

SUBJECT:	Waste Survey 2012 Results.
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Property & Contract Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the results of the Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing Survey carried out in autumn 2012.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This matter is related to the following local and national policy objectives:
- The Council's medium-term aim of helping to provide a clean and decent district where there is pride in, and ownership of, surroundings and public spaces.
 - The current Joint Waste Strategy for Bucks policies, in particular "to secure a long-term strategy for the management of wastes for which the member authorities are collectively responsible".
 - The Council's recycling / composting target of 60% by 2025 and European targets of 50% recycling by 2020

3. Background

- 3.1 A survey was carried out in summer 2007 after the Contracts Services team highlighted the need to undertake survey of waste related services with the aim of identifying areas for improvement.
- 3.2 This was also recommended by the Audit Commission after an inspection of the Environment Unit.
- 3.3 It was decided to conduct a survey on a bi-annual basis to gain the views of residents on the refuse, recycling and street cleansing services. A second survey was completed in 2009.
- 3.4 A third survey was completed three years later in summer 2012 to which this report relates.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 The closing date for completed surveys was 31st October 2012. 209 (68.75%) surveys were completed online, with the remainder being hard copies delivered by Biffa operatives to residents' properties and returned. 732 hard copies were sent out based on the Acorn profile of roads being

representative of the wider district. To incentivise participation, entry into a £50 prize draw was offered and the survey was advertised via a press release, website pages and a message to our resident email mailing list.

- 4.2 The survey was analysed in January 2013 by which time 304 surveys had been completed. Appendix A is a copy of the survey, Appendix B illustrates the results discussed in this paper in graph form.
- 4.3 Members are asked to note that comparisons have been drawn with the 2009 survey where possible however the content of the two surveys did vary slightly therefore some figures do not have comparisons. Members are asked to note that responses will add up to over 100% where more than one answer can be selected by a respondent.
- 4.4 It should be noted that as the majority of surveys were completed online, respondents are more likely to be comfortable using online facilities. The online approach has provided a closer representation of the population of South Bucks than the 2009 survey, for example 31% of respondents were over 65 compared to 46% in the 2009 survey. 18.6% of the South Bucks population is estimated to be over 65, so while still not an accurate representation; this survey approach is closer to the underlying demographic. Younger age groups are still underrepresented, however this is likely to be partly due to the age of home owners being higher than average in the district.
- 4.5 A majority (93.2%) of respondents stated they found it easy to find out information about our services up from 87.9% in the 2009 survey and 88% in 2007.
- 4.6 70.6% of respondents have used the website to access information about the service. This is up from 31% in the 2009 survey. Though this may be in part due to the survey moving from the South Bucks Report to the largely online version, it is still a significant rise.
- 4.7 67.1% of respondents said they would like to receive information from us via email, with 17.7% saying magazine/newsletter and 8.7% stating local press as their preferred method. 'Text Message', 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' were selected by 1.9%, 0.6% and 0.3% of respondents respectively. Though relatively small numbers, this could represent a growing trend in residents utilising these approaches to access information. These figures are not directly comparable with the 2009 survey as different options were given. 'Leaflets' was not an option on the 2012 survey, but 26.4% of respondents selected magazine/newsletter or local press and 8.7% of respondents used the comments section of the question to suggest leaflets as a preferred option. This suggests that hard copies of recycling and refuse information are still strongly desired by residents.
- 4.8 77.7% of respondents provided their email address for resident email updates.
- 4.9 When asked about their satisfaction with refuse collections in the district, 93.2% responded positively. This is very similar to the 94% who responded positively to the 2009 survey. 96% of those on a black sack collection stated they considered the service to be excellent, good or usually good. This

compares to 88.9% of those in the wheelie bin trial area. 32% of respondents were in the wheelie bin trial area which covers 20% of the district. People in the trial area were therefore more likely to complete the questionnaire. This could mean using wheelie bins for refuse is a polarising issue, with people keen to air their views. If this is the case then with 88.9% responding positively there is clear support for wheelie bin collections, though those who oppose wheelie bins are likely to be quite vocal during a scheme change.

- 4.10 Recycling satisfaction levels are slightly lower at 89.4%, which is again comparable to the 90% from the 2009 survey.
- 4.11 Both satisfaction level questions allowed for comments to be added. The majority of residents did not comment (64.5%). Of those who did the results are as follows:

Comment	Action
9.5% had positive comments about the service and/or the crews	
6.5% complained of spillages not being cleared up on collection day	This has been raised with Biffa and we are monitoring closely
6.5% complained that boxes or bins are not returned to where they were presented	As above
5% would like all plastics to be collected in the recycling	
4% would like wheelie bins for refuse	The new collection service agreed by Members will include a wheelie bin for refuse
2% would like garden waste collections	The new service agreed will include an optional chargeable garden waste collection service
1% would like a commingled recycling collection	The future recycling scheme is currently under discussion by this PAG
1% would like additional materials added to the recycling scheme	As above

- 4.12 The majority of respondents (81.3%) indicated adults most influence their households recycling behaviour, 18.1% indicated that the whole household takes responsibility with 0.3% indicating each of children over 16 and children under 16 taking greatest responsibility. This is a slight change from the 2009 survey in which 67% indicated adults were most responsible and 28% indicated the whole household. Due to multiple answers being given by a large percentage of respondents, it is difficult to determine how significant a change this is.
- 4.13 In response to the question ‘How do you deal with your garden waste?’, 44.8% of respondents indicated they compost at home, 56.5% of respondents take their garden waste to a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), 2.3% purchase Biffa green sacks and 23.3% use the SBDC green bin in the trial areas. This suggests there could be a potentially good take up for the proposed chargeable garden waste scheme. The 56.5% of respondents taking

their garden waste to a HWRC would be the biggest target market if they judge the time and money savings of no longer transporting their own garden waste to outweigh the cost of the new service. The 2.3% purchasing sacks at present could simply move to paying for a different scheme and the 23.3% using the current trial bins are likely to be convinced by the convenience of the service and persuaded to pay to continue with the scheme.

- 4.14 88.3% of respondents use the recycling bring sites which is similar to the 2009 figure of 89%. The survey does also ask which site respondents most frequently use, however due to the lack of clarity some residents have between bring sites and the HWRCs the results of this question were inconclusive and it is not possible to determine from this how popular our bring sites are.
- 4.15 87.4% of respondents responded positively when asked about the cleanliness of their road. This is up from 84% in the 2009 survey and 78% in the 2007 survey, which was undertaken before the start of the current contract we have with Biffa. 87.8% responded positively when asked to describe the cleanliness of South Bucks generally. Members are asked to note that respondents in Dorney (100%), Farnham Royal (100%), Fulmer (100%) and Wexham (100%) were most likely to respond positively. Respondents in Denham (79%), Stoke Poges (82%), Taplow (84%) and Burnham (85%) were least likely to respond positively, though the sample size for each is small.
- 4.16 In response to the question 'Do you have any further comments on how we can improve our services' the most commonly selected of the multiple choice responses were: collect all plastic (5.2%), provide wheelie bins (4.5%) and provide garden waste collection (4.5%). The additional comments section of this question closely followed the comments sections available for earlier questions.
- 4.17 In conclusion, overall, there are high levels of satisfaction with our service. Although the majority of residents say they find it easy to find information about our services, there could be scope to improve our online and social media presence. Some residents have shown a desire for wheelie bins, garden waste collections and additional materials being added to recycling collections. In some areas residents have responded very positively about the cleanliness of their streets, while in areas such as Denham, Stoke Poges, Taplow and Burnham more could still be done.

5. Resource and Wider Policy Implications

- 5.1 There are no current resources or wider policy implications arising from this report.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Environment PAG members are asked to note the content of this report

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Background Papers:	Results of Previous Survey in 2009