

Quality on every street

Humble recycle boxes outside every home on collection day are a vital part of Somerset's waste success story, from pioneering innovation to Recycle More and the transformation of how we deal with our rubbish, including the end of landfill.

By allowing double sorting (you and your collection crew), open boxes produce clean streams of low-contamination high-quality recyclables at a time when reprocessor firms want ever better standards for the raw materials they use to make new products and packaging.

That means Somerset's recycling rate (see below) is significantly above South-West and England averages, and it has been independently ranked as a carbon reduction high-flyer annually since 2012.

And Somerset recycling's high quality ensures that 90% or more of the material is recycled in the UK, with much of it going into "closed loop" (so that glass becomes glass again, for example) processes.

It helps keep the average cost of all waste services per household down to £3.40 a week while both saving millions of pounds a year that can be spent on other vital local services and expanding the scope of kerbside collections to take far more plastics in the future.

The alternative to kerbside sorting into boxes is known as commingling, with

some dry recycling in a wheeled bin. Rather than a single bin solution, in most cases that requires food, glass and textiles to be collected separately. But such a mixed system can easily mean high contamination, low quality and less recycling as the new container becomes a second rubbish bin.

In a world wanting more recycling of far higher quality, the "how" of recycling is as important as the "how much".

Better and better

Latest annual waste figures for 2018-19 show that Somerset's recycling and reuse is up 0.13% to 52.41% and more than 90% of that is being recycled in the UK. There were welcome falls in the amount of both domestic rubbish, down over 9kg per household, and reuse, recycling and composting, down another 2.76kg. Over the year, more glass, metal and textiles were recycled but less garden waste, paper and cans.

Recycle sites saw visits rise 1.6% to 1,640,948, handled 70,715 tonnes of recycling and rubbish, and achieved an average recycling rate of 76.53%. Continuing its decline, fly-tipping incidents fell 521 to 4,107.

Recycle More moves ahead

Progress is being made on all fronts in the transformation of Somerset's waste services, following last month's choice of waste experts SUEZ as the preferred bidder for Recycle More kerbside collections of extra weekly recycling and three-weekly rubbish collections, which will start rolling out from mid-2020.

Before Recycle More begins, capital expenditure is planned of around £18m on 87 vehicles and nearly £7m on improvements to depots and new equipment, with funding via SWP's partner councils ensuring significant financial savings over the 10-year initial length of the collections contract.

Tendering will start soon for the fleet of recycling trucks. The new Avonmouth energy-from-waste plant is on track to take Somerset's shrinking rubbish tonnages when the county switches away from landfill. And building continues at two Somerset transfer stations that will bulk up and send on rubbish from all parts of the county.

Save a life with summer safety

Sunny weather with al fresco meals can bring the risk of fires in refuse bins, collection trucks and at landfill sites from portable barbeque trays or coals.

The safety advice is simple: please do not add embers, ash or charcoal from domestic or garden fires or barbeques to your rubbish bin or black sacks. Instead, drench portable barbeques and ash or let them cool down completely. [Find more advice on fire risks here.](#)

Big and bulky? Get it collected

As a community service, we offer at-cost charged-for collections of furniture, white goods and other large or bulky items. Paid to your district council, this costs £44.50 for up to three items, plus £12.30 per item for up to two further items. Each item must be able to be carried by no more than two collectors.

Convenient and cost-effective, bulky waste collections also avoid using man-

and-van operators whose suspiciously cheap deals risk your possessions being fly-tipped and could put you in court for failing to properly look after your waste. [Full details on our website.](#)

Latest communications

Recent communications included:

- [World Environment Day](#)
- [Glastonbury recycling alert](#)
- [Food waste prevention](#)

Upcoming communications will include: fire prevention and van permits.

Somerset Waste Board (SWB)

SWB is SWP's executive arm, with two members nominated by each of the five Somerset partner councils, one of which must be the waste and/or environment portfolio holder. SWB's annual general meeting (AGM) elects the Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. SWB's next meeting is the AGM on 28 June. Full SWB details are available [online.](#)

SWB membership:

Mendip: Cllrs Tom Ronan, Adam Boyden

Sedgemoor: Cllrs Janet Keen, Gill Slocombe

Somerset County: Cllrs David Hall, Clare Paul

Somerset West and Taunton: Cllrs Alan Wedderkop, David Mansell

South Somerset: Cllrs Sarah Dyke, Tim Kerley

Find more information here

For more on SWP, SWB and waste services: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and sign up for our Sorted ezine on our [website](#). All partners' customer service helplines can assist with service enquiries.