



Supporting Communities In Thurrock



Thurrock Ngage Attitudinal Survey - Final Report

April 2008

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Acknowledgements

Waste Watch would like to acknowledge the support and information provided by Ngage and Thurrock Council. Waste Watch would also like to recognise the contribution of the Recycling Surveyors.

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Executive Summary

- In February 2008, the council commissioned Waste Watch to undertake a doorstep survey in 20 areas in Thurrock. This survey formed part of an ongoing consultation process to determine levels of commitment to recycling and opinions regarding future recycling options.
- A total of 6,068 households were visited as part of the survey. Of these 1,544 residents completed the survey on the doorstep and 447 stated that they had already completed and returned the survey or wished to do so in their own time.
- The majority of respondents claimed to 'always' recycle all of the recyclable materials within their kerbside collection. Paper and cardboard are the most frequently recycled materials with 83.9% and 83.4% respectively. This was followed by glass (82.2%) and plastic bottles (81.8%). Tins and cans are the least recycled dry material with 77.2% of respondents claiming to always recycle these items. Garden waste was the least recycled material overall with only 62.1% of respondents stating that they recycled this type of waste.
- When respondents were asked what would make recycling easier for them, the most common responses were 'wheeled recycling bins' (43.7%), 'more recycling boxes' (30.1%) and 'a reuse and recycling centre in the west of Thurrock' (21.3%).
- Overall, just over half of all respondents could accommodate one (32.8%) or two or more (22.1%) wheeled bins, with 43.1% of residents claiming to not be able or willing to accommodate any or any additional wheeled bins. As may be expected, residents of flats are least likely to be able to find room for additional bins.
- Just over half of the survey respondents (51.4%) wished all plastics to be included into their recycling service. Doorstep collections of kitchen waste' (35%) and textiles (30.5%) were favoured by about one third of respondents.
- Overall, the majority of respondents (72.8%), regardless of the type of property they occupy, were not in favour of paying any extra council tax to increase recycling above current levels. Of the 27% of respondents who are willing to pay extra council tax, 11.6% are willing to pay £10 per year, while 9.7% are prepared

to pay £5 per year and only 5.6% of respondents are prepared to pay £25 extra per year.

- Of all the respondents surveyed 28.1% claimed to be home composting. Considering this, 11.3% of residents surveyed live in flats with likely space limitations and/ or no access to gardens.
- The majority of respondents (85.6%) supported the principle of using waste left after recycling and composting to generate heat and power. Some 10% of respondents did not support this principle. A small number of respondents (3.9%) did not understand the question or chose not to answer it.

1. Background

Local authorities have been under increasing pressure from European legislation to decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill. Land available for landfill is becoming increasingly scarce, landfill tax is increasing and disposal of waste to landfill has significant environmental implications. Recycling is one method that local authorities are adopting to decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill.

The current dry recycling rate in Thurrock is 27%. However, to meet future targets significant changes the recycling services are required to increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. The projected recycling rates for the different service models considered by Thurrock Council are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed recycling and composting options

	Option 1 – 40% recycling rate	Option 2- 35% recycling rate	Option 3 – 30% recycling rate	Option 4 – 27% recycling rate
Re-use & Recycling Centre	New Re-use & Recycling Centre	New Re-use & Recycling Centre	New Re-use & Recycling Centre	No new Re-use & Recycling Centre
Dry recycling collection	Weekly with wheeled bins	Weekly with wheeled bins	Weekly with wheeled bins	Weekly with blue box
Kitchen and garden waste collections	Weekly with wheeled bin	Weekly with wheeled bin	Collection of garden waste with sacks; no collection of kitchen waste	Collection of garden waste with sacks; no collection of kitchen waste
Residual waste collection	Fortnightly collection	Weekly collection	Weekly collection	Weekly collection

In early 2008, Thurrock Council embarked on an extensive public consultation to gain a better understanding of residents' views relating to recycling and the proposed waste collection service options.

1.1 Postal survey

A self-completion survey leaflet, consisting of nine questions, was sent to all 64,000 Thurrock households.

A comprehensive consultation pack, giving detailed information of a range of different recycling and waste treatment options under consideration by the council was sent to 6,300 households, which were selected to comprise a representative sample of the

property types in Thurrock. In addition to the nine questions of the first leaflet, the consultation pack survey contained one question on the preferred recycling and composting options proposed by Thurrock Council.

1.2 Doorstep survey

In order to boost the number and the representativeness of surveys completed, the council commissioned Waste Watch to follow up the postal surveys with a doorstep survey with the 6,300 households which had received the consultation pack.

The doorstep survey was carried out over a three-week period with a target of completing a minimum of 1,500 surveys and was based on the same nine questions as the first postal survey previously sent to all residents as outlined below:

1. What type of property do you occupy?
2. Do you have a wheeled bin?
3. How often do you recycle the following items from the kerbside (paper, cardboard, tins and cans, plastic bottles, glass and garden waste)?
4. What would make recycling easier for you?
5. Does your property allow you to accommodate any extra wheeled bins for recycling/ composting?
6. Would you like any of the following extra recyclable materials collected from your door (kitchen waste, textiles, all plastics, other)?
7. How much extra council tax would you be prepared to pay to increase recycling above current levels (nothing, £5, £10, £25)?
8. Do you compost at home?
9. Do you support the principle of using waste left after recycling/composting to generate heat and power?

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample selection

The sample selected for both the full postal consultation and the doorstep survey consisted of approximately 6,300 households drawn from 20 areas in Thurrock. The households were selected to provide a representative sample of the different property types present in Thurrock including, detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, houses, flats and maisonettes and caravans. The selected areas and housing types are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected areas for the survey

	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats and maisonettes	Caravans	Total
Aveley and Uplands Ward	71	91	83	69	0	314
Belhus	21	38	125	120	0	304
Chadwell St. Mary	0	94	117	110	0	321
Chafford and North Stifford	97	73	104	35	0	309
Corringham and Fobbing	97	80	51	72	18	318
East Tilbury	21	163	71	68	0	323
Grays Riverside	40	40	85	153	0	318
Grays Thurrock	58	111	116	39	0	324
Homesteads	83	44	167	24	0	318
Little Thurrock	45	127	109	38	0	319
Little Thurrock Rectory	69	122	133	0	0	324
Ockendon	50	105	117	34	0	306
Orsett	82	207	32	60	0	304
South Chafford	122	37	63	93	0	315
Stanford East and Corringham Town	17	110	113	76	0	316
Stanford-le-Hope West	38	146	70	49	0	303
Stifford Clays	100	100	119	0	0	319
Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	33	138	92	50	0	313
Tilbury St. Chads	1	126	81	100	0	308
West Thurrock and South Stifford	1	109	106	94	0	310
Total	1,046	2,061	1,954	1,284	18	6,286

2.2 Recycling surveyors

Six Recycling Surveyors were recruited for this project including two Team Leaders to manage two separate teams. As agreed with ngage, the Recycling Surveyors aimed to complete a minimum of 1,500 doorstep surveys, equivalent to approximately 25% of the selected sample.

Prior to the commencement of the survey on 4 March 2008, the Recycling Surveyors underwent a one-day training session tailored to the Thurrock doorstep survey. This training covered the following:

- principles and practice of doorstepping and surveying
- health and safety issues
- background information about current recycling services in Thurrock
- the consultation process on the proposed recycling and composting service options.

2.3 Doorstep survey

All Waste Watch Recycling Surveyors adhere to an established survey protocol. Where contact with a resident was made, the Recycling Surveyors introduce themselves and state the purpose of their visit. The Recycling Surveyors would then enquire if the resident had received the 'Limiting landfill in Thurrock' consultation pack whilst showing the resident a copy of this. If the resident had seen the pack, they were then asked whether they had completed and sent off the questionnaire.

Where this was the case or the resident stated that they preferred to complete the survey themselves, the Recycling Surveyors recorded this on their logsheet and thanked the resident for completing the postal survey.

Where residents stated that they had not yet read the consultation pack or completed the survey form, they were invited to undertake the 9-question questionnaire on the doorstep which was recorded by the Recycling Surveyors onto their logsheets.

After these questions had been recorded, each resident was asked if they had any further comments about recycling in Thurrock. After this, three optional demographic questions on age, ethnicity and disabilities were also asked and recorded.

In cases where the resident was very enthusiastic or wanted to know and contribute more the resident was offered a 'Limiting Landfill in Thurrock' consultation pack and

was invited to complete the tenth question, regarding future recycling options, in their own time and send this back to the council.

For properties where no contact was made, the Recycling Surveyors recorded this on the logsheet, along with the approximate time of the visit, to allow for a possible re-visit at another time.

The Waste Watch Project Officer undertook quality checks of each Recycling Surveyor on the first day of doorstepping (Tuesday 4th March 2008) and half-way through the project (on Friday 14th March 2008) to ensure the requisite standards were being met.

Once the data was collected the Project Officer who managed the project entered data into a Microsoft Access database provided by ngage. The results and overall summary of the survey findings are detailed within this report below.

3. Results

3.1 Summary findings

A total of 1,991 residents were contacted as part of the survey. Of these 1,544 completed the survey on the doorstep and 447 stated that they had already completed and returned the survey or wished to do so in their own time.

Table 3: Summary survey findings

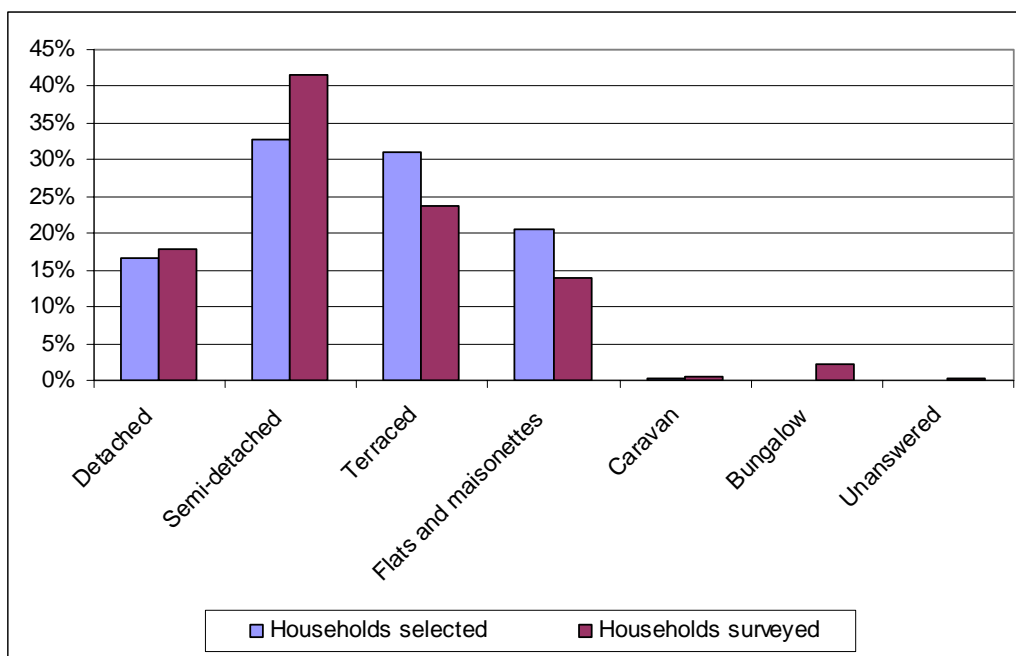
Number of residents contacted	1,991
Number of residents surveyed	1,544
Number of respondents who had already completed the questionnaire or preferred to do this in their own time	447
Most frequently recycled material as stated by the respondents	Paper
Least frequently material as stated by the respondents	Garden waste
Most common response to what would make recycling easier for the respondent	Wheeled recycling bins
Respondents able to accommodate one or more wheeled bins	54.9%
Material most requested to be included in recycling service	All plastics
Respondents not prepared to pay any extra council tax to increase recycling	72.8%
Respondents composting at home	21.8%
Respondents supporting the generation of heat and power from waste left after recycling and composting	85.6%

3.2 Housing type

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the housing types of the sample of households selected by Thurrock Council and of the households surveyed as part of the doorstep survey.

The most common housing type surveyed were semi-detached houses with 41.5%. Terraced (23.8%) and detached houses (17.8%) were the next most common type of residence surveyed. In addition to the categories used by Thurrock Council in their selection process, a small number of residents classified their property as a bungalow, accounting for approximately 2% of the households surveyed.

Figure 1: Comparison of housing type of sample of selected households and households surveyed

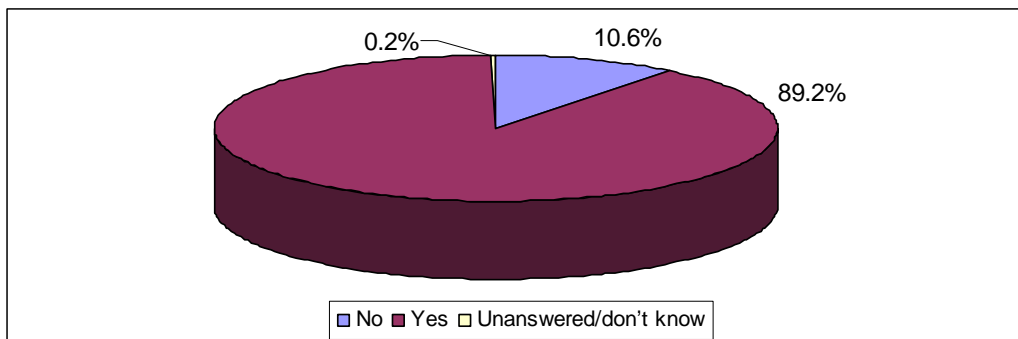


As can be seen, there is a notable over-representation of semi-detached houses, which were the most frequently surveyed type of property. As may be expected, it was more difficult to make contact with residents in flats and maisonettes and also terraced houses, resulting in an under-representation of these housing types.

3.3 Wheeled bin ownership

Figure 2 shows the proportion of bin ownership across all households surveyed.

Figure 2: Wheeled Bin Ownership

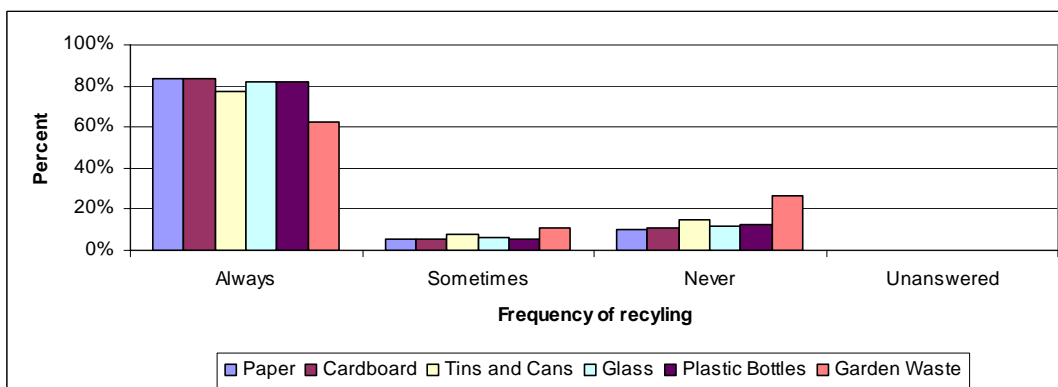


Almost 90% of respondents stated that they currently owned one or more wheeled bins for residual waste. Only 10.6% of households surveyed did not have a wheeled bin, which is likely to be due to the living in properties with space limitations, such as flats.

3.4 Frequency of current recycling

Figure 3 shows a comparison between the six different recyclable materials currently collected and the frequency of recycling within the kerbside collection service.

Figure 3: Frequency of current recycling by material



Claimed recycling frequency was high (approximately 80%) for all materials collected from the doorstep, except garden waste, with the majority of survey respondents stating that they always recycled these.

Paper and cardboard are the most frequently recycled materials with 83% of respondents stating that they always recycled these materials through their kerbside service.

Garden waste was the least recycled material with only 60% claiming that they always recycled this and 26.9% of respondents stating to never recycle garden waste. However, the survey included a proportion of flats without access to gardens or to the garden waste collection service.

Tins and Cans were the least recycled dry material with 14.9% of respondents claiming to never recycle tins and cans through their recycling service.

3.5 Options for easier recycling

Respondents were asked whether there was anything that would make recycling easier for them. Surveyors would read out five options with respondents able to name multiple options and adding any other suggestions as appropriate.

Figure 4: What would make recycling easier for you?

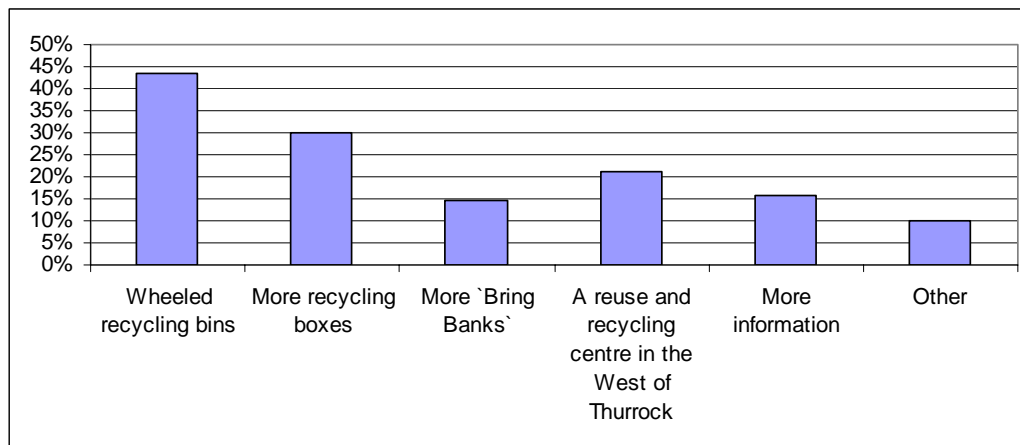


Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents that considered these options would make recycling easier for them. Increased recycling container capacity was seen as the best ways of helping people to recycle, with over 40% of respondents choosing the 'wheeled recycling bins' options and a further 30% requesting 'more recycling boxes'. A new Reuse and Recycling Centre in the West of Thurrock was the third most popular option (21%) for making recycling easier. More 'Bring Banks' had the lowest amount of responses (14.7%).

Figure 5: 'Other' suggestions for making recycling easier

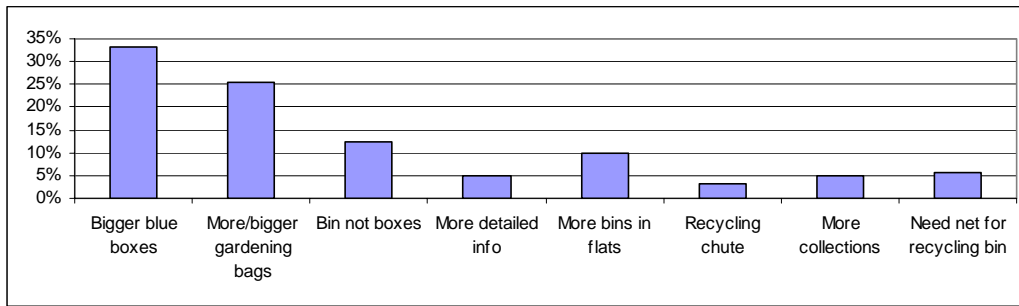


Figure 5 represents a breakdown of the main responses from the 'Other' category (10%) in Figure 4. The main suggestions were 'Bigger blue boxes' (33.1%), followed by 'more or bigger green garden waste bags' (25.6%) and respondents requesting recycling 'bins instead of boxes' (12.4%).

3.6 Accommodation of additional wheeled bins

Respondents were asked whether they could accommodate any additional wheeled bins within their property and, if so, whether they could accommodate one or two extra wheeled bins.

Figure 6: Additional wheeled bins – comparison between property types

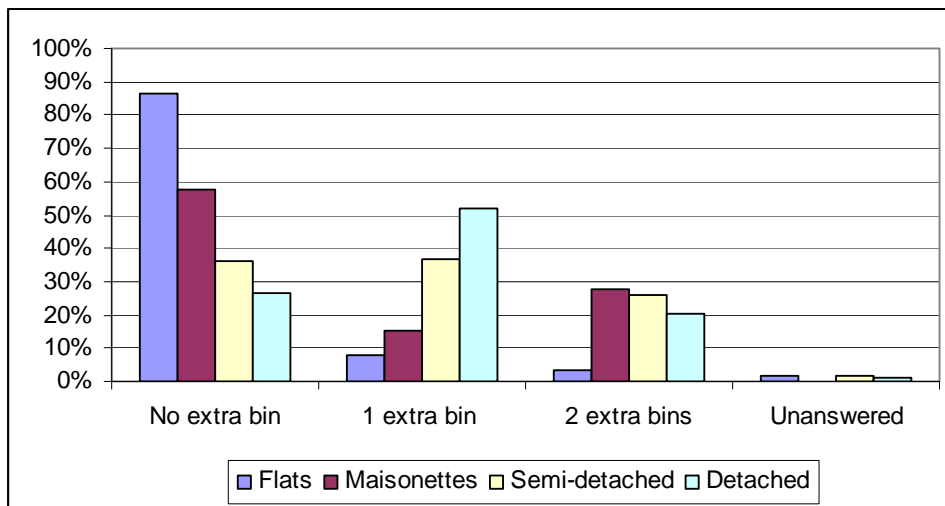
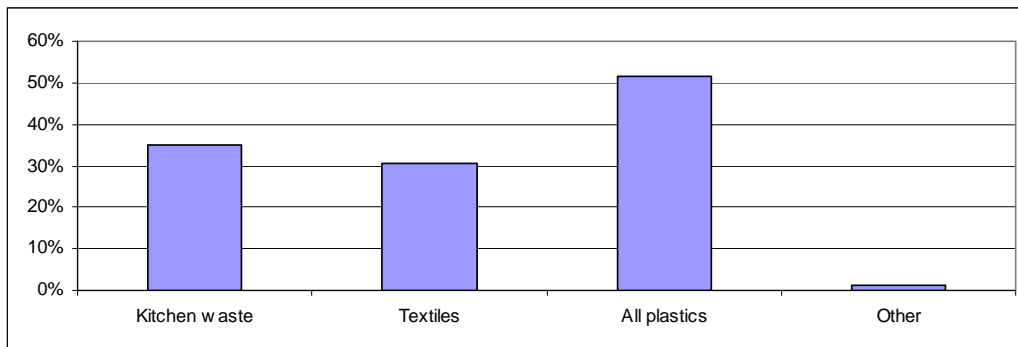


Figure 6 shows a comparison of the ability to accommodate additional wheeled bins by property type. As may be expected, a large majority of residents living in flats (87%) and maisonettes (58%) stated that they are unable to accommodate an extra wheeled bin. On the other hand, 62% and 72% respectively of respondents living in semi-detached or detached properties stated that they would be able to accommodate one or two more bins.

3.7 Additional recyclable materials collected

Respondents were asked whether they would like kitchen waste, textiles and all plastics to be included in their kerbside collection. Respondents could name multiple materials they would like to be collected and were also given the opportunity to name other materials they would find useful to be collected from the doorstep.

Figure 7: Demand for additional materials collected



As Figure 7 shows that over half of respondents (51.4%) stated that they would like all plastics to be included in the kerbside collection. Over one third of respondents (35%) stated that they would like kitchen waste to be collected and 30.5% also wanted textiles incorporated into the kerbside recycling collection service.

Within the 'Other' category, which only consisted of 17 responses, the main extra material named was bulky waste such as furniture and electrical items such as computers.

3.8 Willingness to pay extra council tax to increase recycling

Respondents were asked whether they would be prepared to pay any extra council tax to increase recycling above current levels. Respondents were given four options - nothing, £5, £10, or £25 per year.

Figure 8: Willingness to pay extra council tax

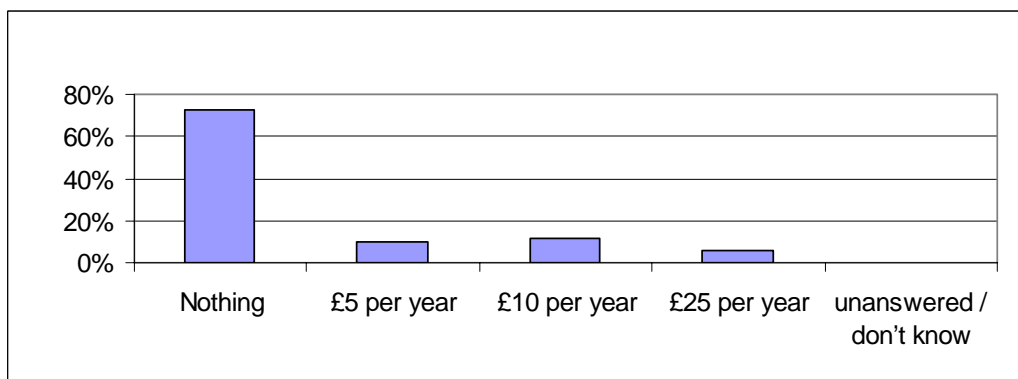


Figure 8 shows the overall response across all housing types. As can be seen, the large majority of respondents (72.8%) are not in favour of paying any additional council tax to increase recycling above current levels. Of the 27% of respondents who are willing to pay extra council tax, 11.6% are willing to pay £10 per year, while 9.7% are prepared to pay £5 per year and only 5.6% of respondents are prepared to pay £25 extra per year.

Figure 9: Willingness to pay extra council tax by property type

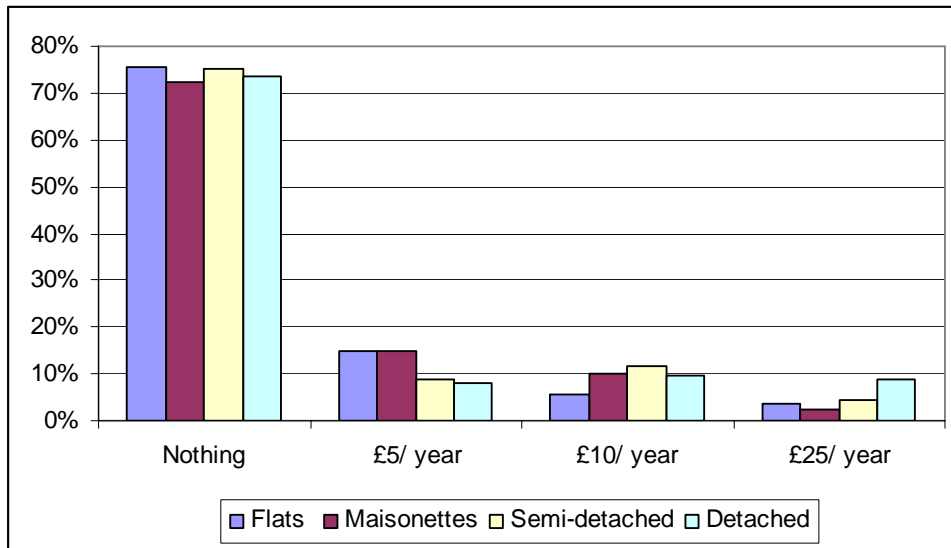


Figure 9 shows a comparison of the responses regarding willingness to pay extra council tax to help increase recycling by property type. As can be seen, the vast majority in each property category (ranging from 70% - 75%) were unwilling to accept any council tax increase.

Among those willing to accept a council tax rise in the name of recycling, residents of flats and maisonettes were more likely approve of smaller increases (approximately 15% would accept a £5 rise), whereas residents of larger properties showed greater readiness to pay larger amounts (16% of residents of semi-detacheds and 18% of detached house occupiers).

Overall, occupiers of maisonettes showed the greatest readiness for council tax increases to improve Thurrock's recycling rate, with 27.5% of respondents willing to pay more.

Figure 10: Households willing to pay extra council tax by property type

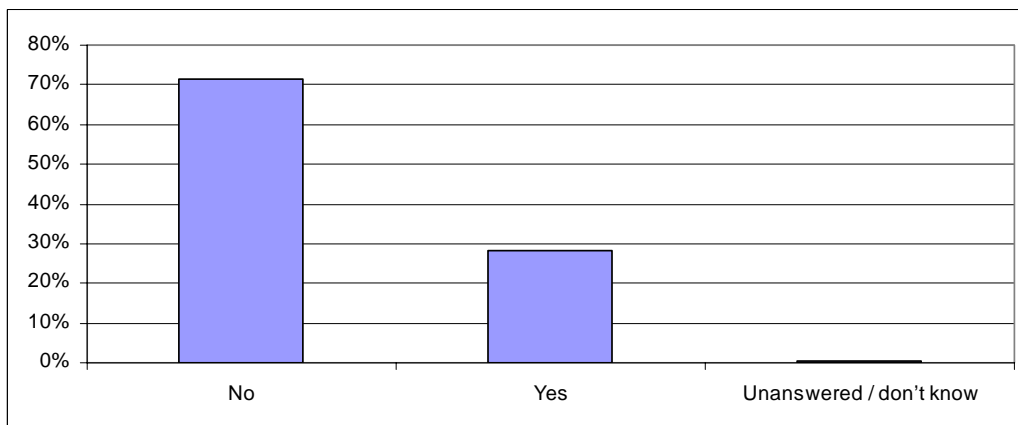


Figure 10 shows a breakdown of only those respondents willing to pay more council tax by property type. Here it is taken as implicit that a household prepared to pay £25 per year extra, would agree to a £5 or £10 increase and equally that those accepting a £10 increase would approve of a £5 rise.

3.10 Home composting

Respondents were asked whether they compost any of their organic waste at home.

Figure 11: Composting at home



As Figure 11 shows, less than a third (28.1%) of respondents currently home compost their garden and/or kitchen waste and the vast majority of respondents (71.6%) stated that they did not.

3.11 Using waste left after recycling to generate heat and power

Respondents were asked whether they supported the principle of using waste left after composting and recycling to generate heat and power.

Figure 12: Support using waste left after recycling to generate heat and power

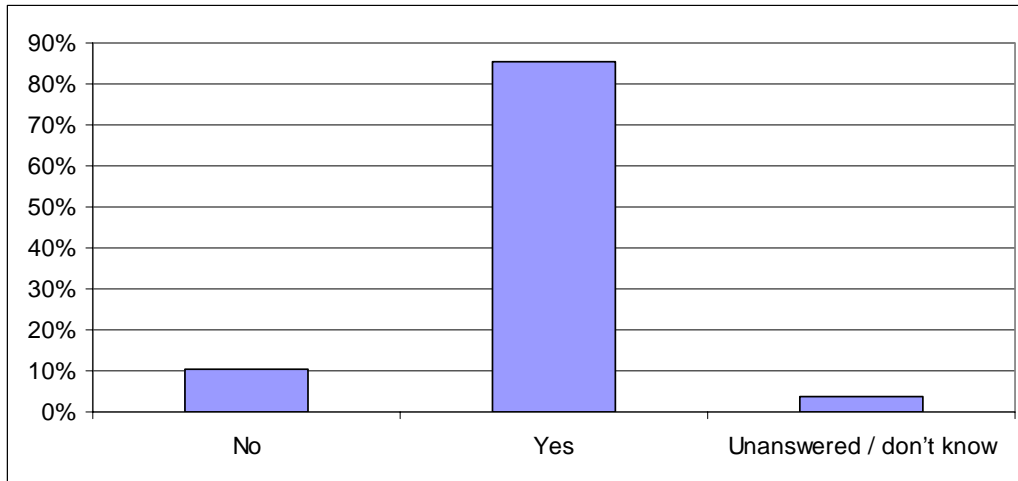


Figure 12 shows that a large majority (85.6%) of respondents support this principle and only 10.6% of respondents did not support this idea.

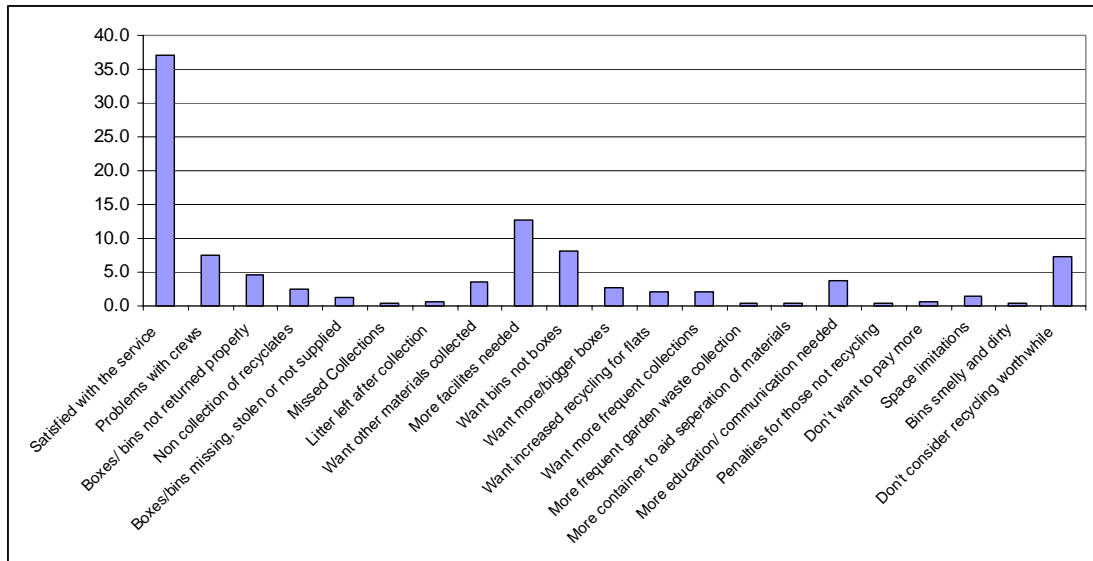
A small number of respondents (3.9%) did not understand the question or chose not to answer it. The Recycling Surveyors reported that on some occasions they needed to rephrase this questions a number of times.

Given the complexity of the question, the overwhelmingly positive response to this question should be treated with caution, as possibly a greater number of respondents did not completely grasp this question but did not wish to admit to this.

3.12 Additional comments

Respondents were invited to give additional comments on the recycling service in Thurrock and 657 respondents (44%) took this opportunity to provide further feedback. These comments can be seen in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Additional comments



The main comment made was satisfaction with the service (37%). Other comments regarding the service included problems with the crew (7.5%), bins and boxes not being returned properly after collection (4.6%), recyclables being left behind (2.4%), boxes or bins being missing or not having been supplied in the first place (1.2%) and missed collections (0.5%).

Some 13% of respondents believed that they needed more recycling facilities and services in general. A further 8.1% reiterated that they would like to have bins instead of boxes for their recycling and 3.5% emphasised that a greater range of materials should be collected.

A minority of 7.3% of respondents stated that they considered recycling was not worthwhile, while 1.5% cited space limitations as a reason for not participating.

4. Demographic questions

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked four optional demographic questions. The questions related to gender, age, ethnicity and disabilities. Of the 1,544 survey respondents, 1,388 (89.9%) chose to answer one or more of these questions.

4.1 Gender

Figure 14: Gender

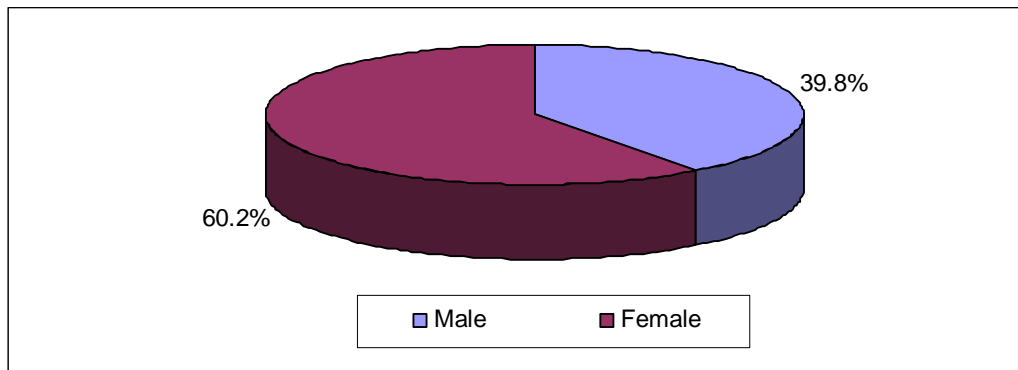


Figure 14 shows that of the 1,388 respondents to this question, the majority were women (60.2%) and 39.8% were men. This breakdown can be assumed to be fairly representative of the entire survey.

4.2 Age

Figure 15: Age

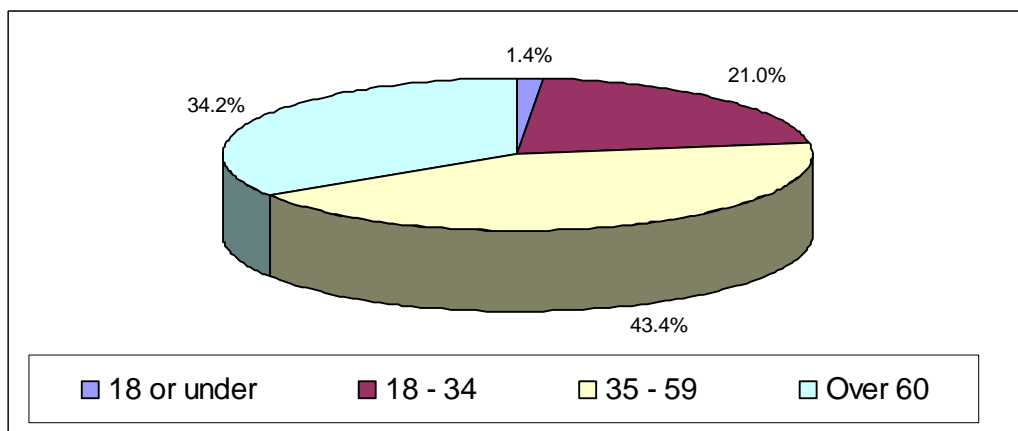


Figure 15 shows the age distribution of survey respondents. The largest group of respondents (43.4%) was aged between 35 and 59 years and a further 34% were

over 60 years old. Twenty-one percent of respondents were aged 18 to 34 years and under-18s had the smallest representation with only 1.4%.

4.3 Ethnic origin

A total of 1,353 respondents chose to answer the question regarding their ethnic origin.

Figure 16: Ethnic origin

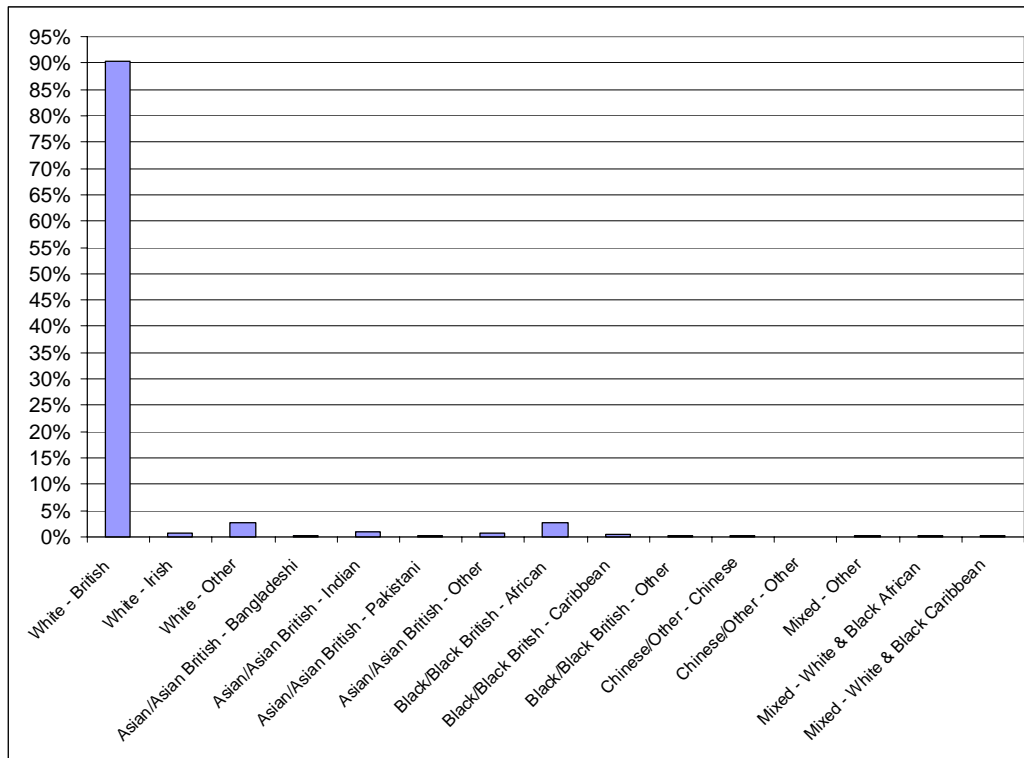
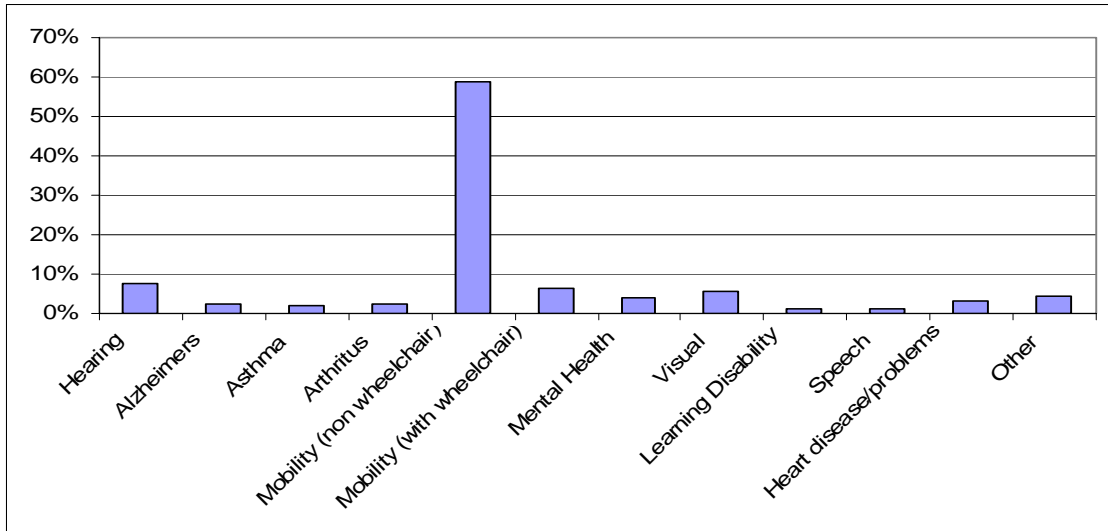


Figure 16 shows that the large majority (90.2%) stated their ethnicity as White British. Of the other ethnic origins the next most stated were Black/Black British - African (2.8%), White – Other (2.6%) and Asian/Asian British – Indian (0.9%).

4.4 Disabilities

Respondents were finally asked whether they considered themselves to have a disability. Approximately 10% (156) of all respondents stated that they had one or more disabilities.

Figure 17: Disabilities



The most frequently cited disability related to mobility with 59% of respondents being non-wheelchair users and 6.4% requiring a wheelchair. The next most common disabilities were hearing disabilities (7.7%).

5. Appendix – Survey questionnaire

Good morning/ afternoon. We are carrying out a survey about waste and recycling in your area on behalf of Thurrock Council. Would you be happy to go through a short questionnaire with me – this will only take a few minutes?

1. What type of property do you live in?

This question in most cases can be filled in by looking at the house, but seek clarification with the resident if you are unsure.

2. Thurrock Council have recently sent out a consultation pack and questionnaire to households in your area. Do you recall receiving this? (show a copy of the consultation pack)

If Yes

a) Have you had a chance to read through it and send off the completed questionnaire?

If Yes:

That's great – thank you for participating in the survey.

Leave and remember to tick the logsheet to show they have sent off the questionnaire!

If **Not** received or read:

b) Ok, no problem. I have a few more short questions for you.

If they have not received it or not read it record N/A and carry on with the other questions.

3. Do you have a wheeled bin?

4. Thinking about your kerbside recycling collection, how often would you say you recycle the following materials, which I will read out to you. In your answers, could you please use the categories of Always, Sometimes or Never

Read out the list of materials and record an A (Always), S (Sometimes) or N (Never) in the appropriate column of your logsheet.

5. Thinking about recycling in general, would any of the following make recycling easier for you?

- Wheeled bins for recycling
- More recycling boxes
- More Bring Banks
- A new Re-use and Recycling Centre in the west of Thurrock
- More information about recycling

Is there anything else that would make it easier for you to recycle?

6. Would you be able to accommodate any extra wheelie bins on your property for the collection of other recyclable materials?

If **yes** clarify whether they could accommodate one or two more wheelie bins

7. Would you like any of the following recyclable materials collected from your door:

- Kitchen waste (i.e. 'food waste' if clarification is required)
- Textiles
- All plastics

8. Can you think of any other materials you would like collected from your door?

9. Would you be prepared to pay extra council tax to help increase recycling above current levels? If so, how much would you be prepared to pay? Read out the four options.

- £25
- £10
- £5
- Nothing

10. Do you compost at home?

11. Do you support the principle of using the waste left after recycling and composting to generate heat and power?

1) What is your postcode? Or is your postcode

2) Do you have any further comments about recycling in Thurrock?

Demographic Monitoring Questions

i. Male or female (should not be asked)

ii. Could I ask your age? Are you:

- Under 18
- 18 to 34
- 35 to 59
- over 60

iii. How would you describe your ethnic origin?

iv. Do you consider yourself disabled?

If yes:

How would you describe your disability?

They are all my questions. Thank you so much for your time and contribution to recycling in Thurrock.