



# **123+ to the top – how Stratford-on-Avon is the leading recycling authority in England**

**Julie Lewis**

**Head of Environmental and  
Neighbourhood Services**

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council**



# Background

Introduced 123+ Aug 2022.

Considered....

- Cost
- Practicality/deliverability
- Time scales
- Climate change
- Future legislation
- Political agendas

- **Reduce carbon footprint**
- Reduce residual waste
- Increase recycling
- Be the market leaders





Food Waste



1  
Every week

Recycling



2  
Every 2 weeks

Waste



3  
Every 3 weeks

Garden Waste



+  
Every 2 weeks

For more information visit [www.stratford.gov.uk/123](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/123)



# Climate Change Impact

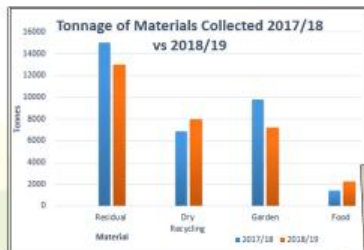
- 3 weekly residual saved 102,796 miles per annum
- Equates to c2,650t of CO<sub>2</sub>e (66 Asian elephants, 1168 great white sharks or 20 blue whales)
- £108k fuel saving per year
- Reduction in residual (already evidenced)
- Rise in recycling (achieved)
- Food being anaerobically digested





# Previous Evidence of 123+ Success Daventry District Council

## Assessing the impact of the campaign



In the first 12 months of operations

Residual Waste  by 23%

Food Waste  by 56%

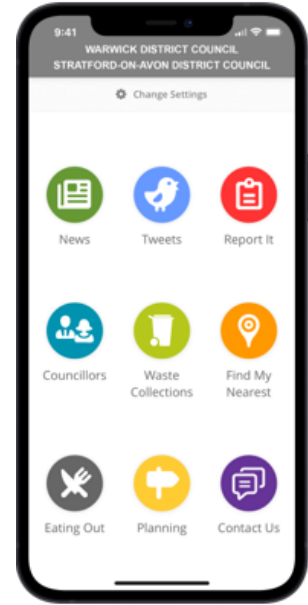
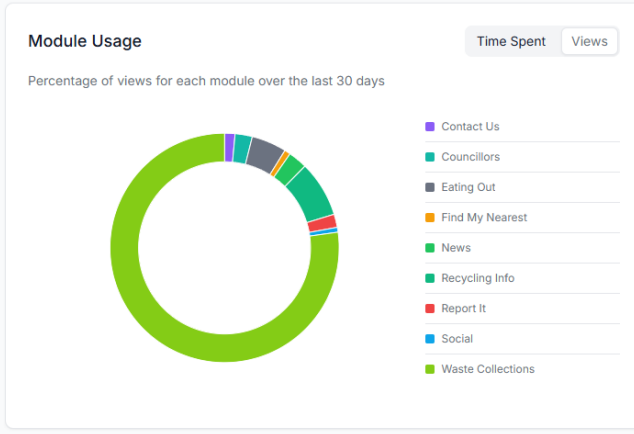
Dry recycling  by 21%



# Communications

## Comprehensive communications plan

- Councillor newsletter
- Councillors briefings
- Bin hangers
- Information booklets
- Recycling Contamination Projects – working with Lixo AI
- Cloud 9 app
- FAQs
- Timing



Total app installs since launch:  
**63,620 (~93% of all households)**





# Social Media Examples



**Keep Maggots Out - Feed Your Food Waste Caddy!**

We know maggots in your bin can be an unpleasant sight, especially during the warmer months. Remember, maggots aren't just a food waste issue - they can also appear in your non-recyclable grey refuse bin.

**Tips on how to avoid maggots in your bin:**

- Put your bin out weekly, even if it is not full!
- Line your caddy with newspaper or bags
- Keep the lid shut tightly
- Rinse your caddy with warm water and vinegar




**THAT SPOOKY OUTFIT DOESN'T BELONG IN THE BIN**

**HAUNT YOUR LOCAL TEXTILE BANK INSTEAD!**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO CHECK OUT RECYCLE NOW'S TEXTILE BANK LOCATOR




**LINE IT YOUR WAY**



Using the liner that suits you, can make food recycling easier and cleaner. And with the cost of living rising, it's great to know you can reuse bags you already have at home!

Got questions? Visit our website for more information and how to get in contact: [www.stratford.gov.uk/contact](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/contact)

How does it work?

- The anaerobic digestion process doesn't need oxygen, so biodegradable bags don't break down properly.
- That's why they remove all liners before turning your food waste into fertiliser - keeping plastic out of farmer's fields.
- Removed liners are sent to an Energy from Waste facility to generate electricity.

**WHAT SHOULD GO IN MY RECYCLING BIN?**

Yes, please!	No, thanks!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aerosols</li> <li>Aluminium Cans, Foil and Trays</li> <li>Bubble Wrap</li> <li>Card and Cardboard</li> <li>Cartons and Tetra Pak</li> <li>Cling Film and Cellophane</li> <li>Crisp Packets</li> <li>Glass</li> <li>Paper</li> <li>Plastic Bags e.g. Carrier Bags, Bread Bags, Salad Bags</li> <li>Plastic Bottles and Tubs</li> <li>Sweet and Chocolate Wrappers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal Foulings</li> <li>Baby/Cleaning Wipes</li> <li>Blister Packs</li> <li>CDs or DVDs</li> <li>Car Batteries</li> <li>Coat Hangers</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Games and Toys</li> <li>Garden Tools and Equipment</li> <li>Gas Bottles</li> <li>Greaseproof Paper</li> <li>Plastic Sachets e.g. Pet Food or Baby Food Pouches</li> <li>Shredded Paper</li> <li>Wallpaper</li> <li>Wax Candles</li> </ul>

**Textiles, Small Wired Electrical Equipment and Household Batteries**

Please place items in separate tied carrier bags and leave them on top of or next to your wheellie bin (not inside). Items must be small enough to fit in a standard carrier bag.

**Still unsure?**

Check using our A-Z recycling checker tool! Download our free app, or scan the QR code or visit: [www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z)





**WHAT WENT INTO YOUR RECYCLING BIN? MARCH 2026**

Our Material Recycling Facility (MRF) works hard to sort out contamination from recycling bins. Take a look at what items contaminated our recycling in March 2026.



**Non Recyclable Material: 13.16%**

- Nappies & Sanitary waste
- Clinical waste
- Hazardous waste
- Sand
- Building materials
- Wood
- Liquids
- Hard Plastics

**Food waste: 0.43%**

**Textiles: 0.50%**

**Recyclable Material: 86.1%**

**Unsure what should go into your recycling bin?**

Check our A-Z recycling tool to make sure you can recycle it!  
Download our free app, or scan the QR code or visit: [www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z)



**PAUSE. CHECK. RECYCLE.**

In June, nearly 16% of our recycling was contaminated with items that shouldn't have been there.

Let's do better together!

Before you recycle, make sure the item is clean, dry and belongs in the bin.

What goes in?	What should stay out?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean &amp; Dry Paper and Card</li> <li>Plastic Bags, Wrapping &amp; Traps</li> <li>Clean Tins, Cans, Foil &amp; Aerosols</li> <li>Clean Plastic Bottles, Pots &amp; Tubs</li> <li>Glass Jars &amp; Glass Bottles, with or without lids</li> <li>Tetra Paks &amp; Cartons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clothing &amp; Textiles</li> <li>Food &amp; Green Waste</li> <li>Sanitary Waste &amp; Nappies</li> <li>Clinical Waste</li> <li>Hazardous Waste</li> <li>Sand &amp; Building Materials</li> <li>Wood</li> <li>Liquids</li> </ul>

**Not sure if it belongs in the recycling?**

Check using our A-Z recycling checker tool! Download our free app, or scan the QR code or visit: [www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/a-z)





## SHERBOURNE RECYCLING

---

- Sherbourne Recycling was established in 2021, but the journey started way back in 2016.
- To develop, operate, and maintain a new state of the art materials recycling facility in Coventry.
- Partnership of eight local authorities make up the company structure.



# LATEST WASTE TECHNOLOGY

## Samurai®

- The Samurai® technology is powered by an artificial intelligence which identifies distinguishing features in the same way as the human eye
- Recognises material in dirty and constantly changing conditions
- Generates essential data from the material stream composition
- Operates according to a pre-determined order of task hierarchy
- Up to 70 picks per minute, nearly double the average pick rate (30-40 picks per minute) of a human sorter
- Up to 95% efficiency of targeted product recognition



### Key Facts

- 12,000m<sup>2</sup> purpose-built state-of-the-art facility
- 175,000 tonnes of waste per annum
- 18 sorting robots
- 14 optical sorters
- 14 AI units
- Ballistics, screens and balers are also used

ITEMS WE CAN COLLECT

<b>Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays</b>
<b>Glass jars and bottles</b>
<b>Tins, clean cans, clean foil and aerosols</b>
<b>Clean, dry paper and card</b>
<b>Tetra Pak and cartons</b>
<b>Carrier bags, fruit and vegetable bags, frozen food bags, bread bags, cereal bags</b>
<b>Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, cakes, ice cream, and chewing gum wrappers</b>
<b>Crisp and snack packets, coffee bags</b>
<b>Removeable film, lids, plastic sleeves for bottles and jars</b>
<b>Multipacks, toilet and kitchen roll, magazine and newspaper wrapping</b>
<b>Bubble wrap and cling film (maximum 1m sections)</b>
<b>Cheese, fish, and meat wrapping</b>
<b>Fruit and vegetable net bags (once empty)</b>
<b>Plant Pots (subject to size)</b>

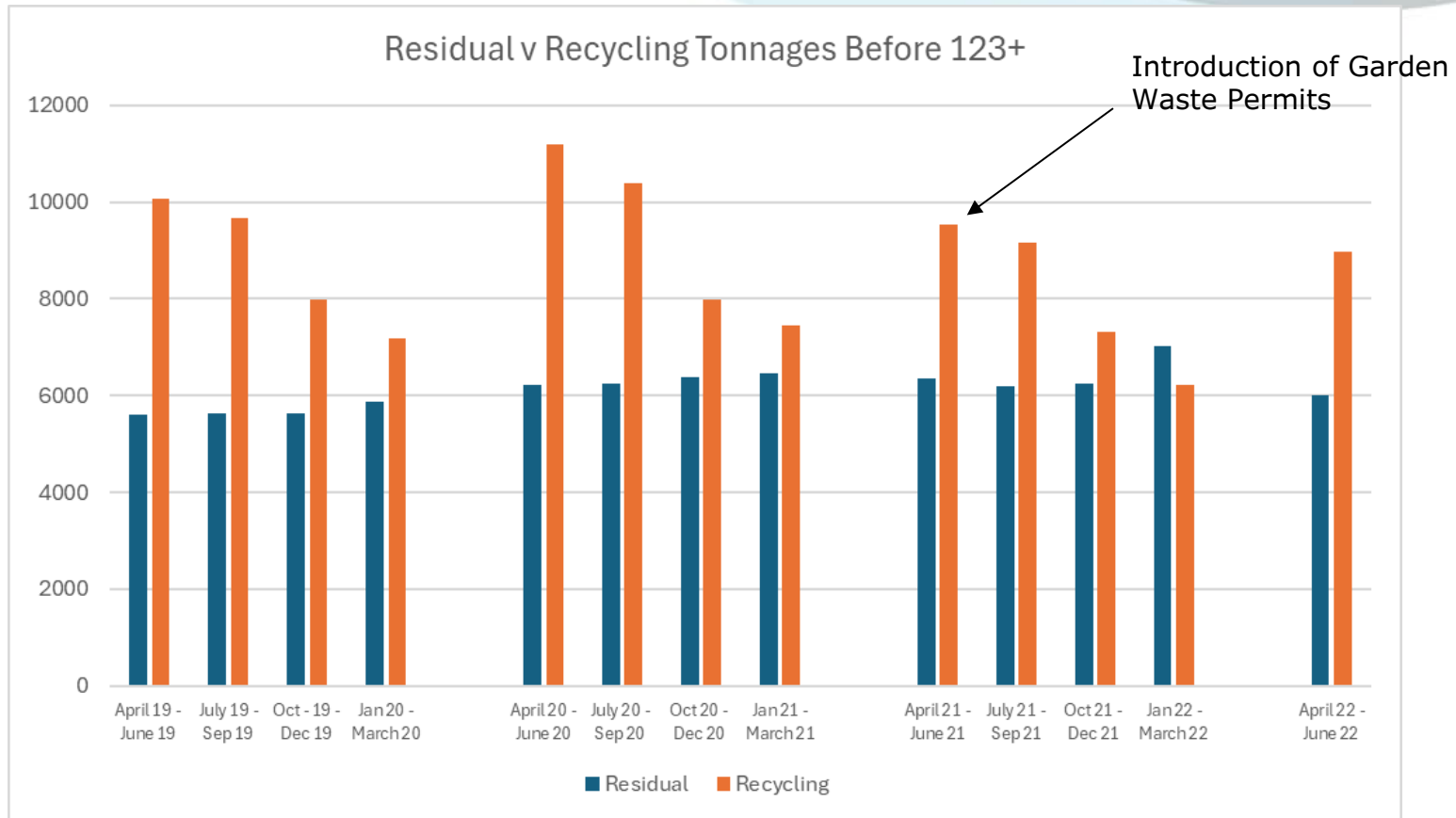


# The Results

- Commenced Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 2022
- Service in steady state after 4 months
- Accepted well by public – very few complaints
- New Defra guidance about food waste already met!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Food waste going to AD
- 1<sup>st</sup> loads went to Sherbourne MRF Aug 2023
- £2m+ new income for garden waste subscriptions per year (over 75%)
- Food tonnage direct correlation with reduction in residual



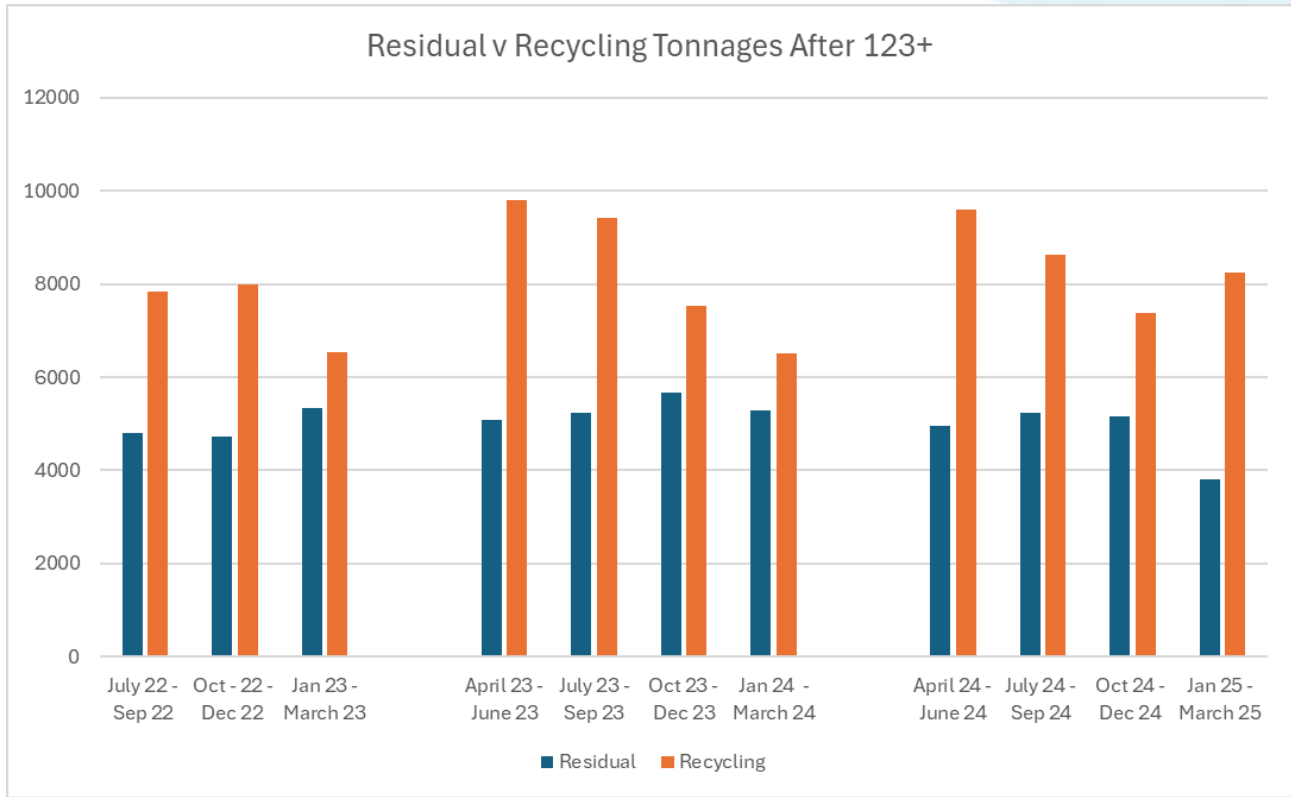
# TONNAGES BEFORE 123+ WAS INTRODUCED





# TONNAGES AFTER 123+ WAS INTRODUCED

Residual v Recycling Tonnes After 123+



Residual decreased by approx. 18% after introduction of 123+



Since the introduction of 123+ we've collected over 18,000 tonnes of food waste



# Successes

## Trophy crowns the recycling efforts of Stratford district



All smiles as they receive the award. Picture by Marcus Miggins 2326003MMR

- In 2023/2024 Stratford-on-Avon District Council had the third highest recycling rate in England at 61.0%.
- **Stratford-on-Avon District Council has recorded the highest household waste recycling rate in England for 2024/25.**



# Successes

- The Warwickshire authority achieved a recycling rate of 63.9%, placing it at the top of the latest annual local authority waste statistics released by Defra.
- Organic waste accounted for 64.0% of its total household recycling tonnage, the highest proportion of any authority in 2024/25.
- The figure comes amid an overall decline in recycling performance in England, hitting 43.8% in 2024/25, down 0.2 percentage points from 44.0% in 2023/24.



# Successes

- “This result reflects the commitment of our residents, who recycle responsibly every week, and the dedication our waste collection partners, Biffa, and our teams who work hard behind the scenes to deliver a high-performing service. It shows what can be achieved when a community and council work together to reduce waste and protect the environment.”
- “Introducing separate food waste collections for all households has the potential to alter the trajectory of our household recycling performance and at the same time help to provide a source of renewable energy to heat and power our homes.”