

# Waste & Recycling

Consultation results

## Introduction – Process

In order to fully understand the views of the residents of Central Bedfordshire on waste and recycling, the council has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise. This launched on 26 February and closed on 20 April. The approach has included:

- Household leaflets delivered across Central Bedfordshire and inviting residents to give their views on options around future recycling and waste services
- A written survey, open to all residents, and available online and through paper copies
- A telephone survey with a sample of 1,224 people who are representative of the whole population
- A series of discussion groups with residents from towns and villages across Central Bedfordshire
- A series of drop in sessions to answer residents' queries and encourage participation in the consultation

The council has promoted the consultation widely and 15,086 responses have been submitted via the open survey.

This report includes the results of the open public survey, the results of the telephone survey and feedback from discussion groups.

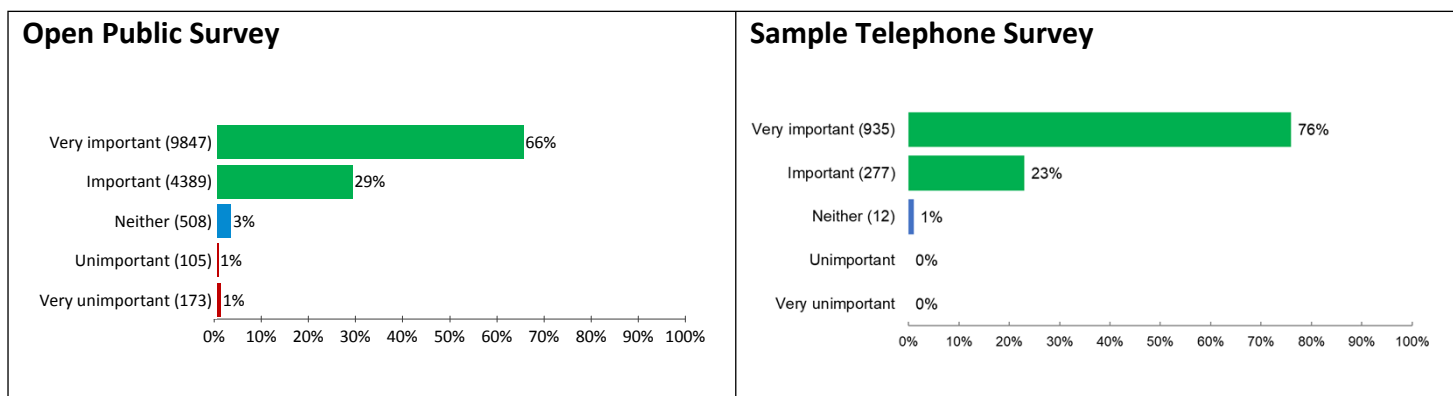
## Headline findings

- There are some consistent themes emerging from all of the consultation methods
- Almost everyone agreed it is important to help people to recycle as much as possible
- The majority agree that savings should be found from these services
- On recycling, retaining the status quo was the least preferred option, with majority support for both the alternatives. (separating paper and card and glass collections)
- Separating paper and cardboard is the most popular recycling option
- The majority of respondents support food waste collection for households across Central Bedfordshire
- The majority do not support three-weekly domestic waste collections, although around a third did. Retention of free garden waste collection and introduction of food waste collection would be the most influential factors in changing the opinions of residents who disagree.
- A similar majority do not support the introduction of charges for green waste collection, although around a third did. Retention of the fortnightly domestic waste collection would be the most influential factor in changing the opinions of those who disagreed. However, a greater proportion were more likely to say that their opinion could not be changed than was the case with three-weekly domestic waste collection.
- Comments in the surveys and focus groups highlight some of the practical issues and concerns residents raised about each of the options and how some of these could be mitigated.

Note: The numbers in brackets in the charts are the number of respondents.  
Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Priorities

### Q1 – Priorities. How important is it that people are helped to recycle as much as possible?

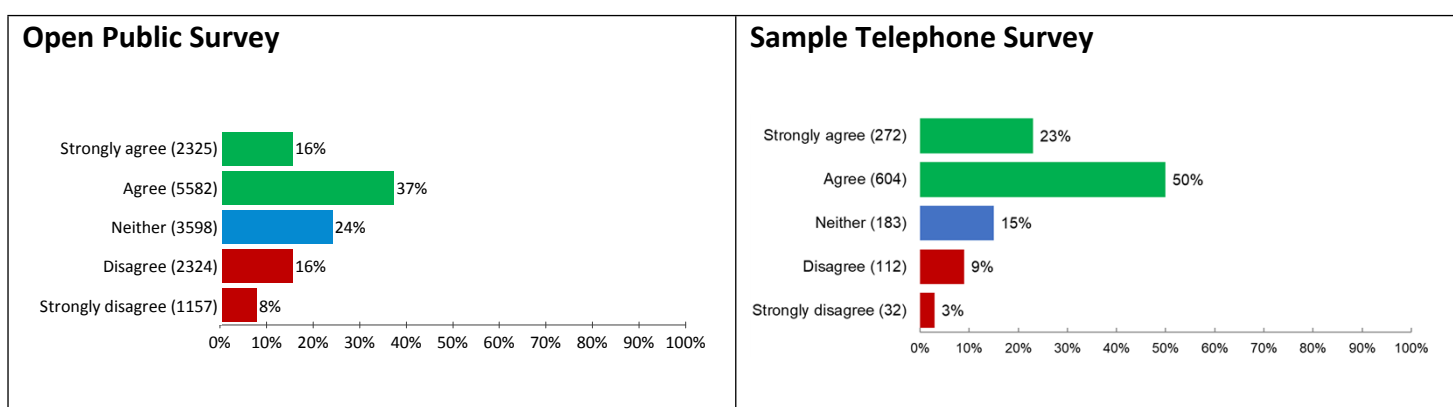


#### Discussion group feedback

- Participants were generally supportive of efforts to encourage more recycling. They said that more investment should be made to educate residents about what they can and cannot recycle. Similarly, they also want to understand the impact of their recycling efforts, for example, by knowing how much Central Bedfordshire recycles and what good comes of the recycling. Participants said that a lack of understanding about recycling and its impact is a barrier to recycling more. Therefore, participants said that education, information and feedback should accompany (or come before) any changes to bin collections to maximise the benefits and reduce the impact:

“If they bring these changes in they need to educate people first. We need information about what we can and can’t recycle to help us recycle more and not put as much in our black bins. They need to tell us how well we’re doing and what impact we’re having to encourage us to recycle.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*

### Q2 – Priorities. To what extent do you agree or disagree that savings should be found from these services?



#### Discussion group feedback

- Most participants appreciated that savings must continually be made. They also tended to agree that waste and recycling is an area where savings can be made, but not to the detriment of delivering good quality services that meet residents’ needs:

“I think most of us understand that money is tight and councils have to always keep looking at how they can save money. Waste and recycling is important, but it’s not a life and death service so it is reasonable to try to save some money. But we still need our bins collected regularly – they have a duty to do that.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

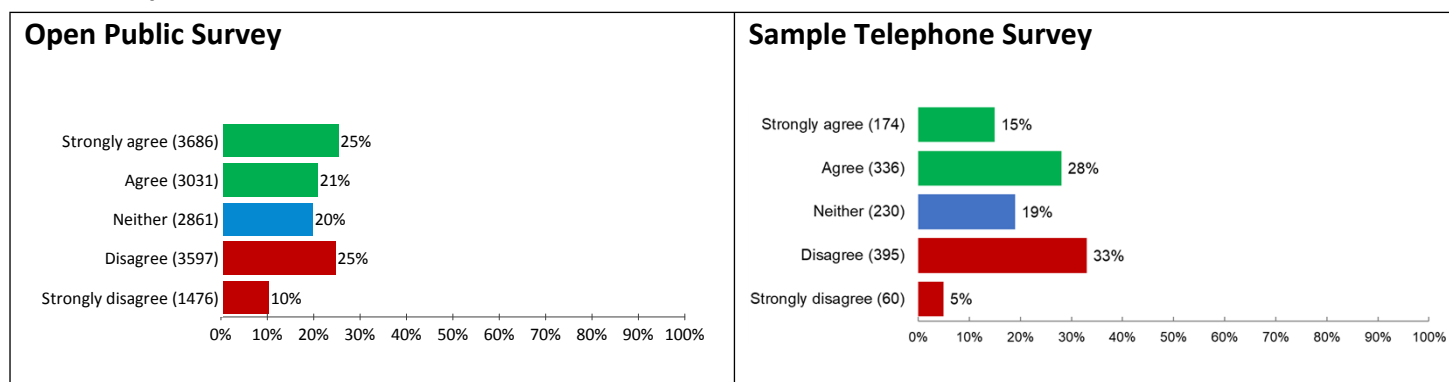
“Some of this is about recycling and some of this is about saving money. I support the idea of recycling more and I’d be more likely to support the proposals if I knew that the money would be spent on important things like adult social care and children in need. They suggest they will do that, but there are no guarantees from what I can tell and it seems a bit vague.” *Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

## Priorities Summary:

- Respondents strongly support the idea that residents should be helped as much as possible to recycle.
- Feedback suggests more education and engagement around recycling would encourage more people to do so. This is a recurring theme throughout the consultation.
- Whilst a majority support the need for savings, many suggested that savings should not be made if they would negatively impact on the current service level. This perspective might explain the unusually high percentage of people selecting neither agree nor disagree in both surveys (Open survey = 24%, Sample survey = 15%).
- Respondents who expressed a willingness to achieve savings cited other key services that the council provides that should be supported.

## Recycling

**Q3a - Recycling. To what extent do you agree or disagree with option one, which would see current recycling arrangements remaining unchanged (with no financial savings being achieved)?**



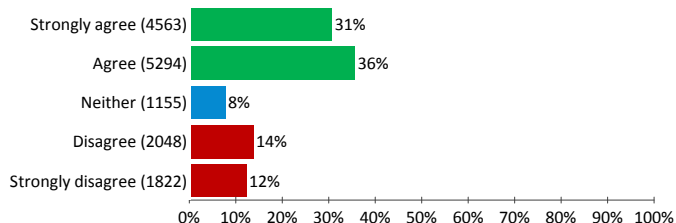
## Discussion group feedback

- Some participants, satisfied with the current approach, expressed concerns about the implication of changes:

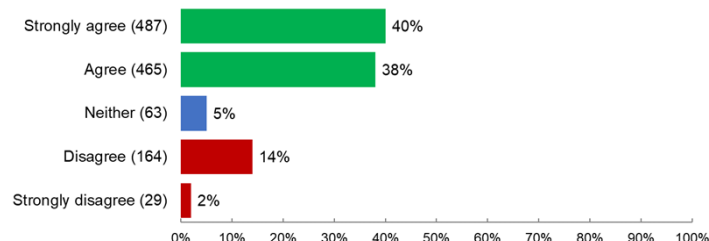
“I’m quite happy with the way it is at the moment. I have a big recycling box and fit everything in there. I go to the bottle bank now and then. I think I do enough recycling already and I don’t think any of the changes will encourage me to recycle anymore. Having too many boxes will make it complex and clutter the space outside my house.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

**Q3b – Recycling. To what extent do you agree or disagree with option two, which would see residents continuing to use a wheelie bin for all their recycling except paper and cardboard, which they would be asked to put in a separate box provided by the council (to achieve financial savings)?**

**Open Public Survey**



**Sample Telephone Survey**



**Discussion group feedback**

- Those participants that support the proposal to separate out paper and card said that it would not be an issue for them, hoped it would help residents recycle more and appreciated that it may lead to savings. A few participants also welcomed having an additional box for recycling because their current recycling wheelie bin is full upon collection:

*“I’ll support anything that will encourage people to recycle more. Having more space to put recycling in has got to help. Our recycling bin is always full, so it will be good to have more space. I’m sometimes forced to put stuff that I could recycle into our black bin because we don’t have any more space in our recycling wheelie bin.” Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

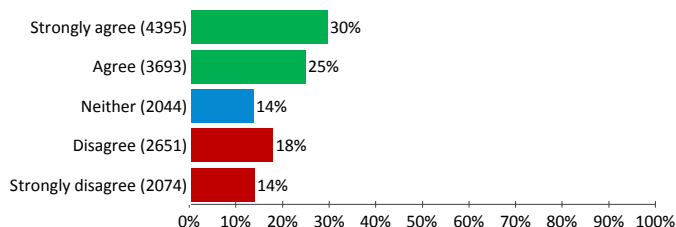
- Those residents that are against the proposal to separate out paper and cardboard are concerned about:
  - Having additional boxes outside their house.
  - The boxes not having lids and the contents getting wet or blown away.
  - The boxes being too heavy to move.

*“There isn’t much space outside my house, so I don’t like the idea of having more boxes. There’s no room and it will make the outside of my house look cluttered.” Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

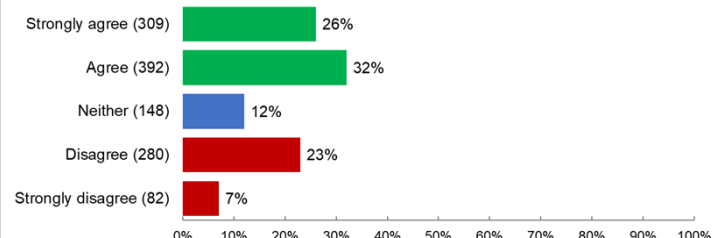
- Consequently, some participants said they would want to see creative solutions, which could allow for separation of paper and cardboard within the existing wheelie bin to avoid additional boxes taking up space. Almost all residents said they expected any box provided to include a lid. A few participants said that assisted collections should be made easily available to help older or disabled residents.

**Q3c – Recycling. To what extent do you agree or disagree with option three, which would see the introduction of glass collection for everyone. Residents would continue to use a wheelie bin for all their recycling. Glass would need to be put in a separate box provided by the council (which is unlikely to achieve financial savings)?**

#### Open Public Survey



#### Sample Telephone Survey



#### Discussion group feedback

- Some participants that lived in villages/certain areas already had glass collections and they tended to value it. They were concerned that it would be taken away:

“We already have a glass collection. It works well. It is pretty full every two weeks. If it wasn’t there I’d have to save it up and take it to the bottle bank, which would be a hassle. Or I’d be tempted to put it in the black bin.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

- A few participants said they supported kerbside glass recycling as their preferred option because it would encourage more and better recycling:

“Not everybody is prepared to go to a bottle bank. Lots of people put glass in their black bins. I even do it sometimes. Glass is the best thing to recycle. It can be recycled infinitely, whereas plastic and paper degrade over time. A roadside collection might not lead to savings, but it will be the best for recycling.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

- Similar concerns were raised about a kerbside glass collection as they were for separating out paper and card i.e. having additional boxes outside their house, the boxes not having lids and the contents getting wet or blown away and the boxes being too heavy to move.
- In addition, a small number of participants said they were concerned about broken glass, whether it be after a collection or because people would come past their house and smash glass that is in their recycling box.
- Most participants did not see glass collection as a priority because it does not offer any savings and they are prepared to continue taking their glass to a bottle bank (and there were some requests that facilities at bottle banks be improved, including more frequent collections):

“We take our glass to the bottle bank and we can continue to do that. But the bottle banks can be quite full and messy, with lots of broken glass, especially at busy times of the year like Christmas. I think it probably puts some people off. So, if they don’t introduce the glass collection they should improve the bottle banks – maybe more of them, keep them clean and safe and empty them more often.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire.*

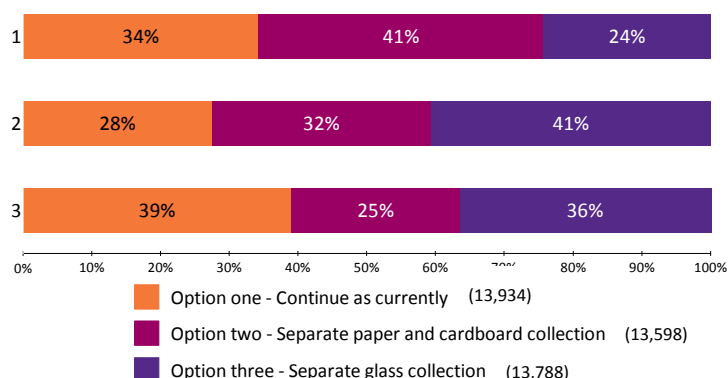
- Some participants would welcome glass recycling, but only in addition to separating out paper and card, because they believe a kerbside glass collection would help them and others recycle more:

“I know we don’t want lots of boxes, but if this is about improving recycling then surely we need to do it properly. The best way to do it is to have a fourth option – a box for paper and a box for glass. This will make it easier and give people more space [for] their recyclables.” *Female, South of Central Bedfordshire.*

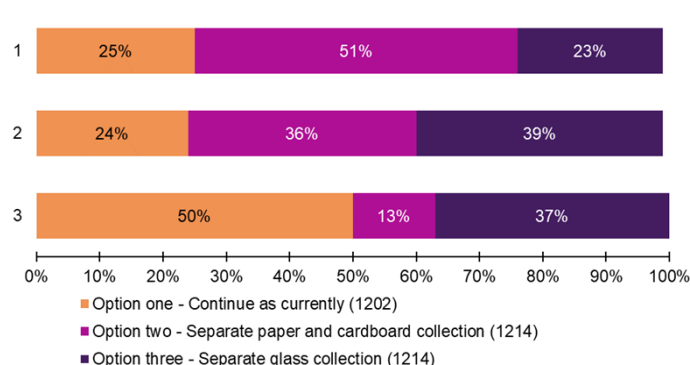
- A small number of participants also asked if it would be possible to have glass recycling included within the main recycling wheelie bin. They said they had seen this work well in neighbouring Hertfordshire, where they have friends, family or used to live.
- A small number of participants suggested introducing a three-weekly recycling collection, with bigger recycling bins, which could encourage more recycling as well as generate savings (instead of a three-weekly domestic bin collection).

#### Q4a – Recycling. Please rank these options in terms of preference with 1 being your preferred option and 3 being your least preferred

##### Open Public Survey



##### Sample Telephone Survey



- Both surveys indicate a preference for option two – separate paper and cardboard, followed by glass collection and then continue as currently as the third option.

## Q4b – Recycling. Do you have any comments regarding these proposals?

Most frequent themes found below:

### Open public survey

### Sample telephone survey

Q4b	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented
Bottle banks are widely available / happy to use bottle banks	1012	7%	15%	32	3%	17%
Concerns about storage for additional boxes / don't want extra boxes or bins	995	7%	15%	43	4%	23%
Support for glass collection	713	5%	11%	9	1%	5%
Introduce both paper and glass collection	642	4%	10%	7	1%	4%
Remain unchanged / system works well / changes too complicated	452	3%	7%	21	2%	11%
Containers need to be weather proof (rain and wind) i.e. have lids	377	2%	6%	19	2%	10%
Concerns additional containers will not be large enough	369	2%	6%	9	1%	5%
Support for paper and card option	333	2%	5%	7	1%	4%
Support for anything that gets people to recycle more	282	2%	4%	-	-	-
Need to educate and provide information so people can recycle better	257	2%	4%	13	1%	7%
Create hazards on streets – blocked pavements because lots of bins, litter and smashed glass	-	-	-	17	1%	9%
Elderly people may struggle to lift boxes	-	-	-	11	1%	6%
Other themes (x22)	2251	15%	34%			
Other: Domestic waste*	511	3%	8%			
Other: Garden waste*	257	2%	4%			
Other: Food waste*	92	1%	1%			

\*Please note: some comments were not relevant to this section and are captured in the more relevant section.

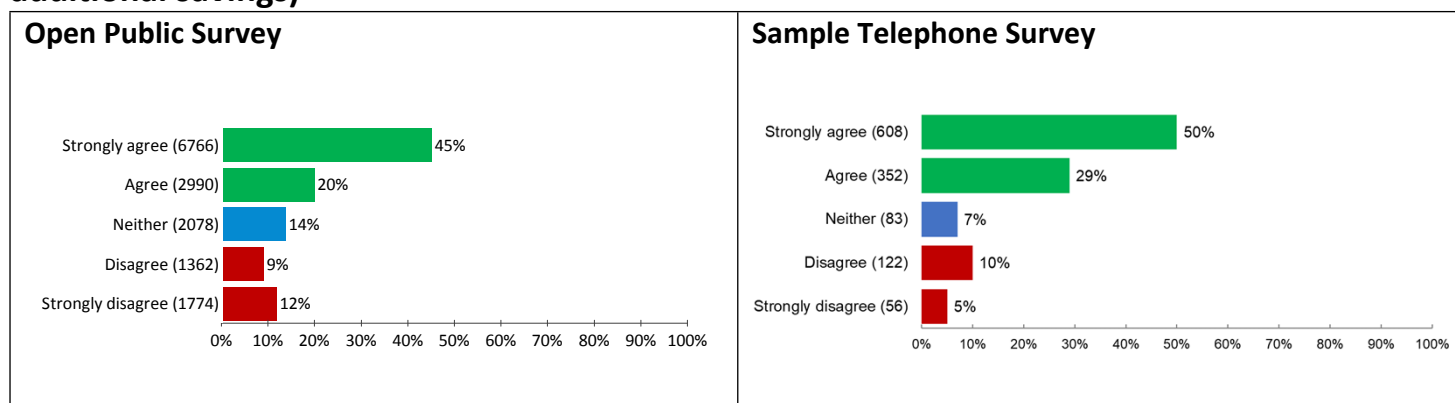


## Recycling Summary

- A majority of respondents support both separate paper & cardboard and glass collection options, but a larger proportion support paper & cardboard.
- Continuing current recycling arrangements was less well supported in both surveys (Open survey = 46% / Sample survey = 43%).
- A significant percentage of respondents selected neither agree nor disagree (Open survey = 20% / Sample survey = 19%).
- Practical issues were raised with both options such as a lack of storage for the additional boxes. Some respondents also commented that they were happy to continue using bottle banks, suggesting that existing arrangements were adequate.
- Others suggested introducing both options to encourage even higher levels of recycling. This further reinforces the general support for additional recycling from Central Bedfordshire residents.

## Food waste

### Q5a – Food Waste. To what extent do you agree or disagree with weekly food waste collection for every household in Central Bedfordshire? (This option doesn't offer any additional savings)



### Discussion group feedback

- Most participants that already have a separate food waste collection (in the north of Central Bedfordshire) value it and use it effectively. They said initially it was challenging, but they got used to it and it is now habit. All participants that currently have separate food waste collections said they would not want it stopped:
 

“It’s habit now, we’re used to it [food waste collection]. When it was first introduced it took some getting used to but now it doesn’t bother us. It’s a good thing to do and does free up space in your black bin. I hope they wouldn’t take it away from us.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire.*
- Those participants that do not currently have a separate food waste collection tend not to support this option, because:
  - They are concerned about mess, smells, hygiene and infestation.
  - They are concerned about having more bins in and outside their house.
  - It is another chore they will have to do.
- Several participants asked questions about frequency of collection and bags, implying that they would be more inclined to support it as long as collections are weekly, plenty of bags are provided free and the outside caddy is lockable:

“Are they collecting it each week? They would have to because otherwise it would smell.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

“They’ve got to provide lots of bio-degradable bags and replace them easily when we need some more. If I have the bags I’d give it a go, but without it I don’t think anyone would do it – they’ve got to make it easy to do.” *Female, South of Central Bedfordshire*

“What about vermin and foxes? Won’t they be attracted to it and get in? The caddy would need to be one of those lockable ones.” *Female, South of Central Bedfordshire*

- A few participants questioned the value of introducing food waste collections because it will not result in any savings and they were not persuaded by the environmental argument:

“I don’t see the point. It won’t achieve any savings. It can be expensive to process food waste. I see it as coming from the land and going back to the land, so I don’t have a problem with it going in my black bin.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

- A few participants said they would not need to use the service, if introduced, because they do not generate much food waste and/or they compost.

## Q5b – Food waste. Do you have any comments regarding weekly food waste collections?

Most frequent themes found below:

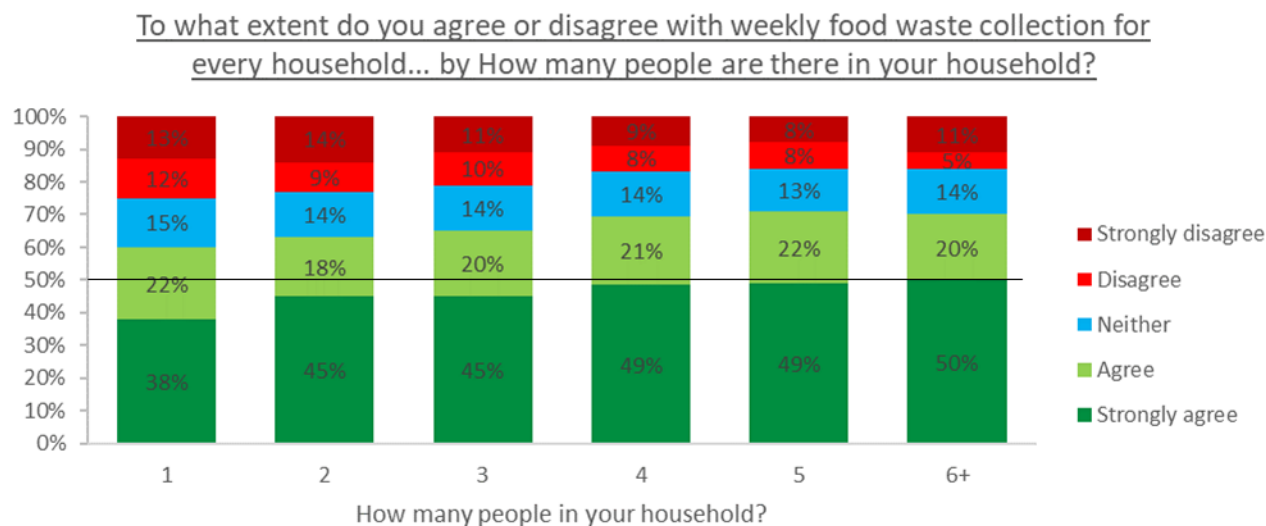
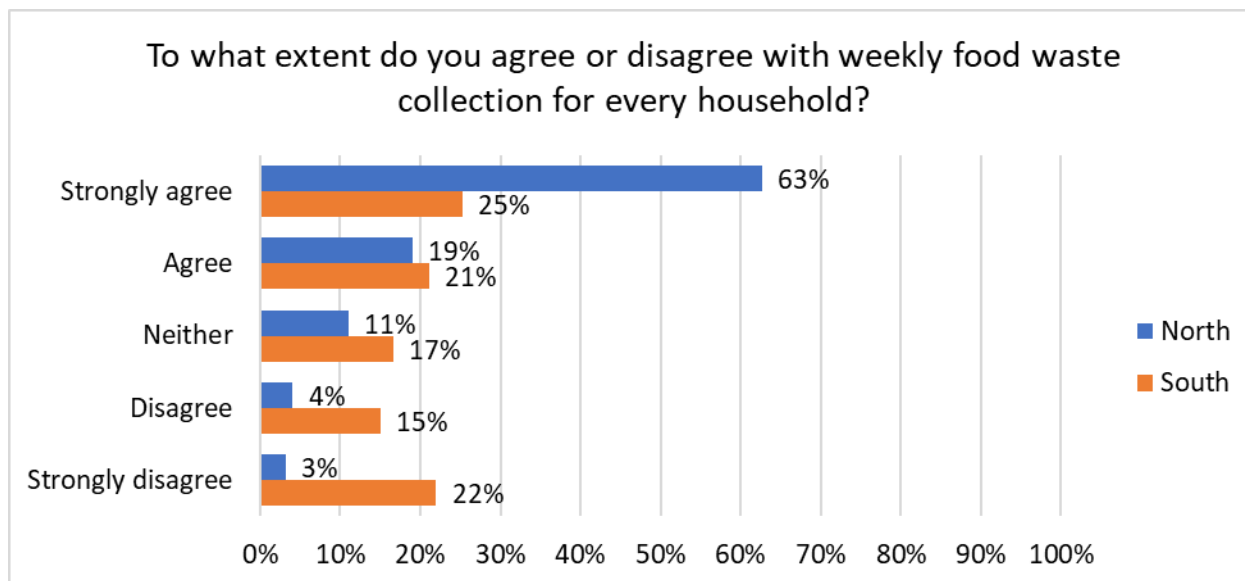
Q5b	<u>Open public survey</u>			<u>Sample telephone survey</u>		
	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented
Support for proposal	1065	7%	17%	24	2%	15%
Concerns with smell, mess, hygiene and risk of infestation	708	5%	11%	35	3%	22%
Already have this service *	642	4%	10%	25	2%	16%
Collections must be weekly	592	4%	9%	17	1%	11%
Do not support	375	2%	6%	-	-	-
Concerns about a lack of savings/ cost	360	2%	6%	-	-	-
Would not use – do not create much food waste or compost	353	2%	5%	30	2%	19%
Service works well currently*	340	2%	5%	-	-	-
Currently compost much of the waste	268	2%	4%	-	-	-
Too many bins	-	-	-	11	1%	7%
Important to provide bags	-	-	-	6	1%	4%
Other themes (x28)	2725	18%	42%			

\* Likely to be made by residents from North Central Bedfordshire (see additional food waste analysis)

## Additional food waste analysis (Open public survey)

The following results highlight that:

- Residents in the north are more supportive of the proposal than those in the south. This may be the result of their previous experience using the system.
- Residents in larger households are more likely to agree with the proposal to introduce weekly food waste collection for every household.
- Please note: Similar analysis was conducted on the telephone survey with comparable results



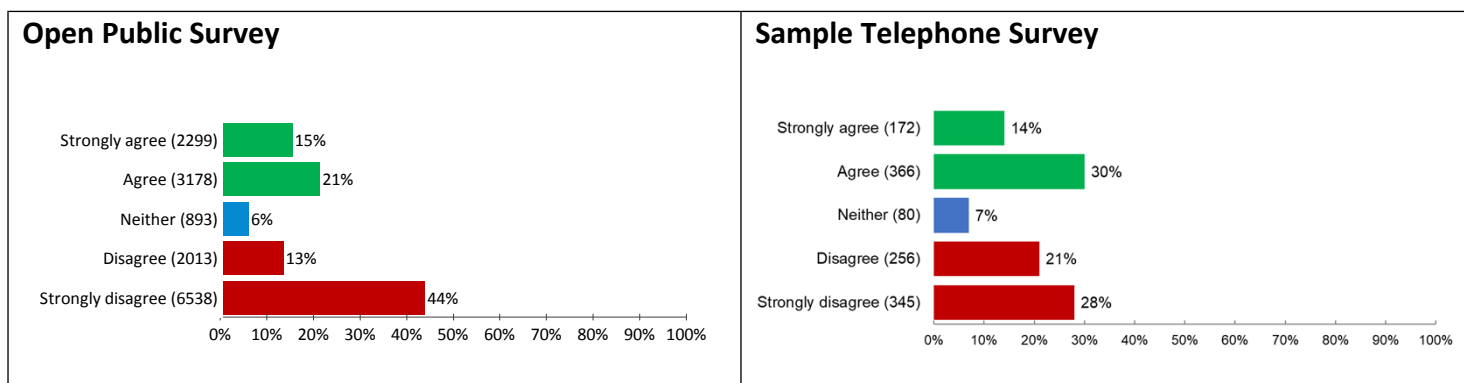
## Food Waste Summary:

- A majority (Open survey = 65% / Sample survey = 79%) strongly agree with the proposal to provide weekly food collections to all Central Bedfordshire residents.
- Residents in the north are more supportive than residents in the south. This is probably due to their previous experience of using the service, unlike residents in the south.
- Residents in the south have raised concerns over the smell, mess and the possibility of attracting animals

- There were also some concerns about the additional cost to the council should this option be introduced, given that there is a stated aim to seek savings within the service.

## Domestic waste (black bins)

### Q6a – Domestic waste (black bin). To what extent do you agree or disagree with collecting domestic waste (black bin) once every three weeks? (this option is likely to deliver very significant savings)



#### Discussion group feedback

- Participants tended to fall into three groups – the smallest group are residents that actively support the proposals to reduce cost and encourage recycling. They also stated that the changes would not affect them because their bins are not full after two weeks:

“I don’t have a problem with it. My bins are not full at the end of two weeks. I think if people have less space in their bins it will encourage them to recycle more. If it saves money, which can be spent on more important things then it is fine.” *Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

- The next group would, at best, reluctantly go along with the change, in that the proposals would not affect them directly because their bin is not full upon collection. However, they did have some concerns, such as:

- Neighbours’ bins over-flowing.
- Smells from bins where households do not recycle food, or have nappies, hygiene/healthcare waste or animal waste.
- ‘Bin wars’ whereby people will put excess waste into the bins of their neighbours.
- Fly-tipping because people do not have space in their bins.
- Forgetting the three-weekly collection (i.e. because it will not be on alternate weeks with the recycling collection):

“Personally, we could cope, our bin is not full after two weeks. But my neighbour’s bin over the road is over flowing. What will they do? I can see bins lying around for weeks and smelling. I can imagine people going around and putting their bins in other people’s and causing arguments between neighbours – bin wars. And I can see people just dumping their waste, fly-tipping.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*

“What about people with nappies? My elderly mum has to put some health-related items into the black bin, which would really smell by three-weeks. And what about animal waste, that has to go in the black bin and would smell.” *Female, South of Central Bedfordshire*

“The three-week collection worries me. At the moment it is quite easy to know when your bin will be collected because it is alternate weeks. But I can see people forgetting when it is every three weeks. And if you forget, what happens then? It could be six weeks without a collection!” *Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

- The third group, which is broadly similar in size to the previous group, are strongly against the proposal, partly for some of the reasons stated above and also due to practical concerns because their bins tend to be full upon collection. Most of these participants said they already recycle a lot and do not believe they can do much more to reduce the waste in their black bin. These participants tended to come from larger households (4-5 members) and/or have young families (including nappies):

“This is a ridiculous proposal. I already have to jump up and down in my bin at the end of the two weeks to fit everything in. I have no idea how we’d cope with three weeks. We already recycle a lot and I don’t think we create much food waste. We’re a household of five people. I just don’t see how it can work and it doesn’t feel fair to households like ours.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*

“I have a young family and we go through lots of nappies. They need to find a way to deal with those, because this [three-weekly bin collection] discriminates against families with children. Our bins are full at the end of two weeks and they already smell, so it’s going to be a lot worse after three weeks.”

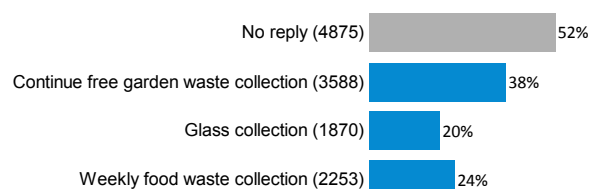
*Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

- Participants were asked to identify if anything would help reduce their concerns/lessen the impact:
  - Most said larger bins should be provided for households that can prove the standard size is not big enough and that they cannot recycle anymore (the current provision for families of 6+ households was seen as too high a threshold).
  - A few participants mentioned special collections at Christmas, when more waste is generated.
  - Some said clear information to help people remember when their black bin will be collected.
  - A few mentioned special provisions to collect missed bins if people forget to put them out in the early days of the new collection while people get used to the new arrangements.
  - Some participants mentioned improved education and information to help people recycle more.
- However, some participants still said that the above would not be enough to resolve their practical issues and/or in principle that they are against the proposals:

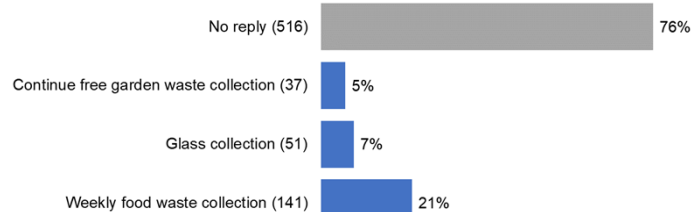
“You can introduce some of these things [some of the issues mentioned above] but I don’t think it would be enough, I just think it is going a bit too far to go to three-weeks.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*

**Q6b - Domestic waste (black bin). If you disagreed with three-weekly collections, would the introduction or retention of any of the following alter your opinion? (Note: Respondents who agreed with the previous question were not asked to complete)**

#### Open Public Survey



#### Sample Telephone Survey



#### Discussion group feedback

- A few participants said that the introduction of food waste collection and improved recycling could make the change more manageable:

“I don’t think you can do this [introduce a three-weekly collection] without a food waste collection.”

Some people will need to do that to free up space in their black bins. And anything that helps us recycle more will also help.” *Female, South of Central Bedfordshire*

Respondents to the telephone survey were less likely to indicate that they were prepared to alter their opinion. This difference may be more likely to happen with a telephone survey because respondents have less time to think about the possible options.

Residents were able to choose more than one option, so percentages for this question will not round to 100%.

### Q6c - Domestic waste (black bin). Do you have any comments regarding three-weekly black bin collections?

Most frequent themes found below:

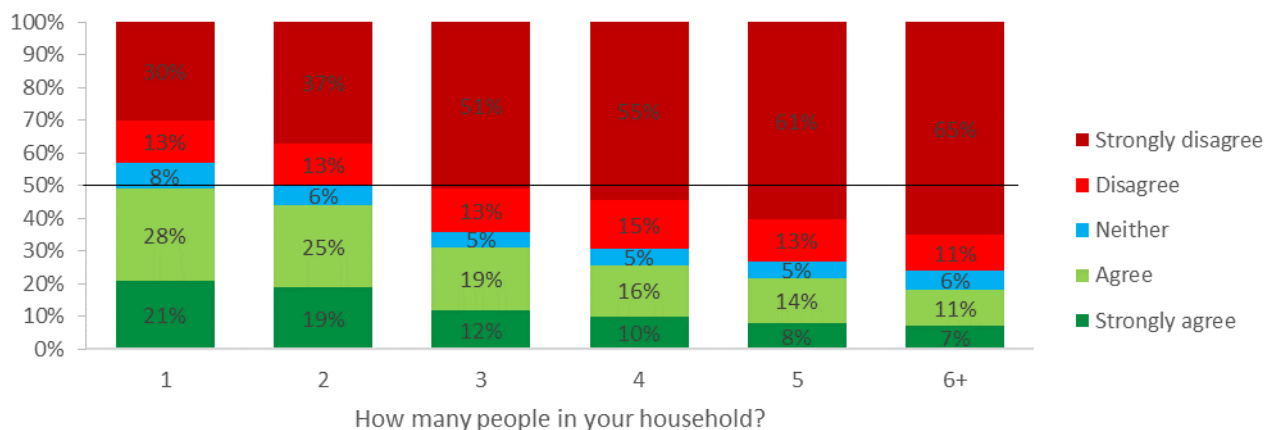
Q6b	<u>Open public survey</u>			<u>Sample telephone survey</u>		
	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented
Disagree with proposal/must remain fortnightly	1947	13%	22%	56	5%	21%
Concerns with smell, vermin and infestation	1883	12%	21%	59	5%	22%
Will lead to more fly-tipping	949	6%	11%	11	1%	4%
Concerns about disposable nappies	938	6%	10%	16	1%	6%
Bins would be overflowing	865	6%	10%	14	1%	5%
Support proposal	808	5%	9%	24	2%	9%
Full black bin - despite recycling as much as possible	778	5%	9%	38	3%	14%
Black bin is rarely ever full	683	5%	8%	14	1%	5%
Support if food waste collection is introduced	611	4%	7%	29	2%	11%
Provide larger bins	521	3%	6%			
Black bin is already full	457	3%	5%			
Recent council tax increase, yet less service	448	3%	5%			
Concerns about hygiene/healthcare waste	413	3%	5%			
Concerns about pet waste	390	3%	4%			
Three-weekly would be a health hazard	366	2%	4%			
Educating people to recycle more would also help	300	2%	3%			
Collection days could get confusing	297	2%	3%			
Support if it encourages people to recycle more	248	2%	3%			
Other themes (x5)	1132	8%	13%			

## Additional domestic waste analysis (Open public survey)

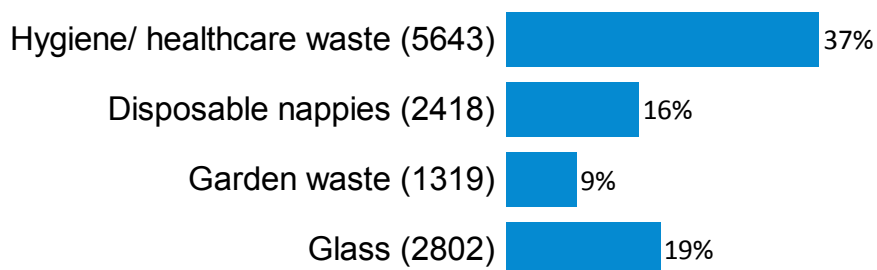
The following results highlight that:

- Those in larger households are less likely to support three-weekly bin collections
- Some respondents have indicated that they dispose of recyclable items such as glass (19%) and garden waste (9%) in their black bin. Suggesting that alternative means of disposal are unavailable or not used.
- Of those disposing of garden waste in their black bin, 77% have a small or medium sized garden which suggests that volume of garden waste is not a contributing factor as to why people dispose of garden waste in their domestic waste bin.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with collecting domestic waste once every three weeks... by How many people are there in your household?



Do you dispose of any of the following in your domestic waste bin?



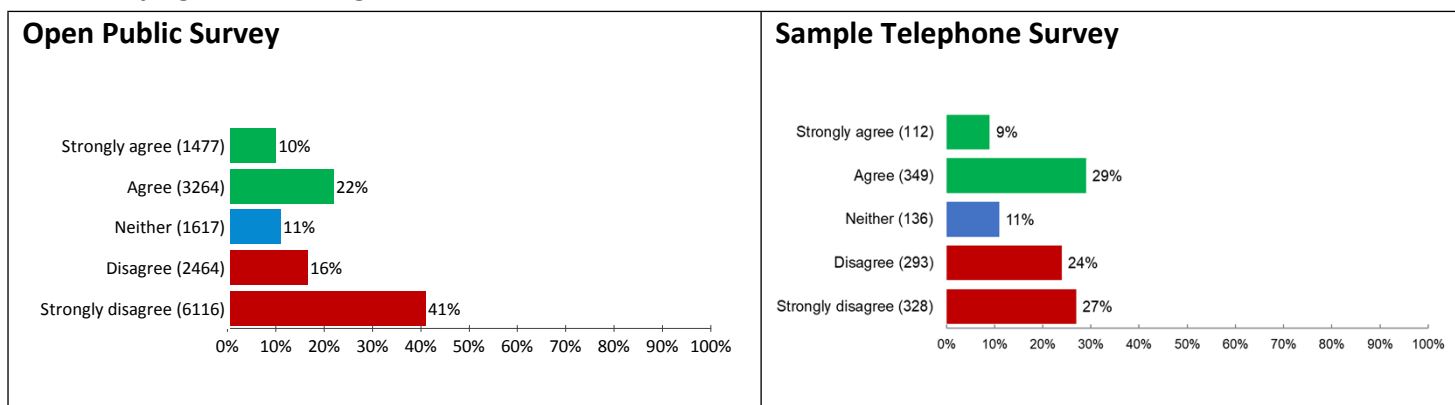
## Domestic Waste Summary:

- There were larger variations in results between the open public survey and the sample telephone survey, unlike previous questions.
- The majority of respondents to the open public survey disagreed (57%) with the proposal to introduce three-weekly collections. Only 49% of the sample telephone survey disagreed with the same proposal.
- The majority of those that disagreed with three-weekly collections did not select any options or factors which would change their mind, suggesting they would not support this proposal under any circumstances.
- Of those who did select an option which would change their mind, 38% said the continuance of free garden waste collections would alter their view of three-weekly domestic waste collections. In the sample telephone survey, the option that would most likely alter their views would be the introduction of weekly food waste collections (21%).

- The main concerns that respondents had regarding this proposal were around smell, infestation, fly-tipping and the disposal of nappies. Many also suggested their black bins were full after two weeks and they would not be able to cope with an additional week between collections.
- As a result, larger households were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

## Garden waste

**Q7a – Garden waste. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to charge customers who wish to have their garden waste collected? (This option is likely to deliver very significant savings)**



### Discussion group feedback

- This proposal also evoked negative reactions amongst many participants, who resent being charged:  
 “This one really gets me going. It is just under-hand to charge for something we already get free. They have just increased council tax as high as they can and now they want to charge for this. It just feels wrong. I’d expect this to be included in my council tax, I pay enough.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*
- A similar number of participants said they oppose the proposal for practical reasons. In some cases, it is a service they value, while others said they are worried that people will fly-tip, make bonfires or put their garden waste in a black bin:  
 “In the long run it won’t work. They’ve tried this elsewhere and people just put it in their black bins or fly-tipped. It will cost them more than they save in the end. So I think it’s a bad idea.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*
- A similar number of participants do not currently use the garden waste collection service – they either do not generate much garden waste, they compost or they generate so much garden waste that they find the current collection service unsuitable, and therefore already take their waste to the tidy tip. Therefore, the change will not have an impact on them (although some still resent its introduction).  
 “Just out of principle I wouldn’t pay. I do use the collection now, but I can just as easily put it in the car and go to the tidy tip. The tidy tip isn’t far. But I’d probably do more harm to the environment by driving there and I can just imagine the queues at the tidy tip. Have they thought about that?” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*  
 “I like getting my bin collected at the moment – we have a big garden and we fill it up. I would probably pay because I can’t be bothered to go to the tidy tip, but I would be paying reluctantly.” *Male, South of Central Bedfordshire*



- A smaller number of participants said that elderly, disabled people, people on low incomes or people without a car would not have an alternative to take their garden waste to the tidy tip and so would have to pay for the collection. They suggested that garden waste collections should remain free to some residents:

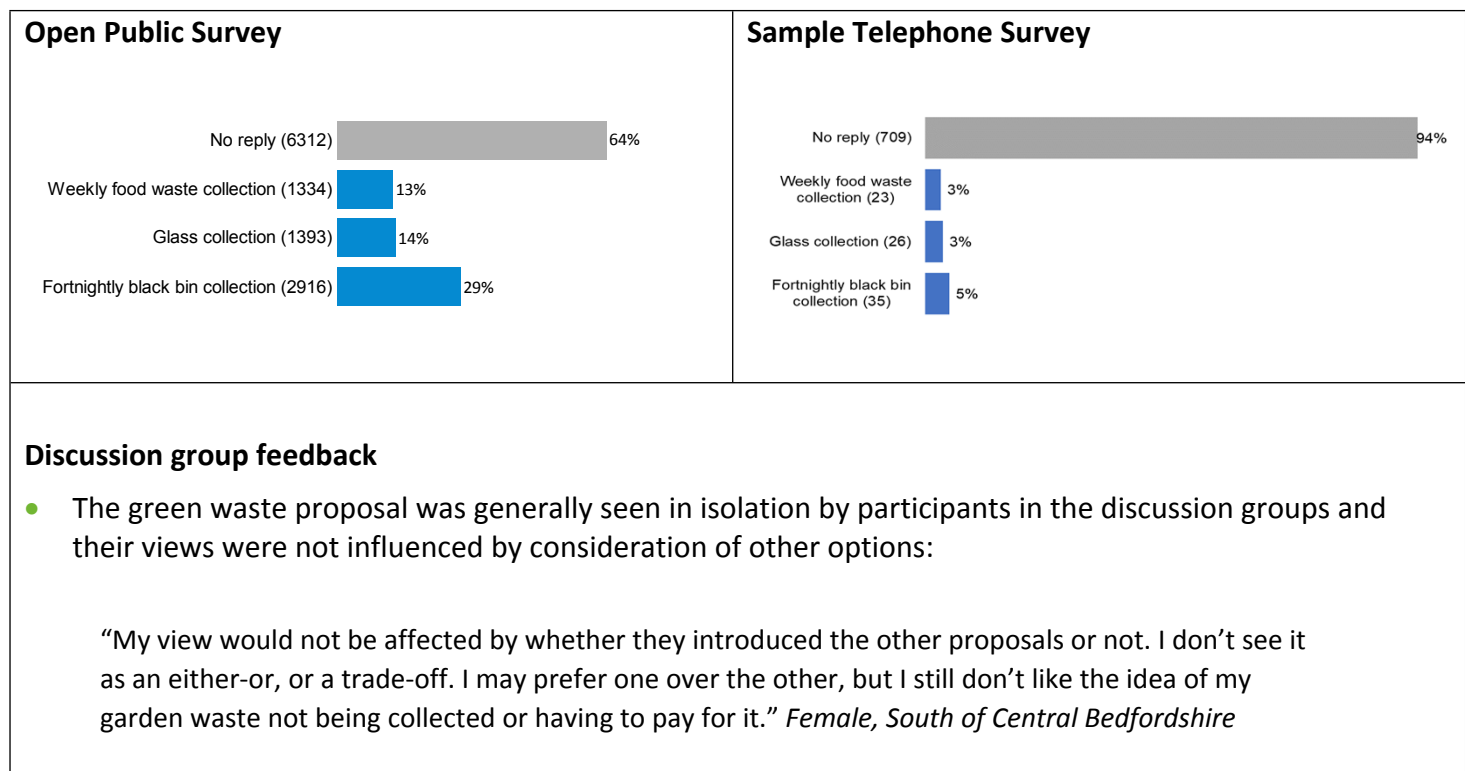
“What about people who don’t have alternatives? Who can’t get to the tip or afford to drive? They’re basically being forced to pay, and some of them might not be able to afford it. If the council did make this change they should at least keep it free for the elderly and disabled.” *Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

- A similar number of participants supported the proposal or at least were not against it, partly because they would find regular collections useful or partly because they would prefer a green wheelie bin (if they live in the north and do not currently have one, although some people in the north said they like the orange sacks):

“I’d be happy to pay. It’s not that much money in the big scheme of things and if it helps the council. I find it useful to get the green waste collected and I’d like to get one of those big green bins.” *Female, North of Central Bedfordshire*

## 7b – Garden Waste. If you disagreed with charging for garden waste collection, would the introduction or retention of any of the following alter your opinion?

(Note: Respondents who agreed with the previous question were not asked to complete)

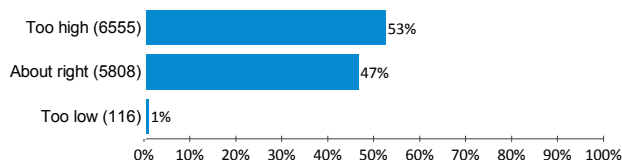


Respondents to the telephone survey were less likely to indicate that they were prepared to alter their opinion. This difference may be more likely to happen with a telephone survey because respondents have less time to think about the possible options.

Residents were able to choose more than one option, so percentages for this question will not round to 100%.

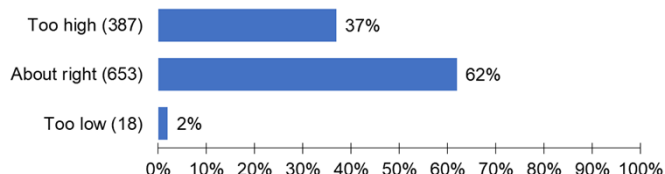
**7c – Garden waste. Around a third of councils charge for this service, with £40 being the average. What do you think about the cost of the proposed annual charge?**

**Open Public Survey**



What should the price be?	Frequency
£0	3702
£1-10	420
£11-20	709
£21-30	658
£31-40	103
£41-50	26
£51-70	29
£70+	33
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5680</b>

**Sample Telephone Survey**



What should the price be?	Frequency
£0	98
£1-10	10
£11-20	36
£21-30	54
£31-40	6
£41-50	2
£51-70	4
£70+	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>212</b>

Note: A high number of respondents did not answer because they do not agree with the charge or could not identify a suitable price.

**Discussion group feedback**

- Participants said that the price is not the issue, it is more the principle of it being charged that some participants disliked:
 

“I can’t really give a view on the price because I don’t want to pay it. It is not the price, it is more about being charged in the first place and removing a service which is currently free and covered in our council tax.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*
- The proposal for a £40 charge was generally considered reasonable for those participants that said they would likely pay it.
- A few participants said that they would consider paying for a service for some parts of the year (and pay less) or pay on a per use basis:
 

“They say it’s £40 or £1.50 odd per collection, but not everyone will want to use it every two weeks, especially in the winter. I don’t know why they don’t do it for 9 or 6 months like they currently do and charge less. It seems stupid to do it for the full year. Or they could just charge you as and when you use it. I know the technology is available to do that.” *Male, North of Central Bedfordshire*

## 7d – Garden waste. Do you have any comments about charging for garden waste collections?

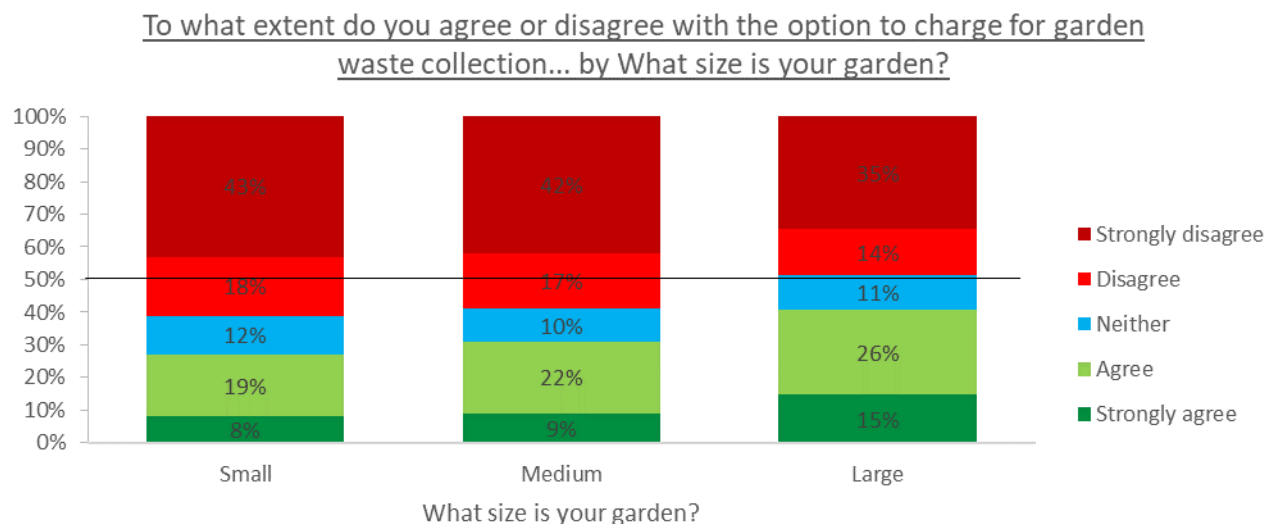
Most frequent themes found below:

Q7d	<u>Open public survey</u>			<u>Sample telephone survey</u>		
	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented
High council tax yet more charges	2074	14%	22%	80	7%	28%
Should not be an additional charge	1853	12%	20%	49	4%	18%
Will lead to more fly tipping	1598	11%	17%	47	4%	17%
Support for proposal	1190	8%	13%	27	2%	10%
Wouldn't use/wouldn't pay/use alternatives such as taking to tidy tip or composting	894	6%	10%	17	1%	6%
People will dump garden waste in their black bins	763	5%	8%	20	2%	7%
Concern for disabled/ elderly/ low income households who cannot afford charge	702	5%	8%	19	2%	7%
Reduce charge and provide service for 9-6 months of the year or charge on a pay as use basis	-	-	-	8	1%	3%
Not everyone can travel to the tidy tip	546	4%	6%			
Unfair to charge all residents the same as some would not use the service regularly	501	3%	5%			
£40 is too much	489	3%	5%			
Fortnightly collection all year is not needed	452	3%	5%			
Concerns around storage of another bin	348	2%	4%			
Do not change the service	270	2%	3%			
Offer extra/ larger bags/bins	253	2%	3%			
People will use their neighbours paid for bins	252	2%	3%			
Recycling will go down if charge is introduced	237	2%	3%			
Other themes (x13)	1846	12%	20%			

## Additional garden waste analysis (Open public survey)

The following results highlight that:

- The majority of respondents who have smaller and medium sized gardens disagree with the option to charge for garden waste collection. Opinions are more balanced amongst those with larger gardens but they are still more likely to disagree (49%) than agree (41%).

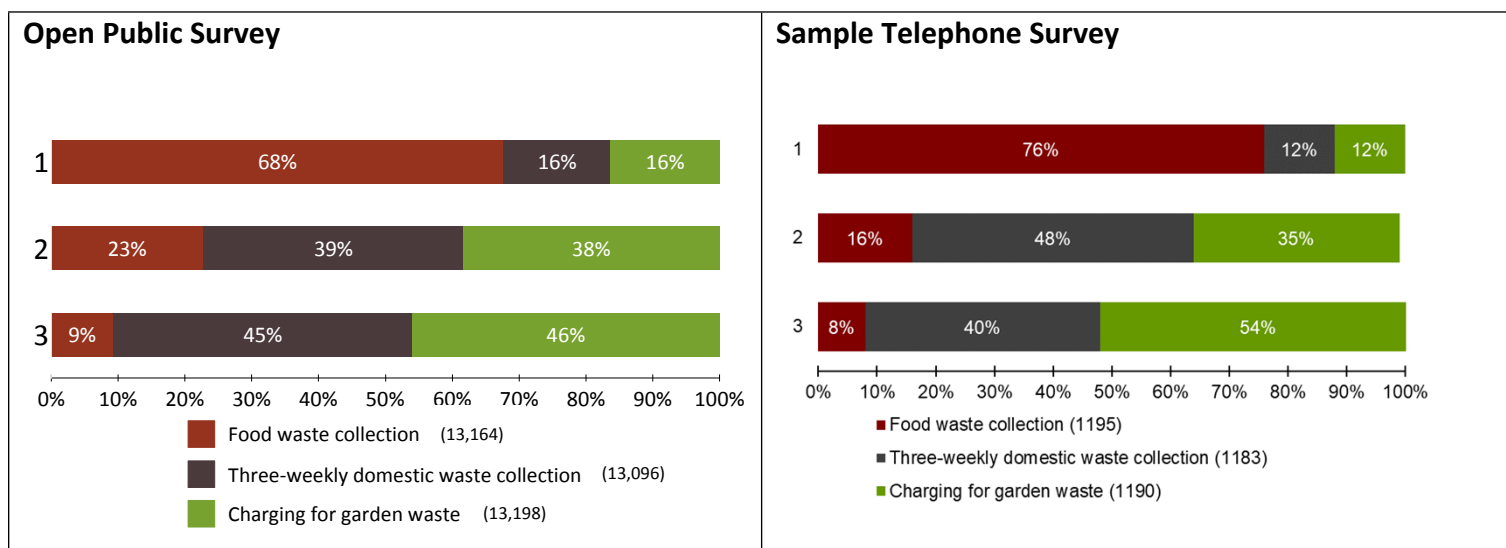


### Garden Waste Summary:

- The majority of respondents in both surveys disagreed with the proposal to charge for garden waste collection (Open survey = 57% / Sample survey = 51%)
- Respondents who disagreed were even less likely to have their views altered than those who disagreed with three-weekly domestic waste collections with 64% (Open survey) and 94% (Sample survey) not replying, suggesting none of the other options would make them change their mind about charging for garden waste collections.
- The cost of the charge was generally split with 53% in the open public survey saying the cost was too high and 62% in the sample telephone survey saying it was about right.
- Comments regarding the cost suggested it was too high and that it was unfair to charge everyone the same price as many would not use the service every fortnight. Some suggested flexibility in the charging could help persuade them.
- General concerns about the proposal were around this additional charge that would be on top of the recent increase in council tax, which was announced during the consultation. There were also concerns that the charge could lead to more fly tipping which in turn would cost the council more to clear up. Some suggested they would rather visit the local tidy tip than pay the charge.

## Preferred Options

8. Please rank these options in terms of preference with 1 being your preferred option and 3 being your least preferred.



- Both surveys indicate a preference for option one – food waste collection, with charging for garden waste as their least preferred option.

### Preferred Options Summary:

- Food waste collection was the overwhelming preference out of the three options.
- Three-weekly collections and charging for garden waste were evenly split in the public survey, with 39% selecting three-weekly collections as the second choice in comparison to 38% for chargeable garden waste.
- In the telephone survey 48% of respondents selected three-weekly domestic waste collections as the second choice in comparison to 35% for chargeable garden waste.

## 9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding changes to waste services in Central Bedfordshire?

Most frequent themes found below:

### Open public survey

### Sample telephone survey

Q9	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented	Number of comments	% of all respondents	% of people who commented
Disagree with three-weekly black bin collections	700	5%	13%	9	1%	7%
Keep services unchanged	619	4%	12%	31	3%	24%
Disagree with all proposals	601	4%	11%	32	3%	24%
Disagree with charging for garden waste	488	3%	9%	-	-	-

Higher council tax - less value for money	455	3%	9%	-	-	-
Proposals will lead to more fly-tipping	439	3%	8%	10	1%	8%
Find savings elsewhere	369	2%	7%	-	-	-
Educate the public about recycling	323	2%	6%	21	2%	16%
Support for more recycling	289	2%	5%	-	-	-
Support for general ideas proposed	283	2%	5%	19	2%	15%
Support for weekly food waste collection	270	2%	5%			
Other themes (x20)	2328	16%	45%			

### Discussion group feedback

Participants raised some other points of note:

- A few participants said additional boxes and bins would create more hazards, including blocking pavements for wheelchairs and pushchairs.
- A few participants said that they were concerned about mess being left after collections, and they expected the new waste collection provider to be monitored so that they did not leave litter and mess lying around on the streets, which could be worse if recycling boxes and food waste are introduced.
- A few participants said they felt this was “too much, too soon” and that the changes should be phased in, with education and information preceding food waste collections and recycling changes before any further changes are introduced.
- A few participants said that the council should commit to reviewing the impact of any changes a year or so after introduction and be prepared to reverse changes if they prove unsuccessful. Similarly, a few participants said that some policies being proposed by Central Government such as charging for plastic bottles and paying for returning glass could make some of the council’s proposals outdated in the future.

### Other Suggestions Summary:

- Comments reinforced disagreement with three-weekly collections and charging for garden waste, with many wishing to see services remain unchanged and for savings to be found elsewhere.
- Other comments expressed a desire to see more opportunities for recycling and for greater education for residents to help understand what can and can’t be recycled and what happens to the waste once it has been collected. This has been a common theme throughout the consultation and demonstrates an enthusiasm in residents to continue to recycle in the future.

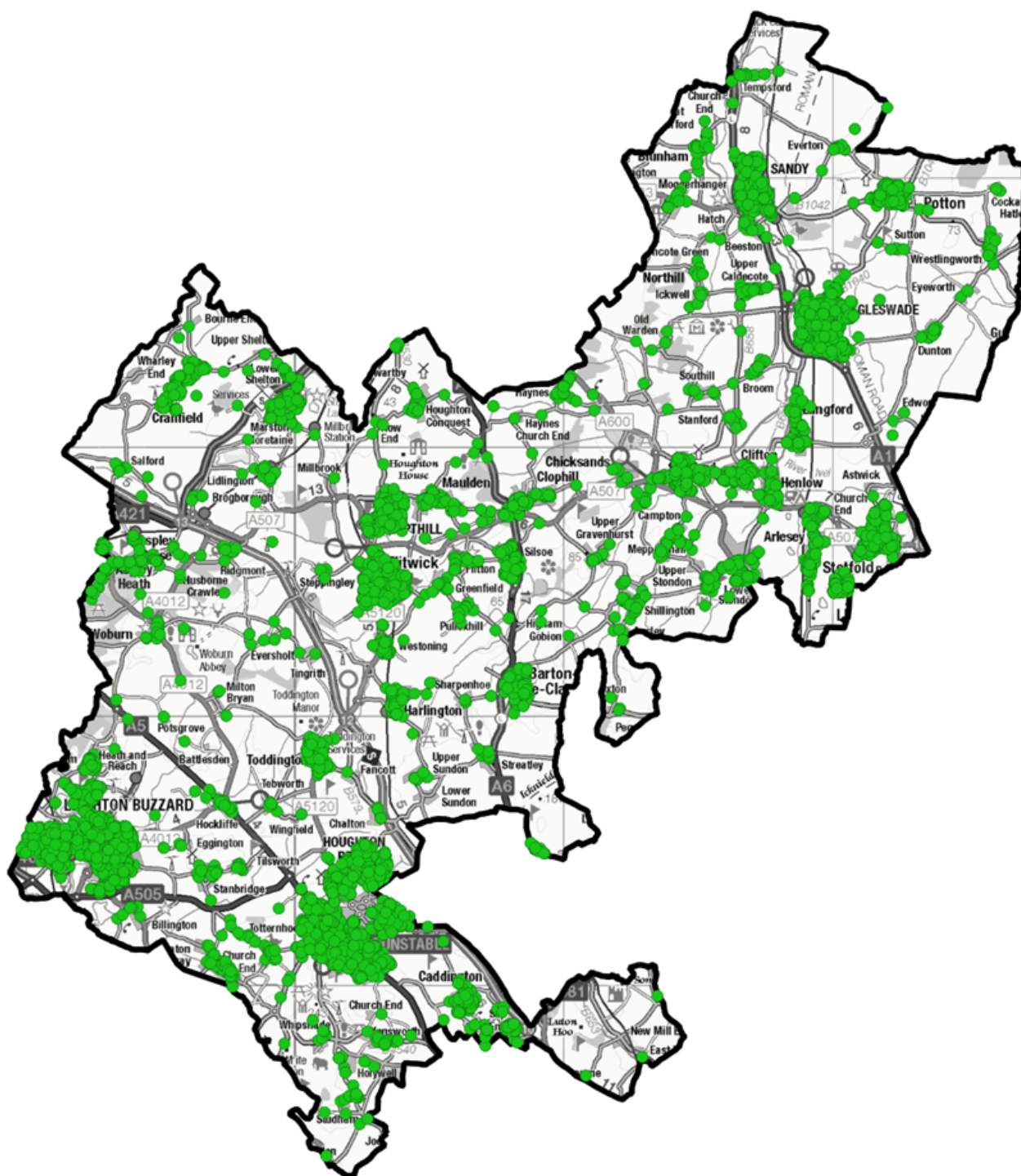
## Demographic profile of respondents

Profile	% in population (16+)	Open public survey	Sample telephone survey
Female	51%	58%	52%
Male	49%	42%	48%
16-29	19%	5%	17%
30-44	25%	27%	25%
45-59	27%	31%	28%
60-74	19%	29%	21%
75 and over	9%	7%	9%
Disability/ No disability	17% / 83%	7% / 93%	7% / 93%
White British / Other ethnic group	90% / 10%	95% / 5%	91% / 9%
Property: Detached	28%	43%	40%
Property: Semi-detached	34%	37%	40%
Property: Terraced	25%	17%	16%
Property: Other	13%	3%	4%
Garden size: Small	n.a.	29%	21%
Garden size: Medium	n.a.	51%	51%
Garden size: Large	n.a.	19%	25%
Garden size: Not applicable	n.a.	1%	3%
Household numbers: 1	11%	12%	9%
Household numbers: 2	30%	43%	34%
Household numbers: 3	21%	17%	22%
Household numbers: 4	25%	20%	25%
Household numbers: 5	9%	6%	7%
Household numbers: 6+	4%	2%	4%

Note: Property type figures are as a % of dwellings; household numbers are a % of all people (not just 16+).

## Map 1: Location of respondents to the open public consultation

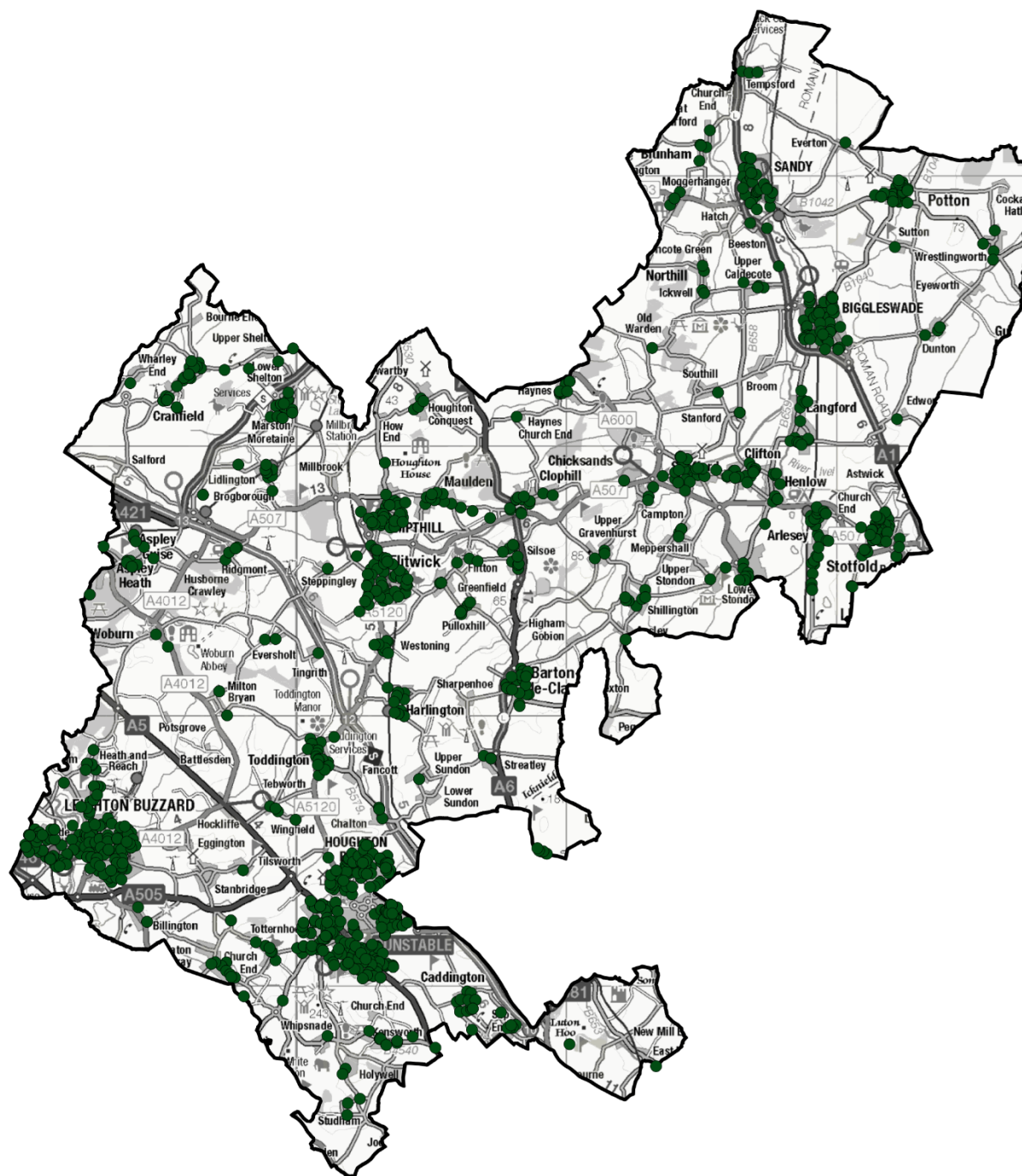
This map shows the residency of respondents from Central Bedfordshire who gave a valid postcode (84% of all respondents) and illustrates that responses came from across Central Bedfordshire.





## Map 2: Location of respondents to the telephone survey

This map shows the residency of respondents to the telephone survey and illustrates that responses came from across Central Bedfordshire.



## Conclusions

- The provision of effective waste and recycling services is very important to residents, as demonstrated by the unprecedented levels of participation in the open public survey. (15,086 responses)
- The headline findings of the consultation are largely consistent across the different consultation methods.
- The vast majority of respondents agree that it is important to help people recycle as much as possible.
- There is also majority agreement that savings should be found in waste and recycling services.
- Respondents generally support improvements in recycling such as the separation of paper and cardboard, introduction of glass collection and food waste collection.
  - In order to make improvements in recycling and introduce food waste collection for all residents, respondents have indicated that it will be important to include a strong focus on public education and information and ensuring that practical concerns (such as lids for boxes, provision of free food waste bags etc.,) are addressed.
- The largest proportion of respondents in both surveys do not support the introduction of three-weekly domestic waste collection, (Open survey = 57% / Sample survey = 49%).
  - Some respondents who disagree might be persuaded to change their opinion if food waste collection is introduced and charges are not implemented for green waste collection.
  - Respondents are concerned about smell, infestation, fly-tipping and disposal of nappies.
- The majority of respondents in both surveys do not support the proposal to charge for garden waste collection (Open survey = 57% / Sample survey = 51%)
  - Respondents who disagreed were far less likely to say that their views could be altered on this issue.
  - Respondents are concerned that this would be an additional charge on top of the recent increase in council tax. It is felt that fly-tipping could increase.
- The findings suggest that a phased approach to the introduction of any changes would be advisable, in order to ensure that residents are supported as much as possible to maximise levels of recycling.



**Central  
Bedfordshire**



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