

The Big Waste Decision

Waste & Recycling Questionnaire Results

Introduction

This report summarises the findings of the Waste & Recycling Questionnaire we conducted during September and October 2007.

Results have been combined from questionnaires made available at roadshows held in Broadway, Droitwich Spa, Bredon, Pershore, Evesham and Inkberrow, on display in our three Community Contact Centres as well as online on our website.

Data has been cleansed to remove duplicate entries that were submitted online and has been weighted to make representative of all age groups based on census population figures.

In total there were 770 valid responses received.

Information Provision

Overall, respondents feel well informed about what materials can and cannot be recycled (86%) and what recycling services are provided in their area (84%). The level of feeling informed increases with age with older residents (60+) feeling significantly more informed compared to younger residents (under 30).

Respondents across all age ranges however feel less informed about what happens to materials after they have been collected for recycling (34%).

Importance of Recycling

97% of residents think recycling household rubbish is important, with 84% saying it is very important.

Recycling Participation

64% of respondents said that they recycle everything they can. This level of participation varies across the age ranges with the over 60's the highest recorded levels (77%) and the 30 - 44 age group the lowest (56%). 9% of residents under 30 said that they don't recycle at all.

Barriers to recycling

The main reasons respondents gave for not recycling everything they can were because they do not have enough space to store recycling (31%), too messy and vermin and animals (22%), too smelly and not easy to do / easier to throw away (16%).

Other common barriers mentioned were the limitations in the range of plastics accepted for recycling and the lack of collection of green waste.

Encourage recycling

A reduction in council tax (35%) was the main thing that respondents said would encourage them to recycle (or recycle more than they currently do). 34% felt that nothing would encourage them as they recycle adequately with the current scheme. Other significant encouragements were more information about what can be recycled (27%), a single container or bag for recycling (21%) and more space for to store waste for recycling (19%).

As previously identified as common barriers, encouragements that were frequently mentioned included the expansion of the range of items accepted for recycling, particularly plastics as well as the collection of green waste.

Preferred Receptacle - Sacks v Bins

62% of respondents preferred way of putting their non recycled rubbish out for collection was black sacks, with 31% opting for wheeled ('wheelie') bins and 6% preferring dustbin(s).

Views on Council

Overall, respondents agree the council is committed to reducing the amount of waste produced in the district (77%) and to increasing the level of recycling carried out in the district (79%). Respondents felt that it is essential for local residents to recycle everything they can (90%), however significantly fewer agreed that the council makes it easy for them to do so (53%).

48% of respondents agreed and 34% disagreed that the council should make it compulsory for all residents to recycle everything they can. The level of agreement varies significantly across the age groups with younger residents (under 30) more in favour of making it compulsory 65% compared to older residents (41%).

This disparity is further evident in the view that the council should limit the amount of waste that residents put out for collection. Overall 66% of respondents disagreed with a limit, increasing with the 45-60 and 60+ age groups (70-71%) whilst in the under 30 and 30-44 age groups the level of disagreement was lower (57-62%).

Frequency of collection

77% of respondents would prefer to receive a fortnightly collection of dry recycling. 85% would prefer that kitchen waste is collected weekly, however this level falls to 61% with respondents under 30.

Overall, 51% of respondents would like to see the remaining rubbish collected less frequently with 36% preferring a fortnightly collection and 15% monthly collection. 45% of all respondents preferred a weekly collection, although levels altered significantly between the older and younger age groups, with 61% of those under 30 preferring a weekly collection compared to just 33% for those over 60.

Views on frequency of collection for garden waste are more split, with overall 18% preferring weekly, 33% fortnightly, 25% monthly and 18% preferring we do not collect it at all.

Options for future service

Option 1 - Current system of residual waste collected in black sacks weekly, clear and purple recycling sacks collected alternative weeks and green recycling box for glass collected fortnightly. This scheme would be extended to all households.

70% of respondents would welcome this option, with a further 20% accepting it but with some concerns. Levels of support for this option were high amongst all age groups however the under 30s had more concerns (30%) compared to those over 60 (11%).

Overall, the biggest concerns with this option were with the sacks, with 68% of respondents concerned about them being ripped open by vermin or animals and 55% with them easily ripping or tearing. 26% of respondents were concerned with recyclables needing to be sorted into different receptacles, with 21% concerned with injuries to refuse collectors and 16% finding the scheme confusing.

Option 2 - Introduction of two wheeled bins, one for waste disposal and one for mixed recyclables e.g. paper, light card, plastic bottles, cans and glass bottles / jars. The bins are collected on alternative weeks so that one week you would have the waste bin collected and the following week the recycling bin.

Overall, 15% of respondents would welcome this option, with a further 22% accepting it but with some concerns. Opposition for this option was greater with 23% opposing it and 38% finding it totally unacceptable.

Levels of support for this option varied significantly between age groups with 65% of those under 30 welcoming or accepting this option compared to just 23% of those over 60.

Overall, the biggest concerns with this option were the frequency of collection of household waste (75%), health issues from food waste (66%), storage of the bins (64%) and wheeled bins being unsightly (52%). 27% were concerned with no textiles being collected.

Other common concerns that were raised with this option included the maneuverability of bins particularly by the elderly or disabled, contamination of recyclables through using a single container and the lack of collection of green waste.

Additional Comments

There were a number of additional comments that were raised by respondents and the following summarises the key issues that are being raised:

- Happy with the current scheme - if it ain't broke why fix it?
- Need for a collection of green waste
- Suitability of wheeled bins in certain areas of the district
- Concerns over potential vandalism of wheeled bins
- Perceived reduction in service with alternate weekly collection
- Health concerns with wheeled bins - smells, frequency of collection of food waste and cleaning of bins
- Lack of understanding how alternate weekly collection will increase recycling
- More information about what can be recycled, in particular plastics
- Concerns of an increase in fly-tipping with alternate weekly collection
- More emphasis needs to be placed on producing less waste

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