

# Slough Borough Council

**Report To:** Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Subject:** Waste Management & Recycling Services

**Lead Member:** Cllr Gurcharan Manku

**Chief Officer:** Pat Hayes, Executive Director of Regeneration, Housing & Environment

**Contact Officer:** Matthew Hooper, Director of Environment & Highways

**Ward(s):** All

**Exempt:** No

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Waste Management and Recycling services in Slough as requested by members of CISC. The report sets out the levels of resources currently in place to deliver these services, the key issues currently and proposed areas for improvement.
- 1.2 In addition, this report sets out the service's response to the motion submitted by Councillor Sabah, and seconded by Councillor Akram at Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September requesting a review of Slough's refuse collection policy.

## 2. Recommendation/s/request for direction from the committee

- 2.1 Committee members are asked to note the key issues and acknowledge the unusually low level of resources in Slough's street cleansing service.

## 3. Report

### 3.1 Introduction

As a Unitary Authority, Slough has legal duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended) to collect and dispose of household waste, and to keep land and highways free of litter. Each year, Slough's residents produce around 65,000 tonnes of waste which is either collected kerbside by our refuse teams or deposited by residents at the Chalvey Household Waste & Recycling Centre (HWRC).

In Slough currently, all residents have at least two bins – a grey bin for residual waste and a red bin for recycling. Residents can dispose of all dry recycling in their red bins including paper, card, and glass. Residual waste and recycling bins are collected fortnightly.

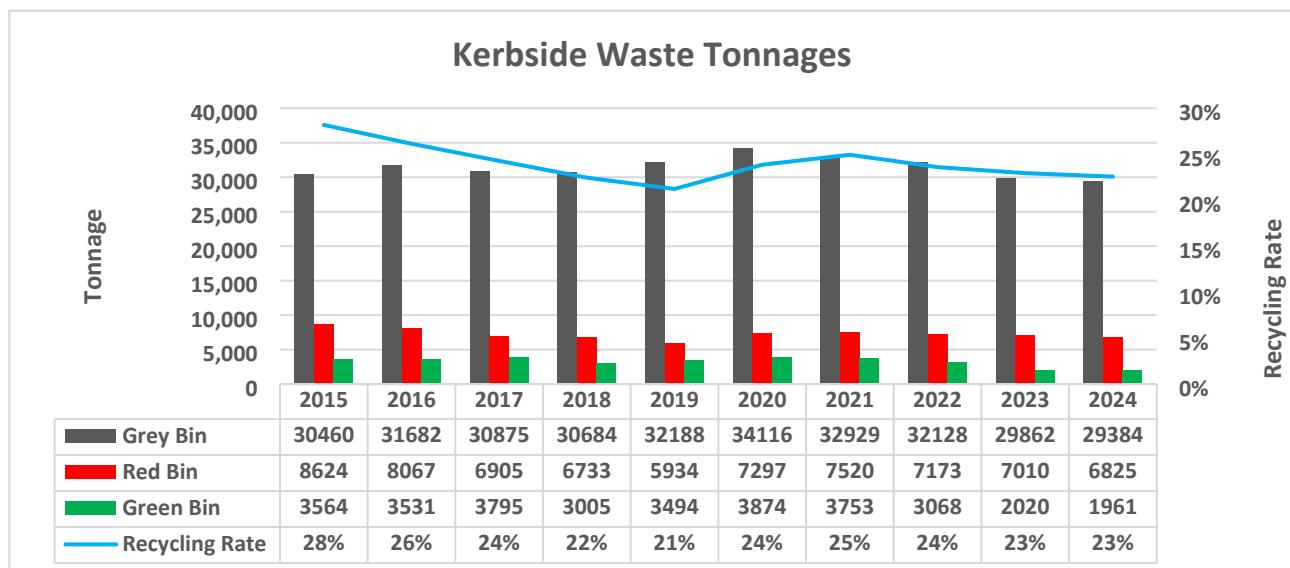
At present, around 8,000 households also pay for a green waste bin. Residents purchase the green bin itself at a cost of £48 and the annual subscription costs £55 for 25 collections a year.

As part of the ongoing food waste trial, 5,200 households in five different areas of Slough receive weekly food waste collections.

## 3.2 Background

### 3.2.1 Recycling

The below shows the breakdown of waste we collect from the kerbside (wheeled bins). Kerbside data is the data used to calculate Slough's recycling rate.



Slough has one of the lowest recycling rates in the southeast at 23%. The average recycling rate for the southeast is 45% against a UK average of 44%. In Berkshire, Wokingham has the highest recycling rate at 52.9%.

As can be seen from the above, the level of residual (grey bin) waste has been reducing since 2020, with nearly 5,000 fewer tonnes collected in 2024 compared to 2020. The level of red bin waste has fluctuated, reducing from its highest level in 2015 to its lowest in 2019.

Recycling rates are driven by a number of factors, including population churn and housing tenure – both of which are likely to be significant issues in Slough. The high level of rental accommodation in Slough which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) means a number of our residents only reside in Slough for a short period. This makes communicating with these residents more challenging and they may be less likely to invest in activities which are seen to improve the local area. There is also some evidence that HMO tenants are responsible for disproportionate levels of flytipping.

A team of two recycling officers have recently been recruited (to be followed by a team manager shortly) to drive Slough's recycling efforts along with the community. They have been set a workplan which includes:

- Resident Surveys: Developing a segmented approach for houses and flats, ensuring accessibility through translation and accommodation-specific design. The

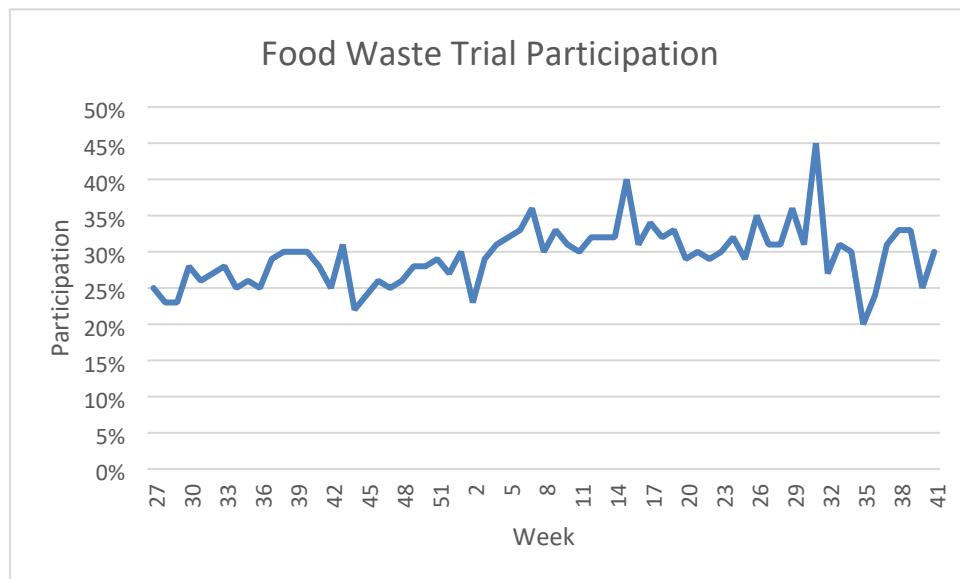
surveys will help verify and refine participation data to support targeted engagement.

- Schools Engagement: Creating a long-term *Recycling Champions* loyalty scheme for primary schools and *Recycling Ambassadors* initiative for secondary schools to build lasting behavioural change. Reviewing existing school activities to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Community Partnerships: Strengthening links with Slough Anti-Litter groups, local faith organisations, and community networks to expand reach and encourage collective responsibility.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Conducting refuse and recycling audits at housing associations and other key waste producers to ensure maximum opportunity is provided for recycling to take place.
- Food Waste Rollout Support: Preparing engagement materials and mapping participation barriers ahead of the borough-wide rollout between November 2025 and April 2026.

Together with our efforts to roll out food waste we hope that our new recycling officers can help set Slough on the right path and both gradually and sustainably improve recycling.

### 3.2.3 Food Waste

Since June 2024 Slough has been running a food waste pilot in five neighbourhoods: Chalvey, Britwell, Colnbrook, Diamond Estate & Langley. Initially, participation in the scheme across the five areas averaged at 24% but over time this has increased to 31%, with a high of 45% in some weeks.



While the more affluent neighbourhoods such as Colnbrook and Langley typically have seen higher levels of participation throughout, it is important to note that levels of participation have increased across all five areas.

From November 2025 we will expand food waste collections to additional areas, with borough wide coverage achieved by April 2026. As part of Government's 'Simpler Recycling' arrangements, all boroughs must have weekly borough wide food waste collections by April 2026.

From the data available, we anticipate borough wide food waste collections will improve our overall recycling rate by around 5-6%.

### 3.2.4 Garden Waste

In the past, Slough has offered all residents free garden waste collections. At that time, we collected garden waste from 28,000 households with a maximum annual tonnage of 4,000 tonnes. Since then, we have changed our waste collection arrangements and brought in chargeable green waste collections. We now have between 8,000 – 9,000 subscribers.

### 3.2.5 Flytipping

Flytipping is a significant issue in Slough and something residents have told us is a concern for them. Each month, the Council usually receives between 1-200 reports of flytipping and we remove between 20 – 40 tonnes of flytips. Most of these are collected by the dedicated flytipping collection crew but some flytips will be removed by our street cleansing teams so it is difficult to accurately measure the total flytipping tonnage removed every month. Based on the data above, it is estimated that Slough spends anywhere between £3,000 and £6,000 a month on disposing of flytips.

#### Fly Tipping – September Dashboard



Resilience and Enforcement Team | Public Health and Public Protection Directorate

Following the Council receiving EPR waste funding from central government it was agreed by CLT and cabinet (March 2024) to allocate £150,000 to Public Protection for flytipping enforcement. Commencing in June 2025, the first phase of the Council's fly-tipping reduction project is delivering some early signs of positive results. The programme combines targeted deployment of ANPR-enabled mobile CCTV cameras, a zero-tolerance enforcement approach, behavioural interventions, and a co-ordinated social media campaign to reduce fly-tipping across the borough.

In FY25/26 to date, a small, dedicated enforcement team has issued 101 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for fly-tipping and duty of care offences, compared with 43 issued across the whole of FY24/25, representing a 134% year-on-year increase. This equates to £85,000

in FPNs issued, with £21,645 collected to date, against a total of £14,550 collected in FY24/25.

### 3.2.6 Resources

The levels of resourcing Slough has to collect waste and remove litter is relatively low. At present the staffing breakdown is as follows:

	<b>Supervisors</b>	<b>Operatives</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
Waste & Refuse Collection	3	50	18
Street Cleansing	3	24 (previously 48)	14
Transfer Station & HWRC	2	6	5

While Waste & Refuse Collection is able to function well with minimal numbers of missed collections and relative resident satisfaction, the low levels of operatives in Street Cleansing is an operational issue. Slough is a borough of 30 square miles, containing 324 kilometres of highways and 647 kilometres of footways. It is a significant challenge for the team as currently resourced to adequately cleanse the whole borough at a reasonable frequency. Prior to 2021, the team consisted of 48 Operatives but this was cut by 50% in 2021 due to the financial constraints. This cut completely removed all flexible cleansing staff we had to deal with day to day issues, it halved the crews to deliver the routine cleansing schedule and it reduced the area specific resources for the town centre and Chalvey. We know from resident feedback that they don't feel the level of litter picking and street cleansing is sufficient and this is due to the low levels of resource. Improvements can be made within existing resources, but these improvements will only go so far. The planned improvements are set out below:

- A street cleansing schedule that uses data to focus on need rather than a set frequency of cleansing regardless of the level of litter.
- Supervisor access to vehicles to allow remote checks in the street.
- Town Centre cleansing – more intensive litter picking, hot washes around bins, street furniture cleansing.
- Training for all operatives in use of small street sweepers.

In particular the first bullet point above will allow greater operational flexibility meaning the service can be more responsive without impacting on the day to day work of the team.

## **4. Response to September Full Council Motion**

1. *The decision by Cabinet on 17 June 2013 to issue the 180L grey bin and 240L red bin as standard when requesting or replacing a waste container;*
2. *The criteria determining the household eligibility for a larger bin (240L & 360L);*
3. *The criteria determining the eligibility for a separate or weekly collection and/or disposal of clinical and personal hygiene/sanitary waste;*

All homes are allocated a 180 litre grey bin (residual waste) and a 240 litre red bin (dry recycling). Within the next five months all homes will also be issued with a 5 litre internal food waste caddy and a 23 litre external food waste bin. Subscribers are allocated a 240 litre green waste bin. It is normal practice for local authorities to issue a smaller residual

waste bin (almost always 180 litres) and a larger recycling bin. This is to discourage residents from producing unnecessary waste and encourage recycling.

Where a property has 6 or more occupants and requests a larger bin our current policy is to issue one 240L grey wheeled bin (instead of a 180 litre grey bin) and the household can have up to 2 x 240L recycling bins. Larger bins can also be requested for those households with two or more babies in nappies and households which have a resident with a medical / health condition which results in the production of extra waste. In certain circumstances and where evidence of need can be provided (i.e. a letter from a doctor or health care professional) a clinical waste collection can be arranged.

4. *Impact report on waste disposal & fly tipping in relation to “Sheds with Beds” (including permitted or unpermitted developments);*

It is extremely difficult to measure the impact Houses in Multiple Occupation have on waste disposal and flytipping in Slough. As a waste collection authority, Slough has a statutory obligation to collect all household waste, including waste produced by HMOs. Where the level of waste produced by HMOs cannot be contained in the provided bins, landlords are expected to arrange additional waste collections privately. We do not measure the amount of waste produced by each household as we don't have the necessary technology on our refuse collection vehicles.

5. *Current communications plan and resident engagement in particular the above policies and any such changes;*

A budget of £50,000 has been allocated from grant funding to encourage greater levels of resident communication on waste disposal and recycling. This will be driven by the Recycling Officers in conjunction with corporate communications.

6. *Establish a ‘citizens charter’ promoting responsible recycling and waste disposal;*

To an extent this will be picked up by the recycling officers and the communications work referenced above. Budget will need to be found if we intend to undertake a greater level of activity such as a Citizens Charter.

## **5. Implications**

### **Financial implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Legal implications**

5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Equalities Implications**

5.3 The only part of the report which details a change in current operations is around our efforts to drive up recycling. The Recycling Officers recruited for this purpose will ensure that in focusing on community groups they are engaging with the full range of Slough's community, including groups which represent those with protected characteristics.

## **Corporate Parenting Implications**

5.4 There are no corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

## **Risk management implications**

5.5 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

## **Environmental implications**

5.6 The report details a number of initiatives to help drive up recycling and help protect the environment. Everything

## **6. Appendices**

None