

Resources and Waste Strategy Consultation - Summary and Key Findings

1. Introduction

West Northamptonshire Council was formed in April 2021 following the disaggregation of Northamptonshire County Council. It has a population of 425,725 (2021 census) with 172,643 households (2021 census).

West Northamptonshire Council is responsible for collecting all household waste and arranging for it to be recycled, treated, or disposed of. We also provide a range of special services for particular waste types such as clinical waste, commercial waste, and items of bulky household furniture.

We run a network of six household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) where members of the public can take waste for reuse, recycling, or disposal, and we are responsible for keeping streets and public open spaces free of litter and fly-tipping.

Since April 2021, we have implemented several changes to help to harmonise the waste services across West Northants as well as deliver improvements. We want to continue improving to provide fair, consistent services for residents and businesses in the area and lessen the impact waste collection, treatment and disposal has on the environment.

The Resource and Waste Strategy will set out our long-term plan and how we intend to achieve further improvements.

2. Purpose of Consultation

Some contracts procured by the previous authorities are due to expire from 2025. The requirements of the authority have changed considerably since the procurement of the current contracts for example, due to population growth (Growth area – 11.3% increase in 10 years compared with 6.2% across England), financial constraints and changes to national legislation.

This report sets out the approach taken to a public consultation completed on the Resources and Waste Strategy and provides a full breakdown of the feedback received. Recommendations are proposed and actions are noted to identify work required as an outcome of the consultation.

The consultation was open for 6 weeks from 5th July 2023 to 21st August 2023.

The consultation was open to all residents, businesses, stakeholders, and other statutory consultees who wished to have a say in the future of waste management in West Northamptonshire. The consultation was not intended as a referendum or 'decision making process'; the data gathered will be used to inform decisions about waste services.

3. Responses

In total 3316 responses to the questionnaire were received, of this 1962 were fully completed responses and 1353 were incomplete responses. Incomplete means that the respondent worked through some of the survey but did not respond to every page. Respondents were not required to complete the questionnaire fully, having the option to comment only on the areas that were important to them. When looking at total responses to individual questions, outputs shall be given in percentage/total of the number of responses to the specific question being referenced.

92% of responses were received from residents of West Northamptonshire. Responses were received from across West Northamptonshire and neighbouring authorities. Of location responses, 95% were from Northamptonshire postcodes (NN) and the remaining 5% were from areas of Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire.

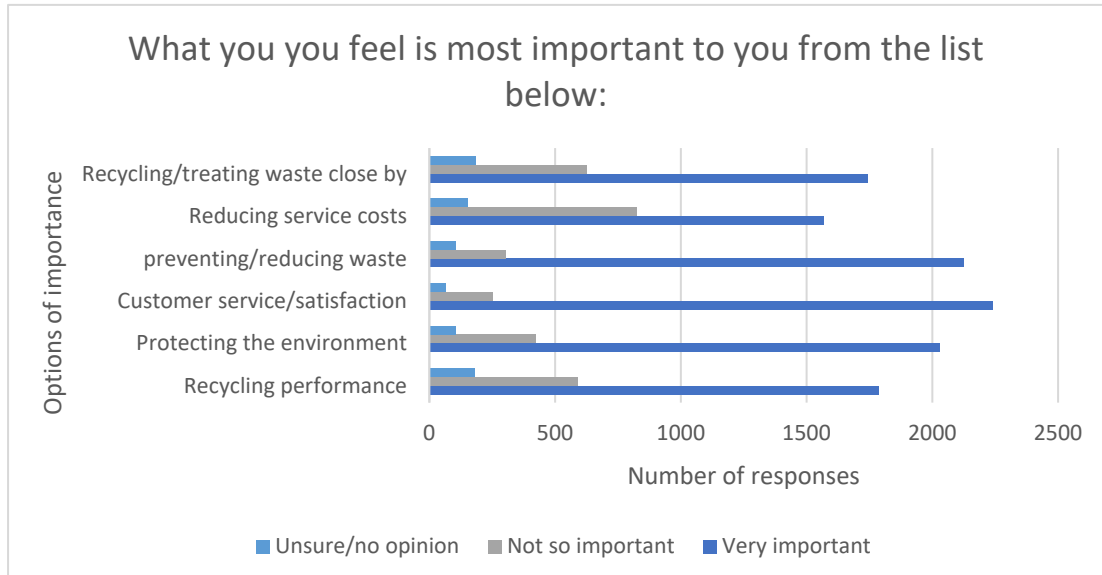
Objectives

There was general support for the vision and objectives of the Strategy. 53% of respondents were supportive of the vision and objectives, 42% neither agreed/disagreed or had an opinion, and 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

538 respondents made a comment on the vision and objectives of the Strategy. Of these, 5% referred to the importance of public engagement and education, 5% stated that reuse, recycling and composting should be promoted/increased, 22% of respondents mentioned the need for regular collections and a strategy to tackle fly tipping. 13% of respondents referred to the need for cleaner streets and public open spaces with the addition of more communal bins. 9% of respondents suggested more services should be built in the local area and managed in house. 4% of respondents suggested more opening days for recycling facilities, a further 4% suggested accessibility of these services should be addressed, whilst 2% commented that more responsibility should lie directly with the packaging producers and retailers.

Priorities

When asked what was most important, respondents identified reducing service costs as “not so important”, with customer service/satisfaction “most important”.

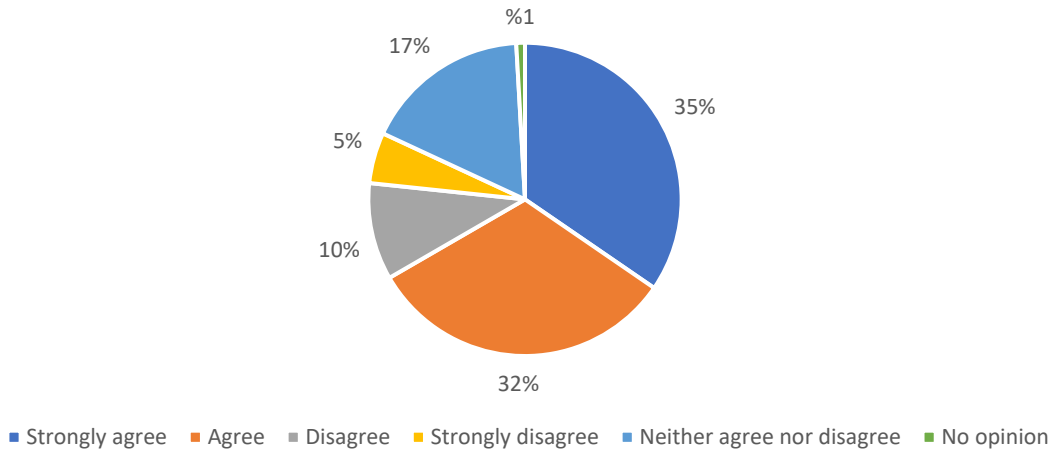


Harmonisation

67% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that all households should have their waste collected in the same way and the same frequency.

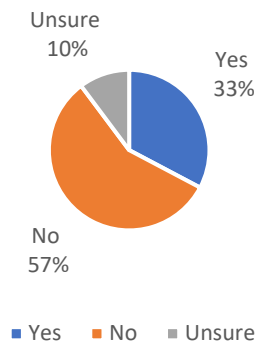
We also asked which bins were usually full by collection day. 38% of respondents said their recycling bin was full by collection, 21% said their garden waste bin was full, 16% of respondents had full food waste caddies by collection, and 21% had full non-recyclable household waste bins. 4% of respondents usually had no full bins by collection day.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that all households should have their waste collected in the same way and the same frequency?

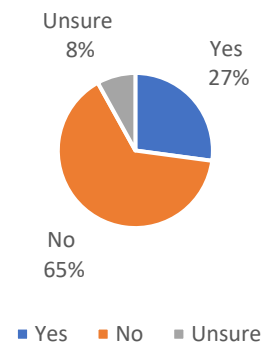


To gain further insight into how collections could be harmonised across West Northamptonshire, we asked respondents their preference on how waste should be collected, either collecting a smaller bin every 2 weeks or a larger bin collection every 3 weeks.

Downsizing household waste bin collecting every 2 weeks

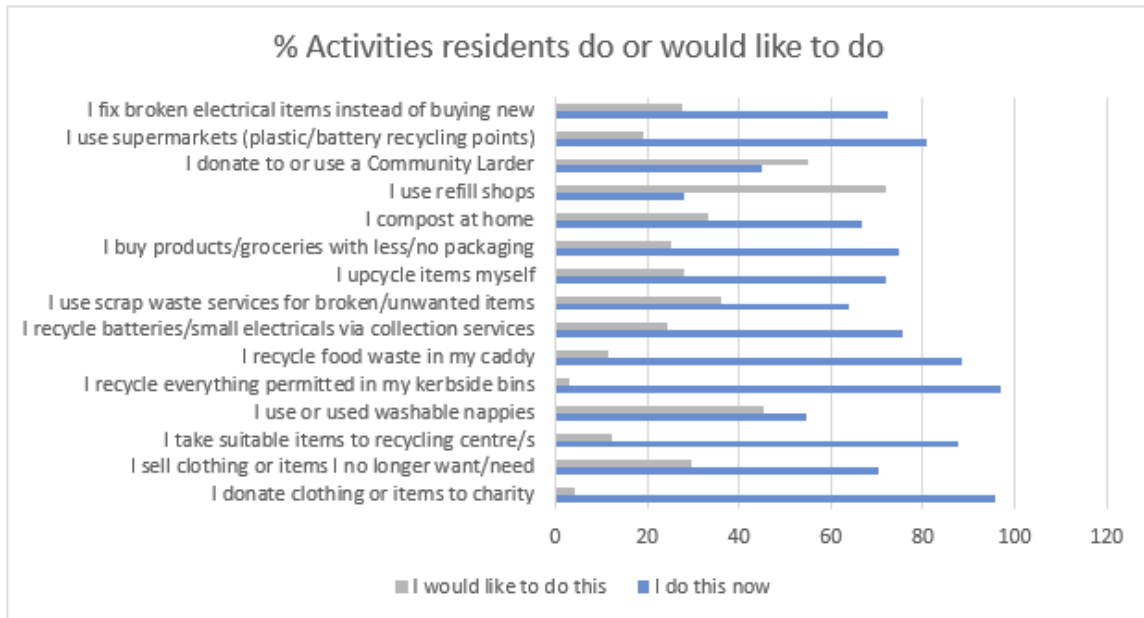


Keeping current size bin collecting every 3 weeks



Increasing recycling and waste prevention activities

In order to understand the service requirements for future service provision, we asked about our residents current recycling habits. 77% of respondents told us they currently perform various recycling activities. Of these 97% recycled all they could at the kerbside, 96% donated to charity, and 88% took items to recycling centres. Of respondents who suggested they would like to do more recycling activities in future, 72% said they would like the option to use refill shops, 36% would use scrap services in the future, and 24% would use the collection service to dispose of batteries and small electricals, buy products with less packaging, and donate to community larders.



Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

In order to gain insight into future HWRC services, we asked several questions regarding HWRC's in West Northamptonshire.

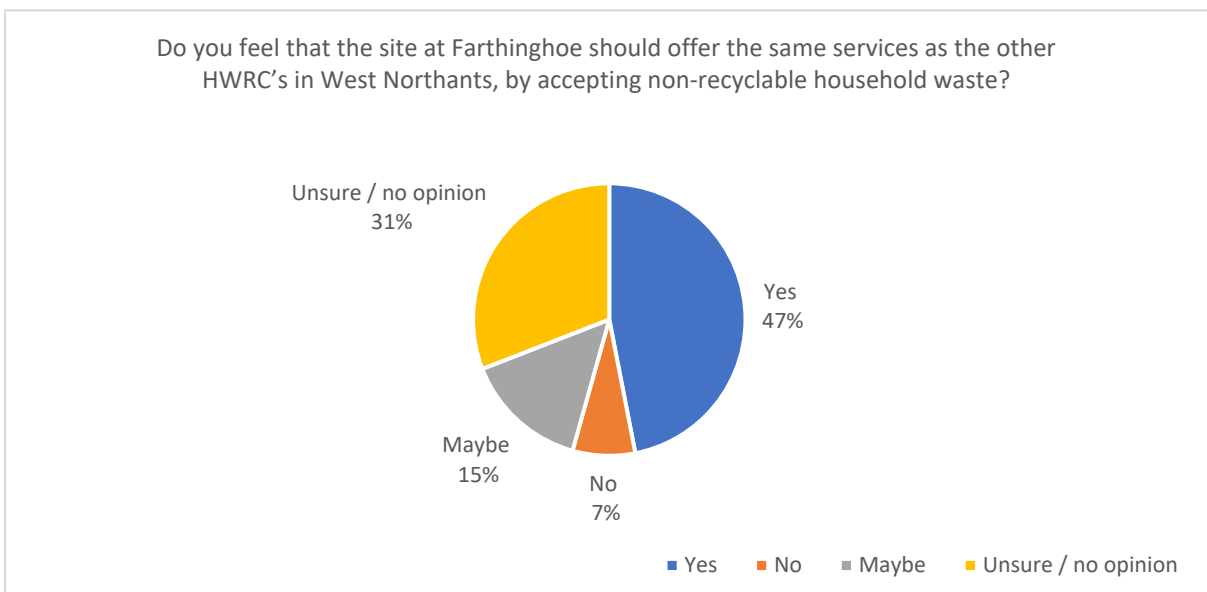
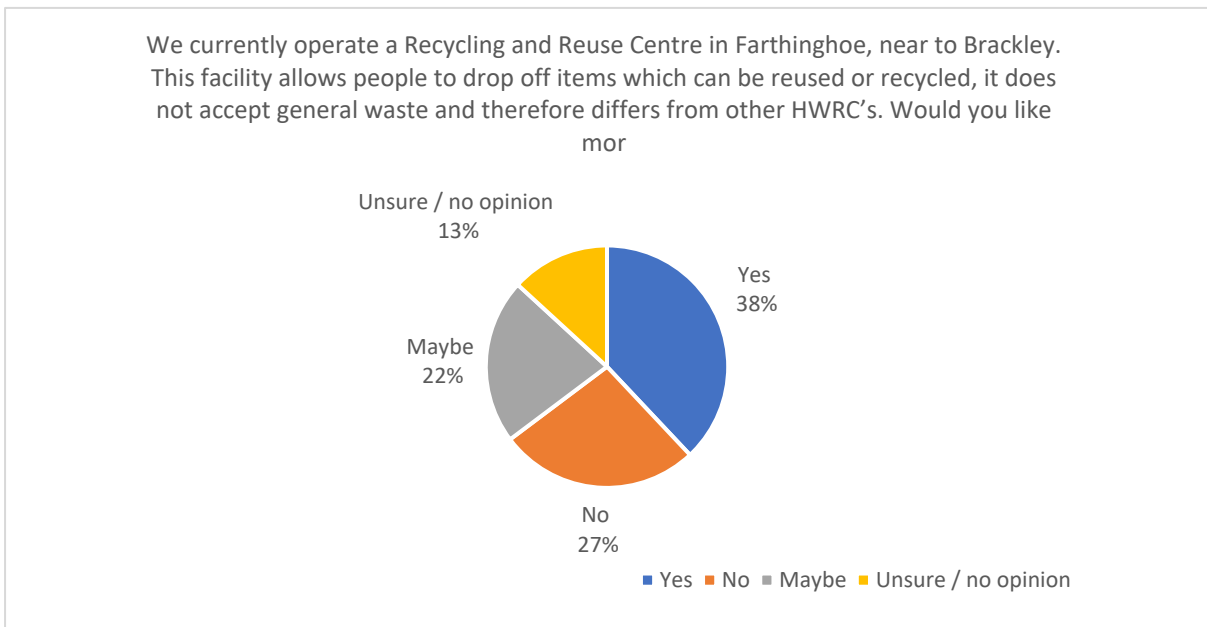
We asked if residents would like to see more reuse shops on site at HWRC's. Of those that responded 1506 (69%) said yes, 88 (4%) said no, 362 (16%) said maybe, and 240 (11%) respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

We asked if reuse shops were made available at more HWRC's, would respondents donate and buy items for re-use. 80% of respondents said they would donate items, 4% would not, and 16% might donate items. 42% of respondents would buy items for re-use, 16% would not, and 42% respondents might buy items for re-use.

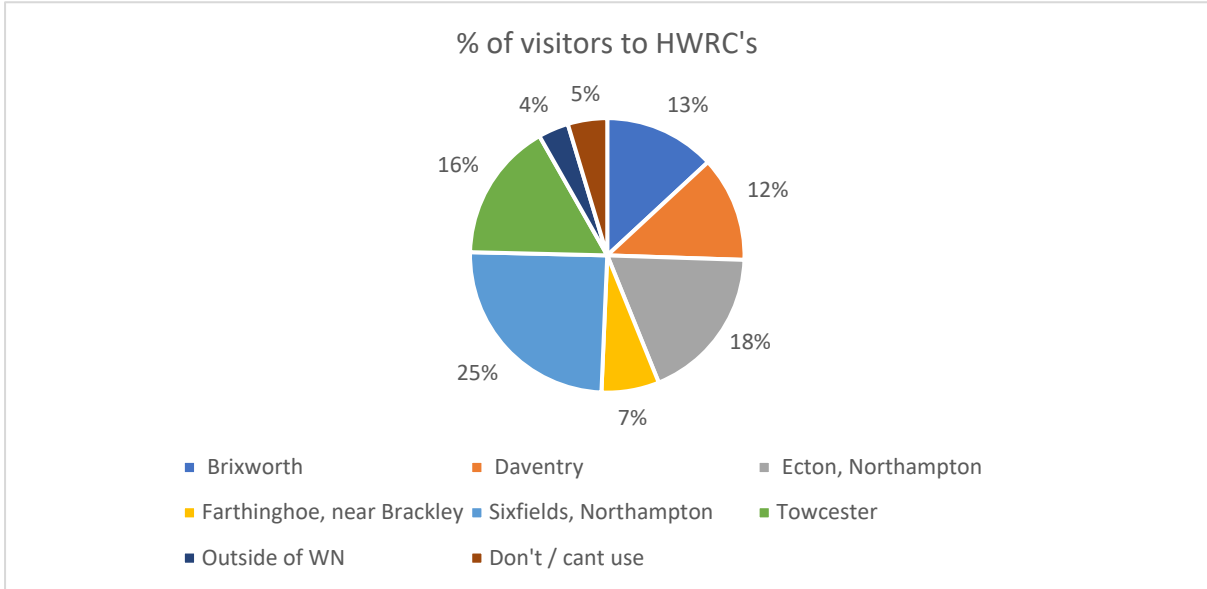
West Northamptonshire currently operate 6 Household waste recycling centres, however one (Farthinghoe near Brackley) allows people to drop off items which can be reused or recycled, and does not accept general waste, therefore differing from other HWRC's.

We asked respondents whether more of our HWRC's should operate like Farthinghoe, and whether Farthinghoe should operate like out other HWRC's and accept general waste.

The responses we received to the questions below appear to contradict each other, but can perhaps be explained because residents tend to use their local site, and may not fully understand the services that are available at different HWRCs.



We asked which HWRC's our respondents used the most. Sixfields was the most used site, gaining 25% of visits. 7% visited Farthinghoe, whilst 4% visited HWRC's outside of West Northamptonshire, and 5% did not use a HWRC at all.

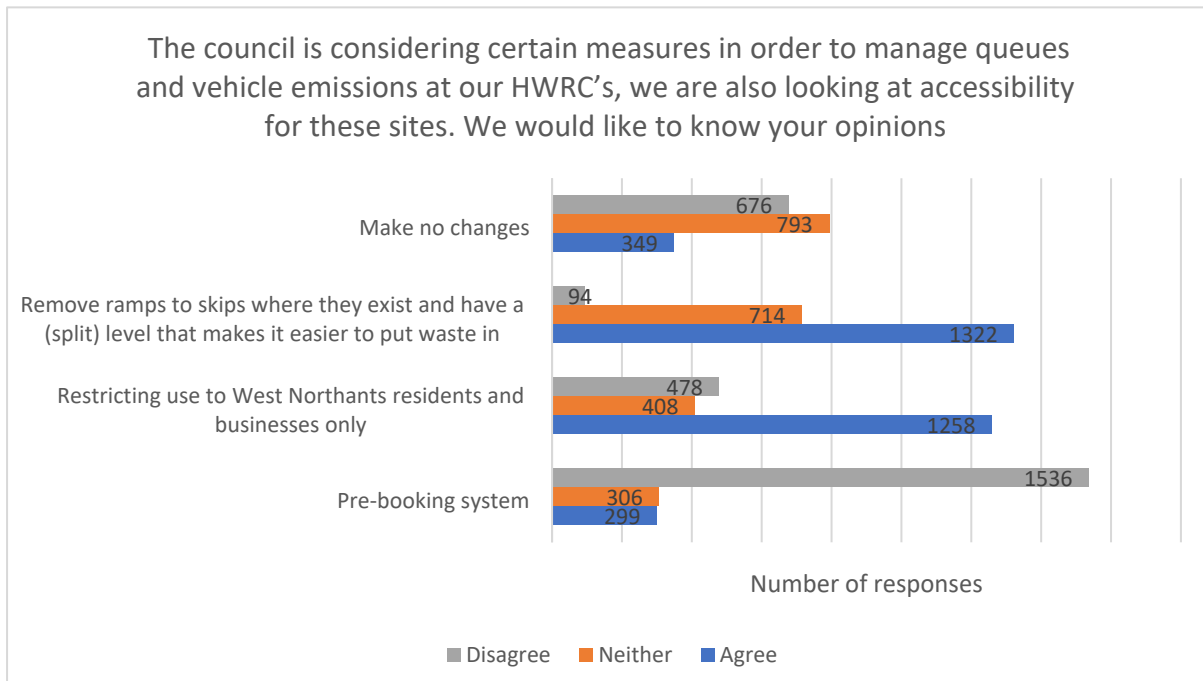


When asked how far residents travel to use a HWRC and their reasons for doing so. 1788 (86%) respondents travelled to their closest HWRC, whilst 301 (14%) travelled further than their nearest site to use one with better facilities.

To better manage queues and vehicle emissions at our HWRC's, we are also looking at accessibility for these sites. We asked to what extent residents agreed or disagreed with options being explored to help with this.

Most respondents were opposed to a booking system, however, they agreed that sites should be for West Northamptonshire's residents only?

The highest agreement response to this question related to the possibility of removing ramps and having split level facilities at all sites for ease of access.



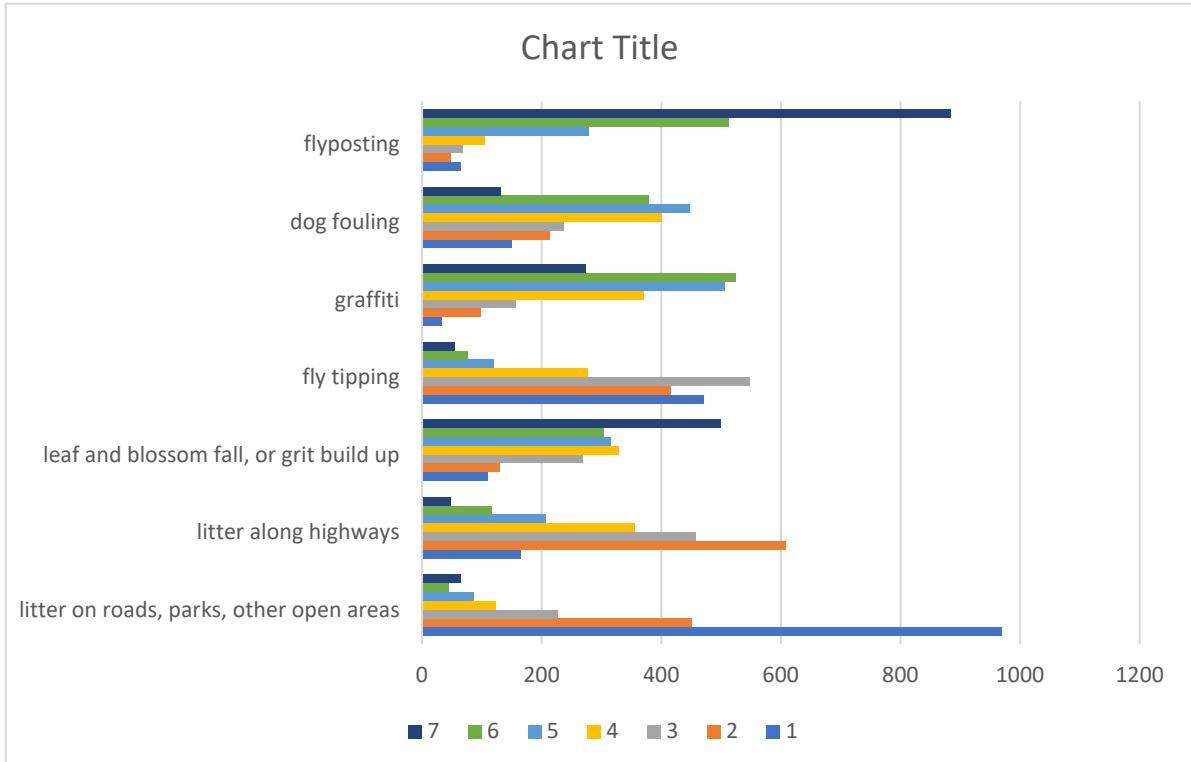
We asked if part of a booking system could be used to specify the sort of waste residents are disposing of at HWRC's, and if this could help to encourage people to sort out the waste they can, so it can be suitably separated into recycling and general waste. 58% of respondents were against a booking system, 21% agreed with booking, and 21% neither agreed/disagreed, or had no opinion.

Respondents were asked if reviewing HWRC site opening times should be considered, and what the preferred options would be. 3003 responses were received. 1304 respondents asked for sites to be open more days of the week, 587 asked for no changes (they were happy with the current provision), 546 wanted sites open later in the evenings, 453 wanted sites open earlier in the mornings, and 113 respondents had no opinion.

Street cleansing

We asked our residents, to consider the area in which they lived, and to rank by importance (1 being most important and 7 being least important) what they felt was important to them. Of these responses, most important was litter on roads, parks and other open areas with 969 number 1 (most important) rankings, followed by fly tipping with 471, litter along highways, dog fouling, leaf and blossom fall, or grit build up, flyposting and graffiti with the lowest number 1 ranking.

Flyposting was the least important of local issues gaining 883 number 7 rankings.



4. Recommendations & Actions

The vision, which forms the headlines of the Resources and Waste Strategy will remain unchanged since the overall, those who responded to the consultation agreed with it.

However, the detail of the responses to the individual consultation questions will be captured within the strategy, and particularly the associated action plan, including:

1. Improved & more frequent communications to residents to emphasise the collection services that are available, particularly:
 - a. That additional recycling can be left in a clear sack next to the recycling bin on collection days.
 - b. Bulky waste collection services are available for residents, and household waste can be taken for free to a HWRC
2. Additional emphasis on actions to prevent waste and encourage reuse, including the Council acting to enable waste prevention and reuse options.
3. Consideration of all comments and suggestions for the Household Waste Recycling Centre services when shaping the new arrangements, noting that the reuse service, operational hours and days, controls to ensure costs are minimised, and investment in the infrastructure being particularly important.
4. Increased Waste Education activity to inform residents from a young age of the importance of responsible waste actions, such as:
 - Speaking to school children about waste and recycling.
 - Increasing awareness of the reasons why it is important to reduce and recycle waste.
 - Ensuring that all residents know how to correctly take part in the recycling services provided by the council.
 - Empowering West Northamptonshire's residents to be 'responsible consumers' helping the Council to achieve its recycling targets.
5. Working with the Council's enforcement team to identify and implement effective options to reduce fly posting, dog fouling and littering.
6. Where technical language is used, documentation should be reviewed to ensure that it is easy to understand and the terminology used will be added to the text or glossary.