

Assessing site locations

Location is a vital factor in bring site performance. A good location should have high footfall, relative to the density of housing: in rural areas, this may mean a location with high “drive-past” rates, compared to other areas. A site should also have easy access and sufficient space for the number and types of containers to be provided (see separate *Site design* fact sheet).

There are two key reasons for assessing bring site locations:

- to optimise existing site provision, as part of a service review to identify the most appropriate sites to remove, retain or relocate; and
- to identify suitable new locations, as part of service expansion or relocation of existing sites.

To inform any decisions about site location, it is important to keep an up-to-date map of all sites, including which materials are collected at each site. Once such a map is produced, consider publishing it online so that the public can see what they can recycle, where. Or you could provide a link on your authority’s website to the RecycleNow bank locator¹.

The screenshot shows the RecycleNow website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "What can we help with?" and a "SEARCH" button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "What can I do today", "Why recycle", "How is it recycled", "Home composting", and "Schools". The main heading is "Your local recycling banks" with a location pin for "OX16 0AH" and a "Change" link. Below this, there is a section titled "I WANT TO RECYCLE..." with a search bar containing "E.g. Paint" and a "SEARCH" button. A list of materials to recycle is shown on the left: Batteries, Composting, Construction and Demolition, Glass, Liquids and Chemicals, Metals, Miscellaneous, Paper and Cardboard, and Plastic. To the right, under "YOUR NEAREST RECYCLING BANKS", three banks are listed: Gala Bingo (0.16 miles), Mothercare Banbury (0.21 miles), and The Fire Station (0.28 miles). A map of Banbury is displayed below the list, showing the locations of these banks and various streets.

¹ Help us ensure that the information on RecycleNow’s bank locator is up to date by keeping RecycleNow informed of any changes you make to your bring site network.

Site selection criteria

Potential sites should be assessed against criteria that are appropriate both for your local authority area and the aims of the bring site recycling service. Relevant criteria may include:

- **population density:** there needs to be a sufficient population within the catchment area of an existing or proposed site to ensure it will be utilised and benefit the local area.
- **proximity to major routes:** sites should be close to major driving routes to ensure convenience and increase site utilisation.
- **site ownership:** though it may be easier to obtain permission to use land owned by the local authority, busier sites can be located on private land, for example in supermarket car parks. This may require you to draw up agreements with the landowner.
- **proximity to houses:** sites located close to houses can cause a nuisance and result in local objections and complaints. However, if well screened, these sites can be popular and offer the advantage of not requiring people to drive to use them.
- **proximity to existing bring sites:** new sites should complement the existing network and not adversely affect the performance of existing sites.
- **site accessibility:** access to a site should be as easy as possible, for users and for servicing vehicles, and risks to site users and employees are minimised.
- **site safety:** potential issues such as surface conditions, slopes/gradients, obstructions (both at ground level and overhead), lighting, proximity of moving vehicles, space for safe parking/drop off zone all need to be considered.
- **impact on local area:** would the location encourage fly-tipping or littering incidents occurring, for instance if the location is secluded? Consider the potential site design (see Site Design) to ensure the site will have limited visual impact and noise intrusion.
- **existing site performance and usage:** to assess the need and location for a new site, analyse the performance (such as tonnage performance data per site and material), capacity and servicing frequency at existing sites nearby to identify patterns in usage and anticipate future use of sites.
- **number and nature of complaints:** review complaints received for existing sites and assess whether these could be resolved or reduced by relocating the site.
- **cost of infrastructure required:** this includes containers, signage, litter bin provision (the size and number of which may be affected by the size of the location) surface, access and suitable lighting.
- **new developments or redevelopment projects:** is there potential/capacity to include a bring site in any new residential or commercial developments? If so, which stakeholders would you need to work with?

A supporting MS Excel Site Location Tool, which can be adapted to reflect your authority's circumstances, is available to download to help you carry out an assessment of new or existing site locations.

Issues to consider

When reviewing the effectiveness of existing site locations, or evaluating the potential of new ones, it is important to:

- understand the required level of service provision across the entire local authority area, and identify gaps in provision. In particular, consider the need for bring site provision in high density housing areas that may not be suitable for kerbside dry recyclable collections;
- speak to colleagues in other departments (for instance housing, parks) or the waste disposal authority who may be able to provide insights on likelihood of use and help identify any local issues relevant to the proposed site;
- consider the potential for refurbishing existing sites before adding new sites: could an existing site be improved, rather than finding a location for a new site?
- consult with the community. This can generate suggestions for potential site locations and options for optimising or relocation of existing sites. It may also provide valuable feedback on how existing sites are used and any issues with them;
- ensure bring site provision is incorporated into planning applications for new retail parks or significant housing developments;
- consider bring site provision in high density housing areas that may not be suitable for kerbside dry recyclable collections;
- review existing bring site performance regularly to measure trends and changes in use, so that requirements for new sites can be assessed.

Case Study: East Riding of Yorkshire

East Riding of Yorkshire Council has 145 bring sites, and offers a kerbside recycling service to all households. It is now planning on removing some sites and enhancing the remaining ones; however, following requests from the community it also is considering establishing new sites.

The Council uses a 'bring site matrix' with selection criteria for locating new sites. Requests are logged on a spreadsheet, listing site name, location, contact, nearest existing bring containers, proximity to households and number that could be serviced by a new site, surface quality and vehicle clearance dimensions. Potential sites are visited and assessed according to the criteria as shown below.

	v good	good	adequate	basic	limited	not viable
	10	8	6	4	2	0
Surface						
Gradient	Flat Surface	Relatively flat	Flat but not consistently so			Steep Gradient
Surface Type/Quality	Concrete/Tarmac - No Cracks	Concrete - some cracks			Gravel	Grass
Access						
Vehicle Clearance 24 hrs/ 7 days	No width or height barriers					limited opening
Infrastructure	Excellent Roads and Access	Relatively good roads	Acceptable Roads	difficult access BUT possible	poor access	Poor or no road access
Visibility and lighting	Well lit and clear					No Lighting or visibility
Position						
Proximity to homes	300 Metres + from householders	200 Metres + from Households	100 m from households	50m or less from households	25m or less	5 m or less
Number of Houses Serviced	250 or more households	250 or less	100 or less	50 or less	25 or less	5 or less
Nearest Glass Bank	10 Miles +	10 miles or less	5 miles or less	2 miles or less	1 mile or less	Very close
Cost						
Cost	No Costs					High Costs
Customer Contact						
Requests	Petitions and requests	One or More Written Request	One written request or multiple verbal request	One Verbal Request	No support or approval	Actively against the site
Site Ownership	East Riding Council	Parish/Town Council		Private- with consent	Private	Unknown

Frequently asked questions

Does my authority need Planning Permission to establish a new bring site?

Local authorities do not require planning permission to site banks on their land as they are deemed a permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. A Highways Authority may also allow banks to be located on a pathway such as a pavement.

Typically, bring banks located on private land such as supermarket car parks are unlikely to be deemed a 'material change of use' and therefore will not require planning consent from the planning authority. However, any third party planning on siting a bank should contact the planning authority to check whether planning permission is required.

How can I ensure adequate bring site provision is included for new developments?

Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local planning authorities (LPA) can enter into a legally binding agreement, or 'planning obligation', with a landowner that makes the granting of planning permission conditional on certain factors being in place. Therefore, the LPA can introduce a planning obligation to include bring sites on all major developments. If this is not a requirement for new developments in your area, discuss with your planning department whether it could be included in the future.

How do you measure footfall prior to selecting a site?

There are various ways to measure footfall, depending on the site. You could carry out a survey in the area. If the proposed site is located in a private car park or at a community centre, the site owner may have existing data about visitor numbers. Other sources of information include speaking to the local community.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of locating sites on private land?

Advantages

Locating sites on private land can help increase bring bank usage: locations such as supermarkets, cinemas and leisure centre car parks typically have high visitor numbers. It may also encourage working with the landowner, particularly retailers, to promote recycling and other sustainability issues.

Disadvantages

- Maintaining a commitment/ agreement from the landowner to continue to locate bring site containers can sometimes be difficult (see *Procuring New Contracts* fact sheet) particularly if the site experiences recurrent littering/fly-tipping/vandalism problems. This may lead to the landowner requesting bring site removal.
- Private sites may require additional cleaning and servicing.
- The landowner may need to be paid recycling credits.
- The space required for a bring site can discourage landowners' consent particularly in private car parks where revenue is obtained from parking or where the number of customers to the establishment, for example public houses, could be overly restricted.
- If 'rogue' banks are placed next to authorised ones, it can discourage private landowners from allowing the service to continue.

How effective are reuse/recycling credits and what is their impact on bring recycling?

Bring sites located on private land and managed by community groups/parish councils may receive a reuse/recycling credit from the local authority in return. Payments can assist the group in managing the site which, in turn, can help reduce the day-to-day management requirement for the local authority. For some organisations, re-use/recycling credits are an incentive to promote a site actively, but it depends on the organisation receiving the credits. You may have some scope to influence how proactively they promote a site, perhaps through regular feedback on the site's performance and prompt payment of recycling credits: this highlights that the more material collected for recycling, the more revenue they will receive. Assessing monthly tonnage performance and patterns, from when payments are introduced, is a useful way to measure site performance and the influence of recycling credits on recycling behaviour. Comparison to nearby sites (with or without community involvement) should also show any emerging trends.

How should we assess site performance?

The easiest and most consistent way to assess site performance is using tonnage data: how much material is collected at each site? If tonnage data per site are not available, you could carry out a visual inspection and request collection crews to record the tonnage per container/material on collection – see *Data recording/reporting* fact sheet. In assessing performance, it is also good practice to compare with other nearby sites.

How should we decide to remove sites, and if so, which?

Performance data is the starting point: poorly performing sites may not be worth keeping. However, you should also assess the locations of the nearest alternative sites, the catchment area and likelihood of bring site use and calculate any cost efficiencies of removing the site. You may want to enhance nearby sites to compensate for the removal of a site. It is also necessary to consider all the facilities available to communities, particularly in rural areas, where a bring site – even if low tonnage – might be the only recycling facility available locally.

Checklist

- Keep an up-to-date map of all sites, including which materials are collected for recycling.
- Monitor performance regularly – and conduct full reviews of bring provision annually or when you make changes to your recycling services.
- Assess costs per location, if possible: are some sites more expensive to operate than others? If so, why?
- Consider opportunities to refurbish existing sites to enhance performance before seeking additional sites.
- Ensure the locations of new sites do not adversely affect the performance of established sites nearby, and take action if this occurs.
- Use knowledge of the local authority area gained from colleagues in other relevant departments within your authority (street cleaning, housing, parks) or the waste disposal authority to inform decisions about site locations.
- Work with the planning department and/or developers to ensure that planning applications, for new retail or housing developments, take into account bring site provision. Consider opportunities to add new bring sites when public land is redeveloped.