



The Chartered Institution
of Wastes Management
North West Centre Council

Local 
Partnerships

Delivering Waste Efficiencies in the North West



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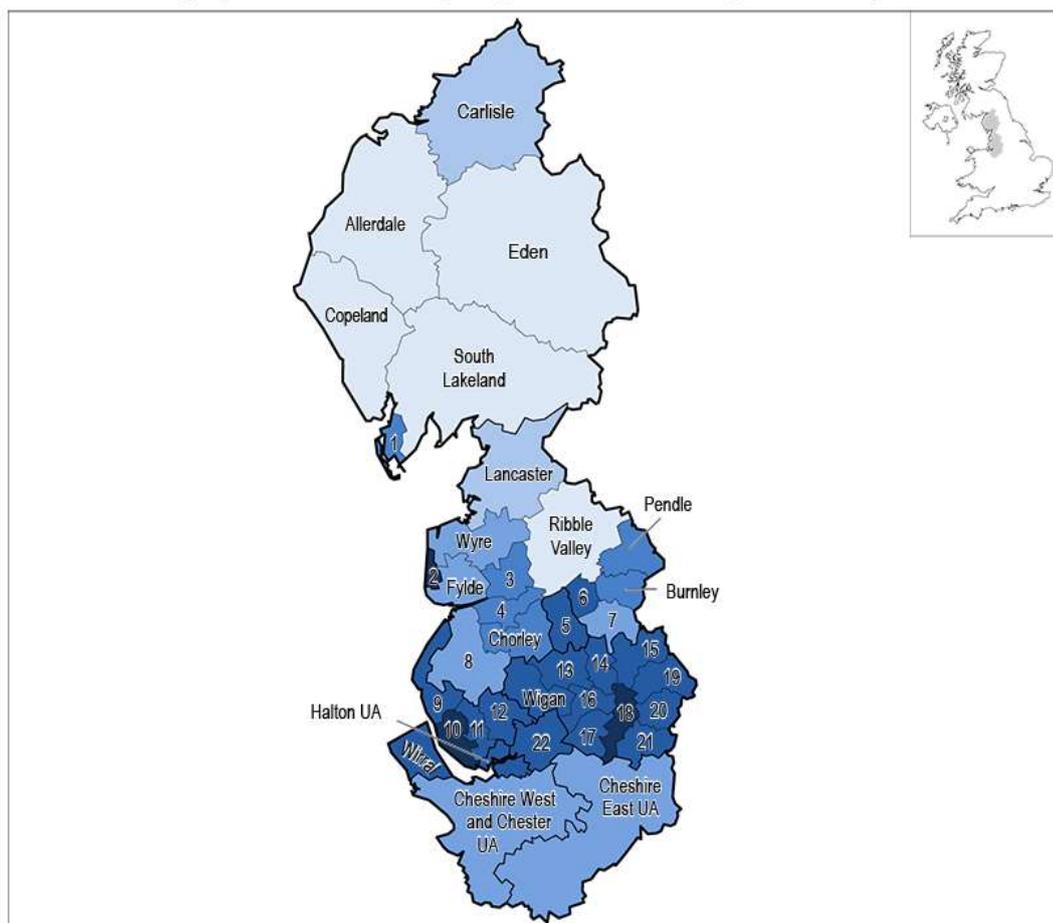
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Introduction

There are 43 authorities in the North West, a mixture of; 15 metropolitan districts in Greater Manchester and Merseyside, 18 District authorities in Cumbria and Lancashire, 6 Unitary authorities, 2 County Councils and 2 Statutory Joint Waste Disposal Authorities. Like all authorities across the UK testing times continue, as resources are reduced but service expectations remain high. Great strides have been made in delivering efficiencies in budget, in order to protect public services, even enhance them, and this continues to be one of the biggest challenges local authorities face.

Figure 1: Authorities in the North West¹



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Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2012

Key for the authorities numbered in figure 1 above:

1 Barrow-in-Furness	12 St. Helens
2 Blackpool UA	13 Bolton
3 Preston	14 Bury
4 South Ribble	15 Rochdale
5 Blackburn with Darwen UA	16 Salford
6 Hyndburn	17 Trafford
7 Rossendale	18 Manchester
8 West Lancashire	19 Oldham
9 Sefton	20 Tameside
10 Liverpool	21 Stockport
11 Knowsley	22 Warrington UA

¹ Map is colour coded from light to dark to illustrate increasing population density based on 2010 data

Context

This is the fifth regional review undertaken by Local Partnerships focusing on efficiencies achieved in waste management. The previous four reviews, focusing on Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East, West Midlands and London provided a wealth of information to decision makers and stakeholders; this review continues the work of the previous reports in terms of building upon the bank of knowledge being generated in this area. The previous reviews are available for download at <http://www.localpartnerships.org.uk/publications>.

Throughout the North West authorities have successfully delivered efficiencies in a number of areas. The examples provided throughout this report will enable others to benefit from these experiences; particularly in terms of examining their own services and seeing if the experiences here could be applied to their authority and support them in making their own savings. As with the previous reviews the examples shown by authorities in the North West have not just focused on one specific area or aspect of waste management, but have explored a range of options to achieve efficiencies. This is clearly reflected in the wide diversity of examples featured.

All 43 authorities in the North West were given the opportunity to contribute to the review; a profile was prepared for each authority with a request for further information to highlight the progress made to date and any lessons learnt which can be shared with others. A workshop was also held to provide feedback and the chance for authorities to benchmark themselves and provide any final pieces of data and information. A total of 22 responded to the request for further information. It is worth noting at this stage that a significant number of authorities expressed a desire to take part in the review but felt that they had insufficient resources in terms of staff time to pull together the information required. This certainly reflects the current climate that authorities find themselves operating within, in terms of ever decreasing budgets and the impact on staffing and capacity.

It is also worth noting that a number of authorities in Lancashire were undergoing a detailed service review at the same time as this project; this is in respect to the current cost sharing agreement between the WDA and the WCAs coming to an end in March 2018. The cost sharing agreement was set up to encourage investment in kerbside recycling services by incentivising WCAs to provide a minimum 3-stream waste collection service to over 90% of households. When this payment ends it is currently not planned to be replaced with any other mechanism and obviously this will impact upon services financially supported by this cost sharing agreement. For a couple of authorities taking part in the service review limited resources have meant that they have had to respectfully decline to take part in the North West Efficiencies Review at this time.

The authorities who took part are:

Metropolitan Districts / Districts		County Councils	Statutory Waste Disposal Authority's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolton • Burnley • Bury • Hyndburn • Knowsley • Oldham • Pendle • Preston • Ribble Valley • Rochdale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossendale • St Helens • Sefton • South Lakeland • South Ribble • Tameside • Trafford • Wirral • Wyre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumbria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMWDA • MRWA

The individual profiles for these authorities can be found in Appendix 1. Examples of their achievements are given in the main body of the report. The responses from the authorities have not been audited in any way and therefore the information presented in this report is based on the information that the authorities kindly provided.

The Authorities in the North West

The North West region covers 14,100 square kilometres (sq. km) and is the third largest region in the UK in population terms; it has an increasing population that is currently around 7 million (Office of National Statistics, 2010). Population density varies from 2,100 people per sq. km in the urban conurbation of Merseyside compared to 70 people per sq. km in the largely rural area of Cumbria. The region has the second largest area of National Parks in England, the highest mountain (Scafell Pike) and the largest lake (Windermere).

There are a number of strategic waste partnerships in place in the region including Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership, Lancashire Waste Partnership and the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership. The Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership consists of Cumbria County Council and its 6 constituent district authorities. Lancashire Waste Partnership is a large partnership consisting of Lancashire County Council, its 12 district authorities, and 2 unitary authorities. The Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership consists of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and its 5 metropolitan district authorities plus one unitary authority. In addition the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal authority works with its partners - Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester) Ltd, Recycle for Greater Manchester (R4GM) as well as the 9 districts of Greater Manchester - to deliver a range of waste and resource management services.

As with the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber, 'in-house' dominates the collection services of those who took part in the review, with only 5 of the authorities having outsourced their collection arrangement. Virtually all provide an alternate week collection service, for residual, dry recycle and garden waste collection, although two authorities have recently embarked upon a 3 weekly collection of residual and dry recycle; a more detailed case study features later in the report. One authority provides a weekly collection of residual. In terms of

the systems in place for collection of dry recyclables at the kerbside, the majority provide a comingled collection. Virtually all in the review currently provide a free garden waste collection; only 2 authorities charge for this service which is slightly at odds with the national picture with 42% of authorities in England charging for collection of garden waste (WRAP 2014/15). The difference is mainly due to a predominance of mixed food and garden waste collection; separate food waste collection is virtually non-existent, with only 2 authorities offering a separate weekly food waste collection, and 9 of the authorities collecting food with their garden waste. One authority offers a mix of both types of collection, with separate food waste targeted at high density terrace properties, whilst the majority of the households in that authority receive a mixed food and garden waste collection. In England 31% authorities now have a separate food waste collection and only 17% collect mixed food and garden (WRAP 2014/15). It should be noted that of the 9 authorities featured in the review with a mixed food and garden collection, 5 are from Lancashire and as of 31st March 2016, the IVC facility which processes their material will be closed as part of the County Council's cost saving measures². Facilities for the composting of garden waste only will be provided by the WDA from 1st April. Clearly this will impact upon those WCAs offering a mixed food and garden waste collection as there will no longer be a treatment option provided by the WDA, and changes in service can be expected.

The challenge of budget cuts remains the most pressing concern whether at WCA or WDA level and this latest review charts the ongoing pressures facing local government in providing a comprehensive service with ever diminishing resources.

Refer to Appendix 2 for an overview of the waste collection profile of the district and unitary authorities that took part in the review.

Regional Performance

According to the latest figures from Defra for 2014/15, two of the authorities in this review are achieving over 50% recycling rate, with one of those authorities reaching 61.9%. Performance varies with eleven yet to reach 40% (albeit some are getting very close and figures supplied by two local authorities, for December 2015, show dramatic improvements in performance), and the remaining nine in the 40-50% range with more than half getting close to the target figure of 50%. Very few authorities in the review offer food collection and many feel that increasing the percentage for recycling will only be possible if separate food waste is added to the kerbside collection service. Appetite varies widely for this at present, largely due to capital and revenue costs required (depending on the location of the authority in this varied region), current collection arrangements which may be restrictive and/or availability of treatment and processing options. It is worth noting that the overwhelming driver for the authorities in the review is economics; a need to generate financial savings from the service over and above any other benefits. There was a strong feeling that action will not necessarily be taken simply to generate an increase in percentage points for recycling; the main priority is generating value for money services within a limited public budget.

In terms of changes over time, for many in the review recycling rates appear to have stagnated a little over the last three year; a trend that has been seen in many authorities across the UK.

² Closure of the IVC facility is reported to be part of a phased closure of the PFI funded Waste Technology Park, including the MBT facility, which will have an impact upon the WCAs in terms of waste treatment and management. This current scenario reflects the ongoing challenges that face two tier arrangements, where budgetary decisions within one tier can have a significant and profound effect on another and require authorities to be constantly looking for new ways to generate efficiencies.

For some who have implemented service changes, this appears to have had a positive effect on recycling rates, for example Bury and Rochdale whose internal data is showing a significant increase in recycling in 2015 through reducing frequency of collection whilst maintaining overall capacity available. Others have experienced a slight decline in recycling rates. Various reasons were given for this, notably reduced staffing and resources impacting upon communication and engagement, enforcement and training.

For further information on performance data refer to Appendix 3; the table includes all authorities in the region, with those who participated in the review highlighted.

As a region a recycling rate of 46.5% is being achieved, rating the region third from top in terms of performance in England. Percentage sent to landfill remains high at 31.8%, but kg/household residual waste is low compared to other regions.

Delivering Efficiencies

All authorities continue to deliver good quality waste services, building on current levels of performance, whilst at the same time delivering significant financial savings. Budgets have been cut and look set to continue to decrease over the coming years and all departments have to demonstrate savings through efficiencies.

A study³ by the Association for Public Services Excellence (APSE), in response to the question 'What efficiencies are you currently working towards or proposing', found that the main areas identified to deliver savings in relation to the waste service were:

- Route optimisation leading to reduction in crews and vehicles and the introduction of double-shifting;
- Reductions in management structures;
- Increasing income from chargeable services and closing or reducing operational hours of HWRC's;
- Renegotiation of contracts and reduced landfill disposal costs;
- Introducing fuel saving technologies; and,
- Merging services with neighbouring authorities to reduce costs, brought about by shared service structures

It is clear from the APSE report that reducing service delivery costs whilst increasing income generation will be the focus of service managers across the UK. In addition the decision to share service delivery with adjoining authorities is becoming something which more local authorities are considering and in some cases implementing.

Depending on the local circumstances of each authority the impact of efficiencies in these individual areas, in terms of the size of the saving achieved, can vary but collectively can equate to a considerable sum. This is reflected by the examples covered in this report where authorities in the North West have delivered major savings in waste budgets focusing on the following areas or key issues:

³ State of the Market Survey 2015 - Local Authority Refuse Services, May 2015. This can be accessed through <http://apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/members-area/briefings/2015/15-27-local-authority-refuse-and-recycling-services-state-of-the-market-survey-report-2015/>

- Route optimisation & round efficiencies;
- Streamlining services;
- Introducing charging;
- Joint procurement;
- HWRC optimisation;
- Maximising income and value from the service;
- Rationalising staffing;
- Changing collection frequency;
- Contract savings and management;
- Food waste reduction;
- Reducing waste disposal costs;
- Promotion and support of Reuse.

Success in Partnership Working

The opportunities presented to deliver efficiencies through joint working have been increasingly documented. The LGA report “Services Shared: Costs Spared?” provides a detailed analysis of five high profile shared service arrangements; clear financial benefits have been achieved with the five shared services saving £30m between them.

Lessons learnt from this LGA study include:

- The set up and integration costs for merging services are modest with less than a two year payback period for all the shared services analysed;
- The shared services have succeeded in providing the same or better levels of performance at less cost;
- These initial benefits are typically delivered rapidly with strong top-down leadership;
- Baseline financial and performance information is essential to make the case for change and track the benefits of shared services in terms of efficiencies and service improvements; and,
- Expanding established shared services to provide services for other public sector partners in a locality is a useful way to generate income and ensure efficiencies through greater economies of scale. In addition to the efficiencies which can be achieved, other advantages to joint working at this level include the opportunity for partners to harmonise best practice across their services, making adjustments where practicable and sharing best practice to a greater extent. In addition, coming together as a partnership and delivering the service ‘as one’ may make the addition of a particular material or change in a service more affordable and appropriate than when acting alone.

Partnership working is not without its challenges, specifically in terms of successfully bringing authorities together who may have different operational practices, budgets, political preferences and local geography and circumstances. A number of traditional partnerships, as in two tier arrangements, are active in the North West and some of the examples included in

the review and in the individual authority profiles in Appendix 1, allude to both the challenges of working together and also the benefits. However partnership arrangements are now starting to go further than traditional set-ups, as authorities seek new ways of working together to maximise benefits for all partners. One such example is as an arrangement of mutual benefit in terms of maximising use of available treatment capacity and is presented in more detail in case study 1.

Case Study 1: GMWDA and Merseyside

Available treatment capacity, in both thermal and MBT facilities, as a result of reduced waste arising, has meant that **GMWDA** has been able to enter into Section 101 agreements with a number of other local authorities in order to make use of this capacity and generate an income stream. Over the last three years around 200,000 tonnes of waste has been processed through the GMWDA facilities under these arrangements, providing other authorities with access to modern, sustainable waste management facilities at a competitive rate and generating an income that assists GMWDA in meeting austerity targets. **MWDA** is one authority that has made use of the spare capacity as part of a 3 year programme of interim waste treatment contracts, procured in the period from financial close on the Resource Recovery contract (EfW) in 2013 to its proposed operational start in late 2016. All interim contracts are at less cost than landfill and will save over £4M compared to landfill.

Good Practice in Delivering Efficiencies

As already discussed and as demonstrated in the other four regional reviews, the manner in which efficiencies can be delivered varies as does the financial saving which can be made. The range of examples of what authorities have successfully achieved in delivering efficiencies in the North West are broad and details of their successes are given below.

Route optimisation & round efficiencies

Ensuring rounds are fully optimised in terms of the time it takes to collect the waste or recycle and number of vehicles required continues to be a priority for a lot of authorities and the North West region is no exception.

In **Pendle**, route optimisation work undertaken resulted in a reduction of the number of personnel required on domestic waste collection services in 5 out of 10 collection days. This has led to annual saving **£58,000** for the authority.

Rossendale achieved significant savings through a move to 'area based working'. Implemented during the third quarter of 2014, the change enabled the Council to make the most of how it uses its staff, deploying 2 Loaders from each vehicle onto cleansing activities during periods when vehicles are travelling to and from tipping facilities. Further savings (**£100,000**), have previously been realised as a result of staff reduction and operational changes to Street Cleansing due to the introduction of Area Based Working and associated elements of cleansing being delivered by waste operatives. The impact on fuel usage has been positive; usage for October/ November indicates 6,000 litres less was used in 2014 in comparison to the previous year. This figure when applied to a full year forecast amounts to 36,000 litres less fuel usage.

Bolton has also benefited from redesigning its collection service, moving to zonal working using route optimisation software to produce the most efficient collection rounds across all aspects of the service. A saving of **£395,000** has been achieved as a result of a reduction in vehicles, staff and fuel.

Tameside completed a review of the working patterns and hours of the operational teams. Restructuring the days and moving from a 4 day week to a 5 day week has enabled the service

to increase productivity from 8 million collections per annum to 12 million collections per annum. This change in working patterns has reduced overtime making a saving there, and increased the overall efficiency of the service. Along with other raft of other initiatives this has contributed to a reduction in operating costs of **£1.9M**.

Route optimisation can also be used very successfully in avoiding future costs. For example, **Ribble Valley** have been using round optimisation to absorb household waste growth of around 7.5% by 2017 across the current collection rounds. This is expected to contribute around **£350,000** a year in avoided costs.

In **St. Helens** efficiencies in residual waste collection rounds has resulted in a reduction in vehicles and staff required; equivalent to **£138,000** per annum in savings.

Similarly in **South Lakeland** round optimisation and procurement of fuel efficient vehicles has delivered savings of 30,000 litres of fuel in 2015/16, valued at approximately **£40,000**. In addition to the optimised routes and fuel efficiency, investment in new Resource Recovery Vehicle's also allows more materials to be collected from the kerbside; plastic and card will be added to the collection of paper, glass, and cans and this will be rolled throughout the district during 2016 /17. South Lakeland are also exploring the collection of food waste on the same vehicles, however outlets are yet to be sourced for this material.

For **Sefton** the savings were generated by the introduction of a night operation to maximise productivity in the street cleansing services when roads are quiet and more can be achieved in less time. For example all arterial route cleansing has been moved to the night operations team, as has rapid response team to deal with graffiti and flytipping and emptying of litter bins in some areas. This has had a significant impact on services; **£300,000** was taken out of the street cleansing budget, but by introducing the night service operation the same level of service can be provided on a reduced budget.

Reducing residual capacity

Stimulating behaviour change and maximising participation in recycling can be achieved by a number of different means, including reducing the available residual capacity. **Bolton** has approved plans to roll out a programme aimed at restricting residual capacity and as a result generate savings of **£1,250,000 per year**. From June 2016 to November 2016 all 240 litre grey bins, used to collect residual waste, will be exchanged for 140 litre bins. In preparation a borough wide engagement campaign is underway to door knock all households (minimum 40% contact rate) and increase the number of residents recycling. Results are already being seen ahead of the changes, with the tonnage of the grey residual bin decreasing and recycling increasing, therefore there is confidence that the predicted savings will be achieved.

Tameside introduced a scheme called Bin Swap in 2015, switching the use of the residual black 180 litre bin with the recycling green 140 litre bin. This provided less landfill capacity for residents and more recycling capacity, resulting in a diversion of a further 25% of landfill waste (on average), away from landfill. Along with a number of other initiatives this contributed to a reduction in operating costs of **£1.9M** and a reduction in the levy in the region of **£3M** per annum.

Oldham is currently looking into the possibility of replacing 240 litre residual bins with 140 litre bins; this is currently under debate with Members and a decision is expected 2016/17.

Streamlining services

Streamlining services can take many forms including modifying, merging, reducing or even eliminating services that may be underperforming or high cost to deliver. In **Trafford**, as a result

of an increased range of materials collected at the kerbside, the Council decided to rationalise the number of bring sites from 35 sites to 10 sites. This resulted in operational savings of **£100,000** per annum.

Wyre went one step further when as a result of deciding to remove all bring sites across the borough prior to retendering, due to misuse and anti-social behaviour, it was found that this resulted in significant financial savings. Whilst recycling diversion rates were reduced by approximately 0.5%, the savings realised for street cleansing and the Contact Centre teams in no longer having to service the bring sites and handle associated complaints, far outweighed the percentage reduction.

Wirral focused on reducing street cleansings frequencies across the Borough; areas that were cleansed weekly are now cleansed every four weeks and areas that were originally cleansed every four weeks are now on a twelve-weekly schedule. This has resulted in a **£1 million reduction** from the core contract. Detailed monitoring is ongoing, with the intention to better target resources where they are required in the future.

Pendle have also revised their street cleansing programme which has resulted in a reduction in the mechanical street cleansing fleet by one vehicle and one operative. The saving achieved was forecasted to be **£34,760**. Pendle have also looked at how other aspects of the service can be streamlined and one area of focus was how to manage the collection schedule to cover days not worked over the Christmas and New Year period. Instead of hiring additional vehicles and labour the crew worked the Saturday before and after the Christmas period saving **£5740**. The intention is to continue to review the programme of activity for each Christmas period to see if further cost savings and efficiencies can be made. Streamlining of staff has also taken place. Following a review of the collection schemes a decision was made to remove the staff specifically employed to carry out block assisted collection; this generated savings of around **£23,000 per annum**.

For **Knowsley** bringing to a close the commercial waste collection service has brought significant financial savings in the order of **£100,000 per annum** through reduction in crews, vehicles, management costs etc.

Integration of services is where **Ribble Valley** has realised benefits. The collection of trade waste has been integrated with the collection of domestic waste across each of its collection rounds so that efficiencies are delivered in one pass of a single collection vehicle. Using round optimisation software the Council has been able to avoid costs of around **£100,000** required to operate a separate waste collection round. This also prevented trade customers facing a potential 40% increase in charges. Therefore they have found that the integration of trade waste collections into the domestic collection system is more efficient and therefore more cost effective to the Council and its customers. **Ribble Valley** has also focused on how it can streamline the service to cost-effectively and efficiently collect relatively small waste streams from a small number of domestic properties spread over a large rural area. The answer was to implement split bodied collection vehicles to enable two waste streams to be separately collected in one pass.

In **Preston** streamlining of the collection service was made possible by the introduction of 180 litre recycling bins, replacing the previous kerbside box system. Whilst the change was primarily focussed on the new wheeled bins, round restructuring and changes to vehicle fleet also helped reduce the workforce by 11 posts (all lost through natural wastage, no redundancies), as well as reducing the overall number of recycling rounds from ten to six. Overall the changes are projected to save over **£1,000,000** over the full pay back period of the wheeled bin rollout (14

years). However the project has been more effective than projected and greater savings are anticipated through increased round efficiencies

Hyndburn reviewed its collection costs and streamlined its services by moving collection of fly-tipped waste and rural properties to main domestic collection rounds to save separate crews and vehicles. In addition a partnership agreement has been made with a neighbouring council within a rural village (where the boundary is down the middle of the village) to do green collections in exchange for street cleaning and weed control. There is no direct financial exchange but it allows each council to remove one set of services from the area. Finally Enforcement Officers have been brought into the Waste Service area with each officer working with one crew over their entire collection route. This has led to greater understanding and improved efficiencies by the two teams working closely together. Driver /Team Leaders have also shadowed the enforcement officers for a couple of weeks to highlight the difficulties in taking enforcement action.

Introducing new services

Tameside introduced a weekly food and garden waste collection system to all properties. There was a heavy focus on education and delivery of the correct facilities. This allowed a diversion of heavy food and garden waste away from landfill and the charges associated with it and along with a number of other initiatives contributed to a reduction in operating costs of **£1.9M** and a reduction in the levy in the region of **£3M** per annum.

Charging

One area where we have seen an increase in activity across all the regions that have been reviewed, is charging for aspects of the waste service where this is legally allowed; specifically garden and bulky waste collections and replacement containers for collection. The general aim for most authorities when introducing a charge is for this aspect of the service to be self-financing at the very least. Whilst not many authorities have gone down this route in the North West, those that have are clearly making financial savings from doing so. For example, **Pendle** has introduced a subscribed service for garden waste collections of £25 per bin per annum resulting in an **income of £200,000** and **resource savings equating to £28,000**. Similarly, **Wirral** has introduced a £35 charge for garden waste collection (£30 for online subscriptions and £20 for each additional bin collected) resulting in **£1.1 million saving** over 3 years compared to operating a free garden waste scheme available to all. Other authorities are considering implementing a charge for garden waste collection but have yet to do so; **Burnley** for example are considering this as a potential future option and have **estimated savings of around £200,000 per annum**.

Bulky waste charges have also been a consideration and in **St Helens** a tiered approach has been adopted. Bulky waste is categorised as white goods, normal bulky items (items too large to fit into bin) and special bulky (large, heavy items). The authority started charging £25.00 for up to three items of special bulky in December 2014. The number of requests for a collection when the service was free was 35 per week, whereas since charging began it has averaged around 20 per week. In October 2015 a charge of £15 for three items was also implemented for the other two categories; white goods and normal bulky. With the expected reductions in orders and income from the charges service costs are expected to reduce and savings are anticipated in the region of **£50,000**.

Charging for replacement bins is increasingly occurring as authorities look for means to cover costs. In **Knowsley**, there is currently a charge imposed for replacement wheeled bins at £23 per bin; the projected income from this charge is around **£75,000 per annum**.

Joint procurement & procurement savings

Procurement costs can be high and negotiating with the market place can be a challenge in terms of securing a good deal. Therefore working together, to jointly procure a service or a product, reduces overall procurement costs and also has the potential to attract a better market price as a result of economies of scale.

MWRA procured 'Agripa' panels with prevention and recycling messages on RCV's on behalf of the authorities in the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership. This joint procurement saved **£20,000** compared with the cost of Districts procuring individually. Building on this theme of joint procurement, MWRA is currently exploring the potential for a joint food waste collection process across the districts.

When procuring a partnership contract with FCC, **South Ribble** made savings of around **£50,000** through adopting a very cost effective procurement process. Access to WRAP support and pulling in expertise from across the authority contributed to these savings.

Optimisation of HWRCs

Reviewing operational costs associated with running HWRCs has enabled decisions to improve the overall cost and efficiency of these sites. For example, **GMWDA** reviewed its 25 HWRCs, and this resulted in the closure of 6 sites, and construction of 1 new purpose built facility, saving **£600,000 per annum** in operating costs.

Maximising Income and Value

Reflecting the findings of the APSE report in terms of the focus of waste managers being reducing service delivery costs whilst increasing income generation, **GMWDA** provided a profitable solution to the spare residual capacity in Thermal and MBT facilities as a consequence of a reduction in waste arisings. Section 101 agreements with other authorities has seen 200,000 tonnes treated in the facilities and generated additional income for the authority. In addition, in an effort to maximise the value of HWRC waste, 60,000 to 90,000 tonnes per annum of HWRC residual waste, previously landfilled directly, is now processed via a shredder to create a fuel that can be processed to generate electricity and steam. Estimated net savings are **£3m per annum** (possibly more if higher end shredding number can be achieved).

Staffing

Reductions in the number of staff required to deliver a service (whilst maintaining an optimal level to ensure services can be delivered and managed effectively), can bring about financial savings through reduced wage bills and the associated on-costs of employment. Whilst recognising the potential adverse impact of a reduced capacity, a number of authorities have successfully realised financial benefits.

Knowsley has reduced the number of Environment Officers promoting recycling from 5 full time equivalent posts to 2 full time equivalent posts and in **St Helens** a restructure of management and administration resulted in reduced staffing leading to a saving of **£100,000**.

As a consequence of a strategic review within the **MRWA**, an EVR and Voluntary redundancy programme together with vacancy management has seen staff numbers reduced by 20%. Establishment savings are approximately **£200,000 per annum**.

Burnley restructured and amalgamated back office and the resultant changes in staffing in addition to the introduction of new IT Systems generated savings in the region of **£130,000 - £150,000**.

If a service is performing well and there is little for the public to complain or be concerned about, then this can provide an opportunity to reduce staffing levels in some areas of the service. For example, in **Wyre**, the performance to date of the waste collection contract has excelled, with a significant reduction in the number of missed bins and service related complaints along with a decline in the amount of residual waste to landfill. Satisfaction levels have increased to 82%. The reduction in service related complaints along with other efficiencies enabled the Council to reduce staffing levels within the Contact Centre with savings in the region of **£120,000**.

Collection frequency

This remains a much discussed area as authorities have moved to alternate or two weekly collections and reaped the financial benefits of doing so. **Knowsley** for example introduced alternate week collections generating savings of **£473,000 per annum**. In **Trafford** residual waste collection moved to two weekly using smaller 140 litre wheeled bins, and at the same time a weekly biowaste collection was introduced. This change has resulted in savings of **£1.2M per annum**, primarily as a result of reduced disposal costs. In addition, recycling rates increased and the Council now has a recycling rate of 61.9%.

In **Rossendale** the frequency of garden waste collection was reviewed and they operate an alternate weekly garden waste collection service between 1st March & 30th November, whilst during the winter an on demand service is provided to residents 1 day per fortnight and is available by telephoning the Council to request. Year on year savings achievable due to the seasonal reduction in Organic waste collections and less reliance on the back up round will amount to approximately **£60,000 per annum** based on round requirements. As part of a service review a number of further options have recently been discussed including introducing a charge for green waste collection or moving to 4 weekly collections.

Burnley also focused on garden waste collection and suspension of this service during winter months resulted in savings of **£20,000-£25,000 per annum** through avoided staff costs.

Bolton has made significant savings through the introduction of managed weekly collections. This involved the introduction of food waste collections to high density terraced housing that had not previously had a food waste collection service and also changing the frequency of residual waste collections from weekly to fortnightly. This resulted in a saving of **£2.6 million**, the majority of which was a saving in the cost of waste disposal.

Ribble Valley have focused on ensuring their weekly collection of residual waste alongside an alternate week collection of dry recyclate and mixed garden and food is cost effective and delivers the level of service required.

As collection frequency stays in the spotlight authorities are now keen to see the experience of others across the UK who are implementing bigger changes, for example three weekly residual collections. **Rochdale** has recently introduced a 3 weekly collection of residual waste and at the same time introduced food and garden waste to all households (it was previously available to only half the borough). Early recycling figures are encouraging; since the roll out in October 2015 recycling rates in December 2015 reached 49.4%, compared to 32.6% in December the previous year. This will have a positive impact on the councils disposal levy amounting to approximately **£500,000** in 2015/16 and a projected positive impact in 2016/17 of **over £1.5M**. A number of authorities have been applying a watching brief on the authorities that have implemented 3 weekly collections and the positive outcomes to date are encouraging. **Oldham** has declared that they are currently looking into this area and debating this with Members; a decision is expected in 2016/17 as to whether there will be a move to 3 weekly residual

collection. **Bury**, is another authority that has had success in this area and more insight into the impact of the changes can be seen in Case Study 2.

Case Study 2: Three Weekly Collections in Bury

In October 2014 **Bury** moved to a 3 weekly collection cycle for residual and dry recyclate; food and garden waste remained the same, collected every 2 weeks. It is worth noting that although frequency has changed the available capacity for households on a weekly basis has remained the same at 360 litres.

The main drivers for change were environmental and financial, with targets to achieve 60% recycling by 2016 and secure savings in excess of **£800,000** through reduced disposal costs.

In just 11 months there has been a significant impact on both tonnage of recyclate and food and garden waste collected, with just over 9% increase in tonnage in each of the comingled, paper and card, and food and garden bins, and a reduction in residual waste bins by 16.75%. The recycling rate⁴ is reported to be on average 54.18% (with a peak of 59.69% reached in July); this compares very favourably with a recycling rate of 47% achieved in 2013/14.

In preparation for the changes new collection rounds were developed and there was increased engagement and training with the crews. Recognising the role of the Contact Centre in responding to queries and concerns from the public additional staff and resources were invested and a communications and engagement programme was put in place. This included press articles, pre-collection leaflet, information pack and calendar, local presentations, area based targeted awareness raising, and workshops for specific community groups.

Also in recognition of the changes being imposed and to respond to any residents who may be concerned about the frequency of collection, the authority have agreed that residents can increase their capacity by requesting additional dry recyclate bins free of charge and they can also upsize from 140 litre bins to 240 litre bins for residual waste free of charge. Any additional residual bins are on an application only basis with a waste audit being conducted to establish need. In total, as of autumn 2015, 17,208 bins have been supplied across the service, including dry recyclate bins, (in response to residents requests) and a further 5,724 kitchen caddy's. Plus 2,183 properties have upsized to the larger residual bin. Only 464 applications have been made to date for an additional residual bin and of these 285 have been approved.

In terms of quality, 4 contaminated loads of biowaste have been reported over the first 11 months and 1 part load of paper/card. In addition 90-95% residual bins are presented with closed lids, with side waste (waste being placed alongside the wheelie bin) being a low level issue. Problems encountered with terrace back streets (of which there are approximately 25,000 properties of this type) have not increased. In addition street cleansing tonnages in general are reported to have reduced over the same period.

In terms of the success of the service change, over the first 11 months of the service significant savings have been made and the authority is on track to reach the target of £860,000 avoided costs as a result of reduced disposal. This saving has been made without an increase in operational costs and with no job losses. Recycling performance has improved significantly and the authority is on track to reach the target of 60% by 2016.

Contract savings and management

⁴ Please note this is the rate for collected bin waste only, rather than the NI192 rate.

Securing new contracts provides a major opportunity for reviewing service delivery, securing new and additional income and making considerable savings on the cost of delivery as a result of more favourable conditions. In addition reviewing existing contract terms and conditions and negotiating changes or extensions with the contractor also provides an excellent opportunity to reduce costs and deliver efficiencies in the immediate to long term.

MRWA procured a 3 year programme of interim waste treatment contracts in the period from financial close on the Resource Recovery contract (2013) to its proposed operational start in late 2016. All interim contracts are at less cost than landfill and will save **over £4M** compared to landfill.

In **Wyre**, procurement of a waste collection contract has enabled the waste collection service to be provided at a reduced cost of £2.2m per annum, and has delivered **annual savings of £1.4m**. Similarly in **South Ribble** procurement of a partnering contract with private sector will result in savings of **£9M over the 14 year life of the contract**.

Trafford has an outsourced waste collection contract for over 20 years, and in recent years a number of service changes and efficiencies have been realised through partnership working with the waste contractor. The current contract which includes a number of environmental and infrastructure services is required to deliver 20% savings against the net budget (approximately £2.25M in 2015/16).

For **Burnley** the recent waste and cleansing contract procurement exercise realised savings in the region of **£500k per annum** (approx. 20% saving) for the Council. The specification was kept broadly the same as the previous contract but focused upon an output specification. The aim of the procurement exercise was to realise significant savings whilst not reducing the quality of the service. The result was a new contract that has seen no reductions in service, in fact the opposite, additional street cleansing resource has been added into this new contract along with brand new vehicles with additional technology such as in cab reporting and on board cameras.

It is recognised that new contracts do not always mean the same level of savings for all involved if jointly procured. For example, **South Lakeland** jointly procured a new contract for the provision of a waste transfer station with Cumbria County Council. The new contract will generate a saving to **Cumbria** County Council of around **£140,000 net per annum**; for South Lakeland there will be additional costs, estimated at £15,000 net per annum.

Insourcing

The move towards bringing services back in house is being much discussed at present. For some authorities it has proved to be a positive move. In **Sefton**, insourcing all aspects of the service has resulted in significant avoided costs. It is estimated that with the additional material collected through the fully comingled service from July, the reduced levy payments from a reduction in residual waste volume needing to be treated by MWDA, and the avoided contract costs, equates to a saving of approximately **£1M**.

Food waste reduction

Cumbria has been pushing a number of initiatives across the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership; initiatives which have the potential to make significant savings and be of benefit environmentally and socially to the local area. The authority is promoting food waste digesters at a discounted price; 2770 households are diverting up to 410 tonnes per annum, and over 10 year lifespan, 4,100 tonne equates to over **£130,000 disposal savings**. The intention is to distribute 9,000 digesters, diverting 2,000 tonnes of food waste per annum. In addition, Cumbria is working with Inspira Children's services to add food waste minimisations as a focus

for local delivery of the National Citizen Service supporting 16-17 year olds to develop skills for work and life.

Oldham fully support separate food waste collection, to reduce the tonnage of food waste requiring disposal. In an effort to address contamination of food waste collections, the authority developed a compostable carrier bag which is available to local community stockists within areas where plastic bag contamination was causing issue. The compostable carrier bags can be used in the food waste collection without causing contamination. The savings associated reducing the levels of contamination are **£280,000 per annum**.

Promotion and support of Reuse

In addition to the focus on food waste **Cumbria** is also promoting a number of initiatives targeting reduction which will generate savings in disposal costs for the authority. Supporting the local Freegle groups and increasing its reach through the development of a Freegle app has resulted in over 40 tonnes of material reused and diverted from waste stream. In addition procurement of the Warpit portal to enable the council to offer its excess furniture and office equipment to the other organisations and the third sector for reuse for free has generated savings of **£9314** to date (taking into account disposal savings for the authority and procurement savings for the organisation collecting).

Lessons Learnt

This report highlights a number of areas where authorities in the North West have successfully taken on the challenge of delivering better value in waste services in this very difficult economic climate. The experience of the projects featured in this report shows that significant savings can be achieved, whilst continuing to deliver high and in some cases improved performance. However it is fair to say that a number of lessons have been learnt along the way, and the authorities have been very open in identifying key considerations which hopefully others can learn from. These lessons include:

Develop and maintain a long term strategic vision

A long term vision needs to be maintained when considering options for savings to avoid short term decisions being taken that then impact on the long term ability to deliver is the key advice from **GMWDA**. In addition delivering savings requires all parties to have common purpose and aims; this includes the WDA, WCAs and Contractor.

Knowsley also recognises the value of a long term vision and considers that clearly identifying drivers for change and developing the route map or strategy for addressing these matters is key to long term successes. They also recognise that whilst they may seek a long term strategic vision to aspire to (in their case a City Region footprint), they are aware of the challenges of working in partnership and turning this into a reality and therefore pursuing and having a vision for stand-alone local authority solutions is equally important.

No right or wrong answers to efficiencies

Hyndburn are very clear in their advice that there are no wrong suggestions only a difference in the level of efficiencies they provide. Some are monetary savings, some improve customer service and some just make it more efficient for staff. They go on to state that the simple act of reducing budgets does not make efficiencies, although this will focus minds to make

efficiencies. The time will come when the process cannot be streamlined further and further budget reductions will only be possible by changing the service provision and in local government this is very political. This is a very strong and pertinent point that it is very likely other authorities will concur with.

Cumbria also consider the point that there is more than one way to target and minimise a problem waste stream. Despite the current situation in Cumbria resulting in food waste collections appearing impractical and cost ineffective, Cumbria County Council has made significant effort to offer householders another option to deal with their food waste at home by providing discounted food waste digesters. This has been made possible via creative funding bids and partnership working.

Planning & Communications are key

For **Pendle**, their advice is that whenever introducing changes which affect frontline services it is important to start communicating with colleagues affected by the changes at the earliest opportunity. Being clear on the desired objectives and the reasons why the changes are being made with evidence to support management's case is essential. In addition for changes which specifically affect the public it is considered essential to communicate with residents through a mix of media/communications tools.

St Helens stress the importance to plan well ahead and give yourself time to consider the consequences of your actions. If possible run the service on a trial basis before rolling out across the authority. Ensure communication of information is distributed to the key elements of the service so everyone knows where they're going.

Trafford also concur with St Helens in terms of the need for planning and effective timescales. They stress the importance in not under estimating the lead in time to deliver the service changes. Effective engagement, consultation and management of messages is critical to obtaining buy in to deliver service changes and can take years from initial seeds of thought to fruition. **Wyre** also point out that its good practice to involve Overview and Scrutiny in the procurement process prior to going out to tender so they are brought in to review the documents in the early stages, and to do this significant planning ahead is required.

Rossendale have experience of the positive impact that good planning can have on the implementation of service change. When they rolled out 'area' based working it was anticipated to present challenges for a period of 4-6 weeks before bedding in. The reality was that following the initial 2 week period or first cycle of collections, the new system stabilised faster than anticipated. The main reason for this was the effectiveness of the plan and communications strategy combined with the application of staff and operatives.

For **Bolton**, preparing residents well in advance of any service changes means you can address concerns early, reducing the pressure on roll-out. For example encouraging residents to order recycling containers in advance of a service change will prevent an unmanageable surge in bin deliveries when the changes go live. Also, carrying out waste audits with residents that are concerned about the changes in advance can help get residents on board and ensure they fully understand what can and cannot be recycled. Timing of communication is essential, as **Tameside** stress, knocking on doors between 9 and 5 in areas where people are working is pointless and a waste of resource.

Rochdale, who have recently introduced a service change, concur with the other authorities in the view that it is essential to involve anyone that the changes may impact upon, as early in the process as possible.

Communication, and how concerns are responded to, can impact upon the success or otherwise of a scheme. Residents raised concerns with **Sefton** that the collection frequency for green waste, which changed from alternate week collection to every three weeks, was not going to be sufficient to meet their needs. The response from Sefton was that additional capacity could be purchased if required. This succeeded in addressing residents' concerns, ensured that a free service could be maintained at the reduced frequency and additional capacity is paid for by residents, leaving the authority to benefit from the additional material collected and diverted from residual waste.

Remove uncertainty and unnecessary risk

For **Burnley**, when engaging with contractors, providing as much data about the service as possible was key to providing assurances and removing the requirement for the contractor to price risk into the contract. In addition they consider that reviewing which party is best positioned to deliver specific aspects of the service or fund certain elements is crucial in securing the best deal. For example combining the Councils borrowing rate with the contractor buying power may be the best way forward but does require innovative thinking.

Maximise the opportunity to work with others

Cumbria has found that there is a need to be aware of funded initiatives which are already engaging with householders, and the opportunity to build on their work or work with them should be maximised wherever possible. Furthermore, most communities will contain individuals and groups who are volunteering in disciplines directly linked to the waste prevention agenda. Making contact with and supporting these stakeholders is incredibly important in extending the reach of the resource efficiency agenda in a cost effective manner.

The opportunity to work with others is also relevant inter-departmentally, as just as waste services are being forced to streamline and find efficiencies, so are all other local government services. Therefore in **Cumbria** there is a real feel that the behaviours associated with waste minimisation can influence and even strengthen many other parts of the authority; working on waste minimisation initiatives across departments will provide best value to the authority as a whole.

Learning from others is also key and being open to information sharing and discussions is supported by **Oldham**, who when investigating options for 140 litre residual bins and also the potential to move to 3-weekly residual collections, have found engaging with neighbouring authorities has been invaluable.

A holistic approach to collection and disposal

GMWDA consider that a cradle to grave holistic approach that looks at collections as well as disposal costs must be undertaken when considering options to change operations and reduce costs. A change in one area always affects the other therefore WDAs must work closely with their constituent WCAs.

Honesty, trust and openness

Capacity, capability, transparency and trust need to be there to generate ideas, deliver and manage projects and thereby liberate savings is the advice from **MRWA**. There is a concern that in the current climate there is a real danger of the 'savings' agenda resulting in loss of project management capability or 'cutting nose off to spite face'. **Hyndburn** echo the need for honesty and openness and consider that efficiencies through working with outside organisations will only succeed if both parties are willing and committed to ensuring promises are kept.

Stakeholder engagement

Knowsley clearly advocate the importance of fully engaging with all stakeholders. With elected members this means securing their approval in terms of the strategic direction, and their acknowledgement of the operational implications of the strategy on their constituents. With the general public this means engaging locally to ensure public awareness and understanding of why the Council is changing its collection arrangements. **Wyre** also recommend fully engaging to secure buy in from Members and stakeholders at the early stages of any proposed service changes.

Full engagement with all partners, Members and staff across council departments is also supported by **Bolton** who found that addressing concerns and issues as they arise and involving staff thought the process can prevent any surprises when the service changes go live. As staff are often closer to the daily duties carried out they may pick up on considerations that may otherwise be missed, and ultimately help the project run more smoothly.

South Lakeland also urge others to engage employees in the process as much as possible, tapping into in-house knowledge and experience.

For **Burnley**, engagement with stakeholders extends to contractor; the earlier they can be brought into the process, for example through soft market testing prior to procurement, then greater understanding can be gleaned of innovative techniques which are available and also to get the markets insight on what is being proposed.

Involve those who live and breathe the work as their day is an opportunity that should not be missed according to Tameside. Their knowledge and experience will be invaluable. Also, accept that some are not going to like the plan and they may be most vocal; however engaging with the silent greater good will help deliver the changes required.

Wider benefits

MRWA consider that business cases can be drawn more widely in terms of benefits, and not just costs, such as creating new jobs. Therefore, assistance in monetising wider benefits may help persuade sceptics on larger scale efficiency projects.

The need for flexibility

Pendle consider that when tendering for vehicles or service providers it is worthwhile keeping in mind that during the life of the contract there could be external factors which put pressures onto the authority to deliver services differently. Therefore their advice is to be adaptable and willing to change and accept that one size does not fit all. **Wyre** also feel strongly that it is

important to not only engage with partners and but also to ensure flexibility is built into agreements. Indeed **South Ribble** built a degree flexibility in their partnership agreement to be able to review the service in 2018, when the cost sharing agreement with the Cumbria County Council comes to an end.

Burnley echo these comments and stress that it does not pay to be too prescriptive, a more flexible view will allow contractors to bring and incorporate their innovation and learning therefore it is better to focus on outputs rather than prescribe the process required.

Demonstrating potential impacts of change

Recognising the challenges when introducing change and the need to get everyone on board in sharing the vision, **MRWA** support the need for feasibility or pilot projects. From their experience they believe that 'Second wave' efficiencies or funding applications are easier if there has been a successful partnership pilot project to demonstrate feasibility/costs/benefits.

The need for good data and effective monitoring was highlighted by **Rosendale** as a key lesson learnt in terms of demonstrating the impact of change. Full interrogation of base data prior to implementing changes is important in order to ensure accuracy to further enable full analysis of the impact of changes aside from financial benefits. Ongoing comparative data can then be interrogated to establish longer term gains on service surety and recycling increases.

Foster good working relationships

Trafford have found that partnership working with waste contractors in long term contracts is essential to deliver efficiencies and make service changes. The working relationship between Council staff and contractor staff is often the key to both understanding the areas where efficiencies can be made and also delivering those efficiencies to realise the savings.

In addition to this, key to good working relationships are avoiding blame culture according to **St Helens**. Listen and consider issues from your team. If someone is telling you this may not work, discuss their concerns; have you a 'plan b' in place? Give yourself time to change things if required and be clear why things have to change.

Explore the benefits that service change can bring

Being open minded in the changes that could deliver success in terms of financially or performance related has seen **Trafford** reap the rewards. Their advice is to consider what it is you are trying to achieve and what will make the biggest difference. By restricting residual capacity this has driven up recycling and generated financial savings in terms of residual waste costs; in 2014/15 they were the highest performing metropolitan authority for recycling with a rate of 61.9% achieved.

The need to keep an open mind and embrace the positives that service can bring were echoed by **Burnley** who recognise that the waste and recycling sector is moving at a fast pace and you need to be open to contract changes if they are going to be beneficial. In their case this meant changing the way garden waste and residual and recycle were collected to ensure it was the most efficient approach possible.

Summary

As seen in this report authorities throughout the region have successfully delivered efficiencies in a wide range of areas. In all cases not only have savings been realised but services have been maintained or improved upon.

In terms of the value of the savings being realised to date, the table below provides a summary of the area of saving and financial value achieved (as identified by the individual authority).

Summary of overall savings identified in the North West

Local Authority	Areas of saving	Value of saving or avoided cost (if identified)
Bolton	• Collection frequency	➤ £2.6M
	• Route optimisation and round efficiencies	➤ £396,000
	• Reducing residual capacity	➤ £1.25M per annum (predicted)
Burnley	• Collection frequency	➤ £20,000 - £25,000 per annum
	• Staffing	➤ £130,000 - £140,000
	• Contract savings and management	➤ £500,000 per annum
Bury	• Collection frequency	➤ £860,000 per annum
Cumbria	• Food waste reduction	➤ £130,000 disposal savings over 10 years
	• Promotion and support of Reuse	➤ £9314 to date
GMWDA	• Optimise HWRCs	➤ £600,000 per annum
	• Maximise income and value	➤ £3M per annum
Hyndburn	• Streamlining services	
Knowsley	• Streamlining services	➤ £100,000 per annum
	• Charging	➤ £75,000 per annum
	• Collection frequency	➤ £473,000 per annum
	• Staffing	
MRWA	• Joint Procurement	➤ £20,000
	• Staffing	➤ £200,000 per annum
	• Contract savings and management	➤ Over £4M over 3 years
Oldham	• Food waste reduction	➤ £280,000 per annum
Pendle	• Route optimisation & round efficiencies	➤ £58,000 per annum
	• Charging	➤ income of £200,000 per annum, resource savings equating to £28,000
Preston	• Streamlining services	➤ over £1,000,000 (14 years)
Ribble Valley	• Route optimisation & round efficiencies	➤ £350,000 per annum
	• Streamlining services	➤ £100,000 avoided costs
Rochdale	• Collection frequency	➤ £500,000 per annum (2015/16), over £1.5M expected 2016/17
Rossendale	• Route optimisation & round efficiencies	➤ £100,000 per annum
	• Collection frequency	➤ £60,000 per annum

Local Authority	Areas of saving	Value of saving or avoided cost (if identified)
Sefton	• Route optimization and round efficiency	➤ £300,000 per annum
	• Insourcing	➤ £1M
South Lakeland	• Route optimisation & round efficiencies	➤ £40,000 per annum
South Ribble	• Procurement savings	➤ £50,000
	• Contract savings and management	➤ £9M over 14 years
St Helens	• Route optimisation & round efficiencies	➤ £138,000 per annum
	• Charging	➤ £50,000 per annum
	• Staffing	➤ £100,000
Tameside	• Route optimisation and round efficiencies	➤ £1.9M
	• Reduced residual capacity	➤ £3M
	• Introducing new services	
Trafford	• Streamlining services	➤ £100,000 per annum
	• Collection frequency	➤ £1.2M per annum
	• Contract savings and management	➤ 20% against the net budget from contract commencement (approximately £2.25m in 2015/16) for a range of environmental and infrastructure services.
Wirral	• Streamlining services	➤ £1 million reduction from the contract
	• Charging	➤ £1.1 million saving over 3 years
Wyre	• Streamlining services	
	• Staffing	➤ £120,000
	• Contract savings and management	➤ £1.4M per annum

The estimated savings and avoided costs given in the examples provided by the authorities who took part in this review for the North West, are in the region of **£20 million per annum**. It should be noted that a number of authorities have not been in a position to quantify the individual savings so this figure is expected to be a conservative estimate. This is a significant sum and reflects the good practice that is being delivered across the participating authorities in the North West.

This is the fifth of LP's regional studies. Previous reports covering authorities in the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands and London plus a number of authority specific case studies can be found at www.localpartnerships.org.uk/publication. The objective of all these studies is to disseminate information on how authorities are using innovative approaches to deliver efficiencies while protecting, and where possible, enhancing public services.

I would like to thank Dr Jane Beasley for her help in producing this report.

John Enright

Appendix 1: Completed Profile for each authority

➤ Bolton

Background

The council provides an in house waste and recycling collection service. For the majority of households this is alternate week collection of residual, dry recycle, and mixed food and garden waste. High density terrace properties receive a weekly food waste collection instead of the alternate week mixed food and garden waste collection. Rural properties receive a similar service to the standard collection service, but dry recycle is collected every 4 weeks and they do not have access to a food or garden waste collection service; instead residents are encouraged to compost at home. Flats and apartments are part of the communal collection service. There are 12 bring sites and bulky waste is contracted out to Bolton Community Transport and furniture services and costs residents £30 for the removal of up to 5 items; this contract expires in July 2016 but has the option to be extended for a further 2 years. A commercial waste collection service is available. GMWDA is responsible for treatment and disposal.

Current status

- In September 2009 the waste collection service was redesigned in a modernisation programme to move the waste and recycling collection service to zonal working. This involved splitting the borough into 5 waste collection zones and splitting each zone into week 1 and week 2. This was done using route optimisation software and a saving of £395K was achieved as a result of a reduction in vehicles, staff and fuel.
- In May 2013 food waste collections were introduced to high density terraced housing and residual waste collections changed from weekly to fortnightly. This resulted in a saving of £2.6 million, the majority of which was a saving in the cost of waste disposal.
- In July 2015 plans to further restrict the residual waste capacity in Bolton to achieve a saving of £1.25 million per year were approved. From June to November 2016 the council will exchange all 240L grey bins for 140L bins. A borough wide engagement campaign is underway to door knock all households and increase the number of residents recycling. We are already seeing results ahead of the changes, with the tonnage of grey bin waste decreasing and recycling on the increase.

Lessons learnt

- It is essential to fully engage with partners, members and staff across all departments that may be impacted by the changes. By addressing any concerns and issues as they arise and involving staff throughout the process you bring them along with you and prevent any surprises when the service changes go live. Staff are often closer to the daily duties carried out and can identify considerations help projects to run more smoothly.
- Preparing residents well in advance of any service changes will allow you to address their concerns, which will reduce the pressure during roll out. For example by encouraging residents to order recycling containers in advance of a service change you will prevent an unmanageable surge in bin deliveries when the changes go live. In addition, carrying out waste audits with residents that are concerned about the changes in advance can help get residents on board and ensure they fully understand the service.
- Route optimisation software used by trained in house staff with knowledge of the area can ensure that you model service options accurately and realise the savings you expect.

➤ Burnley

Background

Burnley provides an outsourced collection service with Urbaser, contracted until 2023 with an option to extend for 1 or 2 years, to collect residual waste, comingled dry recycling and garden waste. Commercial waste collection is currently not available; however this is one of the options being reviewed to generate additional income. Other options being considered include charging for green waste, along with a review of collection methodologies post 2018 (when the Cost Sharing arrangements comes to an end with LCC). The Council offers its residents of the borough a chargeable bulky collection service.

Current status

- The recent waste and cleansing contract procurement exercise realised savings in the region of £500k per annum (approx. 20% saving), or between £4-5 million over the next 8-10 years. The specification was kept broadly the same as the previous contract but focused upon an output specification. The new contract has seen no reductions in service, in fact additional street cleansing resource has been added into this new contract along with brand new vehicles with additional technology.
- A change in service delivery, resulting in garden waste collection on a Monday, refuse and recycling collection on Tues – Friday and staff working longer days with 1 rest day per week, has seen a saving of 2 vehicles from the garden waste round and 0.5 vehicles each from the refuse and recycling route due to re-routing, amounting to £250k pa.
- Suspension of collections of garden waste during winter months generated staff savings of £20k-£25k. Other changes include restructuring and amalgamation of back office including introduction of new IT Systems generating savings in the region of £130-150k.

Lessons learnt

- Undertaking an efficiency review prior to starting the procurement exercise enabled the Council to fully understand their service and remove any inefficiency prior to procurement. In addition, engaging with stakeholders early, through a soft market testing day enabled the Council to understand current innovative techniques being deployed and also to ask the market what their thoughts were on some of potential ideas – e.g. purchasing vehicles, round re-routing etc.
- In order to write a concise and effective specification the current services must be fully understood, otherwise, the procurement exercise could go horribly wrong. In addition, do not be too prescriptive, allow the contractors to bring and incorporate their innovation. Focus upon the outputs which are required and not upon the process required, ensuring contractors look for innovative, efficient solutions linked to outputs.
- Provide as much data about the services as possible; the more data, the more assurance the contractor is given. Remove the requirement for the contractor to price risk into the contract; undertake a risk matrix to determine who the risk best sits with and include this within the tender documents thus removing uncertainty. In addition review which party is best positioned to delivered specific aspects of the service or fund certain elements; the Councils borrowing rate is much lower than the private sector companies, therefore look at combining with the contractor buying power to get the best deal.

➤ Bury

Background

Bury implemented a 3 weekly collection service for residual and dry recyclate in October 2014 using 240 l bins as standard. Food and garden waste is collected every 2 weeks and kitchen caddy's and liners are issued free to residents. The collection service is operated in-house. There is a network of mini recycling centres in place operated by the Council and a commercial waste and recycling collection service is available, again operated by the Council. Management and sale of recyclate and treatment and disposal services are operated by Viridor Laing as part of a 25 year PFI contract with GMWDA.

Current status

- The most significant change which has delivered efficiencies to date is the modified collection frequency. Still providing a 360l capacity a week, residual and dry recyclate are now collected every 3 weeks, whilst food and garden remains at 2 weekly collection.
- In preparation for the changes new collection rounds were developed and there was increased engagement and training with the crews. Recognising the role of the Contact Centre in responding to queries and concerns from the public additional staff and resources were invested and a communications and engagement programme was put in place. This included press articles, pre-collection leaflet, information pack and calendar, local presentations, area based targeted awareness raising, and workshops for specific community groups
- In terms of the success of the service change, over the first 11 months of the service significant savings have been made and the authority is on track to reach the target of £860,000 avoided costs as a result of reduced disposal. This saving has been made without an increase in operational costs and with no job losses. Recycling performance has improved significantly and the authority is on track to reach the target of 60% by 2016.

➤ Cumbria County Council

Background

Cumbria County Council, as Waste Disposal Authority for Cumbria, is responsible for a 25 year PPP contract with Shanks Cumbria Ltd. for the following: Management of the County's 14 HWRCs; Treating the County's kerbside collected residual waste at 2 MBT facilities (in Carlisle and Barrow); Landfill of certain wastes under sub-contract arrangements; and 2 transfer stations. In addition Cumbria has a contract with Suez (SITA) for a waste transfer station in Kendal. The County's current waste prevention programme includes: minimising food waste and distributing food waste digesters; trialling a series of "how to" guides enabling locally driven resource efficiency sessions such as community cooks, swishing, toy swaps, etc.; offering discounted home composting units; increasing bulky waste reuse and reuse of small household items; incentivising the use of real nappies; and, reducing textiles disposal.

Current status

- As a large and rural county with a dispersed population food waste collection service would present a significant challenge. In order to offer the Cumbrian public an option to treat their food waste, the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership have been promoting discounted food waste digesters since summer 2014. 2770 Cumbrian homes have started digesting their food waste at home which could divert 410 tonnes from the Cumbrian waste stream every year. Over the guaranteed 10 year lifespan of the products this equates to 4100 tonnes diverted and over £130,000 disposal savings.
- Our waste prevention programme focuses on collaboration and includes working with local Freegle groups to increase reach and financially support the development of the first Freegle app; this has led to over 1000 new Freeglers in the county and over 40 tonnes of being reused. We are also working with local housing provider, Impact, to add 4 resource efficiency units – Love Food Hate Waste, Love your Clothes, Upcycling and Growing/Composting – to their 12-step move on programme for short-term accommodation residents. In addition we are working with Inspira Children's services to add food waste minimisations as a focus for local delivery of the National Citizen Service.
- In June the team investigated and procured the Warpit portal to enable the council to offer its excess furniture and office equipment to other organisations and the third sector for reuse for free, saving 5267kg of CO2 and overall reuse savings of £9314.

Lessons learnt

- If the obvious solutions don't work, then think again. Despite food waste collections appearing impractical/cost ineffective, householders have another option to deal with food waste at home, made possible via creative funding bids and partnership working.
- There are a number of funded initiatives who are already engaging with the householders within localities who local authorities are trying to encourage to reduce their waste airings. Furthermore, most communities will contain individuals and groups who are volunteering in disciplines directly linked to the waste prevention agenda. In these straightened times it is easy to lose sight of this. Making contact with and supporting these stakeholders is incredibly important in extending the reach of the resource efficiency agenda in a cost effective manner.
- Just as waste services are being forced to streamline and find efficiencies, as are all other local government services. The behaviours associated with waste minimisation can influence and even strengthen many other parts of the authority. An internal strand of any waste prevention programme will offer depth and provide best value.

➤ Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority

Background

In April 2009, GMWDA entered into a 25 year PFI contract with Viridor Laing (Greater Manchester) Ltd (VLGM). The contract involves £631 million of capital investment in new facilities for the sustainable management of c. 1.1 million tonnes per annum of Local Authority Collected Waste arising from 9 of the districts of Greater Manchester. Under the contract, VLGM are responsible for the construction and operation of 5 Mechanical Biological Treatment facilities using Anaerobic Digestion; 4 In Vessel Compositing facilities; 1 Materials Recovery Facility; 7 Transfer Loading Stations; 20 Household Waste Recycling Centres; 1 Combined Heat and Power Thermal Power Station; 4 Visitor and Education Centres. The Contract is guaranteed to achieve 75% diversion from landfill and 50% recycling rates by 2020 and GMWDA is working, in partnership with VLGM, to implement a long term strategy that will see these targets exceeded. Through this partnership approach, landfill diversion rates in excess of 90% are potentially possible, giving environmental and financial benefits.

Current status

- In 2011, GMWDA undertook a review of the 25 HWRCs provided under the Contract, focusing on throughput versus design capacity, spatial distribution against population, customer surveys to determine travel distances and a mapping exercise to identify any areas with under capacity. The output from this work was a decision to close 6 sites and construct 1 new facility in an area determined to have insufficient capacity. This exercise saved a net £600k per annum in operating costs and leaves us with 20 sites better able to meet the needs of our residents, whilst maximising recycling and diversion.
- Reducing waste arisings has resulted in spare capacity being available in the residual waste stream facilities (both Thermal and MBT facilities). GMWDA has therefore entered into Section 101 agreements with a number of other local authorities in order to make use of this capacity and generate an income stream. Over the last three years c 200kt of waste has been processed through the facilities under these arrangements, providing other authorities with access to modern, sustainable waste management facilities at a competitive rate and generating an income for GMWDA in meeting austerity targets.
- Under the 2020 partnership vision with VLGM, the principal activity in 2015/16 has been to assess what waste streams could have value recovered from them that would otherwise go to landfill. Under the Contract landfill costs are a pass through to GMWDA, therefore any additional tonnage diverted represents a saving to the Authority. The partnership identified c. 60 to 90 ktpa of HWRC residual waste that was being landfilled directly. This material is now being processed via a shredder to create a fuel that can be processed in the TPS to generate electricity and steam. An estimated net figure of c.£3m per annum will be saved via this route.

Lessons learnt

- A cradle to grave holistic approach that looks at collections as well as disposal costs must be undertaken when considering options to change operations and reduce costs. A change in one area always affects the other therefore WDAs & WCAs must work closely.
- Delivering savings requires all parties to have common purpose and aims. This includes the WDA, WCAs and Contractor.
- A long term vision needs to be maintained when considering options for savings to avoid short term decisions being taken that then impact on the long term ability to deliver.

➤ Hyndburn

Background

Hyndburn provides an in-house collection service for residual waste, multi material dry recyclate and garden waste. These are collected on an alternate weekly basis using 240L wheeled bins for residual and garden waste, and a mixture of reusable bags and 55L box for recyclate collection. Commercial residual waste is collected weekly and recyclate alternate weekly. A free bulky waste collection is available upon request each month, up to a maximum of 6 items per request. There are no food collections available and no bring sites as all properties offered door step recycling collections. There is currently no recycling officer therefore limited scope to provide education and no budget for any promotion / activities.

Current status

- Collection of fly-tipped waste and rural properties moved to main domestic collection rounds to save separate crews and vehicles.
- Partnership agreement with neighbouring council within a rural village, (where the boundary is down the middle of the village), for them to do our green collections in exchange for us to do their street cleaning and weed control. There is no financial exchange but this allowed each council to remove one set of services from the area. There is another arrangement with this council on our boundary to share grass maintenance of a busy motorway junction/main gateway where each council provides 4 cuts a year but in total the area receives 8 cuts a year.
- Enforcement officers brought into the Waste Service area and now each officer works with one crew over their entire collection route. This has led to greater understanding and improved efficiencies by working closely. Driver /Tam Leaders have also shadowed the enforcement officers for a couple of weeks to highlight the difficulties in taking enforcement action.

Lessons learnt

- There are no wrong suggestions only a difference in the level of efficiencies they provided. Some are monetary savings, some improve customer service and some just make it more efficient for staff.
- Efficiencies through working with outside organisations will only succeed if both parties are willing and committed to ensuring promises are kept. I have experienced project failures where our partner did not maintain the commitment or there are staff changes that do not continue with agreement.
- The simple act of reducing budgets does not make efficiencies, although this will focus minds to make efficiencies. However, the time will come when the process cannot be streamlined further and further budget reductions will only be possible by changing the service provision and in local government this is very political.

➤ Knowsley

Background

Knowsley currently delivers an in-house service collecting residual waste and comingled dry recycle using 240L wheeled bins on a fortnightly basis. Garden waste collections are seasonal, using a 240L wheeled bin, and also on a fortnightly basis. Bulky waste collections are available; it costs £15 to have up to five items collected and £30 for between six and 10 items. Commercial collections are no longer available; they stopped in October 2015. Collected waste is managed by MRWA, apart from green garden waste which is composted by White Moss Horticulture (a Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership contract). Recent Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership work led by Knowsley Council include advancing the management of municipal waste for the Liverpool City Region, proposed joint commissioning of waste collection services on a City Region footprint to secure financial efficiency, increased recycling, reduced Levy cost and financial returns from the MRWA Resource Recovery Contract. Also considered are shared political and chief officer governance / commissioning arrangements fully integrating waste collection and waste disposal authority functions.

Current status

- Introduction of alternate week collections in 2013/14 has led to a saving £0.473m per annum. In addition charging for replacement maroon bins @ £23 per bin – has generated a projected income of £0.075m per annum.
- In 2015/16 cessation of the commercial waste collection service will led to a saving approximately £0.100m per annum. There will also be a reduction in the number of Environment Officers promoting recycling from 5fte posts to 2fte posts, generating savings in staff costs.
- A strategic review of the Optimum Waste Management Solution for Knowsley is currently underway – to be concluded in April 2016. It is anticipated that this will bring additional efficiencies.

Lessons learnt

- Clearly identify drivers for changes and the route map / strategy for addressing these matters. Seek to work a City Region footprint but the reality of securing this outcome is very difficult to achieve; therefore pursuing stand-alone local authority solutions is equally important.
- Ensure full engagement of elected members and secure their approval to a strategic direction, and the operational implications of this on their constituents.
- Ensure public awareness and understanding of why the Council is changing its collection arrangements.

➤ Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority

Background

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) is the statutory WDA for 5 Merseyside districts and also a members of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership working with the 5 WCAs, the Unitary Authority of Halton, and private and community sector organisations. MRWA provides the strategic lead for the authorities and drives forward a range of waste prevention and reuse initiatives and campaigns. MRWA is responsible for 13 Existing HWRCs, a new HWRC under construction in Liverpool, 2 MRFs servicing the co-mingled recyclables collected by Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral; these are operated by Veolia under a 20 year contract. MRWA is responsible for plastic / cardboard collections from Sefton, and also provides direct support for Liverpool's waste service to improve recycling performance of the largest and lowest performing Merseyside District. MRWA have procured a 25 Resource Recovery contract with SITA and an Energy from Waste facility is due to be operational from 2016.

Current status

- Strategic review. EVR and Voluntary redundancy programme together with vacancy management has seen staff numbers reduced by 20%. Establishment savings are approx. c. £200,000/yr.
- Interim contract procurement. A 3 year programme of interim waste treatment contracts has been procured in the period from financial close on the Resource Recovery contract (EfW), 2013) to its proposed operational start in late 2016. All interim contracts are at less cost than landfill and will save over £4M compared to landfill.
- Partnership Agrippa panels - MRWA procured 'Agrippa' panels with prevention and recycling messages on RCV's on behalf of the MHWP Authorities. This joint procurement saved £20,000 compared with the cost of Districts procuring individually.

Lessons learnt

- Business case can be drawn more widely in terms of benefits but most Districts are concerned with their costs, not wider benefits like employment. Therefore, assistance in monetising wider benefits may help persuade sceptics on larger scale efficiency projects.
- 'Second wave' efficiencies or funding applications easier if there has been a successful partnership pilot project to demonstrate feasibility/costs/benefits.
- Capacity, capability, transparency and trust need to be there to generate ideas, deliver and manage projects and thereby, liberate savings. Danger of 'savings' agenda resulting in loss of project management capability or 'cutting nose off to spite face'.

➤ Oldham

Background

Oldham Council has an in-house collection service responsible for the collection of residual waste, paper & cardboard, comingled dry recyclate (all collected fortnightly) and food & garden (collected weekly). All residual and recyclate collections are undertaken fortnightly, whereas food and garden collections are weekly. An in-house commercial collection service is also available and the Council operates a number of bring sites across the authority. The service has a 'development' section which focuses on education and promotion of the service as well as implementing projects to tackle priority issues the service faces. In our case they are built currently around fly-tipping of bags at collection points, increasing participation amongst our recycling services and residents using plastic bags within their food waste collection service. The only external contract in place is with the FRC Group for Bulky Collections and this contract runs until June 2017. Like all Greater Manchester authorities disposal is dealt with through the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority.

Current status

- Oldham Council has developed its compostable carrier bag which it has recently made available to local community stockists within areas where plastic bag contamination was causing issues within food waste collections. The saving associated with this is £280K per annum.
- Oldham is now looking at 140 litre general rubbish bin replacement (from 240 litre bin) and 3-weekly collections to try and significantly impact on current waste collection performance. This is currently under deliberation by politicians with decisions expected within the next financial year 2016/17.

Lessons learnt

- With regards to working within specific communities we have had great success by employing project workers from within the community.
- With regards to investigating options for 140 litre and 3-weekly collections discussion and information sharing with neighbouring authorities has been invaluable.

➤ Pendle

Background

Pendle Borough Council is a Waste collection authority responsible for in-house collection of residual waste, comingled dry recycle, subscribed garden waste collections and cardboard, paper and textile collections. Bulky waste collections are provided free of charge and is delivered by a third party charitable status organisation who attempt to re-use or re-home items collected. The authority provides a commercial waste collection service for recyclable and non-recyclable materials. All processing, treatment and disposal is undertaken by Lancashire County Council

Current status

- Route optimisation work undertaken resulting in a reduction of the number of personnel required on domestic waste collection services in 5 out of ten collection days. Annual saving £58,000.
- Introduction of a subscribed service for garden waste collections resulting in an income of £200,000 and resource savings equating to £28,000.
- Reviewed bulky waste collections service, no changes made as current provider most cost effective.

Lessons learnt

- Whenever introducing changes which affect frontline services it is important to start communicating with colleagues affected by the changes at the earliest opportunity. Being clear on the desired objectives and the reasons why the changes are being made with evidence to support management's case is essential. In addition any change to services which affects the public it is essential to communicate with residents either through letters, workshops, social media or local media.
- Be adaptable and willing to change. One size does not fit all.
- When tendering for vehicles or service providers it is worthwhile keeping in mind that during the life of the contract there could be external factors which put pressures onto the authority to deliver services differently.

➤ Preston

Background

Preston City Council provides waste collections services in the Preston area. Specifically these are in-house residual, recycle, mixed food and garden waste, bulky waste collection and also skip hire service. All the household collection are provided on an alternate weekly collections basis unless the property type does not all e.g. tower blocks. Most properties have a 240l bin for residual waste, a 240l bin for garden waste collections and 2x 180l bins for recycling collections. Collections are based on the resident presenting the bin at the curtilage of the property. There is a small in house recycling team who focus on education of residents primarily on a case by case basis.

Current status

- In 2012 the service commenced a four year service change plan, based around the introduction of 180 litre recycling bins to replace the previous kerbside box system. Whilst the change was primarily focussed on the new wheeled bins, the obvious knock on effects were on round restructuring and changes to vehicle fleet. By focussing on these elements we reduced the workforce by 11 posts (all lost through natural wastage, no redundancies), as well as reducing the overall number of recycling rounds from ten to six. Overall the changes are projected to save over £1,000,000 over the full pay back period of the wheeled bin rollout (14 years). However the project has been more effective than projected and we have been able to achieve greater savings than expected through increased round efficiencies.

Lessons learnt

- Round route planning software is very beneficial. It makes the process easier and can generate considerable efficiencies.

➤ Ribble Valley

Background

Using split bodied refuse collection vehicles, Ribble Valley operates an in-house residual and recycling collection service, providing a 140 litre wheeled bin for weekly collection of residual waste alongside alternate weekly 140 litre wheeled bin collection for co-mingled glass, cans and plastic bottles and, a 240 litre wheeled bin for mixed garden and food waste. Mixed paper and cardboard is collected fortnightly through a separate collection service with residents provided with a re-usable polypropylene sack. Also provided is a chargeable bulky waste collection, 19 recycling Bring sites and an integrated trade waste collection service. Collected paper and cardboard is delivered directly to a waste paper merchant and the other waste streams are delivered to the Council's Waste Transfer Station from where it is bulk transferred for treatment to the Waste Technology Park provided by Lancashire County, who are responsible for processing, treatment and disposal of all waste and recycle. It should be noted a budgetary decision has been taken by the WDA to close the PFI funded Waste Technology Parks; this will mean food waste will no longer be accepted with garden waste and there will be no treatment residual waste. Clearly this will impact on performance across Lancashire.

Current status

- The collection of trade waste has been integrated with the collection of domestic waste across each of its collection rounds so that efficiencies were delivered in one pass of a single collection vehicle. Using round optimisation software the Council has been able to avoid costs of around £100,000 require to operate a separate waste collection round. This also prevented trade customers facing a potential 40% increase in charges.
- The challenge of cost-effectively and efficiently collecting relatively small waste streams from a small number of domestic properties spread over a large rural area resulted in the use of split bodied collection vehicles able to recover 2 waste streams in one pass. Again using round optimisation household waste growth of around 7.5% by 2017 is being absorbed across the current collection rounds and is expected to contribute around £350,000 a year in avoided costs.
- The collection of glass, cans and plastic co-mingled has also proven more efficient than providing separate collection or kerbside sorting. However whilst the service was designed to be economically, environmentally and socially beneficial it also had to take into account the sorting/treatment processes provided through the Lancashire Waste Technology Parks and the financial arrangements made through the Lancashire Waste Partnership. We believe that sorting through a MRF is much more efficient and cost effective than the more labour intensive kerbside sorting or the use of separate collection vehicles. The TEEP assessment undertaken by Ribble Valley concluded that the quantity/quality of dry recycle recovered and sent for closed loop recycling required only glass to be subjected to the Practicability Test. The conclusion was potential additional capital costs of £337,543 and ongoing revenue costs of £290,533 and that arguably co-mingled was more environmentally and economically practicable.

Lessons learnt

- The integration of trade waste collections into the domestic collection system is more efficient and cost effective to both the Council and its customers.
- It is important to establish the facts for your own authority; it has been demonstrated in this authority that it is arguably more efficient to collect dry recycle co-mingled than source separated. In addition the collection of mixed food and garden has been very effective.
- In future Government should stipulate to disposal authorities that enter into localised agreements that they should not be allowed to withdraw statutory funding that supports the segregated collection of domestic waste for recycling.

➤ Rochdale

Background

Rochdale Council provides an in-house service for the collection of residual, dry recyclate, food and garden waste. Residual and dry recyclate are collected on a 3 weekly cycle, whereas food and garden waste are collected weekly. A kitchen caddy and free compostable bags are provided for the food waste. Dry recyclate collection is two stream; 2 x 240L wheeled bins collect mixed recyclate in one and paper and card in the other. Food and garden waste is collected in a 240L wheeled bin. There are also a number of bring sites available. Treatment and disposal is managed by GMWDA.

Current status

- Significant changes to the collection service with the introduction of 3 weekly collections of residual waste and dry recyclate. In addition the introduction of food and garden waste to all households (previously only half the borough had bio waste collections). Route optimisation software was used to enable the changes to happen with minimal impact on the collection service. Early recycling figures are encouraging; since the rollout of the new service in Oct 2015 recycling rates for December 2015 reached 49.4% that is in comparison to Dec 2014 32.6%. This will have a positive impact on the council's disposal levy amounting to approximately £500K in 2015/16 and a projected positive impact in 2016/17 of over £1.5m.

Lessons learnt

- Do your homework and trawl best practice as widely as you can.
- Involve anyone that the changes may impact upon as early in the process as possible.
- Make sure that your figures stack up and that you are not being over optimistic.

➤ Rossendale

Background

Rossendale Borough Council is a waste collection authority within Lancashire County Council. An alternate week in-house collection is provided for residual waste, dry recyclate, garden waste. Residual is collected using a 140/240L wheeled bi, dry recyclate is collected in 2 streams using 140L/240L/sacks (paper and cardboard collected separately from cans, plastic bottles and glass), and garden waste is a seasonable collection using 140L/240L/compostable sack. Collections are undertaken over 4 days per week Tuesday to Friday. Rossendale currently charges for bulky waste removal (£24 for up to 3 items), and Residual bin provision (£26). Rossendale does not collect food waste or textiles, but has entered into agreement with Bag it up, for provision of textile bring sites throughout the borough, which realises an income of approximately £3,000 per year.

Current status

- As part of both the Council's ongoing financial efficiency savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and continuous service improvement, the Refuse and Recycling Collection Service was reviewed and moved to area based working implemented during Q3 2014. This has enabled the Council to deploy 2 Loaders from each vehicle on cleansing activities during periods when vehicles are travelling to and from tipping facilities.
- Further savings (£100,000), have previously been realised as a result of staff reduction and operational changes to Street Cleansing which progressed based on the future introduction of Area Based Working and associated elements of cleansing delivered by waste operatives. Although there are additional factors than the introduction of ABW, Fuel usage for October/November indicates 6,000ltrs less was used in 2014 in comparison to the previous year. This figure when applied to a full year forecast amounts to 36,000ltrs less fuel usage.
- The Council operates an alternate weekly Garden waste collection service between 1st March & 30th November. During the winter period due to reduced requirement an on demand service is provided to residents 1 day per fortnight and is available by telephoning the Council to request. As part of a service review a number of further options have recently been discussed including introducing a charge for green waste collection or moving to 4 weekly collections. In addition Year on year savings achievable due to the seasonal reduction in Organic waste collections and less reliance on the back up round will amount to approx. £60,000 Per annum based on round requirements.

Lessons learnt

- The roll out of Area based working was anticipated to present challenges for a period of 4-6 weeks before bedding in. The reality was that following the initial 2 week period or first cycle of collections, the new system stabilised faster than anticipated. The main reason for this was the effectiveness of the plan and communications strategy combined with the application of staff and operatives.
- Interrogation of base data prior to implementing changes In order to ensure accuracy to further enable full analysis of the impact of changes aside from financial benefits. Ongoing comparative data will be interrogated to establish longer term gains on service surety and recycling increases.

➤ St Helens

Background

St Helens provides an in-house service for the collection of residual waste, dry recyclate, food waste and green waste. Residual is collected weekly using a 240L wheeled bin, whilst dry recyclate, also collected weekly, is sorted at the kerbside, and is collected using 55L box (cardboard and paper), 55L bag (plastic and cans), 25L bag (paper). Food waste is collected weekly using 23L box and green waste is a two weekly seasonal collection using 240L wheeled bin. Bulky waste collection is available as is commercial waste collection. MRWA are responsible for 3 HWRCs and for treatment and disposal of residual waste. Green waste is sent to White Moss at Kirkby Merseyside under a joint procurement exercise with Knowsley, Sefton and Wirral Districts. This began in November 2014. Kerbside recycling is sent to Biffa where a rebate is received on the commodities. This contract is under review at present.

Current status

- Bulky waste charging: We currently have three waste streams; white goods, normal bulky items (items too large to fit into bin) and special bulky (large, heavy items). We started charging for specials last December 2014. Number of orders when free was 35 per week. Since charging (£25.00) began it has averaged around 20 per week. We have just implemented charging (£15.00) for the other two categories (1st October). With the expected reductions in orders we will reduce service costs and make savings but too early to put a figure on it, but in the region of £50k.
- Residual waste collections: reduction in vehicles/staff £138K
- Restructure of management/admin £100k

Lessons learnt

- Plan well ahead and give yourself time to consider the consequences of your actions. If possible run the service on a trial basis before rolling out across the authority. Ensure communication of information is distributed to the key elements of the service so everyone knows where they're going. We had too little time to consider the full impact of radical service change.
- Listen and consider issues from your team. If someone is telling you this may not work, discuss their concerns; have you a 'plan b' in place?
- If things start to unravel keep a calm head and don't get into a 'blame game' culture. Again give yourself time to change things if required and be clear why things have to change.

➤ Sefton

Background

Sefton operate an in-house service for residual and garden waste collection and a partial in-house service for dry recycle; currently Sefton collect plastics and card whilst Palm collect metal, glass and paper, and also food waste. However from July, the service will come totally in-house and Sefton will be providing a comingled collection plus separate food and separate garden waste collection. All the services will be alternate weekly collection with the exception of garden waste, which will be collected every three weeks on a seasonal basis (March to November), and remains free for the residents. In operational terms garden waste collections will be on a Monday, whilst dry recycle, food and residual will be Tuesday to Fridays, maximising the use of the crew and vehicles. There is a successful commercial waste service in operation and bulky waste is also provided as an in-house service with residents charged £10 per collection.

Current status

- Insourcing all aspects of the service has resulted in significant avoided costs. The current contract with Palm, collecting metals, glass and paper, priced the extension of the service, to include plastics and card, at £1M. Bringing it in as an in-house service utilising existing resources has resulted in massive savings. It is estimated that with the additional material collected through the fully comingled service from July, the reduced levy payments from a reduction in residual waste volume needing to be treated by MWDA, and the avoided contract costs, equates to a saving of approximately £1M.
- Improved efficiency in litter bin management has been achieved through increasing the size of the litter bin for around a third of all litter bins across the borough; 'daleks', 240L encased bins have been introduced to increase capacity in key areas.
- A night operation has been introduced to maximise productivity in the street cleansing services when roads are quiet and more can be achieved in less time. For example all arterial route cleansing has been moved to the night operations team, as has rapid response team to deal with graffiti and flytipping and emptying of litter bins in some areas. This has had a significant impact on services; £300k was taken out of the street cleansing budget, but by introducing the night service operation the same level of service can be provided on a reduced budget.

Lessons learnt

- Consider how green waste is presented to residents. It is an optional and not statutory service but once it is offered there is an expectation amongst residents that it is a requirement and any changes you introduce may not be met favourably. Therefore how you communicate this service as an authority is important.
- If residents are not wholly supportive of changes in collection frequency, consider other ways to manage their concerns. In the case of green waste moving from AWC to 3 weekly collection concerns residents had in relation to not having enough space in their bin for all their green waste were met with the opportunity to purchase an additional bin. Collection remains free of charge to residents and the council benefits from the additional material collected and diverted from residual waste.

➤ South Lakeland

Background

South Lakeland District Council provides an in-house service for the collection of residual waste, green waste, and paper, glass and cans from 54,000. In addition plastic and card are collected from a further 14,000 households. Collections are made on an alternate weekly basis. The bring site service is provided under contract by CWR, and continues until March 2016. The bulky waste service is provided under contract by right2work, and continues until March 2017. A round optimisation project is currently underway, which will prepare the service to expand plastic & card collections to the remaining 40,000 households. Cumbria County Council is responsible for treatment and disposal.

Current status

- Round optimisation and procurement of fuel efficient vehicles delivered savings of 30,000 litres of fuel in 2015/16, valued at approximately £40,000.
- A new contract for the provision of a waste transfer station in Kendal was jointly procured by SLDC with Cumbria County Council. There will be a saving to Cumbria County Council estimated at £140,000 net per annum. There will be additional costs to SLDC, estimated at £15,000 net per annum.

Lessons learnt

- Where possible break projects into smaller sub-projects to mitigate the impact on resources.
- Engage employees in the process as much as possible. Use your in-house knowledge.

➤ South Ribble

Background

South Ribble Council provides an alternate weekly collection of residual, dry recyclate and mixed food and garden waste. Dry recyclate is a two stream collection service. Treatment and disposal is managed by Lancashire County Council, as are the HWRCs. Collection service is outsourced and a new 7 (+7) year contract was signed in 2015 with FCC. Bulky waste collection is provided as a charged for service and is run in partnership with Total Reuse. Street cleansing and grounds maintenance, part of the waste management service, remain in-house.

Current status

- The procurement of a partnership collection contract with FCC will save the authority in the region of £600k a year without reducing the service in any way. This has the potential to generate savings of around £9M over the full 14 year contract. In addition, the partnering contract includes the requirement for South Ribble to supply the vehicles, giving the authority control over that aspect of the service and removing a potential barrier (in terms of vehicle failure) from successful delivery of the contract.
- The procurement process itself was cost effective – it should have been in the region of around £60k-£80k when in fact it cost around £32k – a saving of up to £50K.
- The waste team has been boosted with an additional 2.5 waste monitoring officers – these posts, for a period of two years to cover the transition process, are designed to support the successful delivery of the service and are aimed at addressing any complaints or issues at the earliest opportunity.

Lessons learnt

- With hindsight we would have directed more resources to support the evaluation stage for the new contract as it was very resource intensive and quite onerous at times. However good support internally during the procurement enabled the entire procurement process to be very cost effective.
- Build flexibility within the contract arrangement wherever possible, to accommodate changes that may arise over the life of the contract. For example, with the cost sharing agreement with Lancashire County Council coming to end in 2018, it was important to prepare for this as much as possible with an outsourced service. The solution is an option to review the service in 2018; this is built into the partnership agreement.
- Make use of existing procurement support to minimise procurement costs, for example WRAP documentation.

➤ Tameside

Background

Tameside operates an in-house service collecting residual, comingled dry recyclate (glass, cans, plastic bottles and tin foil) and separate paper and cardboard (including tetra-pak), and mixed food and garden waste. Residual waste is collected fortnightly as is comingled dry recyclate. Paper and cardboard is collected every three weeks, and mixed food and garden waste are collected weekly. A commercial waste collection system is available, again operated in-house, as is a chargeable bulky collection service (5 items for £27). Current considerations include increasing the frequency of paper and cardboard collection to a two weekly service. All treatment and disposal is managed by GMWDA.

Current status

- During 2011, we completed a review of the working patterns and hours of the operational teams was completed. This change from working a 4 day week to a 5 day week allowed the service to increase productivity from 8 million collections per annum to 12 million collections per annum. This enabled a reduction in overtime, increase in efficiency and provided an improved service user centric service.
- During 2013 a weekly food and garden waste collection system was introduced. This was provided to all 100,000 domestic properties within Tameside. There was a heavy focus on education and delivery of the correct facilities. This allowed a diversion of heavy food and garden waste away from landfill and the charges associated with it.
- During 2015, a scheme called Bin Swap was introduced, switching the use of the black 180 litre bin with the green 140 litre bin. This provided less landfill capacity for residents and more recycling capacity, resulting in a diversion of a further 25% of landfill waste (on average), away from landfill.

The above initiatives delivered a reduction in operating costs of £1.9m and a reduction in the levy in the region of £3m per annum.

Lessons learnt

- Communication is key, be amongst the people when they are available. There's no point knocking on doors in areas where people work between the hours of 9am and 5pm.
- Involve those affected by change – take them on the journey, ask them for their input. If they live and breathe the work as their day job, they probably know more about it than you realise!
- If you know the plan is correct, don't be distracted by the noise in the system. Some people just aren't going to like it and they will be vocal about that, but the silent greater good will help deliver those changes.

Celebrate success – when it works, celebrate.

➤ Trafford Metropolitan

Background

Trafford Borough Council currently undertakes its refuse and recycling services via an external contractor, AMEY LG Ltd. The current contract commenced in July 2015 for an initial period of 15 years and includes the provision of all residual and kerbside recycling collections, bulky waste collection, bring sites and commercial waste collections. Residual waste is collected fortnightly predominantly using a 140L wheelie bin, alternating with pulpables (mixed paper and card) using a 240L wheelie bin and comingled dry recycle (glass, cans and plastic bottles) also using a 240 L wheelie bin. Mixed food and garden waste is collected weekly, using 23L external green caddies, 140 litre green bins or 240 litre green bins are used for all property types. Bulky waste collection are available with a charge of £29 for the collection of up to 5 items. Commercial waste collections are also available. In addition the Council currently operates 8 Neighbourhood Recycling Bring Sites. GMWDA are responsible for the provision of HWRCs and for all treatment and disposal.

Current status

- Prior to 2013, the Council operated a weekly residual waste collection service using 140L bins and a fortnightly food/garden waste collection service using 240L bins. In 2013, the Council changed the frequency of the service, introducing a weekly biowaste collection and fortnightly residual waste collections using a smaller 140L residual waste bin. This resulted in savings of £1.2 million per annum, primarily as a result of reduced disposal costs. Recycling rates increased and the Council now has a recycling rate of 61.9%, which is the highest recycling rate of any metropolitan authority in England.
- As a result of an increased range of materials collected at the kerbside, the Council decided to rationalise the number of bring sites from 35 sites to 10 sites. This resulted in operational savings of £100,000 per annum.
- The Council has outsourced its waste collection contract for over 20 years. In recent years, a number of service changes and efficiencies have been realised through partnership working with the waste contractor. The current contract which includes a number of environmental and infrastructure services is required to deliver 20% savings on costs.

Lessons learnt

- Restricting residual capacity drives up recycling and results in savings on residual waste – Trafford Council is the highest performing metropolitan authority for recycling with a recycling rate of 61.9% in 2014/15.
- Partnership working with waste contractors in long term contracts is essential to deliver efficiencies and make service changes. The working relationship between Council staff and contractor staff is often the key to both understanding the areas where efficiencies can be made and also delivering those efficiencies to realise the savings.
- It takes time to implement major operational service changes effectively – do not under estimate the lead in time to deliver the service changes. Effective engagement, consultation and management of messages is critical to obtaining buy in to deliver service changes and can take years from initial seeds of thought to fruition.

➤ Wirral

Background

Wirral operates an outsourced contract with Biffa. This covers all forms of municipal waste collection and streetscene services including street cleansing and runs until 2027. The collection service operates on alternate weekly collection for residual and co-mingled recycling collections, plus a charged for garden waste subscription service every fortnight. The cost of the garden waste service is an annual charge of £35 for the first bin to be collected (£30 if you subscribe online), £20 for each additional bin to be collected and £37 for a new or replacement brown bin. There is a regional contract in place with a separate commercial company for the treatment of kerbside collected garden waste. Bulky waste collection is available at £26.50 per visit for up to 6 separate items. MRWA is responsible for waste treatment and disposal.

Current status

- Street cleansing service has been reviewed and led to a reduction of street cleansing frequencies across the Borough; with areas on weekly cleansing dropping to four weekly and areas on four weekly cleansing dropping to 12-weekly. This has resulted in a £1 million reduction from the core contract.
- Introduction of garden waste charging for households has led to a £1.1 million saving over three years.

Lessons learnt

- Behaviour change campaigns, using education and enforcement, is essential when reducing alleyway cleansing frequencies in particular.

➤ Wyre

Background

Wyre currently provide an outsourced waste collection service through Veolia. The contract started on 1 April 2012 for a term of 8 years with the option to extend for up to a further 8 years. The core service to over 90% of households is an alternate weekly collection of residual waste and recycling. Residual waste is collected in 240 litre containers, paper / card in 240 litre wheeled bins, 35 litre boxes are used for co-mingled glass, cans, aerosols, plastic bottles and textiles are collected in sacrificial sacks. Food and garden waste are also collected on a fortnightly basis in 240 litre wheeled bins. The remainder of the borough receive a weekly sack collection due to their isolated location or limited storage capacity. Residual waste goes to an MBT plant, and the co-mingled dry recyclate is bulked up and sorted at the MRF in Farington. During 2015/16 the kerbside recycling service will be extended to include the collection of small WEEE and domestic batteries. Wyre work in partnership with Blackpool Council and have a joint Contract with Calico (formerly Furniture Matters) for the collection and reuse / recycling of bulky household waste. There is a fee applied for this service. This is a 5 year contract which commenced in October 2012.

Current status

- The successful procurement of the waste collection contract in 2011/12 resulted in the appointment of Veolia Environmental Services who offered unrivalled industry expertise, the best quality assurance and greatest recycling improvements. Outsourcing allowed us to benefit from economies of scale, the use of up-to-date technology and equipment and the ability to draw on Veolia's world-wide experience throughout the life of the contract. The waste collection service is now provided at a reduced cost of £2.2m per annum, and has delivered annual savings of £1.4m.
- To date the performance of the waste collection contract has excelled, with a significant reduction in the number of missed bins and service related complaints along with a decline in the amount of residual waste to landfill. Satisfaction levels have increased to 82%. The reduction in service related complaints and other efficiencies enabled the Council to reduce staffing levels within the Contact Centre creating savings in the region of £120,000.
- A decision was made prior to re-tendering to remove all bring sites across the borough, due to mis-use and anti-social behaviour. This affected the recycling diversion rates by approximately 0.5%, but realised significantly more in financial savings for the street cleansing and contact Centre teams that did not have to service them and handle associated complaints.

Lessons learnt

- Get buy in from Members and stakeholders at the early stages of any proposed service changes.
- Involve Overview and Scrutiny in the procurement process to review documents prior to going out to tender ... therefore requiring significant planning.
- Engage with partners and ensure flexibility is built into agreements.

Appendix 2: Waste Collection Profile of the District/Unitary Authorities in the Review

District/Unitary	Residual		Dry Recyclable		Garden			Food	In-house / outsourced
	Collection frequency	Container	Collection frequency	Container	Collection frequency	Container	Free or charged		
Bolton	AWC	240L(140L from June/Nov. 2016)	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	Free	With garden & sep. weekly coll.	In-house
Burnley	AWC	240L	AWC	Box & 2 x sacks	AWC	240L	Free	No	Outsourced
Bury	3 weekly	240L	3 weekly	240L	AWC	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Hyndburn	AWC	240L	AWC	Box & 2 x sacks	AWC	240L	Free	No	In-house
Knowsley	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	Free	No	In-house
Oldham	AWC	240L	AWC	2 x 240L	Weekly	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Pendle	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	£25 per bin/annum	No	In-house
Preston	AWC	240L	AWC	2 x 180L	AWC	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Ribble Valley	Weekly	140L	AWC	140L & sack	AWC	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Rochdale	3 weekly	240L	3 weekly	2 x 240L	weekly	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Rossendale	AWC	140L/240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	Free	No	In-house
Sefton	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	3 weekly (from July)	240L	Free	Separate (AWC from July)	In-house
South Lakeland	AWC	240L	AWC	Box & sack	AWC	240L	Free	No	In-house
South Ribble	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	Free	With garden	Outsourced
St Helens	AWC	240L	Weekly	Box, sack, bag, caddy	AWC	240L	Free	Separate	In-house
Tameside	AWC	140L	AWC/3 weekly	180L & 240L	Weekly	240L	Free	With garden	In-house
Trafford	AWC	140L	AWC	240L	Weekly	23L/140L/240L	Free	With garden	Outsourced
Wirral	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	£30-£35 per bin/annum	No	Outsourced
Wyre	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	AWC	240L	Free	With garden	Outsourced

Appendix 3: Performance Data 2014/15⁵

Authority	Residual household waste per household (kg/hh)	% of hh waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	% of municipal waste sent to landfill	Collected hh waste per person (kg)
Allerdale	516.9	39.30%	-	405.7
Barrow-in-Furness	528.8	33.90%	-	392.4
Blackburn with Darwen	581.6	36.80%	67.10%	375.7
Blackpool	538.1	39.90%	25.70%	447
Bolton	463.9	38.90%	-	332.5
Burnley	488.8	31.70%	-	331.6
Bury	426.2	46.60%	-	349.1
Carlisle City	479.9	43.00%	-	392.7
Cheshire East	467.6	56.80%	24.80%	483
Cheshire West & Chester	439.4	59.10%	24.70%	482.5
Chorley	479.1	47.70%	-	393
Copeland	552	34.20%	-	396.8
Cumbria	508.5	49.40%	14.40%	483.7
Eden	486.6	44.40%	-	426.5
Fylde	425.4	50.00%	-	411
GMWDA	515.9	45.00%	23.00%	407.3
Halton	547.4	46.80%	17.30%	450.2
Hyndburn	425.4	34.30%	-	294.9
Knowsley	532.6	36.70%	-	374.8
Lancashire	532.2	47.30%	39.40%	449.4
Lancaster City	453.9	42.90%	-	350.6
Liverpool City	561.4	29.60%	-	366.2
Manchester City	502.5	32.80%	-	317.9
MRWA	583.3	41.90%	46.00%	457
Oldham	487.9	37.00%	-	319.7
Pendle	532.2	34.20%	-	356
Preston	502.5	39.60%	-	358.2
Ribble Valley	545.1	38.60%	-	385.7
Rochdale	500	33.40%	-	323.4
Rossendale	510	32.80%	-	343
Salford City	429.4	41.20%	-	335.2
Sefton	499.2	41.10%	-	388.9
South Lakeland	483.6	43.80%	-	435.9
South Ribble	452.5	49.40%	-	392.6
St Helens	508.9	40.60%	-	390
Stockport	317.7	60.70%	-	356.6
Tameside	418.7	40.80%	-	321.5

⁵ Those authorities highlighted are the ones that took part in the review.

Authority	Residual household waste per household (kg/hh)	% of hh waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	% of municipal waste sent to landfill	Collected hh waste per person (kg)
Trafford	321.1	61.90%	-	352.5
Warrington	491.3	50.50%	1.80%	436.1
West Lancashire	517.5	45.30%	-	407
Wigan	523.5	45.30%	7.90%	422.2
Wirral	522	36.00%	-	372
Wyre	413.1	51.10%	-	392.9