

Thurrock Waste Consultation – Summary Report

Note: As part of the COVID-19 government restrictions libraries were closed. Completed surveys handed in by residents at the libraries and social hubs have not been included in the current report

Demographics and general information

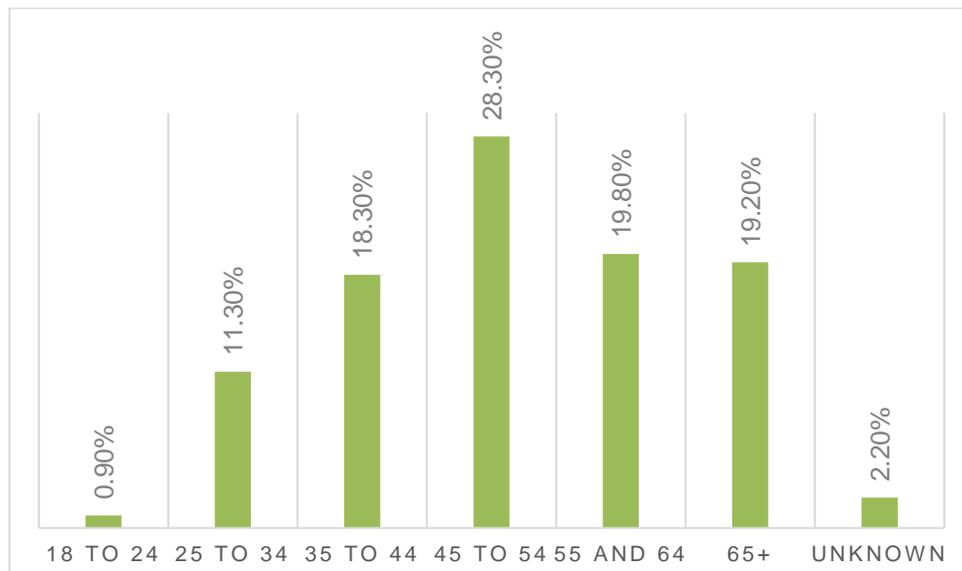
In February 2020, a cross party working group that had been formed to investigate ways in which the level of recycling in Thurrock could be increased, commissioned a consultation with all residents of the Borough. The consultation was publicised under the strap of “Talking Rubbish” and was available to resident online or as a paper survey accessed through libraries and community hubs. The consultation was advertised through postcard sent to all households, social media and a further letter to households that included an educational sticker for use on recycling bins.

The consultation covered 4 key areas:

1. Recycling
2. Education
3. Collection regimes
4. Waste processing options

Of the 1,150 visitors to the consultation site, a total of 684 residents completed the survey that was open for responses from 8th January to 22nd March 2020. This equates to a response rate of 1% of residents, which is in-line with the response rates other councils have reported for similar consultations.

The demographics of respondents was as follows:



Only 5.5% of respondents live in a purpose built flat or flat in a converted house.

1. Recycling

The majority of respondents (percentage) reported seeing themselves as someone who recycles. 83% of respondents also stated that there were several barriers preventing them from recycling more. The two most common barriers were reported as:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Not enough knowledge on what can be recycled | 52% |
| Too much effort | 30% |

The other barrier options presented did not receive significant responses. These included:

- My recycling bin is too small
- My recycling is not collected when it should be
- The location of my home

There was no unanimous agreement that reward schemes or enforcement would encourage higher levels of participation in recycling initiative.

| | |
|---|------------|
| Reward scheme would make me recycle more | Percentage |
| Enforcement action would make me recycle more | Percentage |

63.6% of respondents were willing to further separate waste to improve recycling rates in the Borough.

68.8% of respondents felt that the range of materials collected at the kerbside was adequate.

Almost 50% of residents would be supportive of a monthly recycling collection that included a range of the following materials:

- Textiles
- Household batteries
- Electrical items

Only 84 respondents (12%) would not be willing to separate dry recyclables into individual receptacles.

54% of respondents strongly agreed that they recycle food and garden waste with 50% of respondents reporting no barriers to engagement with that service.

The key barriers identified by others were:

| | |
|--|-----|
| I am worried about hygiene/mess | 24% |
| I don't have the facilities to recycle food waste in my kitchen' | 22% |

38% of respondents would not be willing to separate food and garden waste with facilities as they currently are. However, this figure drops to 27.9% when the possibility of a kitchen caddy being offered by the Council is introduced.

70% of respondents who live in flats were supportive of the introduction of dry recycling facilities. 63% of respondents who lived in flats were prepared to support food waste collections at those sites.

Considerations

- Engagement around recycling and sharing of clear accessible information with residents is essential.
- The ability for households to have more than one recycling bin needs to be clearly communicated/advertised.
- There is no clear evidence that reward schemes or enforcement actions would increase motivation to recycle household waste.
- The introduction of additional recycling streams collected on a monthly basis would be supported.
- There is a high level of openness to changes in the way that dry recyclables are collected for example, further separation of materials.
- Offering residents a food caddy type receptacle would potentially increase levels of food waste being recycled.
- There is a high level of support for the proposed recycling improvements for flats in the Borough.
- Food waste is an additional stream to be considered for flats.

2. Education

Only 25.2% of respondents think that Thurrock Council effectively educates residents about recycling. With regard to the recycling campaigns that have been run by the council over the past year, only 23.9% of respondents had seen the materials. These figures do not reflect the impact of the Bin Sticker and Recycling guidance distributed to residents as part of the Consultation promotion.

The four top preferred education methods identified by respondents were:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Education leaflets | 66% |
| Bin stickers on recycling bins | 63% |
| Information on the Council website | 42% |
| Resident Newsletter | 37% |
| Facebook | 33% |

The overall view of respondents was that an app detailing which materials go into which bins and collection days would be useful, with 64.3% supporting the proposal.

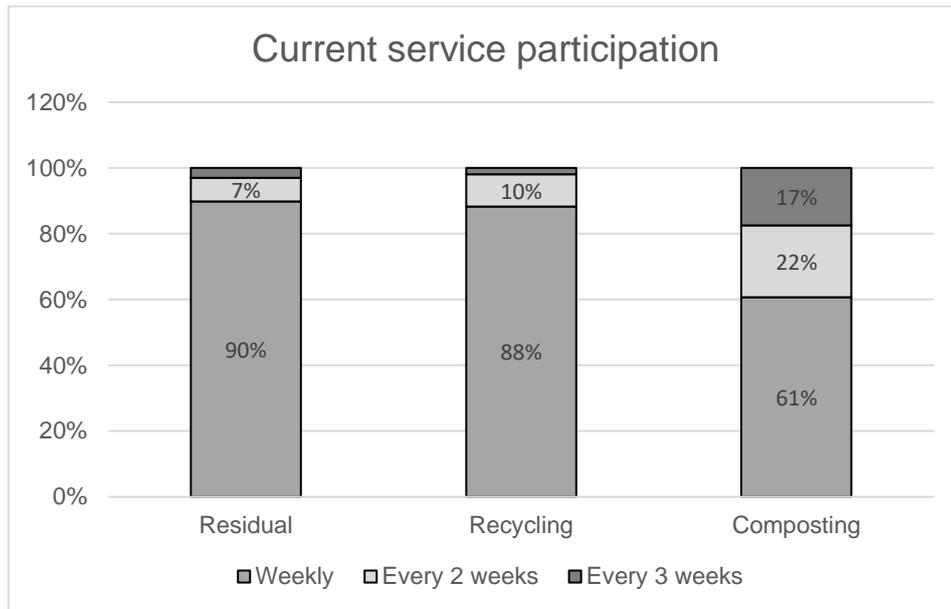
Considerations

- Ongoing education is essential and we need to ensure that we are using methods that reach all residents.

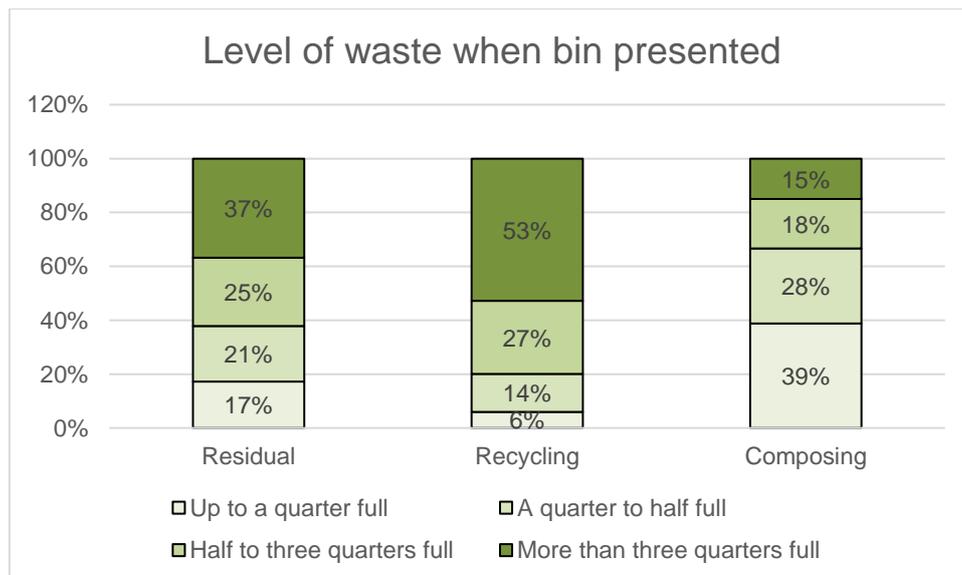
- Our current methods of communication with regards to recycling do not appear to be reaching a large proportion of residents.
- Building an app to support recycling and collection details in the Borough might is a popular option with respondents.

3. Collection

The current rate of use of the different streams of waste is detailed in the graph below. The majority of respondents report using all three services each week:



It is useful to combine this data with the reported fullness of bins as reported by respondents.



63% of respondents reported that when presented for weekly collections, their residual waste bins were less than three quarters full. For the combined kitchen and

garden waste bins, that figures increases to 85%, whilst for recycling it drops to 47%. The reported level of fullness of the recycling bins is likely to be largely due to the nature of recyclable materials. Unless items such as milk bottles and cans are manually compacted, they can be bulky.

69.9% of residents would prefer collection frequencies to remain unchanged for all streams of waste. This is not an unexpected response given that Thurrock is one of the few Local Authorities to have retained weekly collections of all waste streams. 50% of respondents would be supportive of garden waste collections happening every second week, as long as food waste was separated and continued to be collected on a weekly basis. 74.3% of respondents reported that they would find it acceptable if their brown bin was emptied on a fortnightly basis during the colder months (October – March).

There was no appetite to support paid garden waste collections, with 82.5% of respondents stating that they would not make use of that service.

The time of day that collections occur was not considered important by the majority of respondents.

Considerations

- There is little stated support for a reduction of collection frequencies for any streams of waste other than garden waste.
- With weekly collections, residual and composting bins are less than three quarters full for the majority of respondents.
- Recycling bins are reported to be almost full after a week.
- Time of collections does not appear to be a concern for residents.

4. Processing of waste

There was strong support from respondents for Thurrock to further investigate the building our own waste processing facilities including those to:

- Separate and process dry recycling.
- Process compostable materials – both food and garden waste.
- Generate energy through incineration.

Only 12% of respondents were opposed to further investigation or consideration or options.

Considerations

There is clear support for Thurrock Councils to investigate building their own Energy for Waste Facility, MRF and Composting facility.