Designing for Waste Management

When undertaking development on your home, it is important to consider the implications of your domestic waste production and how your waste can be recycled, stored and collected.

Whether building your new home, redeveloping or redesigning existing rooms or building an extension, it is necessary to allow enough space to separate and store your domestic waste, and ensure that you can easily transfer this waste to the collection point.

What does it have to do with me?

The County Council, supported by the District and Borough councils in Northamptonshire, has produced planning guidance\(^1\) that promotes the provision of waste management facilities with new development, including householder development (individual dwelling houses and domestic extensions specifically relating to kitchens, utility rooms and other domestic waste storage areas). This guidance, called the SPD, requires householders to prepare and submit a Waste Management Facilities Strategy to accompany planning applications made to the District and Borough Councils and the County Council in Northamptonshire.

The information within this guide can also be applied to small scale, home renovations, such as installing a new kitchen.

How can I help manage my waste at home?

Although not often considered, individual waste management design features can greatly influence behavioural patterns and hence can contribute towards waste prevention and minimisation through increased reuse, recycling and composting. Simple steps and actions at home can have a significant effect on waste generation and hence reduce the amount of waste required to be managed or disposed.

Principles for Providing Waste Management Facilities

The SPD sets out a number of Principles for providing waste management facilities, which cover a wide range of scenarios and scales of development. It is therefore recognised that householders, in building a new home or making major extensions, are likely to have a reduced capacity to influence some of these principles. However, the cumulative impact of many smaller developments should not be ignored, and so this guide has been prepared to assist householders.

\(^1\) Development and Implementation Principles Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Sept 2011)
Applying the SPD Principles in your home

Hierarchy of preferred sustainable waste management options. The waste hierarchy is all about making waste prevention the top priority. Preventing waste entering the waste system in the first place is more sustainable than dealing with it retrospectively. When waste is created, priority is given to preparing it for re-use followed by recycling, then recovery. Disposal of waste (e.g. landfill) is the least preferred option.

1. High Quality, Innovative Design

Waste management facilities should be of high quality, innovative design, yet flexible to accommodate future change.

When designing your home, you should seek to incorporate high quality and innovative design, however, it is also important to maintain a degree of flexibility due to the changing nature of domestic waste management practices and collection methods.

2. Provision of Complimentary Facilities

Provision of waste management facilities should complement and support existing facilities and services.

By incorporating recycling facilities into your kitchen or utility room designs, it is possible to ensure that waste minimisation is easy and convenient to implement. Individual waste management features should compliment existing waste management infrastructure and services to increase ease of use.

3. Adequate Space and Access

Adequate space and access should be provided to ensure convenient storage locations and clear and easy access.

It is important to ensure that external refuse storage is located away from the property, preferably undercover or screened, and that access routes to the collection point are large enough and kept clear at all times. Designs should always consider the space required for the separation and storage of household waste.

4. Public Safety

External waste management facilities should not have a detrimental impact on your household’s or public safety (e.g. pedestrians).

When designing external waste storage areas, consider how features contribute towards creating safe and secure environments around your home, particularly in relation to deterring criminal or antisocial activity.
Waste Management within your home

It’s easy to include waste management facilities and design in your home. Following these 3 simple steps will help you fulfill the requirements of the SPD in relation to the provision of waste management facilities.

1. Include space for recycling containers in your kitchen, utility room or garage.

2. Identify these features on a site layout plan, clearly marking access points (Figure 2).

3. Incorporate the good practice measures below into your designs.

Ideally, households should have 3 internal storage bins. One bin each should be provided for: dry mixed recyclable waste, compostable kitchen waste and general waste.

Home composting bins should be located away from the house and in an area that is relatively cool in the winter and warm in the summer. Bins should be placed directly onto the soil to allow access for worms, soil, microbes and drainage.

Screened / enclosed bin storage areas will help to reduce potential for anti-social behaviour. External storage areas should be located in a well ventilated area and allow space for at least 2 large bins and 2 small containers.

Ensure that your designs can accommodate recycling containers and compost bins.

Allow for adequate access to and from your waste storage and collection points.

Figure 2: Example site layout plan showing best practice measures
External household waste management design

Various designs exist for external waste management design features to assist in accommodating and screening waste bins and recycling containers.

Some examples of external design features demonstrating undercover storage and screening are illustrated in Figure 3.

When storing waste outside of your home, it is important to ensure that:

- **Bins are located and designed to minimise their visual impact** and blend in to the surroundings and existing buildings;
- **Bins do not obstruct the sight lines** for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists;
- **Bins can be easily and safely moved** from the storage area to the collection point, or where that is not possible, create a suitable storage area; and
- **The collection point is easily accessible for collection crews and the occupier.**

An example of suitable locations for external household waste storage for dwelling houses is illustrated in Figure 4.

![Figure 3: Examples of external undercover storage and screening](image-url)

![Figure 4: Location for refuse storage and compost bin](image-url)

Note that there is sufficient access both from the property to the bins and from the bins to the collection point. Also, the bins and recycling containers are located undercover, or alternatively on adequate footprint area screened to reduce visual impact.
Internal household waste management design

Various internal waste management design features exist to assist in the separation and storage of household waste and recyclables.

Internal waste management design features should:
- **make efficient use of space in the home**;
- **prevent odours**;
- **have suitable screening**, for example in-built kitchen cabinets to hold recycling bins; and
- **make the separation of household waste extremely simple**.

Some examples of internal design features are illustrated in Figure 5.

![Figure 5: Examples of internal storage containers to separate household and recyclable waste.](image)

Further Information

There is an ever-growing base of information regarding waste management, the following represents a good starting point for anyone keen to learn more. Recommended industry guidance identified within the SPD and supporting information may also be of use, especially in relation to the provision of technical information.

- Northamptonshire County Council  
- Environment Agency  
  www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- WRAP  
  www.wrap.org.uk
- Recycle Now  
  www.recyclenow.com
- The Association for Organics Recycling  
  www.organics-recycling.org.uk
This information can be provided in other languages and formats upon request such as large print, Braille, audio cassette and floppy disk. Contact 01604 236014.

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