

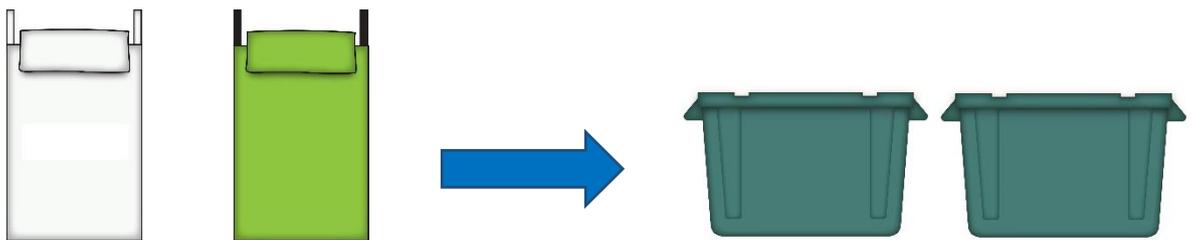
Removal of recycling bags for kerbside collections

Consultation Document

Proposed change

We would like to stop providing white and green bags for recycling and ask residents to use green boxes for all their recycling materials.

No changes are proposed to how materials need to be separated and presented for collection, i.e. plastics and cans mixed together and all other items grouped separately in the boxes.



Why we would like to make this change:

We have noticed some issues with the recycling bags:

- Bags deteriorating or blowing away mean they normally need to be replaced and only 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 and transported via container ship. They are made from non-recyclable plastic and deteriorate over a period of 12-18 months, releasing multiple fragments of plastic into the environment.
- Residents have told us there is confusion over how to sort recycling for collection. Removing the use of bags would simplify our messages so that residents are confident in using the service. This would enable crews to empty containers as efficiently as possible and reduce contamination.
- We can save around £100,000 a year by not using recycling bags

How can we make sure this change doesn't cause a problem for anyone?

At this stage the following actions have been identified which could potentially mitigate any negative effects:

- If they wish, residents may continue to use their existing recycling bags until they need replacing, at which point they will need to switch to using boxes.
- Promotion of use of boxes including how to stack, store and use them.
- Creating simpler, more accessible information about the collection service.
- Wider publicity of the assisted collection service, including publicity at disabled and older people's forums.

Additionally, an Initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAA) has been completed and will be updated to take account of equality issues emerging as a result of this consultation.

Background Information

Our waste strategy

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.

Recycling collections

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](#).

Why make a change now?

We considered whether to continue using recycling bags in the development of the Waste Strategy in 2015, and feedback on a proposal to remove them was taken into account 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 or 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 these findings, usage of recycling bags continued.

Since we last consulted the public, some things have changed:

- We introduced weekly recycling in June 2017, making it easier for residents to manage storage of recycling 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 addresses receiving the assisted collection service, to ensure we only provide this service to households where no resident is able to take bins or recycling containers to the kerbside. This reduced the number of households receiving the service and means we have capacity to help those in need of the service.

How to find out more and have your say:

We would like to hear your views on whether we should replace recycling bags with boxes, and if we did how it might affect you.

The consultation is open to the public between 2 November and **25 January 2019**, and a decision will be made by March 2019. To take part:

- Visit our dedicated consultation webpage to see the Initial Equalities Impact Assessment: <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/RecyclingBags>
- Complete the online survey on our webpage
- Pick up a paper copy of the survey from libraries or One Stop Shops, or download and print one from our website, then post it to us at the below address - no stamp needed
- Write to: *Freepost RTXL-YJXJ-BXEX* South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF
- Email: consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01454 868154