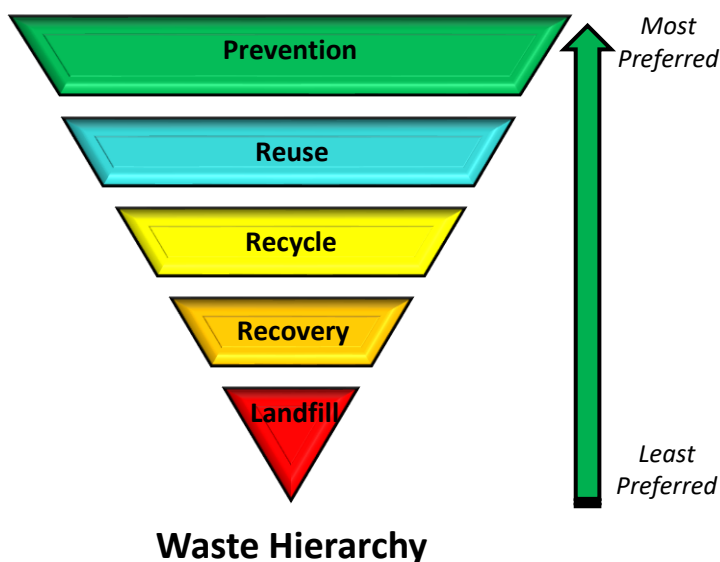


ORWP 2023-2024 Annual Report

Introduction

This is the annual report for the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP) for 2023-2024. ORWP is a collaborative partnership between and funded by the 6 constituent local authorities (LAs) in Oxfordshire who are responsible for both household waste collection and disposal in the county¹. More detail on the Partnership can be found in the Appendix.



The purpose of the ORWP is provided for under the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS)², a statutory requirement in two-tier areas which outlines the aim, objectives and practical measure by which the Partners intend to manage Oxfordshire’s household and other municipal waste in line with the waste hierarchy³.

This is undertaken by increasing waste prevention, improving recycling performance and reducing the amount of waste sent to energy recovery and landfill.

Priorities and Progress (2023-2024)

The Partnership continues to engage across multiple areas; supporting the development of key national policy as well as internal work streams.

Key activities included the extension by two years of the Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Strategy (the JMWMS as noted above) from 2023-24 to 2025-27, Board approval of the Waste Prevention Strategy, national engagement (including consultations), support for bidding for project funding around single use vapes and ongoing communication and public engagement activity by all Partners. More detail is below:

1. National Representation and Consultations

The changes proposed under the Government’s national Resources and Waste Strategy (2018) and the Environment Act (2021) remain significant in both scale and impact on how recycling and waste for households and businesses are managed.

¹ ORWP Partners are (alphabetically) Cherwell District, Oxford City, Oxfordshire County, South Oxfordshire District, Vale of White Horse District and West Oxfordshire District Councils

² The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS): [OxfordshiresResourcesandWasteStrategy](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshiresresourcesandwastestrategy)

³ Guidance on applying the waste hierarchy: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a795abde5274a2acd18c223/pb13530-waste-hierarchy-guidance.pdf>

Policy is predominantly focused on household waste in the main and represents a substantial shift in how local authority (LA) waste services will be funded and delivered. This will be through policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR); Simpler Recycling (formerly 'Consistency of Collections') and a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers.

In October 2023, the Government published a response to the Consistency of Collections consultation that was closed mid-2021, alongside two further consultation on the renamed policy viz. 'Simpler Recycling' on related Statutory Guidance and policy, to which ORWP responded. Simpler Recycling and the related secondary legislation set out the Government's mandate on what is collected across England for recycling, and how it should be collected. Funding leveraged through the EPR scheme is due to support some of the changes LAs are expected to make under Simpler Recycling. However, the continued delays and lack of detail means that forward planning and budget setting continues to be a challenge for all the ORWP Partners.

ORWP activity on a national level:

- Active participation through national groups and meetings and events, representing ORWP. This included the Policy and Advisory Committee for the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO), Defra Local Authority Engagement Forum, Waste Partnership Managers Group (formerly South East WPM) and Waste Network Chairs, for whom the ORWP Partnership Manager now undertakes the secretariat (since September 2023)
- Consultations and Calls for Evidence that ORWP responded to (April 2023 to March 2024)
 - Near ban of bio-degradable waste to landfill
 - Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) Regulations (Statutory Instrument)
 - Public Accounts Committee Review of the Resources & Waste Reforms
 - Simpler Recycling x 2: Statutory Guidance and Additional Policies
 - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) reforms
- Government responses to a number of other consultations were received. These included the 'Maximising Resources and Minimising Waste Programme' (formerly the Waste Prevention Programme for England), Reform of Carrier, Broker, Dealer Regime and Digital Waste Tracking. ORWP now awaits the next stages of implementation for these.

2. Environment Act implications for ORWP

- Ongoing briefings for Members and Officers on progress, delays and likely implications of key policy areas as noted above.
- Direct engagement with Defra on the details of national policies and likely impacts and opportunities for ORWP Partners.

3. JMWMS action plan targets and delivery

- Much of the work of this year undertaken by Partners has been focused on day-to-day delivery of actions such as engagement with the public on waste prevention and recycling behaviours, delivery of operational activities in line with good H&S practice and sharing of good practice and opportunities for collaborative working, and national policy engagement.

- At the Partnership Board meeting of 9 November 2023; the Board approved a decision to extend the current Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Strategy by two years from 2023-24 to 2025-26
 - The original end date of the current JMWMS of end 2023-24 was dependent on Government policy and legislation being implemented within the original timescales set out in the national Resources and Waste Strategy (2018).
 - The decision to extend the end date by two years was to account for the ongoing delays in the implementation and funding detail on national policy and the requirements on local authorities. A full refresh of the JMWMS without the clarity of requirements from local authorities and likely funding would be difficult to undertake.

4. Deliverable projects:

- In late 2023, ORWP supported Oxfordshire County Council's bid to Material Focus for £40,000 of funding to trial collections of disposable [single-use] vapes, working with Cherwell and City colleagues.
- The project aims to test a number of different options for the separate collection of disposable vapes including kerbside collection options in Cherwell, public drop-off locations in Oxford City and Cherwell, and a new bin at each of the seven Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- A target of 2 tonnes of vapes have been set for the first 12 months of the project, with the review of progress for the first year expected October 2024.

Additional work undertaken:

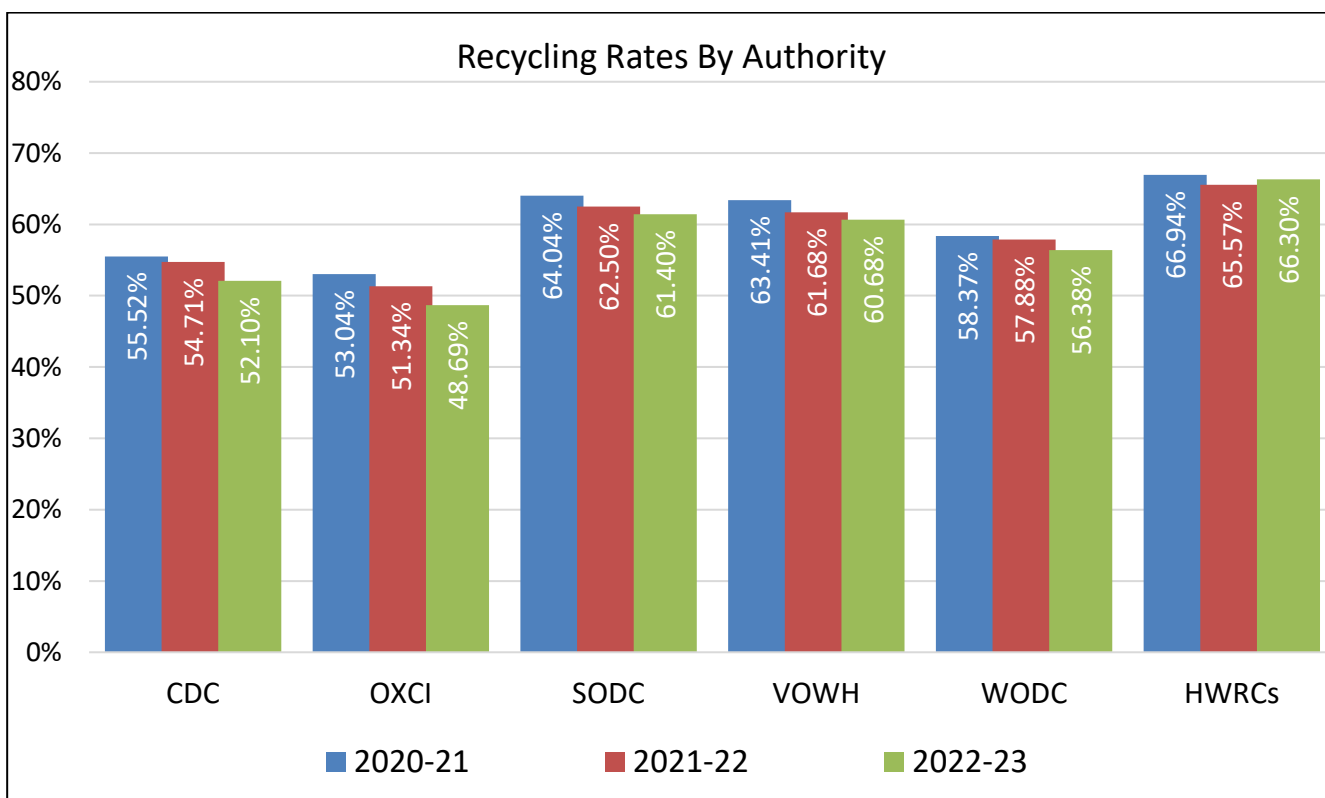
- Ongoing support and engagement with the Partnership working groups viz. Waste & Recycling Projects, Health & Safety, Operations and Enforcement Officers Groups.
- Supporting Partners on individual key projects and tasks. This has included ongoing representation of ORWP on the Oxfordshire County Council HWRC Steering Group, the Steering Group for OCC's newly emerging Circular Economy Strategy and the Waste Collection Authority collaboration group.
- Attended meetings of the Oxfordshire Chief Executive group on national policy and to seek approval for a programme of work for the Partnership ('Partnership Mechanisms') to undertake a review of a number of options for future partnership work. The Partnership Mechanisms programme includes financial mechanisms, collection systems, collaborative procurement, infrastructure and partnership structures. Approval was given and that work is under development with external consultancy support being sought. This programme will be delivered starting in the 2024-25 financial year.
- The draft Waste Prevention Strategy was approved by the Partnership Board at their meeting on 7 March 2024; the next step will be for each Partners to take the Strategy through their individual Council approval processes.
 - The Waste Prevention Strategy will sit as an addendum to the current JMWMS.
- Ongoing support for BAU operational delivery on the management of Persistent Organic Pollutants, primarily though links with external bodies (such as NAWDO) to keep ahead of any future developments and changes.
- Partnership governance and structures maintained. The Partnership Manager role was made permanent in August 2023.

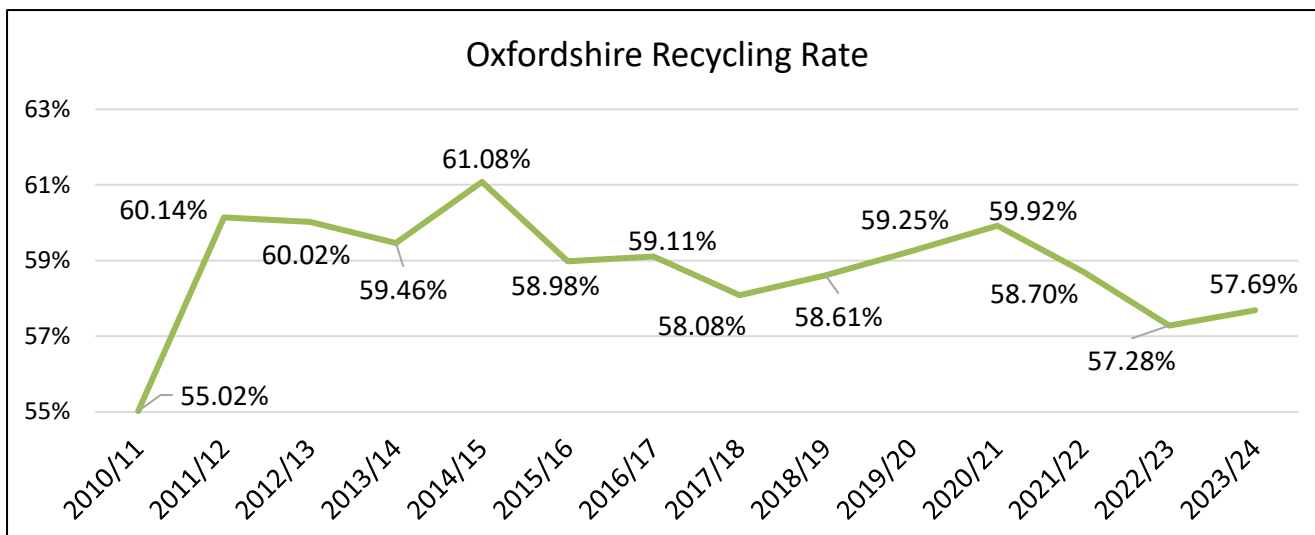
Partnership Performance and Data

ORWP Partners have made significant strides in maintaining high recycling rates despite a challenging period. The 2022-2023 national recycling rates were published end January 2024 (a year in arrears as is standard), with Oxfordshire County achieving a commendable recycling, reuse, and composting rate of 57.2%, making it the top-performing county for the tenth consecutive year. For the Collection Authority Partners, South Oxfordshire ranked first with a 61.6% recycling rate, followed by the Vale of White Horse in third place with 60.9%, and West Oxfordshire in 14th place with 56.8%. Cherwell and Oxford City also performed well, ranking 31st and 49th respectively, with Oxford City being the top-performing city council. All ORWP Collection Authorities were in the top 25% of English councils.

However, the partnership has faced a reduction in recycling rates, a trend observed across England. The dry summer and autumn seasons of 2022 led to a decrease in green waste, which likely contributed to the drop in recycling rates.

Below is a table of recycling rates by Partner, with HWRCs for the County Council





There has been a significant improvement in diverting waste from landfill to energy recovery since the late 1990's. Landfill has reduced from over 147,000 tonnes in 2009-10 to less than 7,000 tonnes in 2022-23. While there was significant early improvement in recycling and composting rates (from less than 10% in 1997-98 to more than 50% from 2010-11); recycling rates have somewhat plateaued over the last several years as can be seen in the graph above. This plateau is also reflected in national trends.

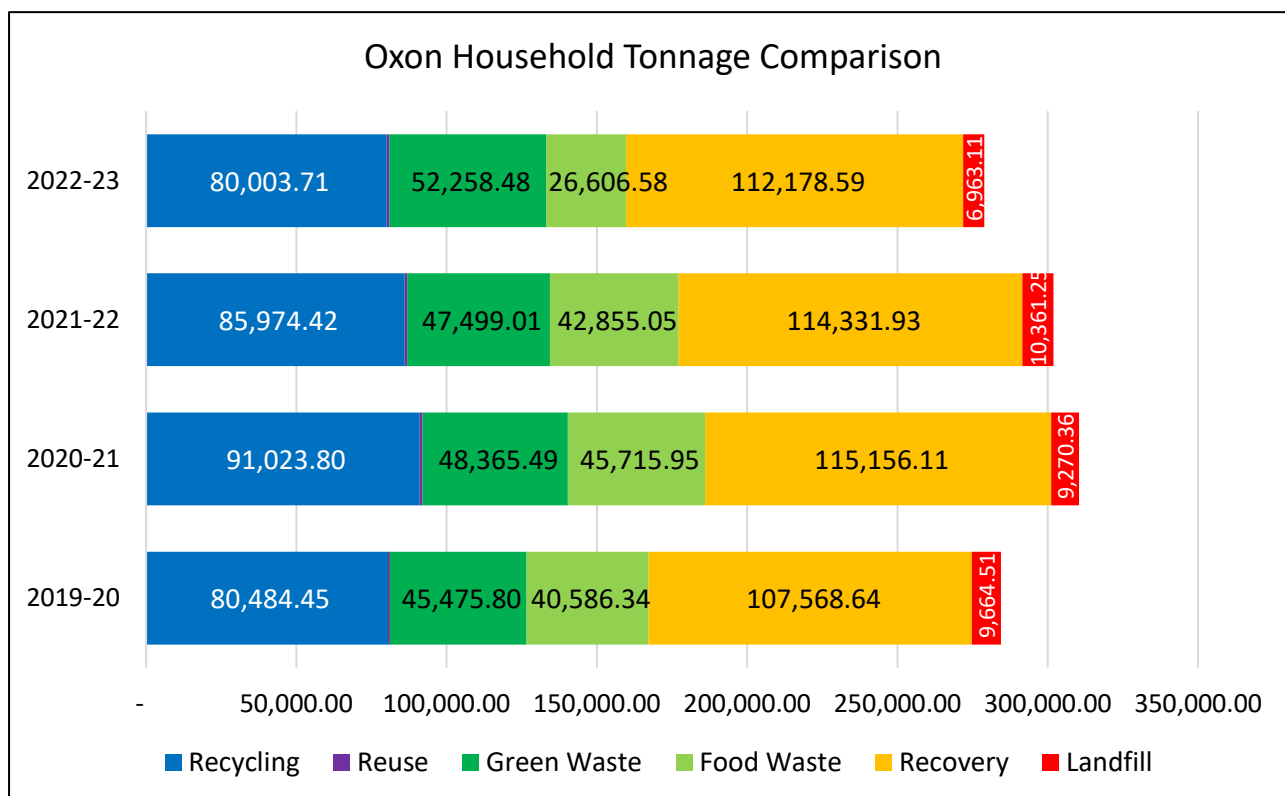
ORWP Partners continue to work hard to support residents to recycle better, focusing on putting the correct items in the recycling bin; whilst also supporting a reduction in their waste arisings through various communications campaigns and direct engagement. This work continues, with the top of the hierarchy (prevention, reduction and reuse/repair) remaining a critical focus for the partnership moving forward; in line with the vision of the partnership:

'As the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership, our vision is to reduce Oxfordshire's carbon emissions, especially through positive resource management. We will continue to work with our residents and businesses to reduce Oxfordshire's waste as much as possible; while reusing, repairing and recycling as much as we can of what is left before it goes to energy recovery.

We will use this circular economy approach to support the creation and delivery of wider environmental, economic and social benefits for our communities.'

Recycling and Engagement officers from across the Partnership delivered a number of communications campaigns during 2023-24, along with events and direct engagement with the public. These have included:

- Recycle Week (October 2023)
- Oxfordshire Reuses event in Banbury (October 2023)
- Christmas campaigns (December 2023)
- Buy Nothing New month (January 2024)
- Food Waste Action Week (March 2024)
- Oxfordshire Reuses event in Oxford (March 2024)
- Great British Spring Clean (March 2024)



As noted in the previous Annual Report (2022-2023), there was a notable reduction in food waste tonnages for 2022-2023. This is due to a service change made by Cherwell District Council in providing separate collections for food and green waste; where previously these were co-collected and recorded under the 'Food Waste' category for previous years.

Planned activity for 2024-2025

- Ongoing delivery of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) objectives.
- Retain the action from 2023-24 of modelling the likely impacts – services and finance - of Environment Act policies (pEPR, DRS, Consistency) for Partners; once implementation on detail (including funding) is received.
- Progress the Partnership mechanisms programme, including financial mechanisms, infrastructure, partnership structures, collaborative procurement and collection systems, alongside the gathering of baseline data on performance and current services.
- Continue engagement with national policy, and with representative bodies (eg. DCN, NAWDO, Waste Network Chairs, etc) and others (eg. Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP)), including lobbying.
- Responding to appropriate consultations and calls for evidence.
- Supporting Partners on issues such as Emissions Trading Scheme, Persistent Organic Pollutants and future service changes.
- Supporting delivery of future projects and funding bids
- Support the development and delivery of Partnership-wide communications and engagement activity.
- Begin the JMWMS refresh/rewrite.
- Annual Report for 2024-2025.

Appendix:
The structure of ORWP:



Partnership Board

The Partnership Board consists of the Portfolio Holders from each Partner, supported by the Strategy Group. Chair of the Board is held for two years, in alphabetical order by Partner Authority, with the deputy being the Member from the next Partner to hold the Chair. The current Chair is Oxfordshire County Council (from Jan 2023) and the deputy is South Oxfordshire District Council; with the latter taking the Chair from January 2025. The Board meets at least 3 times a year, after the Strategy Group have met; with additional meetings as required.

Strategy Group

The Strategy Group is made up from directors and senior officers from each Partner, each with an overview of strategic waste matters for their local authority. The group meets at least 3 times a year, prior to the Partnership Board meetings and also with additional meetings as required.

Working Groups

Working groups meet regularly throughout the year, and at varying intervals. Additional ‘Task and Finish’ groups are formed as needed.

- *Operations (Ops) Group*: comprising technical officers from each Partner
- *Waste & Recycling Projects (Projects) Group*: comprising recycling officers from each Partner
- *Health & Safety Working (H&S) Group*: comprising appropriate operational officers from each Partner
- *Enforcement Officers*: comprising enforcement officers from each Partner

Partnership Manager

The Partnership Manager (PM) is a role that is jointly funded by all ORWP Partners, hosted by Oxfordshire County Council. The PM is required to advance the Partnership Principles and Partnership Objectives.

This page is intentionally left blank