

Impact of the new duty to collect plastic film on local authorities in England

LGA Webinar

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- Summary of key findings
 1. Understanding flexible plastic and material flows
 2. The impact on council waste and recycling services
 3. Preparing for the new duty

For local authorities in England:

- **392,000 tonnes** of plastic film in household waste streams.
 - Only **15,000 tonnes** currently collected and recycled.
 - Estimated **96,000 tonnes** when mandatory collections introduced.
- Cost of collections:
 - **£82 million to £301 million** per year.
 - Average cost **£3 to £12** per household.

Understanding flexible plastic and material flows

Examples of plastic film

from [WRAP kerbside instruction leaflet](#)

	<p>All plastic bags carrier bags salad/fruit/vegetable bags frozen food bags bread bags cereal bags flower bags</p>		<p>Cheese, fish, and meat wrapping</p>
	<p>Confectionery wrappers chocolate sweets biscuits cakes ice cream and chewing gum wrappers</p>		<p>Outer layer bags and wrapping multipack toilet and kitchen roll magazine and newspaper wrapping</p>
	<p>Foil lined packaging crisp/snack packets coffee bags</p>		<p>Plastic film and sleeves removeable film lids plastic sleeves for bottles and jars</p>
	<p>Bubble wrap and cling film</p>		<p>Fruit and vegetable net bags</p>

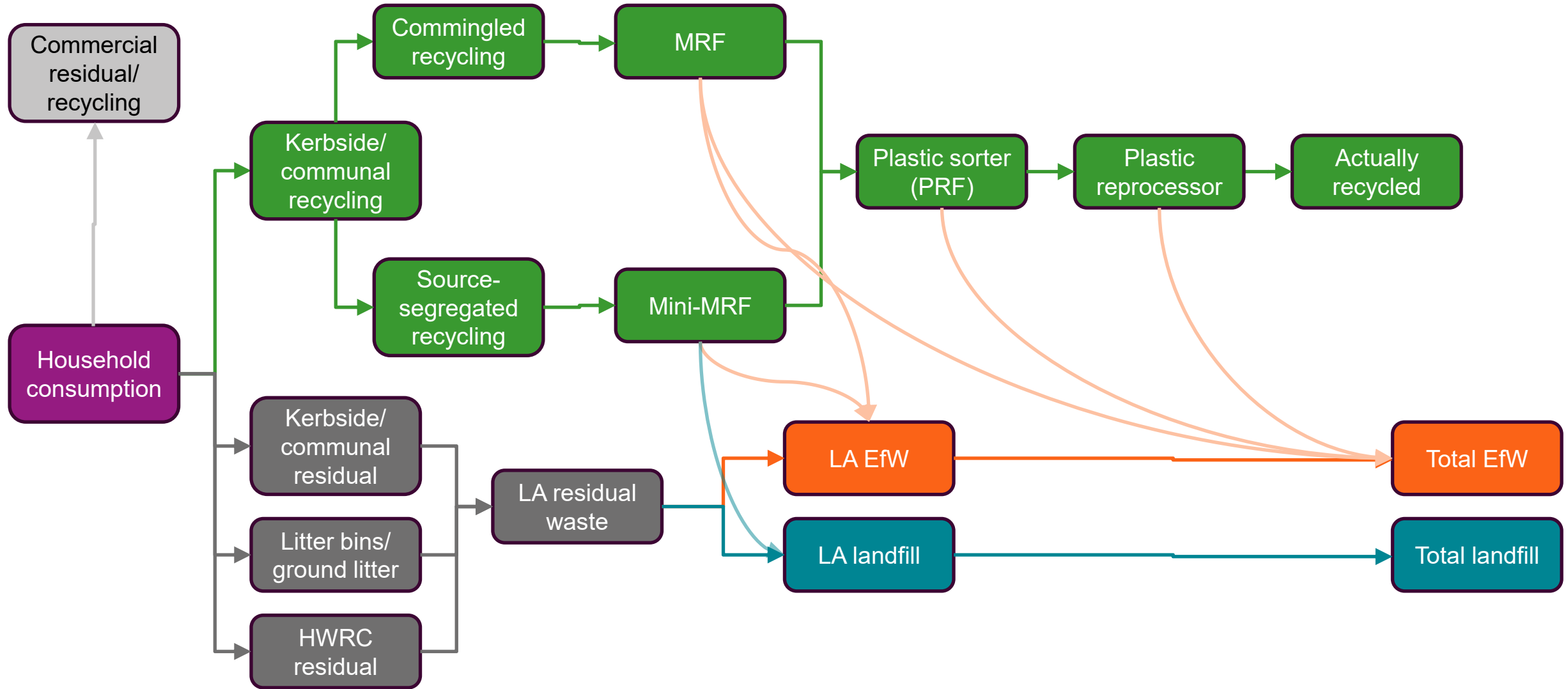
Simpler Recycling prescribed list:

- **Polyethylene**
 - (bags, outer wrapping: *stretch material e.g. bread bags*)
- **Polypropylene**
 - (wrappers: *crinkly material, tends to rip e.g. salad bags*)
- **Includes film with metallised layers**
 - (e.g. crisp packets)
- **Does not include:**
 - **Film containing aluminium foil** (e.g. coffee packs) or **paper layers.**
 - **PET film** (ready meal lids)
 - **PVC film** (some cling film)
 - **Multi-layer non-PE/PP packaging** (pouches, sachets, snack packets)
 - **Black plastic**
 - **Small items** < 40mm x 40mm

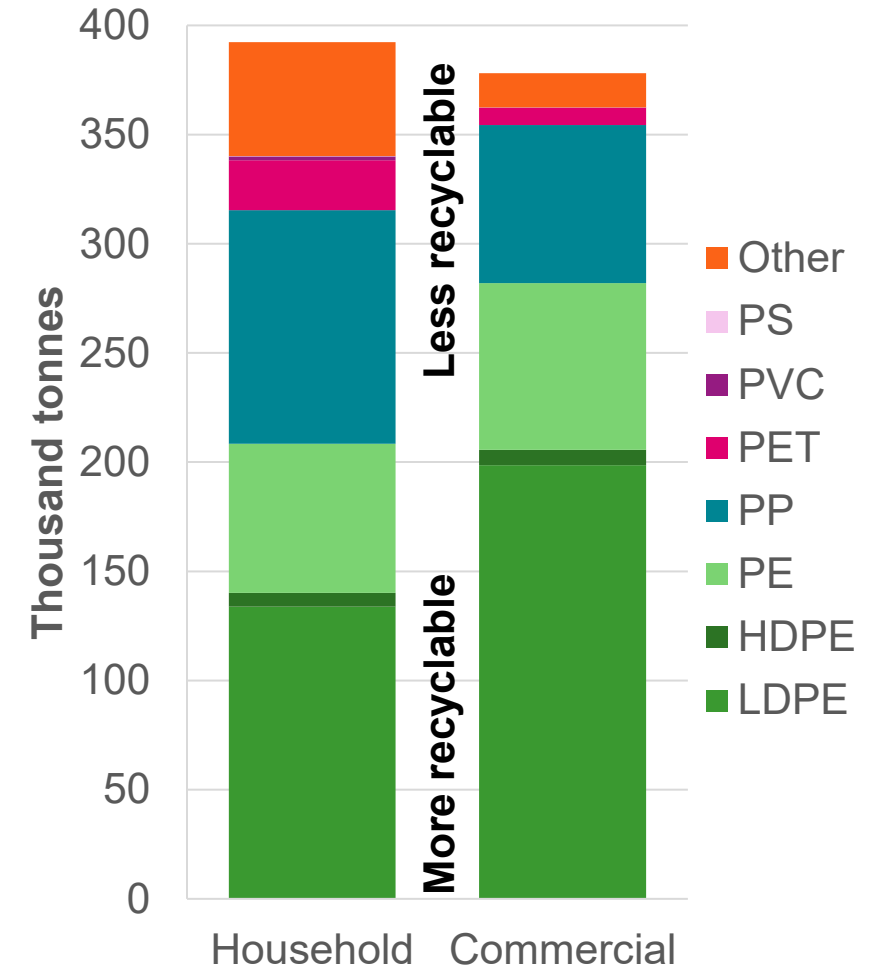
Recycling pyramid



Collection and treatment

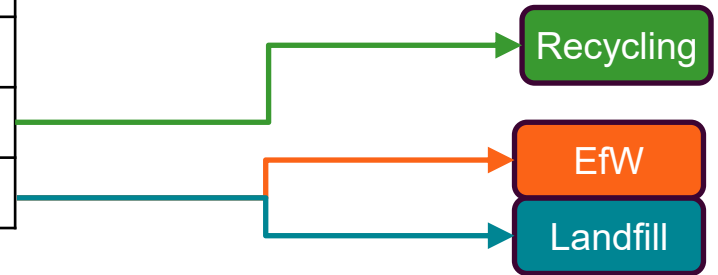


Material	Example uses	Simpler Recycling	Recyclability
Clear PE	Bags for fresh veg, bubble wrap	✓	✓
Coloured/ printed PE	Carrier bags, bags for bread	✓	✓
Clear PP	Wrappers for salads and fruit punnets	✓	✓
Coloured/ printed PP	Multi-pack bags, noodles packs	✓	✓
Metalized PP	Crisp packets, some snack bars	✓	?
Film with EVOH barriers/ coatings ^a	Cheese packets, bacon packets	✓	?
Small film items	Sweet wrappers, bottle film seals	X	X
PP nets	Fruit nets	X	X
Black film	Bin bags	X	X
PET film	Ready meal lids, tamper-proof seals	X	X
PVC film	Cling film (some)	X	X
Multi-layer film with PET layer	Clear and metallised pouches, sachets and snack packaging	X	X
Film with aluminium foil layer	Stiff 'silver' pouches, sachets, coffee packs and snack packaging	X	X
Film with paper layer	'Rustic' paper/plastic pouches	X	X
Oxo-degradable, biodegradable or compostable	Kitchen caddy liners, some carrier bags	X	X



Recycling collected and capacity

Household film arisings and recycling	Thousand tonnes
Total film that could be collected from households	397
-- of which film arising in household waste	392
-- of which bin bags & pet waste bags	51
-- of which collection bags	4
Film collected and recycled under Simpler Recycling	96
Film NOT recycled	300



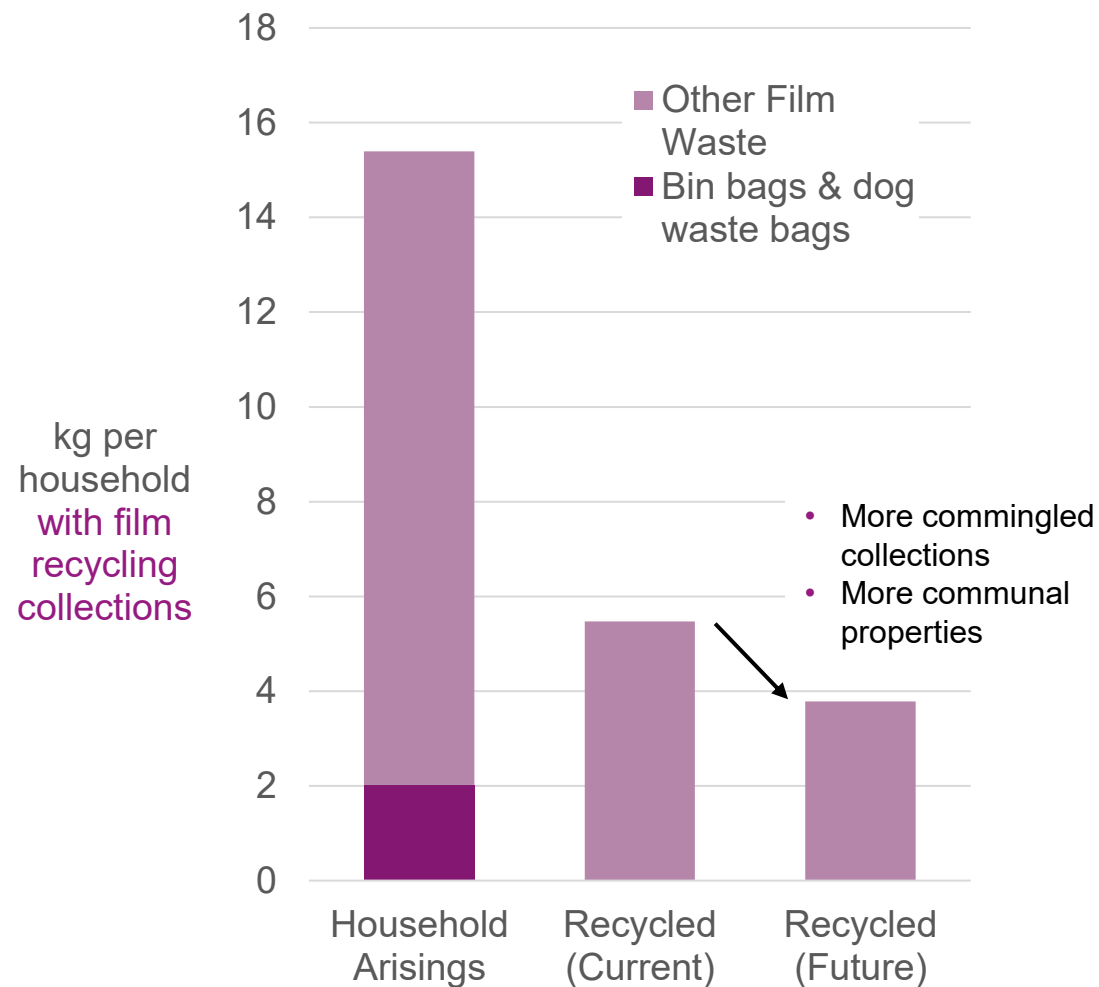
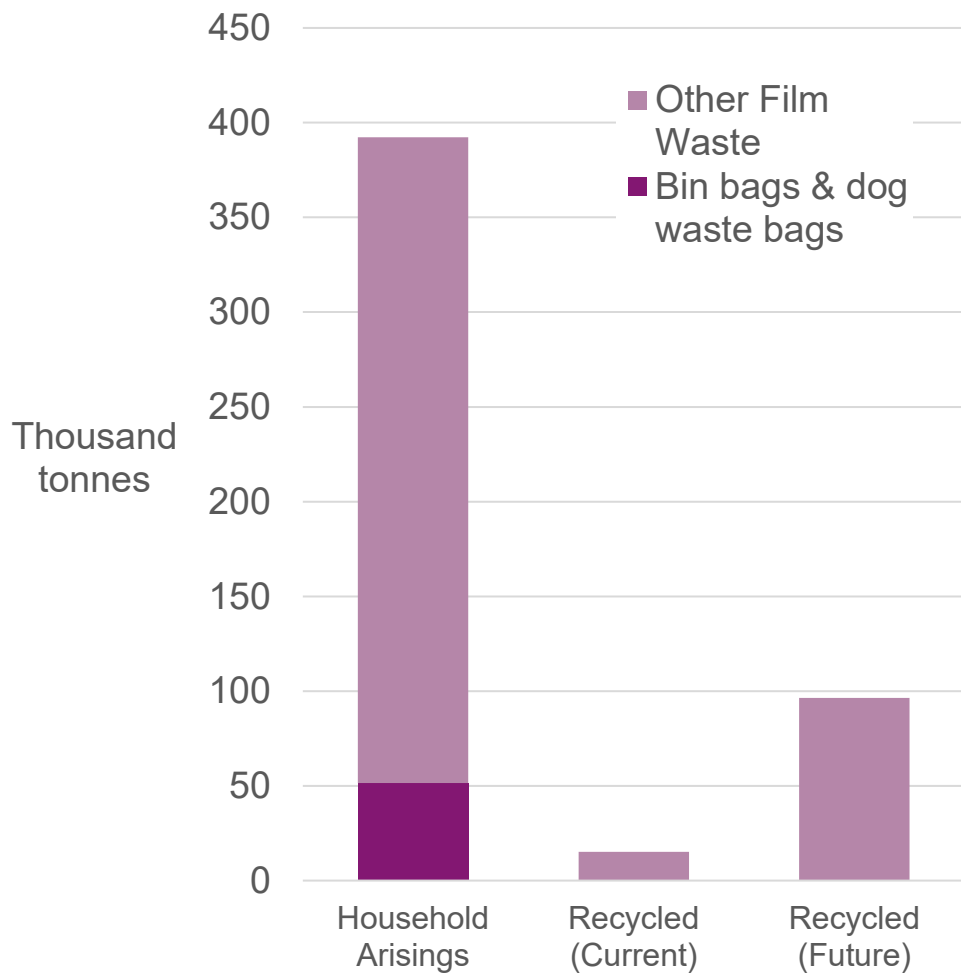
Thousand tonnes	Mechanical	Dissolution	Chemical	Total
Current capacity	194	-	-	194
Future additional capacity	160	10	120	290
Total future capacity	354	10	120	484



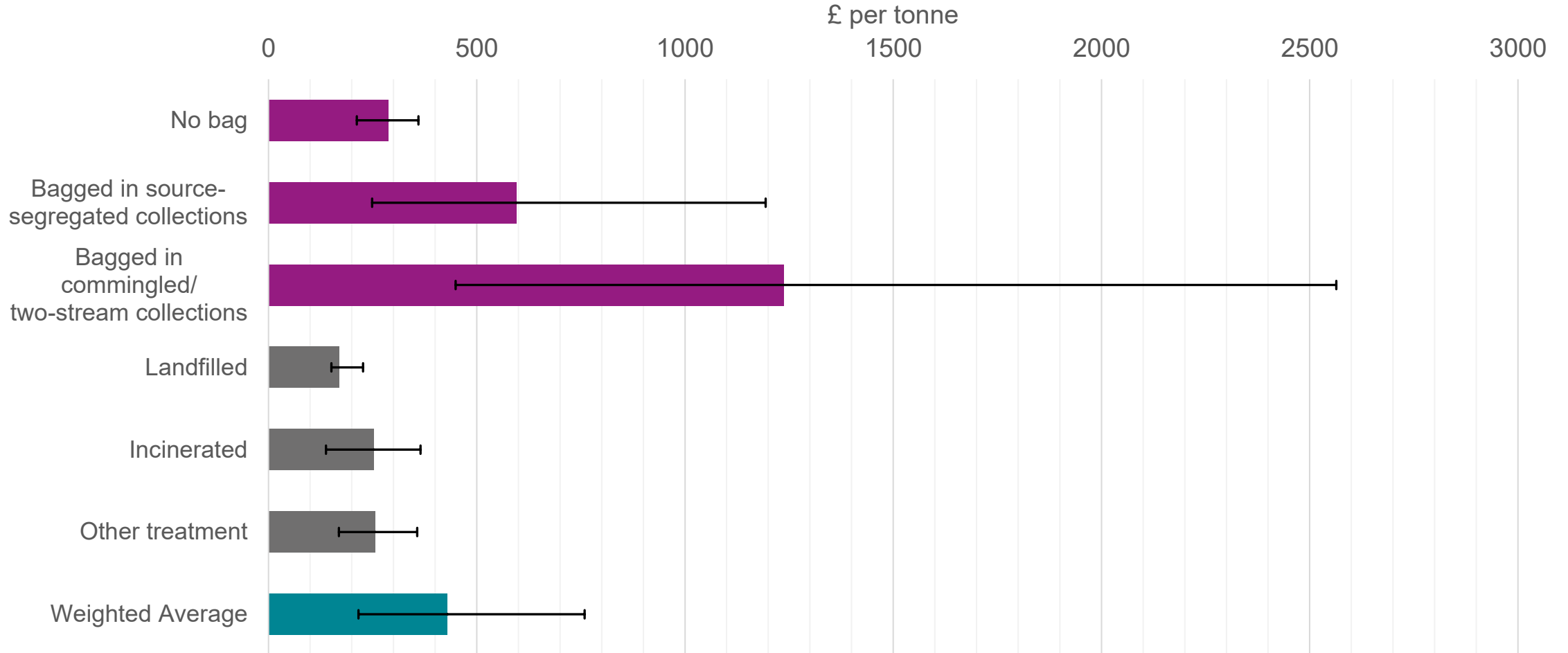
The impact on council waste and recycling services

- Reprocessor availability
 - Does MRF* have outlet for film?
- Bags vs no bags
 - Can MRF* handle loose film? Bagged film?
 - Cost of bags – initially and ongoing
 - Cost of delivery – initially and ongoing

Yields

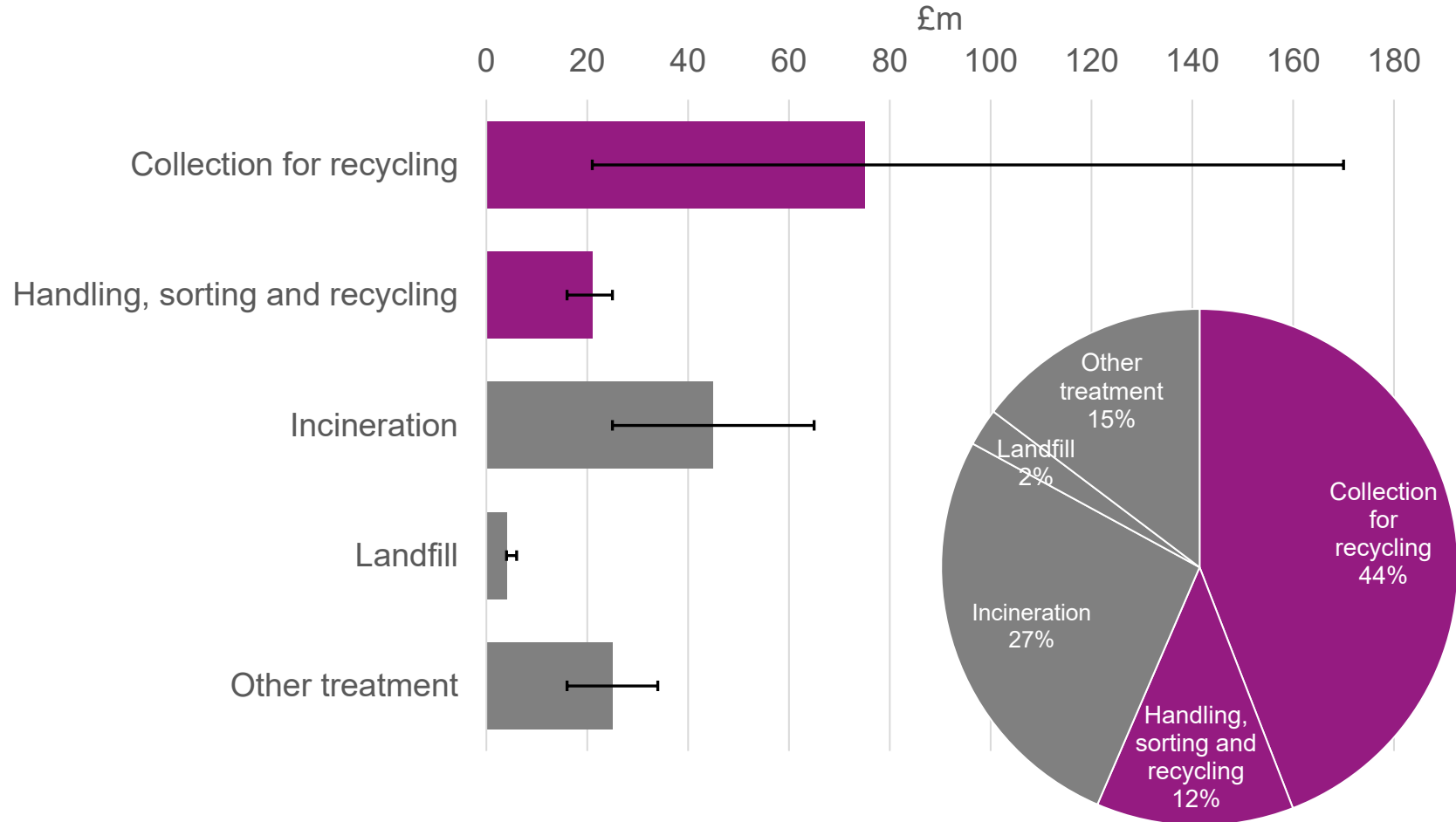


By treatment route



Costings

Total costs



Total
£82m / £170m / £301m

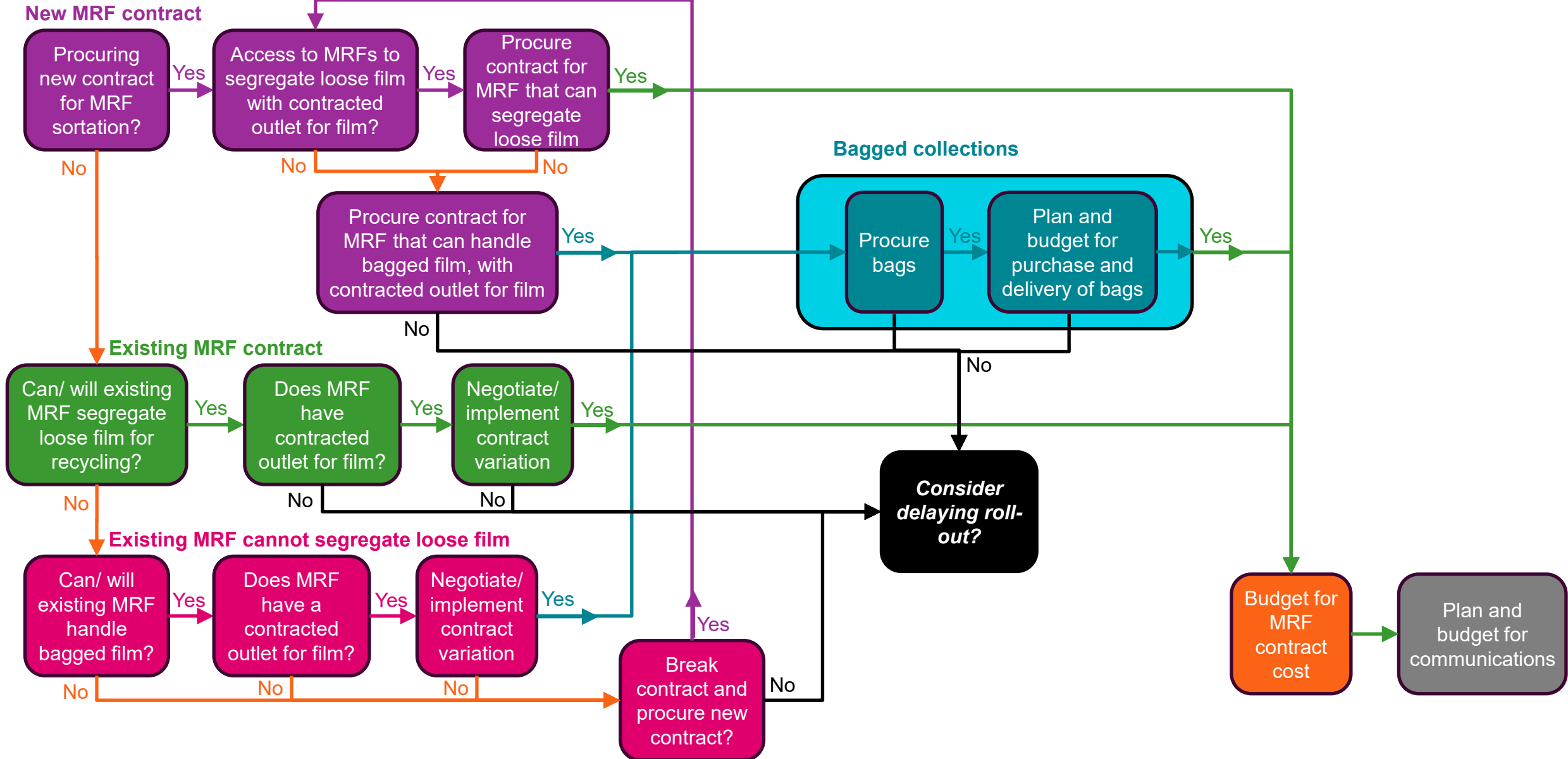
Per Household
£3.20 / £6.68 / £11.80

Preparing for the new duty

Bag decisions and MRFs

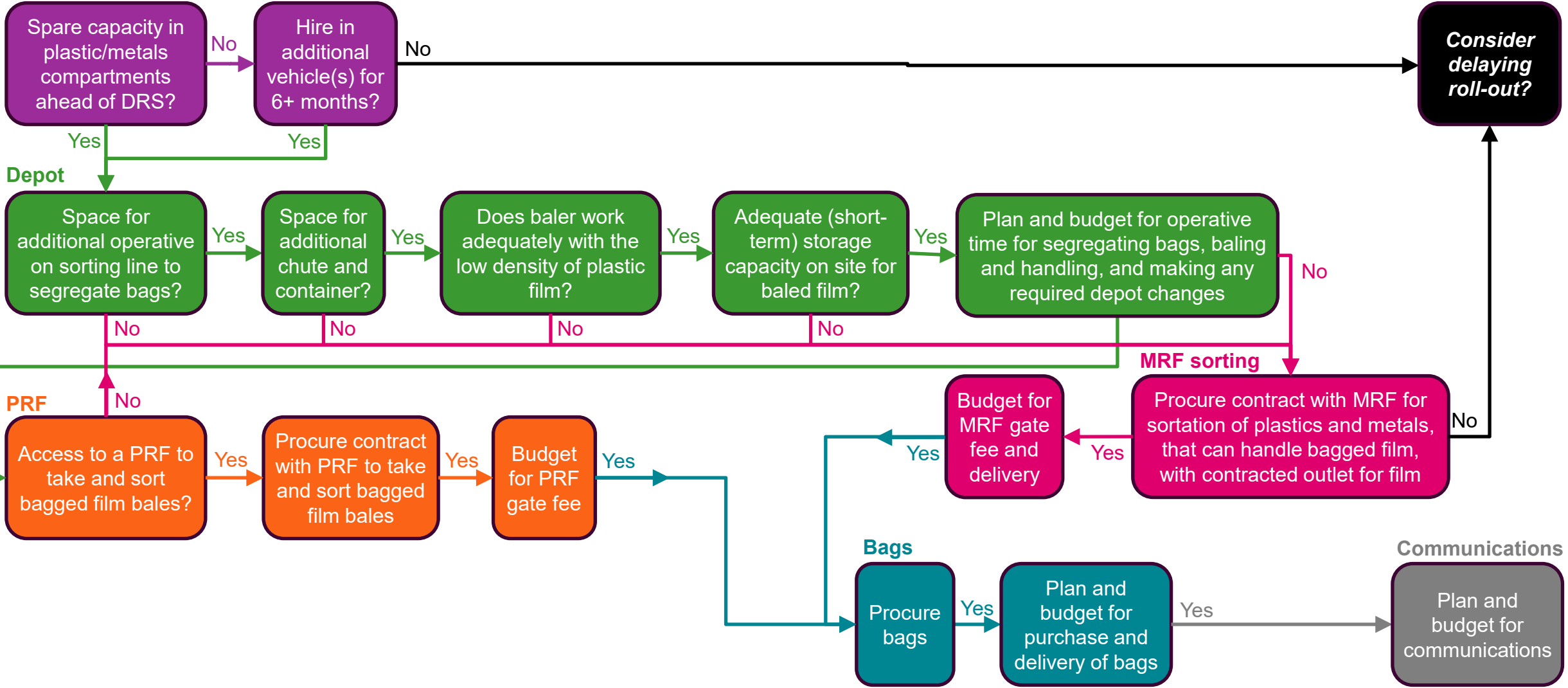
- **Bagged collections:**
 - Easier to handle during collections and segregation; protect fibre streams
 - Expensive; require procurement; require delivery to households initially and ongoing
- **MRF contract / own sorting facility:**
 - Can MRF handle loose film / bagged / no film?
 - Does MRF contractor have a reprocessing outlet for plastic film?
 - What polymer types and formats will be accepted?
 - Agree MRF contract variations / costings for own facility
 - Budget for variation of costs: sorting, paying for reprocessing, ETS costs passed on
- **If using bags:**
 - Allow time for procurement – use framework
 - Choose colour – blue? – and printing (instructions and how to request replacements)
 - Decide how to deliver initially and ongoing: collection crew/ container delivery crew?
 - Budget for cost of bags and delivery – initial and ongoing

Commingled collections



Source-segregated collections

Collection vehicles



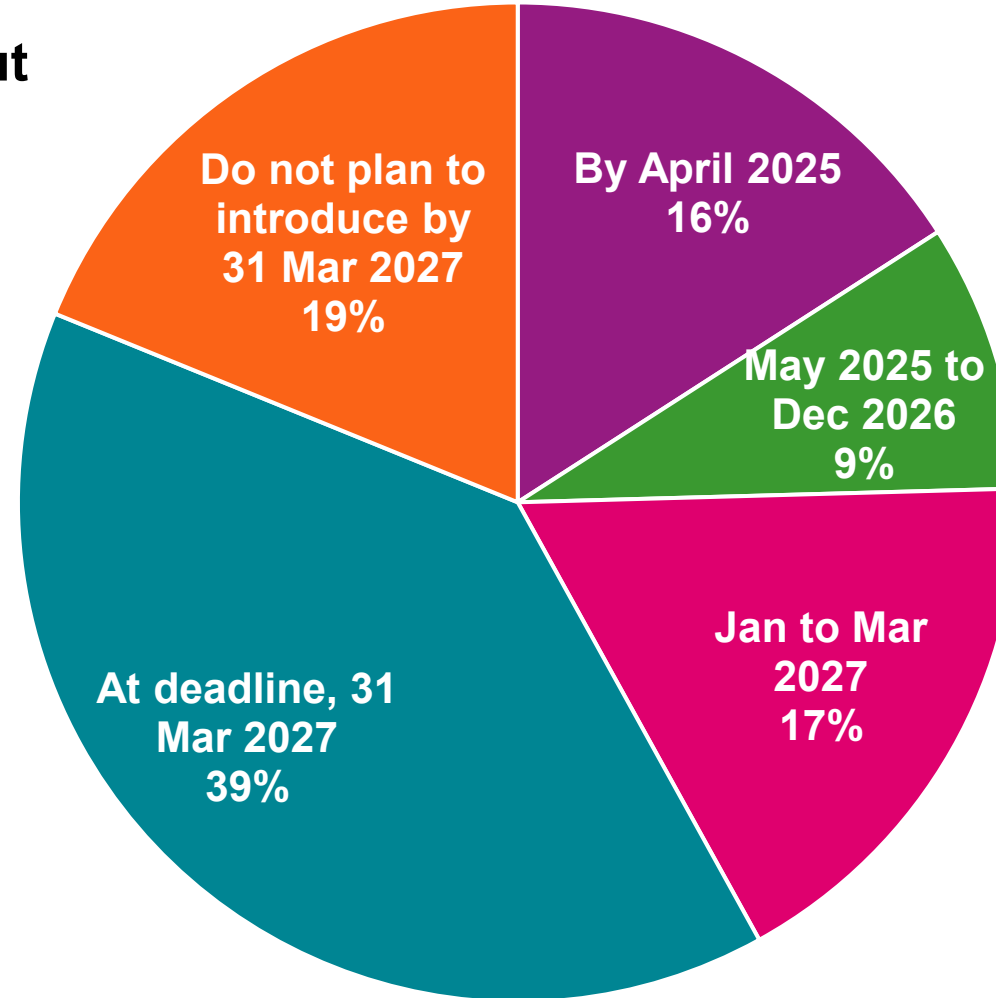
Assumption: preferable to collect film in bags to avoid wind-blown litter and to segregate at depot

- **Consult WRAP guidance** ([Kerbside Plastics Bag Collection Guidance & Templates](#))
 - Use of bags
 - Clarify which formats accepted/ not accepted
 - Reduce contamination by non-target materials
- **Leaflets:**
 - Prior to start - or in council tax booklet?
 - At start - with bag delivery if using bags
 - Follow up leaflet - may depend on contamination of bags/ other streams
- **Reputational risk**
 - May be a delay in having sufficient capacity to recycle film
 - Some film types will not be recycled in short and medium term
- **Budget for comms**

Timing of roll-out

% of councils in England rolling out film collections by particular dates

Source for data: [RECOUP's UK Household Plastic Packaging Collection Survey 2025](#)



- **Collections will cost between £3 and £12 per household**
 - Costs depend on collection type, bags/ no bags, and participation of householders
 - Communications not costed and need to be added
 - The costs of collections of packaging film should be reimbursed via EPR payments
 - Non-packaging film is not covered by EPR fees or payments
 - It is not yet known what the flexible plastic fee will be to support this
 - It will be cheaper to collect for disposal rather than recycling even with ETS in place for EfW
 - Most film will be in residual waste even after rolling out recycling collections

Any questions?

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