

re3 STRATEGY 2026-2031

Executive Summary

The re3 partnership has delivered effective, reliable waste management services for more than 25 years. This success story reflects the collaboration between Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, and their principal contractor, FCC Environment. Working together, they have improved performance, provided services that are highly valued by residents, and achieved recycling rates above the national average.

New legislation will significantly change how the councils collect, treat, and fund waste and recycling services. Some services will be managed outside local control, shifting decisions to Government or agencies, which may place additional pressures on council budgets.

As the partnership prepares for these changes, it is essential that this strategy reflects both national requirements and the priorities expressed by residents through the 2025 public consultation. This strategy sets out how the councils will continue to deliver high-quality, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible waste management, supporting residents to protect resources while achieving best value for money.

The strategy is built around three themes aligned with the waste hierarchy and long-term planning:

Theme 1 - Waste Prevention, Recycling and the Circular Economy

Preventing waste at source is the most sustainable and cost-effective action available to councils. This theme focuses on reducing avoidable waste, by tackling everyday wastefulness, supporting residents to make better choices, and extending the life of materials through reuse, repair and more effective recycling. The emphasis is on areas where councils and residents have the greatest ability to influence outcomes directly, such as consumption habits, correct use of services and consistent participation in recycling rather than product design or packaging decisions, which sit largely beyond local control. Residents already engage well with recycling, but clearer communication and accessible services will further reduce contamination and increase material capture. Supporting a circular economy also delivers wider social and economic benefits, including cost savings for residents and reduced demand for natural resources.

Theme 2 - Our Facilities and Service Delivery

The partnership's facilities, operating since 2007/08, are the operational heart of re3 services. They have driven performance targets and adapted to changing needs. Looking ahead, the councils will look to further invest in infrastructure improvements, operational efficiency, and legislative compliance while maintaining value for money. Initiatives include upgrading the Material Recycling Facility (MRF), trying to optimise Recycling Centre operations and introducing operational innovations to capture more recyclable material and reduce contamination.

Theme 3 - Stakeholder Engagement and Future of Services

With the current contract ending in 2031, the partnership is planning for future service delivery under rising environmental expectations and new legal requirements. Strong collaboration with residents, contractors, neighbouring authorities, producers, and government agencies is central to this theme. Effective communication will ensure residents understand why changes are made and how they benefit both the environment and the local community. The strategy also prioritises future planning through waste composition analysis, modelling waste growth, exploring MRF upgrades or replacements, and collaborating with neighbouring councils to align capacity and manage costs efficiently.

This strategy positions re3 to continue delivering efficient, resilient, and future-ready services. By embedding the waste hierarchy, promoting innovation, and engaging residents and partners, the councils will ensure sustainable outcomes, high recycling performance, and responsible use of public resources through to 2031 and beyond.

Theme	2026–2028 Focus	2029–2031 Focus
Waste Prevention, Recycling and the Circular Economy	Improve waste prevention and recycling through behaviour-change campaigns; expand reuse schemes and social value programmes; reduce contamination.	Build on successful reuse and prevention initiatives; embed circular economy principles and further reduce residual waste.
Our Facilities and Service Delivery	Maintain efficient Recycling Centres and embed black-bag splitting; optimise booking systems, site layouts and opening hours. Upgrade the MRF to reach compliance with the Simpler Recycling.	Standardise effective operational changes; adapt services and infrastructure to future demand and legislative change.
Stakeholder Engagement and Future of Services	Strengthen communications and partnership working; initiate long-term waste modelling and infrastructure planning for the post 2031.	Plan post-2031 services and infrastructure; respond to policy change and future waste trends; prepare for future contracts and investment.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the strategic direction for re3 Waste Partnership to manage waste disposal services up to 2031.

The partnership between Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, and Wokingham Borough Council began in 1999. Since then, re3 has provided a shared platform for delivering efficient waste disposal services, avoiding duplication of costs, sharing assets and expertise, and enabling residents to achieve recycling rates exceeding 50%.

Significant national legislative reforms, alongside ongoing financial pressures on local government, mean that re3 must adapt and modernise services. The partnership must respond to new statutory requirements while ensuring services remain efficient for residents, affordable, and environmentally responsible.

1.1 Strategy Development

The strategy has been developed to establish clear priorities and actions that will guide waste disposal services through to 2031.

Its development has been informed by:

- Engagement workshops with elected Members from the three councils.
- A six-week public consultation

1.2 Public Consultation

The consultation ran from 3 November 2025 for six weeks, and feedback from residents has directly shaped the strategy. The consultation received 3,466 responses from residents across the three councils.

Selected highlights include:

- 91% of respondents rated recycling as important or very important, with 65% stating they recycle most items and a further 24% saying they recycle everything possible.
- Reducing landfill waste (72%) and increasing recycling and reuse rates (61%) were identified as top priorities.
- Ease of recycling was ranked as the most important factor in designing future services, ahead of environmental impact and cost.
- There was strong support for expanding the range of materials collected at the kerbside, particularly batteries and small electrical items, with glass and soft plastics frequently requested in open responses.
- 93% of respondents had used a Recycling Centre (the 'tip') in the past year, demonstrating high engagement with existing services.
- While 65% of residents agreed that recycling is easy to understand, many highlighted confusions about what can be recycled and called for simpler, more consistent systems.
- A significant proportion of respondents supported operational changes at Recycling Centres if they improved environmental outcomes or reduced costs, though over a third preferred no changes to current arrangements.
- Looking ahead, residents prioritised future services that make recycling as easy and convenient as possible, favouring systems with minimal sorting and fewer containers where practical.
- There was also clear conditional support for partnership working: 37.5% supported the three councils working together, with a further 50% supporting collaboration where it delivers cost savings or environmental benefits. Similar views were expressed about working with neighbouring councils.

Overall, respondents expect future services to be simple, efficient, environmentally ambitious, and delivered collaboratively where this improves outcomes for residents and taxpayers.

2. Current Performance

In 2025/26, the re3 Partnership processed over 175,000 tonnes of household waste and achieved an overall average recycling rate of 54.0%, placing re3 within the top 20% of local authorities in England (Fig.1).

The overall recycling rate was achieved by a combination of (i) kerbside collections achieving a recycling rate of 49%, and (ii) the Recycling Centres achieved 62%, exceeding the national average recycling rate for Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) of 55.7% (2022/23).

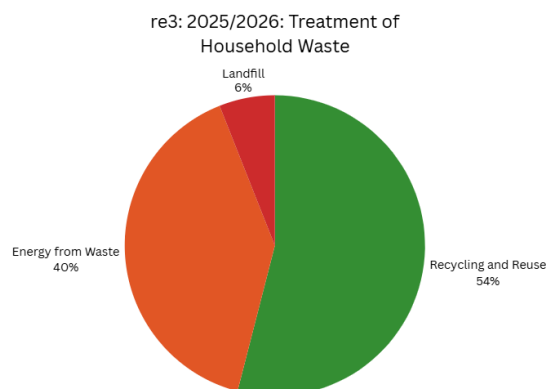


Figure 1 Treatment of Household Waste

2.1 Waste Composition

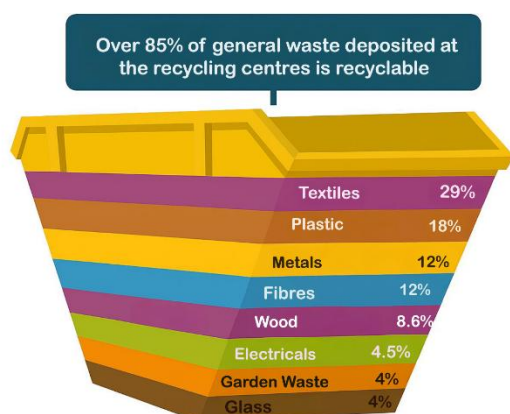
The compositional analysis undertaken in April 2025 found that up to 55% of the material currently placed in household residual (non-recyclable) bins could have been recycled through existing kerbside services. A further 23% could have been recycled at local bring banks or Recycling Centres. This indicates substantial scope to improve performance. Fig. 2 shows a breakdown of the types of materials found in the average residual waste bin across the re3 area.

Disposing of waste that could be recycled is both costly to the environment and to the council's finances.

In addition, the compositional analysis of residual waste deposited at the Recycling Centres (Fig.3) found that up to 86% of non-bulky waste placed in the residual bays could have been recycled. Of this, 23% could have been recycled at the kerbside.



Figure 2 Compositional analysis of residual waste. Sample content of general waste bins of households. It highlights the type and volume of wastes that could be diverted and ones that should be disposed of in general waste.



Data collected in November 2024 indicates that around one third of all residual waste at Recycling Centres is non-bulky material, demonstrating further potential for diversion and cost savings.

Figure 2 Compositional analysis of the residual waste deposited at the Recycling Centres, April 2025

2.2 Cost of Waste

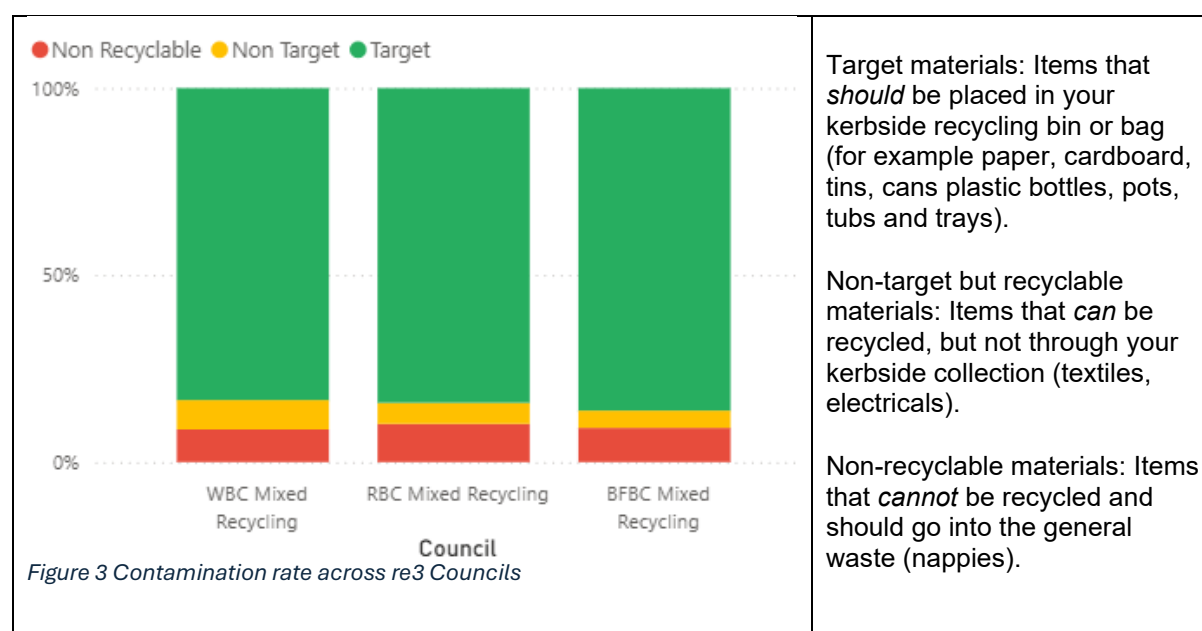
Waste management costs the re3 councils approximately £40 million per year, equating to around £190 per household annually. With forthcoming legislative changes expected to increase costs, further improvements in recycling performance and reductions in residual waste will be critical to managing financial pressures.

However:

- Up to **55%** of waste currently in residual bins could be recycled at the kerbside.
- A further **23%** could be recycled via bring banks or Recycling Centres.
- At Recycling Centres, up to **86%** of non-bulky residual waste could be recycled.

2.3 Quality of Recycling and Contamination

Across the re3 area, recycling contamination rates currently average between 15% and 25%, meaning approximately 1 in 5 items placed in recycling bins is not suitable for kerbside processing (Fig.4). Contamination increases processing costs and may result in rejected loads, which cost nearly three times as much to manage as correctly sorted recycling.



3. Industry Context

Alongside considering our local circumstances, as part of the development of this strategy the re3 councils must also consider the wider national drivers of change. The UK Government has announced several major policy reforms which will affect how waste and recycling is managed in England, and how services are funded. These policies are expected to take effect during the lifetime of this strategy and, if implemented as currently proposed, will significantly influence how waste and recycling is managed across Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham.

The major national policies are outlined below.

It should be noted that the policies discussed below remain under development by the UK Government, and implementation dates or requirements may change during the lifetime of this strategy.

Policy	Expected Implementation	Key Requirements	Impact on re3 Councils	Key Risks / Uncertainties
Simpler Recycling	Phased 2025–2027	Mandatory collection of a consistent set of materials: food waste, paper/card, plastics (including flexible plastics from 2027), glass, metals, and garden waste (on request, for a reasonable fee).	Requires introduction of kerbside glass and flexible plastics collections. May require service redesign and infrastructure changes.	Cost implications, so any changes are effective and efficient. National infrastructure capacity constraints, especially related to flexible plastic reprocessing.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	1 October 2025	Producers pay the full net cost of managing packaging waste, including collection, transport, sorting, disposal and administration. Applies to recycling, residual waste and litter bins	re3 will receive payments for delivering an “efficient and effective” packaging waste service. Encourages improved packaging design and circular economy outcomes.	Criteria for “efficient and effective” services remain unclear. Funding beyond year one is uncertain, creating financial planning risks.
Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)	October 2027	Refundable deposit applied to most plastic bottles and aluminium cans (150ml–3L), redeemed at return points (e.g. supermarkets).	Likely reduction in plastic bottles and cans in kerbside collections. May reduce litter and increase national recycling rates.	Loss of valuable materials from kerbside stream. Potential inconvenience for residents without easy access to return points
UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)	2028 (Energy from Waste inclusion)	Carbon pricing applied to Energy from Waste facilities, increasing costs for burning fossil carbon materials	Increased cost of disposing of residual waste. Estimated additional cost could reach ~£2.9m per	Exposure to carbon price volatility. Financial pressure if residual waste

		such as plastics and textiles.	year if waste composition remains unchanged. Strengthens case for waste reduction and recycling	levels are not reduced.
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In addition to the four major national reforms outlined above, there are a number of further regulatory requirements that the re3 councils must comply with.

Policy	Expected Implementation	Key Requirements	Impact on re3 Councils	Key Risks / Uncertainties
Near Elimination of Biowaste to Landfill	Under consultation (from 2023)	Government aims to significantly reduce biodegradable waste sent to landfill to limit greenhouse gas emissions from anaerobic breakdown. May introduce landfill cost mechanisms similar to ETS.	Increased emphasis on food waste, garden waste, paper/card and textile diversion. Potential need to introduce new collection services for nappies and absorbent hygiene products (AHP). Strong alignment with resident priorities on reducing food waste and affordable green waste services.	Likely requirement for new or expanded services (e.g. AHP). Limited sustainable processing infrastructure for AHP. Financial impact uncertain.
Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	Regulations in force (2023)	Upholstered furniture and other POP-containing waste must be handled separately and destroyed (typically via high-temperature incineration). Cannot be landfilled.	Requires separate collection and handling arrangements. Supports zero-landfill objectives.	Treatment and disposal of POPs waste is costly.
WEEE, Vapes and	Under consultation /	Strengthened requirements for	Strong resident support for	New or enhanced

Batteries Reforms	phased implementation	safe collection and treatment of electrical waste, batteries and vapes. Possible future mandatory kerbside collections.	kerbside battery and small electrical collections. Reduces fire risk at vehicles and facilities. Supports recovery of valuable materials.	services will need to be developed. Policy details and funding arrangements still evolving.
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4. Key Themes, Objectives and Actions

A strategy is a plan - or group of plans - designed to respond to a specific situation. Earlier in this document we have described the re3 context: rising financial pressures, significant legislative reform, the need to reduce carbon emissions, and the requirement to deliver efficient, future-proof services.

This section sets out **what we will do as a partnership**.

The re3 strategy is structured around **three key themes**, each directly shaped and strengthened by the public consultation. Residents were clear about their priorities: reduce landfill, make recycling easier, protect valued services, and plan responsibly for the future. The themes below reflect that direction.

Theme 1: Waste Prevention, Recycling and the Circular Economy

Preventing waste in the first place is the most sustainable and cost-effective action we can take. This theme focuses on reducing waste generation, supporting reuse and repair, improving recycling quality, and embedding circular economy principles into everyday service delivery.

Public consultation strongly supported this approach:

- 72.4% said reducing waste sent to landfill was their top priority.
- 60.6% prioritised increasing recycling and reuse rates.
- 23.2% said increasing reuse was a key topic for council communications.
- 89% said they recycle “most” or “all” of their waste.

Residents are clearly motivated and environmentally conscious. The opportunity now lies in making services clearer, simpler, and more convenient so that good intentions translate into measurable impacts.

Objective 1A: Promote Waste Prevention and Increase Reuse

Residents want more opportunities to reuse and repair items rather than discard them:

- 71.7% support a collection service for reusable goods.
- 48.9% want repair workshops.
- 84.7% gave items away in the past year.
- Over 64% use clothing banks.

This demonstrates a strong foundation for expanding reuse infrastructure and community partnerships.

Objective 1B: Increase Recycling and Make It Easier for Residents

While participation is high, contamination remains between 15–25%, meaning approximately one in five items placed in recycling cannot be processed.

Residents explained the reasons:

- 21.8% are unsure what goes in which bin.
- 20.6% admit they “make a guess.”
- 18.1% say bins sometimes get too full.
- Ease of use ranked as the number one factor in designing future recycling systems.
- 63.8% want clearer communication on “recycling correctly.”
- 59.3% chose email newsletter as the most suitable form of communications channel

Residents also asked for additional materials to be collected at the kerbside, particularly batteries and small electricals.

Residents are already doing the right thing; our role is to make the system work better for them.

Objective 1C: Work Towards a Circular Economy and Increase Social Value

Transitioning to a circular economy means keeping materials in use for as long as possible through sharing, donating, reuse, repair, and recycling. Together, the re3 councils are committed to supporting a more circular economy, where we use resources more wisely and create less waste. By highlighting the social and environmental benefits of reducing waste and cutting carbon, we want to help everyone understand the positive impacts their actions can have. Our goal is to not only share useful information but also to motivate people to change their habits for the better.

As a partnership, we are also committed to adding social value by directly engaging with and supporting our local communities. Through existing initiatives such as re3grow – Community Scheme compost we provide free compost to organisations, through re3Read and re3Paint we distribute free books and paint and are raising funds for charity via sales from our reuse pop-up shops.

Theme 2: Our Facilities and Service Delivery

The re3 waste management facilities at Longshot Lane (Bracknell) and Island Road (Reading) are central to day-to-day service delivery across the partnership. Together, they handle approximately 170,000 tonnes of waste per year and receive over 600,000 resident visits annually.

Since their construction in 2008/09, the sites have delivered reliable, flexible and high-quality services, enabling the re3 councils to consistently exceed 50% household recycling rates.

The facilities sort mixed recyclables collected at the kerbside, provide Recycling Centre services, and operate as the hub of the wider waste management system.

However, the operating environment is changing. National policy reforms, including Simpler Recycling, the Emissions Trading Scheme and the Deposit Return Scheme, alongside financial pressures and rising public expectations, require the partnership to adapt its facilities to remain compliant, efficient and future-ready.

The public consultation confirmed that residents highly value these services:

- 93.5% of respondents had used a Recycling Centre in the past year

- 90%+ report satisfaction with the service
- 72.4% prioritise reducing landfill
- Ease of use was ranked as the most important design factor for future systems

This theme focuses on maintaining strong environmental performance while improving operational efficiency, compliance and long-term resilience.

Objective 2A: Maintain High-Performing and Compliant Recycling Infrastructure

The re3 Material Recycling Facility (MRF), owned by the councils and operated by FCC Environment, plays a critical role in processing paper, cardboard, plastics and metals collected at the kerbside. Direct ownership provides valuable operational control and data insights.

However, evolving legislation will require the system to adapt. Simpler Recycling will introduce additional material streams such as glass and flexible plastics. The Emissions Trading Scheme will increase costs associated with residual waste treatment. The Deposit Return Scheme may alter the volume and composition of kerbside recyclables.

Residents expressed a desire for more materials to be collected at home, particularly glass and soft plastics. At the same time, residents ranked ease of use above cost and environmental impact in system design preferences. Any future configuration must therefore balance simplicity, performance and affordability.

Objective 2B: Optimise Recycling Centre Performance and Efficiency

The two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) serve a population significantly larger than WRAP guidance recommends for two sites. Despite this, they consistently achieve strong outcomes:

- 67% of waste recycled, composted or reused (2024/25)
- 90%+ user satisfaction
- Longer opening hours compared to many comparable facilities

The recent public consultation confirmed the importance of the sites:

- 93.5% of respondents used a Recycling Centre in the last year
- 47.1% visit every few months
- Only 2.5% have never visited

Residents most commonly use the sites for occasional clear-outs (78.8%), garden waste (27.1%) and recycling overflow (25.8%).

Waste composition analysis shows that up to 86% of residual (non-bulky) waste delivered in black bags could be recycled through existing services. This presents a significant opportunity to improve recycling performance and reduce disposal costs.

Booking data shows how the Recycling Centres are used less at certain times of day, such as early mornings and later in the evening. This creates opportunities for operational efficiency.

The re3 partnership must respond to ongoing financial pressures while maintaining appropriate levels of access and service quality. As part of the public consultation, residents were asked whether they would support a range of proposed efficiency measures aimed at reducing costs and improving operational performance. These included adjusting opening hours and introducing a 'bag splitting' initiative, where visitors would separate recyclable materials from general waste on site.

Responses indicate that residents hold strong, protective views about their Recycling Centres:

- 24.8% supporting all proposed efficiency measures
- 36.2% not supporting reductions in service or the 'bag splitting' initiative
- 21.7% supporting adjusted opening hours only
- 12% supporting bag splitting initiative only
- 5.1% did not provide an answer

Overall, the findings suggest a cautious and measured openness to change, with greater support for measures that minimise disruption to convenience - such as adjusting opening hours - compared to those that may impact the user experience more directly. In response, the strategy adopts a balanced approach: seeking to improve efficiency and reduce disposal costs, while carefully managing operational risks and preserving the accessibility and usability of services valued by residents.

Theme 3: Future of Services and Collaboration

Effective waste services rely not only on infrastructure but also on collaboration with residents, contractors, neighbouring authorities, producers, and government bodies. The re3 councils have demonstrated the value of shared messaging and coordinated service development. Moving forward, this collaborative approach will be vital in engaging residents and reinforcing behaviour change, particularly as funding becomes increasingly performance based.

The re3 partnership has a strong local and regional presence. By working together, sharing expertise, and using available data, the councils can deliver clear, consistent messages that help residents understand the importance of reducing waste, reusing, and recycling. High recycling performance and low contamination require communication that explains why changes are needed, not just what they are.

Future funding of council waste services will increasingly depend on service success. The re3 partnership has scope to work efficiently under Collection and Packaging Reform (CPR), using coordinated messaging to address gaps in participation, reduce contamination, and increase service usage.

The councils have also been successful in developing operational waste management, introducing new treatments, and providing complementary services. Maintaining momentum and compliance requires services that are customer-focused, efficient, cost-effective, reliable, and well-communicated, giving residents confidence that their actions make a real impact. Timely, efficient collections support these communications and help sustain motivation.

As the re3 contract concludes in 2031, this strategy looks ahead to ensure services remain compliant, efficient, and financially sustainable in the face of major national reforms. Residents have expressed strong support for partnership working:

- 87% support the three councils working together.
- 80% support exploring wider partnerships if clear benefits are demonstrated.

This endorsement provides a strong mandate to continue and strengthen collaborative working.

Objective 3A: Strengthen Collaboration, Communication and Transparency

High recycling performance and low contamination require more than infrastructure, they require consistent, accessible and well-coordinated messaging. While communications

currently focus primarily on collection logistics, future engagement must place greater emphasis on behaviour change, environmental impact and service transparency. As funding becomes increasingly linked to performance under Collection and Packaging Reforms (CPR), reducing contamination and improving capture rates will directly affect financial sustainability. This makes coordinated messaging across the partnership essential. The re3 councils already benefit from a strong shared identity and data-driven service management. Building on this foundation will ensure residents understand how their individual actions contribute to local environmental performance.

Objective 3B: Plan for Future Infrastructure and Legislative Compliance

The current re3 contract concludes in 2031. This provides both a challenge and an opportunity to plan long-term infrastructure that is compliant, efficient and adaptable. National reforms, including Simpler Recycling, the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will significantly influence service design and material flows.

Simpler Recycling will require additional materials, including glass and flexible plastics, to be collected from households. To ensure compliance while maintaining material quality, the councils are looking to introduce separate glass collection. Longer term, options may include retrofitting the existing MRF or constructing a modern facility capable of processing additional streams more efficiently and potentially serving a wider geography.

Collaboration with neighbouring councils will also be explored to optimise capacity, reduce duplication and deliver economies of scale.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

High Level re3 Strategic Principles (Joint Waste Disposal Board, September 23)

The principles are as follows:

- a) Delivering, corporately sustainable, legislative compliance.
- b) Delivering, and encouraging, efficiency in service provision, across waste management (collection and disposal).
- c) Seeking genuine engagement with all re3 residents, to support them and reinforce their personal agency and good citizenship.
- d) Supporting climate-change targets (delivery and maintenance of net zero) via prioritising greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction.
- e) Preferring systems which encourage and facilitate waste reduction and increase the circular economy.
- f) Prioritising the retention of financial value in the re3 area, alongside quantified, corporately purposeful and measured Social Value.
- g) Working in partnership and providing sector leadership

6. Glossary

This section could be quite detailed, and it might be nice to add photos or diagrams to add depth to the explanations.

Anaerobic Digestion (AD)

A biological process in which microorganisms break down organic material, such as food waste, in the absence of oxygen. The process produces biogas (a methane-rich renewable gas used to generate electricity and heat) and digestate, which can be used as a fertiliser. re3 currently uses Severn Trent's Wallingford Anaerobic Digestion facility, which processes over 50,000 tonnes of waste each year and generates around 2.4 MW of electricity.

Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP)

Non-medical waste products designed to absorb bodily fluids, including nappies and incontinence products. These products are typically non-recyclable and are costly to manage due to their mixed material composition and high fossil-carbon content.

Behaviour Change

Actions and interventions designed to influence how people think about and manage waste, encouraging practices such as waste prevention, correct recycling and reuse through information, prompts, incentives and service design.

Biodegradable Waste

Waste materials capable of being broken down by microorganisms into natural substances such as water, carbon dioxide and biomass. Examples include food waste, garden waste, paper and cardboard.

Bring Banks

Publicly accessible collection points, often located in neighbourhoods or supermarket car parks, where residents can recycle specific materials such as glass, textiles or paper outside of kerbside services.

Circular Economy

An economic system designed to minimise waste and maximise the value of resources by keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, refurbishment and recycling. The circular economy aims to eliminate waste and pollution, circulate materials at their highest value, and regenerate natural systems.

Collection and Packaging Reforms (CPR)

The combined set of national waste reforms including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Simpler Recycling and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). Together, CPR changes how recycling services are designed, funded and evaluated.

Commingled collections

A recycling collection method where multiple recyclable materials (such as paper, plastics, glass and metals) are collected together in one container and later separated at a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). While convenient for residents, and often increasing participation this system can result in higher contamination and reduced material quality.

Contamination

The presence of non-target or incorrectly presented materials in recycling streams. Contamination increases processing costs, reduces recycle quality and can result in recycling being rejected and sent for disposal.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

A scheme where a refundable deposit is added to the purchase price of certain single-use drinks containers. Consumers reclaim the deposit by returning empty containers to a return point, typically via a reverse vending machine (RVM). England's DRS is expected to cover plastic bottles and aluminium cans.

Digital Waste Tracking (DWT)

A national system designed to track waste movements electronically from production to final treatment or disposal. DWT improves transparency, compliance and data quality across the waste sector.

Dry Recyclables

Recyclable materials that do not include food or garden waste. These typically include paper and cardboard, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, metal tins and cans, cartons, and glass bottles and jars.

Energy from Waste (EFW)

The process of creating energy in the form of electricity or heat from the incineration of waste materials.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

A policy approach under which producers are financially (and sometimes operationally) responsible for managing products at the end of their life. Under EPR for packaging, producers fund the full net cost of collecting, sorting, recycling and disposing of packaging waste.

Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

A system that helps reduce pollution by setting a limit on the amount of greenhouse gases that companies can release. Businesses that pollute less can sell their extra allowances to others that need more, encouraging everyone to cut emissions over time. From 2028, Energy from Waste facilities are expected to be included in the UK ETS. Find out more [here](#).

Flexible Plastics

Plastic packaging that can easily bend or flex, such as plastic bags, wrapping films, bread bags and liners. Flexible plastics are widely used but currently have limited recycling capacity. This material stream is a material stream expected to be collected and recycled by all councils from 2026 under Simpler Recycling reforms.

Fossil (Long-Cycle) Carbon

Carbon derived from fossil fuels such as oil and gas, found in materials like plastics and synthetic textiles. When burned or degraded, this carbon is released as carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change ([explainer at 1.1](#) and relative carbon at 1.5

Glass

A non-degradable but 100% recyclable material which can be endlessly recycled with no loss of quality. New glass is made from four main ingredients: sand, soda ash, limestone and other additives for colour or special treatments.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)

A group of gases contributing to global warming and climate change for example carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Converting them to carbon dioxide (or CO₂) equivalents makes it possible to compare them and to determine their individual and total contributions to global warming.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) - A facility where residents can dispose of their household waste. HWRCs are a key part of the recycling services offered by local authorities. re3 offers two HWRCs to their residents: Longshot Lane, Bracknell and Island Road, Reading. To explore re3 facilities, [check the virtual tour](#).

Material Capture

The proportion of recyclable material that is successfully collected and diverted away from residual waste streams through kerbside collections, Recycling Centres or reuse schemes.

Material Recycling Facility (MRF)

A facility designed specifically to receive, separate and prepare recyclable materials for marketing to end-user manufacturers, such as paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and containers, aluminium and steel cans, foil and cartons. re3 owns and operates an MRF processing kerbside recyclables. Discover what happens to waste at re3 Material Recycling Facility ([video](#), [virtual tour](#))

Non-Bulky Waste

General household waste that can be lifted and handled without mechanical assistance, typically placed in black bags. This contrasts with bulky waste such as furniture or large appliances.

Producers

Under Extended Producer Responsibility, businesses or organisations that manufacture, import or place products (including packaging) onto the market, and are responsible for funding their end-of-life management.

Residual Waste

Waste remaining after reuse, recycling and composting, placed in the general waste bin (green in Bracknell Forest, grey in Reading, black in Wokingham). Residual waste is typically treated by Energy from Waste.

Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs)

Automated machines that accept empty drinks containers covered by the Deposit Return Scheme and return a monetary deposit or voucher to the user.

Reuse

The act of using items again for the same or a different purpose without significant reprocessing, such as donating furniture, clothing or electrical items.

Social Value

A positive impact that businesses and organisations can have on the local community. This can include supporting the environment, creating jobs, and improving the lives of residents.

Source-Separated Recycling

A waste collection system where residents sort different types of recyclable waste at the kerbside for example: plastic, glass, paper are placed into separate containers before collection. This system relies heavily on public participation but helps achieve higher diversion rates and cleaner material streams.

Simpler Recycling

A national reform introducing a consistent set of recyclable materials to be collected at home, work and schools across England, aimed at reducing confusion and improving recycling performance. More information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update>)

Textiles

Fabric-based materials such as clothing, bedding and towels. Textiles may be biodegradable (natural fibres) or fossil-based (synthetic fibres), with differing carbon impacts.

Twin-Stream Collections

A recycling system where materials are collected in two streams, typically paper/cardboard in one and containers (plastics, metals, glass) in the other, balancing ease of use and quality.

WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme)

A UK-based not-for-profit organisation supporting waste reduction, recycling and the transition to a circular economy.

Delivery Plan 2026-2028

Residents told us...	We are doing this...	Theme & Objective	Lead responsibility
Reducing waste sent to landfill is their top priority, with strong support for prevention, reuse and recycling before disposal.	Support national campaigns and local behavioural change initiatives on waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling We will promote waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling through coordinated campaigns across the partnership. Embed social value within reuse and recycling services Expand initiatives such as community compost distribution (re3grow), book and paint redistribution (re3Read and re3Paint), and charitable fundraising through reuse shop sales. We will also improve measurement and reporting of social impact.	Theme 1: Objective A	re3 Project Team and Councils Communications Team
We are committed to recycling but find systems confusing, with many unsure what goes in each bin or making a guess.	Improve communications and promote digital tools for quick recycling guidance We will continue to address confusion through clear messaging, mobile tools and simple guidance, responding directly to the 63.8% of residents who prioritised recycling correctly. Use data to target contamination hotspots By analysing participation and contamination data, we will focus communications and operational interventions where they are most needed.	Theme 1: Objective A	re3 and Councils Communications Team
We want more opportunities to reuse items instead of throwing them away.	Make the Reuse Shop permanent and continue with pop-up reuse shops as required We will progress proposals for a permanent reuse shop at Bracknell site and continue pop up reuse shops in Reading and Wokingham	Theme 1: Objective A & C	re3 Project Team

	especially at the community centres and other accessible locations to support non-drivers.		
Residents want to understand what happens to their waste (28.5%) and the environmental impact of their actions. 1 in 5 respondents expressed wish to see more educational activities done by the partnership.	Continue offering educational tours, webinars and virtual engagement alongside improved reporting These initiatives build trust and improve recycling quality.	Theme 1: Objective B	re3 Project Team
Over 70% of residents support doorstep reuse collections, particularly for textiles and small electrical items.	Promote third-party doorstep reuse collections. We will work with established third-party providers to actively promote doorstep reuse collections via councils communications	Theme 1: Objective A	re3 and Councils Communications Team
Residents want to recycle more, but value convenience and are concerned about enforced changes at Recycling Centres.	Introduce Black Bag Splitting initiative at Recycling Centres Introduce this initiative through a phased approach, starting with a voluntary model that encourages residents to open and separate black bags on site. Subject to performance and compliance, transition to a mandatory approach if appropriate.	Theme 2: Objective B	re3 Project Team / Contractor
Recycling Centres are highly valued and residents are protective of access, but a significant proportion of residents is open to the opening hours change where convenience is preserved and financial benefits are clear	Optimise the booking system and review opening hours Use booking and usage data to inform adjustments to the opening hours across both sites. This will include redistributing slots to maintain optimal access levels. Trials will be undertaken to identify the best balance, and, if required, restrictions on non-statutory services (such as the trade waste scheme) may be introduced.	Theme 2: Objective B	re3 Project Team / Contractor
You want clearer information at the Recycling Centres	Review Recycling Centre layouts and signage Improve traffic flow, accessibility and on-site guidance to enhance user	Theme 2: Objective B	re3 Operations / Communications

	experience and material separation. Introduce customer charters.		
Residents want to reduce environmental impact and recycle more materials at home, particularly plastic film, in line with national Simpler Recycling requirements.	Upgrade the MRF to manage plastic film. Prepare the Material Recycling Facility to process flexible plastics, enabling compliance with Simpler Recycling and supporting the introduction of plastic film recycling. Explore new forms of treatment particularly for flexible plastics End markets for flexible plastics materials is currently limited. The partnership will monitor emerging treatment technologies to ensure that processing this material is environmentally and financially sustainable. Maximise MRF sorting efficiency and output quality Improve performance in preparation for future legislative requirements and potential infrastructure upgrades.	Theme 3: Objective A	re3 Project Team
Residents support the three councils working together and favour wider collaboration with neighbouring authorities where clear environmental or cost benefits can be demonstrated.	Plan for post-2031 and commission long-term waste growth and infrastructure modelling To ensure facilities remain fit for purpose, the partnership will use waste composition analysis, household growth projections and material flow modelling to forecast needs over the next 10–15 years. This modelling will inform decisions on infrastructure scale, treatment types and capital investment, avoiding over-specification and aligning with national policy on energy-from-waste capacity.	Theme 3: Objective B	re3 Project Director