WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Strategy Statement / Purpose

At Durham University, we have an ambition to make our institution one of the most sustainable in the UK (Durham University, 2018). To achieve this aim, we must reduce the environmental impact of waste arising from our activities, which means adopting the principles of the waste hierarchy (prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery and disposal) across our operations (DEFRA, 2011). The University has a set an ambitious target to recycle at least 70% of its waste by 2042, as outlined in our 2023 Sustainability Ambition Statement. This strategy identifies the ways in which we plan to do that.

With over 21,000 students and 4,000 staff members, the University produces between 2,500 and 3,000 tonnes of waste each year. Waste is generated through our residential Colleges, academic departments, catering outlets, professional service departments, libraries, museums and attractions, Graham Sports Centre, Durham Students' Union, Green Lane Depot, and from capital building projects.

This strategy and the accompanying action plan, outline how the University will manage waste in a legally compliant and sustainable manner.

2. Scope

This strategy covers all hazardous and non-hazardous waste arising from university operations.

Waste is generally considered hazardous if it (or the material or substances it contains) are harmful to humans or to the environment. Examples of hazardous waste include:

- Asbestos;
- Chemicals, such as brake fluid or print toner;
- Batteries;
- Solvents;
- Pesticides;
- Oils (except edible ones), such as car oil;
- Equipment containing ozone depleting substances, like fridges; and
- Hazardous waste containers. (Gov.uk, 2019)

3. Commitments

Further to our overall recycling target, waste is an important element of the Environmental Sustainability Vision, Policy and Strategy, with an overall commitment to:

"Minimising our waste production whilst increasing recycling and reuse within the University"

In addition to this pledge, the University has commitments in the following areas:

3.1 Waste Reduction

- Minimise waste across the University by looking to re-use items through the warp-IT portal for staff, the annual Green Move Out for students and other appropriate means;
- Promote the use of University 'keep cups' to reduce the amount of disposable coffee cups used, including through our cup levy; and
- Look for further opportunities to move away from single use items across all areas of the University.

3.2 Waste Segregation

- Promote the use of central recycling facilities across the University;
- Provide facilities for staff and students to be able to segregate their waste into appropriate streams (General Waste, Paper & Card, Plastic, Aluminium Cans, Food and Glass);
- Look for opportunities to increase segregation of food waste in our catering outlets, cafes, colleges and departments; and
- Carry out internal inspections to check waste is segregated correctly, providing feedback where issues are identified.

3.3 Landfill Avoidance

- To send as little waste as possible to landfill, with a maximum allowable proportion of 5% of our total waste volume;
- To continually monitor and track the amount of waste sent to landfill;
- To challenge our service providers to find alternative solutions to landfill disposal;
- To make publicly available the amount of waste we send to landfill each year, attached to the appendices of this document.

3.4 Operational Waste Management

- Collaborate with our waste contractors and key University stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement across all of our activities;
- Manage waste in a way that minimises the impact on the environment and reduces risk to public health;
- Ensure the safe handling and storage of waste across the University Campus, allowing access for waste management contractors to empty bins;
- Provide awareness and training for staff whose role can significantly impact the University's waste performance; and
- Set objectives and targets, monitor results using waste data; and implement changes to improve performance and increase recycling rates.

3.5 Capital Projects

- Include waste requirements in tenders, to ensure that contractors carrying out works on behalf of the University adopt best practice in terms of waste management; and

- Ensure projects are audited by the Considerate Constructors Scheme to confirm waste management commitments are delivered on site.

3.6 Legal Compliance

- Comply with all relevant waste legislation, statutory obligations and codes of practice;
- Carry out Duty of Care audit visits to waste contractor's facilities to ensure compliance; and
- Appoint waste management contractors with state-of-the-art materials recovery facilities to maximise the amount of waste recycled.

Finally, the University commits to continually improving our waste management performance through the adoption of best practice from across the sector.

4. Responsibilities

All students, staff, contractors and visitors to the University have a responsibility to dispose of waste in accordance with this strategy.

The Energy & Sustainability team are responsible for checking compliance against the requirements of this strategy.

Relationship Managers in the Estates & Facilities Directorate will share the contents of this strategy with their departmental contacts and act as the single point of contact for escalation of any queries relating to the strategy.

Staff Environment Champions and members of the Greenspace Student Environment Group (GSEG) will support this strategy through promoting and communicating best practice to their respective teams, colleges, departments and colleagues.

The Business Support Team in the Estates and Facilities Directorate provides a single point of contact for our waste contractor and departments/colleges for day-to-day waste enquiries. The team is also responsible for managing Duty of Care documentation and checking invoices prior to payment.

The Procurement team is responsible for issuing waste management tenders, setting the Service Level Agreement and awarding a contract to the winning bidder.

Appointed waste management contractors are responsible for ensuring waste is collected as scheduled, processed in a compliant manner and in line with the agreed contracts, and for ensuring Duty of Care documentation is correctly completed.

5. Waste Arrangements

The preferred non-hazardous waste containers for each University location are included in the table below:

Waste Stream / Location	General Waste	Dry Mixed Recycling	Paper & Card	Plastics	Cans	Food	Glass
Catering Outlets	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Colleges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Departments and Teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
External Areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Professional Services	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

In addition to the above typical waste streams, the University also has agreements in place to dispose of the following types of waste:

Batteries;
Chemical and laboratory waste (including sharps and contaminated PPE);
Clinical waste;
Confidential waste bags;
Fluorescent tubes;
Green waste;
Mixed construction and demolition waste;
Printer cartridges;
Scrap metal;
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment; and
Wood.

Departments should develop local rules to ensure the sustainable, safe and legally compliant disposal of the above waste streams.

The Business Support team within the Estates & Facilities Directorate should be consulted if a department has any special wastes, including hazardous waste, that require technical assistant before disposal at waste.collection@durham.ac.uk. In some cases, it may be necessary to contact the Sustainability Manager for Waste & Environmental Compliance. Contact details can be found at the foot of this document.

6. Monitoring Performance

The University will meet with our main waste management contractor on a monthly basis to review waste data and contract performance against the Service Level Agreement. Performance will be assessed using the following Key Performance Indicators:

- Total waste tonnage;
- Internal recycling rate (%);
- Waste (kg) per staff/student FTE;

- Food waste tonnage; and
- Warp-IT and Green Move Out tonnages

Elements of our waste performance will be included in the University annual report, as well as being available on our external website.

In addition, performance for each academic year will be reviewed by the Energy & Sustainability team to identify areas for improvement, with those objectives being included in the EcoCampus framework for monitoring and evaluation.

7. Strategy, Procedures and Enforcement

The University Executive Committee (UEC) is responsible for approving this strategy and accompanying action plan.

The Sustainability Manager for Waste and Environmental Compliance is responsible for annually reviewing this strategy and action plan and updating it in line with any changes in legislation or best practice.

Ultimate responsibility for compliance with this strategy lies with the Director of Estates and Facilities.

8. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out prior to the implementation of this strategy. The EIA found that while there is potential for impact on protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure no one is negatively impacted.

9. Related Information

9.1 Legislation

- Animal By-Products Regulations 2009;
- Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010;
- Environmental Protection Act (Part 2) 1990;
- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC);
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2009;
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005;
- Landfill Tax Regulations SI 1996/1527;
- Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2009;
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013; and
- The Environment Act 2021.

9.2 University Policies and Guidance

Waste Management Strategy - Durham University

Waste - Durham University

9.3 Websites

recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with

warp-it.co.uk/

durham.gov.uk/recycling

10. Definitions

Hazardous Waste:

Waste is generally considered hazardous if it (or the material or substances it contains) are harmful to humans or the environment. Examples of hazardous waste include:

- Asbestos;
- Chemicals, such as brake fluid or print toner;
- Batteries;
- Solvents;
- Pesticides;
- Oils (except edible ones), such as car oil;
- Equipment containing ozone depleting substances, like fridges; and
- Hazardous waste containers. (Gov.uk, 2019)

Waste Duty of Care:

The Environmental Protection Act (Part 2) 1990 establishes the 'Waste Duty of Care' principle:

Section 33 makes it an offence to deposit controlled waste or knowingly cause or knowingly permit waste to be deposited in or on land... and to treat, keep or dispose of control waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health.

Section 34 establishes the Duty of Care principle requiring the waste holder to take reasonable steps to: i) prevent breach of Section 33 by any other person ii) prevent the escape of waste, iii) transfer waste only to an authorised person and iv) provide a written description of the waste.

11. Contacts

For further information on waste management, please contact:

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Sustainability Manager (Waste & Environmental Compliance)
T: 07860 10 91 96
E: darren.j.hatfield@durham.ac.uk

Business Support Team (Waste collection)

T: 0191 334 6042
E: waste.collection@durham.ac.uk

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Senior Housekeeping, Cleaning and General Services Manager
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E: lisa.blundell@durham.ac.uk

References

DEFRA. 2011. Guidance on applying the Waste Hierarchy. [Online] June 2011. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69403/pb13530-waste-hierarchy-guidance.pdf.
Durham University. 2018. Environmental Sustainability Vision, Policy and Strategy. [Online] January 2018. https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/greenspace/policies/EnvironmentalSustainabilityVision_Final.pdf.
Gov.uk. 2019. Hazardous waste. [Online] 2019. https://www.gov.uk/dispose-hazardous-waste.
Durham University, 2023. Sustainability Ambition Statement. [Online]

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Version Control

Author	Date	Approval	Version
S. Park	26th May 2020	UEC	V 1.0
D. Hatfield	24th October 2025	Stewart Ross, Chief Operating Officer, UEC member	V 1.1

Appendix 1

2018/19 Baseline Data

Table 1. Waste data and destination for our baseline academic year 2018-2019.

Waste Stream	Tonnes	Destination
General	1,270.65	Energy from waste
Organic	346.57	Anaerobic digestion
Recycling	421.68	Recycled
Construction & Demolition	139.42	Recycled
Glass	145.91	Recycled
Wood	16.26	Recycled
Metals	8.87	Recycled
Electronics	8.73	Recycled
Cardboard	0.68	Recycled
Paper	168.95	Recycled
Other	25	Landfill

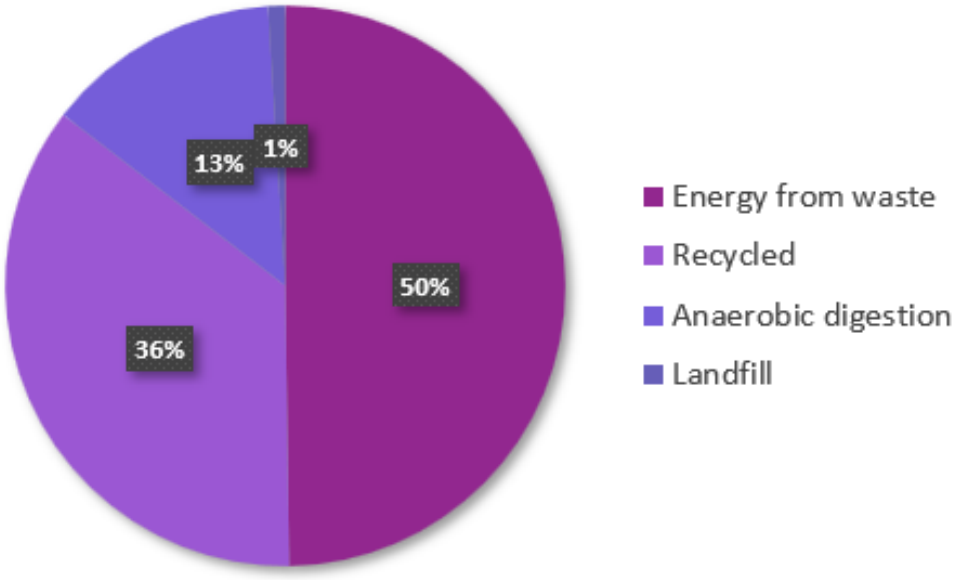

Chart 1. Pie chart displaying waste destination as a percentage of the total.

2023/24 Data

Table 2. Waste data and destination for academic year 2023-2024

Waste Stream	Tonnes	Destination
General	988.35	Energy from waste
Organic	250.55	Anaerobic Digestion
Mixed Recycling	321.42	Recycled
Construction	141.36	Recycled
Glass	75.94	Recycled
Wood	44.82	Recycled
Metals	25.70	Recycled
Electronics	6.70	Recycled
Cardboard	1.80	Recycled
Paper	0.13	Recycled

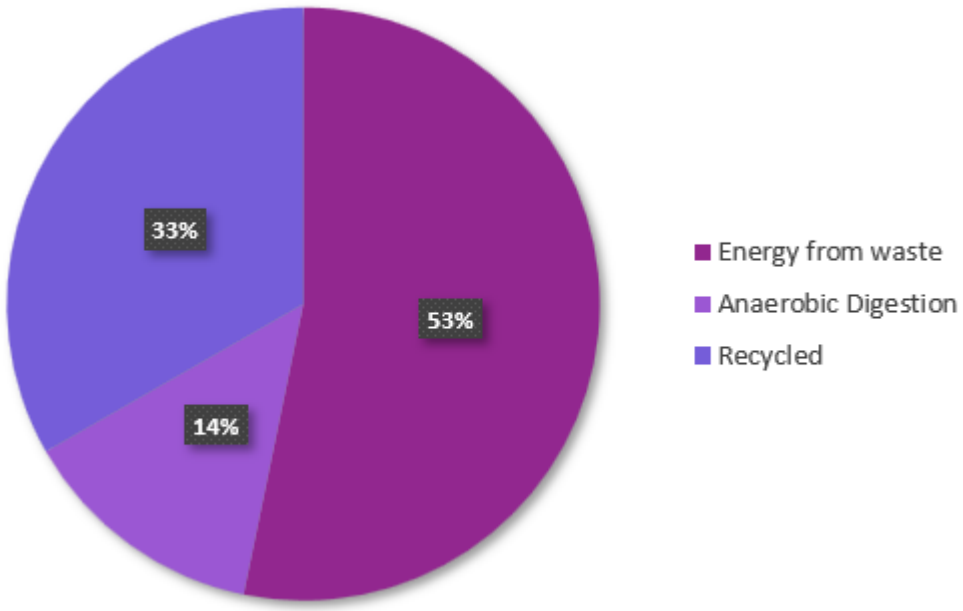

Chart 2. Pie chart displaying waste destination as a percentage of the total.

2024/25 Data

Table 3. Waste data and destination for academic year 2024-2025.

Waste Stream	Tonnes	Destination
General	986.21	Energy from waste
Organic	325.03	Anaerobic digestion
Recycling	298.95	Recycled
Construction & Demolition	90.30	Recycled
Glass	46.79	Recycled
Wood	35.60	Recycled
Metals	18.62	Recycled
Electronics	12.68	Recycled
Cardboard	0.56	Recycled
Paper	0.16	Recycled

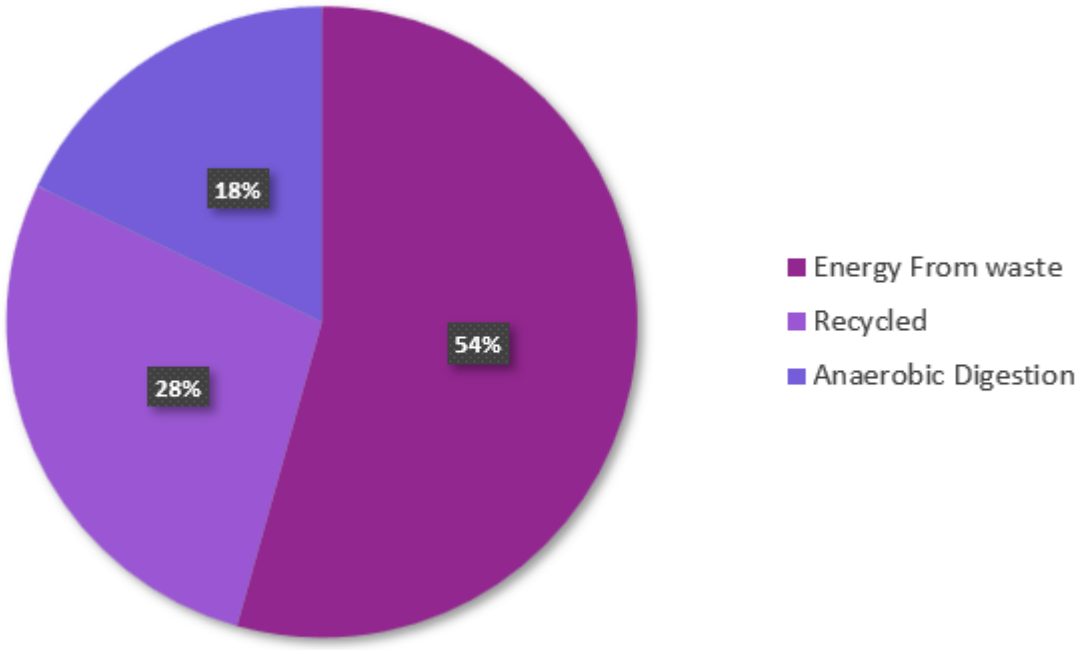

Chart 3. Pie chart displaying waste destination as a percentage of the total.