



Committee and Date

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6th September 2024

Item

6

Public



A Waste Prevention Strategy for Shropshire

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Ian Nellins - Climate Change, Environment and Transport		

1. Synopsis

A motion to create a new waste prevention strategy was unanimously supported at Council in December 2023. Subsequently a new strategy has been produced, this report recommends the adoption of the new strategy for Shropshire. The strategy aims to reduce the quantity of waste produced by households and is appended to the report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Adoption of a new waste prevention strategy will principally contribute to the healthy environment pillar and also to the healthy people and healthy economy pillars of the council’s Shropshire Plan.
- 2.2. The Council is responsible for collecting and disposing of household waste, this includes kerbside collections of recycled material, garden waste, food waste and residual waste. The council also provides Household Waste Recycling Centres for waste not suited to kerbside collection. The council also collects waste from highway/street litter bins and fly tipped waste from the highway network and from council land.

- 2.3. The Council is not responsible for the collection of business waste, although some illegally enters the household waste system.
- 2.4. Shropshire's residents can justifiably be proud of how they have responded to the call to recycle during the last two decades. From a countywide performance that was in single figures, to now consistently recycling and composting well over half of Shropshire's household waste is a fantastic achievement.
- 2.5. Recycling and composting performance has however plateaued in recent years, with outturns regularly being between 50 to 55% of waste diverted from incineration or landfill. Performance gains are becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. Of the remaining waste 44% is incinerated and 2% is taken to landfill.
- 2.6. Despite having a good recycling and composting performance, Shropshire has one of the highest quantities of waste per household in the country costing the council around £35m per year to collect and dispose of, which equates to 6% of the council's entire budget.
- 2.7. The cost of disposing of waste will likely increase in future years due to indexation alone. Anticipated housing growth over the coming years will add to further waste arisings and hence cost. Further interventions and behaviour change is required to stem what might otherwise be runaway waste growth.
- 2.8. Many other authorities have used waste prevention strategies successfully to reduce the level of waste being produced through a mix of education, awareness raising campaigns, enforcement and charges. The new waste prevention strategy proposes a similar approach.
- 2.9. The waste prevention strategy sets out an ambitious target to reduce Shropshire's household waste on a per household basis by 20% by 2030 compared to the quantity produced in 2013 as a baseline.
- 2.10. Achieving a 20% waste reduction will remove an average of 178Kg from each household. Across Shropshire's approx. 150,000 households such a reduction will remove 26,700 Tonnes of waste from the waste system.
- 2.11. The strategy considers the saving that can be achieved from the cost of avoided waste treatment and the income that can potentially be achieved if that relinquished treatment capacity at the council's energy recover facility is sold. Combining the saving and income, there is a benefit to the council of in the region of £1m annually. This benefit, along with the environmental and social benefit justifies giving due focus to waste prevention.
- 2.12. The strategy details that the potential financial benefit to be achieved will be obscured by rising waste management costs due to indexation of the waste contract cost and housing and population growth.
- 2.13. The strategy references benefits, other than just financial, such as environmental and social benefits that a waste prevention strategy can deliver, in addition to helping households with cost-of-living challenges.

- 2.14. The strategy explores the reasons for Shropshire's high quantity of total waste, linking this principally to the quantity of garden waste in Shropshire being 50% higher than similar authorities. The strategy details that residual waste (black bin waste) in Shropshire is comparable to the national average.
- 2.15. The strategy makes recommendations for action in 10 areas and notes that a charge for garden waste collection and a booking system for the HWRC network are due for introduction in October 2024. Other actions include reviewing the communications approach, developing community delivery and exploring the case for a dedicated role to develop and deliver waste prevention initiatives.
- 2.16. The strategy sets out targets in specific target years for the quantity of waste on a per household basis. The strategy concludes with numerous case studies that are already assisting to reduce waste in the county that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere in Shropshire.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 3.1. Consider the Waste Prevention Strategy for Shropshire 2024-2030 in terms of its aim to reduce waste, reduce council expenditure on waste management, and deliver environmental, economic and social benefits.
- 3.2. Approve the Waste Prevention Strategy for Shropshire 2024-2030 for subsequent adoption by Council.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Approval and implementation of the Waste Prevention Strategy poses a nominal risk.
- 4.2. Not approving the waste prevention strategy poses a greater risk as this would prevent the ability to deliver the financial savings and environmental and social benefits that will arise from implementation of the strategy.
- 4.3. Some policy reforms that may arise from a review of waste policies may have potential to be contentious. As and when opportunities for policy reform emerge, proposed policies can be consulted upon and have their own approval process.
- 4.4. Some policies that will help reduce waste such as charging for the collection of garden waste and the introduction of a booking system for accessing HWRC sites are in the process of being implemented. These policies have followed their own public consultation and approval process.

- 4.5 The Council considers impacts in relation to equality, social inclusion and health, as part of our overall approach towards considering a range of impacts, including climate change, environmental and economic impacts, in the course of our decision-making processes. This is primarily recorded through use of an Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment template, in order to demonstrate that 'due regard' has been taken of people in Protected Characteristic groupings as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The Council also seeks to give due regard to people at risk of exclusion due to their household circumstances, including low-income households, households in fuel poverty, and those we may regard as vulnerable, e.g. young people leaving care e.g. people in areas without ready access to facilities and services in our large and sparsely populated rural county.
- 4.6 The draft Waste Prevention Strategy 2024-2030 forms part of a range of environmentally focussed and economically focussed proposals and ongoing initiatives in train across Shropshire, with community involvement crucial to achievement not only of the measures set out within it, but also to achievement of outcomes set out in the Shropshire Plan and therefore positive equality and health and wellbeing impacts across groupings.
- 4.7 As an overarching plan, the Shropshire Plan sets out high-level views of what the Council will be focusing on delivering. Actions identified in the delivery plans may require ESHIAs of their own. It may therefore be that, with the proposed adoption of the Waste Prevention Strategy 2024-2030, delivery elements will necessitate an ESHIA. This has for example been the case with proposals for changes to arrangements with households around garden waste, household recycling centres and food waste collection, which were the subject of public consultation earlier this year and for which an ESHIA was produced ahead of the consultation.
- 4.8 In the case of the Waste Prevention Strategy itself, a separate Stage One ESHIA screening record is neither warranted nor proportionate at this stage. It may be that further aspects of waste prevention which directly affect households become a matter for further public consultation and stakeholder engagement, in which case this would need to be revisited. By way of illustration, we remain mindful not only of the pockets of deprivation that exist within our county but also of the needs associated with the geographical challenges of access to and from services. With a high proportion of housing stock including gardens, compared with other similar authorities, along with possible links between numbers of older people and high levels of dry recyclates, with associations between newspaper reading and age, there is a need to continue to collect such data as may subsequently inform specific service proposals, then leading to the desirability of carrying out a screening ESHIA
- 4.9 Continuing to collect data such as around the need for and optimum locations of food banks and around ways to encourage communities in furniture recycling will assist the Council and partner organisations, particularly from the community and voluntary sector, to build up a better and more complete picture of needs and opportunities across the county, recognising its rurality and the practical geographical challenges for households to play their part in waste prevention.
- 4.10 The risks have been outlined; the importance of the proposed Waste Management Strategy 2024-2030 as a contributing element in the achievement in particular of Healthy Environment outcomes within the Shropshire Plan has been noted; and the risk has been identified that not to act now as proposed could be to disadvantage the more vulnerable members of society rather than promote and encourage their inclusion alongside

households with whom we are already working to promote community engagement in waste prevention.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Preventing waste avoids the cost of its collection and management via either treatment at the council's energy recovery facility at Battlefield or recycling or composting. The way in which that avoided waste would otherwise have been dealt with impacts considerably on the cost associated with that quantum of waste.
- 5.2. There is considerable complexity around when reducing waste saves on the council's treatment cost and when and how third-party revenues and recycle values are shared between the council and its waste contractor Veolia. Because of the complexity of the contractual saving and sharing mechanism and because it is unknown exactly how much of which types of wastes might be prevented or diverted into recycling or composting; it is impossible to place a definitive financial value on the outcome of the waste prevention strategy.
- 5.3. The waste prevention strategy assumes achieving a 20% reduction in waste on a per household basis by 2030. 25% (6,672 Tonnes) of the total reduction is assumed will be achieved from waste currently in the residual waste stream. It is assumed that savings on waste treatment cost will be achieved, that the spare capacity can be sold and some additional revenue from recycle values will be realised. An indicative figure of £1m per annum is placed on the effect of the waste prevention strategy.
- 5.4. Because the waste contract base cost is indexed and further new homes are built and added to the service, and because waste quantities rise due to housing and population growth, the saving effect from the waste prevention strategy will be outstripped by the unavoidable rises in the cost of the waste contract.
- 5.5. Without implementing the waste prevention strategy, the contractual cost for provision of the waste management service would increase unchecked.

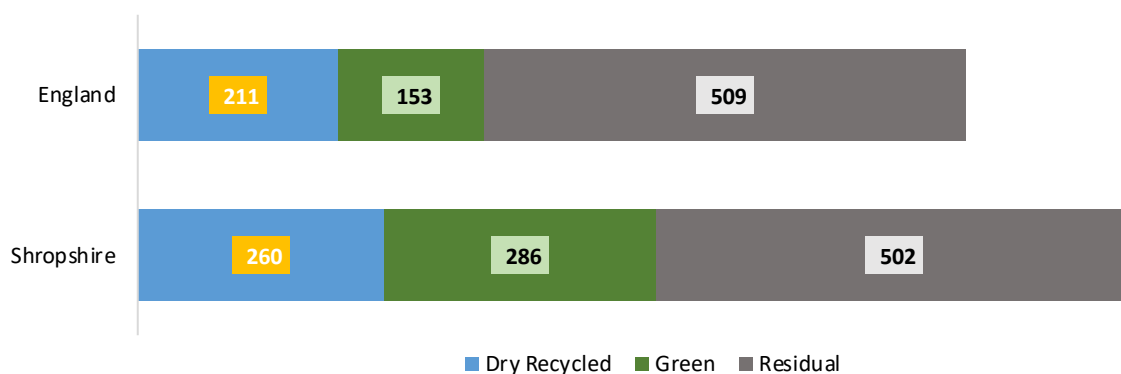
6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Waste prevention is at the top of the waste hierarchy as it is the best waste management approach for the environment and climate. The waste hierarchy is to 'reduce, reuse, recycle' in that order. Much focus has been given to improving recycling rates delivering good results in Shropshire with performance consistently above 50%. Much less focus has been given to waste prevention and with performance gain in recycling being incrementally more difficult to achieve, it is appropriate to focus on waste prevention to address Shropshire's high waste arisings.
- 6.2. Energy and fuel consumption: Preventing waste significantly reduces demand for energy and fuel and will positively benefit the climate. The methods deployed to prevent waste, for example avoidance, minimisation, reuse and repair for reuse keep goods in use for longer and avoids the more damaging climate impacts generally associated with extraction of raw materials to commence the manufacturing process for new goods.

- 6.3. Renewable energy generation: Preventing waste will have no effect on the generation of renewable energy.
- 6.4. Carbon offsetting or mitigation: Waste prevention will avoid CO₂ and CO₂ equivalent emissions. As an example, preventing food waste avoids the CO₂ and CO₂e emissions right through the food processing system back to the farm. Currently around 1/3 of food is wasted at some point in the food system with the majority of food waste occurring at the domestic household point. Even when food waste is composted it generates CO₂ and CH₄ (Methane) although far less compared to landfilling food waste. Hence preventing food waste is preferable to composting. This will have a positive outcome.
- 6.5. Climate change adaptation: Waste prevention achieved by the community sector helps develop community which in turn will help communities be more resilient and adapt to climate change. An example of this is community food growing which avoids food packaging, reduces food waste, enables composting, strengthens food security and avoids food miles. This will have a positive outcome.

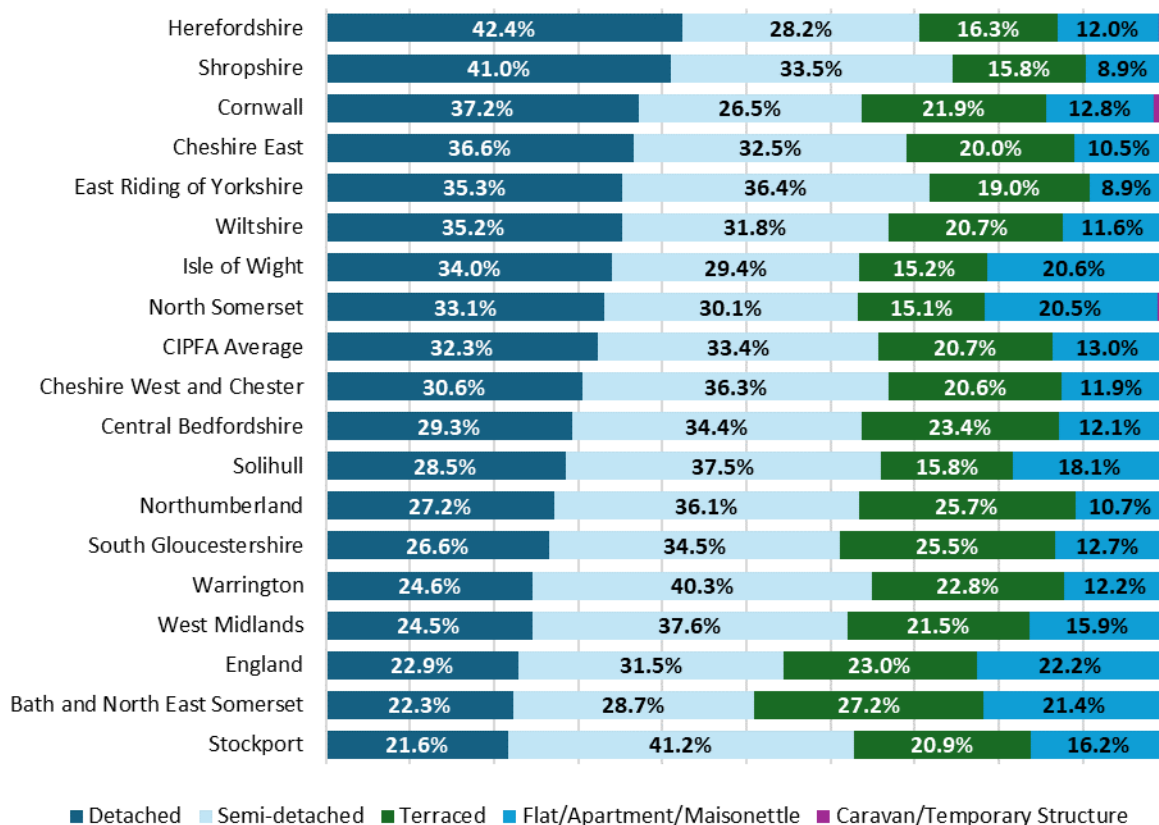
7. Background

- 7.1. Shropshire produces a high quantity of waste, higher than the national average and higher compared to similar local authority areas. Shropshire Council is regularly ranked in the bottom 5 of all authorities for the quantity of waste produced on a per household basis.
- 7.2. Undertaking the research and data analysis for the waste prevention strategy has identified some reasons why Shropshire’s waste quantity is high, a large factor is the quantity of garden waste collected per property, (286Kg) Shropshire’s recycled quantity (260Kg) is higher than average. Shropshire’s residual (black bin) waste (502Kg) is lower than average, this detail is set out in the chart below with the figures of the waste types in KG per household.



- 7.3. The reason for Shropshire’s comparatively large quantity of garden waste can in part be explained by the below chart that details Shropshire’s housing type relative to its CIPFA near neighbour benchmarking group and the regional and national average. Shropshire has the highest proportion of detached and semi-detached dwellings (that likely have

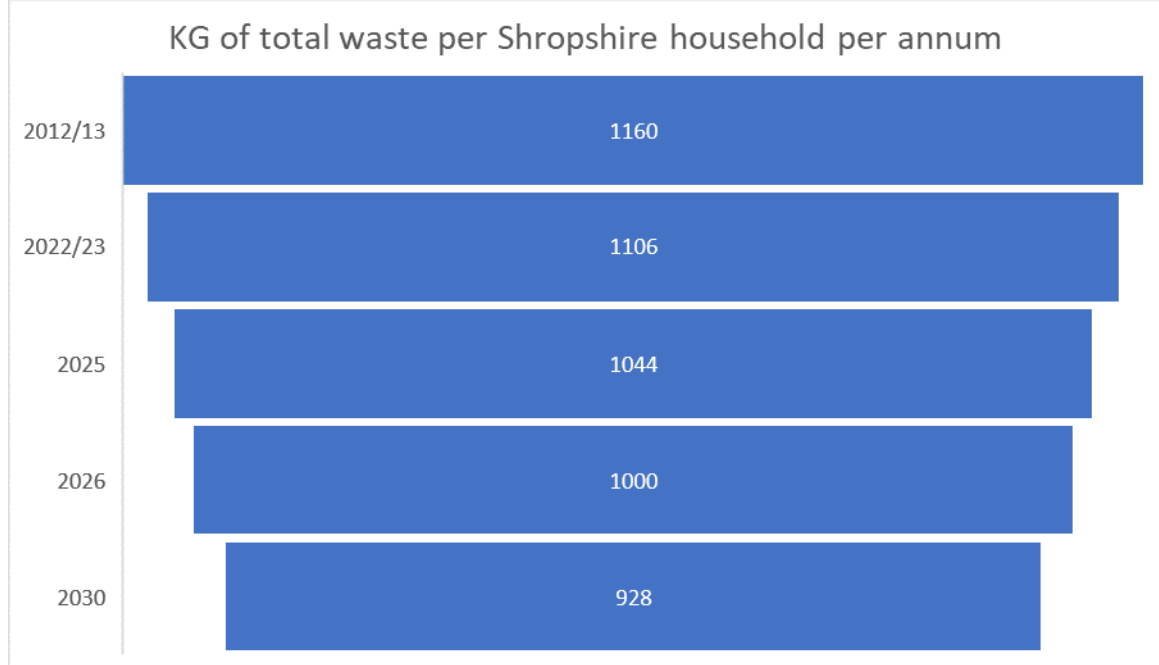
gardens) and the joint lowest number of flatted dwellings that are unlikely to have gardens.



- 7.4. In addition to the property type in Shropshire contributing to garden waste arisings, Shropshire remains in a small and diminishing group of local authorities that have not to date charged for the collection of garden waste although a charge will be introduced from October 2024. The waste prevention strategy has addressing garden waste as its first action area.
- 7.5. The waste prevention strategy examines in detail the composition of waste drawing from analysis in Shropshire and more recent examples from elsewhere to identify the types of waste on which to focus prevention activity. The table below sets out this composition data;

Study	Shropshire	Bishop's Castle	UK WRAP	Wales	Delivered to Battlefield
	refuse sample*	residual sample	all waste streams	residual sample	residual sample
Sample size	Not known	50 houses	estimated	410KT	0.5T
Year	03/04	2010	2017	2022	2024
Organics	34%	0	2.2%	8.9%	27.9%
Garden waste		0	17.2%	2.2%	
Food Waste		21.4%	18.1%	24.7%	
Paper	19%	6.3%	11%	6.8%	8.2%
Cardboard	6%	6.3%	6.5%	6.3%	6%
Wood	1%	4.1%	3.9%	0	0
Glass	5%	1.5%	6.9%	2.4%	0
Plastics	11%	11.3%	9.2%	14%	12.7%
Metal	3%	1.5%	3.8%	3%	0
Textiles & shoes	3%	0.5%	4.7%	6%	18.2%
Disposable nappies/sanitary (inc AHP**)	3%	16.3%	0	6.1%	7.8%
Household Hazardous Waste (inc WEEE)	4%	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	0
Miscellaneous Items/Fines	11%	28%	14.3%	16.8%	18.8%

- 7.6. From the data reproduced above, the waste prevention strategy identifies organic wastes in the form of garden and food waste as priority waste streams on which to focus prevention activity.
- 7.7. The waste prevention strategy uses data from 2013 onwards for comparison purposes, robust data is available for this period obtained from DEFRA's waste data flow portal. 2013 is also the mid-point of the last Waste Prevention Plan that covered the term 2010 to 2015. 2013 has therefore been selected for use as a base year for data against which to set targets for future years.
- 7.8. During the period between 2013 and 2023, there has been a 4.6% reduction in the quantity of household waste per household in Shropshire. The waste prevention strategy sets out a relatively ambitious target to reduce Shropshire's total household waste by 20% on a per household basis by the year 2030. This calls for a reduction of a further 15.4% on top of that already achieved. Targets are set for the target years of 2025, 2026 and 2030 as per the below chart.



- 7.9. Although the scale of the ambition appears challenging, new national waste policies are in the pipeline following the passing of the Environment Act 2021. New policy reforms include simpler recycling, a potential deposit return scheme and extended producer responsibility for those organisations that place packaging materials onto the marketplace. National measures will complement action proposed in the waste prevention strategy to be taken in Shropshire.
- 7.10. The waste prevention strategy covers reviewing waste policies, reviewing and refreshing communications approaches and building partnership within the community sector to enable engagement to support further waste prevention. The waste prevention strategy makes a proposal to explore further the case for dedicated staff resource to develop and implement waste prevention initiatives. Comment is made as to how such a post could be funded by waste prevention savings or could be jointly funded if working across local authority areas.
- 7.11. The waste prevention strategy proposes ten strategic action areas with several smaller actions arising from several of the strategic areas.
- 7.12. The waste prevention strategy concludes with five Shropshire based case studies, these are from The Street Allotment Project, Ludlow Repair Café, Shropshire Master Composters, Shrewsbury Furniture Scheme and an individual in Shrewsbury who has become a dedicated 'Zero-waster'.
- 7.13. The purpose of including the case studies is to demonstrate some of the good work already taking place across Shropshire that contributes towards reducing waste whilst also providing considerable benefit through helping households with cost-of-living challenges. In the case of the Shrewsbury Furniture Scheme, many of their customers are often in distress or facing hardship.
- 7.14. The waste prevention strategy makes the case for scaling up or replicating elsewhere in Shropshire such initiatives as those showcased to help towards delivering waste prevention and the associated environmental, economic and social benefits.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. DEFRA advise it is good practice for LAs to have waste prevention plans but do not review their content and there is no requirement to publish them.
- 8.2. The following documents and sources were consulted to assist in developing the waste prevention strategy

[The waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-prevention-programme-for-england-maximising-resources-minimising-waste)

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf>

[Household Waste Prevention Hub: Delivering waste prevention | WRAP](#)

- 8.3. An action plan to support delivery of the waste prevention strategy has been produced as a separate document and is appended to this report.
- 8.4. The report: Creating and Delivering a Waste Minimisation Strategy in Shropshire went before Place Overview Committee on 29th September 2022.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. Shropshire regularly ranks near the bottom of performance ratings for the quantity of waste produced in the county although there are clear reasons for this due to the county's demographics.
- 9.2. Although the county's waste quantities have reduced slightly since 2013, the rate of reduction is behind the national trend.
- 9.3. There is clear rationale to reduce waste to save council expenditure on the service so that more funds can be diverted to deliver essential services.
- 9.4. To make progress at pace to reduce waste quantities, a strategic approach is required.
- 9.5. There is rationale to support having a dedicated resource to develop and implement waste prevention initiatives funded from the savings that would arise from reducing waste by the target level of 20% by 2030.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Creating and Delivering a Waste Minimisation Strategy in Shropshire – Place Overview Committee 29th September 2022

Local Member: *N/A (countywide)*

Appendices

Waste Prevention Strategy 2024 – 2030

Waste Prevention Strategy for Shropshire 2024 – 2030 - Action Plan for Delivery

Waste Prevention Plan 2010-2015
