

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Waste & Recycling Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 28 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

J Russell (Chair)

M L Ayling, J Charatan, R A Lanzer and S Piggott

Also in Attendance:

Councillor K L Jaggard

Officers Present:

Paul Baker	Partnership Services Manager
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Sheehan	Head of Projects and Commercial Services

1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	Introduction to the Review, Setting the Scoping Framework and Timescales (Minute 2)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC (as WSCC is the waste disposal authority)

2. Introduction to the Review, Setting the Scoping Framework and Timescales

Councillor Russell welcomed the Panel to the first meeting of the Waste and Recycling Review and provided some background information.

The purpose of the Panel was to look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley could be improved, following the Notice of Motion (NOM) at Full Council in October 2023. There was a need to scrutinise the current situation and performance to improve Crawley's household waste recycling rate, taking into account the differing challenges the Borough had in comparison to other areas, and explore the options available.

Associated and accompanying this, was the National Waste Strategy (Simpler Recycling) and how this would impact, but also seek to provide options for the changing collection regimes to improve the waste and recycling rates in the borough.

In addition to this, was improving awareness for residents and community engagement to improve the ability to recycle along with the new requirements to increase the waste and recycling rates.

It would be important for the Panel at end of each future meeting to think about what recommendations may be relevant for the final report as it was not advisable to wait until the last meeting and have to review each meeting in infinite detail.

The Chair then asked Nigel Sheehan, Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services and Lead Officer of the Panel, together with Paul Baker, Partnership Services Manager to provide some background information (attached as Appendix A to the minutes).

The Panel was informed that the current service locally operated on a 2-2-1 service (weekly residual waste, fortnightly dry recycling, paid fortnightly subscription garden waste). Across the collection regime there were approximately 50,000 collections per week. Nationally approximately only 17% of authorities had retained a weekly residual waste collection service and within West Sussex only Crawley and Arun operated this.

The service was delivered by Biffa Municipal (10 year contract), which had been extended for 2 years until April 2026 due to a response to the National Waste Strategy. In terms of performance it was acknowledged that the partnership service was well regarded. The continuity of service was highlighted during the Covid pandemic when the service had been maintained throughout that period. It was noted that sickness throughout the service was incredibly low compared to other authorities and the Panel recognised the commitment to staff engagement, morale, respect and recognition and it was felt there could be lessons to be learned indirectly from the positive results.

With regards to recycling performance, across West Sussex the Council was performing the lowest for collecting recycling waste tonnage. However, there were significant factors and contextual issues that underpinned the performance figures. Only two authorities had retained the weekly residual waste collections (Crawley and Arun). It was typical that where an authority had moved from a residual waste collection to one which was less frequent (fortnightly) this had resulted in higher recycling rates. Additionally, the recycling figures included garden waste collections, but it was acknowledged that the borough had a large majority of flats relative to other districts and boroughs and consequently those collecting garden waste resulted in a greater tonnage of recycled material. Finally, it was highlighted that typically the quality of recycled material retrieved from flats was lower and more was rejected from communal blocks and flats. However, this was a national trend and not specific to the town but would be an important factor to be considered for the new collection regimes.

The Panel was informed that work was being undertaken with consultants Ricardo in preparation for the new National Waste Strategy, and their work involved benchmarking and comparing local authorities. A different group of local authorities had been provided, which were deemed to offer a more meaningful comparison and representation based on urban makeup, proportion of flats, demography and collection regime (WRAP rurality). Throughout the analysis with the comparative authorities (WRAP rurality), the council was deemed to be performing above average. Ricardo was currently undertaking further analysis and data was forthcoming. It was felt beneficial for the Panel to receive this at a future meeting.

Information was then provided with regards to the National Waste Strategy. In October 2023, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

launched the National Waste Strategy “Simpler Recycling” which would see some significant mandated changes to the collection regimes over the next few years.

Whilst this was still a final consultation at the time of the Panel’s meeting, in summary changes for the Council would see:

- Standardised recycling and waste collections across the country (April 2026)
 - Residual (general, non-recyclable) waste collections to be collected (at least) fortnightly.
 - Garden waste will remain a subscription based fee-paying service.
 - Co-mingled recycling will continue to be collected on a fortnightly basis.
 - A separate weekly food waste and absorbent hygiene products collection will be mandated.
- A separate soft plastics collection (crisp packets, cling film) will be required by March 2027.

In answering queries on the above, it was confirmed that there was an exception in determining physical space within communal blocks to provide a separate food waste collection bin and there was the potential that the current residual waste collection would continue. There was a high probability that this may not be achievable at all flats or communal blocks.

Confirmation was provided on the food waste disposal which would be handled as a separate waste disposal by WSCC as the disposal authority, with the end product being an energy product. Implications for the council were currently being modelled in terms of vehicles, staffing and revenue costings. The Government had indicated there would be revenue support for waste collection authorities in response to the additional costs. The Council would incur additional costs in terms of collecting the different waste streams and there would be some recovery from Government. WSCC should benefit in terms of landfill tax due to less amounts to landfill and any product generation should have a market value, however WSCC would have plant reconfiguration costs.

The food product that was collected currently in residual waste was not used as a bio-gas product but a low grade agricultural product. The amount and quality of the material was paramount to identify the percentage of material to landfill or any product generation. Future options would be important, and the Panel felt it would be beneficial to investigate collection regimes and methods (for example “smart sacks”) currently being undertaken at other urban local authorities.

To implement the above changes to any collection regime, the Council would need to agree a new specification for the new collection arrangements by September 2024 to meet a contract start date 1 April 2026. It was highlighted at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in January 2024 the importance of the implementation dates. Consequently, it was suggested that it would be beneficial that the Scrutiny Panel would be a focused review comprising of a few sessions to enable a potential report in the autumn as this would coincide with a Cabinet report in autumn 2024.

Session 1

- Background and Scoping

Session 2

- Simpler Recycling - Local Delivery and Projection Impacts (recycling, carbon, operational) with consultants subject to dates and availability.

Session 3

- Recycling Performance Local Interventions
- Simpler Recycling – Crawley Implementation

Session 4

- Conclusions and Recommendations

It was acknowledged that Ricardo was currently modelling the impact of the changes outlined in the National Waste Strategy as this would affect but also provide options for the changing collection regimes to improve the waste and recycling rates in the borough. This work would be completed May 2024. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for Ricardo to attend the next meeting of the Panel (subject to dates and availability) to present findings (session 2). It would be important to analysis the council's performance in the context of the current regime to highlight lessons to be learned to take forward into the new regimes.

The Panel recognised that there would be merit in analysing the interventions being undertaken locally (flats and communal blocks), the challenges the National Waste Strategy would bring such as the introduction of food waste collections, together with customer and resident engagement (session 3).

It was recognised that it would be important to learn from other local authorities, however it was noted that recycling was not the ideal way to reduce waste but also there was the need to reduce overall waste and encourage producers to rethink packaging. It was confirmed that the waste hierarchy was 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. Within the National Waste Strategy there was the "extender producer responsibility" which equated to packaging tax and this may come back to waste collection authorities to support the additional burden costs for collecting food waste. There was a role for the council to assist in promoting and encouraging the hierarchy and waste improvement, reduction and minimisation of packaging and it was anticipated this could be covered at a future Panel meeting (potentially session 3).

Panel Members then discussed the draft scoping framework. There was a general view that the scope should acknowledge customer and resident engagement. It was felt it may be beneficial to have a brief online survey to ascertain the impediments to recycling. Advance notice would be required from Communications to action, although should this not be feasible, further (online) research could be undertaken with other local authorities with regards to their collection regimes and the impediments to recycling.

It was noted that other surveys had been undertaken with regards to the barriers to recycling, and part of the National Waste Strategy was to eliminate confusion over what can be recycled in different bins. The introduction of a single system across the country would potentially make things clearer for households.

Concerns were raised that the National Waste Strategy was highlighted throughout the scoping framework, and it was recognised that this was a "step change" to the collection change regime to improving recycling rates. The NOM requested the OSC Chair looked into setting up a cross party Scrutiny Panel "*to look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley can be improved*" and reviewing the National Waste Strategy was not explicitly included in the NOM. Other Panel Members commented that there was a strong link between the waste collection strategy and the level of recycling. It would be important to analyse the council's current performance in the context of the current regime and reasons as this would assist in identifying challenges. This would highlight lessons learned and improvements both now, and also to take forward into the new regimes when the National Waste Strategy becomes mandated to improve the waste and recycling rates in the borough.

The context for the National Waste Strategy was to achieve a 'step change' approach in recycling performance and the best way to achieve that was to investigate the

collection regime. The Panel may wish to consider how to obtain the best results possible, as a result of analysing the current regime for lessons learned and then for the options available moving forward for 2026.

It was felt “the Panel would seek to find ways to understand impediments to recycling in the borough and also consider ways to inform residents/customers of proposed changes to waste collection to maximise levels of recycling”.

The Scoping Framework was agreed, subject to the amendments noted above, as set out as Appendix B.

RESOLVED

1. That evidence gathering session be arranged with Ricardo (to ascertain current performance).
2. That the Scoping Framework was agreed (subject to the above amendments) as set out as an appendix to these minutes.
3. That officers investigate the potential for an online survey.
4. That further research be undertaken with other local authorities with regards to their collection regimes and the impediments to recycling.

3. Future Meetings

Future sessions were agreed as follows (subject to witness attendance):

Session 2 – June (TBC – however placeholder slot of 12 June has been provisionally allocated)

- Simpler Recycling - Local Delivery and Projection Impacts (recycling, carbon, operational) with consultants subject to dates and availability

Session 3 – (July TBC)

- Recycling Performance Local Interventions
- Simpler Recycling – Crawley Implementation

Session 4 – (Aug/Sept TBC)

- Conclusions and Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission would need to re-constitute the Scrutiny Panel (and membership) at its first meeting on 3 June prior to any meetings taking place.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Waste & Recycling Scrutiny Panel concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.44 pm

J Russell (Chair)

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Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel

28th February 2024



1 *

Waste and Recycling Collection in Crawley



2

Crawley Waste and Recycling Contract - Sickness and Attrition

Contract	Code	Sickness %		Attrition %	
		FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
Arun	ARU	4.9%	5.0%	29%	
Crawley	CRA	0.8%	5.0%	23%	
East Sussex Hastings	ESH	6.3%	4.0%	26%	
East Sussex Rother	ESR	2.7%	3.0%	26%	
East Sussex Wealden	ESW	4.6%	4.4%	26%	
Portsmouth Green waste	PGW	3.5%			
Portsmouth	POH	3.5%			
Tandridge	TAN	5.0%	0.0%	25%	
Thurrock	THU				
Waverley	WAV	5.1%	4.0%	34%	
Winchester	WIN	7.3%	6.0%	55%	
Region 2					

Attrition Breakdown

- 4 leaders left due to more money or other opportunities
- 2 leaders Resigned due to disciplinary's
- 4 leader failed the probation period
- 1 leader dismissed (gross Misconduct)
- 1 leader returned to old employer

3

Missed Bins (3 Months) - Comparative Performance



Month	Crawley	Havering	Havering
November	11	10	10
February	10	10	10
September	10	10	10
December	10	10	10

4

Recycling Performance - West Sussex

Percentage of Household Waste Sent for Recycling, Reuse or Composting (NI192)	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Adur District Council	36.59%	41.11%	41.43%
Adur District Council	42.84%	42.34%	42.62%
Arun District Council			
Chichester District Council	44.93%	44.50%	47.01%
Crawley Borough Council	30.27%	31.92%	31.39%
Horsham District Council	53.32%	53.52%	53.09%
Mid Sussex District Council	42.94%	41.75%	42.85%
Worthing Borough Council	39.96%	41.49%	43.63%

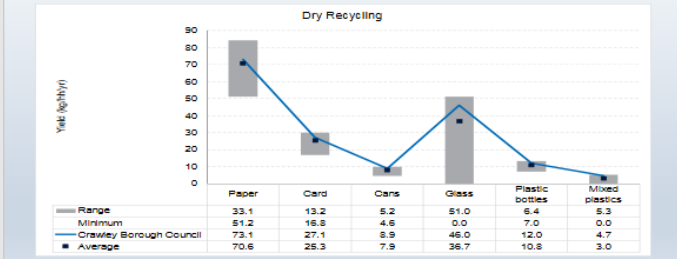
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Recycling Performance - Comparator Authorities

Local Authority	WRAP Rurality	Residual Collection	Dry Recycling Collection scheme	Frequency	Food waste Collection scheme
Adur District Council	4	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Fortnightly	none
Adur District Council	4	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Fortnightly	none
Barnet LB	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Weekly	none
Brighton and Hove Council	2	Weekly	Two Stream	Fortnightly	none
Crawley Borough Council	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Fortnightly	none
Eastbourne Borough Council	2	Weekly	Two Stream	Fortnightly	none
Hammersmith and Fulham LB	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Weekly	none
Havering LB	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Weekly	none
Huddersfield Council	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Weekly	none
Redbridge LB	2	Weekly	Two Stream	Weekly	none
Rushmore Borough Council	2	Weekly	Two Stream	Fortnightly	none
Wandsworth LB	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled Plus Textiles	Weekly	none
Worthing Borough Council	2	Weekly	Co-Mingled	Fortnightly	none

6

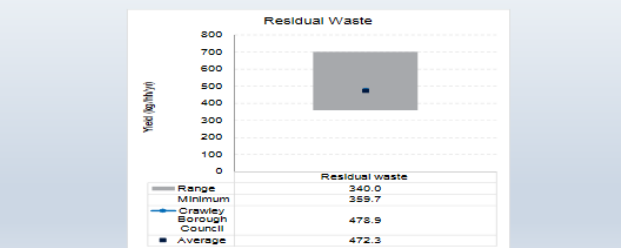
Dry Recycling - Comparative Performance



	Paper	Card	Cans	Glass	Plastic bottles	Mixed plastics
Range	33.1	13.2	8.2	51.0	6.4	6.3
Minimum	51.2	16.9	4.6	0.0	7.0	0.0
Crawley Borough Council	73.1	27.1	8.9	46.0	12.0	4.7
Average	70.6	26.3	7.9	36.7	10.8	3.0

7

Residual Waste - Comparative Performance



	Residual waste
Range	340.0
Minimum	359.7
Crawley Borough Council	478.9
Average	472.3

8

Agenda Item

National Waste Strategy

- Standardised recycling and waste collections across the country (April 2026)
 - Residual (general, non-recyclable) waste collections to be collected (at least) fortnightly.
 - Garden waste will remain a subscription based fee-paying service.
 - Co-mingled recycling will continue to be collected on a fortnightly basis.
 - A separate weekly food waste and absorbent hygiene products collection will be mandated.
- A separate soft plastics collection (crisp packets, cling film) will be required by March 2027.

Scrutiny Panel Review - Proposed scoping

- Session 1 - Background and Scoping
- Session 2 - Simpler Recycling - Local Delivery and Projection Impacts (recycling, carbon, operational)
- Session 3 - Recycling Performance Local Interventions
 - Simpler Recycling - Crawley Implementation
- Session 4 - Conclusions and Recommendations

9

10

Final Scoping Framework

Title of Review: Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel

PART 1: THE REVIEW

Section 1 - Terms of Reference

To look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley can be improved.

The Panel would seek to find ways to understand impediments to recycling in the borough and also consider ways to inform residents/customers of proposed changes to waste collection to maximise levels of recycling.

There was a strong link between the waste collection strategy and the level of recycling. The National Waste Strategy will see significant changes to waste and recycling collection arrangements introduced over the next three years. Notably, the mandatory requirement to introduce a separate weekly food waste collection service and this can be expected to achieve a significant increase in recycling rates albeit with significant financial and operational implications.

This review will examine the performance of the current regime to establish challenges and improvements, which could be taken forward whilst investigating options for the proposed roll out arrangements for the introduction of weekly food waste and seek to ensure the preferred mechanism will achieve maximum environmental benefit whilst balancing the financial and operational implications.

Section 2 – Reasons for the Review

At the Full Council in October 2023, a [notice of motion](#) was passed requesting that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission *look into setting up a cross-party Scrutiny Panel, to look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley can be improved.*

It would be important to analysis the council's current performance in the context of the current regime and reasons as this would assist in identifying challenges. This would highlight lessons learned and improvements both now, and also to take forward into the new regimes when the National Waste Strategy becomes mandated to improve the waste and recycling rates in the borough.

The Council noted the Local Authority Waste Performance Statistics released by DEFRA in March 2023 (below), which showed the latest available household waste recycling data for the seven District and Borough Councils within West Sussex for three years from 2019/20. This data showed Crawley having the lowest household waste percentage in West Sussex that is sent for recycling.

Percentage of Household Waste Sent for Recycling, Reuse or Composting (NI192)	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Adur District Council	36.59%	41.11%	41.43%
Arun District Council	42.84%	42.34%	42.62%
Chichester District Council	44.93%	44.50%	47.01%
Crawley Borough Council	30.27%	31.92%	31.39%
Horsham District Council	53.32%	53.52%	53.09%
Mid Sussex District Council	42.94%	41.75%	42.85%
Worthing Borough Council	39.96%	41.49%	43.63%

It is noted that these figures include tonnages for garden waste. Comparisons with local authority areas with a similar urban makeup are helpful in determining the relative performance for Crawley and will form part of the review.

On 21 October 2023, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the Government response to the “Simpler Recycling” consultation (formerly Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England). The final consultation for all local authorities closed on 20 November 2023 on additional policies related to “Simpler Recycling” in England and the Council is awaiting the results.

In summary, changes will see:

- More standardised recycling and waste collections across the country, including mandated waste collections as all authorities in England must collect the same waste streams for waste, recycling or composting from households.
- Residual (general, non-recyclable) waste collections to be collected (at least) fortnightly.
- Garden waste will remain a subscription based fee-paying service.
- Co-mingled recycling will continue to be collected on a fortnightly basis.
- A separate weekly food waste and absorbent hygiene products collection will be mandated. Waste collection authorities are required to introduce these arrangements with effect from beginning of April 2026.
- A separate soft plastics collection (crisp packets, cling film) will be required by March 2027.

To implement the above changes to any collection regime, the Council will need to agree a new specification for the new collection arrangements by September 2024 to meet a contract start date 1 April 2026.

It was highlighted at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in January 2024 the importance of the implementation dates. Consequently, it was agreed the Scrutiny Panel would be a focused review comprising of a few sessions. This will enable findings from the review panel to be considered as part of the specification drafting process for the new contract period.

Section 3 – What will be in scope and Objectives of Review

The Scoping Framework is specific in that the Scrutiny Panel should focus on the activities **where the Council can influence and add value.**

- a) Current residential waste and recycling collection arrangements
- b) Implementation of the National Waste Strategy requirements
- c) Balancing environmental benefits with operational and financial implications.

Overall Aims:

- a) To review the current operating performance, identify challenges/improvements and investigate the proposed arrangements for responding to the National Waste Strategy to ensure these achieve environmental benefits while balancing operational and financial implications for the Council.
- b) Seek to find ways to understand impediments to recycling in the borough and also consider ways to inform residents/customers of proposed changes to waste collection to maximise levels of recycling.

Agenda Item

Section 4 - What will not be included in the scope (and why)

Potentially this could become a huge review, but it is proposed to keep this review more proportionate and concise by focusing on where it can add most value. There are tight timescales which need to be adhered to.

PART 2: EVIDENCE GATHERING AND PLANNING

Section 5 - Key Documents and Background Information the Panel may find useful for research.

- a) Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the Government response to the “Simpler Recycling” [consultation](#).
- b) Information and evidence from Key CBC Officers.
- c) Potential witness sessions from Cabinet Members.
- d) Potential witness session from external partners.

It will be necessary to take into consideration current and proposed policy documents when undertaking this Panel's work to ensure work is in line with Council policies and priorities.

Section 6 - Witnesses that may be invited

(some initial suggestions listed below – but probably will need to be more focused and selective)

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Name/Position</u>
Internal -	
CBC – Cabinet Member	Cllr Noyce – Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
CBC	Nigel Sheehan – Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services
CBC	Paul Baker – Partnership Services Manager
External -	
Ricardo	Waste and Recycling Modelling Consultants.

Section 7 - Site Visits and Attendance at Events

<u>Location/Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Purpose of Visit</u>
TBC by Panel		

Section 8 - Community Engagement Proposals

Potential surveys - TBC

Agenda Item

PART 3: ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKLIST

Section 9 – Planning the Panel’s Work Programme		
	<u>Date (prov)</u>	<u>Details: (e.g. witnesses, objectives etc.)</u>
Projected start date	Feb 2024	
1 panel meeting	Feb 2024	Background information and scoping framework
2 panel meeting	May 2024	Presentation from Ricardo (Options and implications)
3 panel meeting	June 2024	Conclusions, recommendations and input to contract specification.
4 panel meeting – IF REQ		

Section 10 - Resources and Responsibilities	
Chair of Scrutiny Panel	Cllr Justin Russell
Other Members of Scrutiny Panel	Cllrs Ayling, Charatan, Lanzer, Piggott, Russell
Lead Officer(s)	Nigel Sheehan, Paul Baker, Susan Lawrance
DSO	Heather Girling
Cabinet Member	Cllr Noyce - Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
Head of Service	Head of Major Projects & Commercial Services – Nigel Sheehan

Section 11 - Reporting Arrangements	
<u>Committee/Body</u>	<u>Date (prov.)</u>
Final report of Panel to Overview and Scrutiny Commission	TBC
Final report to Cabinet	TBC

Section 12 - Approvals		
<u>Details</u>	<u>By whom</u>	<u>Date</u>
Panel agreed	OSC	29.1.24
Scoping Framework - agreed	Panel	28.2.24