

South Tyne and Wear
Waste Management Partnership

Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy: Summary



Introduction

Waste collection and disposal are two of the key services that councils provide. Building on a history of collaboration within the waste sector, Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland City councils decided to work even closer together to tackle the growing environmental and financial issues faced by continuing to landfill waste.

The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP) was created and in 2007 agreed a twenty-year Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) to support the further development and delivery of waste services across a total area of 34,300 hectares for a population of over 629,000 people.

This document provides a summary of the full JMWMS which is available at www.sunderland.gov.uk/householdwaste

The refreshed JMWMS is the outcome of a review of progress and refreshes aims and aspirations for 2021-2025.

Successes

Since the previous review of the JMWMS was published, STWWMP has ensured that many of the actions and activities that were agreed in 2012 have been taken forward and embedded into the day-to-day waste-related functions of the partner authorities or within the role and functions of the joint partnership team.

Some of the key successes and achievements in recent years include:

- **Residual waste treatment contract**
In 2014, STWWMP delivered a major milestone which has significantly changed how the majority of waste disposed by Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland residents is managed. Following a global procurement exercise, the new waste and processing treatment infrastructure has been completed and the 25 year Residual Waste Treatment Contract is now fully operational.
- **Improved recycling services**
The partnership has successfully extended the range of materials that residents can recycle in their blue bins as part of the kerbside recycling collection service.
- **Community education and engagement**
Alongside the service commencement of the Residual Waste Treatment Contract, a dedicated community education and engagement programme was also introduced, delivered by Groundwork North East & Cumbria from the brand new visitor and education centre at Campground.
- **Joint working**
The joint partnership team is now providing the Waste Disposal Authority functions on behalf of partner authorities including day-to-day contract management functions.

The national picture

At a national level, recycling performance has stagnated in recent years and although there has been an overall

reduction in recycling levels across the STWWMP authorities since the last JMWMS review, this, in part, can also be attributed to a number of external factors.

Recently, around the world, we have all experienced unprecedented, difficult, and challenging times. This has impacted on every single aspect of our lives and also the services that local authorities have been able to deliver safely.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, the waste sector was already experiencing a prolonged period of uncertainty, which was impacting on the ability to undertake the scheduled review of the JMWMS. For example, the global waste sector has faced much stricter restrictions that challenged the quality of materials that could be imported as recycling in the Far East. As restrictions became more widespread, this even included outright bans on importing certain materials into popular Far East recycling outlets, which significantly impacted on the already-volatile recycling markets all around the globe, including in the UK.

Furthermore, the implications on the waste sector of the UK leaving the EU are not yet fully understood, and the long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic on all aspects of local authority services is not yet known.

Environment Plan

Launched in January 2018, the '25-Year Environment Plan' sets out a wide range of goals and targets that aim to improve the environment, detailing how

government will work with communities and businesses to target environmental issues. It includes plans to minimise waste, reuse materials wherever possible, and manage materials appropriately at their end-of-life to reduce their impact on the environment.

Resources and Waste Strategy

The Resources and Waste Strategy contains proposals for the government's long-term waste policy framework and aims to deliver actions that encourage England to recognise and maximise the value of resource usage by minimising waste and its impact on the environment, including:

- Introducing consistent household and business recycling collections in England
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system

Environment Bill

The Environment Bill supports the delivery of the Environment Plan and aims to ensure that England maintains and improves its environmental protections following the UK leaving the EU. The Bill provides the legal framework to deliver many of the waste and resource efficiency proposals identified in the Resources and Waste Strategy, should government choose to do so.

Objectives

A new set of six simplified objectives for the period 2021-2025 is proposed:

Objective 1: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to follow the waste hierarchy to prioritise the management of waste by providing opportunities to:

- Reduce the amount of waste that is generated;
- Reuse materials wherever possible;
- Recycle and/or compost waste responsibly, maximising participation and minimising contamination levels; and
- Recover energy from any waste that remains.

Objective 2: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to provide environmentally sustainable waste services and facilities that offer value-for-money, which are accessible to all who live, work, and/or visit Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland.

Objective 3: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to develop and deliver a wide-ranging community education and engagement programme across all ages

Objective 4: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to work with government, other local authorities, trade associations, and industry organisations to support the development of waste strategy and policy.

Objective 5: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to identify opportunities to access external funding to investigate and deliver service changes and share the costs and benefits in the delivery of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

Objective 6: The South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership will continue to review the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy objectives as required and undertake ongoing monitoring of progress in the delivery of their aims and aspirations.

Themes

Five broad, over-arching themes which encompass the aspirations of the refreshed objectives replace the specific actions. This will allow flexibility in delivering day-to-day services and activities, yet still provide opportunities to be considered to further joint partnership working or consider new ways of working through the development of trial activities or dedicated 'projects' targeting, for example, priority issues.

The JMWMS 2021-2025 themes are:

- Community education, engagement, and communications
- Joint working opportunities
- Income generation and external funding
- Environmental benefits
- Lobbying activities