

Waste Collection Survey Summer 2010

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Have your say

On the future of **waste collections**
in Cheshire West and Chester



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Key Findings

- These are the key findings of a survey sent to all households in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) that was conducted as part of a multi-faceted consultation about a future waste collection service
- 21,132 completed questionnaires were returned. This represents an excellent response rate of 15% and the results are statistically valid
- Supplementary questions were asked within the questionnaire to allow responses to be further analysed against sub-categories covering: former District area, type of home, household size, and key issues affecting waste collection (pages 15-17)
- The profile of the respondents was very similar to the profile of CW&C residents overall, in terms of these sub-categories, and so the results are statistically valid.

Options for frequency of non-recyclable waste collection (p 14)

- 60% of respondents preferred the alternate weekly option for collection of non-recyclable waste. The result was almost 2:1 in favour of this option.
- This comprised 74% in the former Ellesmere Port & Neston area, 72% in the former Vale Royal area and 41% in the former Chester area. In each area 8% of respondents said they had 'no preference'
- The alternate weekly collection option was chosen by a majority of respondents in all but one of the other sub-categories. The only exception was that representing the 2% of households comprising 6 or more people.

Materials that are important to collect for recycling (p 8-9)

- Over 90% of respondents thought it was important to collect the following materials for recycling: all plastic packaging, cans and tins, glass bottles and jars, paper, cardboard and garden waste. These were followed by: kitchen waste (69%), tetra packs (77%) and textiles and shoes (49%).

Important issues relating to recycling containers (p10–13)

- Residents were asked to pick the four issues relating to recycling containers that were most important to them:
 - Container is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum – 77%
 - Can safely be stored outside – 66%
 - Can be wheeled to collection point – 56%
 - Helps keep the cost of the service down – 54%
 - There are as few containers as possible – 51%
 - Reduces the risk of spillage – 42%
 - The durability of the container – 38%.

Results of the 'little things that make a big difference' roadshow surveys

- During the consultation, roadshows were used to undertake one to one surveys with residents on key customer service issues. Correct replacement of bins after collection was the single biggest issue identified by residents at these roadshows and was also a key concern for respondents to the survey.

The results of the consultation will be considered by Members and will be used to inform the procurement process for the new waste collection contract.

Background

Following the Local Government Re-organisation in April 2009, Cheshire West and Chester's (CW&C) Waste Management and Street Scene Service intend to harmonise the three different waste collection systems operating in the three former districts. Due to the nature of the contract tendering process a lengthy procurement process will take place and consultation with residents will be a key feature of this.

One of the five key aims for the new waste collection contract will be to deliver high levels of customer service. As part of their proposals bidders will be expected to demonstrate they have taken into account the views of residents. To provide bidders with these views the Council undertook a six week public consultation exercise which had two key elements-

- Customer First Roadshows
- Consultation Leaflet

Customer First Roadshows – These took place at locations across the Borough and were used to help discover the little things which, if changed, would make the biggest difference to residents' satisfaction. This could include anything from ensuring bins are placed back correctly to reducing the number of day changes due to bank holidays. By collecting this information through direct interaction, it was possible to gain a fuller understanding of residents' issues, which will help to shape the delivery standards for the new service. This added to the results of focus groups held on 27th April 2010 which have been reported upon separately.

Consultation Leaflet - An A4 consultation leaflet was delivered to all households via Royal Mail. The leaflet explained the procurement process and contained a simple free-post questionnaire. In addition, the leaflet contained a list of dates for drop-in sessions and roadshows (mentioned above) where householders could ask questions or find out more detail. To ensure both the explanatory text and questions were easy to understand and complete they were tested using focus groups in April 2010 which have been reported on separately .

The purpose of this survey was to:

- establish the views of residents about:
 - the importance of kerb-side collection of various materials for recycling
 - the importance of various issues regarding recycling containers
 - which option they preferred regarding the frequency of collections for non-recyclable waste
- compare results from residents living in:
 - the three former districts
 - different types of housing
 - houses or households with particular needs

The results of the survey will inform the next stage of the tendering process.

Consultation Costs

The total cost for the public consultation exercise was £60,103 or **41p** per household (based on 145,800)

Please note this figure has risen from the original estimate due to an increase in data capture costs as a result of the high response rate.

Promotion of the Consultation

To ensure maximum awareness, the public consultation was promoted by-

- *Bin handle tags* – Information tags wrapped around the handles of domestic waste bins to encourage householders to look out for and complete their consultation leaflet. (Properties on a bag collection received the same information via a leaflet)
- *Stakeholders' Information packs (eg parish councils)* – These packs were distributed to all key stakeholders containing background information along with posters for the local promotion
- *Website Promotion* – The consultation featured on the home page of CW&C website throughout the consultation period. This made it easier for residents to access the online version of the survey
- *Community Forum 'Drop in' Sessions* – The community forums were used as a key tool in both promoting the consultation and also providing local people with the opportunity to ask any questions they may had regarding the process
- *Press and Radio Adverts* – These were used at key points to raise awareness and also act as a call to action for householders to look out for and complete their survey
- *E-marketing* – Google and Facebook advertising were used to raise awareness of the consultation amongst some groups of people who are usually harder to reach

Survey Methodology

The consultation leaflet about future waste collection and recycling services was delivered to all households in Cheshire West and Chester Borough (CW&C) during June 2010. It contained a short questionnaire that residents could complete themselves and return free of charge.

To ensure a good distribution all the postcodes given via the completed surveys were spatially mapped using GIS. This information was then used to highlight any potential distribution problems and distribute replacement leaflets to those households.

To further maximise accessibility the survey was also made available to complete online through the Council's website.

The deadline for completing the survey was 26th July 2010.

Profile of respondents

In total 21,132 questionnaires were completed, which included 20,034 paper copies and 1,098 on-line. This is an excellent response rate of about 15% based on an estimated 145,800 households across CW&C.

Below is a profile of the respondents:

- Of the 19,477 responses which gave sufficient post-code information to allocate to a former district:
 - 7465 (38%) were from Chester City
 - 3953 (20%) were from Ellesmere Port and Neston
 - 8059 (41%) were from Vale Royal

These almost matched the actual proportions of 38%, 24% and 37% respectively and so will produce statistically valid results for CW&C.

- Of the 20,881 responses which gave housing details, the results were:
 - 48% lived in detached properties compared to 31% in CW&C
 - 35% lived in semi-detached properties compared to 37% in CW&C
 - 12% lived in terraced houses compared to 22% in CW&C
 - 2% lived in flats/apartments compared to 7% in CW&C
 - less than 1% lived in a caravan or mobile home compared to 1% in CW&C

Therefore, as has been seen in previous surveys, those living in detached properties were over-represented and those living in terraced houses or flats and apartments were under-represented. However when the data was weighted to take account of this, there was only a very slight change in the result, see page 16 for an example. So using the un-weighted data does not change the messages and still produces statistically valid results.

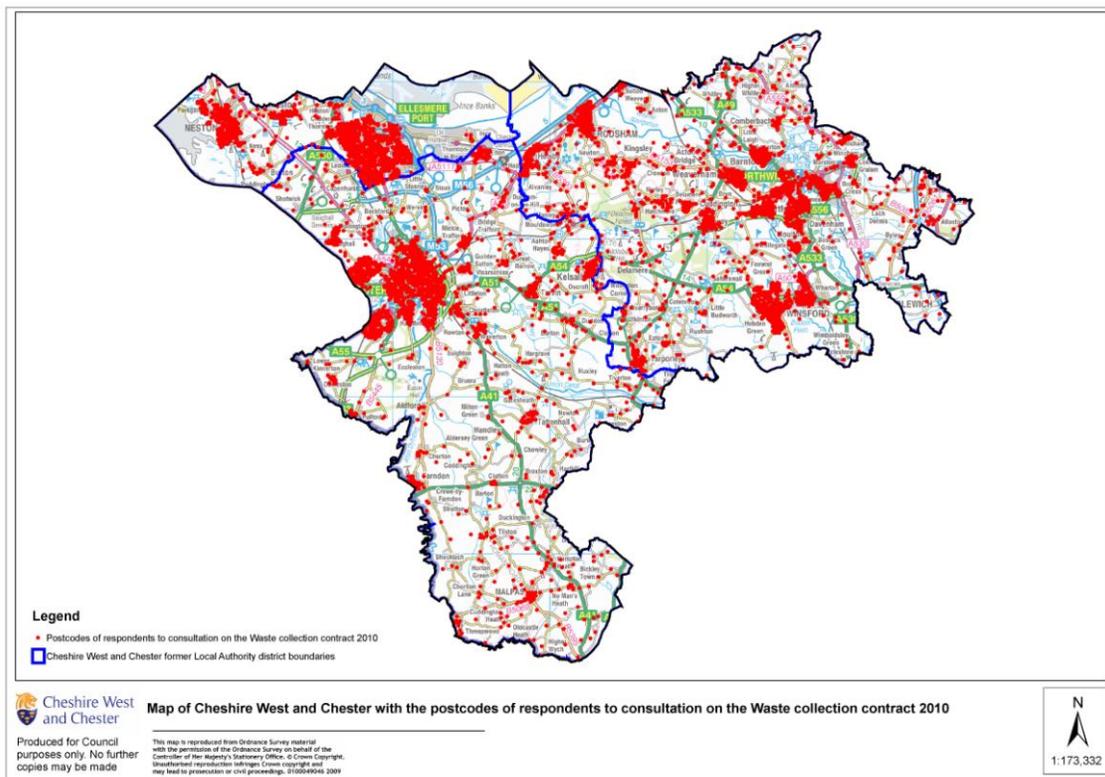
- Responses came from the following types of household who have specific issues that affect their waste collection:

Issue	% Respondents
Long or steep driveway	13%
Property opens directly on to pavement	7%
Waste collection from the rear of property	6%
Shared waste facilities	2%
Registered for an assisted service	3%
No issues	63%

Responses came from the following size of household which were similar to the profile of CW&C and so will produce statistically valid results for CW&C.

Household Size	% Respondents	CW&C profile in 2001
1	22%	27%
2	48%	36%
3	13%	16%
4	12%	14%
5	3%	5%
6 or more	1%	2%

The map below shows the postcodes of the respondents and that responses came from all areas of CW&C. This will produce statistically valid results for CW&C based on location of resident.



In summary, the respondent profile overall is a good match for CW&C and so will produce statistically valid results. Therefore all results are based on the analysis of unweighted data.

Results

Importance of kerb-side collection of various key materials

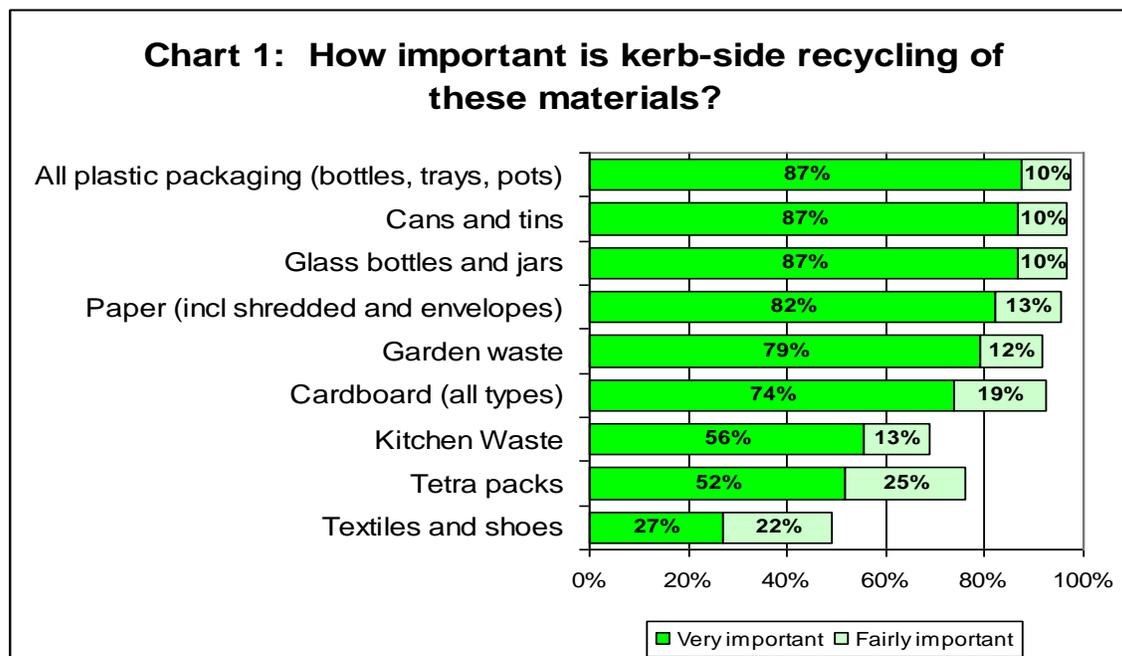
Respondents were asked to say how important it was that the council collected from their home certain key materials for recycling, providing there was an affordable and sustainable way of recycling them.

Chart 1 shows the percentage of respondents who said that it was ‘very important’ or ‘fairly important’ for each of the materials they were asked about. For many of the materials, over 90% of respondents thought it was important to collect them from home for recycling, which included at least three-quarters saying it was very important. These included:

- All plastic packaging – bottles, trays and pots
- Cans and tins
- Glass bottles and jars
- Paper – including shredded paper and envelopes
- Garden waste
- Cardboard – all types

Three materials were seen as less important to collect (see more detailed results in Table A on next page). These were:

- Kitchen waste (cooked and raw including meat and bones) – 69%
- Tetra Packs - 77%
- Textiles and shoes – 49%



Bases: 20,379 - 20,974

Table A shows the full results of how important the respondents thought it was to collect key materials from their home for recycling. As detailed earlier most respondents thought it was important to collect from home most of the listed materials for recycling.

Included below are the details for the three materials seen as less important for recycling:

- Textiles and shoes – just under half (49%) thought it important to collect these with a relatively large percentage (25%) of respondents saying it was unimportant
- Kitchen waste – 69% thought it important to collect this, 16% said it was neither important nor unimportant to collect it, and a further 15% said it was unimportant to collect it
- Tetra Packs – 77% thought it important to collect these, 15% said it was neither important nor unimportant to collect them, and a further 10% said it was unimportant to collect them.

Results of respondents from different house types showed that those living in terraces or flats/apartments thought recycling garden waste was less important.

Table A:

Q1: How important is it to you that we can collect from your home the following key materials for recycling, providing we can find an affordable and sustainable way of recycling them?					
	Very important	Fairly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Fairly unimportant	Very unimportant
All plastic packaging (bottles, trays, pots)	87%	10%	1%	0%	1%
Cans and tins	87%	10%	2%	1%	1%
Glass bottles and jars	87%	10%	2%	1%	1%
Paper (incl shredded and envelopes)	82%	13%	3%	1%	1%
Garden waste	79%	12%	4%	2%	3%
Cardboard (all types)	74%	19%	5%	2%	1%
Kitchen Waste	56%	13%	16%	7%	8%
Tetra packs	52%	25%	15%	6%	4%
Textiles and shoes	27%	22%	27%	14%	11%

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Importance of particular issues regarding recycling containers

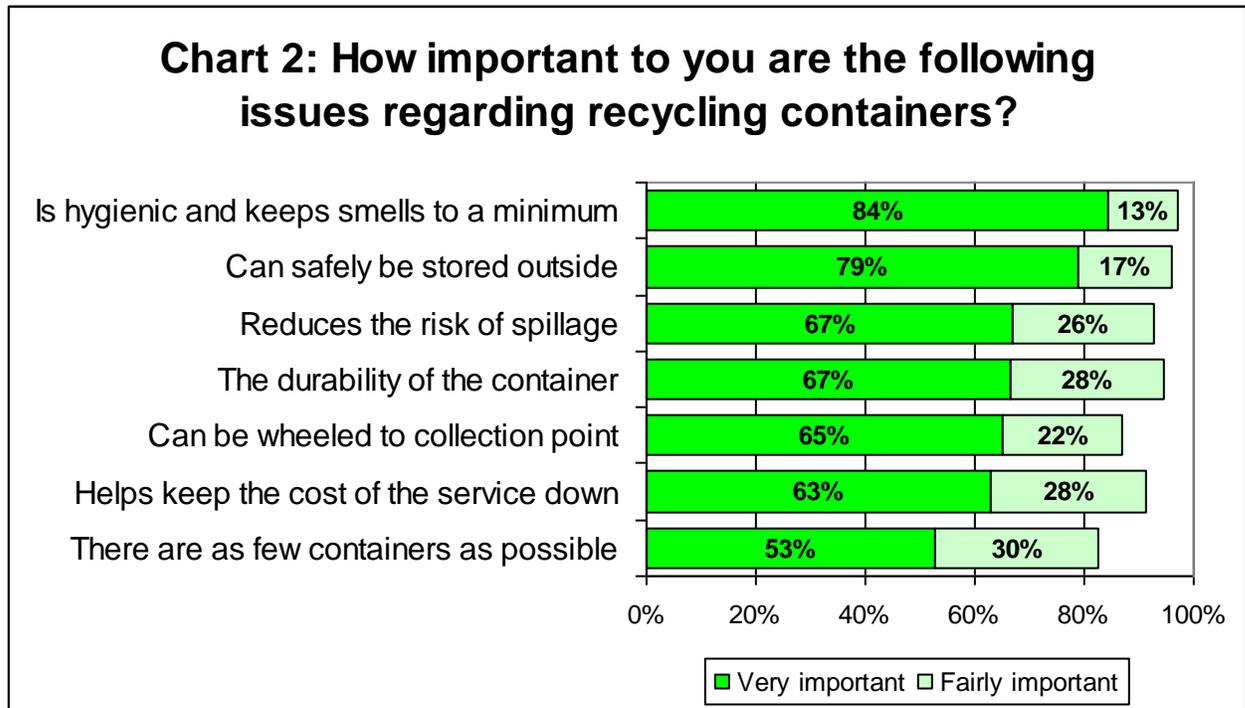
Different types of recycling containers can affect the cost of service, the amount that can be recycled and the ease of use of the scheme for residents. Questions could not be asked about specific types of container as it is not yet known what will be used in the future. Therefore, questions were asked about how important various issues relating to recycling containers were.

Chart 2 shows the percentage of respondents who said that it was ‘very important’ or ‘fairly important’ for each of the issues they were asked about. Those who receive an assisted waste collection service were told that they need not comment on the issue ‘Can be wheeled to collection point’.

The chart shows that:

- All issues were seen as important with at least 83% saying that a particular issue was important
- The two issues seen as most important, with a significantly higher proportion of respondents saying they were ‘very important’ were ‘Containers are hygienic and keep smells to a minimum’ and ‘Containers can be stored safely outside’
- The least important issue was ‘There are as few containers as possible’ although more than half (53%) still said that this was ‘very important’.

More detailed results can be seen in Table B on the next page.



Bases: 20,129 - 20,866

Table B shows the full results of how important various issues relating to recycling containers were. As detailed earlier most respondents thought that all the issues detailed were important.

Table B

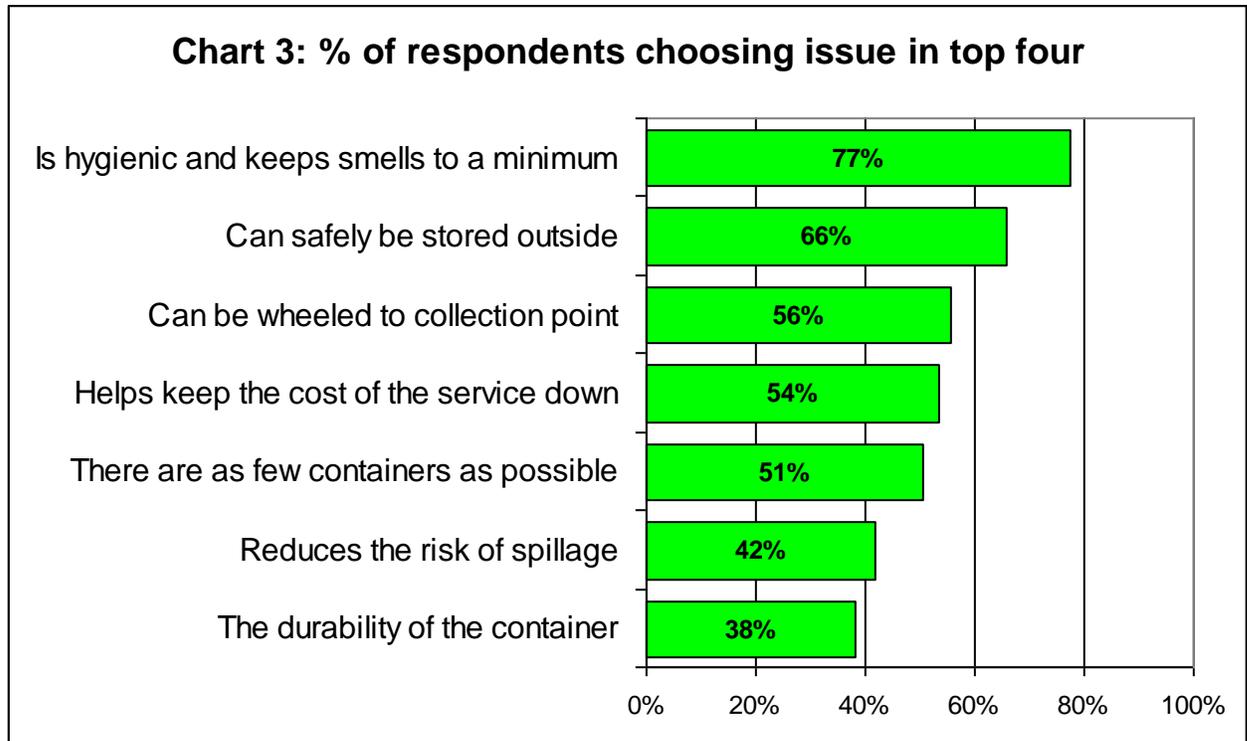
Q2a: How important to you are the following issues regarding recycling containers?					
	Very important	Fairly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Fairly unimportant	Very unimportant
Is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum	84%	13%	2%	0%	0%
Can safely be stored outside	79%	17%	3%	1%	1%
Reduces the risk of spillage	67%	26%	6%	1%	1%
The durability of the container	67%	28%	4%	1%	0%
Can be wheeled to collection point	65%	22%	9%	2%	2%
Helps keep the cost of the service down	63%	28%	7%	1%	1%
There are as few containers as possible	53%	30%	12%	4%	2%

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Which are the four issues that are most important to you?

Having considered the importance of each of the issues regarding recycling containers, respondents were then asked to choose the four issues that were most important to them, but were not asked to rank them.

Chart 3 on the next page shows the percentage of respondents who chose a particular issue in their top four.



Base: 21,132

There was little difference in the views of respondents that related to their district location, type of property, household size and issues that might affect their waste collection. Below are listed those issues where there was a difference:

- 'Can be wheeled to collection point' was seen as more important by residents living in properties with long or steep driveways and residents of the former Chester City district. It was less important for residents living in terraces or flats/apartments.
- 'The durability of the container' was more important for residents of the former Vale Royal district than for residents of other districts.
- 'Helps keep the cost of service down' was seen as less important for residents of the former Chester City district.
- Views for residents of the former Ellesmere Port and Neston district were similar to the overall CW&C results

It is interesting to compare the results shown in Chart 3 with Chart 2:

- That the container 'Is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum' and 'Can safely be stored outside' came 1st and 2nd in both
- That the container 'Reduces the risk of spillage' came 6th in respondents' top four issues but 3rd in Chart 2. It may be that respondents thought this issue was partly covered by a container that 'Is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum'. So when choosing 4 issues they may have felt that this was one they could omit
- 'The durability of the container' came 7th in respondents' top four issues but 4th in Chart 2. Therefore although many respondents thought it was a very important issue, they considered other issues were more important
- Within each chart there was not much difference between the results for the other three issues and so it is not surprising that they have changed positions slightly.

Table C below shows the relative positions of each issue in Chart 2 and 3.

Table C

Issue regarding container	Position in chart 3: issue chosen in top 4 issues	Position in chart 2: % saying it was very important
Is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum	1 st	1 st
Can safely be stored outside	2 nd	2 nd
Can be wheeled to collection point	3 rd	5 th
Helps keep the cost of the service down	4 th	6 th
There are as few containers as possible	5 th	7 th
Reduces the risk of spillage	6 th	3 rd
The durability of the container	7 th	4 th

Preferred option for frequency of collection of non-recyclable household waste

Residents were given the following information about two options available for the frequency of collection of their non-recyclable household waste. Both options were subject to the council achieving its annual £1.5million savings target in this area of work.

Option 1: Collection of non-recyclable waste on alternate weeks.

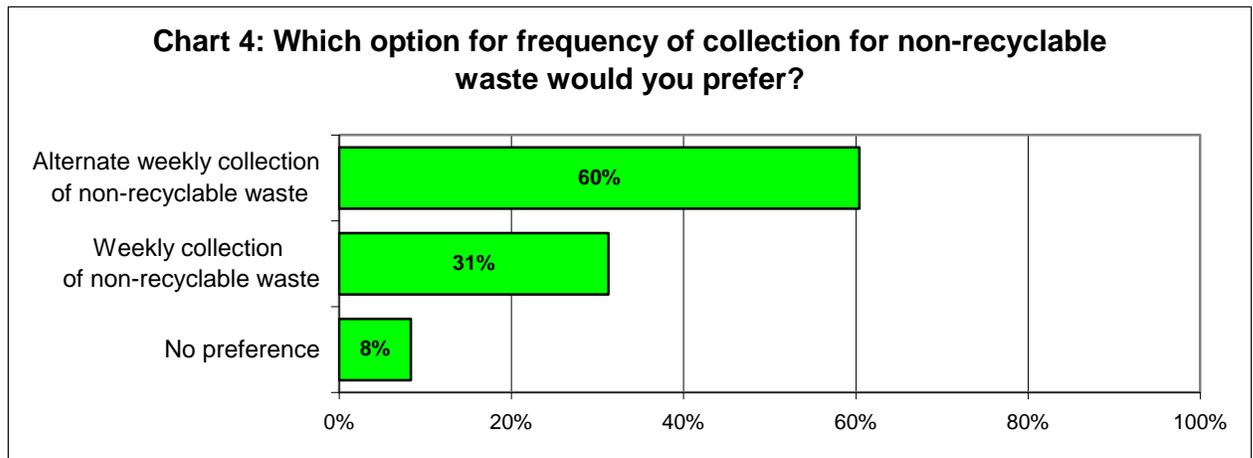
This will help to keep the cost of waste collection down. This option is most likely to allow us to achieve an annual saving of £1.5million. It is even possible that it will allow us to make further savings over and above the £1.5million target.

Option 2: Collection of non-recyclable waste each week.

This option is likely to be more expensive than option 1. It will only be considered by the council if the bidders for the new contract are able to offer a weekly collection and still achieve the annual savings target of at least £1.5million. Please note, a smaller wheeled bin would be used rather than for alternate weekly collections.

Respondents could choose one of the above two options or state that they had no preference.

Chart 4 below shows that residents across the whole of CW&C responded almost 2:1 in favour of the option for an alternate weekly collection of non-recyclable waste.



Base: 20,469

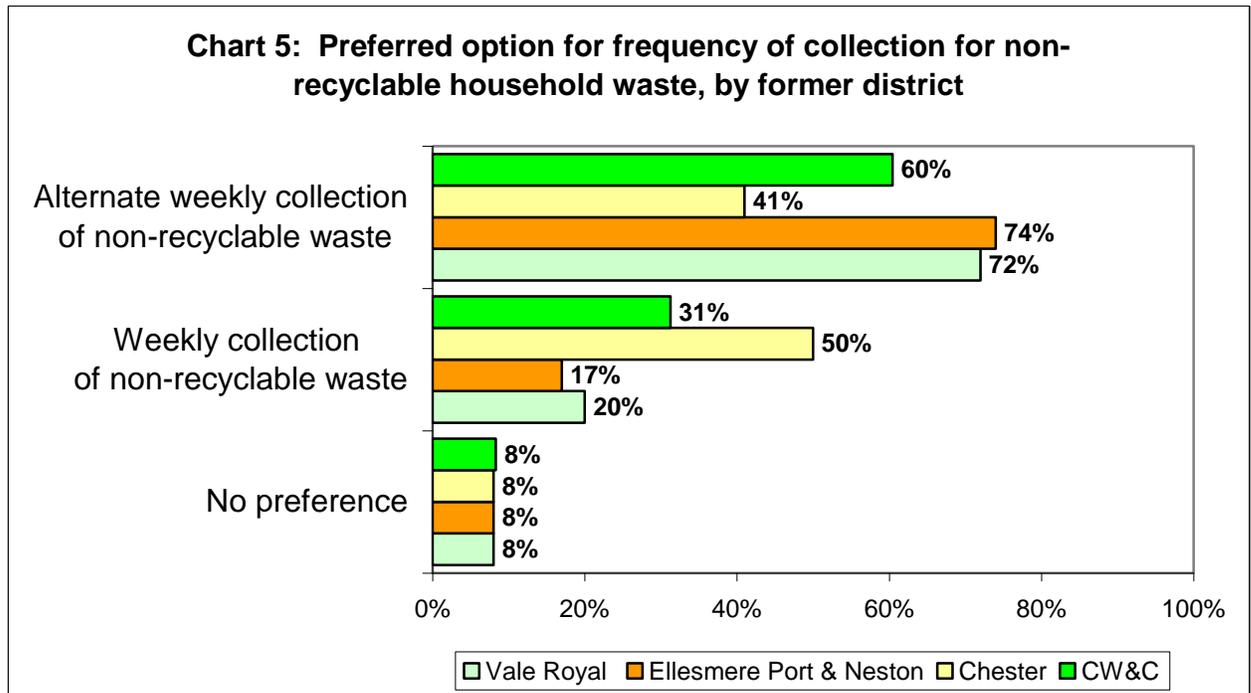
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

During focus group discussions it was suggested that some residents may not choose any of the options if they wanted a weekly collection regardless of cost. Analysis showed that of those that didn't choose any of the options, about 50 commented that they wanted a weekly collection. If these were included, they would not significantly alter the results shown in Chart 4,

Comparison of preference by residency in former district

Residents of the former district councils currently have different waste collection systems and so may have different views. Residents of the former Chester City Council area have a weekly collection of their non-recyclable waste which they keep in a 140 litre bin. Residents in the former districts of Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal have an alternate weekly collection of their non-recyclable waste which they keep in a bigger 240 litre bin.

Chart 5 below shows the response by district.



Bases: 3,821 - 20,469
 Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

As the proportion of respondents from the three districts almost matched the actual proportions of the three districts within CW&C, these results are statistically valid for CW&C in terms of the former district they live in.

Comparison of preference by type of home

Table D below shows the preference by type of home.

Table D

	Detached house/ bungalow	Semi	Terrace	Flat/ Apartment	Caravan/ Mobile home	Other
Alternate weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	62%	60%	56%	53%	76%	49%
Weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	30%	32%	33%	36%	11%	43%
No preference	8%	8%	10%	11%	12%	8%
Base Count	9970	7212	2475	456	89	135

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

For all types of housing the majority chose the option of an alternate weekly collection of their non-recyclable waste as their preferred option. So although, as the respondents' profile shows on page 5, households in detached properties were over represented and those in terraced houses and flats or apartments were under-represented, it will not have changed the overall message.

For example, if the results shown in Chart 4 on page 14 were re-calculated using data that was weighted by house type, so that it was completely representative of CW&C, they would show:

	Un-weighted data (as shown in Chart 4)	Data weighted by house type
Alternate weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	60%	59%
Weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	31%	32%
No preference	8%	9%

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

The difference in the results is insignificant and confirm that analysis of data that is un-weighted is statistically valid.

Comparison of preference by collection issues

Table E below shows the preference by issues that might affect a resident's waste collection service.

Table E

	Long/steep driveway	Opens directly onto pavement	Waste collected from rear of property	Shared waste facilities	Registered for assisted service	None
Alternate weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	59%	61%	56%	49%	60%	62%
Weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	33%	31%	36%	42%	32%	30%
No preference	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%	9%
Base Count	2581	1502	1149	355	558	13152

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

For all types of issues that might affect a resident's waste collection service, the majority chose the option of an alternate weekly collection of their non-recyclable waste as their preferred option. The smallest gap between the two options was from those residents with shared waste facilities.

Comparison of preference by household size

Table F below shows the preference by household size.

Table F

	Household Size					
	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Alternate weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	65%	62%	57%	53%	53%	44%
Weekly collection of non-recyclable waste	25%	30%	36%	39%	40%	48%
No preference	10%	8%	7%	8%	7%	8%
Base Count	4036	9222	2596	2430	662	233

Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Apart from households with 6 or more people, for all other sizes of household, the majority chose an alternate weekly collection of their non-recyclable waste as their preferred option. However as the size of the household increased the gap between the two options tended to narrow. Households with 6 or more people preferred a weekly collection option of non-recyclable waste. As the profile of the respondents almost matched CW&C's profile, these results are statistically valid for CW&C residents in terms of household size.

Other comments about the waste collection service

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments. Almost half added a comment of their own about the waste collection and recycling service.

These are being analysed and a summary of the comments will be added as an appendix to this report as soon as it is available. The most frequent comment identified so far is that residents would like the correct replacement of bins after collection.

Analysis of Comments from Customer First Roadshows

The Customer First Roadshows took place at locations across the Borough and were used to help discover the little things which, if changed, would make the biggest difference to residents' satisfaction with their waste collection service.

The results from these roadshows are being analysed separately and a summary of the analysis will be added as an appendix to this report as soon as it is available. The most frequent issue identified at the roadshows was that residents would like the correct replacement of bins after collection.

Summary and Conclusions

21,132 completed questionnaires were returned which represents an excellent response rate of 15%.

Supplementary questions were asked within the questionnaire to allow responses to be further analysed against sub-categories covering: former District area, type of home, household size, and key issues affecting waste collection. The profile of the respondents was very similar to the profile of Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) residents overall, in terms of these sub-categories, and so the results are statistically valid

Options for frequency of non-recyclable waste collection

60% of respondents preferred the alternate weekly option for collection of non-recyclable waste and 31% preferred the weekly option for collection of non-recyclable waste. So almost 2:1 were in favour of the alternate weekly collection option.

When looking at the results by former district, 74% chose the alternate weekly option in the former Ellesmere Port & Neston area, 72% in the former Vale Royal area and 41% in the former Chester area. In each area 8% of respondents said they had 'no preference'.

The alternate weekly collection option was chosen by a majority of respondents in all but one of the other sub-categories. The only exception was that representing the 2% of households comprising 6 or more people.

Materials that are important to collect for recycling

Over 90% of respondents thought it was important to collect the following materials for recycling: all plastic packaging, cans and tins, glass bottles and jars, paper, cardboard and garden waste. Results for the other materials asked about were: 69% thought it important to recycle kitchen waste, 77% for tetra packs and 49% for textiles and shoes.

Important issues relating to recycling containers

Residents were asked to pick the four issues relating to recycling containers that were most important to them:

- Container is hygienic and keeps smells to a minimum – 77%
- Can safely be stored outside – 66%
- Can be wheeled to collection point – 56%
- Helps keep the cost of the service down – 54%
- There are as few containers as possible – 51%
- Reduces the risk of spillage – 42%
- The durability of the container – 38%

Results of the ‘little things that make a big difference’ roadshow surveys

During the consultation, roadshows were used to undertake one to one surveys with residents on key customer service issues. Correct replacement of bins after collection was the single biggest issue identified by residents at these roadshows and was also a key concern for respondents to this survey.

What happens next?

The results of the consultation will be considered by Members and will be used to inform the procurement process for the new waste collection contract.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this consultation.

Contact Details

For results about our various consultations please visit our website:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

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