# West Sussex council allocates £2.4m to repair critical landslip damage at waste facility ahead of new food waste laws



The Mechanical Biological Treatment facility in Warnham, West Sussex, faces significant challenges following a landslip that damaged vital equipment essential for processing food waste. This incident, which occurred in May 2024, has prompted the council to allocate £2.417 million to repair the damage. Deborah Urquhart, the cabinet member for environment and climate change, emphasised the urgency of these repairs. If they are not completed by the deadline, the council risks failing to comply with forthcoming food waste legislation set to be enforced in March 2026.

Investigations revealed that the landslip was not an isolated incident; a more substantial landslip has occurred further up the slope, leading to a young oak tree falling and damaging the facility's pipework. Such events have been linked to an extended period of heavy rainfall, exacerbating the slope's instability, which has been identified as reaching depths of up to 2 metres.

The existing facility, constructed between 2010 and 2013 at a cost of approximately £150 million, has a significant operational role in managing West Sussex's waste, converting 'black bag' household and commercial waste into refuse-derived fuel and renewable energy. However, with an insurance excess of £10 million, the repairs will be fully financed by the council.

To address these challenges, Biffa, the company that operates the facility under a long-term contract with the West Sussex County Council, has engaged geotechnical engineers and building contractors. Their proposals include various strategies to stabilise the slope, such as the use of soil nails and drilled-in drains, aimed at preventing future incidents and ensuring the integrity of the operations.

The Brookhurst Wood facility has already made significant strides in reducing landfill waste, processing over 310,000 tonnes annually and diverting roughly 75% into useful resources like renewable energy. This commitment to sustainability is underscored by recent efforts to enhance the facility's capacity and operational efficiency. A focused enhancement to the facility is expected in accordance with the long-term waste management strategy of the council, which recently awarded a substantial contract worth up to £396 million to manage the treatment and export of refuse-derived fuel generated at Brookhurst Wood.

As the council moves forward with these vital repairs, the emphasis remains on compliance with environmental legislation and advancing its waste management goals. This proactive approach is critical in light of the shifting landscape of waste management and the rising expectations for sustainable practices within the region.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25196160.west-sussex-council-spend-2-4m-landslip-clean/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/what-happens-to-your-waste/about-brookhurst-wood-mechanical-biological-treatment-facility/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25196160.west-sussex-council-spend-2-4m-landslip-clean/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/what-happens-to-your-waste/about-brookhurst-wood-mechanical-biological-treatment-facility/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/rdf-contract-west-sussex/), [[6]](https://westsussex.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/WSCC/028/22)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.horsham.gov.uk/news/2022/05/local-processing-facility-key-to-reducing-landfill-waste-for-our-district), [[7]](https://waste-management-world.com/artikel/biffa-signs-1-billion-waste-treatment-deal-with-west-sussex-council/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25196160.west-sussex-council-spend-2-4m-landslip-clean/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/what-happens-to-your-waste/about-brookhurst-wood-mechanical-biological-treatment-facility/> - This page provides detailed information about the Brookhurst Wood Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility in West Sussex. It outlines the facility's purpose, which is to treat the county's 'black bag' household and commercial waste, aiming to reduce landfill usage. The facility processes waste through mechanical sorting and anaerobic digestion, producing refuse-derived fuel (RDF) and renewable energy. It also highlights the environmental considerations, such as rainwater collection and solar panel installations, and discusses the facility's capacity and operational details.
3. <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/rdf-contract-west-sussex/> - This article reports on West Sussex County Council awarding an 11-year contract worth up to £396 million to the West Sussex Seneca-Britaniacrest Partnership. The contract involves the collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) generated at the county's MBT facility in Horsham, operated by Biffa. The partnership will continue to export the waste as RDF until Britaniacrest’s new energy-from-waste plant becomes operational, aiming for 2026.
4. <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/news/2022/05/local-processing-facility-key-to-reducing-landfill-waste-for-our-district> - This article discusses the significant reduction in landfill waste achieved by the Mechanical and Biological Treatment plant at Langhurstwood Road, Horsham. The plant, operated by Biffa under a 25-year contract with West Sussex County Council, has reduced landfill waste from just under 30% in 2018/19 to just under 9%. The facility processes over 310,000 tonnes of waste per year, diverting more than 75% into resources, including refuse-derived fuel and electricity generation.
5. <https://www.watermagazine.co.uk/2024/03/07/plans-for-new-4-5m-wetland-to-be-created-in-west-sussex/> - This article reports on Southern Water's plans to create a 3.2-acre wetland adjacent to its treatment works in Staplefield, West Sussex. The wetland aims to assist in wastewater treatment and act as a nature-based solution to reduce phosphorus levels in nearby watercourses. The project includes a feasibility study, groundwater risk assessments, and environmental planning, with work expected to start in May 2024, subject to approval by West Sussex County Council.
6. <https://westsussex.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/WSCC/028/22> - This planning application pertains to the extension of the existing MBT facility at Biffa West Sussex, Brookhurst Wood, Langhurst Wood Road, Horsham. The proposal involves providing storage for refuse-derived fuel (RDF) and compost-like output (CLO) prior to export. The application was approved with conditions on 27 July 2023, following a consultation period that closed on 16 September 2022.
7. <https://waste-management-world.com/artikel/biffa-signs-1-billion-waste-treatment-deal-with-west-sussex-council/> - This article reports on Biffa's signing of a 25-year, £1 billion contract with West Sussex County Council to treat the county's residual municipal waste using Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) technology. The contract includes the construction of an MBT facility at Brookhurst Wood near Horsham, designed to divert up to 80% of residual waste from landfill and produce renewable energy. The facility is expected to process up to 327,000 tonnes per year of residual municipal and commercial waste.