

Meeting:	Economy, Place, Access, and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date:	29 April 2025
Report of:	James Gilchrist, Director of Environment, Transport and Planning
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Emergency (Cllr J Kent)

Review of Bags to Bins project

Summary

1. Waste Services are aiming to standardise and improve the collection of household waste within mainly terraced areas by transitioning streets from bag collections to wheeled bin collections.
2. Scrutiny Members have asked for a report on the progress of the bags to bins project. This report provides a background of the project, as well as an update on the progress of the project, challenges faced, and upcoming plans for implementation and reviews.

Project Background

3. The Bags to Bins project seeks to improve household waste collections for residents in mainly terraced areas of the city and reduce the potential for injury to waste collection operatives.
4. Wherever operationally possible, the City of York Council prefers refuse collection via wheeled bins because:
 - It provides householders with a container within which they can safely and effectively store all their waste.
 - Waste remains contained between collections, reducing the risk of bags being torn apart by pests.
 - Limits the amount of waste presented to an appropriate amount.
 - It improves safety by reducing manual handling for waste crews.
 - Wheeled bins help to decrease refuse round completion times.

5. Properties are usually deemed unsuitable for a wheeled bin where they lack storage space off the public highway or an appropriate presentation point.
6. The project was agreed in principle at the Cabinet Decision Session on 23 November 2015 and commenced in 2017 in the Holgate and Westfield wards, successfully transitioning 27 streets and 1,016 properties to wheeled bins. However, progress stalled due to competing priorities within the service.
7. Previously, the refuse wagons used, were much larger vehicles which meant we were unable to get to the end of tight or narrow streets. This meant that some streets that did have appropriate bin storage off the highway, were still deemed as unsuitable as the wagon could not reach them and it is not practicable to ask the crew to wheel a bin back and forth to the wagon covering long distances up and down an inaccessible street.
8. The Council has now procured narrow, rear steer refuse vehicles which means they can now access streets that were previously inaccessible, making some streets now viable.
9. If a property can accommodate a wheeled bin for household waste, then it is likely to also be suitable for garden waste collections.

Residents now eligible for a refuse bin will be asked to express their interest in also receiving a garden waste service in the future. An 'expression of interest' survey can be found within the garden waste section of the bags to bins webpage. Details of this survey and the bags to bins webpage will be included in the letters residents receive.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CYC-GardenWasteInterest>
10. The provision of a wheeled bin for refuse would mean these properties could be looked at for inclusion when reoptimizing the garden waste service. Extending the garden waste service is part of the council plan.

Decision to recommence Bags to Bins project

11. The project was approved to recommence at a meeting of the Executive on Thursday, 25 January 2024 following the introduction of the garden waste subscription scheme.
12. The Executive approved the following recommendations; please find updates provided:

Approved in Jan 2024	Updates
<p>The transition from bags to bins in specific ward order set out in full report.</p>	<p>The ward order has been amended to achieve more equal numbers of properties per delivery, as requested by the contracted distributor as explained in point 23.</p> <p>Members of the affected wards were informed about this change through briefing notes.</p>
<p>Based on operational Health & Safety it was agreed there was no requirement to repeatedly seek approval via resident consultation to progress on to the next Ward.</p>	<p>The decision not to hold public consultations has been maintained based on Health & Safety priority.</p>
<p>Approve the capital budget of £163k.</p>	<p>The capital budget of £163k will be maintained as there is no predicted overspend.</p>
<p>Agree that 170 streets (5,544 homes) are suitable to accommodate wheeled bins.</p>	<p>At present, circa 159 streets (5397 homes) have been deemed suitable for wheeled bin accommodation.</p> <p>This reduction in numbers is based on additional assessments conducted by the Environmental Services Officer in early 2025.</p> <p>These assessments revealed that some streets listed in the Executive Report were already receiving bin collections and were subsequently removed from the project.</p>

	Members of the affected wards were informed about this change through briefing notes.
Agree that 102 streets (2828 homes) are not suitable to accommodate a wheeled bin and as such will stay with bags.	<p>At present, 87 streets (1936 homes) have been deemed unsuitable for wheeled bins and will continue using bag collections.</p> <p>The reduction in this number is based on additional assessments conducted by the Environmental Services Officer in early 2025.</p> <p>These assessments resulted in the inclusion of neighbouring streets to the ones deemed viable but previously not listed in the Executive Report. Members of the affected wards were informed of this change through briefing notes.</p>

13. Since recommencement of the project in January 2024, Environmental Services Officers and Operational Supervisors have reassessed all streets within scope to offer the service to as many properties as possible.
14. Properties deemed suitable for a wheeled bin require:
 - appropriate storage space off the public highway
 - sufficient space at designated presentation point (whether this is at the front edge of property or at a central collection point)
 - sufficient vehicle access for the refuse wagons.

Development of the Bags to Bins project

15. Following approval in January 2024, an internal Project Team was established to implement the Bags to Bins project. The team included senior members of the Environmental Services Team, Environmental Services Officers, and Operational Supervisors, with additional input from Web Services, Communications, Public Realm (PR), Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs), and the Access Team.
16. Existing records and data were scrutinised, and operational assessments were conducted between July 2024 and December 2024. Further review of areas and access requirements were completed by Environmental Services Officers from January to March 2025. These additional assessments focused on difficult areas requiring further evaluation where site visits were required. This work also helped to identify streets not previously in scope.
17. The capital investment required for purchase and distribution of containers is now approximately £122K. This cost is based on the total number of properties identified during the initial assessment, as well as additional properties identified in subsequent evaluations. The investment covers:
 - One standard grey 180-litre wheeled bin for residual waste per property.
 - Optional wheeled bin upgrades for those with larger families which may be requested before the rollout. An appropriately sized bin will be allocated at no extra cost using in-house resources.
 - Any replacement bins requested by residents after the rollout will be subject to the council's Charging for Bins Policy.

18. Due to competing priorities among other internal CYC departments there have been delays in procurement and ordering the required bins. Progress has commenced for Phase 1 and bins have since been ordered.
19. Bins will be purchased, stored and distributed under the CYC procurement framework, by two suppliers in three phases, minimising the impact on existing operations and resources. By directly purchasing bins with an existing supplier, rather than a third party, there is a cost saving of c. £9k.
20. Through further assessments we have added additional streets and properties that have now been deemed suitable for wheeled bins. This will increase the key outcomes outlined in the policy decision section. These additions are within the capital budget of £163K and greater economies of scale have been achieved through larger delivery batches.
21. A previous Community Impact Assessment was included in the report submitted to the Executive. An update on Equality Impact Assessment is currently being completed in consultation with Access Team.
22. Monitoring and reviews of areas with newly supplied bins will take place between the project team, NEOs and Public Realm. Particularly if there are instances of fly-tipping or abandoned bins. Letters and enforcement will be implemented if required. Updates will be provided to ward councillors.
23. Six wards have been divided into two phases to stagger implementation and allow adequate time for monitoring after each transition. Each phase will involve the distribution of at least 2,000 bins, which has formed the division of wards. Additionally, a third phase has been introduced to address streets requiring a more complex approach, as well as any additional streets identified by us and Councillors in the affected wards.
 - Phase 1 Micklegate and Heworth.
 - Phase 2 Clifton, Guildhall, Fishergate, and Holgate.
 - Phase 3 Additional streets identified.
24. Attention will be given to student areas, particularly in the Clifton area following recent initiatives to target problematic areas, especially during clear-out periods. Information of streets being transitioned will be sent to the landlord association to disseminate to landlords in an

effort to ensure correct storage and presentation are maintained as well as containers being collected and labelled if a student property is currently untenanted.

Implementation of the Project in Hull Road ward

25. At the request of Hull Road Councillors, the Bags to Bins project was implemented in two streets within the Hull Road area - primarily consisting of student accommodations - as a one-off initiative at the end of 2024. The roll-out was conducted using in-house resources:
 - **Siward Street** transitioned to the new collection system on 25 October 2024, with the first wheeled bin collection taking place on 28 October.
 - **Lamel Street** transitioned following reports of bin bags being improperly presented in back alleys, on 17 December 2024, with its first collection on 23 December.
26. Crews were instructed to collect waste only from the newly established Central Collection Points (CCPs). This ensured that proper presentation and monitoring could be maintained moving forward.
27. Site visits were conducted at key milestones: after the first wheeled bin collection, after the first three collections, and after three months. A further assessment will be carried out six months after the transition.
28. Reports from these visits were submitted to the project team and ward councillors.
29. Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs) visited the area on three occasions in response to reports of fly-tipping and abandoned bins in back lanes and at the newly created CCPs. Landlords and residents were contacted regarding fly-tipping issues, and Public Realm removed abandoned bins.
30. Siward Street and Lamel Street were met with positive responses from local ward councillors. We did receive councillor engagement regarding the monitoring of presentation and storage issues following reports of fly-tipping and access issues - we responded with an update of the site visits conducted, and NEO enforcement taken.

Councillors' contribution

31. Ward members have been informed in advance of rollout in their wards via briefings, which included an annex of the affected streets, an original timetable for the rollout, and any other information of relevance to the project and their ward. Councillors were also offered a ward walkabout for any areas deemed problematic or complex.
32. Project briefings were sent on 13 February 2025 to the following Councillors:

Ward	Info
Hull Rd	Cllr. M. Pavlovic, Cllr. J. Moroney, Cllr. A. Baxter
Micklegate	Cllr. J. Burton, Cllr. J. Crawshaw, Cllr. P. Kilbane
Heworth	Cllr. C. Douglas, Cllr. B. Burton, Cllr. Bob Webb
Clifton	Cllr. D. Myers, Cllr. M. Wells
Guildhall	Cllr. T. Clarke, Cllr. R. Melly, Cllr. D. Merrett
Fishergate	Cllr. C. Whitcroft, Cllr. S. Wilson
Holgate	Cllr. J. Kent, Cllr. L. Steels-Walshaw, Cllr. K. Taylor

Table 1: List of recipients of briefings.

33. After providing a briefing overview to Councillors, Environmental Services Officers received a small number of specific requests regarding problematic streets, along with a suggestion for a public consultation. Since the project was approved without requiring a public consultation, the team advised that Councillors could update constituents during local ward meetings and surgeries.
34. Virtual ward walkabouts have been proposed by Councillors of Guildhall, Heworth and Micklegate Wards as this method of addressing problematic streets and other issues was deemed sufficient. Members of the Environmental Services Senior Team were in attendance.
35. Please see the detailed outcome of the virtual ward walkabout in the table 2 below:

Ward	Councillors attending	Issues raised	Solution applied	Physical ward walkabout needed
Guildhall	Cllr. T. Clarke Cllr. R. Melly Cllr. D. Merrett	Concerns regarding streets for reassessment, including Marygate and Monkgate were raised – narrow access issues of concern, yet expression of interest in bins and garden waste collections from residents.	Included in streets for reassessment. Waste Team to conduct site visits and assess.	N/A
Heworth	Cllr. Bob Webb	Raised issues over Oakville St./Kitchener St./Ashville St. with regards to vehicle access and presentation points being narrow. Reviewed Clark Terrace to see if the properties had front edge access.	Team advised on vehicle access points at end of street and accessible CCPs with estimated numbers of bins split unevenly between them to ensure access. Google streetview and YorkMaps confirmed front edge access.	N/A
Micklegate	At time of writing this is planned for 17 April			

Table 2: Virtual ward walkabout outcome

36. Environmental Services Officer will provide revised annexes of streets to ward members, along with any other relevant information following final assessments and virtual ward walkabouts. Ward walkabouts have been successful in providing thorough assessments of complex streets and allaying any concerns councillors have had.

Communications with Residents

37. All affected residents will receive written notification in advance of the project implementation date and again before bin delivery, more information explaining details such as presentation points and available support.
38. Both letters will include a QR code and web link to the bags to bins webpage where more project information is provided along with a weblink for residents to express their interest in receiving the garden waste service: www.york.gov.uk/bagstobins
39. Letters also include an email address for residents to contact the project team directly to make them aware if they currently have a City of York Council issued bin: bagstobins@york.gov.uk
40. The envelopes will be clearly marked with 'important information about your waste collections'.
41. Households currently registered for an assisted collection will continue to receive this service using their wheeled bin from previously agreed location. Any new requests for an assisted collection will be reviewed by the waste team, and reasonable adjustments may be made for residents who, due to personal circumstances, cannot wheel a bin. In such cases, the property may be permitted to remain on black sack collection if operationally viable.
42. Larger households, which meet the qualifying criteria, will be able to upgrade their wheeled bin to a 240 litre (households of 5), or a 360 litre bin (for households of 6 or more).
43. A communications plan will be delivered from implementation of the first phase. This will include print and digital campaigns. Targeted posts on the following digital platforms; City of York newsletters, Facebook, 'X' (formerly Twitter), Instagram and 'Next Door'. A review of social media campaigns, analysing impressions and click throughs, will be conducted once the campaign has concluded.

Estimated timescales per ward

44. Due to competing priorities, delays with procurement, and additional assessments, original timescales provided in Councillors briefings have been moved forward and are now as follows.

- Phase 1 - Micklegate & Heworth – Letters sent out to resident's week commencing 5th of May 2025 with the delivery week commencing 16th of June 2025
- Phase 2 - Clifton, Guildhall, Heworth, Fishergate and Holgate – Letters sent out to resident's week commencing 2nd of June 2025 with the delivery week commencing 4th August.

Conclusion

45. The bags to bins project has been successful to date, though there have been delays with competing internal priorities. Comprehensive assessments have taken place, with further reassessments taking place in complex areas such as Guildhall and Micklegate. Through flexible approaches to mailing, purchasing of bins, storage and distribution of bins there has been an estimated cost saving exercise of c. £13K. Leaving an estimated c. £36K in the capital budget to spend on additional streets in phase 3 of the project.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this report:

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