

# Fenland Recycling Plan

## Fenland Recycling Plan 2026

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# Fenland Recycling Plan

## 1. Executive Summary

Fenland District Council is committed to delivering efficient, cost-effective waste and recycling services that meet statutory requirements while supporting environmental sustainability and reducing the burden on taxpayers. This plan outlines the district's current performance, demographic trends, and future strategies for waste management.

### Population and Growth

- Fenland has an estimated population of 104,595 (ONS, 2023), with growth projected to reach 113,200 by 2031.
- The district is predominantly rural with four main market towns: Chatteris, March, Wisbech, and Whittlesey.
- Deprivation, an aging population and significant housing development will influence future waste volumes.

### Current Waste Performance

- In 2023/24, Fenland produced 41,432 tonnes of household waste, averaging 396 kg per person, higher than the England average (337 kg).
- Recycling and composting totalled 16,586 tonnes (158 kg per person), above the national average (148 kg).
- Residual waste analysis shows 36.9% food waste, which can be targeted by the new food waste service in 2026.

### Key Services

- Kerbside Collections: Two-stream system for dry recyclables and residual waste.
- Garden Waste: Chargeable service with over 24,500 subscribers and 97% satisfaction.

- Food Waste: Weekly collections start summer 2026, processed via anaerobic digestion.
- Bulky Waste: Affordable collection for large household items.
- Commercial Waste: Flexible, competitive services for SMEs, schools, and charities.

### The Future

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): Key funding stream, ensuring producers cover packaging waste costs, reducing reliance on local taxation.
- Quality Focus: Ongoing campaigns, inspections, and community engagement to maintain and improve recycling quality.
- Fleet Planning: Potential additional collection vehicle anticipated from 2028/29 to meet property growth predictions.
- Education & Training: Continued investment in staff training and public awareness initiatives.

### Environmental Impact

- Introduction of food waste recycling can significantly reduce landfill and carbon emissions.
- Garden waste continues to be composted locally via windrow systems.
- Commercial waste services help businesses comply with legal recycling obligations.



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# Fenland Recycling Plan

## 2. Introduction

The Council provides recycling and waste services to meet statutory requirements. These services are provided as effectively and efficiently as possible, in line with new Extended Producer Responsibilities, making use of technology and modern ways of working with the aim of reducing the burden on local taxpayers of these statutory services.

This document describes the socio-demographics of the local authority area, together with current municipal waste management services and performance specific to Fenland District Council.

## 3. Fenland – Population and Socio-Demographics

Fenland's four market towns, Chatteris, March, Wisbech and Whittlesey, are the main service, commercial and social centres and have strong historic character. There are about 800 listed buildings and 10 defined conservation areas. There are 29 villages, often comprising of a 'parent' village with one or two nearby hamlets with houses stretching out along a road or drainage bank. Over 70% of residents live in market towns, and most future growth will be directed to the towns, but the villages are facing intense development pressures. As of 2021, Fenland was the 12th least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around one person living on each football pitch-sized area of land<sup>1</sup>.

The population of Fenland is estimated at 104,595 (ONS, mid 2023 estimates). The population size increased by 7.6%, from 2011 to 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%).

The Fenland population makes up 9-10% of that of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which is approximately 1,095,000 people.

For Fenland, census data showed that between 2011 and 2021, there has been an increase of 21.1% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 3.4% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 6.5% in children aged under 15 years<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [How the population changed where you live, Census 2021 - ONS](#)

<sup>2</sup> [How the population changed where you live, Census 2021 - ONS](#)

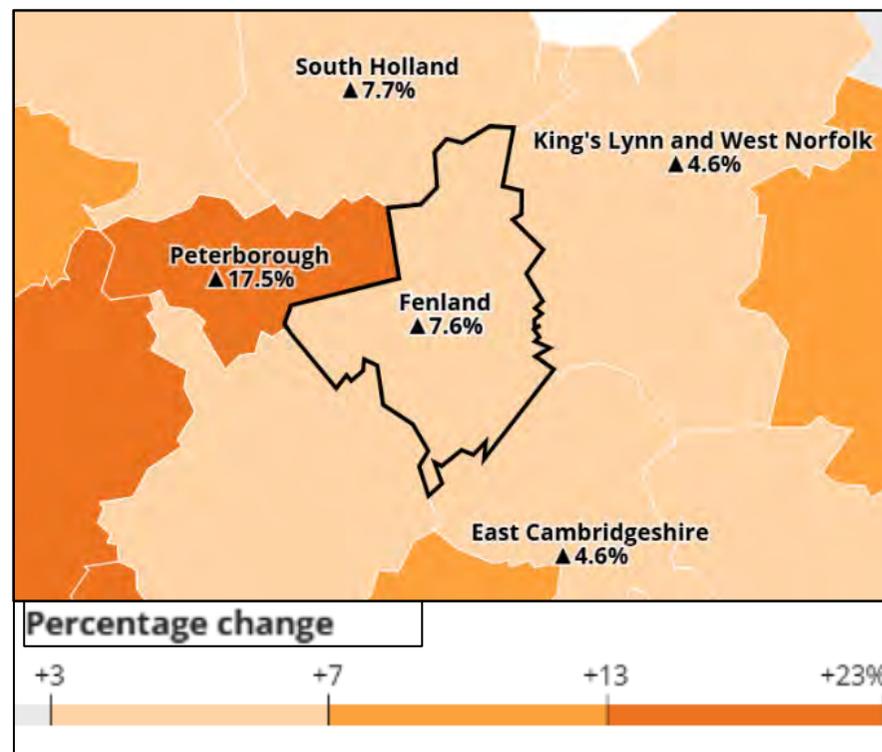


Figure 1: Population Rise in Fenland and Neighbouring Authorities 2011–2021<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [ONS](#)



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## 3.1. Predicted Growth

Outside of Local Government Reorganisation considerations, the Fenland area is projected for significant population growth by 2031, with estimates suggesting an increase of around 15-20% (over 15,000 people) from recent years, reaching potentially 113,200 residents. This is driven largely by new housing in the market towns, though this growth sees some age groups (50s) reducing but with overall older and retired populations increasing<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 1. Housing Forecast to 2031**

Area	Total Forecast Dwellings (2025–2031)	Current Annual Requirement (2025)
Fenland	5,500 <sup>5</sup>	593
Peterborough	~7,500	~1,250 <sup>6</sup>
Cambridgeshire	~21,000 <sup>7</sup>	3,889

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been earmarked for development by Central Government and are expected to have some of the highest housing increases in the country. Dwelling projections are used in calculations to predict waste growth.

## 3.2. Demographic Profile for Fenland

<sup>4</sup> [District-level-summaries\\_Fenland.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> Based upon historic 550 properties per annum.

Fenland		
1	Rural Residents	42%
2	Cosmopolitans	0%
3	Ethnicity Central	0%
4	Multicultural Metropolitans	2%
5	Urbanites	16%
6	Suburbanites	14%
7	Constricted City Dwellers	6%
8	Hard-Pressed Living	19%

**Table 2 Demographic Profile for Fenland (OAC)**

The Output Area Classification (OAC) is a hierarchical geodemographic tool that groups areas with similar characteristics. A widely used version is the 2011 OAC, which has 8 groups.

Below are the 8 groups for this version of the Output Area Classification with their corresponding numbers and general descriptions (FDC Percentage):

- 1. Rural Residents (42%):** The population in this group lives in less densely populated rural areas, often in large, owned detached properties. Residents are likely to work in agriculture, forestry, or fishing, have multiple vehicles, and form older, married, and well-educated communities with a high proportion of people providing unpaid care.
- 2. Cosmopolitans (0%):** This group's population primarily lives in densely populated urban areas, frequently in flats or communal establishments, with private renting being more common than the national average.

<sup>6</sup> Peterborough's target includes a high proportion of affordable housing.

<sup>7</sup> Total for 2023–2041 period is 70k; 2031 targets are interpreted from 2011/2023 bases.



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- 3. Ethnicity Central (0%):** Predominantly located in the dense central areas of London and other inner urban areas across the UK, this population group is characterised by a strong ethnic diversity.
- 4. Multicultural Metropolitans (2%):** The population is concentrated in larger urban conurbations, typically in the transitional zones between urban centres and suburban areas.
- 5. Urbanites (16%):** Residents are most likely located in urban areas in southern England, also found in less dense concentrations within large urban areas elsewhere in the UK.
- 6. Suburbanites (14%):** This group is primarily located on the outskirts of urban areas.
- 7. Constrained City Dwellers (6%):** This group is generally associated with areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage.
- 8. Hard-Pressed Living (19%):** Areas in this group tend to have high relative levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

## 4. Waste Arising and Performance

### 4.1. General

From Defra's approved figures, Fenland produced 41,432 tonnes of household waste in 2023/24<sup>8</sup>, which is around 11% of the total amount of household waste produced in the partnership area in this year and a total of 396 Kg per person. For comparison, in England in 2023/24 the average household waste generated was 337kg per person.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough created a total of 379,458 tonnes of Household Waste in 2023/24 and of this, 180,322 tonnes was recycled (47.5%). Fenland's collected recycling and compostable waste of 16,586 tonnes contributed to this

total, 158 Kg per person. For comparison, the average amount recycled or composted per person in England was approximately 148Kg.

Fenland therefore has a higher-than-average overall waste production per person but also produces more recycling per person than the average.

### 4.2. Waste Analysis Residual Waste (Green Bins)

The average composition and arising of kerbside residual waste in Fenland is shown in Table 3 and Figure 2 below. The results from each demographic group have been weighted to produce an average which is representative of Fenland as a whole.

**Table 3: Composition and Arisings of Kerbside Residual Waste (Green Bins) in Fenland.**

Primary Category	Composition (%)	Arisings (kg/household/week)
Paper	8.2%	0.60
Card	2.2%	0.16
Plastic film	6.6%	0.48
Dense plastic	3.9%	0.28
Textiles	3.9%	0.29
Sanitary	6.2%	0.45
Combustibles	7.5%	0.55
Non Combustible	6.3%	0.46
Glass	3.2%	0.23
Ferrous	1.5%	0.11
Non ferrous	0.7%	0.05
Food	36.9%	2.69
Garden and other organic	10.5%	0.76
WEEE	0.8%	0.06
Hazardous household waste	0.6%	0.04
Fines	0.9%	0.07
PPE waste	0.1%	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7.29</b>

<sup>8</sup> [Local authority collected waste management - annual results - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results)

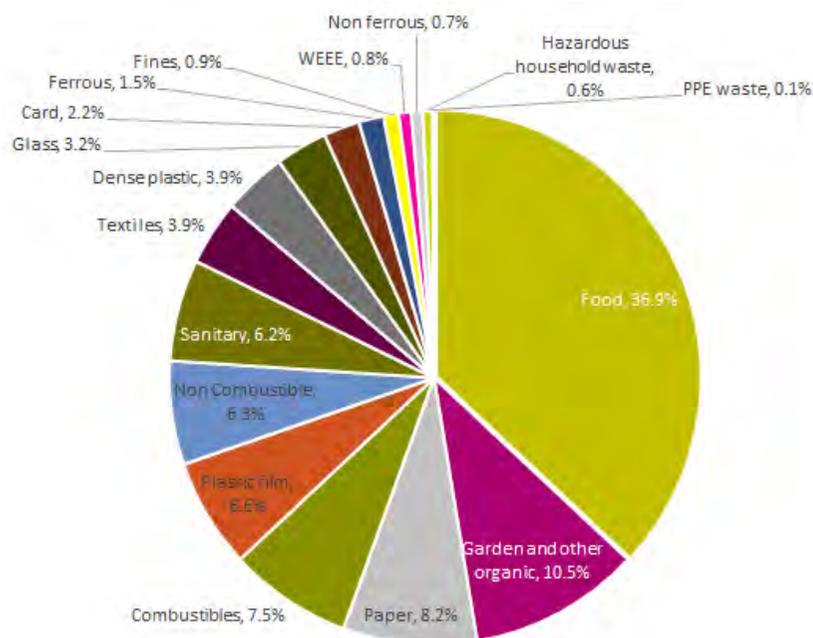


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Figure 2: Composition of kerbside residual waste in Fenland (%)



Food waste made up the highest proportion of the residual waste in Fenland, making up 36.9% of the residual waste analysed. Garden and other organic made up 10.5% of the overall composition, including 3.2% leafy garden waste and 2.4% soil, followed by paper (8.2%), combustibles (7.5%), plastic film (6.6%), non-combustibles (6.3%) and sanitary (6.2%).

### 4.3. Recyclable Materials in Residual Waste

Overall, 15.2% of the residual waste analysed was recyclable within provided kerbside services and more broadly, almost a third, (30.4%) of the residual waste analysed was 'widely recyclable' either through kerbside collections, bring banks or at local HRCs and this is before we consider the food (36.9%) which will be recyclable from summer 2026.

### 4.4. Blue Bin Collection Material Composition

Regular sampling of the materials collected in Blue Bins provides data on the composition of these materials. During 2024/25 a total of 9,016 tonnes of materials were collected, of which 7,573 tonnes (84%) were good quality recycling materials and 1,444 tonnes (16%) were rejected.

Table 4: Composition and Arisings of Blue Bin Collected Material 2024-25.

	%	Kg/hh/wk	Fenland Tonnage
Aluminium	2.2%	0.08	194
Steel	3.1%	0.12	282
Glass	22.4%	0.85	2020
Plastics	10.9%	0.42	984
Paper	36.0%	1.37	3249
Cardboard	9.4%	0.36	844
Rejects	16.0%	0.61	1444
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.81</b>	<b>9016</b>

Of these 1,444 tonnes of incorrect material, the major rejected materials were nappies, materials contaminated with food waste or liquids, waste electrical equipment, textiles and general black bag waste.



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## 5. Performance of Waste Collection Schemes

### 5.1. Overview of Services Within Fenland

Fenland District Council provides the following waste collection services:

- District wide two-stream kerbside waste collection service for households providing recycling for Paper, Card, Metals, Glass and Plastics alongside residual waste collections,
- Chargeable 2 weekly collection of Garden Waste through annual subscription,
- Free Weekly Food Waste Collection Service from end of May 2026,
- A chargeable Bulky Waste Collection Service is provided for bulky household items including domestic fridges and freezers, and furniture containing Persistent Organic Pollutants,
- Free sharps and needle collection points in cooperation with local pharmacies,
- Free home dialysis waste collection service,
- Free two weekly Hygiene Waste collection service,
- Textiles bring sites across the district,
- Waste and recycling collection services for schools, charity shops and care homes, and
- Competitive commercial waste recycling, food waste and residual waste collections for small to medium sized enterprises via bins and sacks.

### 5.2. Fenland's Garden Waste Service

Since 2017 the garden waste service has been a chargeable service on a cost recovery only basis. As a result, the service has reliably been amongst the cheapest garden waste services in the Eastern Region.

The service has generated a total of £9.57 million from 2017 to 2025 to cover the cost of providing the service. Currently more than 24,500 properties subscribe to the service on an annual basis and reported customer satisfaction with the service is 97%<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> 2024 data via online public consultation shared with all customers via email.

### 5.3. Commercial Waste, Recycling and Food Waste Strategy

Fenland District Council offers a chargeable commercial waste collection service offering dry recycling, food waste and general waste services for small to medium sized businesses via wheeled bins and sacks to allow businesses to comply with their legal duties to recycle their waste.

The majority of schools within the district are offered a dry recycling collection service in line with household collections. Educational talks on the service and waste issues are offered to the schools as part of the service.

At present the service provides waste and recycling collections to more than 600 businesses and generates income to support other services.

The main commercial waste policies are:

- District wide service: Three-stream waste collection service for small to medium sized enterprises providing recycling for food, paper, card, metals, glass and plastics alongside residual waste collections.
- Competitive pricing: Great value service, with no hidden fees and convenient payment terms, with payment online in advance or invoices with up to 45 days to pay.
- Flexible collections: Daily, weekly, fortnightly or ad-hoc (subject to location)
- No long-term contracts: Flexible service with no long-term tie-ins.
- Compliant with waste legislation: Separate collections for general waste, a choice of recycling materials and food waste to help businesses stay compliant with their waste and environmental obligations.
- Range of container sizes: From sacks and 23 litre caddies to 1100L wheeled bins for all 3 waste streams.
- Documentation: Up to date contracts and Duty of Care information easily available online.
- Reliable local team: Advice and support when needed, including commercial recycling champion training.



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- Accessible: Where feasible services will be offered to all SME businesses across the district.
- Discounts: Available for customers receiving all 3 waste streams; for schools and charities, payment in advance, and promotions for new and long-standing businesses (in line with agreed fees and charges).
- Clear terms and conditions: Costs are kept low for all by removing services where invoices are unpaid and making reasonable charges for additional waste or return visits.
- Investment: Any profits made are used to reduce the costs of other services provided.
- Houses of Multiple Occupancy: Bespoke services are offered to HMO landlords to ensure compliance.
- Education: School services are the same as that received by local households.

Nationally we are generating an estimated 191-222 million tonnes of waste each year. Industrial and commercial waste accounts for around 23% of total waste. Neither landfilling nor incineration provides sustainable long-term solutions for dealing with the level of waste on this scale and businesses are required by law to recycle more of their waste<sup>10</sup>.

## 5.4. Bring Sites

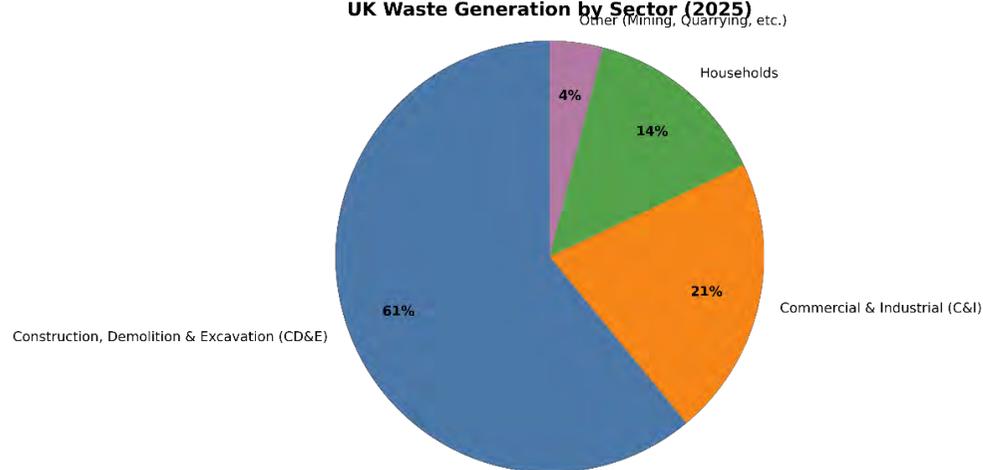
Bring sites for textiles and shoes are provided across Fenland in cooperation with the Salvation Army and other contractors. These are well used and allow customers to recycle their unwanted clothes if they're unable to get to local charity shops.

## 5.5. Kerbside Dry Recycling Collection

Fenland District Council provides a co-mingled kerbside collection of dry recyclables. During 2024/25 a total of 9,016 tonnes of materials were collected, of which 7,573 tonnes (84%) were good quality recycling materials and 1,444 tonnes (16%) were unsuitable for recycling.

The graph below shows the dry recycling tonnage collected at kerbside in Fenland each year 2013 to 2024.

UK Waste Generation by Sector (2025)



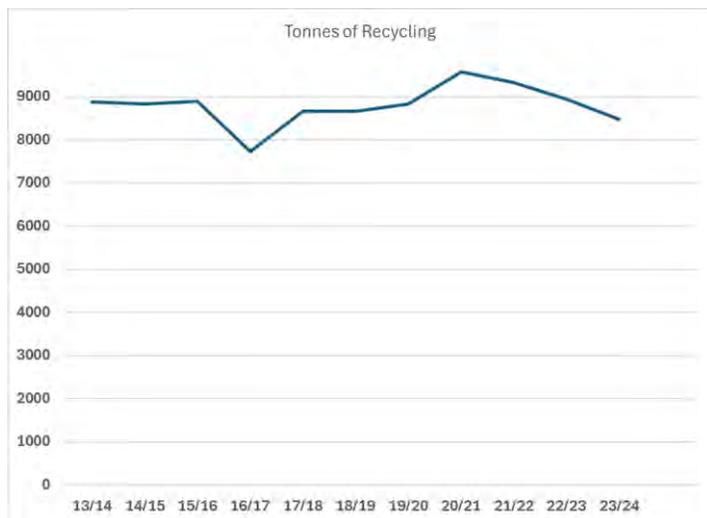
<sup>10</sup> [Simpler recycling: workplace recycling in England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-recycling-workplace-recycling-in-england)



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Allowing for the highs of the pandemic, the average amount each year has remained over 8,000 tonnes until the recently seen impacts of Extended Producer Responsibilities.

**Table 5. Estimated Capture Rates 2021.**

Dry Recycling Captured (Tonnes)	Annual Tonnage Residual Bins	Recycling Bins	Capture Rate
Recyclable Paper	350	2860	89%
Recyclable Card	420	1120	73%
Tetra-Pak	20	50	71%
Plastic Bottles, Tubs, Pots and Trays	590	1040	64%
Glass	650	2900	82%
Steel Cans	190	290	60%
Aluminium Cans and Foil	160	210	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2380</b>	<b>8470</b>	<b>78%</b>

The Data from the most recent waste analysis (2021) provided estimates of capture rates for the key materials. This shows that capture rates for plastics and metal cans were lower than other materials. This prompted promotions targeting these specific materials.

The main Dry Recycling policies are:

- Households must have the material out for collection on the curtilage of the property before 6 am on their collection day.
- The council accepts extra recycling in clear FDC sacks along with loose cardboard next to the bin.
- Additional dry recycling bins are available to larger households.
- Charges apply for bin deliveries.
- Recycling crews carry out a cursory inspection of bins during collection and where there is obvious contamination details are logged in-cab along with a sticker being placed onto the bin.
- Bins containing incorrect materials are not collected, incorrect materials must be removed from the bin, and the bin will be emptied on the next scheduled collection.
- Incidents of incorrectly sorted bins are recorded on the in-cab system with the reason for non-collection highlighted and available to the customer via the website.
- Letters are then sent out where there are repeat issues with information on how to make the most of the waste services provided.
- Further details can be found in the Service Standards [here](#).

## 5.6. Extended Producer Responsibility Payments (EPR)

The Council receives payment from PackUK for all packaging waste collected within the recycling and residual waste. EPR is aimed at making the producer responsible for the costs of collection and treatment of waste packaging rather than this being paid through local taxation.

This legislation does create a requirement on the Council to provide effective and efficient services. These will be assessed on an annual basis using measures that



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will be determined later in 2026. This plan is designed in anticipation of these requirements for quality materials and good customer communications.

## 5.7. Maintaining the Quality of Materials

The team operates to a Recycling Action Plan that is agreed on an annual basis with portfolio holders and focusses on improving the quality of materials presented for recycling through ongoing publicity, advising customers what can and cannot go into their recycling containers, often in partnership with RECAP partners:

- Calendars that are delivered twice a year, and annual recycling information leaflets are included within Council Tax bills and local parish newsletters.
- A specific Fenland Bin telephone app or similar online information.
- Up to date information available via the FDC [website](#).
- Regular campaigns are promoted through social media and press releases.
- Community champions are offered training and experience through the Getting It Sorted Volunteer project work linked to Street Pride.
- Additional recycling specific bin inspections take place on a regular basis with all customers left information leaflets and a highly visible 'thank you' tag for those where the recycling is of good quality.
- Recycling roadshows and presentations at community events across the district and as part of RECAP partnership promotions.
- Material and contaminant specific promotions in partnership with Cambridgeshire RECAP authorities and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) contractor.
- Supply of information to landlords and licensed HMOs.
- Letters sent to residents explaining the service following incidents of incorrect materials being presented.
- Training of My Fenland staff to ensure accurate and consistent information is provided to residents.
- Collection staff carrying service information.
- Adverts on the service in local publications.
- Training collection staff on types of materials acceptable for reprocessing and not to collect materials that are either contaminated or not part of the collection service.

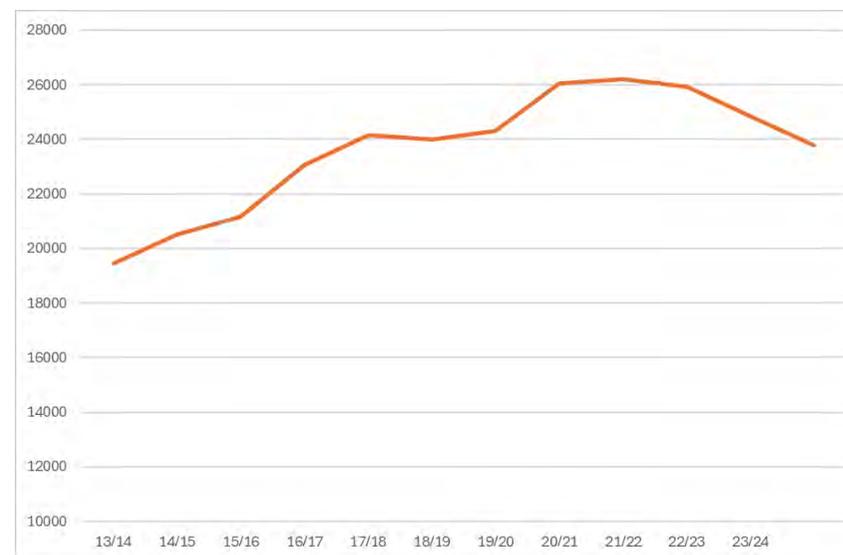
## 5.8. Garden Waste Service

A chargeable garden waste service provides a simple online application process for card and direct debit payments, along with cash/card options at local PayPoint locations, the service aims to maintain a cost-effective service that covers all its own costs at a reasonable fee. The collections are 2-weekly throughout the year and do not include food waste. The service terms and conditions can be found [here](#).

The materials are processed through local Windrow facilities; a long, piled row of shredded organic material (grass, leaves, branches) composted aerobically (with oxygen) in the open air, forming a large, managed compost heap that naturally breaks down over weeks/months into soil-enriching compost, requiring regular turning for aeration and moisture control.

## 5.9. Refuse Collection

The graph below shows the total refuse (non-recycling or compost) tonnage collected in Fenland each year 2013 to 2024.



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## 5.10. Food Waste Service

Commencing in summer 2026, the weekly food waste service will be offered to all domestic premises with flats and communal bin collections coming onboard later in 2026.

Caddies will be made available to all properties and customers have the choice to use the service. The collected materials will avoid landfill or energy from waste (Efw) by going for anaerobic digestion (AD). This is a natural, oxygen-free process where microbes break down organic matter into valuable biogas (methane/CO<sub>2</sub>) for heat and electricity, plus nutrient-rich digestate (biofertilizer). Collected food waste is pre-treated, heated (pasteurized), then fed into sealed tanks (digesters) where bacteria ferment it, producing energy and leaving behind a soil improver, offering a green alternative to landfill/Efw and reducing potential for greenhouse gas production.

## 5.11. Bulky Items Collection

The Council offers a reasonably priced service for the collection of larger household items for disposal. Fridges and white goods are recycled. Customers are encouraged where items are of suitable quality to use local charities and charity shops as a first point of contact.

## 5.12. Street Sweepings

All mechanical street sweepings collected are processed by contractors appointed by the County Council to remove stones, grit and other materials that can be reused/recycled prior to the materials being landfilled.

## 5.13. Fly-Tipping

Where possible tyres, metals, fridges and other materials recovered through flytipping are recycled by the County Council's contractors.

## 5.14. Training

The Council runs most waste services in Fenland and ensures they provide selected and relevant staff with training on:

- Recycling awareness.
- Health and Safety training.
- HGV license.
- Working with Asbestos.
- Forklift driving.
- Supervisor apprenticeship.
- Workshop Technician apprenticeship.

## 5.15. Fleet Forward Plan

The Council updates a comprehensive fleet forward plan on an annual basis that allows frontline vehicles to have a minimum of a 9-year use. Built into this plan are key points where property growth levels are anticipated to overrun existing resource.

At present with 550 properties expected each year and population growth of 15,000 by 2031, without other interventions, the impact of legislation or LGR, an additional frontline vehicle and crew is anticipated from 2028/29.



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