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## Consultation on potential changes to waste collections

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### Survey report



Wokingham Borough Council held an eight week consultation, hosted on the council's engagement website, [Engage Wokingham Borough](#), between 10 October and 6 December 2022. More than 9,000 people responded.

#### **Key findings**

Fortnightly rubbish and recycling collections  
**74%** like, can accept or are neutral

The survey overwhelmingly showed that residents are willing to accept a change from the current collection system where everything is collected every week, to a system where general rubbish and recycling are collected every other week but food waste continues to be collected weekly.

Three-weekly rubbish and recycling collections  
**30%** like, can accept or are neutral

The survey showed that the vast majority of residents are opposed to having rubbish collected every three weeks, recycling every two weeks and food waste collected weekly.

Wheeled bins for general rubbish  
**78%** like, can accept or are neutral

Respondents were strongly in favour of wheeled bins for rubbish, with 43% saying they would like it and 26% saying they could accept it.

Mitigations

When asked if there were issues we should consider mitigations for, respondents' key concerns were about storing the extra waste and recycling, storing the wheeled bin, whether the wheeled bin would be big enough and the impact on the elderly and people with disabilities.

## **Summary of consultation**

### **Consultation key stats:**

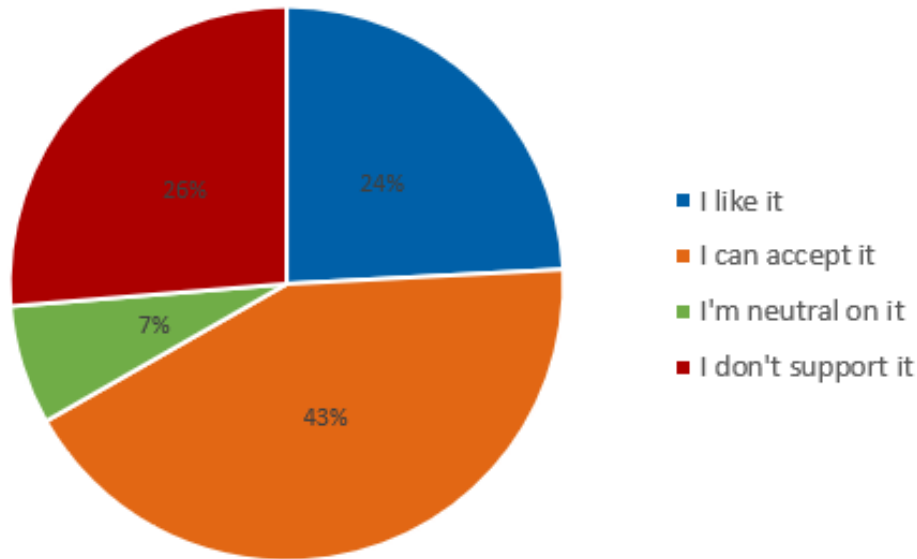
- 29,317 views of the waste consultation page, with 41% completing the survey
- 30,000 saw the survey being promoted in WBCConnect email newsletters
- Of the 8,986 responses, the respondents found out about the survey from:
  - Leaflets – 2,779 (92 QR code scans)
  - WBCConnect email newsletters – 3,626
  - WBC social media – 998
  - Other social media – 1,380
  - Friend/family/neighbour - 552
  - Local media (newspaper, TV, radio) – 172
- Of all responses, 82 paper or telephone assisted surveys were completed (0.9%)
- Halfway through the consultation period, we analysed the demographic data and identified three under-represented groups and used paid for social media promotion to target the groups, reaching 1,232 people in the target groups





### **Survey promotion**

The survey was promoted in the following ways:

- 21 September Media release announcing upcoming consultation
- 10 October Media release launching consultation, with articles in a variety of email newsletters including Residents' Round Up, Climate Emergency and Rubbish & Recycling, and social posts on Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor. The social posts were shared by numerous community groups and town/parish councils. The information was also on the WBC website and WBC news website.
- 17 October Postcard to all households in the borough, via Royal Mail
- 26 October Launch WBC Facebook and CitizenLab Facebook and Instagram paid campaigns targeting under-represented groups
- 1 November Engagement session with CLASP, using an EasyRead version of the survey
- 14 November Media release announcing the halfway point in the survey period, with articles in email newsletters and social posts.
- 23 November Social media 'Less than two weeks left' and 'Final chance to respond' campaigns
- 29 November Media release for last chance to respond, with articles in email newsletters

**1. What do you think of changing our waste and recycling collections so that we continue to have weekly food waste collections, but general rubbish and recycling are each collected fortnightly?**

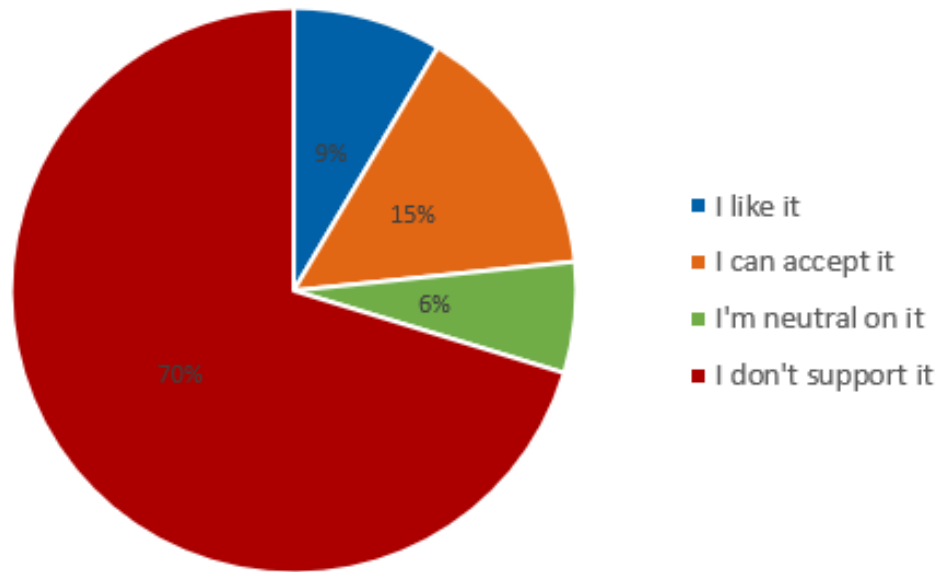






Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I like it		24.17%	2184
2	I can accept it		42.59%	3849
3	I'm neutral on it		6.96%	629
4	I don't support it		26.28%	2375
			answered	9037
			skipped	31

For respondents who would like changing collections to fortnightly, the primary reasons were that it would provide environmental and economic benefits with a simple to use collection system. Many respondents said they currently do not put out a full blue bag every week and the change to fortnightly would be a simple one to make and would encourage those who are currently putting food waste in their general rubbish to use the food waste collection service, which is both environmentally and economically beneficial. Respondents also pointed out that the many local authorities have already moved to fortnightly collections, with some going three weekly for rubbish.

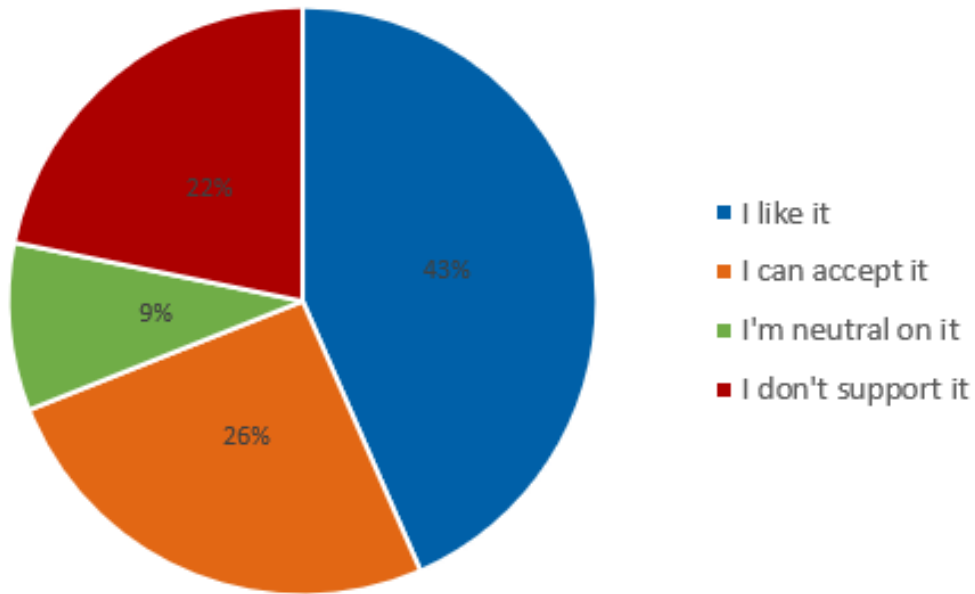
For respondents who said they did not support changing collections to fortnightly, the primary concerns were around storing the additional rubbish/recycling, as well as the cleanliness of having to store waste for two weeks and whether this would cause issues with rats, foxes, birds, etc. Additional concerns were whether the changes would cause additional fly-tipping, that it would be unsightly to store more than one week's worth of waste and wheeled bins outside, and capacity issues. Additionally, some respondents felt that weekly collections should be considered a basic service due to the amount they pay in council tax.





**2. What do you think of changing our general rubbish collection to every three weeks, recycling every two weeks and food waste weekly?**



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I like it		8.52%	769
2	I can accept it		14.84%	1339
3	I'm neutral about it		6.34%	572
4	I don't support it		70.23%	6343
			answered	9023
			skipped	45

### 3. What do you think of having a wheeled bin for your rubbish?



Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I would like it		43.45%	3924
2	I can accept it		25.53%	2306
3	I'm neutral about it		9.21%	832
4	I don't support it		21.81%	1970
			answered	9032
			skipped	36

For respondents who said they would like to have a wheeled bin, the primary reasons were that it would help to reduce mess caused by animals and the weather, that it would be better for the environment as we would no longer use the single use blue bags, and that they have been asking for wheeled bins for years and they would be an improvement to the current system. Respondents pointed out that Wokingham Borough was in the minority by not using wheeled bins and if they were in most other places, they should work here. Some respondents thought having rubbish collected every three weeks would be acceptable as long as wheeled bins were provided.

For respondents who don't support having a wheeled bin for their rubbish, the primary concerns were around having enough storage space for it, the unsightliness of wheeled bins being stored in front of houses, difficulties with access to the rear of the property, difficulties with getting the wheeled bin to the kerbside, the potential hazards of wheeled bins not being returned to the collection point by the crews, and concerns that the bins would be too small.

#### 4. Are there any other issues you would want to see mitigated to make fortnightly or three-weekly general rubbish collections acceptable to you?

We know that there will be some households who would really struggle with fortnightly or three-weekly general rubbish collections. We would make special arrangements for the following: terraced and other properties where access is restricted, households that produce a lot of waste from things like nappies, adult incontinence products and medical waste, larger families, elderly people or people with disabilities.




Just over 3,800 respondents answered this question. The most common concern was around storing twice the amount of recycling at their property if recycling changes to fortnightly collections, followed closely by concerns around having enough capacity if rubbish collects change away from weekly due to large families, children in nappies and personal hygiene waste.

The next most common concern was about having enough room to store the additional rubbish and recycling that would accumulate and having room outdoors to store a wheeled bin. There were also concerns about whether people with disabilities and the elderly would find a new system difficult and issues with the cleanliness and tidiness of changing away from weekly collections. Some residents felt that the borough's high council tax rate should allow us to keep weekly collections, while others raised issues about rats, foxes, birds and insects.






Some residents were concerned about hazards and access connected to fortnightly collections, and others about whether the new system would be confusing, particularly around three weekly rubbish collections. There were also concerns about an increase in fly-tipping and whether the changes would discourage recycling.

Summary of key themes	Response Total	
Storing recycling -- Issues about having enough room to store twice the amount of recycling as they currently need to	378	
Capacity -- Concerns about having enough capacity for non-weekly collections due to large families, children in nappies and personal hygiene waste	365	
Storing rubbish and / or wheeled bins -- Issues about having enough room to store additional rubbish and having room to store a wheeled bin	255	
Disability / difficulty -- Concerns for people with disabilities and the elderly	213	
Cleanliness -- Concerns about smells, hygiene, nappies (re cleanliness)	150	
Untidy -- Issues with wheeled bins being stored at the front of properties	139	
Council tax -- Concerns about paying a high council tax rate and not getting value for money, and whether we could make savings elsewhere to keep weekly collections	119	
Animals -- Concerns about animals such as rats, foxes, birds and insects	88	
Hazards / Access -- Issues with creating hazards by storing rubbish/recycling or wheeled bins outside and the difficulty getting a wheeled bin to the kerbside	67	
Confusing / calendar – Concerns with an alternating collection system being confusing	60	
Fly-tipping – Issues about whether fly-tipping would increase	54	
Discourages recycling – Concerns about if the change would discourage recycling	34	
	answered	3802
	skipped	5184




### 5. How often do you usually put out general rubbish (in the blue bags)?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Every week		86.01%	7765
2	Every two weeks		9.80%	885
3	Less than every two weeks		4.19%	378
			answered	9028
			skipped	40





### 6. How many blue bags do you put out in a typical week?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I don't always put one out		13.81%	1244
2	1		66.74%	6013
3	2		16.67%	1502
4	3		2.22%	200
5	4+		0.56%	50
			answered	9009
			skipped	59





### 7. How full are the rubbish bags you put out in a typical week?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very full -- about 80 to 100% full		44.93%	4043
2	Somewhat full -- about 50 to 80%		34.46%	3101
3	Not very full -- less than 50% full		20.60%	1854
			answered	8998
			skipped	70




### 8. How often do you usually put out recycling (in the green re-useable waterproof bags)?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Every week		96.45%	8712
2	Every two weeks		2.40%	217
3	Less than every two weeks		0.61%	55
4	Never or rarely		0.54%	49
			answered	9033
			skipped	35

### 9. How many green recycling bags do you put out in a typical week?







Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1		43.72%	3925
2	2		44.41%	3987
3	3		9.00%	808
4	4+		2.87%	258
			answered	8978
			skipped	90

### 10. How full are the green recycling bags you put out in a typical week?




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very full -- about 80 to 100% full		75.62%	6795
2	Somewhat full -- about 50 to 80%		21.98%	1975
3	Not very full -- less than 50% full		2.40%	216
			answered	8986
			skipped	82








### 11. Can you tell us why you don't put out recycling every week?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	It's too much work		5.19%	16
2	I don't have a green re-usable recycling bag		3.25%	10
3	I don't know what can be recycled		0.97%	3
4	I don't have anywhere to store the green recycling bag		2.92%	9
5	I recycle everything I can but have less than 1 green bag per week		72.08%	222
6	Other (please specify):		21.10%	65
			answered	308
			skipped	8760










### 12. How often do you put out food waste (in the black food waste caddy)?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Every week		82.45%	7457
2	Less than every week		6.44%	582
3	I don't use the food waste collection service		11.11%	1005
			answered	9044
			skipped	24





### 13. Can you tell us why you don't always separate out your food waste?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	It's too messy and/or too smelly		27.87%	432
2	Using the blue rubbish bags is easier		12.52%	194
3	I don't have a food waste caddy		8.84%	137
4	I put all the food waste I have in the food waste container but have less than a full container per week		23.10%	358
5	Other (please specify):		46.45%	720
			answered	1550
			skipped	7518






### 14. How many people live in your household?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1		13.60%	1229
2	2		43.42%	3925
3	3		16.44%	1486
4	4		20.01%	1809
5	5		4.83%	437
6	6		1.31%	118
7	7		0.27%	24
8	8		0.07%	6
9	9		0.00%	0
10	10+		0.07%	6
			answered	9040
			skipped	28





### 15. Do you have any children under three in your household?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No		87.28%	7722
2	Yes, 1 child		7.36%	651
3	Yes, 2 children		4.61%	408
4	Yes, 3+ children		0.75%	66
			answered	8847
			skipped	221

### 16. What sort of property do you live in?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Detached or semi-detached house with access to the rear		72.27%	6528
2	Detached or semi-detached house with no outside access to the rear		12.20%	1102
3	Terrace house with outside access to the rear		6.73%	608
4	Terrace house with no outside access to the rear		3.33%	301
5	Flat or apartment		2.54%	229

## 16. What sort of property do you live in?

6	Room in a shared house or bedsit		0.03%	3
7	Supported living accommodation		0.03%	3
8	Caravan or mobile home		0.24%	22
9	Other (please specify):		2.62%	237
			answered	9033
			skipped	35

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