

What happened to Surrey's waste

2020-21



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Foreword



Over the past few years, the environment has become increasingly important to many people. News headlines and world events have increased awareness of the impact of individual actions on the planet, and that includes the waste that is produced.

For Surrey residents to be motivated to do the right thing with their waste, it's crucial that they trust the systems that are in place to treat and recycle it. This Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) report

looks at the waste produced in Surrey in 2020-21 – how much of it there was, what happened to it and where it went to be treated and recycled. The aim is to give residents the confidence to know that their efforts to reduce waste and recycle more are making a difference, not just to them personally, but to their families, friends and to the planet.

This report covers a year that was like no other in recent history. Throughout 2020-21, the coronavirus pandemic made a big impact on how people lived their lives. Many people were at home more often, which meant more rubbish and recycling went into household bins. Between 23 March 2020 and 31 March 2021, district and borough council collection crews in Surrey collected 49,707 more tonnes of waste than normal. That's equivalent to 75,000 cows, which is a lot of heavy lifting!

During this period, no key collection services were suspended in Surrey, and bins continued to be emptied. It is a tribute to the bin collection crews and other operational staff that they did such a fantastic job at this time to serve their residents. Many crews found residents to be particularly grateful for their work, often leaving them supportive messages.

From all of us at SEP, we'd like to thank Surrey's bin crews for their hard work and Surrey residents for continuing to recycle during this period.

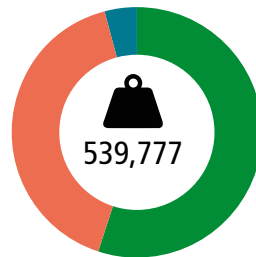
Councillor Neil Dallen MBE

Chairman, Surrey Environment Partnership

What happened to Surrey's waste, 2020-21



83.4% of recycling stayed in the UK



55.1% recycled
41.1% turned into energy
3.8% landfilled

Key

- Total tonnes collected
- Proportion treated or recycled in the UK
- Made into new products

GARDEN WASTE

100,978
 100.0%
 Compost and soil conditioner



RUBBISH

246,634
 69.2%
 Energy and landfill



SMALL ELECTRICALS

4,959
 100.0%
 Shipbuilding, jewellery



TEXTILES

1,570
 42.4%
 Reworn, stuffing or insulation



OTHER RECYCLING

19,358
 97.7%



METAL TINS AND CANS

5,200
 84.1%
 New tins and cans



FOOD WASTE

43,184
 100.0%
 Biofertiliser and biogas



PAPER AND CARD

53,704
 33.5%
 New paper and card



GLASS

36,063
 98.4%
 New glass products



PLASTICS

11,553
 93.5%
 New plastic products



16,573 tonnes of waste was collected as recycling but disposed of as rubbish because it was contaminated.

What happened to Surrey's waste, 2020-21 headlines

Waste type	Tonnes	Proportion of total waste	Proportion treated / recycled in the UK	Proportion treated / recycled outside the UK
All waste collected	539,777 (+5.7%)	-	76.9% (+0.9)	23.1% (-0.9)
Waste recycled	297,409 (+3.9%)	55.1% (-0.9)	83.4% (-2.4)	16.6% (+2.4)
<u>Waste treated as rubbish:</u>	242,368 (+7.9%)	44.9% (+0.9)	69.2% (+5.1)	30.8% (-5.1)
Turned into energy	212,651 (+14.8%)	41.1% (+3.9)	66.2% (+8.5)	33.8% (-8.5)
Sent to landfill	21,523 (-37.1%)	3.8% (-2.7)	100.0% (-)	0.0% (-)

Note: numbers in brackets are comparisons to 2019-20 and if it's a percentage, it's a comparison between tonnages whereas if it's a number, it's a percentage point comparison between two percentages.

The proportion of Surrey's waste that was recycled in 2020-21 fell by 0.9 percentage points to 55.1% compared to 2019-20. This probably happened for a number of reasons such as the closure of Surrey's Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) for part of the year and the change in waste volumes that occurred because people were at home more often due to the coronavirus pandemic.

76.9%

of Surrey's waste was treated
or recycled in the UK

However, this drop was lower than the national average, which was 1.5 percentage points. Of the 30 two-tier authority areas in England, Surrey has the 3rd best recycling rate.

Overall, 76.9% of waste was treated or recycled in the UK, an increase of 0.9 percentage points compared to 2019-20. A higher proportion of rubbish was treated in the UK at 69.2% compared to 64.1% in 2019-20. However, there was a small fall of 2.4 percentage points in the proportion of recycling that was recycled in the UK. This was most likely caused by a drop in the amount of paper and card that was recycled in the UK. This occurred because demand for paper and card in the UK declined during 2020-21, leading to more of it being exported to be recycled.



While all efforts are made to recycle as much waste as possible in the UK, there are multiple factors, including changes to market demand, that influence where waste is sent to be recycled.

In Surrey, compared to 2019-20, the total amount of waste collected rose by 5.7% with 539,777 tonnes of waste collected from households or recycling banks, taken to CRCs or collected as street cleaning. The amount of waste that was recycled increased by 3.9% to 297,409 tonnes. At 242,368 tonnes, the amount of rubbish that was turned into energy or sent to landfill also increased, by 7.9%.

There was an increase of 3.9 percentage points, to 41.1%, in the proportion of waste that was sent to an energy from waste site to be turned into electricity. The remaining 3.8% was sent to landfill, which was lower than the England average of 8.0%.

Note that if you add the total tonnes of rubbish turned into energy and the total tonnes of rubbish sent to landfill, it doesn't equal the total amount of rubbish collected. This is because during transportation some of the waste loses water and therefore weight.

Only 3.8%
of Surrey's waste was sent to landfill

Where did Surrey's waste go?

Type of waste	Waste treated or recycled in:					
	UK	European Union (EU)		Outside EU		Exact location unknown
		Known locations	Exact location unknown	Known locations	Exact location unknown	
Total waste	76.9%	1.1%	14.6%	3.0%	4.2%	0.2%
<u>Total recycling</u>	83.4%	1.8%	1.3%	5.6%	7.7%	0.3%
Dry mixed recycling	60.9%	4.1%	3.1%	13.6%	18.2%	0.2%
Food waste	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Garden waste	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other recycling (such as scrap metal, batteries and paint)	97.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Small electricals	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Textiles	42.4%	33.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	24.5%
<u>Total rubbish</u>	69.2%	0.2%	30.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sent to energy from waste	66.2%	0.2%	33.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sent to landfill	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: dry mixed recycling refers to paper and card, glass, plastics and metal put into household recycling bins.

At 76.9%, most of Surrey's waste stayed in the UK to be treated or recycled. However, where it couldn't stay in the UK, most of the remaining waste went to countries within the EU.

83.4% of Surrey's recycled waste was recycled in the UK, most of which went to Northamptonshire, Somerset and Buckinghamshire. However, sometimes it's not possible for waste to be recycled in the UK. This can be because there isn't the demand in this country for the new product that is produced by the recycling process, or there aren't enough facilities in the UK to recycle the amount of waste produced. The most common destination for Surrey's waste to be recycled abroad was Germany.

Over two thirds of rubbish was treated in the UK. Of the small amount that was sent to landfill, it all remained within the UK. When rubbish was sent to an energy from waste facility, 66.2% of it went to facilities in the south east of England with the rest travelling to countries within the EU. Currently, there isn't enough capacity at energy from waste facilities in the UK to treat all of the rubbish produced here, which is why some of it is exported.

The exact destination that some waste goes to be treated or recycled is unknown. This is because for local authority reporting, the exporter is only obliged by the Environment Agency to report the country of destination and not the full address details of where it ends up. Therefore, we sometimes only know the continent that the waste goes to, which is why a percentage of waste is recorded as unknown.



Over
two thirds
of Surrey's rubbish
was treated in
the UK

When waste is passed on to other organisations to be exported and treated or recycled, Surrey County Council works with those organisations to ensure it goes to an appropriate facility and is treated responsibly.

Local areas in Surrey compared

District or borough council area	Total waste per household (kg)	Recycling		Rubbish		Proportion of recycling recycled in the UK
		Amount produced per household (kg)	Proportion of total waste (Defra recycling rate)	Total produced per household (kg)	Proportion of total waste	
Elmbridge	1,031 (+11.7%)	562 (+15.8%)	54.5% (+1.9)	469 (+6.7%)	45.5% (-1.9)	79.8% (-8.5)
Epsom & Ewell	966 (+4.4%)	519 (+4.9%)	53.7% (+0.3)	447 (+3.7%)	46.3% (-0.3)	81.4% (+8.6)
Guildford	948 (+9.9%)	558 (+10.2%)	58.9% (+0.2)	389 (+8.6%)	41.1% (-0.2)	85.1% (+3.1)
Mole Valley	983 (+9.2%)	557 (+12.9%)	56.6% (+1.8)	427 (+4.6%)	43.4% (-1.8)	79.3% (-10.2)
Reigate & Banstead	884 (+2.9%)	471 (+1.0%)	53.2% (-1.0)	413 (+4.9%)	46.8% (+1.0)	98.3% (+4.4)
Runnymede	808 (+9.0%)	396 (+22.1%)	49.0% (+5.3)	412 (-1.3%)	51.0% (-5.3)	84.0% (+10.4)
Spelthorne	853 (+5.7%)	396 (+5.6%)	46.4% (-0.1)	457 (+5.5%)	53.6% (+0.1)	74.3% (-11.3)
Surrey Heath	943 (+7.5%)	578 (+4.7%)	61.3% (-1.7)	365 (+11.0%)	38.7% (+1.7)	73.0% (+0.9)
Tandridge	946 (+6.6%)	566 (+7.9%)	59.9% (+0.7)	380 (+4.4%)	40.1% (-0.7)	85.6% (+5.6)
Waverley	905 (+8.5%)	516 (+13.7%)	57.0% (+2.6)	389 (+2.2%)	43.0% (-2.6)	72.8% (-20.1)
Woking	950 (+9.5%)	516 (+7.3%)	54.3% (-1.1)	435 (+10.9%)	45.7% (+1.1)	81.8% (+8.0)

Note: numbers in brackets are comparisons to 2019-20 and if it's a percentage, it's a comparison between tonnages whereas if it's a number, it's a percentage point comparison between two percentages.

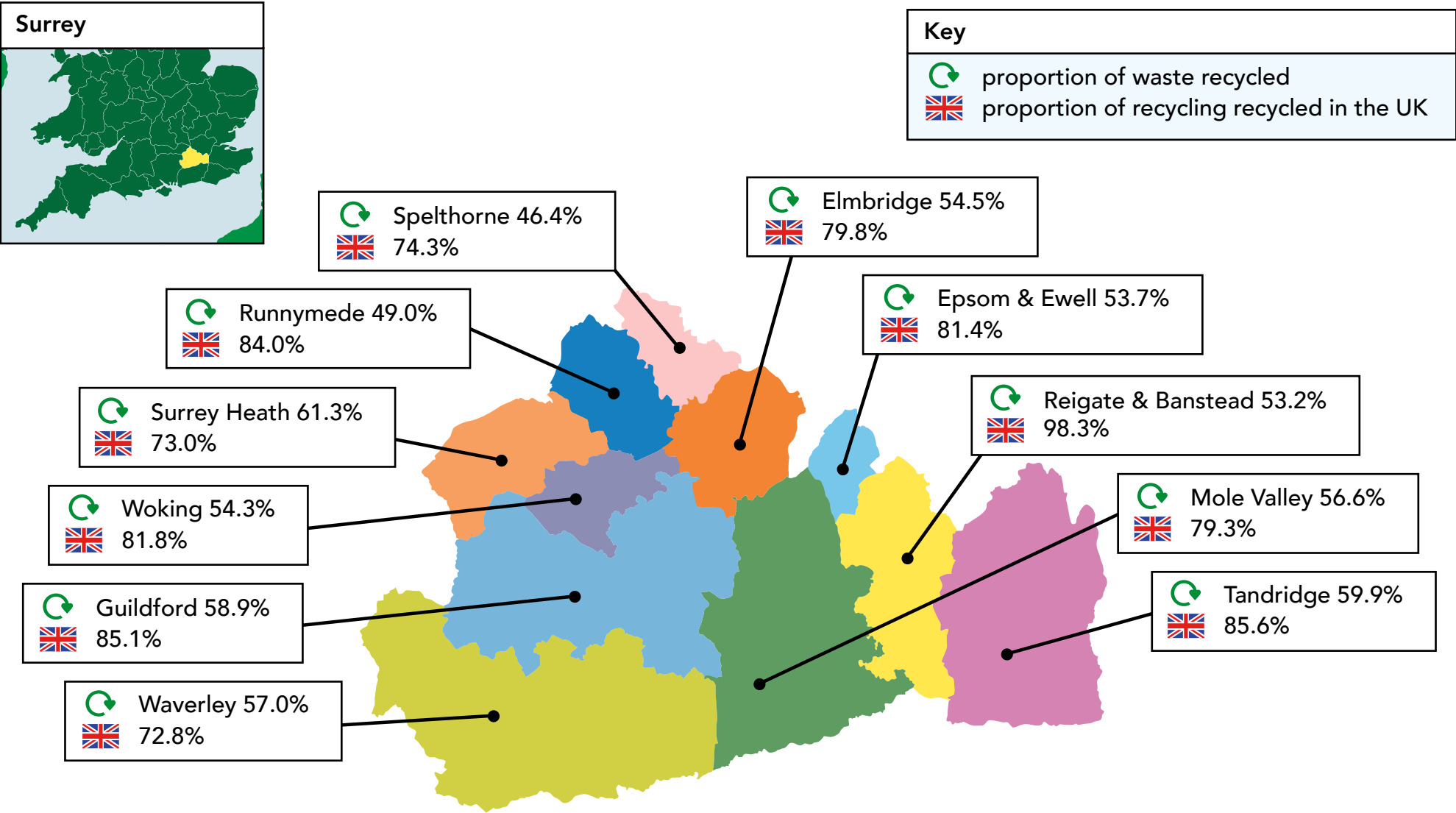
The table on page 9 shows the amounts of waste collected from households and recycling banks in different areas of Surrey. The area where households produce the least waste is Runnymede at 808kg per household. At the other end of the scale, Elmbridge residents produce, on average, 1,031kg per household. This is probably because more properties have larger gardens that produce a large amount of garden waste, and are therefore likely to produce more waste overall.

The area of Surrey that recycles the biggest proportion of its waste is Surrey Heath at 61.3% with the areas recycling least of their waste being Spelthorne and Runnymede. This is probably because in rural areas more properties have gardens and with garden waste being easily recyclable, it means more of their overall waste is likely to be recycled. The same is true for food waste where larger properties are more likely to have room for a food waste caddy.

However, when you remove food and garden waste from the total waste produced and look at the proportion of the remaining waste that is made up of dry recycling (dry mixed recycling plus waste collected from recycling banks including textiles and electricals), you see a different picture, as in the table on the right. Here, we see that there are smaller differences between areas that are less affected by whether they are rural or not.

District or borough council area	Proportion of waste that was dry recycling collected from households or recycling banks
Elmbridge	23.4%
Epsom & Ewell	26.8%
Guildford	24.9%
Mole Valley	24.9%
Reigate & Banstead	28.1%
Runnymede	26.8%
Spelthorne	25.7%
Surrey Heath	29.8%
Tandridge	29.2%
Waverley	30.7%
Woking	21.9%

Recycling in Surrey – local areas compared



Note: Although waste disposal in Surrey is managed by Surrey County Council, local areas recycle different proportions of material in the UK to each other. This is because of the variation between areas in the make-up of their recycling and because different areas send their recycling to different destinations depending on where they are located.

Rubbish

The table below shows the contents of an average household rubbish bin in Surrey.

Type of waste	Proportion of average household rubbish bin
Non-recyclable waste, i.e., rubbish	52.5%
Waste that could have been recycled, made up of:	47.5%
<i>Dry mixed recycling</i>	15.1%
<i>Food waste</i>	27.3%
<i>Textiles</i>	3.1%
<i>Garden waste</i>	1.2%
<i>Small electricals</i>	0.7%

Nearly half of the waste put in rubbish bins could be recycled.

How much rubbish was produced?

Surrey residents produced 242,368 tonnes of rubbish that was sent to an energy from waste facility or landfill site in 2020-21, which includes rubbish collected from CRCs. However, only 159,120 tonnes was non-recyclable waste. The areas of Surrey that produced the least amount of rubbish per household were Surrey Heath and Tandridge with the most being Elmbridge and Spelthorne. The table below shows rubbish collected from households via standard weekly collections, through bulky waste collection services and from street cleaning.

Area	Rubbish produced per household (kg)
Elmbridge	469
Epsom & Ewell	447
Guildford	389
Mole Valley	427
Reigate & Banstead	413
Runnymede	412
Spelthorne	457
Surrey Heath	365
Tandridge	380
Waverley	389
Woking	435

What happens to Surrey's rubbish?

When residents put waste into rubbish bins in Surrey, it is collected by a local crew and taken to one of five waste transfer stations in the county. There, it is bulked up and taken to an energy from waste facility in the UK or EU where it is burned. The heat produces steam, which drives a turbine and creates electricity.

The ash that is left over is then passed on to be used in construction projects. Some waste is also sent to landfill, which only happens to bulky waste that cannot fit into an energy from waste facility or when there is no capacity at energy from waste facilities, leaving no other option for disposal.

Of the 242,368 tonnes of rubbish produced in Surrey, 90.8% of it was taken to an energy from waste facility and turned into electricity with only a small amount sent to landfill. 69.2% of rubbish stayed in the UK to be treated.

The electricity generated by Surrey's rubbish in 2020-21 produced enough energy to power 38,000 UK homes for a year.

Surrey residents are still putting a lot of waste into rubbish bins that can be recycled.

It wasn't all rubbish!

Sending waste that can't be recycled to an energy from waste facility is the most environmentally friendly option for it. However, Surrey residents are still putting a lot of waste into rubbish bins that can be recycled, which ends up at these facilities. If it was recycled, it would be much better for the environment as burning it emits more CO2 than recycling it and it would make savings for Surrey's councils.

The table on the previous page shows that nearly half of what residents put in rubbish bins could have been recycled.

Most of that was food with a large proportion also made up of household recycling, in particular plastic pots, tubs and trays such as meat trays and yoghurt pots, glass drinks bottles, card from online delivery packaging and clothing and rags.



How can residents reduce the amount of rubbish they produce?

All rubbish that is produced is harmful to the environment and costs councils money to dispose of.



Here are some ways residents can reduce the amount of rubbish they produce:

- > Flatten cardboard boxes to make more space in recycling bins. If there isn't enough space for them, leave them next to the bin in a dry, folded and tied bundle or in a clear bag.
- > If more bin space is needed for recycling, residents should contact their local council.
- > Buy reusable items such as cloth bags, beeswax wraps, reusable drinks bottles and washable face masks.
- > Don't buy items with lots of packaging. Residents could even start shopping at refill shops that allow customers to take their own containers.
- > Reuse items whenever possible. For example, plastic bags can be reused to line food caddies.
- > Check if an item can be fixed before throwing it away. Surrey has several repair cafes that can help.
- > Do a DIY waste audit using SEP's Binterrogator tool, which allows residents to see what they're throwing away and to work out where reductions can be made.
- > Residents should make sure they know what can and can't be recycled and put the right things in the right bins. See page 18 for more details.
- > Check if other organisations can recycle some types of waste. Supermarkets and local stores provide recycling services for things like plastic film and other packaging that most councils can't recycle. Terracycle has recycling points for lots of different types of waste across Surrey.

Dry mixed recycling

The table below shows the contents of an average dry mixed recycling bin in Surrey*

Type of waste	Proportion of average dry mixed recycling bin
Food and drink cartons	0.2%
Glass	29.3%
Metal tins and cans	4.2%
Paper and card	43.4%
Plastics	9.4%
Contamination, i.e., waste that can't be recycled	13.5%

*Note that Reigate and Banstead Borough Council collects paper and card separately from other dry mixed recycling and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council collects glass separately

How much dry mixed recycling was produced?

162,584 tonnes of dry mixed recycling was produced in 2020-21. However, nearly 30,000 tonnes of it went into rubbish bins. The most common types of dry mixed recycling found in rubbish bins were paper and card, plastics and glass.

The table below relates to recycling collected from households plus all recycling collected at recycling banks, which includes items such as paper, glass and plastic as well as textiles and small electricals. This is known as dry recycling. The areas of Surrey that produced the most amount of this waste per household were Surrey Heath and Waverley with the least being Woking and Runnymede.

Area	Dry recycling per household (kg)
Elmbridge	241
Epsom & Ewell	259
Guildford	236
Mole Valley	245
Reigate & Banstead	248
Runnymede	217
Spelthorne	219
Surrey Heath	281
Tandridge	277
Waverley	278
Woking	208

What happens to Surrey's dry mixed recycling?

60.9% of dry mixed recycling put into household recycling bins was recycled in the UK.

When residents put waste into recycling bins, it is taken to a materials recovery facility where it is separated:

- > Glass is taken to another facility where it is sorted from other types of waste then crushed, melted and turned into new bottles or jars or used to create aggregate, which is used in construction.
- > Paper and card is taken to a paper mill where it is turned to a pulp, which is then turned into new paper.
- > Plastics are taken to a reprocessing facility where they are either melted down to create pellets, which can be moulded into new plastic shapes or shredded so they can be used again.
- > Metal tins and cans are first separated into aluminium and steel products. Aluminium items are shredded into small pieces, heated and then made into new metal items. Steel items are combined with molten iron, heated up then made into new products such as bikes, cars and drinks cans.



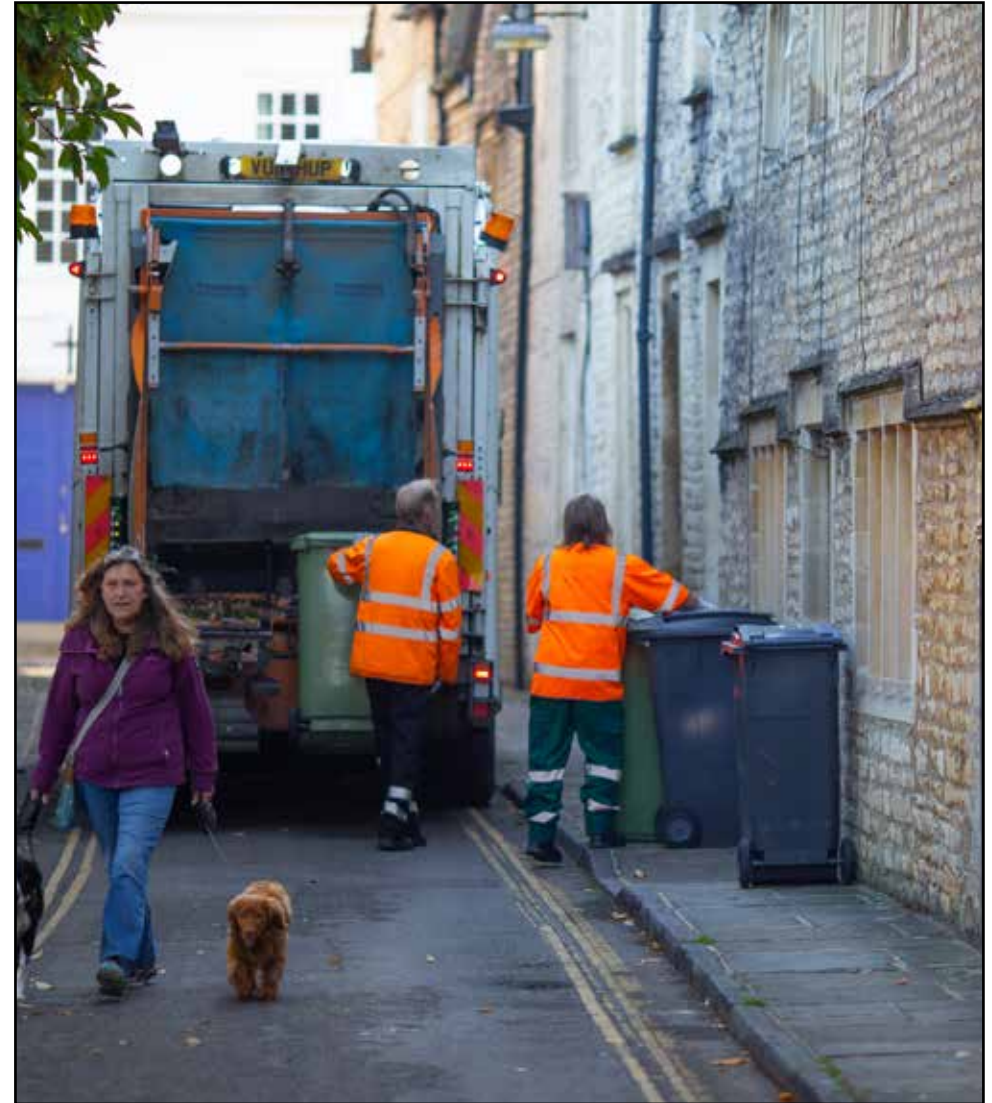
Is all dry mixed recycling actually recycled?

Almost all the waste put into recycling bins is recycled and turned into new products. However, the table on page 15 shows that 13.5% of waste that went into recycling bins in 2020-21 was items that can't be recycled. When this happens, it can cause big problems because it is difficult to separate the good recycling from incorrect items such as black sacks and nappies, which might mean that an entire truckload of recycling is treated as rubbish and not recycled.

If all that waste had gone into the rubbish and not the recycling bin, it would've saved Surrey councils around £1m because it is more expensive to treat waste as rubbish than to recycle it.

Similarly, waste that can be recycled but is put into rubbish bins is unlikely to get recycled. This is because it is much harder to sort through and will be contaminated by other waste, such as food.

*13.5% of waste in recycling bins
was items that can't be recycled.*



How can Surrey residents make sure they're recycling right?

Some top tips for residents to make sure they recycle right include:

- > Regularly update knowledge, as advice on what to do with waste can change.
- > Keep recycling clean, dry and loose – with nothing in bags, sacks or liners.
- > Keep food waste, garden waste, electricals, batteries and textiles out of recycling bins. They are collected separately in most areas.

Surrey councils could save around

£1,000,000

if residents recycled properly.

There are lots of resources that residents can use to find out which items should and shouldn't go in recycling bins:

- > Residents can enter their postcode and the item being thrown away into the Surrey Recycles search tool on the SEP website to find out which bin it goes in. It can also be downloaded as an app from the App Store and the Google Play store.
- > Once a year in October and November, every council in Surrey sends its residents a printed leaflet with information on bins and recycling. Residents should look out for it on their doorsteps, keep it and maybe even stick it up somewhere visible for easy reference.
- > Residents can play the Recycle Right waste sorting game on the SEP website and test their knowledge of which items go in which bins.



Food waste

Area	Food waste per household (kg)
Elmbridge	93
Epsom & Ewell	77
Guildford	86
Mole Valley	83
Reigate & Banstead	84
Runnymede	71
Spelthorne	65
Surrey Heath	104
Tandridge	93
Waverley	83
Woking	100

If all the food waste that was put in rubbish bins had been recycled instead, it would have saved Surrey councils £4 million.

How much food waste was produced?

93,414 tonnes of food waste was produced in 2020-21. However, only 46.2% of it was put into food caddies to be recycled, with the rest going into rubbish bins. Food waste is the biggest single area where residents can make a difference to the environment and to council savings. If all the food waste that was put into rubbish bins in 2020-21 had been recycled, it would have saved Surrey councils an incredible £4 million!

What happens to Surrey's food waste?

When residents separate food waste and put it in an outdoor food waste bin, it is collected by bin crews and then taken to a facility in Surrey. Here, any caddy liners are removed. The remaining food goes into a big, oxygen-free container in which micro-organisms break it down and turn it into fertiliser. While this happens, it releases biogas. This process is called anaerobic digestion. The fertiliser is then used on local farms where it is spread onto crops to help new things grow. The biogas is turned into electricity, which is sold to the national grid and used to power homes, businesses and streetlights. The caddy liners are sent to an energy from waste facility to be turned into electricity.

How can Surrey residents reduce their food waste?

While recycling food waste is the most environmentally friendly thing to do with it, it would be better if it wasn't produced in the first place. It is estimated that an average family of four could save £60 a month by reducing their food waste, not to mention the environmental benefits that it would bring.

The three simple tips to reduce food waste are:

- > Freeze food near its 'Use By' date.
- > Make meals from leftovers.
- > Plan meals and avoid over-buying – why not try a food shopping app?

There is more information including a list of food shopping apps, leftover recipes and other tips to reduce food waste on the SEP website.

How can Surrey residents recycle more of their food waste?

All food waste can be recycled by using a caddy. Using one and keeping food waste out of rubbish bins is a great way to stop rubbish bins smelling between collections. Food waste is collected weekly and caddies are much easier to rinse out to get rid of any odours. To order a food caddy, contact your local council. Alternatively, residents can use a compost bin or a hot composter to compost some or all of their food waste at home. Check SEP's website for details of regular sales of compost bins and hot composters.



Garden waste

How much garden waste was produced?

103,253 tonnes of garden waste was produced in 2020-21.
97.8% of it was captured for recycling with only a small amount going into rubbish bins.

Area	Garden waste per household (kg)
Elmbridge	218
Epsom & Ewell	170
Guildford	202
Mole Valley	205
Reigate & Banstead	131
Runnymede	97
Spelthorne	98
Surrey Heath	167
Tandridge	159
Waverley	134
Woking	188



97.8% of Surrey's garden waste was captured for recycling.

What happens to Surrey's garden waste?

When garden waste is collected by a local crew from a household or is taken to a CRC, it is then transported to facilities in the south east of England where it is composted. First, anything that can't be composted is removed. The rest is shredded and laid out in a long pile. The material is turned regularly to encourage micro-organisms to break it down, reaching temperatures of up to 60 degrees Celsius. Once it has completely broken down, it has been turned into compost, which is then sold to local businesses and farms to help new crops grow or to improve soil.

Is a garden waste bin best for the environment?

No, composting garden waste at home is the best option for the environment. If garden waste is composted at home, it means that collection vehicles don't need to use fuel to visit homes to collect and deliver it to be composted at a facility. Compost can be spread back onto gardens and can help improve soil, which helps new things grow.

If residents want to start composting, SEP holds regular sales of compost bins at discount prices exclusively for those living in Surrey. As well as details of sales, SEP's website also has lots of information to help residents get started and keep going.



Textile and small electrical waste

Area	Textile and small electrical waste per household (kg)
Elmbridge	10
Epsom & Ewell	13
Guildford	34
Mole Valley	24
Reigate & Banstead	7
Runnymede	11
Spelthorne	15
Surrey Heath	25
Tandridge	37
Waverley	21
Woking	20

Only 21.6% of textiles was recycled with the rest going in rubbish bins.

How much textile and small electrical waste was produced?

13,580 tonnes of textile and small electrical waste was produced in Surrey in 2020-21. However, only 48.1% of this waste was recycled with the rest going into rubbish bins. Textiles are a particular problem with only 21.6% collected for recycling. Most areas of Surrey have a separate collection for textiles, as well as small electricals, and there are multiple options such as recycling banks and charity shops to recycle this waste elsewhere.

What happens to Surrey's textile and small electrical waste?

After they have been collected, clothes and textiles are sorted into clothes that can be worn again and those that can't. If they can, they are passed on to be resold as second-hand clothes. If not, they are turned into products like felt, insulation and stuffing.

Once small electricals are collected, they are taken to a reprocessing plant where they are shredded into small pieces. The different materials are then separated and can be used to help with shipbuilding, galvanising railings and lampposts, in jewellery or musical instruments.

How can Surrey residents produce less textile and small electrical waste?



Reducing the amount of textile and small electrical waste produced could make a positive impact on the environment.

Some tips to reduce waste include:

- > Wear clothes for longer. Fast fashion may be good for clothes companies but it's not good for the planet, so focus on making clothes last.
- > While it's best for residents to reduce the amount of clothes they buy, if they find themselves with good quality clothes or working small electricals these could be given away to charity to find a new life and be loved again.
- > Repair clothes and small electricals. Residents can learn to repair items, either online or by doing a course, or there are repair cafés in Surrey where someone can help.

Conclusion

In an unprecedented year that affected every aspect of life including waste, it was encouraging that Surrey residents continued to recycle diligently. 55.1% of Surrey's waste was recycled, significantly higher than the national average of 43.8%. It was also pleasing to see that the proportion of Surrey's rubbish that was sent to an energy from waste facility increased. With only 3.8% of Surrey's waste sent to landfill, this is a positive result and is around half of the national average.

There was also an increase to 76.9% in the proportion of waste treated or recycled in the UK. Although market forces often influence where waste ends up, it is good to see that most of it remained on our shores. And on the occasions when it was exported, the organisations that did so ensured that waste went to an appropriate facility and was handled responsibly.

However, there is still work to do.

What will SEP do?

SEP aims to manage Surrey's waste in the most efficient, effective, economical and sustainable manner. Our partnership's priorities are to reduce the amount of waste produced in Surrey (with a particular focus on reducing food waste) and the amount of non-recyclable waste that is put into household recycling bins, and to increase the proportion of food waste that is recycled.

We'll be aiming to do this in a range of ways. We'll design and deliver projects that help and encourage residents to reduce their waste and recycle more, run regular communications campaigns nudging residents to change their behaviour, work to improve waste collection services, particularly at blocks of flats, and we'll work with our partners to improve processes and policies.

What can residents do?

The change that would make the biggest difference would be if all the food waste produced in Surrey was recycled. Currently, more than half of it isn't and is treated as rubbish instead. Additionally, with almost 30,000 tonnes of recyclable household waste being put in rubbish bins and 13.5% of non-recyclable waste being put in recycling bins, it is ever more important that residents know which bins different types of waste go in. If in doubt, they should check it out!

We hope that this report has provided useful information on what happened to Surrey's waste in 2020-21 and has provided tips, advice and information on how small actions can make a big difference.



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