

Recycling in North Somerset

North Somerset's Recycling Initiatives

- **Kerbside sorting:** Crews separate recyclables upon collection, reducing contamination and improving resale value.
- **High recycling rates:** Ranked 9th in England in 2019-20, 12th in 2022, aiming for a 70% recycling rate by 2030.
- **Waste diversion:** Most waste is incinerated for energy, minimizing methane emissions. Ideally, all recyclables should be removed before burning to lower carbon emissions.
- **Recycling potential:** 80% of household waste should be recyclable, but audits show 45% of general bins contain recyclable material. Increasing recycling could save up to £1.1 million annually.

How North Somerset Manages Waste

- **Material repurposing:** Plastic becomes milk bottles and car parts; metals are remade into cans, bicycle frames, and bridges; paper and glass are recycled into new versions.
- **Anaerobic digestion:** Organic waste breaks down into biogas for fuel, with leftover digestate used as fertiliser.
- **Food waste collection:** Efforts are underway to improve services for flats, where collection is currently limited.
- **Garden waste & composting:** Green waste is processed into fertiliser, but new charges have reduced participation. Subsidised compost bins and e-learning aim to encourage composting, diverting over 1,200 tonnes from landfill.

Future Plans & Sustainability Goals

- **Expanding waste collection:** More businesses and events are gaining access to waste collection services. Numbers have grown from 50 customers in 2016 to 282 in 2021, with continued expansion planned.
- **Litter reduction:** Enforcement actions have increased, including fines, signs, street cameras, and voluntary litter-picking schemes.
- **Infrastructure improvements:** Population growth has strained waste facilities, prompting proposals for new waste transfer stations.
- **Eco-friendly waste management:** Zero-emissions kerbside collection vehicles may be introduced, though costs are high. Carbon-offsetting is also being considered.
- **Upcoming changes:** In June 2025, black bin collections will shift from fortnightly to every three weeks, alongside expanded recycling services and red recycling bags. The council is launching a recycling app to help residents track waste collection schedules.
- **Community ventures:** The council promotes plastic-free initiatives, a reusable nappy scheme, and local zero-waste shops to encourage sustainability.
- North Somerset Council remains committed to improving waste management, balancing financial savings with environmental goals. Recycling plays a crucial role, but reducing waste and embracing sustainable alternatives remain top priorities.