

<b>Meeting:</b>	Place Scrutiny
<b>Meeting date:</b>	16/06/2026
<b>Report of:</b>	Dave Atkinson, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Cllr Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change

## **Decision Report: Recycling Review Consultation Analysis**

### **Subject of Report**

1. Following Executives approval in March 2026 to undertake public engagement with residents on a recycling review, this report outlines the results and feedback from the consultation that was live between 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026.
2. Officers are keen to hear committee's views and feedback on the proposed move from recycling boxes to bins following consultation and survey.

### **Background**

3. In March 2026, Executive approved a consultation with residents of York to seek feedback on a proposal to move kerbside domestic recycling collections from boxes to bins for circa 67,000 properties.
4. The rationale and detail for this proposal can be found in the background and supporting papers.

### **Consultation**

5. Between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026 there was a survey for residents to complete and submit to the Council to express their views and highlight any benefits or challenges residents may view as a barrier to replacing recycling boxes with bins. There were

online and offline options to complete the survey and detail can be found in Annex A, B, and C.

6. During this period, in person drop-in sessions were held to answer any queries or questions. There is a summary of these drop-in sessions in Annex E.
7. We also received various views from residents directly via email that was tracked, this is summarised in Annex D.
8. As part of the consultation, those residents who receive an assisted waste and recycling collections, were written to by the service informing them of the consultation, the drop-in sessions and given reassurance that there would be no change to their assisted collections service should containers change from boxes to bins.

## **Council Plan**

### **9. Affordability:**

- a) Kerbside collection costs are funded by council tax contributions and therefore there will be no increase in collection costs to residents.
- b) Currently recycling boxes are free to residents with no limit on the number of boxes required. Currently on average households have 3 recycling boxes. Replacement wheeled bins will be chargeable to residents if lost or damaged, unless this occurs through fault by the Council.

### **10. Environment:**

- a) The move to recycling bins would increase recycling capacity increasing the opportunity to recycle, and reducing the need to make journeys to the HWRC for extra items.
- b) Simpler recycling reforms in March 2027 require the Council to collect soft film and plastics from the kerbside. Bins with fixed lids will contain new and existing materials better, reducing litter on the streets.

### **11. Equalities and Human Rights:**

- a) Kerbside recycling collections are a universal service and therefore all domestic properties will continue to receive kerbside recycling collections.
- b) It may not be possible for some domestic properties to store additional bins and they may have to remain on box collections. These properties will not be included in any first phase of this proposal. Where possible, recycling bins will be offered to those who want them.

**12. Health:**

- a) The introduction of recycling bins has many benefits including increased capacity per household, which contributes to a sustainable environment.
- b) Recycling bins have musculoskeletal benefits for residents and operational staff with no crouching, bending, lifting or carrying required.

## **Recommendation and Reasons**

- 13. Committee is recommended to consider the consultation feedback and provide feedback to officers to help inform a consideration to move recycling boxes to bins for properties in scope of the proposal.
- 14. Consider the incoming legislation changes to ensure York and the Council meets Simpler Recycling reforms by making kerbside recycling easier and safer for residents and Council employees in the most efficient way possible.

## **Consultation Analysis**

- 15. The consultation received over 13000 responses. This is a positive response in terms of numbers, and demonstrates residents feel strongly about how their waste and recycling collections take place. Annex A shows the responses per ward.
- 16. Majority of the responses were from semi-detached and detached properties with this house type amounting to over 80% of the responses. Annex B provides further detail of house type response and ward detail.

17. Annex C shows the main questions and responses from the survey and as expected demonstrated that most properties use 3 recycling boxes.
18. In terms of current recycling capacity for properties, the highest two responses showed that residents use additional containers if they do not have space for materials or they store them until the next collection. Annex C supports this.
19. Residents felt that the main barriers to the current kerbside recycling collections were litter created on the streets and not enough capacity to recycle all items that households can recycle.
20. The majority of responses felt a move to recycling bins would make recycling easier to recycle.
21. Almost 39% of responses show the main barrier to supporting a switch to bins was lack of storage space although 55% felt there was no barrier.
22. Annex D shows the email communication the service received during the consultation. This is again broken down by house type and varies in feedback. Annex E is drop-in feedback captured.
23. Annex D and E shares feedback in detail but consistently showed common themes:
  - a) Space and storage concerns
  - b) Options for smaller bin sizes
  - c) Cost of the investment
  - d) Obstruction and enforcement concerns during collection and just after collection days
24. Officers answered all queries and questions openly and transparently. This was well received and welcomed by residents

and shared mixed outcomes and views, although demonstrated positive engagement and a good example of consultation.

25. Some properties were not eligible to complete the survey due to not being in scope of any changes to recycling collections at this stage. These properties were made up of flats/maisonettes and the properties in scope of the recent Bags to Bins project during 2025/26.

## **Options Analysis and Evidential Basis**

26. As part of the drop-in session's officers demonstrated the size of the bins being proposed, 240l. These were shown against the size of current 180l refuse bins and 3 stacked current recycling bins.
27. Many of the barriers and concerns raised were around the storage of the bins and the differing needs for larger capacity containers due to the amount of waste and recycling created by residents with single occupiers especially expressing concern that they had no need for larger containers. There is no one size fits all.
28. There was acceptance from properties with storage challenges that this was a positive move and understanding of the rationale of the proposal but some residents felt that there should be options for smaller bins based on both storage challenges and the fact that some households create much less recycling than others.
29. To increase recycling and change behaviour, the ideal is to provide more capacity for the recycling than the residual (black bin) household waste. However, through the consultation and engagement it was noted that for some properties of single occupancy or smaller household numbers, the amount of waste and recycling generated was smaller and many households only use two boxes under the current system.
30. St Nicks currently have capacity to increase the collection service they currently provide for the Council in the city centre, with scope to widen their current scope of work and travel. Officers continue to explore this with St Nicks.

31. Although some concerns were raised around fire risk, officers feel there is no substantial evidence to suggest storing recyclable materials for longer, none of which are self-combustible would present or increase fire risk, and it would be difficult to account for a minority of anti-social behaviour. CYC wheelie bins are industry standard and are designed to collapse inwards should something inside be set alight.
32. The cost of the investment is based on an invest to save model and capital spend would be paid back through a reduction in revenue. The estimated capital investment would be circa £2.8m including manufacturing and delivery, with anticipated revenue reductions of £310k per year.
33. Officers are keen to hear committee views in particular on the following:
  - a) Should the Council offer smaller capacity recycling bins for those properties with storage challenges, and should this be 180l or 140l per bin. There would still be a requirement for each property to have a twin bin system as outlined in a previous report; one container for paper/card and one container for tins/plastic/glass.
  - b) Should the service look to work with St Nicks and where possible, expand their recycling collection service for those properties with storage challenges. This would mean any properties potentially collected by St Nicks would remain on box collections but continue to separate materials in a twin stream method.

## Organisational Impact and Implications

34. Below are the relevant implications:
  - **Financial:** The cost of consultation was met from waste budgets. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, the costs of changing collection arrangements will need to be fully modelled, taking into account the capital cost of new bins, the impact on the number and staffing arrangements on rounds and impact on level of recyclates and income levels will all need to be considered in a full business case taken

forward to a future Executive report. Any new borrowing will need Full Council Approval.

- **Environment and Climate action:** Waste management accounts for the emission of 21,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in York (3% of total emissions). There is a need to increase reuse, repair and recycling rates, which is acknowledged in Objective 4.2 of the York Climate Change Strategy. The proposals in the review have the potential to contribute to that objective with improved messaging for residents and a simplified collection process.

Changes to recycling rates should be monitored as a result of any new processes being introduced.

- **Communications:** Any service change will require significant ongoing communications and engagement support. This is a universal service affecting all residents. We know from the response rate to the survey that this issue is of high priority for residents across the city. The survey responses indicate the customer issues around which this communications and engagement support needs to be focused, in order to support the successful roll-out of any change.

## Wards Impacted

35. All wards in scope.

## Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Place Scrutiny Report.

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## Background papers

March 2026 Executive -

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7653>

## Annexes

Annex A - Participation by ward

Annex B - Types of households by ward

Annex C - Survey responses

Annex D - Email communication analysis

Annex E - Drop-in sessions summary