents to recycle more effectively. Nationally, recycling levels of 60% plus is being achieved.

The Council currently spends **£10.2 million** annually on the treatment and disposal of residual waste. Data shows, however, that **75%** of household waste could be recycled. If this was fully achieved the Council would have avoided costs in the region of **£7 million** for 2014/15 for waste treatment and disposal based on total levy costs. The Council's aim in introducing this Strategy to increase recycling to 60% or more by March 2016 is perhaps more modest but considerably more realistic in the short term and still produces dividends. Every 1% rise in recycling rates for waste collected from households saves the Council up to **£130,000**.

The most effective way to drive increased recycling is through behaviour change. To support this our Strategy is based on providing information and guidance, ongoing education of householders on how to recycle more efficiently and on restricting capacity for waste that cannot be recycled. Bury's residents currently have a weekly bin collection with a capacity of 360 litres, including recycling bins. Plans will be put in place to shift capacity away from residual waste towards the recycling bins and making whatever operational changes to the collection schedules as may be necessary to support residents in this task.

Research and work in Bury to date has shown that with the right support changes in behaviour can be made. Best practice generally has three elements: capacity, inducement (save money and the environment) and targeted enforcement.



Councillor Tony Isherwood
Cabinet Member Environment

INTRODUCTION

Management of waste is one of the most important and challenging environmental issues faced today. The change to more sustainable waste management systems and long term global environmental protection is backed by substantial legislation and guided by policies at European and National level.

These are very challenging times for the whole economy, including Councils who have faced significant financial cuts. The aim of this strategy is to find new and innovative ways cut back on waste, putting it to better use, without increasing overall costs. There is a significant cost of doing nothing as treatment and disposal costs continue to rise, and there is therefore a need to treat waste as a resource rather than a problem.

Following the Service Improvement Review in 2010 and the launch of the Managed Weekly Collection Service in 2011, residents are now able to fully recycle three waste streams, including food and garden waste; glass containers, plastic bottles and metal cans; and paper and card from the kerbside. As a result, recycling rates for collected bin waste have improved to 47.6% for 2013/14, an increase from 29.4% three years ago

The Bury Council Zero Waste Strategy has been developed to provide a framework to sharply increase recycling rates further and manage waste to achieve a more resource efficient society. This Strategy also supports the aims and objectives of the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) Waste Management Strategy, jointly agreed by the nine Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford.

The aim of this strategy is to:

- recycle **55-60%** by March 2015;
- recycle **60%+** by March 2016;
- reduce disposal costs by cutting the amount of waste going to landfill;
- support the Greater Manchester strategy on reducing carbon emissions.

To support the delivery of these aims ten strategic objectives have been developed:

1. Follow the Waste Hierarchy (see pictorial representation on page 14)
2. Preventing waste
3. Recycling on the go
4. Education and awareness
5. Enforcement
6. Best Value
7. Partnership working in Greater Manchester
8. Climate change
9. Empowering local communities
10. Review

The residents of Bury are key to improving recycling figures and the Council is committed to providing further support to meet the aims and objectives of this Strategy.

EUROPEAN, NATIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

The policy focus has moved away from addressing municipal waste simply through avoiding its landfill, to the more ambitious aim of managing recyclable waste as a resource. The European Union's (EU) Waste Framework Directive Seventh Environment Action Programme identifies waste prevention and management as one of four top priorities. The EU is aiming for a significant cut in the amount of rubbish generated, through new waste prevention initiatives, better use of resources, and encouraging a shift to more sustainable consumption patterns.

The EU's approach to waste management is based on three principles¹:

1. **Waste prevention** - Reducing the amount of waste generated in the first place. Waste prevention is closely linked with improving manufacturing

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm>

methods and influencing consumers to demand greener products and less packaging.

2. **Recycling and reuse** – If waste cannot be prevented, as many of the materials as possible should also be recovered, preferably by recycling. The European Commission has defined several specific 'waste streams' for priority attention, the aim being to reduce their overall environmental impact. For example, several EU countries are already managing to recycle over 50% of packaging waste.
3. **Improving final disposal and monitoring** - Waste that cannot be recycled or reused should be safely incinerated, with landfill only used as a last resort. Both of these methods need close monitoring because of their potential for causing severe environmental damage.

The European Commission looks set to press ahead with plans to lay a 70% recycling target by 2030. Furthermore, a landfill ban on recyclable waste – which includes plastics, metals, glass, paper, cardboard and biodegradable waste – is also planned for 2025 and is likely to be extended to include all recoverable municipal waste by 2030.

In England alone, we generate 177 million tonnes of waste every year². The UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) now wants to move towards a 'zero waste economy'. This is a society where resources are fully valued, financially and environmentally, by reducing, reusing and recycling.

Regionally, the GMWDA (Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority) is responsible for dealing with 1.1 million tonnes of waste produced each year³. At a Greater Manchester level, Bury works in partnership with the GMWDA. GMWDA has a 25 year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Waste Management Services contract with Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester) to treat and recycle waste. The basis of this contract is to maximise recycling, and then to make sure that what

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-and-managing-waste>

³ <http://www.gmwda.gov.uk/about-us>

cannot be recycled is not wasted by sending to landfill but instead is used to generate green energy.

The aim of its PFI contract is to reach a 50% recycling target by 2015, stretching to 60% by 2025. The target for residual waste to be diverted from landfill is 90% by 2015.

DEFRA are working with local Councils to increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections and to make it easier to recycle. Funding has been made available to councils through the Weekly Collection Support Scheme to find ways to improve weekly collections, increase environmental benefits and encourage use of innovative ideas or technology that help residents to recycle more.

Centrally imposed recycling targets have been removed to allow Councils to act on their own local priorities and improve recycling rates in line with local autonomy (the Localism Act 2011). The Council has, since 2011, optimised its resources and created capacity as much as it can by adapting existing collection systems; working in partnership with the GMWDA.

Discussions have taken place between the GMWDA and nine constituent Waste Collection Authorities about the different options available to the latter to increase recycling levels. It seems clear that a more radical change in collection practice will need to be adopted. Options to be considered include smaller residual waste bins, reduced collection frequencies for residual waste, a more proactive approach to locally targeted education and awareness, a proactive approach to enforcement and changes to collection regimes.

To achieve the budget diversion rates, Greater Manchester districts need to achieve an average of 50% recycling in 2015/16. It should also be noted that the 50% recycling rate (the UK national target) was built into the GMWDA PFI contract, and is therefore linked to the award of the grant.

CURRENT SERVICE

Since 2011, Bury has improved its recycling rates in Greater Manchester, with only Trafford and Stockport now recycling more – with over 60%.

Following the launch of the Managed Weekly Collection Service in October 2011, the recycling rate for collected bin waste has increased from 29.4% to 47.6% for 2013/14. This was achieved by reducing the frequency of grey bin collections to fortnightly and improving and extending kerbside recycling to all households. As a result, residents now have the recycling bins for the four waste streams required by the 25 year GMWDA PFI contract.

In recent years the service has broadened out the scope of what is to be collected, introducing different coloured and sized containers to residents to allow more recyclable materials to be stored over a longer period.

The service has always been committed to increasing recycling. This strategy sets ambitious new targets for diverting waste from landfill including improved education and ownership by residents, helping to reduce the carbon footprint i.e. put the 'Right Stuff in the Right Bin' and reduce the tax burden on residents and local businesses.

Facts and Figures

- **Waste collected and recycled in Bury**

There are approximately 82,000 households in the Borough and, on average, 447 kilogrammes of waste is collected annually per household. Of these, around 8,500 households use communal bins. Based on varying frequencies, annually we empty up to:

- 1.91 million grey residual waste bins.
- 0.96 million blue co-mingled recycling bins.
- 0.96 million green paper/card recycling bins.
- 1.69 million brown garden and food waste bins.

The weight (tonnes) of material collected from households in the four main bin types (2010-2014) is shown below. This illustrates the overall progress made in reducing waste that cannot be recycled, whilst increasing recycling tonnages.

Year	Grey - Residual	Blue - Bottles/cans /plastics	Green – Paper/card	Brown - garden/ food
2010/11	48,689	6,417	5,279	8,542
2011/12	39,990	7,109	6,783	11,233
2012/13	33,194	7,753	8,269	12,998
2013/14	32,346	7,861	7,921	13,623

Whilst the figures above relate to household collected bin waste only, the Council will seek to increase all forms of recycling including waste from street cleaning and commercial collections.

Bin capacities

Over the past 14 years, the amount of weekly bin capacity (litres) we provide to residents has changed considerably. The table below shows how available weekly bin capacity has increased with the introduction of kerbside recycling collections.

Year	Grey - residual waste	Blue - glass/cans /plastics	Green paper/ card	Brown garden/ food	Max weekly capacity (litres)
Pre 2000	240	0	0	0	240
2014	120	60	60	Up to 120	360

Recycling Potential

Data from the GMWDA Waste Compositional Analysis and Survey (2011) suggests that a typical household in Bury can actually recycle up to **75%** of their waste in their brown, green and blue bins:

- 34.2% - food and garden waste.
- 21.8% - paper and cardboard.
- 19% - glass, cans, plastic bottles, foil.
- 25% - cannot be recycled.

The table below shows the potential for improving recycling performance from collected bin waste.

Row 1: Tonnages of each material actually collected in the respective bins in 2013/14.

Row 2: Material that is theoretically available to recycle in each bin and the theoretical maximum that should be placed in the grey bin.

Row 3: Material that could potentially be diverted i.e. material currently going in the wrong bin.

	Total collected bin waste (t) (2013/14)	Brown – garden /food (t)	Green – Paper/ card (t)	Blue –Plastic bottles/ cans (t)	Grey - Residual waste (t)
1	61,751	13,623	7,921	7,861	32,346
2	61,751	21,119	13,462	11,733	15,438
3	-	7,496	5,541	3,872	-16,908

Diverting 1,000 tonnes of residual (grey) bin waste to recycling bins would represent an increase of around 1.5% on the household recycling rate and save the Council about **£195,000**. This is because every 1% increase in recycling avoids around **£130,000** in treatment and disposal costs.

A 1.5% shift to recycling is the equivalent to residents diverting around 100,000 bins full of recyclable material from their grey bins to a recycling bin. To achieve this, it is recognised that the most effective way to drive recycling behavioural change is to provide information, continue to educate householders and restrict residual waste capacity further.

Recycling Awareness in Bury

In Bury, the Waste Management Service has the following headline message and strap lines to raise awareness about the importance of recycling:

Recycle for Bury

- **Every household counts!**
- **Make it part of your life!**
- **Every item counts!**
- **Our aim is zero waste to landfill!**
- **Right stuff, right bin...simple as.**

WHY THE NEED FOR CHANGE?

Environmental Case

- Waste prevention and management is one of the top priorities of the EU Waste Directive.
- The GMWDA is aiming to achieve a recycling rate of **50%** and diversion of at least **75%** of waste away from landfill by 2015, as required by its 25 year PFI contract, with stretch targets of 60% recycling and 90% diversion from landfill.

Financial Case

- If the GMWDA fails to meet its landfill diversion and recycling targets the levy paid by each WCA will increase and so Bury will also see an increase in costs.
- Bury has to make budget savings and up to **£7.3 million** annually is being spent on waste treatment and disposal costs that could be avoided. This is an opportunity to reduce waste management costs.
- In 2014/15 it will cost the Council **£283.72** to treat and dispose of one tonne of residual waste. In comparison, brown bin waste costs **£61.35** per tonne to process, whilst the Council receives an **income** of **£25** per tonne for all materials collected in blue and green bins.
- The Council spends around **£28,000** per day to treat and dispose of residual waste.
- The cost of doing nothing is expensive. Waste disposal costs for Bury at current levels are expected to increase between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

TO INCREASE RECYCLING AND SAVE MONEY, WE WANT TO...

- Reuse, recycle and recover waste to convert into high value products. To do this more waste must be diverted from going into landfill.
- Cut back on the treatment and disposal of waste as all residents have access to our full recycling service and as a result only a relatively small amount of waste (around 25%) needs to go in grey bins.
- Increase the recycling rate to 60% or more, strive to be the best recycling Council in Greater Manchester and consistently be above national recycling targets, progressively and systematically.
- Reduce the cost of waste disposal.
- Achieve the GMWDA Waste Management Strategy's ambition of zero production of waste and Bury Council's own 'green' ambitions.
- Further review of collections/recycling arrangements is necessary.
- Improve education/information that residents can use to prevent waste.
- Reduce the carbon footprint in Bury.

HOW DO WE GET THERE? – TEN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Follow the Waste Hierarchy

The main changes to waste management priorities in the United Kingdom come from the transposition and implementation of a five step waste hierarchy.

By making opportunities available, designing appropriate collection systems and raising awareness everyone in our communities can play an active role in ensuring that the amount of waste is reduced before it enters the waste stream.

Bury Council will continue to promote waste prevention through a variety of campaigns and initiatives that will be reviewed to ensure that the most effective campaigns, targeting key waste streams such as food waste, are implemented. The waste hierarchy is intended to act as a priority order in waste prevention legislation and policy. This is as follows:



The hierarchy prioritises prevention followed by reuse, recycling and composting. The recovery of energy is the next preference followed by disposal as the last resort. The aim is to prevent waste from being produced in the first place and where waste is produced, treat it as a resource to maximise its potential value.

Preventing waste

One of the biggest challenges we face in our daily lives is reducing the amount of waste we produce. In Bury, we currently recycle 47.6% of collected bin waste and our aim is to increase this to 60% or more by March 2016. To do this, residents need to have the correct information and knowledge to allow them to make informed decisions to help prevent waste. We have become used to purchasing items easily and then throwing them away when they need replacing. Waste prevention is about making different decisions and choices about the things we buy and use e.g. by buying items with less packaging, planning meals and food purchases, buying items in refillable containers and composting at home.

Recycling on the go

Recycling facilities have been introduced on the streets, in public Council buildings and workplaces, allowing recycling of the same waste streams as in our homes. These facilities help people to think about what they are throwing away, not only at home, but also when they are out and about.

Education and awareness

A cornerstone of the Council's Strategy will be to raise awareness and increase support to the public as strategic and operational changes are implemented. Strong education and effective communication will need to be sustained in order to achieve these challenging targets.

A range of methods will be used to communicate with residents, businesses and schools. Various media formats recognising the diverse society across Bury will provide targeted educational messages. Education will be supported by the provision of advice and guidance backed up as required with strong enforcement for those in the community who do not take full responsibility for their own waste.

Enforcement

The Council recognises that its waste collection service requirements can take time to be fully communicated and understood. Consequently the Council will adopt an approach that will offer advice, support and guidance as the first and preferred way to establish the Waste Management Regulatory and Enforcement Policy.

However, the Council is fully aware that resorting to the use of formal powers will be necessary in some circumstances and is committed to seeing such measures applied in an open, reasonable and proportionate way.

Best Value

The Council has an obligation to secure better value, by pursuing revised recycling arrangements. To achieve this we will work to deliver the Zero Waste Strategy in the most effective, efficient and economic way. With the cost of waste disposal forecast to increase, it is vital for residents, businesses and schools to utilise all of the waste recycling systems available to them.

This Strategy reinforces this important message and at the same time encourages efficient waste collection and disposal methods to ensure they provide best value and a cost benefit to Bury's residents. The Council has a duty to its Council Tax payers to provide a cost effective waste collection service.

Partnership working in Greater Manchester

Bury Council will ensure knowledge, best practice and experience is shared and will work together with other Greater Manchester authorities during the development and implementation of this Strategy. We will aim to adopt a common approach across the districts in areas of waste policy in accordance with the GMWDA Waste Management Strategy. The partnership cannot carry out the Strategy alone. We will actively develop partnerships with all sectors.

Climate change

What we do with our waste has a significant impact on our environment. Cutting down on the amount of waste produced, reducing our use of natural resources and recycling materials is a vital part of moving us towards more sustainable living.

The Council views waste as a resource and seeks to maximise the resource potential of waste. We will understand the environmental impacts of any decisions and aim to ensure policies, collection and treatment methods reduce the impact of resource depletion and carbon emissions.

Empowering local communities

This objective is intended to ensure that communities are involved in the development and implementation of this strategy. Without the support of Bury's residents, this Strategy will not achieve its vision, and it cannot deliver on its other nine objectives.

The Council is committed to meeting our duties under equalities legislation and will strive to make our services accessible and responsive to all. Promotional activities will seek to ensure that communities manage their waste in the most appropriate manner. By engaging with our local communities and taking their views into account when determining and implementing initiatives for the management of waste, they are more likely to understand and take responsibility for their role in managing their waste.

Review

Bury Council will continue to review the implementation of the waste management systems that are needed to deliver this Strategy. The service will maintain an understanding of the materials being collected and the impact of the services being provided.

This Strategy will be reviewed regularly to determine progress and update it in the light of new legislation, new technology or other significant developments. Regular communication with stakeholders and, in particular, residents will take place to ensure awareness of progress and involvement in any changes made.

GLOSSARY

Key word	What does it mean?
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	The UK government department responsible for policy and regulations on environmental, food and rural issues.
European Commission	The EU's executive body which represents the interests of Europe as a whole, as opposed to the interests of individual countries.
European Union (EU)	An economic and political union of 28 member states that are primarily located in Europe.
European Union's Seventh Environment Action Programme	Provides details of a broad range of environmental EU legislation.
European Union Waste Framework Directive	Provides the legislative framework for the collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste.
Greater Manchester Waste Collection Authorities (GMWCA)	Nine authorities working jointly within the GMWDA in Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford.
Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA)	Responsible for waste treatment and disposal of the nine Waste Collection Authorities.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract	A Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is a contract between a public body and a private company and involves the private sector making capital investment in the assets required to deliver improved services. The successful PFI may attract revenue support from the Government in the form of a grant.
Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester)	VLGM is the PFI contractor which provides GMWDA with facilities and services to manage household waste across nine districts of Greater Manchester, in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.