

## Annex 3 - Current performance and waste composition

### Current performance

Recycling and waste performance in Surrey is currently monitored by measuring the amount of household waste generated within the county and how much of it is either recycled, recovered or sent to landfill. The most recent revision of the Surrey JMWMS gave performance data up to and including 2013-14, which showed that:

- The quantity of household waste generated in Surrey decreased by 9% from 583,518 tonnes in 2006-07 to 532,773 tonnes in 2013-14.
- The proportion of household waste that was recycled increased from 31% in 2006-7 to 52% in 2013-14.
- The amount of rubbish sent to landfill declined dramatically from 67% in 2006-07 to 11% in 2013-14.
- The amount of rubbish sent for energy recovery went from 2% in 2006-7 to 36% in 2013-14.

Since 2013-14, the total amount of household waste generated in Surrey has continued to fall, reaching a low of 507,428 tonnes in 2018-19 (a 5% reduction from 2013-14). In 2020-21 it increased significantly to 539,777 tonnes as shown in 1 below. However, this large spike correlated with the coronavirus pandemic and more people being at home. Provisional data for 2021-22, currently being audited by Defra ahead of publication in December 2022, shows that household waste decreased to approximately 520,000 tonnes.

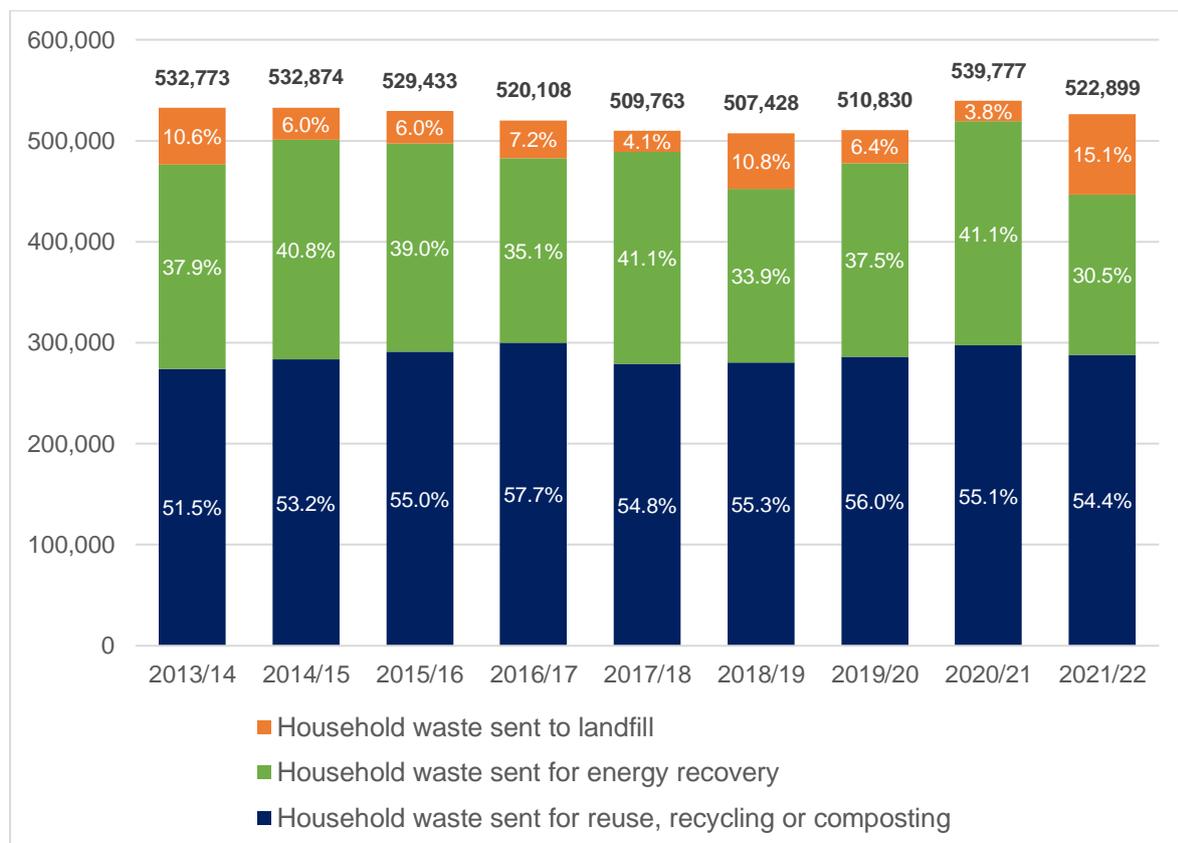
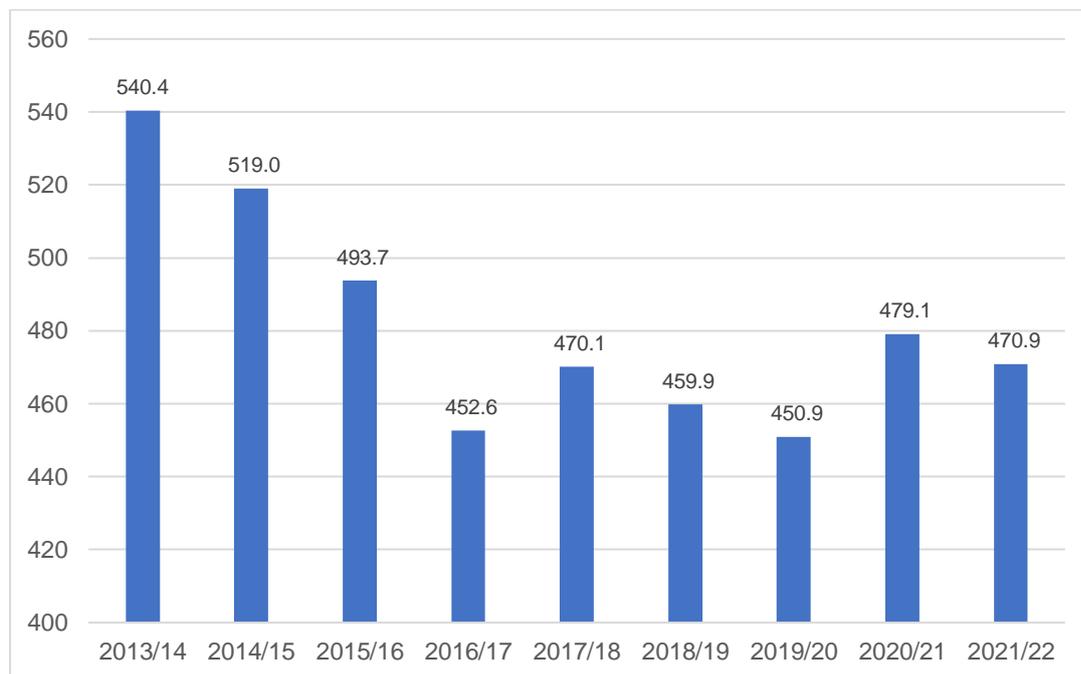


Figure 1: Household waste treated in Surrey from 2013-14 to 2021-22

Between 2013-14 and 2016-17 there was a steady increase in the proportion of household waste that was recycled each year, reaching a peak at 57.7% in 2016-17. From this point forward, SCC lost markets for recycling carpets and rigid plastics, and the ability to compost autumn leaf litter from street cleansing. Also, standards applied by the Environment Agency around what could be recycled began to tighten at this time with re-processors focussing more on quality, and not quantity, and demanding material with less contamination, which led to more recycling being rejected by materials recovery facilities (MRFs). Furthermore, Surrey had already realised most of the benefits associated with changes to recycling services such as the rollout of separate food waste collections from households, which has been provided by every Surrey authority since around 2012-13. With the above in mind, Surrey's recycling rate has fluctuated, but has remained around 55% for the last four years (Figure 1). Provisional data for 2021-22 indicates an unaudited recycling rate of 54.4%.

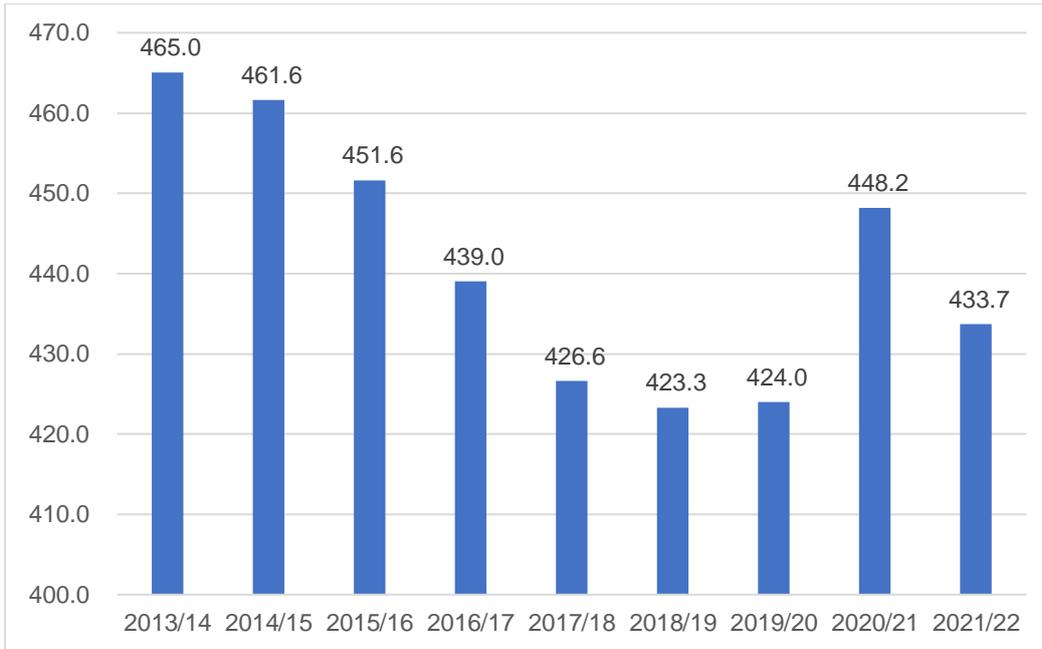
We have continued to reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill (Figure 1), hitting lows of around 4% in 2017-18 and 2020-21, although it has fluctuated around an average of 6 - 7%. However, provisional data for 2021-22 indicates that it has gone up to an estimated 15.1%. This was due to operational shutdowns at facilities used to treat Surrey's rubbish and a reduction in the amount of waste that was sent to facilities in Europe.

The amount of residual household waste collected **per household** in Surrey has been falling since 2013-14 hitting a low of 450.9kg per household in 2019-20 (Figure 2). However, there was a large spike in 2020-21, taking it up to 479.1kg per household, but again this correlates with the coronavirus pandemic and more people being at home. The unaudited data for 2021-22 now puts this at 470.9kg per household.



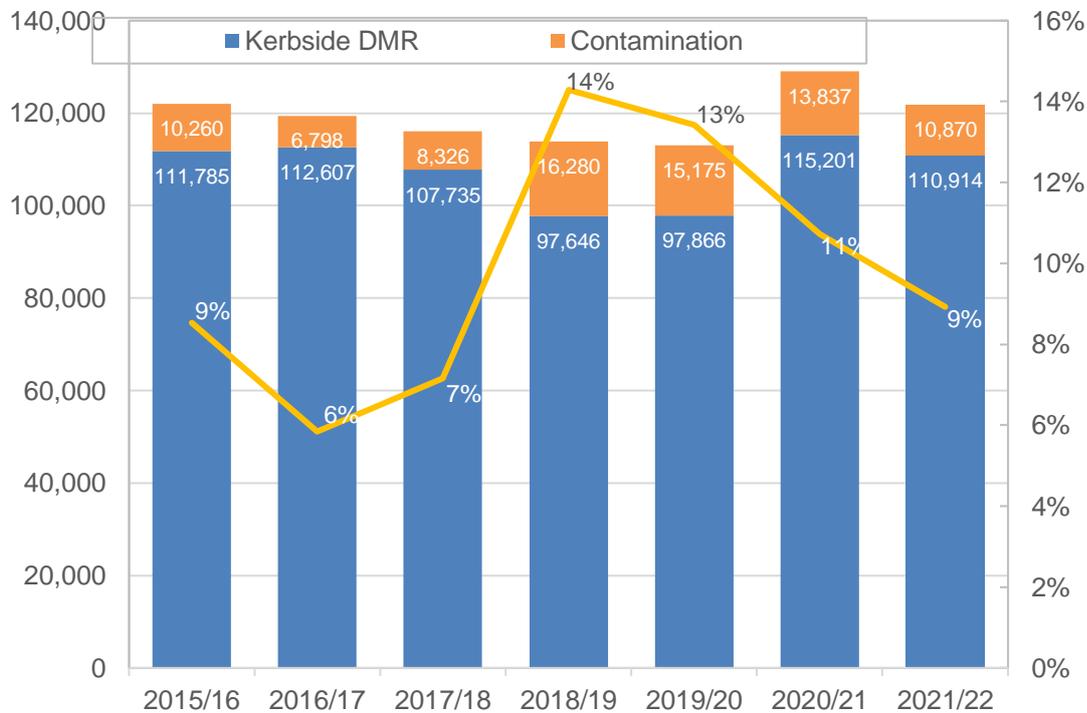
**Figure 2: Residual household waste per household (kg) in Surrey from 2013-14 to 2021-22**

The amount of household waste collected **per person** in Surrey has also been falling since 2013-14 (Figure 3) hitting a low of 423.3kg per person in 2018-19. Again, there was a large spike shown here in 2020-21, taking it up to 448.2kg per person, but again this correlates with the coronavirus pandemic and more people being at home. The unaudited data for 2021-22 indicates that this has dropped to 433.7kg per person.



**Figure 3: Collected household waste per person in Surrey from 2013-14 to 2021-22**

In 2015-16, data began to be collected on contamination of dry mixed recycling (DMR) following the introduction of legislation that required Material Recovery Facilities to sample material being delivered. Figure 4 shows a large spike in 2018-19, which was when data was consistently reported for all D&Bs, as it was limited before this. Since then, SEP has worked to drive down contamination, the effects of which can be seen in 2019-20 and 2020-21.



**Figure 4: Contamination of DMR in Surrey from 2015-16 to 2021-22**

## How we compare with others

Defra publishes performance data on an annual basis for each local authority in England. Table 1 below shows Surrey's position in a league table with all other local authorities in England in relation to performance data on recycling rates, residual waste per household, and collected household waste per person for 2020-21.

**Table 1: Position in the Defra league table for 2020-21**

Authority	% recycled, reused or composted	Rank in the league table	Residual household waste per household (kg)	Rank in the league table	Total household waste per person (kg)	Rank in the league table
<b>Disposal Authorities Only (out of 30)</b>						
Surrey County Council	55.1%	3rd	479.1	6th	448.2	17th
<b>Waste Collection Authorities Only (out of 308)</b>						
Elmbridge Borough Council	54.5%	37th	469.1	101st	440.5	264th
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	53.7%	43rd	447	77th	388.3	129th
Guildford Borough Council	58.9%	15th	389.2	32nd	373.7	102nd
Mole Valley District Council	56.6%	25th	426.5	59th	437	259th
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	53.2%	51st	413.2	49th	368.3	92nd
Runnymede Borough Council	49.0%	76th	411.9	47th	334.8	31st
Spelthorne Borough Council	46.4%	102nd	457	85th	369.8	95th
Surrey Heath Borough Council	61.3%	5th	364.9	22nd	397.1	155th
Tandridge District Council	59.9%	10th	379.6	29th	397.8	157th
Waverley Borough Council	57.0%	22nd	388.9	31st	391.2	140th
Woking Borough Council	54.3%	40th	434.5	66th	408.2	190th

Surrey has one of the best rates of recycling, reuse and composting at 55.1% (3<sup>rd</sup>) and residual waste per household at 479.1kg (6<sup>th</sup>) of all disposal authorities in England. However, it ranks around mid-table for landfill usage (14<sup>th</sup>) and collected household waste per person (17<sup>th</sup>).

Landfill rates are also provided, but this can only be compared by disposal authority. In 2020-21, Surrey ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of 30 disposal authorities with a landfill rate of 3.8%.

Most waste collection authorities in Surrey (9 out of 11) rank in the top 50 for recycling, reuse and composting performance with Surrey Heath Borough Council placed at fifth.

However, performance on residual waste is less encouraging with just over half (6 out of 11) place in the top 50 for residual household waste per household with the rest between 59<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup>. Only one authority of 11 is in the top 50 for collected household waste per person with the rest between 92<sup>nd</sup> and 264<sup>th</sup>.

In summary, while recycling performance is mostly encouraging, residual waste volumes are high compared to other authorities in England. To that end, there is more that can be done to improve performance in Surrey. We have looked at the top authorities in England that are comparable to Surrey's authorities in terms of rurality and deprivation to see what we can learn from them, and this thinking has been incorporated into the key actions referred to in the section on **the partnership approach to achieving our vision, objectives and targets** in the main SEP 2025 approach document.

### Where our recycling and waste goes

Surrey's residents have a keen interest in what happens to their recycling and waste with previous research suggesting that increased transparency around what happens to recycling and waste once collected can positively affect recycling behaviours. A report, What Happened to Surrey's Waste, 2020/21, is available on [SEP's website](#). In summary, Figure below shows that of the 539,777 tonnes of household recycling and waste generated in Surrey in 2020-21, 76.9% of it remained in the UK, 15.7% was treated in Europe (largely Germany and the Netherlands) and 7.4% was treated outside of Europe (largely India).

Of the 297,409 tonnes of recycling collected in 2020-21, 83.4% was processed in the UK, 3.1% in Europe and 13.3% outside of Europe.

Of the 242,368 tonnes of rubbish collected in 2020-21, 69.2% was treated in the UK with the remaining 30.8% treated in Europe.

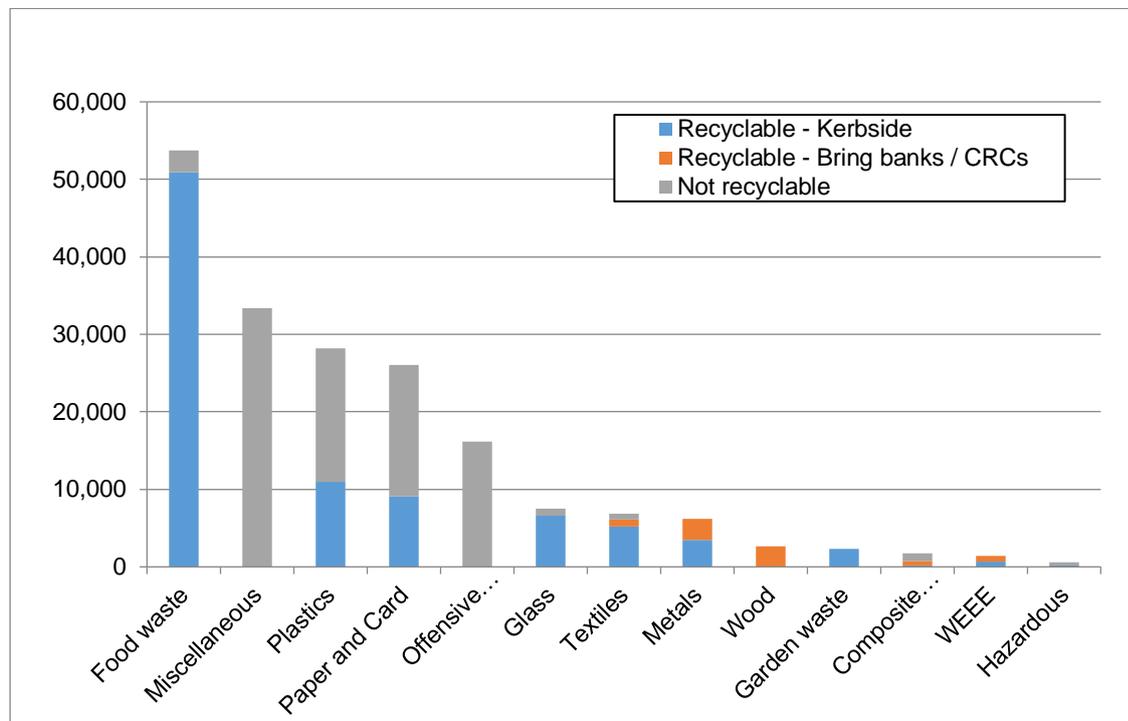


**Figure 5: Where our recycling and waste went in 2020-21**

### Waste composition

Understanding the composition of waste in Surrey provides a valuable insight on where to target future resource to reduce waste and increase recycling. To that end we undertook detailed sampling and analysis of recycling and residual bins at houses and flats in the

summer of 2021. Based on the materials that each of the authorities are currently able to accept for recycling, **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the proportion of each material that was presented in the rubbish bin but that the analysis shows could have been recycled.



**Figure 6: Recycling potential of residual waste 2021**

In summary this shows that:

- Nearly 90,000 tonnes of material in kerbside rubbish bins could be recycled. Likewise, nearly 90,000 tonnes are not currently recyclable. A further 7,600 tonnes could be recycled at bring banks or Community Recycling Centres.
- The largest proportion of material which could be recycled is food waste at nearly 51,000 tonnes, over half the recyclable material. Only a small proportion of food waste is not recyclable – 2,700 tonnes of liquids and oils.
- There are significant quantities of plastics and paper and card in residual waste. However, only 40% and 30% of these respectively are recyclable, at 11,000 and 9,000 tonnes. Some plastics such as films and flexibles aren't accepted at the sorting facilities we use. This is because they can become entangled in equipment causing blockages increasing machinery downtime and, crucially, the current onward market for these materials isn't substantial. Paper and card can become contaminated when mixed with food waste, so is rejected for recycling when presented in this state. Some paper and card (shredded paper, glittery Christmas cards and wrapping paper etc.) aren't accepted for recycling as it can cause problems at the sorting facilities we use and the paper fibres are often of low grade or can't be separated.