



Report to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date – 15 April 2025

Key Decision – No

Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Councillor Denise Rollo – Cumberland Council
Councillor Giles Archibald – Westmorland and Furness Council

Directorate – Place, Sustainable Growth & Transport – Cumberland Council
Thriving Places – Westmorland and Furness Council

Lead Officer – Graham Harrison, Interim Waste Manager, Cumberland Council
Anna Smith, Assistant Director Waste and Environmental Service,
Westmorland and Furness Council

Overview of Waste Disposal Contract and Benchmarking

1. Introduction

In 2009, Cumbria County Council entered into a 25-year contract with Shanks Waste Solutions. The Contract was to provide a solution for waste disposal for Cumbria that would achieve landfill diversion and ensure provision for treatment of municipal solid waste (MSW) to serve all six District Councils in Cumbria as they meet their statutory duties as Waste Collection Authorities (WCA). The contract also included a requirement to operate and maintain the County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre network of which there are 14: 7 in Cumberland and 7 in Westmorland and Furness.

The treatment solution was Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) at two state of the art plants - one in Barrow and the other near Carlisle. The MBT process involves receiving MSW into both plants, shredding the material to reduce its size, then a 15-18 day period of "bio-drying" before entering a secondary refining process. This achieves around 50% reduction on the inputs made up of 30-35% moisture loss and the balance through refining which organic fines, glass and stones, and metals alongside leachate extracted. The "residual" dried waste produces a Solid Recovered Fuel, which is sent under contract to be further refined and used in cement kilns to supplement their fuel and reduce their reliance on traditional fossil fuels. To ensure the facilities are fed evenly, the contract also encompasses the provision of two Waste Transfer Stations for (WCAs) to deliver into. These are located in Workington (Distinguon) and Penrith (Flusco).

In addition to MSW, the Contract also includes provision of disposal for street sweepings, litter bins waste, fly-tipped waste and bulky waste although this material is not generally suitable for the MBT process so is subject to responsible disposal at Landfill.

There has been changes in the near 16-year history. In 2017, Shanks merged with Van Gansewinkel Groep B.V. to create Renewi PLC. In October 2024, Renewi’s UK “municipal” portfolio, consisting of various treatment contracts including Cumbria, was formally “acquired” by Biffa Limited. What was Renewi Cumbria Limited (RCL) is now Biffa Cumbria Limited (BCL) in terms of whom the contract is now legally held with for Cumbria. This presents new opportunities for the Councils and with Biffa being a UK business only, it is hoped that the relationship and contract performance can be improved further over the remaining term.

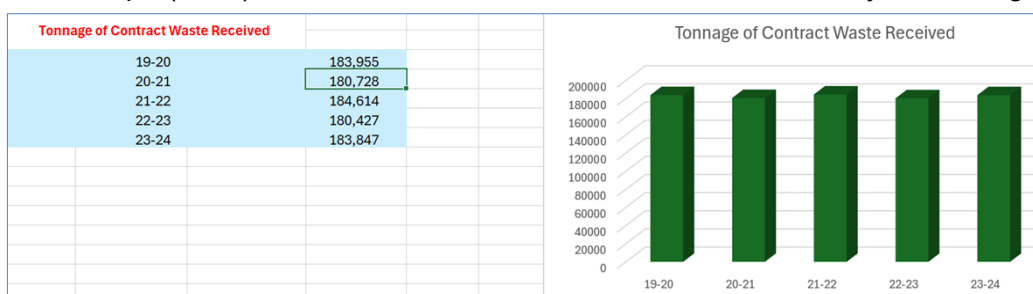
Following Local Government Reorganisation the contract is managed by Cumberland Council under Hosted Team arrangements with a Waste Inter-Authority Agreement (WIAA) in place between Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils. The scope of the WIAA includes a hierarchy of escalation for decisions including a Project Manager through to Joint Executive Committee and Full Councils.

2. Contract Performance

Contract Waste Treatment

The Hosted Waste team are the direct interface with BCL and are responsible for monitoring the performance of BCL and ensuring that obligations under the contract are met.

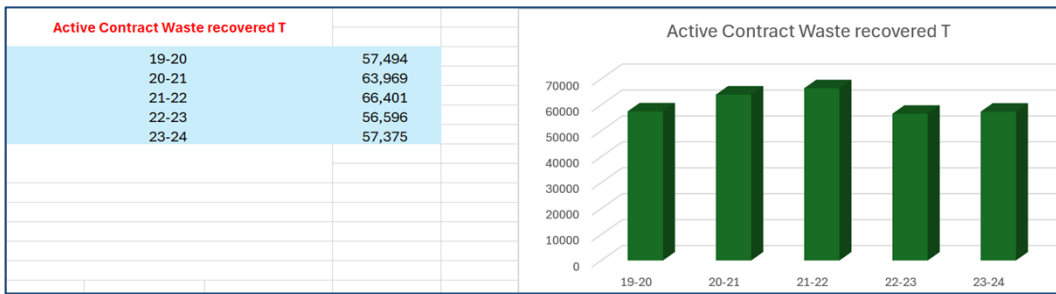
The Contract averages just over 180,000 tonnes per annum (tpa), this is a fairly consistent volume over the past five years. The Councils are contractually required to deliver a guaranteed minimum of 125,000 tpa (GMT) so there is little risk that there would be difficulty in meeting that requirement.



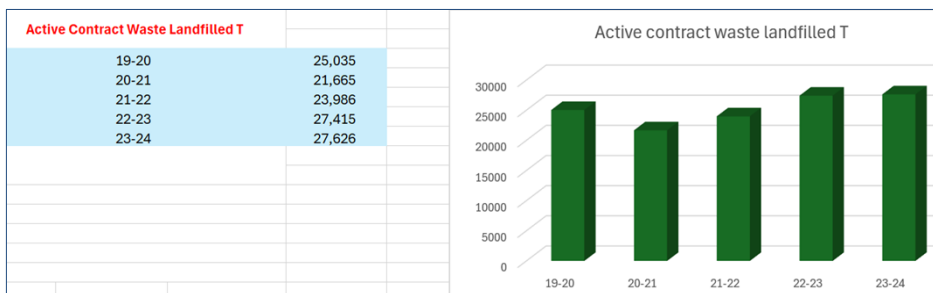
In FY20/21, the impact of the pandemic saw the volume of tonnes received at the MBTs increase by just over 11k tonnes compared to previous year, which was attributed to waste that would have been generated at work, now arising at households whilst people stayed away from the workplace.

Total MBT Tonnes IN	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total
19-20	9,650.06	9,925.86	8,933.68	9,979.90	10,010.74	9,319.56	10,445.80	9,194.11	9,741.86	10,703.30	8,679.66	10,273.42	116,857.95
20-21	11,116.14	9,824.38	10,488.24	11,279.94	9,706.98	11,267.70	10,648.10	10,582.96	11,464.58	10,518.08	9,731.98	11,489.18	128,118.26
21-22	10,881.32	9,708.54	10,723.16	10,916.28	10,094.78	10,794.56	7,903.30	10,424.26	10,992.38	10,222.48	9,218.67	10,949.16	122,828.89
22-23	9,761.46	9,862.04	9,987.98	9,412.78	6,392.56	10,256.82	9,264.05	10,468.28	9,394.01	10,780.30	9,195.82	9,476.77	114,252.87
23-24	8,731.10	9,642.48	10,005.96	8,614.72	10,677.80	9,778.84	9,605.54	10,057.60	9,476.10	10,058.30	8,482.80	7,841.46	112,972.70

The outputs in terms of fuel from the MBTs are summarised below which is disposal via “recovery” into Cement Kilns. This method of disposal is a step up on the waste hierarchy above landfill.



Landfill is the contractual disposal route for a number of waste streams that cannot be processed through the MBTs; specifically, all non-Recyclable waste at the HWRCs, Bulky Waste, Fly-tipped waste as well as MSW when any of the MBTs are unavailable (such as extended periods of downtime). The Contractor consistently performs well against the contractual landfill.



Our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

HWRCs provide facilities provide a valuable service to local residents; they accept significant tonnages of waste and can achieve high recycling rates, providing a valuable service to local residents. These sites also provide residents with an alternative to kerbside collections for the responsible disposal, recycling or re-use of their household waste, particularly for items that are not collected at the kerbside.

There are 14 HWRCs of which each Council has 7 in their administrative areas. Each site accepts a range of materials, and opening hours can vary. Detailed information on the sites can be found on the Councils' websites.

The HWRCs are of varying sizes and layouts, with some having limited space and capacity for a wide range of materials.

The waste disposal contract includes a number of performance indicators relating to the operation of the HWRCs. The Contractor, BCL, is required to achieve a 60% Recycling Rate for all waste received at the HWRCs. BCL have consistently met this KPI (see end column highlighted yellow). HWRCs performance at an average of 63% is just above the average in England of 62%.

Waste Recycled & Composted T	Ambleside	Barrow	Bousteads Grassing	Brampton	Clay Flatts	Flusco	Frizington	Grange over Sands	Kendal	Kirkby Stephen	Maryport	Millom	Ulverston	Wigton	Combined annual Recycling Rate
19-20	672.61	3,523.20	4,102.41	1,186.67	2,246.86	3,408.65	2,290.03	608.49	2,359.18	773.93	1,813.58	558.65	1,458.05	1,018.73	
20-21	882.87	2,176.16	2,655.90	1,131.79	1,524.46	2,333.04	1,703.55	379.50	1,795.14	721.69	1,673.47	558.38	1,272.23	766.92	
21-22	931.38	2,718.73	3,218.88	1,229.62	1,888.83	3,001.61	2,229.65	466.86	2,039.12	831.95	1,795.73	602.30	1,414.56	926.90	
22-23	824.75	2,540.59	3,804.05	1,136.51	1,889.42	3,143.71	2,199.61	489.53	2,040.31	816.70	1,759.89	555.90	1,418.44	825.82	
23-24	794.29	3,002.53	4,165.44	1,345.93	2,132.58	3,355.04	2,255.47	522.71	2,143.81	857.37	2,236.18	519.64	1,465.32	1,193.97	
Waste Recycled & Composted %															
19-20	73.40%	62.45%	58.01%	66.17%	48.46%	66.66%	53.45%	75.22%	70.16%	69.77%	58.93%	54.43%	64.23%	72.52%	63.85%
20-21	73.29%	61.12%	54.36%	62.06%	47.23%	62.31%	53.07%	68.73%	67.21%	69.93%	57.56%	55.37%	62.88%	66.57%	61.55%
21-22	72.56%	59.84%	55.16%	61.37%	49.71%	64.11%	54.53%	68.79%	66.88%	69.56%	59.14%	55.99%	63.27%	68.99%	62.14%
22-23	72.41%	60.17%	56.07%	63.49%	48.84%	66.57%	54.46%	67.65%	67.64%	72.29%	59.88%	56.32%	63.27%	71.36%	62.89%
23-24	74.60%	61.32%	53.86%	64.40%	49.48%	64.05%	56.01%	67.81%	64.50%	74.20%	56.68%	58.64%	60.19%	75.50%	62.94%

However, closer scrutiny shows that there is a range of recycling rates achieved across all HWRCs with some exceeding 70% and others in the low 50%. Clay Flatts HWRC (Workington) is consistently the worst performer explained by the site being a busy site with limited capacity for an extensive range of containers for recycle.

2023/24 Contract year tonnage data summary

BCL report the data below on a monthly basis as part of the Monthly Monitoring Report* which is a contractual requirement. The table summarises the overall tonnage received as Contract Waste and shows where the volumes (expressed in tonnes and percentage of total) are treated. The missing value is the “mass loss” achieved through the MBT process.

Category	Contract Month		Contract YTD		Rolling 12 month	
	tonnes	%	tonnes	%	tonnes	%
Tonnage of Contracted Waste Received	15,027	n/a	184,016	n/a	184,016	n/a
Contract Waste Recycled and Composted	3,656	24.3%	41,983	22.8%	41,983	22.8%
Active Contract Waste Recovered	4,200	28.0%	57,375	31.2%	57,375	31.2%
Active Contract Waste Landfilled	3,387	22.5%	27,626	15.0%	27,626	15.0%
Inactive Contract Waste Diverted from Landfill	1,219	8.1%	13,515	7.3%	13,515	7.3%
Inactive Contract Waste Landfilled	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Tonnage of Non Contract Waste Received	56	0.4%	635	0.3%	635	0.3%

*Extract from March 2024 MMR

Waste Reduction

Waste reduction, at its core, is the practice of minimising the amount of waste we generate in the first place. Unlike recycling or waste treatment, which focus on dealing with waste after it has been created, waste reduction aims to prevent waste from entering the waste stream altogether. This preventative approach targets the source of the problem, shifting the focus from end-of-pipe solutions to sustainable consumption and production patterns. The Hosted Waste Disposal Team carry out waste minimisation work supporting community groups, Collections colleagues, public health and many others to engage residents with support to

reduce their overall waste arisings. The team can be seen attending various outreach events in both Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness and have a dedicated budget to work with to support this public engagement.

Benchmarking

In order to provide some comparisons, this report looked at what other neighbouring Authorities are reporting through Waste Data Flow (WDF) which is where all Authorities report their waste and recycling volumes. **Note** that this is looking at reported Residual tonnage (MSW) only and not some of the other wastes that we looked in in the contract performance section earlier in this report. We are using this as the most accessible means to compare like for like with our domestic household waste.

Our nearest neighbours geographically in England include County Durham, Northumberland and North Yorkshire but Lancashire is discounted as it is a very large administrative area and Dumfries & Galloway have different drivers for recycling and diversion.

This report takes the last five years annual figures and collates number of tonnes (table 1), number of households (table 2) and produces a Kgs per household metric (table 3).

Table 1: Residual Waste Tonnages

Residual	Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
North Yorkshire County Council		173,841.81	177,192.30	173,900.64	181,088.43	182,502.23	172,810.99
Cumbria County Council		148,433.16	146,320.29	145,186.39	150,431.68	147,463.95	142,424.00
County Durham		138,779.84	142,299.65	143,403.93	163,006.61	160,231.47	149,108.17
Northumberland		101,426.30	102,777.70	104,344.60	112,124.30	117,018.60	109,285.20

Table 2: Number of Households

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Authority	Households	Households	Households	Households	Households	Households
North Yorkshire County Council	284,120	286,440	289,170	294,610	294,610	300,670
Cumbria County Council	244,970	245,880	247,490	249,920	249,920	252,650
County Durham	242,160	244,120	246,440	249,510	249,510	252,880
Northumberland	151,390	152,580	154,270	156,810	156,810	159,390

Table 3: Kilograms of Waste per Household

Residual KG Per Household	Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
North Yorkshire County Council		611.86	618.60	601.38	614.67	619.47	574.75
Cumbria County Council		605.92	595.09	586.64	601.92	590.04	563.72
County Durham		573.09	582.91	581.90	653.31	642.18	589.64
Northumberland		669.97	673.60	676.38	715.03	746.24	685.65

By comparing Kilograms per household, the data shows that Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness is performing well against its near neighbours in respect of waste generated per households, the lesser the number the better.

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities - in delivering excellent services. We want to be a high performing council. Our Services have a direct and indirect impact on our residents' health and wellbeing. We want our residents to benefit from excellent, efficient and enterprising public services. We will deliver what we need, when they need it, with a focus on collaboration, dialogue and delivering strategic impact at a local level.

Contribution to the Westmorland and Furness Plan Priorities - the service contributes to the Westmoreland and Furness Council plan for the economy and culture. Sustainable, inclusive economic growth is essential to deliver high quality jobs.

Consultation / Engagement

Legal – Administration of the hosting arrangements will be subject to the conditions set out in the Waste Inter Authorities Agreement. Oversight and governance will be provided by the Joint Officer Board. (JOB) and Joint Executive Committee (JEC) at their scheduled meetings as appropriate.

Finance – Recharging between the two authorities will be subject to the conditions set out in the Waste Inter Authority Agreement (IAA).

As part of the IAA the Joint Executive Committee approves the draft annual budget for the hosted service. The IAA also sets out how this may be reviewed and updated, including quarterly position statements.

Information Governance – Not applicable. The report is for information.

Impact Assessments – Not applicable. The report is for information.

Have you screened the decision for impacts using the Impact Assessment? Not applicable.

If you have not screened the decision using the Impact Assessment, please explain your reason. The report is for information.

Contact details:

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Background papers:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

Data sources:

Resource Efficiency Data (subscription)

WasteDataFlow

Waste Disposal Contract transactions and performance monitoring data compiled by the Hosted Waste Disposal Team

