HIW/19/5

Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee 29 January 2019

Waste & Resource Management Strategy for Devon – an update

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

1. Summary

This report outlines the progress with implementing the Devon Waste & Resource Management Strategy to date, including key milestones that have been achieved and looking at the way ahead.

2. Background

The Waste and Resource Management Strategy for Devon was originally published in March 2005 and reviewed in 2013 (https://new.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/waste-management-strategy-for-devon/). It is now undergoing its 5-yearly review following the recent publication of the Government's Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England in December 2018.

The document was published in partnership with the District Councils of Devon and Torbay. Responsibility for waste management under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 is shared between two tier councils, and Torbay is responsible for its own waste. Torbay remains a partner on the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee, with Plymouth having decided to leave the partnership in April 2014.

The original Strategy set out key policies with regard to managing municipal waste in Devon with clear targets to be met (https://new.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/waste-management-strategy-for-devon/). A review was carried out in 2013 with policies reviewed and new targets set.

3. Proposal

Waste hierarchy

The foundation of waste management in Devon is based on aiming to meet the waste hierarchy. The aim being to deal with as much waste as possible at the higher levels of the hierarchy.



Significant progress has been made in terms of moving the treatment of waste up the waste hierarchy. In 2012/13, 46% of Devon's waste went to landfill. Five years on in 2017/18 only 17% went to landfill with 29% going to Energy Recovery Facilities (ERFs). See Appendix I.

Devon Aligned waste collection service and Shared Savings Scheme

A key target of the 2013 Strategy was to work in closer partnership with the district councils of Devon. The County Council has been working closely with the districts to achieve the "aligned" kerbside collection service. This consists of a weekly dry recycling collection, a weekly food waste collection, a fortnightly residual waste collection and charged for garden waste. The reason for this is to achieve a degree of consistency and to reduce the amount of waste going for disposal. For example, Torridge has just changed from a weekly residual collection to a fortnightly one which will encourage householders to use their recycling boxes more efficiently. The more aligned the services are the easier it is to communicate the service to householders across Devon. The difference between services offered over the last 5 years is shown in the diagrams at Appendix II.

In order to incentivise the districts to modify their services the County Council has been offering a Shared Savings Scheme whereby the County Council shares the savings it makes on waste treatment or disposal costs when a district makes significant changes to their collection service, on a 50:50 basis https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=677.

In addition to aligning the key elements of the service the districts are gradually collecting the same materials (see recycling section below). This is critical in reducing the confusion that residents experience when friends, relations and neighbours in different districts have different services. In 2017/18, the County Council shared over £700,000 with the District Councils through the Shared Savings Scheme.

Recycling targets, growth and Performance Indicators

The Government has not set any recycling targets for local authorities for many years. However, EU targets are in place and member states have been set a target of 50% recycling by 2020. More recently the EU Circular Economy package has also set targets of 55% recycling by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035. Devon met the 50% and 55% targets in 2008/09 and 2010/11 respectively.

The original Devon Resource and Waste Strategy target of 60% recycling by 2019/20 is not likely to be achieved. This was set in 2005 in an era of rapidly increasing recycling rates. The recycling rate increased up to 2010/11 but has remained stagnant at 55% over the last 6 years. Recently it reduced by 1% due mainly to changes at Household Waste Recycling Centres (see HWRC section below). The stagnation is a nationwide phenomenon. To some extent this is related to light-weighting of packaging, and reduced numbers of newspapers bought with people reading news on line. Also, the main heavy components in a typical bin (glass, paper, food waste and garden waste) have all been part of the collection services over the last few years and the indicators are weight-based measures. In addition, austerity has limited budgets for new services and particularly for behavioural change work, with a number of districts having reduced their education and communication resources which means the householders are not regularly reminded about what they can recycle. This situation is particularly evident in West Devon where their recycling rate has decreased year on year following the loss of their Waste Education Officer.

However, there are a number of district council service changes still to be made which will assist with improving performance including North Devon Council offering a 3-weekly residual waste collection and South Hams and West Devon collecting mixed plastics. The

results of Torridge changing to a fortnightly service in June 2018 will also begin to show in the 2018/19 statistics. Other District Councils are also considering a less frequent residual waste collection.

Growth predictions are notoriously difficult to make and although there have been periods of growth in waste quantities in the last 5 years the trend is generally downward and below the 1% yearly increase predicted to account for the increase in house building. Factors that are considered to influence waste arisings include austerity; household sizes; HWRC policy; bin size, type, and collection frequency; side waste and garden waste collection policy and weather for garden waste; political priorities; tourism; technology and light-weighting of packaging; socio economics and effective communications. Depending on which of these has greatest influence at any point in time can affect waste arisings.

Although there have been no performance indicator targets set by Government in the last 5 years, county, district and unitary councils continue to measure a number of indicators themselves. These are as follows:

- BVPI84a kgs of household waste collected
- NI191 kgs residual waste per household
- NI192 Recycling rate %
- BVPI82a-d recycling, composting, landfill and recovery rates.

It can be seen from the graph of BVPI84a in Appendices III and IV that the amount of kg of waste collected per household has reduced over time. This is of key significance because the less waste there is to deal with the less waste management costs and the less impact on the environment and on resources. In the national league table Devon was positioned at the 'wrong' (high) end of the league but is now mid-way. This shows that a number of initiatives including behavioural change work and service modifications have resulted in reduced waste arisings. Further graphs showing the various waste performance indicators are detailed at Appendix IV.

Behavioural Change

The County Council and the districts and Torbay continue to influence householders to change their behaviour in respect of reducing, reusing and recycling their waste by implementing a number of initiatives. The focus for this is the Waste Prevention and Reuse Strategy and also the Schools Waste Education Strategy https://new.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/waste-management-strategy-for-devon/.

The Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee has invested in a Waste and Recycling Advisor's Contract which is focussed on talking to householders face to face to assist them to improve their recycling habits (see infographic in Appendix V). Over the last 18 months advisors have spoken to more than 7000 people, given out more than 5000 recycling boxes and in this time period there has been a 3% increase in people's confidence levels in what they can put out for recycling.

The award winning Don't let Devon go to waste campaign work (see Appendix VI) has continued under the RecycleDevon banner with the website www.recycledevon.org being the knowledge base. The campaign work has concentrated on food waste reduction, home composting, reduction of plastics and recycling across the range of materials. The messaging is targeted at relevant audiences using appropriate methods which are determined by research carried out by WRAP and also our own market research. Much of the messaging is transmitted via social media. Recent campaign work has included:

- Food waste prevention project "Guilty Food Waste Secrets" which provided helpful tips and advice on reducing food waste;
- recycling in the bathroom reminding people to recycle their shampoo bottles and toilet rolls for example;
- promoting less use of single use plastic with "Refill Devon" where retailers/cafes sign
 up to offering free water fill ups for those with their own water bottles, thereby
 reducing plastic bottle usage.

A Reuse Officer has been in place for 3 years now originally funded by the Government's Waste and Resources Action Programme, then the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee and now the County Council. This is a key post given the place of Reuse in the waste hierarchy. This year the project has focussed on organising 6 Repair IT events where people bring their broken electrical items for repair at locations across Devon including a number of libraries. The www.recycledevon.org/reuse pages have been updated and are a valuable source of information. The project has involved a range of initiatives which can be seen at Appendix VI.

A relatively new project is the Devon Community Action Group (CAG). The CAG is based in Tiverton and aims to encourage groups and individuals to put on events & develop initiatives to encourage the community to be more sustainable, e.g. Give and Take, Clothes Swishing and Repair cafes. Resource Futures are the contractor delivering this work on behalf of the County Council. The infographic at Appendix VII shows their achievements in the first year of the contract.

Ecowaste4food is a 4 year EU funded project aimed at reducing food waste in the supply chain by innovative means. Phase 1 has been about exchanging and sharing knowledge and experience of innovative ways of reducing food waste from 'farm to fork' with 6 EU partners. The County Council has visited the 6 partner countries accompanied by stakeholders who operate in the food waste reduction field, and the partners have twice visited Devon where Devon showcased our best local innovations - for example, Grocycle who use spent coffee grounds to grow gourmet mushrooms. In September 2018 a Food Waste Conference was held where delegates discussed the innovative ideas and food waste prevention strategies. An Action Plan is being developed which will be implemented over the next two years subject to further funding being in place.

Schools Waste Education

The Schools Waste Education Strategy and Action Plan is complementary to the Devon Waste and Resource Strategy. It forms the basis of the work with schools in Devon. This has just been reviewed and updated. The contract for schools' education provides a range of workshops, visits to waste management facilities and useful information on the Zone website at http://zone.recycledevon.org/ for teachers and pupils alike. Recently new workshops have been added on litter and in particular marine litter with 23 workshops on this popular subject provided in one summer term. There is also a new *Litter Pack* made available to schools on http://zone.recycledevon.org/lesson-plans.

Recent results show that Totnes St John's CofE Primary have increased their recycling and composting rate from 37% to 81% and Uffculme Primary School have increased their recycling and composting rate from 11% to 84%.

In the last 6 months 351 children and 151 adults have visited the Exeter Energy Recovery Facility as part of the schools and community work.

Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC)

DASWC was initiated in 2016 and replaced its predecessor the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee.

A joint waste committee in Devon has been in existence for more than 25 years. It consists of membership by the waste portfolio member from each District, Torbay and County Council. It has enabled close working between the Districts, Torbay (and Plymouth until 2014), mainly on reducing, reusing, recycling and composting waste initiatives. Its budget is sourced from a pooling of a topslice from recycling credits and has supported a range of initiatives over the years from Community Composting, Reuse, communications and behavioural change initiatives.

The new DASWC was set up to take a more strategic approach to waste management across Devon encouraging more collaborative working as waste collection authorities move towards the Devon aligned collection service.

Residual Waste Analysis

In October 2017 a residual waste analysis was commissioned by DASWC. This involved the analysis of 1800 residual bins across Devon and Torbay. The results showed that there was still 30% food waste in the bins even although all residents except for Exeter have a food waste collection. The pie chart at Appendix VIII shows that plastics and paper were the next most prevalent materials. M.E.L. who carried out the analysis also calculated how much of the material found in the bins was recyclable under current collection regimes (See Appendix VIII). This shows that 40% of what was in the bins would be recyclable if the householders had put the right items in the right bin. This amounts to 50,000 tonnes of waste costing around £6.7m to dispose of. This shows how much more needs to be done to educate the householders to put the right waste in the right bin. The current Waste & Recycling Advisers contract will help residents to recycle more. For example, more than 5000 recycling boxes have now been distributed over the 18 months of the contract showing that people just need a bit of help to improve their recycling practices including having the right bins.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

The HWRCs have always been high performing in terms of their recycling rate. This reached a high in 2016/17 of 82%. In 2017/18 it reduced to 73% due to no longer being able to recycle mattresses and carpets as part of the new contract and tightening restrictions on recycling of wood such that only high-grade wood could continue to be sent for recycling, with low grade wood being sent for recovery.

A scheme to charge for non-household waste (soil and rubble, asbestos, tyres and plasterboard) was introduced in 2011. Further charging was introduced in 2015 (DIY plastic waste, plastic sanitary ware) and vehicle restrictions tightened in 2017. Savings made as a result of taking these actions has enabled the County Council to keep all of its permanent HWRCs open whereas other councils have closed sites or drastically reduced opening hours.

In the past 5 years the following initiatives have been completed:

- New replacement site opened at Sidmouth (See Appendix IX)
- New replacement site opened at Ivybridge, which won the LetsRecycle Awards for Excellence Civic Amenity site of the year 2018 (see Appendix IX)

 Improved levels of re-use with the Reuse shops provided with new signs and donation stations.

A Recycling Centre Improvement Strategy was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 March 2011https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?MID=566&RD=Minutes&DF=09%2f03%2f2011&A=1&R=0 (Report EEC/11/38/HQ and Minute *321 refer)

Whilst a number of sites have now been either improved or replaced there is currently no further funding in the capital programme and there is still much needed investment to develop new modern sites. Some of the older sites were developed ancillary to landfilling operations whilst others developed on small areas of industrial sites and are no longer fit for purpose. They are at times heavily congested, and still rely on the public climbing steps to place their waste in skips as well as having to close whilst containers are swapped over. This leads to frustration from the public, H&S issues and does not help encourage the public to recycle their waste.

The Recycling Centre Improvement Strategy is currently being reviewed and it is intended to refer back to Cabinet later this year to seek further capital funding to continue to invest in this key infrastructure.

Organic waste

The strategy for manging organic waste in the 2000s was to collect mixed garden, card and food waste fortnightly for treatment at In Vessel Composting (IVC) Plants developed adjacent to Heathfield, Broadpath and Deep Moor Landfill sites. This was new cutting-edge technology with the IVC at Heathfield being one of the first plants to operate nationally. These plants enabled the County Council to meet its statutory targets as set out in the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme Regulations to divert biodegradable waste away from landfill. Failure to have done so could have resulted in the County Council having to meet fines of £150/tonne for every tonne of biodegradable waste landfilled over its statutory targets.

At the time Anaerobic Digestion (AD) was a relatively new technology for domestic food waste treatment. However, as it became evident that separating food waste for AD was better for the environment and for encouraging greater public participation, the districts began to consider weekly food waste collections. This was in line with the Devon aligned collection service and was encouraged by the County Council through the Shared Saving Scheme as it would enable kitchen and garden waste to be treated more cost effectively. This would also give the District Councils the opportunity to charge for the collection of garden waste thereby covering the cost of offering the service.

All the districts except Exeter and South Hams now collect weekly food waste separately and charge for garden waste collections. The three IVC plants have now closed. New contracts for composting garden waste and AD of food waste have significantly reduced the cost of organic waste treatment. South Hams currently still collect mixed food and garden waste which is processed in Oxfordshire but this contract will expire in 2020 when it is anticipated that the council will move to separate food and garden collections.

Residual Waste

The County Council commissioned two Energy Recovery Facilities (ERFs) to meet the EU Landfill Directive targets. One was built in Exeter and one procured in partnership with Torbay and Plymouth which was built in Devonport Dockyard. As a result, waste from Exeter, East Devon and parts of Mid Devon and Teignbridge has been going to the Exeter ERF since 2014 and waste from parts of Teignbridge, South Hams, West Devon, Torbay

and Plymouth has been going to Plymouth ERF since 2015. Photographs of these plants can be seen at Appendix X.

From 2019, domestic waste from North Devon and Torridge which currently goes to landfill at Deep Moor, Torrington, will be treated at an ERF plant in Avonmouth. This will leave only around 5% of Devon's domestic waste going to landfill. This will be residual waste that is unsuitable for energy recovery which will predominantly be bulky residual waste from the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Landfill

The EU Landfill Directive and subsequent Government policy & legislation including the Landfill Tax Escalator have encouraged a huge national shift away from landfill for all types of waste. There are currently only two active landfill sites left in Devon and one of these is set to close early next year as it will be full. Both active landfill sites in Devon are owned and operated by commercial waste management companies.

From February 2019 only a fraction of Local Authority Collected Waste in Devon will be sent for landfill. This will be primarily bulky household type waste from the Household Waste Recycling Centres that cannot be recycled and is unsuitable for the energy recovery facilities. There will always be a need for some landfill capacity within Devon as there are some wastes that cannot be managed any other way. In addition, landfill capacity will be required as a contingency disposal point when the energy recovery plants are down for either planned or unplanned maintenance.

Tipping at the Viridor owned Heathfield landfill site ceased in 2016 due to declining landfill tonnages following opening of energy recovery facilities at Exeter and Plymouth, and there being insufficient waste to support two landfill sites in the south and east of the County. Viridor took the commercial decision to close their Heathfield site and concentrate landfilling operations at their Broadpath site near Uffculme.

Since the cessation of tipping at Heathfield, landfill tonnages have not declined as quickly as anticipated for commercial and industrial type waste. At its meeting 19th September 2018, the Development Management Committee gave approval to Viridor to recommence tipping at Heathfield landfill site

https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s20723/rt300818dma%20Heathfield%20Farmhouse%20and%20existing%20offices%20and%20workshops%20at%20Heathfield%20Landfill%20Site%20John.pdf

With Broadpath landfill closing early next year the remaining capacity at Heathfield is therefore required to accommodate further landfill arisings. Otherwise waste would need to be hauled further afield at greater cost and environmental impact. This issue has arisen due to the lack of local capacity for commercial waste, the need for contingency disposal when the ERFs are offline (planned and unplanned maintenance) and some waste types not being suitable for energy recovery. It is not due to any rise in domestic waste quantities. Viridor intend to reopen Heathfield landfill to coincide with the closure of Broadpath.

Recycle@work

The County Council needs to lead by example and has had a recycle@work initiative in place for many years, aimed at reducing, reusing and recycling waste at County Council properties and encouraging staff to follow the waste hierarchy. The County Council has recently published its own plastic strategy

https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s17223/Environmental%20Policy%20-%20New%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Plastics.pdf

and good progress is being made on its implementation.

Clean Devon

Although the County Council is not responsible for collecting litter or clearing fly tipping on public land, it does meet the disposal costs of these wastes collected by the districts. Given the impact of litter and fly tipping on tourism, healthy living and crime the County Council is talking to partners such as the District Councils, the Environment Agency, the National Parks, Highways England, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner about the potential for a multi-agency approach to litter and fly tipping across Devon.

Looking forward

The EU Member States adopted a Circular Economy Package earlier this year and it is anticipated that the Government will implement it within the UK.

The Government has just published its own waste and resource strategy – Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England. This sets out at high level a blueprint for reducing and managing waste in England and moving away from a linear economy towards a circular economy and includes proposals set out in the EU Circular Economy Package.

Many of the proposals put forward in the Strategy will be subject to consultations prior to implementation.

Key proposals and targets are:

- Extend Producer Responsibility for packaging to cover full net costs of recycling or disposal & to consider extending this to other materials – eg textiles, tyres
- Introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for all single use drinks containers including disposable coffee cups
- Specifying a core set of materials to be collected by all councils at the kerbside for every household
- New targets for recycling and packaging (recycling 65% by 2035 and packaging target of 75% by 2030)
- Requiring weekly separate food waste collections for all households and appropriate businesses & offering free garden waste collections to householders.
- Eliminate food waste from landfill by 2030
- Reviewing provision of HWRC services including potential introduction of minimum service standards, improving re-use, charging for non household waste and revision to the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012
- Introduce mandatory electronic waste transfer details, reformation of duty of care
 including international waste shipments, setting up a joint unit for waste crime and
 launching a web based fly tipping toolkit
- Introduce mandatory food waste reporting, targets and distribution by food businesses
- Require hospitality and public sectors to produce food waste strategies
- Undertake a review of date labelling & packaging of fresh produce
- Work towards all plastic packaging being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025, and eliminate plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan
- Introduction of a tax on plastic packaging not containing at least 30% recycled content in 2022 and increasing the plastic bag charge to 10p including small shops
- Ban problematic plastics including straws, cotton buds and stirrers
- Invest in R&D to tackle plastics and develop standards for alternatives including bioplastics

- Review the effectiveness of two tier working and payment of recycling credits
- Move away from weight based metrics using carbon, natural capital and others
- Continue to invest in new waste treatment facilities £3 billion investment to 2042.

Consultations on Extended Producer Responsibility, a Deposit Return Scheme and Consistency of waste collections are due to be launched in January 2019 and the outcome of these may be included in draft legislation as part of the Environment Bill which is anticipated in spring 2019.

The Devon Authorities are also set to review the Devon Resource and Waste Strategy, and this will be influenced by the Government's own publication. It is anticipated that the County Council will respond directly to the Government consultations as a Waste Disposal Authority as well as be part of the joint response from the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee.

Implementation of DRS and EPR has the potential to radically change the way that household waste is collected and managed and in particular for how the costs would be met by the producers. Scrutiny may well wish to input into the County Council response to the consultations.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The 2013 Strategy Review was consulted upon in 2012 prior to publishing. The 2019 Strategy Review will be subject to public consultation.

5. Financial Considerations

The current waste budget is approximately £38 million per annum. The breakdown of this is given in the chart in Appendix XI. Most of the waste services are contracted out including the waste behavioural change and education work. This includes two long term residual waste contracts for both the Exeter Energy Recovery Facility and the South West Devon Waste Partnership Combined Heat and Power facility.

Savings in excess of £6 million have been delivered over recent years. These have largely been achieved by retendering of contracts, working more collaboratively with partners, changes to the HWRC service including the introduction of charges for non-household waste and vehicle restrictions and reductions in the behavioural change and education budget.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The Strategy is founded upon the Waste Hierarchy which ensures as far as economically and practically reasonable that the management of Devon's waste will have the minimal impact on the environment.

7. Equality Considerations

The 2019 Strategy review will be subject to a full Impact Assessment.

8. Legal Considerations

Management of waste is highly regulated and governed by waste legislation. The lawful implications/consequences of the policies within the Strategy are taken into account when implementing them.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The corporate risk register is regularly updated to ensure risks relating to waste management are identified and controlled.

10. Public Health Impact

When dealt with efficiently and effectively waste should not have an impact on public health.

11. Discussion

This report details the progress made on implementing the Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon 2013. The Strategy will be reviewed in 2019 & will be influenced by the publication of the Government's own Strategy.

The Scrutiny Committee may wish to note the progress made on the Waste and Resource Management Strategy for Devon and the proposal to review it in 2019.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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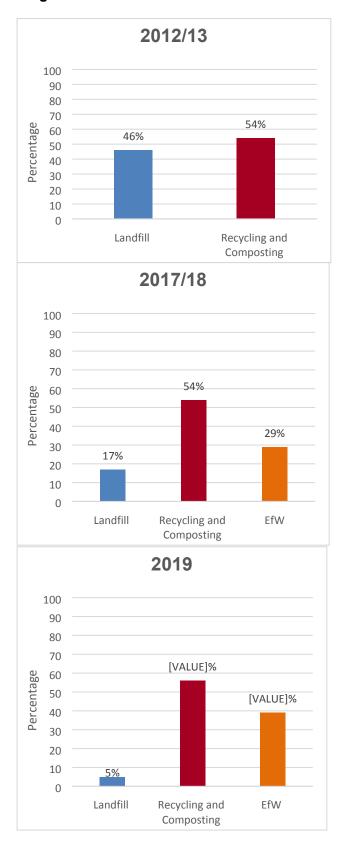
Background Paper Date File Reference

Nil

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Appendix I To HIW/19/5

Changes in waste treatment in Devon 2013 - 2019



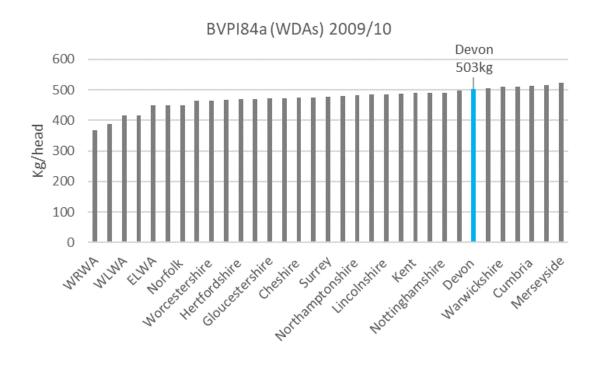
Progress towards the aligned option 2013



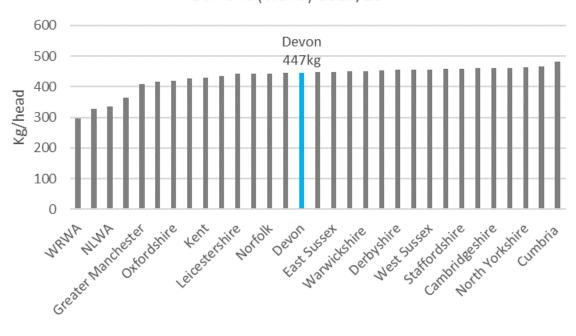
Progress towards the aligned option 2018



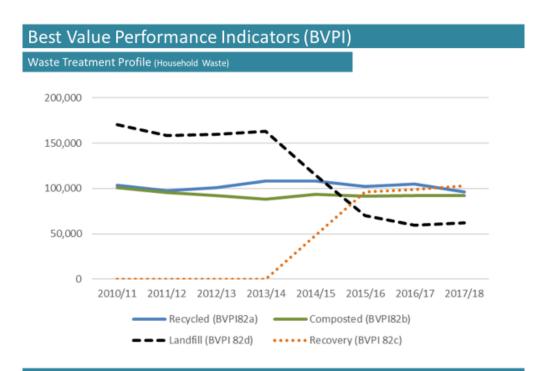
Comparison graphs of English WDAs showing BVPI84a in 2009/10 and 2017/18 (kg of household waste collected per head per year)



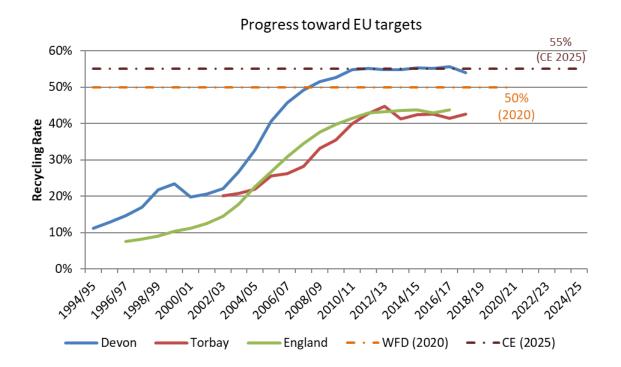


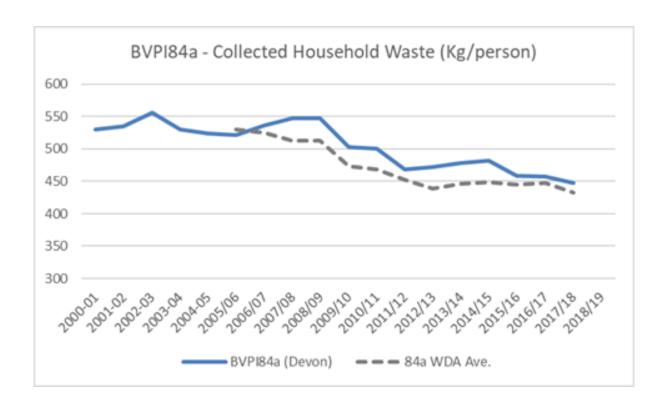


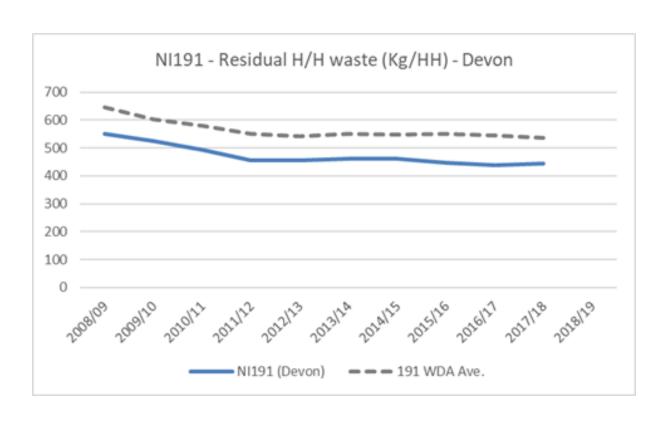
Graphs showing waste performance indicators



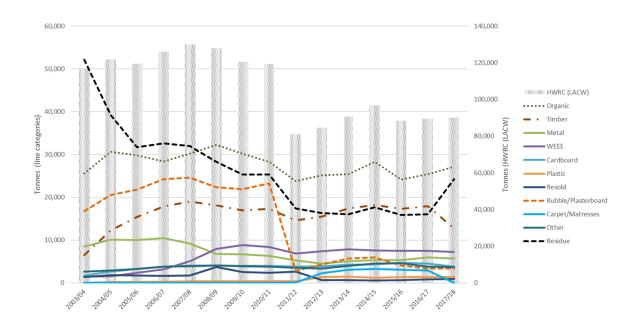
Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee

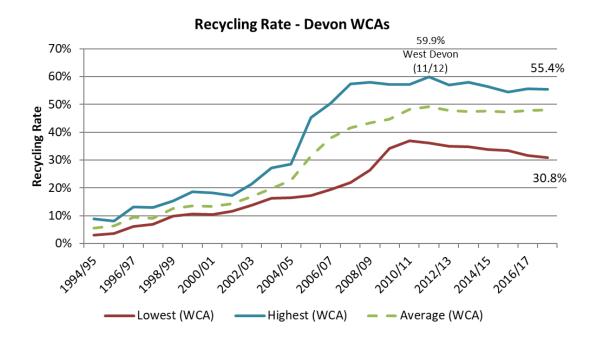




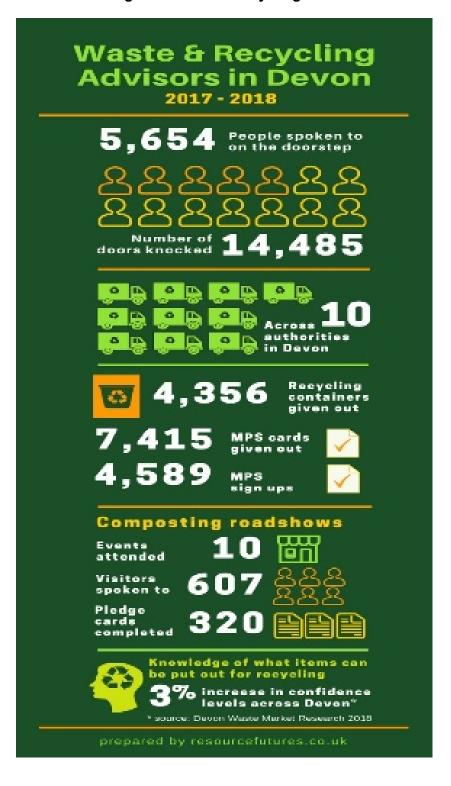


Materials recycling tonnages





Behavioural Change - Waste and Recycling Advisors Contract



Behavioural Change – Don't let Devon go to waste





Behavioural Change – Reuse project

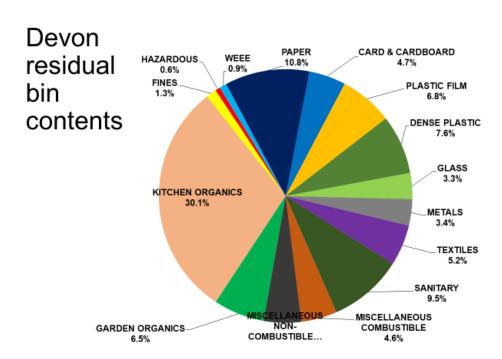
Repair IT events
A schools WEEE amnesty
A scratch card competition at HWRCs
Reuse week
Reuse Art trail
Repair Cafes
Give and Takes
Clothes Swishes
Estate Agent referrals
On line Reuse IT directory
Swish kits for loan
Donation stations at HWRCs
HWRC Resale shop signs

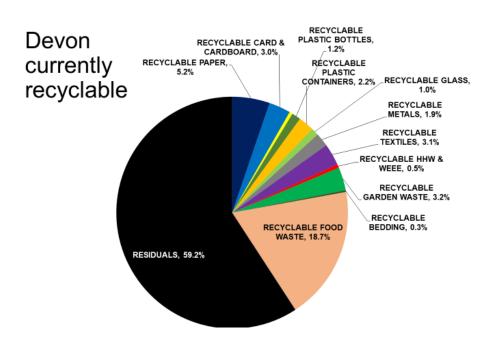


Behavioural Change – Devon Community Action Group



Contents of Devon dustbin 2017





Household Waste Recycling Centres



lvybridge



Sidmouth

Energy Recovery in Devon



Exeter Energy Recovery Facility



Plymouth Energy Recovery Facility

Waste Management Budget

