

Environmental Impact assessment

<p>1. Name of activity:</p>	<p>Review of Waste Vehicles Fuel Arrangements</p>														
<p>2. Main purpose of activity:</p>	<p>The Council set a budget in January 2025 to use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in the vehicles (above 3.5 tonnes) in the waste and street cleansing contract that commenced in May 2025. The decision was based on the Council's commitments to addressing climate change, The budget set aside at the time (£40k per year ongoing) was expected to be sufficient to use 100% HVO in those vehicles, although the budget decision did reference that it would be possible to use incremental levels of HVO depending on cost. Inflation added to the budget means that £40k budget is now £42k (for 2026/27).</p> <p>In the waste and street cleansing contract all vehicles under 3.5 tonnes are electric. So, using HVO in the vehicles above 3.5 tonnes has a significant impact on the environmental impact of the service. HVO reduces carbon emissions by 90% compared to using diesel.</p> <p>The current global political situation has resulted in a marked increase in fuel prices. The premium for HVO (the additional cost of HVO above diesel prices) has significantly increased. It has gone from around 10p per litre when the cost was initially estimated, and latest estimates are that is around 40p per litre.</p> <p>To limit financial exposure to the Council of increased HVO prices, a decision was made on 15 April 2026 to ask Veolia to target a HVO mix that limits the additional cost to the Council (of using HVO over diesel) to £5,000 per month. This would be subject to a minimum HVO use of 20%, unless it became impossible to obtain HVO fuel. That decision was taken to cover the period up to the end of June 2026, so that a more medium-term decision could be taken by Cabinet. At its meeting on 16 June, Cabinet are recommended to adopt the same approach until 31 March 2027.</p>														
<p>3. List the information, data or evidence used in this assessment:</p>	<p>The table below shows the impact on emissions depending on the blend of HVO / diesel that can be achieved:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Diesel</th> <th>HVO</th> <th>Percentage change in emissions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>100%</td> <td>0%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>90%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>-9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>-18%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Diesel	HVO	Percentage change in emissions	100%	0%		90%	10%	-9%	80%	20%	-18%
Diesel	HVO	Percentage change in emissions													
100%	0%														
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	70%	30%	-27%		
	60%	40%	-36%		
	50%	50%	-45%		
	40%	60%	-54%		
	30%	70%	-63%		
	20%	80%	-72%		
	10%	90%	-81%		
	0%	100%	-90%		
Area of Potential Impact	Examples to Consider (non-exhaustive)	Neutral (X)	Negative (X)	Positive (X)	<p><i>Describe the contribution/impact on the area that the decision may have - assess whether this impact is a negative or positive or neutral one.</i></p> <p>Negative: What are the risks?</p> <p>Positive: What are the benefits?</p>
<p>1. Impact on greenhouse emission and support adaption to the effects of climate change</p>	<p>Will energy needs be met through renewable sources?</p> <p>Will it reduce emissions through retrofitting new technology?</p> <p>Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel?</p>		x		<p>Negative</p> <p>Adopting a HVO / diesel blend lowers the emissions benefits from the waste vehicles (as shown in the table above). However adopting a minimum 20% threshold means some benefits are retained.</p>
					<p>Positive</p>
<p>2. Use of natural resources including water and energy</p>	<p>Will it reduce water consumption?</p> <p>Will it reduce energy consumption?</p>	x			<p>Negative</p>


					Positive
3. Minimisation of flood risks to the area (i.e. promotion of SUD's. protect surface and ground water quality)	Will it minimise flood risk from all sources of flooding?	X			Negative
	Will it reduce property damage due to storm events/ heavy rainfall by improving flood resistance and flood resilience?				
					Positive
4. To protect, enhance and create environments that encourage and support biodiversity	Will it protect, enhance and increase biodiversity and protect habitats?	X			Negative
	Will it improve access to and promote educational value of sites of biodiversity interest?				
					Positive
5. To improve Air Quality <i>(air quality describes how polluted the air we breathe is)</i>	Will it improve air quality?		X		Negative
	Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?				
					Adopting a HVO / diesel blend lowers the emissions benefits from the waste vehicles (as shown in the table above). However adopting a minimum 20% threshold means some benefits are retained.
					Positive
6. To reduce need to travel, the use of private motorised vehicular transport as well as	Will it encourage increased walking, cycling and use of public transport?	X			Negative
	Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than a car?				
					Positive

<i>encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport</i>					
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<i>7. To reduce waste production and increase recycling, recovery and reuse of waste</i>	Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?	X			Negative
	Will it reduce household waste?				
	Will it reduce construction waste?				
	Will it increase recovery recycling and re-use?				
<i>8. To enhance the public realm and street improvements</i>	Will it reduce litter?	X			Negative
	Will it enhance the quality of public realm?				
<i>9. To protect, enhance and seek opportunities to increase open space</i>	Will it improve open space?	X			Negative
	Will it improve landscape character?				
	Will it minimise development on Greenfield sites?				
	Will it reduce noise pollution from vehicles?	X			Negative

10. To reduce noise and impact of noise

Positive

6.0 Results			
	Yes	No	
Were positive impacts identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Were negative impacts identified (what actions were taken)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7.0 Consultation, decisions and actions			
Describe the decision on this activity (refer to section 3.2)			
The decision being taken is a balance between financial and environmental impact. It is only seen as a temporary measure while there is global uncertainty on fuel pricing. The Council remains committed to the objectives of its Sustainability Strategy, including reducing emissions of the waste fleet.			
List all actions identified to address/mitigate negative impact or promote positive impact			
Action To target a HVO mix that limits the additional cost to the Council (of using HVO over diesel) to £5,000 per month, subject to ensuring a minimum HVO use of 20%, unless it becomes impossible to obtain HVO fuel.	Responsible person		Completion due date
By	Jeanette Lowden		31 March 2027
When, how and by whom will these actions be monitored?			
Veolia will target a mix of HVO/ diesel which limits financial exposure to the Council up to £5,000 a month above the HVO budget. This means that if prices reduce (and the differential between HVO and diesel also reduces), the blend of HVO can be increased. This would be subject to a minimum HVO use of 20%, unless it became impossible to obtain HVO fuel.			
The waste service manager will ensure that Veolia are instructed to act on the decision from 1 July 2027. Prices will be continually monitored to ensure the optimum level of HVO / diesel is achieved.			
8.0 Signatures			
Assessor (report author):			
Name: Sarah Kingsley	Signature** 		
Validated by (line manager):			
Name:	Signature**		
Forward to the Policy inbox: policy@north-herts.gov.uk			
Signature** Amber Smith-Howell			
Assessment date:	02/06/2026	Review date:	02/09/2026 (quarterly)

**** Please type your name to allow forms to be sent electronically.**

A copy of this form should be forwarded to policy@north-herts.gov.uk and a duplicate filed on the council's report system, alongside any report proposing a decision on policy or service change.