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Let's talk
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LET'S TALK WASTE

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

January 2023



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Waste consultation.
- The consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 5th December 2022 and ended on the 9th January 2023.
- Views were sought on the following proposal;
ALL households across Rhondda Cynon Taf move to a three-weekly black bag/wheelie bin collection. A move to 3 weekly collections, will need to be supported by the continuation of the existing waste limits, which is currently 2 black bags per fortnight (the equivalent of 1 black bag per week) and would move to 3 black bags or a closed wheeled bin every 3 weeks.
- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;
 - An online [Let's Talk project](#) was developed, which included background information, helpful links, videos and a survey to enable people to be informed and give their views.
 - Promotion online on the Council's website/social media
 - An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the project and encourage participation.
 - A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request.
 - The proposals were presented and discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14th December 2022.
- People were asked if they would support a change in black bag/wheelie bin collection frequency if it safeguarded other key services. The 4087 responses received to this question were fairly balanced, with a slight majority of respondents supporting the proposed change, if it safeguarded other key services (50.4%).
- Respondents were asked if they supported the proposed change in frequency of black bag/wheelie bin waste collections across the County Borough to three weekly. Of 4100 responses received, 46.1% of respondents agreed with the proposal.
- The Cabinet report suggests that to increase recycling rates to the 70% target, a move to 3 weekly collections will need to be supported by the continuation of the existing waste limits which is currently 2 black bags per fortnight (the equivalent of 1 black bag per week) and would move to 3 black bags or a closed wheeled bin every 3 weeks. Respondents were asked if they supported this approach. A slight majority of the 4091 respondents said their household would not support this approach (51.6%).
- Of the 4098 responses received, 51.7% said that they had a pet and the majority said they disposed of waste in the black bag/wheelie bin (67.9%).

- People were asked if they would support a change to a reusable recycling sack and if the household would be able to store and use reusable sacks. The results in the table below show that the majority of the 4097 respondents to this question would support a change to a reusable recycling sack (62.2%) and would be able to store and use reusable sacks (55.7%).
- There are currently barriers to 100% recycling such as the packaging used in the goods we buy, or no other alternatives for some products we use. Respondents were asked what they thought the Council can do to encourage residents to dispose of less general waste and improve recycling? The following themes were identified from the 1550 responses.
 - The Council should collect a wider range of recyclables at the kerbside
 - Supermarkets and other businesses should be forced to reduce non-recyclable waste
 - Supply of current recycling bags has been unreliable, and bins would be more helpful
- Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments on the proposals or suggest any alternative proposals, the following are a selection of the themes identified.
 - Existing wheelie bins are too small for the proposed changes
 - Problems with open sacks or containers for recycling
 - Concerns about public health, vermin, smells, fly-tipping and general street waste increases
 - Disposal of animal waste and sanitary waste
 - Council Tax and perceived value for money
 - Larger families and residents without storage space
 - Disabled or non-driver residents cannot access tips/Community Recycling Centers
- Overall, there was concern about hygiene and street cleanliness, with a number of respondents reporting fears that existing rat and litter problems would be made worse by the proposed changes.
- A number of comments raised concerns about greater impacts on groups with protected characteristics including age, disability, sex and pregnancy. There are also concerns that link to socio-economic measures including both household deprivation (those without cars, for instance) and area deprivation (lack of services/ access to public services). Attention is also drawn by many comments to the realities of housing stock across the area (a lot of terraces, many without front garden or other external storage space, narrow lanes and steep inclines).
- Overall, 4110 (online) responses were received to the consultation and 5 emails.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Waste and Recycling consultation.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the online questionnaire.
- 1.5 Section 5 presents the feedback received from letters and emails.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has previously noted that unprecedented challenges lie ahead for ALL services across local government due to the ongoing economic impact of Covid-19, Brexit, the conflict in Ukraine and the Cost of Living crisis, with double digit inflation and three-fold increases in local authority energy costs forecast for next year.
- 2.2 In such circumstances it is vital that the Council avoids non-recycling fines by meeting Welsh Government's recycling targets of 70% by 2024/25 and supporting Wales' efforts to become net-zero by 2030.
- 2.3 The Council now needs to explore all available options to increase the recycling rates across the County Borough. The proposal put forward for consultation was:
 - ALL households across Rhondda Cynon Taf move to a three-weekly black bag/wheelie bin collection. A move to 3 weekly collections, will need to be supported by the continuation of the existing waste limits, which is currently 2 black bags per fortnight (the equivalent of 1 black bag per week) and would move to 3 black bags or a closed wheeled bin every 3 weeks.

This proposal would help the Council to:

- Continue to deliver a FULL WEEKLY recycling service alongside these changes, including nappies, food waste, dry recycling and green waste (seasonal) - which should make up almost 80% of weekly household waste.
- Save vital funding of £800,000 in running costs and significantly reduce its annual carbon footprint.
- Divert any savings achieved to safeguard other key services such as social care or education.

- 2.4 The current recycling rate for Rhondda Cynon Taf stands at 67.48% and the Council must act now to ensure that it is not subjected to large fines of £140,000 for every 1% that it fails to reach the 70% target. This huge sum of money, at an already difficult time, could result in services having to be cut or affected to pay the fines.
- 2.5 It is estimated that the contents of 8 out of every 10 black bags that are put out for collection could be recycled, and the proposed changes would help us all stop and think about every item that is thrown away – and whether they can be recycled.
- 2.6 The Council was one of the first Councils in Wales to move away from weekly waste collections and limit the number of black bags that are collected. Over the past few years these changes have helped achieve a huge rise in the recycling rate for the whole County Borough.
- 2.7 The Council has come a very long way over the last decade to improve recycling rates and that is thanks to the efforts of our residents and our dedicated staff. In 2013, when fortnightly collections were introduced, the County Borough had a recycling rate of 43.3% and was facing potential fines for not hitting the Welsh Government target of 52% for 2013/14 - today the Council has a 67.48% recycling rate, a 24% increase.
- 2.8 The proposal should it be implemented is projected to achieve an increase in recycling equal to 2,600 Tonnes and significantly reduce its annual carbon footprint, equating to a 1.9% increase in the Council's overall recycling rate (based on 2021 figures), (increasing from 67.48% to 69.38%).

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Let's Talks Waste consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 5th December 2022 and ended on the 9th January 2023.
- 3.2 This section presents the methodology which was utilised to promote the consultation and collect feedback on the proposals.
- 3.3 An online [Let's Talk project](#) was developed, which included background information, helpful links, videos and a survey to enable people to be informed and give their views.
- 3.4 The project was promoted online through social media.
- 3.5 An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the project and encourage participation.
- 3.6 A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request.
- 3.7 The proposals were presented and discussed at the [Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14th December 2022.](#)
- 3.8 Overall, 4110 (online) responses were received to the consultation and 5 emails.

4 Questionnaire Results

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the survey hosted on [Let's Talk Waste](#), which received 4110 responses. Not every individual completing the survey would have provided a response for each of the questions asked. A selection of comments are provided and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.¹

Collection Frequency

- 4.2 Respondents were informed that the projected budget savings for this change would be £800,000 in running costs per year and significantly reduce its annual carbon footprint. Such savings could then be diverted to safeguard other key Council services such as social care or education.

People were asked if they would support a change in black bag/wheelie bin collection frequency if it safeguarded other key services.

Table 1: Would you support a change in black bag/wheelie bin collection frequency, if it safeguarded other key services?

	%
Yes	50.4
No	49.6

The 4087 responses received to this question were fairly balanced, with a slight majority of respondents supporting the proposed change if it safeguarded other key services (50.4%).

¹ Between the 22nd December and the 7th January there was a notable increase in respondents filling in the questionnaire in favour of the preferred options, as compared to those respondents filling in the survey against the proposal.

- 4.3 Respondents were asked if they supported the proposed change in frequency of black bag/wheelie bin waste collections across the County Borough to three weekly.

Table 2: The Council is proposing to change the frequency of black bag/wheelie bin waste collections to 3 weekly (saving £800,000 per year). Do you agree with the proposal?

	%
Yes	46.1
No	53.9

Of 4100 responses received, 46.1% of respondents agreed with the proposal.

- 4.4 The Cabinet report suggests that to increase recycling rates to the 70% target, a move to 3 weekly collections will need to be supported by the continuation of the existing waste limits which is currently 2 black bags per fortnight (the equivalent of 1 black bag per week) and would move to 3 black bags or a closed wheeled bin every 3 weeks.

Respondents were asked if they supported this approach. A slight majority of the 4091 respondents said their household would not support this approach (51.6%).

Table 3 – Is this something you household could support?

	%
Yes	48.4
No	51.6

Animal Waste

4.5 Of the 4098 responses received, 51.7% said that they had a pet and the following table shows how they reported that they dispose of their waste.

Table 4 – If you have a pet, how do you dispose of their waste?

	%
Black bag/wheelie bin	67.9
Community Recycling Centre	2.1
Green Waste for hutch waste	5.3
Public Dog waste bin	40.0
Other	5.1

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to multiple response question

The 'other' responses included;

- **Repetition of the above options**
- **Down the toilet**
- **Nappy bin**
- **Compost**
- **Street Bin**

Recycling Bags

4.6 Respondents were informed that the Council purchases 30.2 million single use bags during a year at a cost of £867k. This is despite the Green Waste recycling service now utilising a re-usable Green sack and saving around 3 million bags per annum. We all know that we must reduce the use of single-use plastic wherever possible in our daily lives for the sake of our world and future generations.

4.7 People were asked if they would support a change to a reusable recycling sack and if the household would be able to store and use reusable sacks. The results in table 5 show that the majority of the 4097 respondents to this question would support a change to a reusable recycling sack (62.2%) and would be able to store and use reusable sacks (55.7%).

Table 5 – Reusable sacks

	Yes	No
Would you support a change to a reusable recycling sack?	62.2%	37.8%
Would your household be able to store and use reusable sacks?	55.7%	44.3%

Comments

4.8 There are currently barriers to 100% recycling such as the packaging used in the goods we buy, or no other alternatives for some products we use.

Respondents were asked what they thought the Council can do to encourage residents to dispose of less general waste and improve recycling? The following themes have been identified from the 1550 responses and a selection of the comments received are shown below;

Note: The full text of all comments received in the consultation are available for Cabinet and Officers to view.

The Council should collect a wider range of recyclables at the kerbside:

Kerb side soft plastic collection. Kerb side battery collection.

Introduce the recycling of soft plastics kerbside, instead of having to take to the supermarket. E.g., bread bags, plastic shopping bags etc.

Improve local recycling points, increase number and make them more accessible via foot, not everyone wants to put household recycling in the car and drive miles to the nearest recycling centre. With cost of living people cannot afford to be using petrol unnecessarily.

I recycle everything listed on the bags, but it is the soft plastics such as crisp packets that say are recyclable but aren't by RCT. This type of soft plastic makes up the majority of my black bag waste now.

Some waste ends up in black bags when it isn't possible to get to the recycling centres. Maybe extra things, like clothing, paint cans, small electrical, could be made part of kerbside recycling. Right now if you have 1 small paint can and an alarm clock to dispose of, you're unlikely to go to the recycling centre and so use black bag waste to dispose.

Supermarkets and other businesses should be forced to reduce non-recyclable waste:

Speak to the manufactures to get them to change the packaging

Press the supermarkets and manufacturers to change packaging. It's out of our hands

...manufacturers such as crisps need to change the packaging as a lot of them can't be put with ordinary recycling

Supply of current recycling bags has been unreliable, and bins would be more helpful:

Supply more recycling bags! There aren't any supplies in local shops which there used to be.

Provide recycling bags more easily. I.e. drop off new bags on collection days

Provide labelled bins such as glass bins or cardboard bins that are used in other county councils.

Recycling would be more appealing and easier to manage if recycling wheelie bins were supplied. Not bags that waste blows out of or get soaked in wet weather. Proper lidded bins so recycling can be stored outside.

More readily available access to recycling bags, and easier opportunities to recycle larger items more easily and with lower wait times.

- 4.9 Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments on the proposals or suggest any alternative proposals, the following are a selection of the 1378 comments received under a number of themes.

Existing wheelie bins are too small for the proposed changes:

You've reduced the size of the bins not to be able to support 3 weekly collections for the average family.

You need to make the black bag bins larger; I have 2 children and my bin is full to overfull with the current 2 weekly collections.

Problems with open sacks or containers for recycling:

The use of sacks is okay as long as they are sealable as I do not want to encourage pests and have to store open sacks in storms outside the house.

I also think the clear recycling bags should be replaced with bins similar to other councils - this will help to reduce the use of plastics and will provide more resilience in bad weather (the current bags have a habit of flying around in the wind)

Reusable sacks would end up everywhere because the green waste ones just get dumped in the middle of the road and end up lost. Also they would end up wet when raining and then Couldn't be taken back in the house.

Changing the recycling bags to reusable ones won't be effective as these get pinched easily or blown away.

Concerns about public health, vermin, smells, fly-tipping and general street waste increases:

The only reason we would not support a 3 weekly collection is because of hygiene, and rodent worries. We would be unable to keep 3 weeks of black bags away from the elements and would worry about the smell and hygiene of our garden as well as attracting rodents.

There will be an increase in rats, rubbish on our streets, fly tipping.

The streets will stink and fly tipping will increase even more plus people will lose their jobs.

The less frequent waste is collected the more fly tipping will occur. The amount of fly tipping in the lanes and rubbish strewn on the streets is already disgusting

The smell of pet waste in bins would make three weekly collections a poor choice

The issue is not moving 3-weekly due to overflowing bins - it's the smell of the bins after two weeks. It's a public health issue and with hotter summers expected to increase, RCT will smell like a cesspit.

Disposal of animal waste and sanitary waste:

Female sanitary items currently go into wheelie bin collections. This would not be hygienic if bins were only collected every 3 weeks.

Storing black bags of non-recyclables together with cat litter and other pet products is difficult especially in summertime.

Special bin for pet waste recycling. which would free up space in general waste.

I'm not fully against 3 weekly collection if there is alternative collection for cat litter dog mess etc. as most days I need to put dog mess in my

own black bags due to dog bins being full and after a week it's awful in the Summer after 2 it's crazy after 3 would be unbearable

Council Tax and perceived value for money:

Unless there is an incentive for household i.e. a reduction in council tax, the lazy ones will not bother, they will just fly tip their rubbish as they do now and more so.

With a family of 4 we recycle everything we possibly can, and our green bin is still full on a fortnight basis! You put our council tax up and now want to change our bins to 3 weekly what are we actually paying all this council tax for

Will my council tax be less if it moves to 3 weeks if so I will support it?

Yet again less service for more money from rct. Refuse is the only service I use and now you don't even want to that!

Larger families and residents without storage space:

This will be difficult for those with larger households, children and pets. It would increase pollution and contamination, meaning a risk to public health whilst degrading the environment. Results from the lack of waste collection can easily been seen from the recent strikes in Scotland.

We have a very small bin for a family of 3 and we recycle all we can. Until supermarkets dispose of non-recyclable wrapping this is not possible!

Families with 4+ people in one house will struggle with the limit on general waste and reduced collections. Again, I think other people may struggle if there are multiple sacks/bins for recycling due to lack of space in their homes.

Thousands of houses in RCT are terraces straight on the pavement, with no wheelie bins. Usually bags are kept outside back doors and even on fortnightly collections we used to have these ripped open by wildlife when we lived in a terrace with no wheelie bins. Older people already struggle to carry 2 weeks' worth of black bags through their houses to put out, I imagine waiting 3 weeks would be really hard for some.

The proposal for reusable recycling bags is not ideal, as they may end up getting quite dirty and smelly - I think it may be a lot for some homes with little storage to accommodate this.

Disabled or non-driver residents cannot access tips/ Community Recycling Centres:

I formerly lived in Newport and that council also accepted small electrical, and clothing recycling with the weekly recycling collections, something that again would be more convenient than RCT policy of having to take these to a recycling centre. Not everyone can do that

And please have a thought for residents who cannot get to council tips/ recycling centres to access special recycling points or drop off larger items - fly tipping happens around here (Trefforest) because of the cost of bulky collections, especially at the end of term times when students move in/ out of properties.

The community recycling centres aren't really accessible for residents without a car - would it be possible to have something like a temporary skip?

I don't agree as there will be more infestation of rats etc, what about the elderly who can't get to a recycling centre to dispose of their rubbish or disabled .

General support for the proposal

Happy to support the changes, we have to put less in landfill and recycle more

I support the move to 3 weekly but have a very small bin so that would be overflowing. If the council were to introduce the 3 weekly rubbish collection you should give residents the option to have a large bin either free or. Cheap.

I support the move away from disposable recycling bags. However careful consideration is needed into the design of recycling sacks or boxes for use...

Happy with 3 weekly bins as don't support 4 weekly

If people recycle properly I see no issue at all on 3 weekly black bags

- 4.10 Overall, there is a lot of concern about hygiene and street cleanliness, with a number of respondents reporting fears that existing rat and litter problems would be made worse by the proposed changes.
- 4.11 A number of comments raised concerns about greater impacts on groups with protected characteristics including age, disability, sex and pregnancy. There are also concerns that link to socio-economic measures including both household deprivation (those without cars, for instance) and area deprivation (lack of services/ access to public services). Attention is also drawn by many comments to the realities of

housing stock across the area (a lot of terraces, many without front garden or other external storage space, narrow lanes and steep inclines).

About you

- 4.12 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affect you because of?:
1. Gender
 2. Age
 3. Ethnicity
 4. Disability
 5. Sexuality
 6. Religion / belief
 7. Gender identity
 8. Relationship status
 9. Pregnancy
 10. Preferred language
- 4.13 With regards to the proposals, and the impact it may have, respondents were asked how they could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive, Negative or Neutral) and if, in any way, it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language? How neutral effects could become positive, how positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased?
- 4.14 The comments received for the above 2 questions have been made available for the development of the associated impact assessments.
- 4.15 Of particular note are a large number of comments stating that they feel the proposal will disproportionately, and discriminatorily, affect older people, people with disabilities, large families and people with health conditions. Concerns are also raised about people living in flats or smaller houses who do not have storage space for waste or holding reusable sacks, which would disproportionately affect those living in areas or under conditions of socio-economic disadvantage or deprivation. Some indicative comments on these themes are included below.

Impact on people living in smaller properties

“A large proportion of houses are terraced which presents problems with the storage of black bin bags.”

"Most RCT houses are small terraced and people don't have the capacity to hold 3 weeks worth of rubbish."

"Most houses in Aberdare are small, terraced houses. We don't have the space to store recyclable sacks indoors."

"They smell already at two weeks especially for people on terraced streets who have to bring the bins through the house."

"Social housing 2 bed place no room for bins inside or out. Live in rat infested area."

Impact on elderly residents

"Age, I need user friendly things to help me live independently."

"Age difficult to manage reusable bags, store & carry"

"I am finding it difficult to store bags for 2 weeks let alone 3 as I have limited space available. As I am in my 60's they are very heavy to move"

"As an elderly person carrying the recycling in large canvas type bags would be problematic"

Impact on residents with disabilities

"I'm 40 disabled and live alone with only a carer coming in to see to my personal care. Not their job to sort waste out. They don't have time. And they are very time constricted."

"Discrimination and this is not ever taken in to consideration how it will impact people like myself."

"Also no facilities for adult heavy periods and incontinence waste because there not prescribed so no evidence for this."

"I'm disabled and it's incredibly hard to move my wheelie bin on 2 week collections let alone 3"

"I have a bad back. This would impact me physically. I also have dyslexia so keeping track of dates would make it difficult"

"Dementia and autism so change is unbearable"

"Having a person with a disability at home means that more waste that cannot be recycled is produced. This is not necessarily to do with sanitary items such as incontinence pads etc but small household items or clothing which is no longer able to be recycled. These take up a lot of room in the waste bins which often means we are struggling for"

room for normal rubbish. We recycle as much as possible but every week there are items which we have no way of disposing of, other than putting them in the waste bin. "

Impact on large families

"none of the above but it would impact me due to my family size"

"Larger families are disadvantaged to proposed 3 weekly changes"

"Family of 5, the bin is full after 1 and a half weeks"

"I think you need to be more flexible with houses depending on how many people live there because single people won't need as much bin space as big families."

Other perceived impacts

"Pregnancy- due to having to store waste longer."

"My dad has asthma. Keeping animal waste festering in the house will make him worse."

"I don't drive so not easy to get items to recycling centres as my illness prevents it"

"Having to women who menstruate I feel that 3 weekly would lead to these hanging around to long unless we were given bins and bags like the nappies"

"With multiple dogs, I have 2 black bags worth of waste every fortnight. This waste smells and would become unsustainable to not be disposed of for a 3-week period."

"I do not have the ability to transport this waste to a facility myself meaning this discriminatory reduction of services (no doubt still forcing an increase in council tax upon us) comes at the detriment of the populace the council is supposedly serving."

5 Letter and Email Responses

5.1 The following section outlines a summary of the comments from emails received.

A total of 5 emails were received from residents expressing their views on the consultation. Residents noted their disfavour of the 3 weekly black bag collection, as this would result to black bag being left outside the home for longer periods of time thus increasing the likelihood of animals breaking the bags and result to increased pest concerns.

Residents noted the need for the Council to increase dog waste bins across the Borough to prevent waste contamination in the black bags.

The following are a summary of the emails.

Emails received:
<p><i>I am against moving to three weeks for rubbish collection as I find that as a household, we just about manage with the current system.</i></p> <p><i>(06/12/2022)</i></p>
<p><i>I am emailing in regards to the proposal of moving the refuse collection from 2 weekly to 3 weekly pick ups.</i></p> <p><i>Not only is this unhygienic leaving waste for 3 weeks in a bin outside (i.e., cat and animal litter, dog waste, sanitary products etc), this will also attract rats to the local area, along with unpleasant smells (especially in the summer time). Are the council going to provide free pest control services to counter act this problem if that is the case? I already have a pest issue (living close to the mountain side) on the 2 weekly refuse collection. I can only imagine how bad the issue is going to get if the council moves to 3 weekly.</i></p> <p><i>There is also a question of storage - where are people going to securely store 3 waste bins, I know that I do not have room for 3 plastic bins to store them in until collection on a 3 week basis.</i></p> <p><i>I also fear that fly tipping will increase. This is already a huge issue in RCT and 3 weekly bin collections will only add to this ever growing problem. The local tips do not accept black bags anymore, so it will only be a matter of time before they end up on our mountains.</i></p> <p><i>If for whatever reason, someone missed their black bag collection (ie they were in hospital or on holidays), this would mean they could potentially have a bag of rubbish in their garden for up to 6 weeks at a time!</i></p> <p><i>The idea of wheelie bins would not work in my street also, given steps to and from my back garden and the hill to the front of the property. I also do not</i></p>

want to break my back by lifting 3 weeks worth of refuse in a large wheelie bin to put out for collection every 3 weeks.

I question where my council tax payments go as this is just another form of the council cutting costs. Will I see a reduction in my monthly council tax to reflect the reduction in service I am receiving if this is the case?

*I look forward to hear your response.
Regards*

(06/12/22)

I am against moving to three weeks for rubbish collection as I find that as a household, we just about manage with the current system.

Kind regards,

(06/12/22)

In order to achieve this they will need to increase the amount of dog waste bins around and collections. The recycling centres will need to start allowing people to drop black bags off there, with pets waste. People can't have cat litter and dog poop kept out in the garden for 3 weeks the smell will be horrendous in the summer and the massive increase in rats will add a different dimension

(Contact Centre, 14/06/22)

Dear Consultation Team,

1. Comments regarding RCT's proposals:

1) 3 weekly black bag collections:

This is OK for us, since we currently only put out 1 bag, typically weighing less than 2kg, every fortnight. However, fresh fish and meat wrappings, which cannot be recycled, do smell badly after only one week in the bin and worse after 2 weeks, so will probably be a lot worse after 3 weeks, especially between April and September, when the weather is warmer.

However, I am not sure that this will change the behaviour of a minority of residents who either only partially recycle or the "die hards" who do not do any recycling. What is to stop them simply keeping their black bags for longer, or putting any excess black bags outside another property, or worst of all, fly tipping?

2) Reusable sacks for "dry" recycling:

This may be a better alternative to the clear bags but the advantages/disadvantages of both solutions are not so clear cut, so I have the following questions to be considered regarding the reusable sacks:

- a) Will the reusable sacks be cheaper than the clear bags in the longer term?*
- b) Will the reusable sacks be more environmentally friendly or recyclable than the clear bags in the long term?*

- *Will there be a scheme to recycle old and damaged bags, so that they do not eventually end up in landfill?*
- c) *How many reusable bags will be provided?*
 - *How will the quantity of bags allow for exceptional times such as Christmas, when residents put out a lot more recycling than usual?*
- d) *Will residents have to pay for extra bags and to replace lost or damaged bags?*
- e) *What will be the size and shape of the bags?*
- f) *Will the bags be closed or open?*
 - *If open, then the contents will get wet and/or potentially blown away in windy weather.*
 - *Note that wet paper and cardboard weighs a lot more than when it is dry.*
- g) *Where are residents meant to keep these bags during the week between collections?*
 - *Will they fit inside a standard, large plastic dustbin, or will the residents be expected to simply leave the bags exposed to the elements and then we have to carry soaking wet bags through our houses to put them out?*
 - *Again, wet paper and cardboard weighs a lot more than when it is dry.*
- h) *What is to stop these bags from blowing away, or being stolen, or moved, after the collection – particularly if the residents are away from the house all day or for several days?*
- i) *Will the reusable bags mean more work and time for the collection operators?*
 - *With the clear sacks they pick up several bags in one go, often from more than one property, throw them in the back of the recycling lorry and move on to the next properties. With the reusable bags, the operators will not be able to pick up as many bags at once and will have to collect from one property at a time, returning to each property with the bags after emptying the them.*
 - *I think that there will be a lot of reusable sacks left in the streets for residents sort through and pick up after the collection.*

2. Comments on black bag statement made in the consultation introduction:

“It is estimated that 8 out of every 10 black bags that are put out for collection could be recycled, and it is thought that this change would help us all to stop and think about every item that is thrown away – and whether they can be recycled.”

The above statement from the introduction seems to be an exaggeration, or to be based on black bag waste before the big improvements in recycling. I explain my reasoning as follows:

As per RCT's guidance and our personal experience, it is not possible to recycle all household items. In fact the article states that recycling should make up 80% of household waste. Therefore, it is expected that every household will put out a black bag for some, if not all, black bag

collections, representing around 20% of their waste. Therefore, if the vast majority of residents are participating in recycling, as is confirmed by RCT's current recycling rate of 67.48%, then the vast majority of black bags put out contain only, or at least primarily, non-recyclable items. So, if 32.52% of our waste is going into black bag waste, then 12.52% of our waste is mistakenly put into black bags, instead of recycling, or to put it another way, 38.5% of the waste put in black bags could be recycled, or 3.85 out of every 10 black bags could be recycled.