

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA)

Removal of recycling bags for kerbside collections

Please note:

The council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of its actions in relation to the following protected characteristic groups:-

Age
Disability
Gender Reassignment
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy and Maternity
Race
Religion or Belief Sex
Sexual Orientation

Therefore, the council wishes to hear and proactively consider any comments in relation to how any aspect of the issues presented may impact on any sections of the community as listed above. Any feedback in relation to equalities and any point raised within this document will inform a full Equality Impact Assessment and Analysis of the proposal.

You can find out more and tell us your views by completing our short online survey at <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/RecyclingBags> or by sending your comments to:

Email: **consultation@southglos.gov.uk**

Write to: Freepost RTXL-YJXJ-BXEX, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF

Phone: 01454 868195

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

This document describes an initial assessment of equalities impacts in relation to the proposal to remove recycling bags and instead provide additional recycling boxes for kerbside recycling collections. This was originally considered in the development of the Waste Strategy 2015-20.

Background

Waste and recycling is an important service used by every household in South Gloucestershire. Our updated Waste Strategy sets out our plans for the service from 2015 to 2020 and beyond to make sure that we reach our recycling targets and provide a service that can cater for our growing population.

Weekly recycling collections were introduced in June 2017 for all materials (with the exception of garden waste which is a subscription only service with fortnightly collections). In the period June 2017 – August 2018 we collected 4,419 extra tonnes of recycling from the kerbside (an increase of 14% on the previous year).

In June 2017 we also introduced the following changes to the recycling service:

- **Green boxes** can be used to sort recycling instead of a mixture of bags and a box. Residents may continue to use the white bag and green bag with the green box to sort recycling if they wish.
- **Cans, aerosols and foil are now mixed with plastic bottles, tubs and trays** in a green box or the white bag. Residents still need to sort other items so they can be separated into different compartments on the vehicles.
- **Cartons (Tetra Paks) are now mixed with cardboard** in a green box or the green bag. Residents still need to sort other items so they can be separated into different compartments on the vehicles.
- **Large cardboard boxes** need to be cut or folded down so they are no larger than the green box, so they can fit in the compartments of our new vehicles.
- **Motor oil and car batteries** are no longer collected from the kerbside and should be taken to a [Sort It recycling centre](#).

An assisted collection service is available for households where no resident is able to take bins or recycling containers to the kerbside, this service can be particularly helpful for disabled and elderly residents. Crews will collect bins and boxes from an agreed collection point (excluding inside property) and return them once they have been emptied. More information can be found [here](#).

The continuing use of recycling bags was considered in the development of the Waste Strategy and feedback on a proposal to remove them was considered in the [Equality Impact Assessment and Analysis \(EQIAA\)](#) completed at that time (this was when recycling was collected fortnightly). The EQIAA identified two main concerns:

- Younger people and people from 'White – Other' backgrounds were most in favour of the switch to additional green boxes (although younger age groups were most likely to find all the containers difficult to store / unsightly).
- Older people and disabled people were least likely to wish to see a switch to additional green boxes – feedback borne out by SG Disability Action Group.

As a result of the analysis use of the bags continued.

However, we continue to experience issues with:

- Bags deteriorating or blowing away mean they normally need to be replaced and have a 12-18 month lifespan.
- From an environmental perspective, the bags are out of line with the need to reduce the use of plastics. The bags are manufactured overseas. They are made from non-recyclable

plastic and deteriorate over a period of 12-18 months, releasing multiple fragments of plastic into the environment.

- Based on resident feedback there is confusion as to how to sort recycling for collection. Removing the use of bags would simplify our messages so that residents are confident in how to present their recycling and become more engaged with the service. It would enable crews to empty containers as efficiently as possible and reduce contamination.

Since the previous consultation:

- We introduced weekly recycling in June 2017, reducing the amount of recyclable materials residents need to store between collections.
- Residents have had a years' experience of the new weekly recycling service and a better understanding of the amount of materials they will need to store and present at the kerbside.
- We have introduced new vehicles to collect recycling. The use of boxes makes it easier for and safer for crews to sort recycling as boxes can be hooked to the side of the vehicle.
- We have completed a review of our assisted collections (crews will collect waste bins and recycling containers from an agreed collection point for households where no resident living in the house is able to take bins or recycling containers to the kerbside).

We would like to reconsider the removal of white and green bags and ask residents to use green boxes for all their recycling materials. No changes are proposed to how materials need to be separated.

SECTION 2 – RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

RESEARCH

To inform the development of the Waste Strategy 2015–20 the waste team undertook comprehensive research and a summary of the evidence can be found at http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/wastestrategyevidence_742.pdf

Specifically in relation to the proposal to remove recycling bags, research included:

- Resident focus groups looking at service and container options
- A resident trial of different types of recycling containers

From the research we know:

- Residents found the existing service difficult to understand and wanted a simplified service. This was also supported by the StreetCare Survey of 2017.
- Residents got frustrated at the number of recycling containers, especially the bags, which can easily be damaged and can blow away in bad weather.
- The existing recycling boxes are the best suited design for all housing types and family sizes.

A public consultation on the draft Waste Strategy took place in 2016. One of the questions asked was 'How strongly do you agree with the proposal to stop using the plastic, cardboard and paper bags and instead provide additional green boxes'. This consultation identified that:

- older people and disabled people were least likely to wish to see a switch to additional green boxes. Comments made highlighted the difficulty older residents or those with limited mobility would have in carrying the boxes.
- younger people and people from 'White – Other' backgrounds were most in favour of the switch to additional green boxes (although younger age groups were most likely to find all the containers difficult to store /unsightly).

As a result of the equalities analysis completed at that time it was decided to offer residents the choice to either continue using the white plastic and green cardboard bags or to just use boxes.

The new weekly recycling service, with residents able to choose the types of containers they use, was implemented in June 2017.

However the use of bags has continued ongoing issues of residents being frustrated by the number of containers and bags blowing away. Based on ongoing customer feedback there continues to be ongoing confusion regarding which recycling containers to use. Council communications to explain this are complicated by the alternative methods of using different containers.

CONSULTATION

A fully compliant consultation will be undertaken that will fulfil the council's policies and consultation duties. Equalities impacts and monitoring are included in the consultation as shown within this document. As this is an initial, pre-consultation assessment of impacts, this section will be updated to take account of all issues emerging as a result of consultation.

SECTION 3 – IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF EQUALITIES ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The following table provides an overall indication of impact of the proposal to remove the recycling bags and to provide additional boxes, with an assisted collection service provided to households where no resident is able to take recycling containers to the kerbside.

Equality Group	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact	Unsure of impact	Reason(s)
Women/girls			x		It is not anticipated that people from these groups would be differentially impacted by any decision to remove recycling bags from use.
Men/boys			x		
Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals			x		
Transgender people			x		
White people (including Irish people)			x		
Asian or Asian British people			x		
Black or Black British people			x		
People of mixed heritage			x		
Chinese people			x		
Travellers (gypsy, Roma, Irish heritage)			x		
People from other ethnic groups			x		
Children and young people			x		
Faith groups			x		
Marriage and civil partnerships			x		
Disabled people					
• Physical impairment				x	Previous consultation and analysis conducted prior to the previous service change (June 2017) showed people were potentially negatively impacted by the proposal to remove recycling bags. Further consultation and equality analysis is required to ascertain if this would still be the case following the service change and introduction of mitigating actions.
• Sensory impairment				x	
• Mental health condition				x	
• Learning disability/difficulty				x	
• Longstanding illness or health condition				x	
• Other health problems or impairments				x	
Pregnancy and maternity				x	
Older people				x	

SECTION 4 – EqIAA OUTCOME

To be completed following consultation.

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and justification

SECTION 5 – ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS EqIAA

This section will be completed following the consultation. However, the following actions have been identified to be specifically undertaken during the consultation period:

- conduct discussions with disabled and older people's groups around the accessibility of proposed new recycling containers. Any feedback received will inform an updated and full EqIAA which will be considered prior to and as part of decision making.

In addition, at this stage the following actions have been identified which have the potential to mitigate negative impacts:

- Wider publicity of the assisted collection service, including publicity at disabled and older people's forums.
- Promotion of use of boxes including how to stack, store and use them.
- Creating simpler, more accessible information about the collection service.