

# Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee



**Wednesday 29 March 2023**

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|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Title</b>                     | <i>Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP)2025</i>  |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b>     | To make a Key Decision   |
| <b>Report Author</b>             | <i>Jackie Taylor</i><br><i>Group Head Neighbourhood Services</i>   |
| <b>Ward(s) Affected</b>          | All Wards  |
| <b>Exempt</b>                    | No   |
| <b>Exemption Reason</b>          | <i>Not applicable</i>  |
| <b>Corporate Priority</b>        | Community<br>Environment   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>           | <b>Committee is asked to:</b><br><b>Adopt SEP 2025 as produced by officers and members of the SEP 2025 steering group.</b>   |
| <b>Reason for Recommendation</b> | SEP 2025 has been developed to bridge the gap between our existing out-of-date joint municipal waste management strategy (JMWMS) and further clarity from central government. It will reflect the vision of SEP and provide clear strategic direction for the partnership for the next three years to 2025 and a longer-term vision that will allow SEP to continue to follow the waste hierarchy and work towards zero waste. SEP 2025 is therefore a partnership approach to waste prevention and recycling, and has been developed on behalf of all Surrey local authorities through the SEP. |

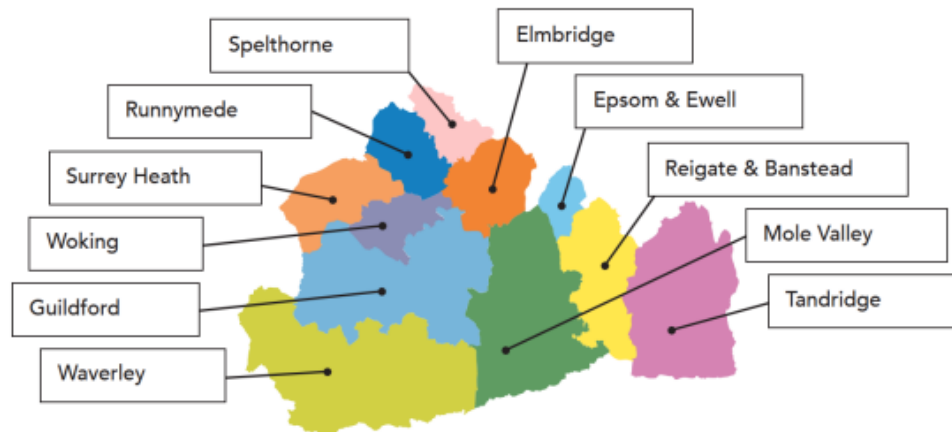
## 1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 SEP (Surrey Environment Partnership) continuously strives to improve collection and disposal services in Surrey and aspires to be among the best nationally on all key performance indicators. Since the Resources and Waste Strategy (RaWS) for England was published in December 2018, the Government has consulted on a number of the strategy's ambitions across a range of subjects, the results of which will provide policy direction, which we eagerly await. The policy situation combined with Surrey's growing population, increasing numbers of households, and changes in the types of waste produced by our residents means change is a certainty. However, the exact direction of the change and the impact it will have on our collection and disposal services remains unclear. Whilst things are so uncertain, now is not

the right time to update the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) and consult with residents, so we need a short-term approach to help manage Surrey's recycling and waste in the most efficient, effective, economical and sustainable way.

## 2. Key issues

2.1 SEP is made up of Surrey County Council (SCC) and the 11 district and borough councils in the county (as shown in Figure 1 below). It was formed originally as the Surrey Waste Partnership (SWP) in 2009 to overcome the challenges of two-tier service delivery and aims to manage Surrey's recycling and waste in the most efficient, effective, economical, and sustainable way possible. SEP's plan (the JMWMS) outlined our approach to achieving this.



**Figure 1: A map of Surrey showing the district and borough council areas**

2.2 SEP's current JMWMS is meant to run until 2024-25. However, it was last updated in 2015 and is therefore considered to be 'out-of-date'. This was delayed due to the publication of the RaWS, which proposes some fundamental changes on how recycling and waste services will be funded and delivered in the future (further explained below). The key policy to support the RaWS is still emerging and therefore, the review has been postponed until national direction is clearer.

2.3 It was also decided to stop the annual monitoring of the JMWMS's action plan at the end of 2017-18 and in its place annual work programmes were developed instead. They have been in place each year through to the latest programme for 2022-23. These have effectively been the plan for working together in partnership since 2018-19.

2.4 The partnership name was changed from SWP to SEP in April 2019 to reflect a growing remit and desire to tackle wider environmental issues in Surrey.

2.5 As a group of councils providing recycling and waste management services, we have several duties and responsibilities in accordance with relevant key legislation and have been the legislative framework that we have operated under during the last 30 years. A key concept set out here is the 'waste hierarchy', which ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created, it gives priority to preparing it for reuse, then recycling, then recovery<sup>1</sup> (this is where most of our residual waste goes in Surrey), and last of all disposal, e.g., landfill, as shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Waste Framework Directive - five step waste hierarchy**

2.6 New and emerging policy Several policies are currently being developed following the publication of the RaWS. Launched in December 2018, RaWS is the Government's plan to preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. This will see products kept in use for as long as possible, making it easier to reuse, repair, refurbish or recycle them (as illustrated in Figure 3 below).

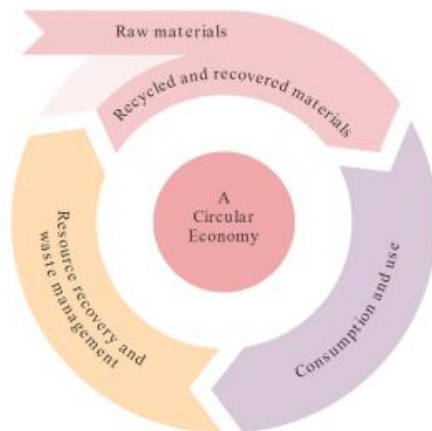


Figure 3 : A circular economy

2.7 RaWS combines actions the Government will take now with firm commitments for the coming years and gives a clear longer term policy direction in line with its 25 Year Environment Plan. RaWS has set out several proposed policy reforms including to:

- Invoke the 'polluter pays' principle through extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging to ensure producers of products bear monetary responsibility for the management of the waste stage of a product's life cycle (except ground litter). The Government has committed to introducing this from April 2024. The key change for local authorities is that they will be compensated for the necessary costs of managing packaging waste from

households, community recycling centres and street bins. Defra is still working on the details of this with more clarity expected in 2023.

- Introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers to reward residents for bringing back bottles and encourage them not to litter them; thereby increasing the quality and quantity of recycling. This is to include cans and plastic bottles of between 50ml and 3l and will include containers sold both individually and as part of a multipack. Glass bottles will not be included. The scheme is still under consideration for implementation from late 2024.
- Improve recycling rates by ensuring consistency in household and business recycling collections. This is still under consideration for implementation from 2023- 24 but are likely to be delayed slightly to coincide with EPR. Key proposals include:
  - ✓ Collection of the same dry recyclable materials (glass, metal, plastic, paper, and card) as separately as possible (with consideration given to circumstances where separate collection of recyclable waste streams may not be technically or economically practicable or may not provide a significant environmental benefit).
  - ✓ Collection of additional dry recycling (metal jar lids, aerosols, cartons, aluminium foil and trays, aluminium tubes, and plastic films and pouches). The Government has so far stated that plastic films and flexibles must be collected by local authorities for recycling by 31 March 2027.
  - ✓ Collection of food waste separately at least once a week.
  - ✓ Collection of garden waste for free or for a maximum cost.
  - ✓ Service standards for collection arrangements and frequency. • The above proposals on recycling consistency together with EPR and DRS are now collectively known as the collection and packaging reforms (CPR). • Stimulate demand for recycled plastic by introducing a tax on plastic packaging manufactured in or imported into the UK that contains less than 30% recycled plastics. This came into effect on 1 April 2022.
- Reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic (SUP) products including bans on items such as plastic straws, cotton buds, and drink stirrers. These were banned from 1 October 2020 and supply stopped from 3 July 2021. Proposals to ban plastic plates and cups, balloon sticks, polystyrene cups, expanded polystyrene food boxes, trays and pots. If agreed these proposed bans would come into effect in April 2023.
- The introduction of a mandatory takeback scheme for the collection and recycling of fibre-based composite cups (disposable coffee cups). This is set to come in from 2024. The measures in RaWS alongside other key plans have set out strategic ambitions to be achieved nationally over the next 30 years such as:
  - ✓ Increase the municipal recycling rate to 55% by 2025 and 65% by 2035.
  - ✓ Near elimination of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill from 2028.

- ✓ Work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030.
- ✓ 76% recycling rate for packaging by 2030.
- ✓ Business fleet owners and operators work towards 100% of vehicle fleets being zero emission by 2030, or earlier where markets allow (COP26 ambition).
- ✓ No more than 10% of municipal waste to landfill by 2035.
- ✓ 50% reduction in per capita residual waste (excluding major mineral wastes) by 2042 from 2019 levels (proposed).
- ✓ Work towards eliminating avoidable waste by 2050.
- ✓ Net zero domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. To that end, the Government introduced the Environment Act 2021 in November 2021 that makes provision for most of these targets and gives them the legislative power to introduce the measures above. The act will also make some changes to existing legislations to enable consistency in collections.

- 2.8 In Surrey about £105 million is spent each year collecting, managing, and processing recycling and waste.
- 2.9 Reducing the amount of waste produced benefits the environment; less raw materials are required, saving energy, emissions and protecting natural resources. Significant achievements have been made possible by working together as a partnership; the most notable being our improved recycling rate, which in 2010-11 was 46.4% (13th highest nationally) and by 2020-21 was 55.1% (3rd highest nationally).
- 2.10 Despite this, now is the right time to revisit how we work together, considering some of the challenges we face including the emerging policy to support RaWS. The direction of travel is not clear on this yet but should become apparent over the next couple of years. So, while now is not the right time to update the Surrey JMWMS and consult with residents whilst things are so uncertain, we do need a short-term approach to help us ensure we continue to manage Surrey's recycling and waste in the most efficient, effective, economical and sustainable way.
- 2.11 Therefore, our response to this emerging situation is to develop a partnership approach to waste prevention and recycling in Surrey for the next three years. This will look to, as a minimum, align with the Government's ambitions such as a 55% recycling rate by 2025 and 65% by 2035. There might be a requirement as a high performing county in England to go beyond this. In any event, we will strive to go beyond the national targets where possible and begin to respond to decarbonisation by planning changes to our vehicle fleets and infrastructure to reduce emissions in the shorter term and move towards net zero emissions in the longer term.
- 2.12 The approach will aim to: -
- Bridge the gap ahead of further clarity from central Government.
  - Consider the anticipated changes that may result from the key emerging national policy to support RaWS.
  - Provide clear strategic direction for the next three years and a longer-term vision for the partnership that will continue to follow the waste

hierarchy and work towards zero waste reducing emissions in the process. This will aid the future development of a new JMWMS for Surrey post-2025.

- Enable us to drive down waste (particularly food and single use plastics waste) and increase the quality and quantity of our recycling.

### **3. Options analysis and proposal**

#### **3.1 Option 1 (preferred option) Adopt SEP25**

Adopt SEP25 and continue the work that has been undertaken as a partnership over very many years which started at Surrey Waste Partnership and has now evolved into the Surrey Environment Partnership. Being a member of the partnership we work with Surrey's other local authorities and districts on a programme of work which is designed to achieve the aims of SEP's three joint strategies, which focus on waste reduction, food waste recycling and contamination reduction of dry mixed recycling (DMR).

#### **Option 2 Do not adopt SEP25**

If we do not adopt this strategy we run the risk of not having the benefit of working together as a partnership to identify opportunities and issues that will be evolving over the coming years in relation to the Government's Resources & Waste Strategy. We also run the risk of not engaging with other districts in Surrey in relation to the campaigns organised within the SEP such as targeted interventions, contamination in flats, watch your waste campaign, composition analysis and regular service guides.

### **4. Financial implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications from adopting SEP25. Adopting SEP25 provides a platform from which all Surrey authorities can develop and work on actions all of which can potentially reduce the future cost of waste collection and disposal in Surrey.

4.2 Action plans are developed and agreed with officers from SEP and we will be required to work towards achieving partnership priorities from those actions. If as an authority we do nothing there is the potential for the funding streams from Surrey to be reduced in future years.

### **5. Risk considerations**

5.1 There are no identifiable risks from adopting SEP25.

5.2 SEP25 was developed to help local authorities work together to drive efficiencies and is a new approach to delivering and strengthening what we already do. Should Spelthorne decide at a later stage to withdraw from this agreement they can do so via the committee system.

### **6. Procurement considerations**

6.1 There are no procurement considerations identified with the adoption of SEP25.

### **7. Legal considerations**

7.1 There are no legal considerations associated with adopting SEP25. If members choose to withdraw from this agreement, they can make a formal request through the committee process to do so.

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

- 8.1 The SEP continually strive to create an environment which celebrates diversity and welcomes difference, a place where everyone's rights and dignity are respected. We strive to provide easy to use statutory and non-statutory services which free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment and bullying. We want to achieve this culture for all those that live and work in our communities. By demonstrating our commitment to equality and diversity through our day-to-day actions and our service objectives. We aspire to be a caring and forward-thinking Partnership creating services for our residents.

## **9. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 9.1 This interim plan is designed to reflect the vision of SEP and provide clear strategic direction for the partnership for the next three years to 2025 and a longer-term vision that will allow SEP to continue to follow the waste hierarchy and work towards zero waste. The full report can be found within this link.

[sep25\\_report\\_final.pdf \(surreyep.org.uk\)](https://www.surreyep.org.uk/sep25_report_final.pdf)

## **10. Timetable for implementation**

- 10.1 If adopted by committee SEP 2025 is set to run to 2025. At the start of 2025 (the final year for SEP 2025) work will begin on developing a new Surrey JMWMS. At this point we should have further clarity from Government on the way forward following the implementation of the RaWS measures which are set to start from 2024-25. Once the Surrey JMWMS is drafted, consulted on, approved and adopted, this will be our new plan for partnership working from 2026.

## **11. Contact**

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**Background papers: There are none.**