Lichfield District & Tamworth Borough

Joint Waste Service business plan

2026 - 2027

working together | for a greener future

Lichfield District Council

Tamworth Borough Council

Executive summary

The Joint Waste Service (JWS) for Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council is dedicated to providing an efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable waste collection service to local households.

This business plan outlines strategies for improving recycling rates, simplifying the recycling process, and reducing costs through enhanced efficiency, while aligning with longer-term goals to meet the environmental challenges and policy directives up to 2035.

This business plan is influenced by the following documents:

Organisation	Strategy/document
Partner council strategic plans	• Lichfield District 2050 • Tamworth Borough Council's corporate plan 2025 - 2030
County council/disposal authority plans	• Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy • Joint resource and waste strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, 2025 – 2045 (emerging – see summary at appendix 2)
National strategies	• Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England • Simpler recycling reforms

The business plan was ratified by the Joint Waste Committee in July 2026 and is now subject to sign-off by Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council.

Contents

Vision statement

To deliver simple, sustainable and efficient statutory waste collection services to approximately 80,000 households across Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough, supporting both districts in achieving higher recycling rates, reducing residual waste, and promoting a circular economy by 2030.

Strategic objectives

Simplify recycling for residents

- Make recycling easier and more accessible for households.
- Address common barriers to participation and confusion.

Drive up recycling rates

- Aim to achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2026/27 and 65% by 2035.
- Reduce tonnage of black bin waste in line with Staffordshire wide targets.
- Introduce food waste and plastic film recycling.
- Reduce contamination rates in recyclable materials.

Enhance efficiency and reduce costs

- Optimise collection routes costs and fuel usage.
- Maximise the use of technology and data-driven decision-making.
- Ensure the service is financially efficient.

Support environmental sustainability

- Align with government waste reduction targets and carbon neutrality goals.
- Encourage waste prevention and reuse initiatives across the partnership area.

Long-term vision to 2035

Achieve 65% recycling rate

- Roll out new waste services and increase the range of recyclable materials collected.
- Regularly review and update educational materials to reflect changes in recycling streams and regulations.

Work with partners to deliver efficient waste infrastructure across Staffordshire

- Work with Staffordshire authorities to ensure the partnership and local communities can benefit from an efficient waste infrastructure.

Develop a greener fleet and service

- Introduce greener fuels and technologies into the waste fleet and service by 2035 to align with local and national carbon neutrality targets.

Demonstrate circular economy leadership

- Position the joint waste service as a leader in waste management innovation by sharing good practice and hosting pilot programs for emerging approaches.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- **Increase recycling**: Increase from the current baseline (e.g., 41.7% 2023/2024) to 50% by 2026 – view our recycling dashboard.
- **Reduce residual waste:** Residual waste weights per household.
- **Reduce contamination rate**: Number of rejected loads (2023/2024 baseline – one per annum).
- **Increase resident satisfaction**: Customer satisfaction rate measured through annual surveys.
- **Minimise missed bin collections:** Number of missed household bin collections.
- **Reduce customer complaints:** Number of upheld customer complaints.
- **Achieve cost efficiency**: Cost of collection per-household.
- **Create a committed workforce:** Agency spend.
- **Increase safety of the workforce:** Number of personal and vehicular accidents.

See appendix 1 for baseline and targets.

Financial overview

Discretionary income

This business plan confirms that the Joint Waste Service increases prices for discretionary services annually in line with CPI to allow it to recoup the costs of running the services:

Charge type	Increase effective
Bulky waste, scrap and replacement black bin prices	The financial modelling of the service assumes that from 1 April each year, prices will rise in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the preceding January, rounded up or down to the nearest £1. The implementation of this is delegated to the joint waste committee. Should the committee recommend rises above CPI, this will be subject to separate approval by both councils.
Garden waste charges	The financial modelling of the service assumes that from 1 October each year, prices will rise in line with CPI from the preceding June, rounded up or down to the nearest 50p. Lichfield District Council (LDC) has implemented an automatic annual increase mechanism. In contrast, Tamworth Borough Council must approve increases annually, and any rise below the Consumer Price Index (CPI) would require Tamworth to fund the resulting shortfall. This difference in approach necessitates careful financial planning to maintain sustainable service delivery. Should the committee recommend rises above CPI, this will be subject to separate approval by both councils.

Recycling credits and extended producer responsibility (EPR)

The joint waste service receives recycling credits from Staffordshire County Council based on the volume of blue bin, blue bag and purple bin recycling collected and disposed of through the council's BIFFA contract. This is paid to the council quarterly and is based on an agreed Staffordshire wide figure through the Staffordshire Waste Partnership. This year, the funding the council receives will include an element of extended producer responsibility payments that are passed on by the county council to the joint waste partnership.

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) direct funding

The joint waste service also benefits from direct payment from DEFRA of extender producer responsibility funding. This funding is paid individually to both councils to be used to offset the cost of colleciting and recycling packaging.

Sale of recyclates

The sale of recyclates is funding the joint waste service receives from BIFFA based on the amount of saleable material the service sends for recycling. This payment is dependent on market conditions and the quality of materials collected and deposited.

Joint council budgets

Lichfield District Council (LDC) and Tamworth Borough Council (TBC) share the costs of the waste partnership service through a fair and transparent percentage split, which is based on the number of properties within each council's area.

This cost-sharing arrangement is reviewed annually to ensure it remains equitable and reflective of the latest property counts. The percentage split to be used for 2026/2027[1] is:

- 58.6% Lichfield District Council (LDC)
- 41.4% Tamworth Borough Council (TBC)

In 2025/2026, a base budgeting exercise was undertaken to provide both councils with greater confidence and clarity regarding the partnership's financial arrangements. The aim was to ensure that all overheads and full costs were fairly distributed between the councils, promoting transparency and accountability. A start and end-of-year cost split assessment regime has also been agreed and put in place, supported by regular financial updates to the Joint Waste Committee.

By conducting this thorough review, Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining a balanced and sustainable partnership that continues to deliver high-quality waste management services to residents.

Social value

Social value generated through Joint Waste Service contracts is reinvested directly into the service, ensuring both Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough areas benefit equally. This approach supports sustainable, community-focused waste management and improves service quality and efficiency across both areas.

[1] *The percentage split is not fixed and alters depending on house building in each district, as it represents the property count,*

High level budget

	Budget			Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2026/27			2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Lichfield District	Tamworth Borough	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2026/27 property split	**58.60%**	**41.40%**	**100%**				
External income	(1,009)	(713)	(1,721)	(1,788)	(1,859)	(1,938)	(2,004)
Garden waste subscriptions	(1,089)	(769)	(1,858)	(1,923)	(1,983)	(2,056)	(2,127)
Tamworth BC contribution		(2,274)	(2,274)	(2,278)	(2,281)	(2,277)	(2,355)
Lichfield DC contribution	(3,219)		(3,219)	(3,244)	(3,275)	(3,297)	(3,327)
Total income	**(5,317)**	**(3,756)**	**(9,073)**	**(9,233)**	**(9,398)**	**(9,567)**	**(9,813)**
Employees	2,760	1,950	4,709	4,807	4,908	5,009	5,176
Transport	1,258	889	2,147	2,162	2,176	2,194	2,233
Supplies and services	794	561	1,354	1,419	1,464	1,511	1,551
Third party payments	8	5	13	13	13	13	13
Support Services	497	351	849	831	836	841	841
Total direct costs	**5,317**	**3,756**	**9,073**	**9,233**	**9,397**	**9,567**	**9,813**
Surplus or deficit	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(0)**	**(0)**	**(0)**	**0**

	Earmarked Reserves	
	Lichfield DC	Tamworth BC
	£000	£000
Servicing new properties in the future	(69)	(69)
Dry recycling contract		(51)
Holiday pay overtime		(15)
Payments in adv. for fleet		(99)
Weekly food waste collections transitional grant	(230)	(164)
Total projected at 31 March 2026	**(299)**	**(398)**

	Lichfield DC approved capital programme					
Project	2026/27 Budget £000	2027/28 Budget £000	2028/29 Budget £000	2029/30 Budget £000	2030/31 Projection £000	Total £000
Bin purchases	166	166	166	166	0	664
Food waste collections	1,381	0	0	0	0	1,381
Approved budget	**1,547**	**166**	**166**	**166**	**0**	**2,045**

2026 delivery plan

Reviewed annually - these actions are incorporated in the joint waste service's **rolling action plan and risk log**.

Simplify recycling for residents

Key project	Description	Target outcome
Clear communication campaign – recycle for good	Roll-out the recycle for good public awareness campaign to educate residents about recyclable materials and proper sorting techniques, using flyers, social media, and local events.	**Comms plan developed and delivered annually. Reviewed monthly.**
Recycle for good volunteer programme	Recruit and train local volunteers to serve as recycling ambassadors, helping to promote best practices in their communities.	**Training materials and comms prepared. To be launched in September 2026.**
Ward councillor and parish council engagement	Develop specific programmes to engage better with ward and parish councillors to deliver recycling messages to their local communities.	**To be launched with food waste roll out in mid-2026.**
Partnership with schools	Work with schools to incorporate Recycle for Good education into their curriculum and run waste-reduction challenges.	**Wombles launched and to be promoted again in September 2026.**

Drive up recycling rates

Key project	Description	Target outcome
Satisfaction surveys	Carry out customer satisfaction surveys.	**Launched and reviewed quarterly – to feed into annual complaint and feedback report. First report due November 2026.**
Roll out food waste collections	Implement a food waste service, including procurement of fleet, food waste containers and introduction of new rounds that optimise collections to ensure they efficient across the wider service.	**Collections to start 20 July and to be monitored ongoing.**
Recycling in flats and communal areas	Pilot programs to improve recycling infrastructure and education for residents in multi-unit housing.	**Roll out in line with food waste service in late 2026.**

Key project	Description	Target deadline
Targeted messaging	Deliver specific campaigns to target battery disposal and Tetrapaks for example.	**Vapes and batteries campaign to launch mid-2026**
Encourage innovation	Consider the introduction of innovative initiatives and pilots to increase recycling and re-use.	**To be launched post food waste roll out September 2026**

Enhance efficiency and reduce costs

Key project	Description	Target deadline
Vehicle upgrades	Launch a new fleet of waste and recycling trucks to better support crews. Roll out safe incab communications software.	**Main fleet in place, food waste by mid-2026.**
Data-driven decision-making	Install GPS tracking in food waste vehicles. Explore technical innovations to monitor and drive up participation rates. Explore inhouse route optimisation.	**Launch with food waste. In house route optimisation to be assessed in August 2026.**
Safe working practices	Review and robustly implement policies and procedures to better support the safety of the workforce and service.	**Reviewed in 2026, monitored ongoing and review by 31 March 2027.**
Training first focus	Deliver robust staff focused training courses to drive up standards of respect, skills and staff satisfaction.	**Reviewed in 2026, monitored ongoing and review by 31 March 2027.**
Shared procurements	Maximise opportunities for joint procurement with partners of vehicles, bins, and services to benefit from economies of scale.	**Reviewed in 2026, monitored ongoing and review by 31 March 2027.**
Missed bin process	Explore an end-to-end missed bin/caddy process that minimises human interaction and maximises use of data and technology.	**Reviewed in 2026, monitored ongoing and review by 31 March 2027.**
Workforce optimisation and support	Continue to explore ways to make the workforce as efficient as possible, explore opportunities for workforce enhancement/training and prepare the workforce for LGR.	**Reviewed in 2026, monitored ongoing and review by 31 March 2027.**

Key project	Description	Target deadline
Waste minimisation	Consider ways to minimise household black bin waste by introducing new sized containers or frequencies.	**Roll out approach in line with food waste service. Monitor monthly activity in line with comms plan.**

Support environmental sustainability

Key project	Description	Target deadline
Reuse hubs	Better promote community reuse and repair centres where residents can donate and pick up items such as furniture, appliances, and clothing, reducing waste and supporting circular economy principles.	**Roll out as part of comms plan, with kick off in September 2026.**
Carbon reduction targets	Explore opportunities to reduce emissions associated with waste collection and disposal in line with both council's carbon reduction targets.	**31 March 2027**

Preparing for the future

Key project	Description	Target deadline
Plastic film and Tetrapak collections	Work towards establishing a system for collecting plastic films and Tetrapak (subject to a local disposal point becoming available), including partnerships with waste processors, public awareness campaigns, and accessible drop-off points to reduce contamination.	**Plastic film collections delayed by government – date TBC. Tetrapack monitored monthly with review by 31 March 2027.**
Deposit return scheme	Work towards developing a strategy to support residents and businesses in adapting to the deposit return scheme, ensuring infrastructure and communication plans are in place for smooth implementation, and the service is appropriately sized to cope with any reduction in household demand/recycling income.	**1 October 2027 (dependent on national roll out).**
National recognition	Promote the service for national recognition to share best practice, help drive up national standards and recognise the team's contribution through award entry.	**Minimum of one national award entry submitted by 31 March 2027.**

Key partnerships

Partnership	Description	What it directly influences
Staffordshire Waste Partnership (SWP)	An informal collaboration comprising ten councils in Staffordshire, including Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and eight district and borough councils. The SWP aims to promote sustainable waste management practices across the county.	Collaborative working on strategy and projects e.g. food waste joint procurement of vehicles and caddies
Staffordshire Waste Officers Group (SWOG) & Senior Staffordshire waste Officers Group (SSWOG)	A sub group within the SWP, consisting of waste management officers from the member councils. SWOG meets bi-monthly to discuss operational matters, share best practices, and coordinate waste management strategies across Staffordshire.	Share best practice, support partnership working, assist in development and implementation of waste strategy
Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB)	A board comprising senior officers and members responsible for environmental sustainability including waste management within the SWP councils. The board meets quarterly and with regards to waste oversees the implementation of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and to monitor performance across the partnership.	Countywide waste strategy that all authorities work to support

These partnerships and groups collectively work towards enhancing waste management services, promoting recycling, and ensuring sustainable waste practices across Staffordshire.

Governance and accountability

The Joint Waste Committee comprises lead councillors and officers from Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council and oversees the implementation of this business plan.

View meetings, minutes and agendas.

The Joint Waste Committee is supported by the Joint Waste Partnership Steering Group that comprises lead officers from Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council.

Meeting frequency:

Body	Meeting regularity
Joint Waste Committee	Three times a year
Joint Waste Partnership Steering Group	Monthly

Quarterly progress reports are published to ensure transparency and accountability and are considered by the Joint Waste Committee and individually by Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council's relevant committees.

The Joint Waste Partnership Steering Group manages a **rolling action plan and risk log**, and oversees the management of the joint waste service's finances.

Appendix 1 **KPIs**

Base KPIs reviewed annually – view our recycling dashboard.

KPI	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026*	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Increase recycling						
Overall dry recycling rate	**22.36%**	**22.17%**	22.73%	23.5%	24%	24.50%
Tamworth dry recycling rate	***23.12%***	***22.70%***	*23.51%*	*23.5%*	*24%*	*24.50%*
Lichfield District dry recycling rate	***21.83%***	***21.80%***	*22.21%*	*23.5%*	*24%*	*24.50%*
Organic recycling rate	**19.34%**	**18.71%**	20%	20.5%	21%	21.5%
Tamworth organic recycling rate	***14.30%***	***13.20%***	*11.53%*	*15.25%*	*15.5%*	*16%*
Lichfield District organic recycling rate	***22.80%***	***22.52%***	*19.88%*	*25.75%*	*26.5%*	*27%*
Food recycling rate	**n/a**	**n/a**	0%	10%	15%	20%
Tamworth food recycling rate	***n/a***	***n/a***	*0%*	*10%*	*15%*	*20%*
Lichfield District food recycling rate	***n/a***	***n/a***	*0%*	*10%*	*15%*	*20%*
Overall recycling rate	**41.70%**	**40.88%**	39.28	54%	60%	66%
Reduce residual waste						
Residual waste weights per household (kgs)	**470.92**	**474.72**	468.7	465	460	455
Tamworth residual weights (kgs)	***492.89***	***506.31***	*481.74*	*490*	*480*	*470*
Lichfield District residual weights (kgs)	***455.22***	***452.21***	*459.51*	*440*	*430*	*420*
Reduce contamination rate						
Number of rejected loads	**1**	**1**	0	0	0	0
Missed bins per 1000 collections	**0.46**	**0.43**	0.48	0.4	0.38	0.36
% of missed bins that are missed assisted collections	**15.49%**	**17.65%**	22%	13%	11%	10%
Increase resident satisfaction						
Customer satisfaction rate	***n/a***	***n/a***	50%	60%	70%	80%
Compliments	**9**	**8**	**13**	12	14	16
Upheld complaints	**16**	**24**	**19**	13	10	8
Achieve cost efficiency						
£ collection per household	**£57.11**	**£56.92**	£56.50	£56	£55.50	£55

KPI	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026*	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
NEW high-level stats						
Number of bins per year Joint Waste*	8,488,761	8,816,589	9,182,693	13,342,693	13,876,400	14,292,692
Number of bins per year Lichfield District*	4,948,948	5,148,888	5,802,186	7,832,161	8,145,447	8,389,810
Number of bins per year Tamworth*	3,539,813	3,667,701	3,810,817	5,510532	5,730,953	5,904,462
Deliver a committed workforce						
Agency spend	**£634,732**	**£595,522**	£688,402**	£609,120	£627,390	£646,210
Vehicle accidents	**47**	**56**	67	40	35	30
Personal accidents	**5**	**11**	21	6	4	2
Frontline days lost to long term sickness absence*	**778**	**721**	**980**	668	660	634
Frontline days lost to short term sickness absence*	**356**	**322**	**283**	310	296	258
Greener service						
Fleet carbon emissions – without targeted action	1,005,990	1,074,388	1,108,338	1,268,212	1,353,175	1,443,838

**Estimate at this stage as full figures will not be known until April 2026.*
***Increased agency due to higher levels of long-term/terminal sickness and snowy weather.*

Rationale

- **Number of bins:** These yearly figures are based on actual jobs on the system across both Tamworth and Lichfield District (so if a property has multiple bins, this is reflected), multiplied by the collection frequency, and divided by the agreed property count. As household numbers grow and change (due to housing growth and demolition) and residents do not always put their bins out every week, it is not possible to provide an absolute number, so these are guideline figures only. The annual increase is based on housing growth projections.
- **Long term sickness**: A small reduction of ~3.6% and ~2.2% respectively, acknowledging age-related health challenges.
- **Short term sickness**: Slightly more flexibility for minor improvements via new health care package and earlier intervention ~4.5% and ~3.7% reductions.

Appendix 2

Joint resource and waste strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, 2025 – 2045

Historically, waste management strategy has centred on recycling rate targets, both national and at a local level. For the Staffordshire Waste Partnership, this linked to a PFI funding deal target 55% recycling rate. Whilst this target remains and is ongoing, the current strategic direction for the Staffordshire Waste Partnership authorities focuses on reduction of waste sent directly to landfill, which was fully achieved during its term.

Recycling rates across the county have stalled in recent years, reflecting the national trend, and residual waste is increasing. Looking ahead from 2025, the strategic direction will focus on the reduction of residual waste by primarily concentrating on waste prevention and minimisation, as well as diversion, which will have knock on affects to improve recycling rates.

Linked to the National Resource and Waste Strategy (2018), there are several key pieces of legislation that are coming into force in the early years of the new term which will largely impact our finances and service delivery models. The main legislative changes are outlined below:

- **'Simpler Recycling' reforms** Mandatory separate food waste collections for businesses (along with dry recycling) from 2025, and for residents from 2026, with inclusion of film in dry recycling from 2027.
- **Extended producer responsibility for packaging** Industry scheme to fund material collection, treatment, processing, disposal by local authorities from 2026.
- **Deposit return scheme** Reverse vending (or digital) scheme to encourage public recycling on the go for a monetary voucher, from 2027.
- **Emissions trading scheme** Inclusion of emissions from incinerators in the existing carbon tax scheme, with pass through costs to councils, from 2028.

To meet these new legislative requirements in a cost effective and efficient manner and further compounded by the increasing need for standardisation and collaboration as we head towards devolution, SWP authorities are committed to joint approaches to resource and waste management that creates a holistic system to provide the best value for money for the taxpayer.

The overarching vision of the strategy is to build upon the success of meeting our target to send zero waste direct to landfill by working together with residents and businesses to reclaim waste as a resource for the environmental, social and economic benefit of our area.

The following core principles set out our commitments - waste reduction, customer engagement, service performance, value for money and environmental sustainability.

These core principles will be delivered through a single implementation plan as a partnership, although also highlighting any local requirements as applicable, and through a joint communications strategy. Key projects to be delivered urgently are:

- A review of all current waste infrastructure, including transfer station provision and processing facility competition, to highlight operational gaps and feasibility of large-scale infrastructure development opportunities.
- Joint procurement of food waste equipment and treatment contracts, alongside joint communications campaigns for the new services to promote operational standardisation and consistent messaging to all Staffordshire residents.
- In-depth assessment of current waste composition to determine key areas of focus for minimisation and prevention projects, including the main waste streams (dry recycling and residual waste) and collection methodologies (kerbside and HWRCs).
- Collating data to further provide a baseline of current practices and to offer Central Government the necessary details required for future schemes, such as EPR payments and DRS impacts.

All documentation will be reviewed every five years over the 20-year term of the strategy, and where any large changes impact the strategic development, a revision can be drafted accordingly.

The strategy is currently delayed whilst awaiting further details on devolution plans, and it scheduled for public consultation in early 2026 and launch thereafter.

Appendix 3
Simpler recycling SWOT analysis

Strengths:

Enhanced recycling programs: The introduction of dual-stream recycling collections in 2022 has improved the quality of recyclable materials by reducing contamination. This system separates paper and cardboard from other recyclables, leading to more efficient recycling processes.

Community engagement: The #RecycleForGood campaign, launched in November 2024, demonstrates a strong commitment to community involvement. By collaborating with residents, the initiative fosters a culture of environmental responsibility and encourages better recycling practices.

Proactive adaptation: The councils' implementation of a new food waste collection in 2026 aligns with national waste management goals. This proactive approach showcases adaptability and readiness to meet future regulations, positioning the service as a forward-thinking entity.

Weaknesses:

Resource allocation: Implementing new recycling initiatives requires substantial investment in infrastructure, such as specialised collection vehicles and containers. This financial burden could strain existing budgets and necessitate careful financial planning.

Public adaptation: Transitioning to new recycling systems may initially confuse residents, leading to improper sorting and increased contamination rates. Continuous education and clear communication are essential to mitigate this challenge.

Opportunities:

Increased recycling rates: Simpler and more efficient recycling systems can boost participation rates, leading to higher volumes of recycled materials and contributing to environmental sustainability.

Cost savings: Effective recycling programs can reduce the volume of waste sent to landfills, resulting in cost savings on landfill taxes and associated expenses. These funds can be redirected to enhance other community services.

Technological advancements: Embracing new technologies in waste collection and processing can improve efficiency, reduce operational costs, and provide data-driven insights for continuous improvement.

Threats:

Policy changes: Future alterations in national waste management policies or funding structures could impact the sustainability of current initiatives. Staying informed and adaptable is crucial to navigate potential regulatory shifts.

Public resistance: Despite the benefits, some community members may resist changes to waste collection routines, leading to non-compliance or negative perceptions of the service. Engaging with the community and addressing concerns transparently is vital.

External factors: Market fluctuations in the recycling industry, such as changes in the value of recyclable materials or international trade policies, could affect the economic viability of recycling programs.