Autumn 2011 Citizens' Panel – results in relation to waste and recycling services

Background and Introduction

Development and Environment commissioned the North Somerset Council Citizens’ Panel to assess residents’ satisfaction with services and, in particular, the impact of the new waste and recycling collection services, which were introduced during the summer of 2010.

Of the 1,035 panel members, 719 people responded (333 by post and 386 on-line). The profile of respondents was broadly in line with the demographic and socio economic profile of the area, with the main exception that the sample was over represented by older people and under represented by younger people. Questions were asked about the use of the services, satisfaction with the services, recycling behaviour and attitudes and contacting the council.

Executive Summary

Overall, the results are extremely positive with very high reported levels of knowledge, usage and satisfaction and positive attitudes towards recycling. In cases where historical data is available, most showed a significant improvement compared with previous years. The results indicate that, overall, residents value highly the new services that were introduced during the course of last summer. This information, together with the performance information in relation to actual recycling / waste minimisation, all helps to build evidence to indicate that the new services, rolled out in the summer of 2010 are delivering both in terms of customer satisfaction and service outcomes.

Issues to be addressed include:-

- The cleanliness of the street after the collection
- Not being able to recycle plastic film and black plastic
- The need for more information about how to separate recycling and the need for more boxes/ boxes with separators
- Returning of bags and boxes to the right place by crews
- The need to give more information to residents about what happens to recycling materials after collection
- Encouraging residents to use the website to report problems/ request services

These results will be received by the Council’s Waste Steering Group, which includes the Executive Member for Environment and by the Community Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel. The results will be used to inform the Council’s new waste strategy and waste service communication and engagement plan, beginning with a special section in North Somerset Life in February 2012.
Overall satisfaction

Overall, the survey shows very high and improving levels of satisfaction with all waste and recycling services. Satisfaction levels rising to the low to mid 90% for every element of the service compare very favourably with a recent national survey (conducted in the same month, September 2011) which shows overall satisfaction with “rubbish and recycling collections” at 78%.

A large majority of respondents also state that they think that the service has improved.

1 Attitudes to waste and recycling in Great Britain, 2011 – Icaro consulting, September 2011 www.icaro-consulting.co.uk
Recycling Behaviour

The positive impact on recycling behaviour is pronounced, with three quarters of respondents reporting that they recycle a lot more (in terms of bulk and weight) ......

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether recycle more or less compared to 'a couple of years ago' (in terms of bulk and weight, and considering all recycling together food, green box, green bag) (% of valid responses)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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<td>1</td>
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... and 84% reporting that they recycle a wider range of materials.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Whether use green box for a wider range of things now compared to a couple of years ago (% of valid responses)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
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Ownership and usage

- Ownership of bags / boxes remains high and reasonably static
  - 97% green box, with 76% of those having more than one
  - 95% brown box
  - 92% green bag

- Usage amongst receptacle owners is high and static; usage “in the last week”
  - 97% green box
  - 85% brown box
  - 85% green bag

Recycling service

- Satisfaction with green box service is very high at 94% and improving
- Satisfaction with food waste recycling element of the service is also very high at 91% (rising from 81% in 2010)

![Satisfaction with aspects of green box service](chart.png)

- 84% of respondents report that they separate materials within their green box, although free text comments suggest that residents would like to understand how to do this better.
- 18% of respondents said they had had a missed recycling collection in the past 3 months (we are checking on how this compares with the actual reported number of missed collections)
Garden Waste Service

- Satisfaction with the green bag (garden waste) service is also high and generally improving.

![Satisfaction with aspects of garden waste ('green bag') service](chart)

- 13% of respondents report a missed collection in the past 3 months (we are checking on how this compares with the actual reported number of missed collections).
- Most respondents report putting out one or two bags (57%), but 25% say that they put out four or more.
- Those who put out more than 2 bags are more likely to be from wealthy areas, living in owner occupied detached houses and from areas outside Weston-super-Mare.
Bring sites and HWRCs

- Use of recycling banks / bring sites has reduced significantly over the past 2 years since the introduction of the new kerbside services, with only 10% reporting weekly usage in 2011, compared with 38% in 2009.
- Usage of HWRCs remains static, with 21% reporting weekly usage.
- Satisfaction with HWRCs is very high and improving.

Satisfaction with aspects of HWRC
(% of those who have used HWRC in previous 12 months)

- Overall, with the HWRC: 94%
- The range of materials that can be recycled: 93%
- How tidy the site is: 94%
- How helpful the staff are: 90%
- The opening hours: 88%
- How ‘user-friendly’ the site is: 86%
- Easy to put things in right place: 84%
- Ease of access Mon-Fri 9-5: 77%
- Ease of access outside Mon-Fri 9-5: 70%

*2005 = satisfaction with “how well run the site is”
Refuse collection

Satisfaction with the service is very high and improving

### Satisfaction with aspects of general household waste (e.g. wheelie bin) service

(\% of valid responses, excludes 'Don't knows')

- **Very or fairly satisfied**
- **Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- **Very or fairly dissatisfied**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Very or fairly satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very or fairly dissatisfied</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the service for the collection of rubbish</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reliability of the collection of rubbish</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That your wheelie bin is always returned to your property</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The attitude of the collectors</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How ‘clean and tidy’ the street is following collection</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Satisfaction with general household waste (residual waste) service

(\% of valid responses very or fairly satisfied, excludes 'Don't knows')

- **2000 BVPI** 88
- **2003 BVPI** 85
- **2006 BVPI** 84
- **Place Survey 2008** 85
- **Spring 2009 Cit Pan** 87
- **Autumn 2011 Cit Pan** 92
• 10% of respondents report a missed refuse collection in the last 3 months (we are checking on how this compares with the actual reported number of missed collections)

• 17% of respondents say that they leave out side waste “sometimes” or more often

• Plastic film and black plastic containers are reported as the largest source of materials placed in residual waste

Knowledge, attitudes and contacting the Council

• 76% of respondents report that they recycle “a lot more” than they did a couple of years ago, with a further 17% saying they recycle “a bit more”

• 82% say that the new waste and recycling services are “better” (12% “no difference”, 6% “worse”)

• Most respondents report confidence in their knowledge about what goes in the various receptacles, although free text comments suggest that many need help with understanding how to best separate their recycling

• Respondents do not, however feel well informed about what happens to recycling materials after collection or that they can use the internet to report missed collections / request new boxes

• 22% of respondents say they have contacted the Council in the last 3 months about their waste and recycling services; 50% of which were about missed collections and 19% about ordering a new bag or box

• 77% of those contacts were by phone

• 80% were satisfied with the way they were dealt with

• 72% were satisfied that they “got what they wanted”

• 54% of respondents report that they much prefer or prefer to use the website for reporting problems; 35% or reluctant or very reluctant and 12% are not sure
Detail

There is a vast amount of detail in the data, including lots of information about various demographic groups, which need to be analysed and used to inform our communications strategy and plan.

Free text comments

There are 30 pages of free text comments, which will be analysed. They contain a huge amount of positive feedback. At first glance, the main issues to be concerned with appear to be:-

• The cleanliness of the street after the collection

• Not being able to recycling plastic film and black plastic

• The need for more information about how to separate and the need for more boxes / boxed with lids and separators

• Returning of bags and boxes to the right place

Katherine Sokol
December 2011