

Title of report: **Waste Recovery Contracting**

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 2 March 2026

Report by: Waste Services Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the scrutiny committee on the establishment of the new waste recovery contract and an update on the roll-out of the garden waste collection scheme.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) Members of scrutiny note the report and prepare any questions for the meeting.**

Alternative options

1. This report is for information only and does not present any alternative options.

Key considerations

2. Herefordshire Council as a unitary authority has a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect household waste and commercial waste if asked to do so, a duty to arrange for the disposal of waste collected by the authority and to provide places where residents can dispose of their household waste.
3. The current waste disposal contract is a joint contract between Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Mercia Waste Management, with Severn Waste Services providing the public face of the contract across both authorities.

4. The contract is for the full provision of municipal waste management services including residual waste to landfill, green waste composting, the bulking and transfer of kerbside collected waste and recycling streams, management of household recycling centres (HRCs) and the treatment and disposal of municipal waste, which included the construction and operation of a Waste to Energy (WtE) facility and a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).
5. A new waste collection contract started in November 2024 following a robust procurement process with an initial term of 8 years (2032) and options to extend up to 12 years (2044).
6. The waste disposal contract was extended in December 2022¹ for a five year period offering savings to the council on the contract costs and included variations to allow Herefordshire to send separately collected garden waste for composting, send collected food waste to anaerobic digestion, separately collect paper and card for direct delivery to reprocessors instead of going through Envirosort and divert 99% of residual waste into the EfW, avoiding the use of landfill as far as possible. This contract is due to end on 11th January 2029.
7. The Environment Act 2021 introduces the obligation on all waste collection authorities to recycle household garden waste by 31 March 2026. A charge for the collection of this waste is permitted.

Garden Waste Service Update

8. In May 2025, Cabinet approved the commencement of the new chargeable garden waste collection service. The following provides an update to scrutiny on the roll-out of the new garden waste collection service which is due to commence collections on 30th March 2026.
9. A programme of readiness activity enabled subscriptions to open in October 2025, and to date there have been 3209 subscriptions². Figure 1 below details the geographical spread of subscriptions to date. It is anticipated that an increased proportion of subscriptions will be received across the next four to eight weeks prior to and into the early stages of the service launch.

¹ [Decision - Waste Management Review – Waste Disposal - Herefordshire Council](#)
[Decision - Waste Disposal Extension, Variation and updated Joint Working Agreement - Herefordshire Council](#)

² *Figures correct as of 17th February 2026.*

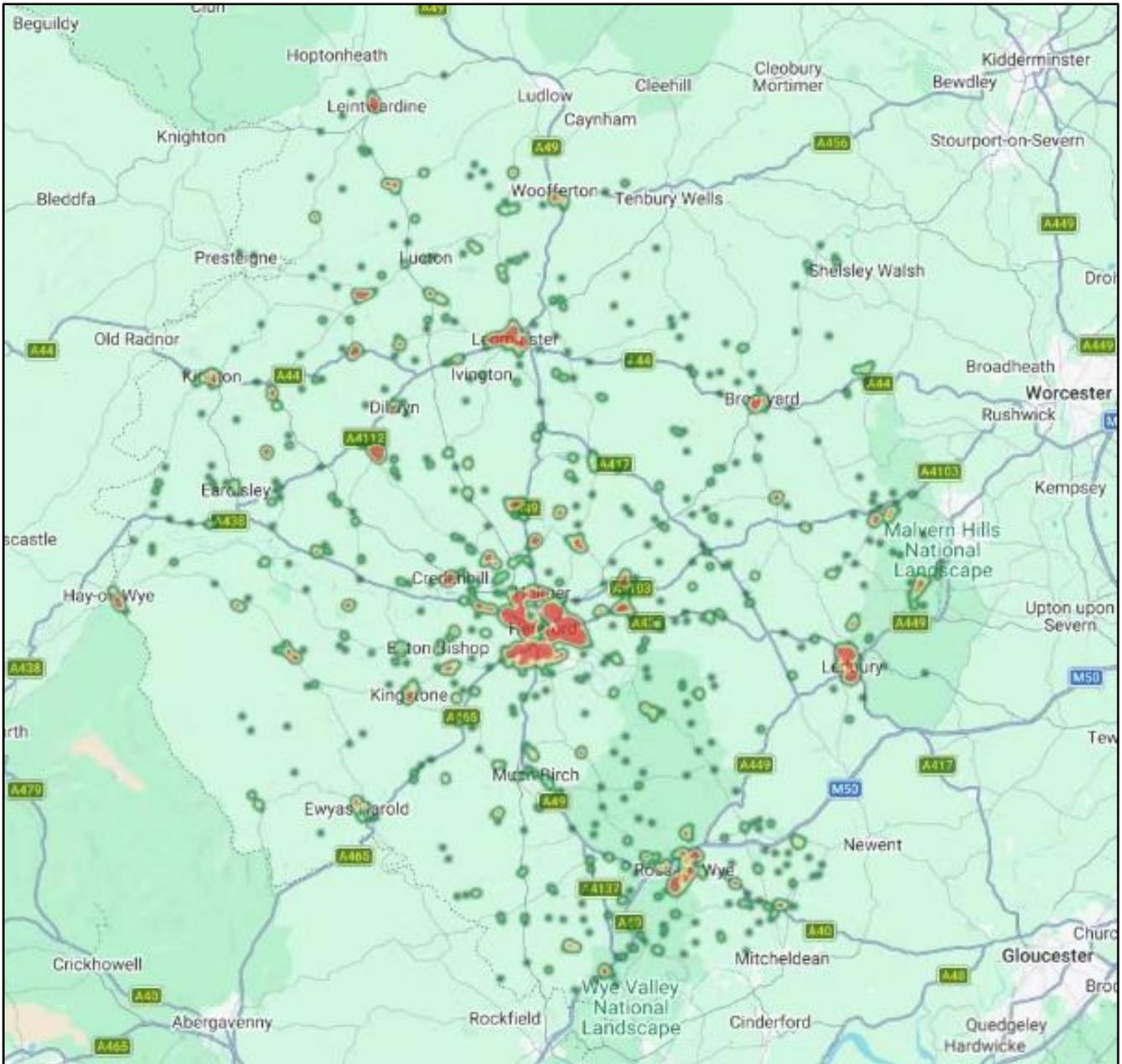


Figure 1: Heat map of the geographical spread of subscriptions to date

10. In order to maximise subscriptions in the early stage of the service launch, Herefordshire Council promoted the service across social media platforms, newspaper articles, front and back page space in the winter edition of Herefordshire Now and promotional stands by waste management staff across strategic garden centres.
11. Each online purchase of the existing garden waste sacks promoted the new service and informed residents that the collection of these would cease from March 27th 2026.
12. The principal advertising streams for continuing and upcoming promotions include targeted online and social media campaigns, local print media advertising, including local press, Herefordshire Now and Herefordshire Living magazines, more promotional stands at garden centres, and promotional screens in high footfall areas such as at the Courtyard.
13. In terms of infrastructure, FCC have arranged for an appropriate number of hire vehicles in readiness for the service launch with permanent vehicle deliveries to be completed by September 2026. Herefordshire Council and FCC Environment are currently calculating the optimal approach for collection vehicle quantity, considering the number and geographic spread of subscriptions across the County. The procurement of the containers is ongoing in line with subscriptions and to date containers have been delivered to circa 2400³ properties.
14. The use of web forms as the primary option for online signup has proved an efficient method, allowing direct integration into our contractors system for service sign up and bin delivery requests. A telephony option is available which has allowed for an inclusive sign-up and is seen as important to allow the availability of multiple channels, especially due to the need to provide direct debit information which some people can be unsure of completing online.
15. The business case previously set out a ratchet model towards cost neutrality within six years of scheme implementation (subject to 16,000 subscriptions and service operating costs). In line with this, monitoring will continue throughout the scheme, and planning is now underway for an appropriate and targeted communications plan into the second year of the scheme.

Establishment of new waste recovery contract

16. In October 2024 consultants, WSP, were engaged to consider future services provision and how the approach to the market may be packaged. A report was produced for the purpose of exploring and analysing alternative options of how the Councils' services could be grouped, for example separating household recycling centres to tender as an individual lot.
17. Through the latter part of 2024 and into 2025 Worcestershire CC experienced absences of senior members of staff responsible for Waste Management and in 2025 Herefordshire Council also experienced changes and absences in key members of staff.
18. In early 2025 Worcestershire CC received its formal, statutory invitation from the Government to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This has created uncertainty over future working arrangements across the authorities and decisions over responsibility for waste services could be unclear until after elections of the new 'shadow' authority/authorities in May 2027.

Uncertainties in waste flows and composition

19. The full implementation of the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) only came into effect in 2025. It is expected this will effect material composition of collected waste by

³ Figures correct as of 17th February 2026.

making producers responsible for the full cost of managing packaging waste, driving a shift towards more sustainable, recyclable, and reusable materials.

20. The introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is expected on 1st October 2027 and is expected to effect the composition of the recycling stream. The scheme will introduce a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers (150ml to 3 litres) made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic, steel, or aluminium. Empty containers are expected to be returned to designated retailer locations, likely using reverse vending machines.
21. The implementation of Simpler Recycling which mandates the separate collection of specific materials including plastic, paper/card, glass, metal, and food waste for recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion aims to boost recycling rates. The effect of this on both the residual waste and recycling waste stream will be affected by the introduction of new or different collection services and customer behaviour and participation in collection services.
22. WSP have been commissioned to develop a waste flow model which will identify the baseline model of existing waste movements across the current collections and disposal contracts and model future projections based on estimated effects of schemes outlined above in 19, 20 and 21.

Future options

23. WSP were also asked to provide a timeline for development of an Outline Business Case ('OBC') which considers the challenges and opportunities for each potential procurement option and aligning with the methodology set out in the HM Treasury Green Book to identify a Preferred Procurement Option for the future arrangements for the management, transfer and haulage of recyclables and residual waste. This was completed in November 2025 and identified that it would be essential that the business case is developed and approved by April 2026 in order to allow enough time for a robust procurement process.
24. Advice has been sought from Eversheds and our own internal legal and commissioning services managers to establish the possibility of a short extension to the current waste disposal contract beyond January 2029. The purpose of this would be to allow the effects of the schemes outlined in 19, 20 and 21 to be realised and for the working arrangements across Worcestershire (and potentially Gloucestershire [SDS]) to be established, allowing decision making for future working arrangements to be more certain.

Community impact

25. Effective scrutiny enables the committee to reflect community concern, one of the four purposes of scrutiny as outlined by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

Environmental impact

26. This report contains no direct environmental impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline their potential environmental impact.

Equality duty

27. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This report contains no direct equality impacts. However the reports and issues that

the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline the any associated equality impacts for committee consideration.

Resource implications

28. This report constitutes part of the typical function of this committee. There is therefore no resource implication in considering this report.

Legal implications

29. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
30. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

Risk management

31. There are no risks identified in considering the information contained in this report.

Consultees

32. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Response to recommendations made by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 24 March 2025.

Background papers

None identified