



Charlotte Tompkins – Head of Waste Services

Why Now



- Environmental and Climate Goals –
- LA's aligning with national targets to achieve Net Zero and support the circular economy.
- Public demand for better services
- New National Legislation – Simpler Recycling (Environment Act 2021), Extended producer responsibility (EPR), Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)
- Addition of Energy from Waste emission to the UK Emissions Trading scheme, adding carbon costs to incineration.



Current Challenges

- Fragmented Services:** Inconsistent collection and recycling standards, varying service delivery models
 - Budget Pressures:** Increasing costs with limited funding, waste disposal costs increasing. Operations costs escalating
 - Low Recycling Rates:** Below national targets in some areas
 - Public Confusion:** Over what can be recycled and how. Wishcycling and Greenwashing
- Enhanced public expectations:** Residents expect clearer and more consistent services and are increasingly concerned about plastic pollution and climate change.



Aspiration and Vision & Principles for Reform

Unified Waste Strategy with a Circular Economy Focus.

Using Digital Transformation to improve Efficiency

Route optimisation, Collections schedules, Data analysis for waste tracking, use of machine learning and AI.

Community-Centric

Education and engagement with common policies and parity of service. Cohesive messaging, use of legislation and policy to promote increased personal responsibility in respect of waste from the household.

Standardisation : Harmonise container types, sizes, collection schedules and waste service policies



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Background

Formation of North Northamptonshire Council (NNC)

On **1st April 2021**, North Northamptonshire Council was established as a **Unitary Authority**, merging the former councils of:

- Corby Borough
- Kettering Borough
- East Northamptonshire District
- Borough Council of Wellingborough
- Parts of Northamptonshire County Council

This replaced the previous **two-tier system** with a **single-tier authority**, streamlining governance and service delivery.

Impact on Waste Services

Under the old system:

- **District/Borough Councils** acted as both **Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs)** – responsible for household waste collection, recycling, and street cleansing, and **Litter Authority** - responsible to ensuring that land is free from litter.
- **Northamptonshire County Council** was the **Waste Disposal Authority (WDA)** – managing landfill sites, Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), and waste disposal contracts.

As a **Unitary Authority**, NNC now oversees **both collection and disposal**, enabling:

- Greater coordination and efficiency across all waste and cleansing operations.
- Unified waste management strategy
- Improved service delivery for over **148,900 households**

Legal Context

- The **Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020** established a **single-tier unitary authority** for North Northamptonshire, effective **1 April 2021**.
- This reform dissolved the former **district and borough councils**

The Order allowed the **new unitary authorities** (North and West Northamptonshire) to **retain existing service delivery arrangements**—including **waste collection and disposal contracts**—from the predecessor councils **temporarily**. This included maintaining varying approaches to chargeable / subsidised services until harmonisation could take place.

- This was to ensure **continuity of services** during the transition and avoid disruption to residents.
- The **Shadow Authorities** were tasked with preparing an **Implementation Plan**, which included decisions on whether to **extend, harmonise, or replace** legacy contracts and operational models

A **Shadow Authority** was formed in 2020 to prepare for the transition, including planning for continuity of waste services. Existing contracts and services were maintained initially, with plans to **harmonize and modernize** services across the new authority area.

Implications for Waste Services:

- Waste collection services continued under the **same terms and providers** as before the reform, even though the governance structure had changed. This transitional flexibility gave the new council time to:
 - Assess performance and cost-effectiveness of inherited contracts
 - Plan for **future harmonisation** of services across the new unitary area
 - Develop a **unified waste strategy**

Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1 - Planning and Consultation

- Stakeholder engagement
- Baseline data collection – TEEP assessment if required
- Review Assets and Infrastructure
- Review existing waste collections policies to identify similarities and gaps

Phase 2 – Design and Plan

- Trial possible systems in select areas
- Plan route optimisation
- Review depot and transfer infrastructure
- Identify risk register and mitigation activities
- Look for interoperability wins e.g bringing waste and environmental crime enforcement out of regulatory into waste services.

Consider activities for up to and including Day 1, plus activities for post Vesting Day



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Risks to consider

- Loss of recycling processing arrangements. (Post Vesting Day)
- Changes to waste legislation.
- Inefficient or unsatisfactory waste collection service & operational disruption
- Increases in the incidents of fly tipping due to policy decisions affecting Waste Services (inc HWRCs)
- Loss of use of Depot or Delivery Points due to accidental damage or inclement weather
- Loss of or insufficient infrastructure
- Failure to meet service delivery Health and Safety requirements
- Closed landfill – Pollution Incident
- Failure to develop a practical and functional Business Continuity Plan
- Failure to pay a contractor for services or incorrect payment.
- Dysfunctional or toxic contract relationships
- Early termination of key contracts
- Contractors' non-compliance with Health & Safety Legislation
- Service users resistant to change

Waste and Environmental Crime Policies

NNC Waste and Recycling Policy

North Northamptonshire Council's Joint Waste and Recycling Policy aims to ensure that refuse and recycling services are provided in an effective and efficient manner to maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste disposed of

NNC Enforcement Policy - Environmental Crime

This schedule sits as part of the Council's Enforcement Policy and contains further detail to set our approach to dealing specifically with environmental crime. It should be noted that the Council operates a Zero tolerance policy in respect of environmental crime.

NNC Strategy for Tackling Litter & Fly-Tipping

This strategy aims to change the behaviour of those who feel it is acceptable to dispose of their waste irresponsibly. Litter and fly-tipping within our area is not only unsightly, but it also has a negative effect on the perception of the locality and mental health of those who live in it. It is also hazardous to the environment.

Opportunities

Community-Level Service Delivery devolution to town and parish councils

Town and parish councils are well-placed to take on:

- **Parks and open spaces maintenance**
- **Street cleaning and minor highways works**
- **Public toilets and local amenities**
- **Community centres and libraries** These services benefit from local knowledge and responsiveness, improving satisfaction and efficiency.
- **Environmental and Climate Action**
- **Delivery of local climate action plans**, including tree planting, biodiversity projects, and community energy schemes.
- **Management of waste minimisation initiatives**, such as local composting or reuse hubs.
- **Emergency and Resilience Planning**
- **Local councils can support community resilience** by coordinating local responses.

Where are we now?

New disposal arrangements in place for all waste streams

All outsourced arrangements ceased or ceasing Summer 2025, all services now delivered in house.

Three rounds of route optimisation initially to address resourcing gaps and to identify further efficiencies that reduce finance pressures on revenue budgets..

Waste Composition Analysis completed

Harmonised garden waste charges and implemented subscription service to all residents. Including a direct debit system.

New arrangement for the provision of HWRCs

Where are we now?

New harmonised organisation structure

All jobs refreshed and graded

Back office working on a single platform shared with customer services across all operating centres.



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How to get in touch

charlotte.tompkins@northnorthants.gov.uk

waste@northnorthants.gov.uk

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/waste>



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