

Overview and Scrutiny

2025

22nd July

Recycling Bins (Bromsgrove High Street) a way forward

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry, Assistant Director for Environmental and Housing Property Services
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Wards Affected	Bromsgrove central
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Councillor S. Robinson
Relevant Council Priority	Clean and green environment
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to note the report and to determine whether there are any recommendations that Members would like to make to the Cabinet based on the content of the report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report provides an update on recycling and waste collection arrangements in Bromsgrove town centre. The report has been drafted to address a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Board raised in February 2025 for a review of the implications of no longer recycling waste on Bromsgrove High Street.
- 2.2 In 2019 the place team carried out a full assessment of the recycling provision at the time. The provision then was made up of two banks of four recycling units (please see Figure 1)

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Fig1



2.3 The process involved the team removing the contents of all the bins and sifting and sorting items into those that could be successfully recycled and other articles. The image at Figure 2 highlights that only one fifth of the entire waste collected was actually recyclable.

Fig 2

- 2.4 Approximately three years ago the current bin system at Figure 3 was installed. There are five of this style of bin strategically positioned along the Bromsgrove town centre high street in order to provide visitors around the town with opportunities to segregate their waste in an appropriate way.

Fig 3



- 2.5 Over the course of the last six months the place team have continued to undertake further audits of the recycle bins which has shown poor levels of adherence to the use of each bin. This has led to all the waste having to be disposed in general waste bins.
- 2.6 One factor exacerbating the situation is that many of the fast-food outlets in the area provide their food in card packaging and so when people are trying to do the right thing and dispose of, for example their pizza box in the recycling, the high levels of grease are then tainting the whole bin.

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- 2.7 Another issue identified is if any paper /card becomes contaminated with glass, whether that is dust particles, shards, or bigger pieces, it's also classed as tainted and cannot be recycled.
- 2.8 To optimise recycling in our town centre, the council needs to implement a comprehensive strategy focusing on clear communication, convenient and accessible collection points, and proper sorting to minimize contamination. This includes using easily identifiable and movable bins, providing clear signage, and educating the public on what can and cannot be recycled.
- 2.9 Best Practice for Town Centre Recycling follows a set of guidelines, some of which the Council has already started:
- **Clear Signage and Instructions:**
Use large, understandable signs indicating which materials are accepted in each bin and provide visual aids to help users easily identify recyclable items.
 - **Strategic Bin Placement:**
Position recycling bins in high-traffic areas, near existing waste bins, and easily accessible locations like entrances to shops and public spaces. Consider using a variety of bin sizes to accommodate different waste streams.
 - **Education and Awareness:**
Launch public awareness campaigns to educate residents, businesses, and visitors about proper recycling procedures, including what is accepted and how to prepare items for recycling (e.g., rinsing containers, flattening cardboard).
 - **Regular Maintenance and Cleaning:**
Ensure recycling bins are regularly emptied, cleaned, and maintained to prevent overflowing and contamination.
 - **Contamination Reduction:**
Address contamination issues by providing clear instructions and actively monitoring bins for non-recyclable items. If contamination is a persistent problem, consider more targeted education and enforcement.
 - **Partner with Local Businesses:**
Work with local businesses to promote recycling and provide them with resources and guidance on proper waste management practices.
 - **Utilise Technology:**
Explore the use of technology, such as smart bins that can track fill levels and optimize collection routes. (This is already in place in Worcester City.)

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- **Regularly Review and Improve:**
Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the recycling programme and adjust based on feedback and performance data.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 As outlined throughout the opening section of the report, there are recycling arrangements in place in the town centre. However, these could be significantly enhanced.
- 3.2 As part of our on-street recycling trial, it is clear that a large proportion of the waste collected currently is either not actual recyclable material or is mixed with contaminated items such as food waste containers which are saturated in oil and other food matter, there is also a specific problem if paper and broken glass are mixed, the presence of glass in the paper then makes the recycling value of the paper negligible and not worth collecting.
- 3.3 The fundamental issues distilled down are around public/business education and cross contamination.
- 3.4 It may be that Overview and Scrutiny Members feel options available to enhance recycling in the town centre should be investigated further and reported to Cabinet for determination. Several options are already being reviewed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Investment in new bins for installation on Bromsgrove High Street would have financial implications for the Council. The cost would vary depending on which options are identified as preferred receptacles in the future.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

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- 6.1 Small but effective changes to how waste is collected in the Bromsgrove town centre would not impact on Local Government Reorganisation other than positively for future reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Waste collection and recycling is an important service for the Council in terms of helping to maintain a green environment.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 Any form of successful recycling will help with the climate change agenda.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 It is important to ensure that the Council continuously monitors waste collection and recycling rates to make sure that they are meeting the needs of residents and benefiting the local environment.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not applicable

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Whittaker	10 th July 2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	10 th July 2025
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	10 th July 2025

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Legal Department	Nicola Cummings	14 th July 2025