What happens to your recycling and waste?

Read below to find out what happens to your recycling and waste.

Food and garden waste

After the contents of your Green-top bin or cornstarch/paper sacks are collected the material is taken to the transfer station at Nathan Way, Thamesmead. It is then loaded onto a larger collection vehicle and taken to an In-Vessel Composting (IVC) facility at Dagenham, Essex.

At this facility, the material is shredded and loaded into enclosed bunkers where it is heated up to 70 Degrees Celsius to kill bacteria and weed seeds. After this process, the material is then transferred into bays where the natural composting process breaks the material down further into a product used for agriculture and landscaping.

Mixed dry recycling

On collection day your Blue-top bin or clear sacks are picked up by our recycling crews and taken to the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) located in Thamesmead.

The material then moves up a conveyor belt into a trommel screen, which is like a big washing machine drum that separates out the heavy materials, like glass which falls through the holes, from the light material, like paper which floats through to the end.

The cans, glass and plastic containers fall through the smaller holes in the drum into a vibrating sieve separator which simply sieves out small particles of glass and other small items.

The containers flow into a “V” screen separator. Any paper is moved by paddles back up to the paper cascade. Steel cans are removed from the containers by an overband magnet and aluminium cans are removed by an eddy current separator – this is a set of spinning magnets

that repel the cans and allow them to be separated.

The glass and plastic containers are put through a piercer/crusher unit where the glass is

crushed and plastic bottles are pierced and flattened. The glass and plastics then go onto a disc screen where the glass falls through holes and the plastic continues across the holes by being moved on by rotating discs.

The materials have all now been separated and are baled, ready to be delivered directly from Royal Greenwich to recycling re-processors.

The majority of the output from the MRF is processed in this country.

On average, we collect 80 tonnes of mixed dry recycling from Royal Greenwich residents a day, and deliver it to the MRF.

Non-recyclable waste – what’s left over

The contents of your Black-top bin and black sacks are transported by our refuse collection vehicles directly to SELCHP, an energy from waste facility, operated by Veolia

Environmental Services, located in the neighbouring London borough of Lewisham. It is burnt at very high temperatures to generate electricity to power around 48,000 households and more recently the process can now provide excess heat and hot water for local homes.