



Northumberland
County Council

Food Waste Update



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Summary: Pilot Food Waste Kerbside Collection and Home Compost Bins

OSC Received report June 2022 on plans to conduct pilot weekly kerbside food waste collections and for home compost bins for food waste in rural communities

Kerbside collection offered to 5,000 properties at 4 locations in central and SE Northumberland

Home compost food waste bins offered to households at 3 rural villages

Pilot data to confirm modelled assumptions on household kerbside food waste collections and explore the feasibility of home compost bins for use by householders in rural locations

Prepare response to Resources and Waste Strategy, mandatory weekly food waste obligations



Food Waste Kerbside Collection

DEFRA commitment to food waste collections from April 2026 subject to new burdens funding from central government.

In next 12 months, using modelling to shape future strategy for food waste collection in Northumberland.

This will confirm the number of food waste rounds, vehicles, collection staff, and containers.

Modelled collection rounds will be subject to Technical, Environmental and Economically Practicable (*TEEP) assessment rural areas.

*TEEP- Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable: "Where necessary... to facilitate or improve recovery, waste shall be collected separately if technically, environmentally and economically practicable and shall not be mixed with other waste or other material with different properties."

Food Waste Kerbside Collections

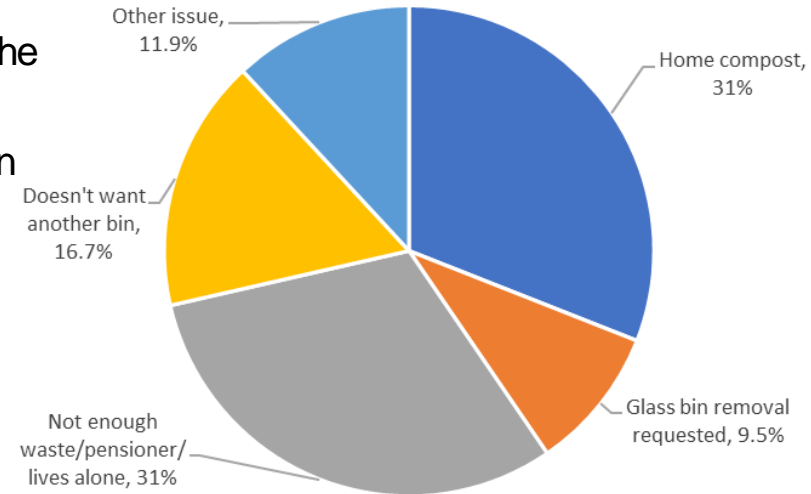
- Commenced November 2022
- Areas

Area	Collection day
Morpeth/Longhirst/Hebron/Ulgham	Monday
Morpeth Stobhill	Tuesday
Bedlington	Wednesday
Pegswood	Thursday

- Households received an initial warm up letter announcing the upcoming trial start date and what to expect
- Followed with bin delivery (5L caddy and 23L outside bin), first roll of compostable liners and a leaflet instructing on how to use the service.
- Participating households present bin weekly on days shown above.

Initial response to trial

The option to opt out of the food waste collection was provided to residents, this could be done via the online form or through the customer contact centre. Through the analysis of the submissions we managed to obtain an overview of why residents were refusing to participate in the service.



Collection and disposal

Collected with one purpose-built vehicle, on hire.
Tips into skip located at SUEZ West Sleekburn site.

Two schools and County hall receiving collections.

Disposal: GAP Organics Wardley Biogas facility, where it is converted into biogas and a fertiliser substitute through anaerobic digestion.

The food waste sent for disposal has reportedly been low in contamination, and no issues raised by the processor onsite.

Budget secured for continuation of pilot until 2024/25



Set out rates

Area	Average set out rate
Morpeth/Longhirst/Hebron/Ulgham	54.8%
Morpeth Stobhill	48.6%
Bedlington	40.8%
Pegswood	44.6%

Key findings so far:

- Overall set out rate of 47.2%
- Average weight of 2.84 kg collected per week from actively participating households
- Average weight of 1.4 kg collected per week for all households in trial area issued with a bin
- Very low levels of contamination
- Negligible missed collections and reliable replacement caddy liners (bags)
- Positive feedback is being received from residents participating in the service – overall user satisfaction levels are still to be determined via customer survey activity later this year

Residual waste impacts

Area	Tonnage diverted from Residual Waste (November 2022 to April 2023)
Morpeth/Longhirst/Hebron/Ulgham	32.66t
Morpeth Stobhill	32.76t
Bedlington	33.84t
Pegswood	37.1t

- In total 136.36t of food waste has been diverted from residual waste (equivalent to 13 full refuse collection vehicles)

Future Options and Next Steps

- Anticipated significant pushback on bag use but experience to date confirmed by WRAP that residents value bags for cleanliness and tidiness. Keeping close eye on usage for future budget.
- Explore feasibility of alternative bag types – starch more expensive
- Promote awareness and convenience and increase participation in pilot areas
- Consider more communal food waste storage and collection solutions
- Market research into alternative food waste containers and vehicle types
- Continue to run the pilot & monitor longer term performance levels/trends to support modelling and business case for roll-out from April 2026

Home Compost Trial

- Over 40 households currently taking part with more bins to be distributed at Gilsland, Elsdon and Chatton, nr. Wooler
- Majority of trial participants have noticed the contents of their residual waste bin have decreased significantly.
- Shortlisted for 'The Best Local Authority Recycling Initiative' at the Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management

