

SORT IT PLUS Recycling Trials

1. SORT IT PLUS

- 1.1. SORT IT PLUS is an integrated package of waste collections with a weekly service for food waste, fortnightly for refuse, optional charged service for garden waste and with the 'plus' of adding cardboard and plastic bottles to kerbside recycling collections.

2. Trials

- 2.1. A series of trials were launched in May 2008 to test a number of options for the provision of SORT IT PLUS collections. These covered 8,500 households in Mendip, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane.
- 2.2. The SORT IT PLUS trials tested innovative new recycling collection vehicles, involving one or two pass collections for all materials including food waste, and different frequencies of recycling collection, as shown below.

RECYCLING COLLECTION FREQUENCIES	Service Package 3	Service Package 2	Service Package 5
Standard Dry Recyclables*	Fortnightly	Weekly	Weekly
Plastic Bottles & Cardboard	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly
Food Waste	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly

* Paper, glass, cans, foil, clothes, shoes and car batteries.

- 2.3. A second recycling box was provided to householders, which can be cross-stacked on top of existing boxes.



3. Key Findings

- 3.1. Service Package 5 (SP5) achieved the best recycling performance in the trials and was the most popular service package with residents. Service Package 2 (SP2) also achieved a good performance and proved a fairly popular option.
- 3.2. Some of the key findings from monitoring of the trials and from a questionnaire sent to all residents on trial rounds are shown in the table below.

KEY TRIAL FINDINGS MONITORING & SURVEY	Service Package 3	Service Package 2	Service Package 5
Projected Recycling Rate (NB varies by District)	44-52%	48-55%	51-58%
Respondents saying SORT IT PLUS is much better or better than previous collections	69%	75%	87%
Respondents recycling a lot more or more than before	72%	76%	83%
Respondents saying their refuse bin is generally full and with extra refuse sacks	5%	6%	2%

4. Collection Vehicle Design for Service Package 5

- 4.1. The prototype recycling collection vehicle, used by Somerset Waste Partnership's collection contractor May Gurney, on SP5 rounds during the trials proved to be unsuitable as a long-term option, as it was not efficient enough in operation.
- 4.2. However, May Gurney used this experience to help develop a new vehicle design, which they started using on similar recycling collections in Barnet at the end of 2008. May Gurney were soon confident enough in this design to offer this as a solution to Somerset and confirmed that it would allow SP5 collections to be provided at a similar cost to those for SP2.



- 4.3. The new vehicle design allows all SORT IT PLUS materials for recycling, including plastic bottles, cardboard and food waste, to be collected by the same vehicle on a single pass. Loading capacity, especially for light bulky materials such as plastics and cardboard, is greatly increased by lowering the position of material stillages and allowing light materials to be mechanically lifted to new compartments at a higher level. The new design offers a number of manual handling improvements by lowering loading heights and removing the need for stepping up on to the vehicle. It is also designed to reduce noise arising from the loading of glass.
- 4.4. Testing of the new vehicle design was required to confirm that it could be adapted to provide sufficient capacity for high recycling yields in Somerset and to include food waste, which is not collected in Barnet. This testing started in March 2009 on Mendip trial rounds and continued in Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane from April 2009.
- 4.5. This testing identified the need for modifications to increase capacity for cardboard and food waste and improve containment for cans collected mixed with plastic bottles, which have been completed and now allow May Gurney to provide a bespoke single pass collection vehicle designed for use on SORT IT PLUS collections in Somerset.

5. Collections for Communal Properties

- 5.1. A method for collecting plastic bottles, cardboard and food waste from households living in communal properties, normally served by micro-recycling centres with wheeled bins for different materials, has not yet been agreed with May Gurney, although options for this under consideration for future implementation.

6. SORT IT PLUS Implementation

- 6.1. Somerset Waste Board has agreed that SP5 is the best option which should be adopted where SORT IT PLUS collections are to be introduced.
- 6.2. A second recycling box will be provided for SORT IT PLUS collections, so that residents will have two boxes for recycling: normally, a green one for paper, glass and foil and a black one for plastic bottles, cans and cardboard. These boxes are designed so that they can stack one top of each other.
- 6.3. The communication plan for rolling out SORT IT PLUS collections in areas currently served by SORT IT, involves:
- Advance notice being issued to the local media and affected Ward Members and Parish Councils.
 - New collection boxes with a clear instruction leaflet being issued 1-3 weeks before the new collections start.
- 6.4. For districts, where SORT IT is not currently provided, the communication plan for rolling out SORT IT PLUS also involves:
- Advance notification packs with service choices and options issued to all households to be served.
 - Roadshows in roll-out areas to allow residents to see the new collection containers and ask SWP officers about the new collections.