

**Questions for the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment & Planning Policy, Cllr
Rob Broom re recycling in flat blocks**

- What are your priorities for improving recycling in Stevenage?

Ensuring all households, including flats, have access to recycling and food waste collections, improving recycling rates, continued education campaigns and promotion of the benefits of recycling for our environment.

- What target are you setting for Stevenage regarding improved recycling and over what time period?

Our recycling rate is currently 39% - the national average is around 44%.

Our aim is to meet the Council's target of 60% by 2030 and the Government target of 65% by 2035.

Looking to achieve a participation rate of between 50% - 70% (it's a variable percentage across UK) for food waste after 2 years.

Need to review the 'composition analysis' of our waste in Feb 2026 to see what we need to target/highlight to be removed from general waste and into the correct recycling streams.

(Composition analysis is where a suitable company assesses the contents of a sample selection of residual waste from a range of properties / locations, to understand if residents are maximising the recycling services at the kerbside i.e. assessing how much recycling matter is still being put into the black residual waste bin).

- What do you perceive to be the biggest barriers for improved recycling?

Improving recycling facilities at flat blocks and maximising resident participation.

- What are your thoughts on encouraging recycling with a recycling champion for a flat block or area?

Recycling champions would be a good initiative to work alongside Officers to promote and encourage recycling.

We would need to explore if others have done this and what they've learnt and achieved and any learning points for such schemes.

- Do you see LGR as a possible threat to keeping a direct refuse and recycling service or could it be a benefit to local residents?

It is difficult to predict the policies and preferred waste and recycling methods for new unitary authorities that don't yet exist.

We are very proud of our directly delivered services – the teams take pride in what they do and having our own workforce enables us to be very flexible and adaptive to change, as we saw during Covid when team members were switched from grounds maintenance to waste and recycling to enable the service to keep operating.

Across Hertfordshire there is currently a mix of contracted out and directly delivered services.

Value for money and service quality will I'm sure be key considerations for any future service delivery.

- What would you hope recycling in Stevenage would look like in 5 years time? What about 10?

We would hope that recycling rates in Stevenage would be improved, meeting the target of 60% and beyond.

However, there are some unknowns in terms of the impact the proposed Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility will have on recycling in Stevenage, and that means it can be tricky to predict.

What we're doing though in terms of implementing separate weekly food waste collection from March 2026, improving recycling services at flat blocks and bring sites; all help us to create the best environment to support recycling participation, and I think we're heading in the right direction.

- What does a successful recycling infrastructure look like to you?

One that enables all residents to be able to recycle by providing the necessary facilities to do so.

With clear guidance on how to recycle, using the range of containers.

I also want to support the officers to provide an optimised operational service, for the crews to complete their work safely and efficiently.

- How do you think we should measure the success? E.g. by volume of recycling, residential engagement, etc.

The nationally recognised way to measure success is by the recycling rate (tonnages of waste, recycling and organics and % recycled). However, engagement with residents for levels of satisfaction and feedback is also important.

Questions for the neighbouring Hertfordshire district authority of Dacorum re how they addressed recycling in flat blocks

- Please can you describe the level of recycling that you were achieving at Dacorum in your flat blocks prior to a dedicated project to improve recycling in flat blocks and what they were following the project, and have the levels of improved recycling continued?
- How many flat blocks, both Council stock and private does your service cover? Is there a difference between private and council stock recycling rates?
- What were the barriers to improving recycling in flat blocks and how did you overcome them?
- Do you have issues with commercial businesses misusing communal bring bank sites in your area? If so what have you done to try and remedy this?
- Do you have any capacity to stop third parties fly tipping rubbish/recycling into communal bin areas in flat blocks by key codes for residents etc.?
- We're there particular types of flats e.g. high rise, private housing that you have found more difficult to work with? Why?
- Did you have many issues with contamination? If so, what did you do about this?
- How did you engage the Community? Before / during roll out. What approaches do you think worked best? 4. Where there any physical or logistical changes needed? E.g. accessibility, bin storage?
- Did you have to adapt collections?
- If you had to start again what is the biggest lesson you have learned/ what would you change?