



Waste Strategy 2014/15

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Executive Summary

As everyone is becoming more environmentally aware, it is becoming increasingly apparent that residents and businesses not only want to do their bit towards reducing waste and helping the environment, but expect the council to do the same.

For many years the council has fulfilled its obligation to collect and dispose of residents' rubbish, but much of it has ended up in landfill where it must be managed to limit the amount of pollution.

Not only that, but landfill space in Wales is rapidly running out and with increasing Landfill Tax charged on every tonne of rubbish which is disposed of in this way, it is also very expensive. Furthermore, sending valuable materials to landfill is a waste, when they could be recycled or reused to prevent using more natural resources.

Tough statutory targets set by the Welsh Government mean more has to be done to increase recycling and reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill or the Council will face large fines, which will ultimately be passed onto the tax payer.

Clearly, things must change and Powys County Council is committed to helping the environment by reducing the amount of rubbish sent to landfill by:

- Implementing an improved recycling and waste collection service throughout the county which will allow residents and traders to recycle a larger amount of materials from home and work, including mixed plastic, glass, paper and card, metals and food.
- Collecting leftover, non-recyclable rubbish from householders once a fortnight, encouraging residents to recycle more and reducing collection costs.
- Improving the Household Waste and Recycling Sites across the county in order to see a consistently high recycling and composting level from all sites.
- Improving the network of Community Recycling Sites throughout the county, giving residents maximum opportunity to recycle a wide variety of materials, such as green waste and textiles, which are not collected at the kerbside.
- Developing fit for purpose bulking sites across the county allowing the council to bulk or mechanically separate, bale and transfer recyclable material more efficiently and cost effectively.
- Continuing to work with the Central Wales Waste Partnership in order to find a solution for alternative waste treatment methods to landfill.
- Continuing to work with both staff and residents to raise awareness of the importance of recycling and reducing waste.

As a result, the Council aims to:

- Meet or exceed statutory targets set by the Welsh Government
- Avoid large fines for missing the targets
- Avoid financial penalties for exceeding the Landfill Allowance Scheme allocation for biodegradable waste.
- Reduce the amount of money spent on Landfill Tax payments

- Provide an efficient recycling service to the residents and traders of Powys
- Encourage the reduction of the amount of waste materials and where possible, push waste further up the Waste Hierarchy.

1 Introduction

1.1 In 2010, the Welsh Government published its ‘Towards Zero Waste’ strategy, outlining challenging recycling and composting targets that exceed the EU landfill diversion rates and restrict the use of other methods of residual treatment.

1.2 The Wales (Waste) Measure was also passed in 2010. The Measure sets out targets and penalties for local authorities about the amounts of waste that is recycled, re-used or composted and allows the Welsh Government to restrict certain types of waste going to landfill. Following on from this, the Municipal Waste Sector Plan was published in 2011 and this now provides a collections blueprint for local authorities across Wales.

1.3 Powys faces tough challenges. By 2024/25, 70% of all waste produced in the county will need to be recycled or composted. It is therefore necessary to plan future approaches that ensure that recycling figures continue to increase year on year so that Powys does not face financial penalties and a loss of trust from the residents who live in the county.

1.4 This Strategy aims to outline the methods currently used by Powys to increase recycling and composting rates, and to supply a framework that the local authority can work to in the future to ensure that these tough targets are met by Powys County Council.

2 National Context

2.1 The ‘Towards Zero Waste’ strategy has the waste hierarchy at its core (see Figure 1) and aims to drive waste as far up the hierarchy as possible. The strategy seeks to stem the growth of waste (see Table 1). In order to achieve this, it outlines challenging targets designed to stimulate high levels of recycling.

Table 1

Target on waste collected by Local Authorities	2012/13	2015/16	2019/20	2024/25
Minimum overall recycling	52%	58%	64%	70%
Maximum level of landfill	.	.	10%	5%
Maximum level of energy from waste	.	42%	36%	30%

2.2 In 2010, the Wales Waste Measure outlined the targets in Table 1 and introduced penalties for local authorities should they fail to achieve their recycling targets, thus making the targets statutory. This is in addition to existing Landfill Allowance Scheme penalties.

2.3 The Welsh Government has also set out preferred collection and treatment technologies. For residents, this includes separate weekly food waste collections, weekly recycling via a kerbside sort collection and fortnightly residual waste collection. The preferred technology for the processing of food waste is anaerobic digestion.

2.4 Powys must meet increasingly challenging targets in the future. It is essential that the most sustainable and efficient way forward is found in order to avoid potentially substantial financial penalties. It is also important to ensure that as one of the most visible customer services that the Council offers, a more sustainable approach is instigated.

3 Regional Context

3.1 The regional context for the management of waste within Powys is defined by the Municipal Sector Plan (March 2011) which provides a blueprint for local authorities, listing the Welsh Government's preferred service configuration for waste collection in order to comply with the policies, outcomes and targets laid down in 'Towards Zero Waste'. The document also aims to help local authorities to deliver key financial, economic, social and environmental outcomes.

3.2 The blueprint outlines preferred kerbside collection methods, HWRC and Community Recycling Site options and different methods of treating waste and recycling. This includes Energy from Waste (EfW). It primarily enables local authorities to reduce costs and aims to maximise recycling and composting levels.

4 Current Performance

4.1 Over the past few years, there has been a decline in the growth of residual waste across Powys. This is due, in part, to waste minimisation initiatives that have been introduced. However, the decline is replicated across the UK and can also be attributed to a depressed economy. Close monitoring will need to continue to ensure that this decline is maintained and recycling and composting percentages carry on increasing, even with an improvement in the economy.

4.2 The Welsh Government's favoured collection and processing methods have been adopted in Powys and in 2012/13, the recycling and composting rate in Powys was 51%. The kerbside collections from households contributed 13,195 tonnes of recycling to the overall recycling figures. This is primarily due to increases in dry recycling and the introduction of a kerbside food waste collection service, which diverts more food from landfill. A fortnightly residual collection has also had an impact.

4.3 Many households in Powys now have a fortnightly wheeled bin collection for residual waste and a weekly kerbside sort collection for dry recyclates and food waste. There are still households that do not yet receive the new recycling service and continue with bagged, twin-stream weekly dry recycling and a weekly black sack residual collection service. These households will receive the new service by the end of 2014.

4.4 The Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC) in Powys had a combined recycling rate of 65% in 2013/14 and altogether, they diverted 14,112 tonnes from landfill.

4.5 The trade waste service has operated for a number of years in Powys with the emphasis now moving towards a recycling service. The recycling service has been limited in some areas due to the availability of specialist vehicle, but with the rollout of the domestic scheme,

more options are now available to traders. We currently have 1711 businesses from which we collect general waste and a total of 501 trade recycling customers. Permits are also available for traders to take their recyclable material to HWRCs or CRSs. In future, the Council aims to offer recycling services to all businesses in Powys.

4.6 Historically, Powys collected leaf sweepings from its rural roads and this material has been composted and included in the recycling percentage. Unfortunately, this is no longer possible following updated guidance from the Natural Resources Wales, due to the possibility of the material containing pollutants. This has made reaching the statutory recycling targets more challenging, but in 2013/14, Powys exceeded the previous yearly percentages for recycling and composting and is making significant progress towards meeting the target set by the Welsh Government to be recycling 52% of all waste by March 2014.

5 Policy Objectives

5.1 In order to successfully develop and deliver the Council’s Waste Management Strategy. The following objectives will be followed:

5.2 Headline Objective

Powys County Council will work to the ‘Towards Zero Waste’ strategy in line with the waste hierarchy to prevent the growth of residual waste by stimulating increased recycling and composting and endorsing waste prevention initiatives with a long-term aim of zero waste.

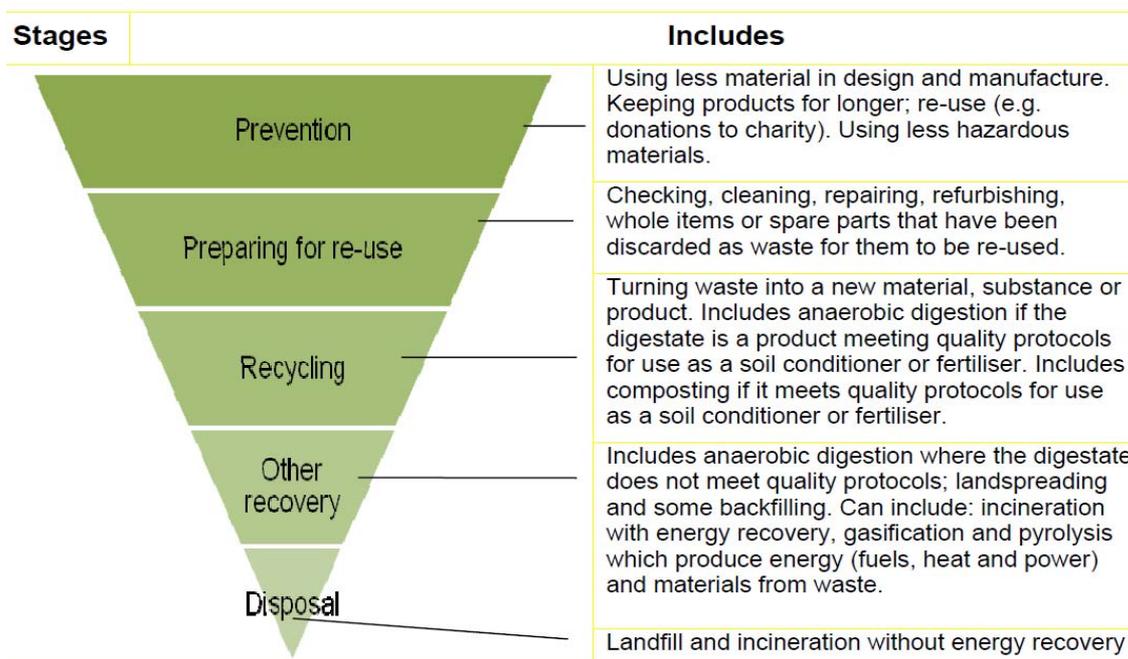


Figure 1 – Waste Hierarchy (Welsh Government, 2012)

5.3 In order to achieve the headline objective, the following supporting objectives have been introduced:

- **Awareness and Education** – Engage with residents, traders, visitors and Council employees to raise awareness and educate of the necessity to follow the waste hierarchy and increase and improve recycling and composting throughout the county.
- **High Recycling** – To work towards the principal Welsh Government target of recycling and composting 70% of all waste by 2024/25.
- **Maximising Recovery from Residual Waste** – Where practicable, to keep landfill to a minimum, materials will be recovered through methods such as energy recovery, gasification and pyrolysis which produce energy.
- **Minimising Waste to Landfill** – To ensure that biodegradable waste sent to landfill is minimised by not exceeding the maximum amount of waste to landfill targets determined by the Welsh Government through the Landfill Allowance Scheme.
- **Sustainable Waste Management** – Adopt sustainable waste management services with reduced carbon emissions.
- **Partnering** – To collaborate with partner organisations, such as the Central Wales Waste Partnership and Powys Local Heath Board, which will help broker improved local, regional and national performance.
- **Cost Efficient Service** – To provide a value for money waste service, which is proficient and well-operated.

6 Waste Awareness

6.1 It is essential to acknowledge the role that the public plays in not only maintaining current recycling and composting levels, but also in helping to meet targets through reducing, reusing and further increasing recycling and composting.

6.2 Behaviour changes remains key if the targets are to be met. Strong education and communications must be progressive and sustained to reinforce the message. The Council will use the variety of media formats available to engage and motivate citizens, communities and businesses. Differing demographic profiles will be recognised and targeted messages specific to these varying demographics will be used. Education will also continue within the Council, with a particular focus on engaging LE operatives with refuse and recycling, increasing their awareness and encouraging best practise across the county.

6.3 A waste awareness strategy for 2014/15 will build on the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle theme and increase recycling rates. Working in conjunction with this, participation monitoring on the new kerbside recycling scheme is being undertaken across the county. The data collected is used to effectively target non- or low participating households and offers the opportunity for communications to be targeted rather than random, which will help to increase capture rate. Currently, there is a 75-80% participation in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells. The local authority intends to do participation monitoring across all the rounds with the aim of increasing participation to 80% throughout the county by March 2015.

7 Education and Enforcement

7.1 The Council has statutory powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take enforcement action on a number of waste related issues. These include residents not using

the supplied containers for their recyclable and residual waste (including the presentation of side waste) and also commercial organisations using the domestic service.

7.2 The approach will be one of education and encouragement where we will endeavour to work with residents and businesses to ensure they fulfil their obligations and help the council to achieve the statutory recycling targets. Enforcement will be a last resort option.

8 Collection Systems

8.1 Powys is implementing a system to deliver higher recycling rates and minimise residual waste sent to landfill. The new service is a kerbside sort scheme, with weekly collections of dry recycling and food waste and fortnightly collections of residual waste for households. This is the Welsh Government's preferred collection method for achieving the targets set and this solution also offers increased environmental benefits, such as segregating waste, recycling and composting at source, which leads to a decrease in contaminated recycling, which needs to be landfilled.

8.2 The scheme focuses on recycling an increased range of materials, including cans, plastics, cardboard, paper, glass and food. Recycling as many materials as possible reduces the amount of material being sent to landfill.

8.3 The Council looks to complete the rollout of the kerbside collection scheme to all areas of Powys by December 2014. During this time, depot infrastructure will be developed to accommodate the new recycling collection methods.

8.4 The scheme currently being rolled out across Powys for domestic properties and business customers will support an increase in recycling figures for some time. Continually increasing the recycling rate towards the statutory targets will become increasingly challenging. In order to reduce this risk, strong communications and education will be used to encourage more householders and businesses to recycle and compost their waste.

8.5 Supplementing the capture rate by introducing new recycling collections will help to drive recycling figures up in Powys. Alongside the current kerbside collections, considerations will be given to the collection of additional materials such as small WEEE. In the future, recycling more materials at the kerbside should be implemented to ensure targets are met.

9 Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

9.1 Under Section 51(1) (b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Powys County Council has a statutory duty to provide residents within its area facilities where they may deposit their household waste, known as Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

9.2 HWRCs are provided in a number of strategic locations in order to serve the whole of the county. This is very challenging in a county the size of Powys and hence some residents will have to travel further distances than others.

9.3 These sites provide a diverse range of recycling options, including materials that cannot be recycled through the kerbside scheme or at Community Recycling Sites. Materials include wood, scrap metal and other bulky items.

9.4 In 2013/14, 68% of all material taken to these sites was recycled. In order to fully contribute to the Council's statutory recycling targets, measures are being put in place to increase the recycling rate at these sites.

10 Community Recycling Sites (CRSs)

10.1 There are approximately 70 Community Recycling Sites situated throughout the county in towns and villages, where local residents and traders with permits can take their recycling. These sites provide a cost effective addition to the collection of recyclables in the county.

10.2 Many of these sites are looked after by a local community group which receives a payment based on tonnages collected. As it is important that these sites complement rather than conflict with the kerbside recycling scheme, the payments mechanism to the community groups has been revised for 2014/15 to incentivise the recycling of materials that are not collected at the kerbside such as green waste, textiles and heavy cardboard.

11 Waste Generated at Council Premises (internal recycling)

11.1 Green issues are high on the agenda for Powys County Council. The Council has reached Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Management Standard, which is the highest attainable level for this particular environmental management system. It means that Powys County Council should now be working towards continual environmental improvement.

11.2 Powys County Council is a large organisation with numerous buildings, as well as more than 7,000 employees. As well as the three main offices, Neuadd Brycheiniog, County Hall and Neuadd Maldwyn, there are also many schools, libraries, leisure centres, depots and other offices across the county, many of which produce waste.

11.3 Some offices and buildings across Powys have facilities to recycle paper, plastics, food and metals. The Council is working to provide all council properties with recycling facilities and collections in the future.

11.4 Every opportunity should be taken in the future to introduce further waste prevention initiatives and encourage Council employees to reduce or reuse their waste as much as possible. The Council will lead by example, setting recycling standards for other organisations in the area and demonstrating what can be achieved to residents and businesses.

12 Trade Waste and Recycling

12.1 A significant proportion of the waste collected by the council originates from the commercial sector. It is therefore imperative that recycling is maximised from this waste stream if the statutory recycling targets are to be achieved.

12.2 All businesses and organisations have specific legal responsibilities as regards the waste they produce, including recyclable materials. Unlike waste produced from households, the collection of which is included in council tax, businesses are required to pay an authorised person for their collection and disposal in addition to their business rates. The rationale behind this is that they take responsibility for the waste they produce and make efforts to reduce and recycle it in order to save money. There is no obligation to use the services provided by the council as long as all the correct documentation is held to prove where the waste has gone.

12.3 The council offers a trade recycling and waste service where recycling is considerably cheaper than residual in order to incentivise businesses to recycle their waste. The trade recycling team are able to work with businesses to provide the best solution for their needs.

12.4 Whilst charges are kept to a minimum, the council has a statutory duty to recover the costs of the trade recycling and waste service. In order to encourage the take-up of the recycling service, the charges made for residual collections are used to subsidise the collection of recyclable materials.

12.5 In order to maximise the cost effectiveness of the trade service, recycling and residual collections are combined with the domestic rounds wherever practicable. Dedicated vehicles are used where this cannot be achieved.

12.6 In order to ensure that council tax payers are not subsidising trade waste collections, it is important that traders do not use the domestic service free of charge. This is also illegal as there is no duty of care in place to show where the waste has gone as required under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The trade waste team works with businesses to ensure compliance with this legislation

13 Waste and Recycling Treatment and Processing

13.1 Recyclable materials are bulked up and sent to reprocessors in a number of locations in Wales and England. The details of these reprocessors are submitted to Natural Resources Wales (formerly the Environment Agency) who verify that they are registered. The destinations of recyclable materials are available to the public on request.

13.2 Food waste is bulked up in Powys and then taken to be anaerobically digested at a facility in England. Anaerobic digestion is the Welsh Government's preferred option for food waste treatment and this contract was procured through the Central Wales Waste Partnership, with financial assistance from the Welsh Government. Furthermore, the Welsh Government make an on-going contribution to the costs of processing through this contract.

13.3 Green garden waste collected at the Community Recycling Sites is taken for composting within Powys.

13.4 General waste is taken to the landfill site at Bryn Posteg. Alternative options to the landfilling of general waste are currently being considered with the Central Wales Waste Partnership.

14 Fly-Tipping

14.1 At present, many fly-tips are sent to landfill, although there are mechanisms in place to separate materials out and ensure that, where practicable, materials are recycled.

14.2 The Council works with the Community Safety Partnership and Fly-tipping Action Wales to target the anti-social aspect of fly-tipping and to increase awareness surrounding the issue.

15 Bulky Waste Collection and Reuse

15.1 Any requests for bulky waste collections where the items are re-usable are referred to a third sector organisation who will collect the items at no cost to the public. These items are then prepared for reuse and sold on to the public, at discounted prices for people on benefits. The third sector organisation receive a payment from the Council per tonne of material prepared for re-use.

15.2 Where items are not suitable for re-use, they are collected by the Council with the householder being charged for this service. This material is recycled where practicable with the remainder being landfilled.

15.3 Work is underway to increase the recycling from the bulky collection service, including working with the Housing Department to maximise re-use and recycling from this source.

16 Finance

16.1 There are huge financial challenges ahead if the Council are to achieve the targets set by the Welsh Government and meet the increased budgetary pressures.

16.2 Costs of transfer, treatment and disposal of residual waste will be decreased by delivering increased recycling and composting.

16.3 A new fit-for-purpose fleet of vehicles has been procured to maximise the efficiency of service and provide kerbside recycling to all residents. Alongside this, the collection routes are to be re-designed to maximise environmental and financial efficiencies.

16.4 The trade service will be extended wherever possible with all costs recharged to customers as required under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

16.5 In 2012/13, Powys did not meet the 52% target but were not fined as Wales as a whole met the target and fines were waived. However, the Welsh Government's statutory recycling targets and Landfill Allowances must be met in future to ensure that the council does not receive financial penalties in years to come. This must be balanced with the increasing costs of providing a service.

17 Risk

17.1 There are numerous risks associated with the waste strategy. Principally, these include: funding; public participation; failure to reach targets; and future changes to Welsh Government policies.

17.2 High participation is needed in order to meet the targets set out by the Welsh Government. It is important for the Council to fully engage with the public and traders regarding the principles of waste prevention, re-use and recycling so that increased capture and recycling rates can be delivered.

17.3 Failure to meet the targets incur financial penalties and the costs may be placed on the Authority. There is also the risk that confidence in the Council could decline and undermine participation in recycling efforts.

17.4 The Welsh Government has set a clear strategic direction, however, waste management changes over time. To ensure that Powys' waste management strategy remains up to date, it will need reviewing periodically and consideration be given to the emerging sector plans.

It is important to note that this is a short-medium term strategy and an annual progress review should be undertaken to ensure the strategy develops and moves forward accordingly to meet the statutory Welsh Government targets and service efficiencies.

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Appendix 1 – Glossary

Anaerobic digestion - A biological process where biodegradable waste, such as food waste, is encouraged to break down in the absence of oxygen in an enclosed vessel. It produces carbon dioxide, methane (which can be used as a fuel to generate renewable energy) and solids/liquors known as digestate which can be used as fertiliser.

Bulking Site - A facility used primarily for the storage of recyclate. If required, some material is baled ready for onward transportation to reprocessing plants. The sites have a weighbridge for measuring the tonnage of material that comes in and out of the site.

Capture Rate - 'Capture' refers to the quantity of a particular target material that is 'captured' by the service or scheme designed to accept that material. 'Capture rate' therefore refers to the proportion (as a percentage) of a targeted material that has been collected relative to the total quantity of that material arising (i.e. including both the residual bin and material recycled / composted). Capture rates are usually calculated for a recycling service / scheme using data derived from operational sources (e.g. the amount of paper collected for recycling at kerbside) and the most relevant and up-to-date compositional data for residual waste available for that area (in this example, it would be the estimated quantity of paper in the residual bin). Although capture rates are usually estimated at the level of a recycling service or scheme, in particular monitoring situations a 'household-level' version might be calculated.

Central Wales Waste Partnership - A partnership between Ceredigion and Powys County Councils. Both Councils are working together to find new and sustainable ways of dealing with waste and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Community Recycling Site (CRS) - Recycling point where the public can bring material for recycling, for example bottle and can banks. They are generally located at supermarket car parks, council car parks and similar locations.

Composting - An aerobic, biological process in which organic wastes, such as garden and kitchen waste, are converted into a stable granular material which can be applied to land to improve soil structure and enrich the nutrient content of the soil.

Energy from waste - Technologies include anaerobic digestion, direct combustion (incineration with energy recovery), use of secondary recovered fuel (an output from mechanical and biological treatment processes), pyrolysis and gasification. Any given technology is more beneficial if heat and electricity can be recovered. The Waste Framework Directive considers that where waste is used principally as a fuel or other means to generate electricity it is a recovery activity provided it complies with certain criteria, which includes exceeding an energy efficiency threshold.

Food waste - This term refers to the discarded food from households and trade premises e.g. vegetable peelings, tea bags, banana skins.

Fly tip – The illegal dumping of waste instead of in an authorised HWRC, CRS or landfill site. It is the illegal deposit of any waste onto land; waste dumped or tipped on a site with no license to accept waste.

Green Waste - Biodegradable waste that can be composed of garden or park waste, such as grass or flower cuttings and hedge trimmings. This is generally disposed of at CRSs or composted at home.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) - Site provided by the Local Authority for the recycling of household waste including bulky items such as beds, cookers and garden waste as well as other recyclables, free of charge. Traders can dispose of recycling at HWRCs if they have purchased a permit.

Landfill Allowance Scheme – The Landfill Allowance Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2004 came into force in Wales on 1 October 2004 to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill sites.

Landfill sites - Any areas of land in which waste is deposited. Landfill sites are often located in disused mines or quarries. In areas where they are limited or no ready-made voids exist, the practice of land raising is sometimes carried out, where waste is deposited above ground and the landscape is contoured.

Low- and non-participating households – Any household that recycles only once in a three week period or not at all.

Municipal Waste - Includes household waste and any other wastes collected by a Waste Collection Authority (WCA). WCA - A Local Authority charged with the collection of waste from each household in its area on a regular basis. They can also collect, if requested, commercial and industrial wastes from the private sector.

Participation Monitoring – Collecting information to measure the public use of the new kerbside recycling scheme and the effect of communication activities so that PCC can target low- or non-participating households.

Pollution - The introduction of contaminants into the natural environment that cause adverse change.

Recycling - Involves the reprocessing of wastes, either into the same product or a different one. Many non-hazardous industrial wastes such as paper, glass, cardboard, plastics and scrap metals can be recycled. Special wastes such as solvents can also be recycled by specialist companies, or by in-house equipment.

Reduction – Minimising the amount of material that enters the waste stream through actions such as reuse, cutting down packaging and composting.

Reprocessor - A business that carries out one or more activities of recovery or recycling.

Residual waste - Term used for waste that remains after recycling or composting material has been removed from the waste stream. Also known as refuse.

Reuse - Using a product again for the same or different use.

Risk – Comprises of two components: uncertainty and exposure. They can either be opportunities (that need to be managed so they are more likely to occur) or threats (where mitigation is needed to reduce any damage that occurs).

Trade Waste - Waste arising from any premises which are used wholly or mainly for trade, business, sport recreation or entertainment, excluding household and industrial waste. Industrial waste is waste from any factory and from any premises occupied by an industry (excluding mines and quarries).

Treatment - Physical, thermal, chemical or biological processes, including sorting, that change the characteristics of the waste in order to reduce its volume or hazardous nature, facilitate its handling or enhance recovery.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) – Describes discarded electrical or electronic devices. The definition includes used electronics which are destined for reuse, resale, salvage, recycling, or disposal.

Waste hierarchy - Sets out the order in which options for waste management should be considered based on environmental impact. It is a useful framework that has become a cornerstone of sustainable waste management.

Zero waste – ‘Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.’ (Zero Waste International Alliance www.zwia.org).