

Consultation Feedback - Draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy

November 2020

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Executive Summary

Torbay Council's draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy was published for consultation on 28 September 2020. The consultation period ran until 9 November 2020.

The consultation sought to determine whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the essential elements of the Strategy. The survey, which was run solely online, provided the opportunity for respondents to explain their reasons for disagreement and how each area could be improved upon.

818 online surveys were received with a total of 1205 pieces of additional explanatory text. In addition, 58 emailed responses were received during the period of the consultation, with a further 4 additional responses, by email and letter, received after the closing date.

The consultation survey was promoted via the Council's social media channels and responses to those posts were also collated and have been included with the analysis in this report.

Overall Response

The table below shows the high level responses to the consultation:

Question	Yes	No
Do you believe that this Strategy shows Torbay Council's commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency?	428	368
Do you think that Torbay Council draft Waste and Resources Strategy aligns with the Government's strategy?	316	208
Do you think we have identified the right priorities, actions and proposals?	362	437
Are the right areas of focus included under each priority?	416	356
Do you agree that increased education, engagement and communication should be our first action?	668	138
Do you think that this Strategy will help to significantly improve Torbay's Carbon Impact?	369	428

Feedback Themes

With regard to the themes raised in the survey, the highest three individual themes mentioned by respondents, with over a hundred respondents mentioning each of them, were:

- A general rejection of the proposed three week collection cycle (231)
- An expected increase in fly tipping (139)

- The current collection system should be fixed first because of the numbers of missed collections and litter left behind on the streets (109)

The themes with the next highest number of mentions were:

- There should be a wider range of things that can be recycled (88)
- Bigger bins would be needed to cope with a three week cycle (81)
- The draft proposals were seen as simply a way to save money or cost cutting (77)
- More education being needed (67)

Often linked to the issue of fly tipping (but with only 50 mentions) were the restrictions on the number of visits currently allowed to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) and the impending charges for certain kinds of waste at the HWRC.

From the email correspondence that was received, the top five themes were:

- There should be a wider range of things that can be recycled (13)
- The current collection system should be fixed first because of the numbers of missed collections and litter left behind on the streets (11)
- Expand collection of green waste (10)
- Bigger bins would be needed to cope with a three week cycle (9)
- A general rejection of the proposed three week collection cycle (7)

Introduction

Background

Torbay Council's previous waste strategy covered the period 2008 to 2025, but the sector is fast moving and a refresh was deemed long overdue.

In 2019, Torbay Council declared a Climate Emergency and, as of 28 August 2020, around 230 other councils had also declared a climate emergency.

Torbay Council is committed to tackling the Climate Emergency and has outlined a series of options to make positive changes in the Draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy 2020. This outlines the overarching objective to manage municipal waste within Torbay in accordance with the waste hierarchy as well as our principles, aims and actions in delivering the Strategy.

To obtain feedback from the community of Torbay, an online survey was set up that asked for responses on the essential elements of the Strategy. Rather than merely selecting Agreement or Disagreement, the opportunity was provided to respondents, via a free text box, to explain their reasons for disagreement (if they disagreed), and how each area could be improved upon.

The Survey

The online survey was publicised on the Council's Consultation web page and through social media and was open between 28 September and 9 November 2020.

Altogether, during that period, the Council received 818 responses directly to the online survey within which were 1,205 items of text regarding the proposals. An additional 58 responses were received as emails or letters.

Following the end of the consultation period, four extra responses were received.

The Report

Given the responses received comprised two very different types of data (both direct Yes/No answers and complex free text), the results have been divided into separate sections.

The first section of the report gives the numerical responses to the questions and the second section of the report gives breakdowns of the themes that the free text response fall into, as well as the suggestions from respondents for specific changes to the draft Strategy.

Consultation Responses

Agreement or Disagreement with the Proposals

The table on the following pages shows the numerical responses to the questions which were part of the consultation. While 818 completed online surveys were sent in, not all of the respondents gave answers to all of the questions. For completeness the number of text responses for each proposal is also given.

Over half of the respondents believed that the draft Strategy shows Torbay Council's commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency, with a slight majority agreeing that the Council's draft Strategy aligns with the Government's strategy. Only 45% thought that the Strategy will help to significantly improve Torbay's carbon impact.

However, over half of the respondents also felt that we had not identified the right priorities, actions or proposals although half of respondents did believe that the right areas of focus were included under the priorities.

More than 80% of respondents agreed that increased education, engagement and communication should be our first action.

No.	Question	Yes	%	No	%	Don't Know/Blank	%	Total Text Responses
1	Do you believe that this Strategy shows Torbay Council's commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency?	428	52.3%	368	45.0%	22	2.7%	
1a	If you just answered No in relation to resources and waste, what further actions would you wish to see within this Strategy to address the Climate Emergency?							285
2	Do you think that Torbay Council draft Waste and Resources Strategy aligns with the Government's strategy?	316	38.6%	208	25.4%	294	36.0%	
2a	If you just answered No, please tell us what else should be included in the Strategy or what should be removed.							136
3	Do you think we have identified the right priorities, actions and proposals?	362	44.3%	437	53.4%	19	2.3%	
3a	If you just answered No, please tell us what other priorities, actions and proposals should be included in the Strategy or what priorities, actions and proposals should be removed.							301
4	Are the right areas of focus included under each priority?	416	50.9%	356	43.5%	46	5.6%	
4a	If you just answered No, please tell us how you think the areas of focus should be changed.							153

5	Do you agree that increased education, engagement and communication should be our first action?	668	81.7%	138	16.9%	12	1.5%
5a	If you just answered No, please tell us what other actions should come first?						85
6	Do you think that this Strategy will help to significantly improve Torbay's Carbon Impact?	369	45.1%	428	52.3%	21	2.6%
6a	If you just answered No, please tell us what further actions will significantly improve Torbay's Carbon Impact?						245
Total Responses		2559		1935			1205

Text Responses to the Questionnaire

Whilst an opportunity was provided against each question for respondents to tell us how we should change the draft Strategy, across the responses there were 15 major themes which repeated.

The table on the following page shows the number of responses within each theme against each question where further information was requested. This provides an overall picture of the prevalence of each of the fifteen themes across the full range of proposals.

The highest three individual themes mentioned by respondents, with over a hundred respondents mentioning each of them, were:

- A general rejection of the proposed three week collection cycle (231);
- An expected increase in fly tipping (139);
- The current collection system should be fixed first because of the numbers of missed collections and litter left behind on the streets (109);

With between sixty and eighty mentions, the themes with the next highest number of mentions were:

- There should be a wider range of things that can be recycled (88);
- Bigger bins would be needed to cope with a three week cycle (81);
- The draft proposals were seen as simply a way to save money or cost cutting (77);
- More education being needed (67);

Often linked to the issue of fly tipping were the restrictions on the number of visits currently allowed to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) and the impending charges for certain kinds of waste such as would come from DIY home improvements at the HWRC (50).

With between twenty and forty-nine mentions each were:

- A strong level of agreement with the expansion of green waste collection (49);
- Suggestions to have less polluting refuse collection vehicles with hydrogen or electric power noted (31);
- Views that the extended collection cycle would mean that rats, vermin and seagulls became more of a problem because waste was outside for longer (29);
- Simpler instructions for recycling (26)

The lowest three themes, with between six and nineteen mentions were:

- To have places (like the one in Newton Abbot) for the on-selling of used goods (19);
- It might be better to centralise the sorting of waste rather than doing it at the kerbside (17);
- Solar powered compactor bins could be used on the streets and at the beaches to reduce the volume, if not the weight, of waste disposed of in them (6).

Question	Rejection of 3 week collection cycle	Bigger bins needed	Expand collection of green waste	More education needed	Wider range of recycled	Simpler recycling instructions	Stop kerbside sorting	Cost cutting exercise	Free use of HWRC	Fix current collection service	Electric powered refuse vehicles	Solar compactor bins	Fly Tipping	Rats, Vermin & Seagulls	Selling on of used goods
What further actions would you wish to see within this Strategy to address the Climate Emergency?	46	25	14	21	25	9	8	30	20	34	13	2	39	8	7
What else should be included in the Strategy or what should be removed?	34	5	7	3	9	3	1	10	12	6	0	0	28	5	3
What other priorities, actions and proposals should be included or which should be removed?	97	27	13	13	14	4	4	11	10	21	2	2	35	7	2
How do you think the areas of focus should be changed?	24	8	7	5	18	1	0	15	7	9	1	1	14	3	4
What other actions (other than increased education, engagement and communication) should come first?	9	3	3	3	2	1	0	2	0	14	0	0	1	1	0
What further actions will significantly improve Torbay's carbon impact?	21	13	5	22	20	8	4	9	1	25	15	1	22	5	3
Totals	231	81	49	67	88	26	17	77	50	109	31	6	139	29	19

The structure of the online survey only presented a free text box when respondents indicated that they disagreed with the particular proposal. However, the questions were worded to encourage feedback on what should be changed within the draft Strategy before it is put forward for ratification.

Whilst there were a significant amount of the text responses which can be taken, in general terms, as objecting to the proposals, there were a range of suggestions put forward and these are set out in the tables below.

The one clear change that respondents wished to see was the removal of three weekly collections for residual waste.

Examples of the responses received within each theme are set out in Appendix 1. The suggestions for changes to the proposals are set out below. The complete set of consultation responses have been made available to the members of the Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and the Waste Management Team.

What further actions would you wish to see within this Strategy to address the Climate Emergency?

More incentive for people to recycle properly at the recycling centre, i.e. not charging for certain items as this deters people from using the centre and encourages others to fly tip, costing more money!

Further investment in the infrastructure and better bus service specially the current buses are very old and have got a very high emission level

Reduce energy wastage due to traffic congestion, by improving traffic flow and reducing hold-ups

Look at waste collection holistically including the footprint from congestion caused by roadside sorting (compared to bulk collection and sorting at base), fuel use differences, operative costs (they also have a footprint)

Solar farms, hybrid electric/solar powered street lights

Electric vehicles. Green collection.

Not restricting households to only 2 trips to the centre every 28 days

Sort for recyclable waste centrally rather than per property - that is the only way to maximise a response to the Climate Emergency

What else should be included in the Strategy or what should be removed?

Re-use is higher up the waste hierarchy than recycling so we should be encouraging that and not concentrating on just the recycling

Incentivise people to do the right thing, and punish those who do the wrong thing

Actively patrol well known fly tipping areas

Tackle root cause with retailers taking non-recyclable packaging out of the system in the first place

Recycling/waste disposal must be simple or people just won't comply

We need more focus on reducing food-miles by encouraging local businesses

Open the recycling centre longer so people can actually go when they are most likely to be able to attend which will reduce fly tipping

it will be extremely difficult to assess progress against these very high level objectives

Please tell us what other priorities, actions and proposals should be included in the Strategy or what priorities, actions and proposals should be removed.

The top priority should be clear, unambiguous communication about what can be recycled through kerbside collection and where to go with materials that can be recycled, but not through our kerbside collection

Review the whole process, right from the start of the process as this is where it environmentally fails and then communicate with the more successful councils within the UK to see how they introduced good successful platforms and efficient working practices to target higher recycling levels and improve the environment

Street cleaning, council operatives being responsible for specific areas and involved with the community in those areas, thereby creating a sense of pride for those living in the area

A two weekly garden waste collection, which would be an opt in where we buy a dumpy bag from you and pay a low fee for said collection

Work with Planning / Building Control to ensure all new builds or conversions in Torbay have sufficient designed space inside and out to store recycling boxes and make it easy for them to be put out for collection

More communal recycling facilities, which would be especially useful for those of us who have small properties and nowhere to store endless boxes and caddies. These need to be accessible

to all, emptied frequently, and as numerous as you can make them, especially for those without cars to drive to these places

Use energy efficient vehicle to collect ALL RUBBISH and negate the need for thousands of private vehicles to take refuse to the tip OR illegal dumping. The current & existing system affects the environment far more

Address why people aren't recycling

Concentrate on the councils fleet of diesel vehicles

The focus should be on delivering the current service effectively before seeking to change it

Please tell us how you think the areas of focus should be changed.

Firstly you need to have proper local consultations to find out what matters to each area in Torbay

Focus should change to public health and wellbeing which in turn will be of benefit to the environment

More proactive and creative work should be undertaken as part of the planning and building control process to enable the appropriate storage and disposal of waste

Should increase recycling opportunities for items which can be recycled but are not currently included

Consideration of upcycling or sale of some items, similar to Newton Abbot

No mention of Recycling Banks around the Bay. No provision currently for plastic waste or non-newspaper/magazine paper - although Breakwater says it does (It doesn't). Going to Recycling Centre is fine, yet often it is quicker/more convenient to go to local Recycling Bank rather than joining a long queue (difficult if no own transport). Surely this will help increase our % recycling - the claimed prime reason for this Strategy

Target areas in Torbay that are often used for fly tipping, and maybe develop these areas into something that might discourage fly tipping, such as clearing overgrown areas

Focus on facilitating waste disposal

We should have the recycling machines for bottles and tins that Germany has. A deposit is charged on each bottle or tin that is returned when you return your empties. This would be more effective as it would make more sense

To make sure that all new housing developments have proper designated recycling areas

What other actions (other than increased education, engagement and communication) should come first?

A fully focused overhaul of the whole recycling process

Focus on getting the service to the correct level ... number one should always be the service itself

Confidence in the collection and recycling regime should come first, getting the service in order before implying that the Public are not doing their bit

Providing an efficient and cost-effective refuse collection service

Cost savings could be made by rationalising collection routes throughout the Council area

A bay wide public engagement project like 'Torbay - The No Plastics Coast' would have a far bigger impact; it would reduce litter (items made of natural materials will decompose before they become a problem) and would also connect people and communities with an 'all hands to the pump' mind-set

Optimise the benefits of the waste treatment plant in Plymouth which effectively uses the waste treated to generate energy, power and recycling of materials

What further actions will significantly improve Torbay's Carbon Impact?

A sensible approach starting with a round table discussion with residents

Collaborating with TDA, SDC & NHS Trust to develop local procurement, including locally grown and processed food

Needs to be combined with other initiatives around sustainable transport, energy reduction etc.

Ensuring that ALL policies give priority to reducing both the carbon footprint and ecology

Actively promoting solar power generation on public sector, commercial, and domestic properties

The collection process needs to be completely overhauled, as it is exceedingly slow and adding carbon to the environment and litter to the streets

New refuse, recycling and street sweeping vehicles, particularly with a significant switch to electric vehicles. Incentivise staff to be invested in their jobs to produce more productivity

More pedestrian zones. Park and ride facilities

No water refill fountains anywhere

You have to incentivise people to recycle more

Themes within email correspondence

Before the closing date, a total of fifty-eight individual emails were received in relation to the consultation. An additional response proffered suggestions on how the survey itself could be improved by reference to one conducted previously by the Health and Safety Executive.

One of the fifty-eight respondents, as well as setting out his own views, provided two web-links that are set out below and which refer to the manner in which there are financial rewards for the recycling of bottles and cans or other beverage containers in Finland. He has suggested that it is an option worth future consideration to help reduce or avoid the numbers of bottles and cans that are simply thrown away without being recycled for either the glass or aluminium content. The Finnish strategy is dual pronged and has the potential to both reduce litter and upgrade the amount of recycling which is done.

<https://finland.fi/life-society/finnish-families-get-to-grips-with-trash/#:~:text=Finland%2C%20a%20leader%20in%20bottle,household%20waste%20sent%20to%20landfills.&text=The%20return%20rate%20for%20refillable,96%20percent%20and%2094%20per cent.>

<https://www.palpa.fi/beverage-container-recycling/deposit-refund-system/>

As with the text responses that formed an integral part of the answers to the online survey, each email response was examined to sift out the key points that were being put forward. Initially this used the fifteen themes identified from the online material. This number was extended to thirty-five as more were found within the material.

The themes, and the number of mentions of each, are primarily arranged in rank order. However, where the number of mentions is the same for a number of themes, they are further sorted alphabetically by the descriptive title assigned to them.

Of the themes described above only thirteen attracted more than two mentions and only one covered an area not previously brought up in the on line responses. This theme was of consulting with the packaging industry with a view to reducing the volume of materials used, and especially, those that could not be recycled.

The table below demonstrates that the emailed responses showed a change in emphasis compared with those from the online survey. The general rejection, in principle, to a three-week collection cycle had dropped from first to fifth place while the perceived need to first fix the existing collection system had risen from third to second place on the list. Another marked difference was the changed perception of the draft proposals as “just a way to save money or cost cutting”. The emailed responses placed this in the thirteenth position instead of the sixth position given to it by those answering the online survey.

Theme	Number of mentions
There should be a wider range of things that can be recycled	13
Fix current poor collection service first - missed collections and litter	11
Expand collection of green waste	10
Bigger bins will be needed	9
General rejection of 3 week collection cycle	7
Make it free to use the recycling centre	6
Selling on of used goods	6
Rats, Vermin & Seagulls	5
Simpler instructions on recycling	5
Stop kerbside sorting	5
Consult packaging industry on reducing packing	4
Fly Tipping	4
Just a way to save money or cost cutting	3
Better recycling of bottles to manufacturers	2
Bigger & more accessible recycling centre - sort there centrally	2
Expand ban on allotment bonfires	2
If there was to be a sudden increase in amounts of recycling etc. current service will not be able to cope	2
More education needed	2
Public recycling bins	2
Put a levy on dog walking services / dog waste	2
Reduction, reuse and recycling and should be part of any publicity campaign	2
Brown Wheelie bins for garden & food waste	1

Commercial site has collection contract with SWISCO & hopes charges will not increase	1
Community service to include litter collection - streets & beaches	1
Coordinate street sweeping with waste collection days	1
Drop the cost saving aspect	1
Free bags for food waste	1
Identify bins with Street and number stickers	1
Make recycling mandatory	1
Money back for recycling cans and bottles	1
On-Street recycling bins	1
Provide can crushers	1
Restrict use of "Grey" bins	1
Solar compactor bins	1
Have electric or hydrogen powered refuse vehicles	0

Again, all copies of the emails have been made available to the members of the Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and the Waste Management Team. This includes the additional four responses which were received after the closing date.

Social Media Evaluation

The Communications Team have evaluated various aspects of the reception of the proposals on different social media platforms and these results are summarised in this section.

From 2 October to 6 November 2020, the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy consultation was featured in the **One Torbay** residents' e-newsletter six times and a total of 333 of the 7,000 subscribers clicked through to the consultation webpage.

The consultation was also featured in Torbay Council's **Staff News** several times from 30 September onwards and in total 35 people clicked through to the consultation webpage.

There was far more engagement on Facebook than on other social media channels which demonstrates once again this is the preferred channel of information for a lot of our residents.

Throughout the consultation period on **Torbay Council's Facebook** page (28 September - 9 November), across 15 posts, there was a total reach of 33,579, with 341 comments, 69 shares, 92

likes, and 3299 engagements. Torbay Council's Facebook page currently has 8,920 likes and 9,719 followers.

By contrast, on **Torbay Council's Twitter** account, there was far lower engagement, with 17 retweets, 207 engagements and 917 impressions, with no questions. There are 12,300 Twitter followers for Torbay Council but there is clearly less engagement from them than the Facebook followers.

The themes in the comments were as follows:

Theme	Number of comments	Positive, Negative or Neutral
Sort rubbish at the yard not kerbside	2	Neutral
Welcome plans for kerbside garden waste collections	7	Positive
Concerns of increase in fly tipping	2	Negative
Against 3 weekly collections / concerns of smelly bins	13	Negative
Larger recycling bins needed	4	Neutral
Better education needed: What is recyclable, increase interest in recycling, inform people to flatten boxes etc.	8	Neutral
Provide new stickers now and again for the boxes as a reminder of what goes in which box as they come off and get lost	1	Neutral
Better town centre bins: general waste / cans / plastic bottles sections	7	Neutral
Fine those who do not recycle	2	Neutral
Complaints that operatives do not take everything, despite being recyclable. Operatives witnessed throwing all rubbish in together and not sorting. Operatives do not pick up what they drop	13	Negative
Add tetra packing / crisp packets to the list of recyclable products	3	Neutral
Better policing of communal bins at blocks of flats	1	Neutral
Reintroduce the Torbay Green Points Incentive Scheme	1	Neutral
Bring back green wheelie bins and get rid of the boxes	6	Neutral

Introduce South Hams system. Or look at Sandwell & Rochdale council for good examples	4	Neutral
Communal recycling bottle banks not emptied enough	1	Negative
Against charging for DIY waste	2	Negative
Box & net not good enough in wind and keeping seagulls out	1	Neutral

There was a total reach of 3032 on the **SWISCo Facebook** page with 8 likes, 6 shares and 13 comments. Though it should be noted that the SWISCo Facebook page is much newer than Torbay Council's (launched in July 2020) and has 1,056 likes and 1,114 followers. There were no retweets from the **SWISCo Twitter** account but it was only launched in July 2020 and currently only has 90 followers.

The themes in the comments were as follows:

Theme	Number of comments	Positive, Negative or Neutral
Potential increase in fly Tipping	2	Neutral
Approval/asking for a kerbside green waste collection	3	Positive
Re opening Lymington Road and Brixham college green waste	1	Neutral
Bins will start to smell with 3 weekly collections	1	Negative
Collection method needs changing	1	Negative
More than 2 trips need to the tip per month	1	Neutral
Larger recycling bins needed	1	Negative
Current recycling needs sorting/collecting first	1	Negative
Against the idea of 3 weekly waste collections	1	Negative
No room for extra waste after 2 weeks – large family/disabled residents	1	Negative

Appendix 1 – Examples of comments for each theme

The extracts have been edited in respect of spelling and, where necessary, to delete any personal information.

General rejection of the 3-week collection cycle

<p>“NO. NO 3 weekly bin collection however you dress it up.”</p>
<p>“Even though this is important, I don't wish to see 3 weekly collections increasing the rubbish that will be stashed in black sacks all over Torbay in order to reduce the carbon footprint! People choosing not to recycle now will not start doing so just like that, but the streets will be covered in rubbish and won't that affect the tourist trade? NOT AT ANY PRICE!”</p>
<p>“The impact of not having a non-recycle collection every three weeks will cause major issues in my household with five adults. The recycle bins are too small and ever since we moved away from the big green bind there has been an increase on waste being spilled into the environment.”</p>
<p>“I cannot recycle any more than I already do. We are a household of only 2 and would not cope with reduced bin collection. Larger households will struggle which will lead to fly tipping and over flowing bins which will attract vermin and gulls”</p>
<p>“bin collections more frequent definitely not less”</p>
<p>“Non recyclables collected on a 3 weekly rota. For 3 years my late mother had carers attend her twice daily to attend to her stoma (colostomy bag). As there is no provision for a clinical collection from private residences the emptied bags and other contaminated clinical waste had to go into the bin. Even in the winter by the end of the second week the bin was extremely unpleasant. In the summer the bin was constantly covered in flies and crawling with maggots. Luckily, she had me to clean and disinfect the bin after each collection. What the bin would have been like after 3 weeks does not bear thinking about. I would imagine parents disposing of nappies would have the same problem. The Council needs to think at the micro level by serving and caring for its residents before thinking at the macro level to reduce carbon emissions (and save money). I would suggest that if the Council insists on bringing in the 3 week rota it also introduces a medical collection weekly for those with conditions that require a stoma and for parents of young babies.”</p>
<p>“Three weekly residual waste collections are unsustainable on a health and hygiene basis for young families with nappies and an increasingly aging population with incontinence pads.”</p>

Fly Tipping

“Action 3: any money saved will be far outweighed by the cost of clearing the increased amount of fly tipping if householders are charged for DIY rubbish they take to the tip.”

“Not charging at the tip for bringing rubbish would also encourage people. If you charge it just encourages people to fly tip because they can't afford it.”

“...if there are less collections there is likely to be more fly tipping which is bad for the environment and uses more energy to remedy!”

“Widening the range of items people will no longer be able to take to the recycling centres has already been proven, across the country, to increase fly tipping which is extremely bad for the environment - leaching out chemicals and toxins and harming wildlife.”

“You are making it harder for people to dispose of rubbish for free so fly tipping will increase even more”

“Collecting waste less regularly will create an environment which encourages fly tipping. It would also be less hygienic with overflowing bins and odours/litter. Any trial should be carried out during the summer... When heat creates more smells and it's also a time when tourists, seagulls and their young are most active. A trial in February would NOT produce reliable results of the impact.”

“Fly tipping is a disgrace around the bay make it easier for people to get rid of their waste free of charge we pay enough in council tax”

Fix current poor collection service first

“...No. Please fix the very poor collection of kerbside recycling first. Even before lockdown our recycling bins were rarely emptied weekly. Currently our food waste bin has not been emptied for over 3 weeks.”

“Actually collect bins when supposed to be collected. Then people wouldn't have to use their non-recycling bins for things that cannot and won't go in the recycle boxes.”

“Better recycling system. The boxes blow around and get broken easily, mine were broken before I even got them! Plus the contents often ends up all over the place, the bin men drop stuff and don't pick it up again, and because they stop right outside my house, most of it ends up in my front garden. Also having to have separate bins in a small kitchen to sort the different recyclables isn't practical for many. I could easily have a wheelie bin here that I can use as and when I need it and not have to worry about keeping rubbish inside to stop it ending up everywhere. The nets are all well and good, but it can get so windy here the whole box will go sliding off. Having the bin men sort the rubbish at the truck is also stupid, they end up sitting

outside my house with the engine running, clattering and yelling at each other, sometimes quite early in the morning, where the normal collection is dump it in the truck and go. Its added cost and takes them far longer than is really needed, we have the tech now to sort rubbish without the need for putting people at risk or injury, so why not use it? It would be more use friendly for everyone as the bin men won't have loads of boxes to carry but one bin they can wheel."

"How about you actually collect our waste! Two weeks now with no collection or date to collect it."

"Make sure the recycling rubbish is collected when it is supposed to be and not left for two weeks at a time for the seagulls to drag it all over the place"

"The collection service is so poor and unreliable, has been for years. Kerbside sorting doesn't work and the bay is full of rubbish mainly due to the inadequate boxes. The operatives are often rude, never pick up what they drop and so much rubbish blows out of the boxes, it has to be left out and you never know when they are actually going to turn up to collect it. It's the worst it's ever been."

"The waste collection process in Torbay is far from efficient and environmentally friendly right from the start. Roadside sortation is a slow process, time and motion inefficient, using unnecessary man power, it is hazardous, it blocks vehicular access on roads, pollutes our streets with fumes of a running stationary vehicle, leaves our streets on collection day, littered with rubbish, where collectors fail to pick up their dropped mess. We have broken glass left, cardboard, plastic blowing down the street. My wife and I constantly have to put our street back to a clean environmental state every time the recycle team visit our street. The domestic recycle bins are too small to encourage an uplift to recycling. The recycle team seem to choose what they want to take even if items are clearly recyclable, which then encourages residents to put the uncollected recyclable item in the main waste bin, to clear the rubbish situation. The waste for recycling should all be in one large wheelie bin, like the general waste bin, the waste should then be delivered to a suitable on site sortation plant, sorted and distributed to the appropriate recycling plant. If this is not possible, Torbay Council has failed at the first hurdle, operating an inefficient non-environmentally friendly service. Street sortation is not only pre historic it is damaging to the environment in so many ways. I could go on about this for hours, but I think the point has been made. To close, I know the system mentioned works as I have lived where it operates, resulting in the large general waste wheelie bin going from full on each collection day to a third full and the same size recycle wheelie bin, being full on every collection day, a vast upturn in recycling achieved just by doing simple things correctly."

Wider range of things that can be recycled

“You need to educate your employees as to what can be recycled, you also need to look at the facts as you don't recycle half of what the industry says can be. This means you are the irresponsible party holding the public back on this issue.”

“include more items we are able to recycle”

“Giving proper instructions on what plastic can be recycled in the household boxes also all refuse staff giving proper training as each week different plastic is left in the boxes as not recyclable.”

“Larger amounts of plastic waste to be recycled such as carrier bags , plastic film , guidance on how to deal with plastic packaging from toys ... Collection of scrap metal”

“Still not enough availability for what we can put in our recycling bins , so much you cannot put in especially plastics, our recycling centres do not have the capability to sort this so there is so much that gets thrown away or gets sent to a sub-contractor to deal with which costs the council money”

“More effort put into collecting materials that are well known to be recyclable but that are refused at kerbside collections, for example paper, black plastics and solid metal items.”

“The issues that most need attention are - recycling of plastics and sources of micro-plastics and disposal of batteries.”

Bigger bins will be needed

“The recycle bins are too small and ever since we moved away from the big green bind there has been an increase on waste being spilled into the environment.”

“My bin after 2 weeks is saturated. How am I supposed to hold it for 3 weeks? If you do 3 weeks, like always it will be delayed or something and we will end having the bins collected every 4 weeks. I really don't think this is for the climate emergency, this is because Torbay is unable to pick the bins on time. You are always struggling. As today my bin has not been collected for 6 days. ”

“Larger bins to hold recycling. I often have to burn cardboard and paper as there is insufficient space in the current bins provided.”

“The provision of larger recycling bins. Do NOT implement a 3-week collection for household rubbish. We have seen the total chaos caused by the waste disposal team having to isolate due to Covid-19. We had a huge increase in council tax last year. This has to stop.”

“There should be bigger recycling bins mine are always full to the brim weekly.”

“Torbay needs to supply bigger recycling boxes or more of them. More and more people are shopping online and have more waste to recycle.”

“Increase the size of the dry recycling 55 litre boxes, or add a third. Possibly may discourage residents putting their surplus in the 240 litre wheeled bin.”

Just a way to save money or cost cutting

“Disingenuous question - this is more about saving money than tackling climate change”

“How people bin their waste won't change as we on the whole already recycle as much as possible, this is quite clearly a move for Torbay Council to save money and nothing more, another service to drive down whilst Council Tax goes up. When the change fails and litter becomes an issue I have no doubt that the customers will be blamed and that under no circumstances will fortnightly collections resume. “

“I believe it will help but I also believe the line that it saves the council money is the main priority and not climate change”

“There is no Climate Emergency, this is a biased question. I would not like to see the actions taken in the proposal. I do not believe moving to 3 weekly residual waste will improve matters for the environment. This is all about saving money, presented as environmentally good, when it is not.”

“This is not about saving resources this is about saving money the council pays it's management far too much and should be saving money there not by cutting services this will lead to more rats and more waste in the streets it is absolutely a disgrace the councillors should be ashamed of themselves”

“This is simply another cost saving activity that is heavily disguised as a way to ‘increase recycling’.”

“You're hiding cost cutting exercises behind the excuse of a climate emergency. If you were serious you would pursue a more green local economy, at least be honest and say it is to save money.”

More education needed

“Better education. There are people in Torbay who will now fly tip when their bins are full or allow seagulls to attack overflowing bins. Demand people recycle with the threat of less collections. In summer, if we have collections every three weeks the seagulls and rats will be the only winners”

“Changing bin collections won't make a difference - education and fines will.”

“Educating people from age 4 to 99. More selective bins on street for walkers and dog walkers. Creating open fridge systems like in Germany to people to be able to share their unused, vegetables, milk products etc. Encouraging companies using recyclable packages”

“It is more about education, than forcing the easy option on those citizens who do recycle (and behave in general) responsibly. Go after those that are irresponsible, rather than put more strain on the "good people"”

“Much bigger campaign encouraging and reminding people what can be recycled, including adverts and going into schools. Including Information about what happens to recycling and why we do it.”

“Provide better and more detailed guidance on what can be recycled and how. For instance, do bottles and jars have to have their caps removed? And, if so, how can these be recycled. Include more items to be recycled - e.g. all types of packaging material; small metal items.

“Education of school children should be considered and get them involved as they are the most likely to be proactive and are most malleable. Recycling projects at school. ... The document is way too complex for the man in the street and it is highly unlikely you are going to get comments from the people you are actually trying to educate or impose changes on.

Make it free to use the recycling centre

“Make use of the tip free and fine fly-tippers thousands of pounds as a punishment for wrecking the landscape”

“Charging for disposal of “building” waste will reduce proper disposal and increase fly tipping. Fundamentally, household waste disposal and the “climate emergency” are not really connected.”

“Skips for garden waste rubble etc. would encourage most residents to recycle waste responsibly and avoid fly tipping which ruins our environment. Charging to get rid of waste encourages bad behaviour from residents who already pay high council tax bills and don't want to have to pay even more!”

"False economy, because it does NOT take into account the effect on the climate of having thousands of individual cars going back & forth to the tip (electric / hydrogen collection vehicle far more energy efficient) Also it ignores the human reaction to NOT BEING ABLE TO TAKE TO TIP " COST " so there will be more illegal dumping which negates any saving PLUS the ugly effect"

"I think one should be able to visit the Yalberton tip whenever necessary. The twice in 28 days rule encourages fly tipping and negates the whole idea of recycling. Moreover, it is very expensive for people to then get rid of their extra waste. However, I like the booking system which saves time."

"More incentive for people to recycle properly at the recycling centre, i.e. not charging for certain items as this deters people from using the centre and encourages others to fly tip, costing more money! Also, not restricting households to only 2 trips to the centre every 28 days, if you want to monitor businesses tipping find another way that does not penalise council tax paying residents. With the limited 2 trips it would seem that you are trying to profit from this idea by charging residents to collect the garden waste from the roadside (as you are not allowing them to go to the centre as and when necessary). If this is to be the case, a reduction on the council tax should be implemented to subsidise this necessity. No to 3 weekly bin collection as well."

"Open the tips free of charge for everyone To stop the fly tipping which will save money. You Are penalising builders who work hard And then fly tip as they are charged or aren't allowed in"

Expand collection of green waste

"I would also like a garden waste bin collection which might help to put a stop to the needless garden bonfires that happen on a daily basis throughout Torbay. It is supposed to be the English Riviera, but shops, restaurants and hotels have to put up with the dreadful stink and the toxic fumes as well homeowners and it is not good for residents, holiday makers or the environment and should be banned."

"Collections of garden waste for free - regularly like the other waste would encourage people to recycle."

"How about a garden waste bin? Other areas have them for a small yearly fee £45"

"Charging for green waste seems a little strange as some people have bigger gardens than others. I don't know how you are going to charge; will it be for each collection or an annual fee?"

"Very happy with the idea of having a green waste collection and would happily pay extra for that."

“The garden collection service is a good idea provided that the charges are reasonable enough to encourage take-up. If your aim is really to limit garden waste going in the residual bin then the charges have to be set to achieve that. People want to do the right thing but going to the tip for a small amount of garden waste is inefficient so the easy answer is to stick it in the main bin; if you want to stop that - i.e. really want to stop it - then the garden collection should really be free but perhaps not running in the winter months. If you have to charge it has to be a low enough charge to meet the stated recycling-based objective...”

“To prevent the constant garden bonfires you need to provide free green waste collection.”

Have electric or hydrogen powered refuse vehicles

“Electric vehicles. Green collection.”

“Firstly before placing this burden on your residents Reduce the council’s carbon foot print by replacing diesel vehicles with electric or hybrid.”

“Hydrogen vehicles are better for the environment than electric.”

“More electrification of council vehicles”

“Waste management vehicles should become zero carbon emitters.”

“Weekly collections with more efficient carbon neutral vehicles.”

“We need to actively encourage more electric-powered vehicles and charging stations. At present, we have an inordinate number of diesel-powered vehicles, and the particulates emitted from diesel engines are especially dangerous to lung tissue as they are tiny enough to damage the microscopic alveoli. This damage leads to asthma in children and respiratory diseases and disorders in adults.”

Rats, Vermin & Seagulls

“...if there are less collections there is likely to be more fly tipping which is bad for the environment and uses more energy to remedy! Also rats and other vermin will proliferate if waste is collected less often!”

“Regular collections instead of leaving food waste etc. sitting in the streets for three or four weeks causing rats and illness”

“There will not be less waste by reducing collections there will just be more waste building up in the houses and roads. Potential implications of 3 weekly collections are pests such as rats,

seagulls will have better access to bags and the roads will be filthy from waste strewn across them.”

“There should be a two-weekly household rubbish collection as an absolute minimum both as a matter of basic health and safety and as an essential public health criterion. The risk of disease spread and vermin breeding is too obvious to require further explanation.”

“Three-weekly general waste bin collections will do nothing except to save the Council money. It will do nothing to encourage people to recycle more. It will just result in bins piled so high with bags that the lids won’t shut, thus encouraging seagulls and other animals (including rats) to get at them. I (and most others in this neighbourhood) have been meticulously recycling everything possible for many years but, however diligent; there is always a residual smell from the bags after two weeks.”

“Keeping a weekly rubbish collection there are lots of rats already and people do not use correct bags and nets and the seagulls and wind cause rubbish to be dropped all over the roads.”

“Compliance will be a major issue. Rats love accumulating refuse.”

Simpler instructions on recycling

“More work needs to be done to simplify recycling instructions and work towards a similar recycling regime for each area.”

“Too much fully marked as to type plastic is currently non-recyclable in Torbay. If you make it simpler, more people will recycle.”

“You need to educate your employees as to what can be recycled, you also need to look at the facts as you don't recycle half of what the industry says can be.”

“Giving proper instructions on what plastic can be recycled in the household boxes also all refuse staff giving proper training as each week different plastic is left in the boxes as not recyclable. Totally confusing for the residents. Get rid of the boxes and replace with one wheelie bin for all recycled items as the time wasted by refuse staff kerb sorting is ridiculous. See how East Northamptonshire Council does it. Used to be 80% recycle household now we barely recycle 40% because of confusing instructions.”

“Better information for residents as to what can be recycled. When I lived in a bungalow in Paignton I had a bin for non-recyclable and two boxes. I could recycle the usual glass, plastic, tins, cardboard and paper but also foil, batteries, used cooking oil and printer cartridges. Now in a flat in Livermead with shared bins there is no mention of the latter items. This is very wasteful. We should have up to date lists for each bin.”

“Current strategy is complicated and only deters recycling - I'm not sure I would remember when collections will occur if you move to 3 weekly waste collections, far too difficult to keep track. Recycling/waste disposal must be simple or people just won't comply. There is no incentive to recycle if it is so difficult to be compliant and need to understand your complicated schedules and procedures. I am fed up with rejected recycling waste being thrown on my garden because your operatives don't agree what can and cannot be recycled. What is the point in me following recycling details on labels only to find you don't agree and refuse collection? We need fewer bins and weekly collections if you are really serious about recycling”

“If you want to encourage recycling, the top priority should be clear, unambiguous communication about what can be recycled through kerbside collection and where to go with materials that can be recycled, but not through our kerbside collection. Recycling suffers from lack of clarity and consistency. Some items are accepted for recycling one week and rejected the next week. A sensible strategy for a householder is to assume that items will NOT be accepted for recycling because the guidelines are not clear. Plastic recycling is typically based on the type of plastic, indicated by the number in the recycling symbol on the item. Why not use these numbers to provide clear, specific guidance? The website says that textiles and shoes can be collected through the recycling boxes, but only if they are clean and dry. There's no suggestion as to how they can be kept clean and dry when they have to be put out overnight for 6:00 a.m. collection. The website appears to be out of date on many items. The food waste bins are an awkward size; I've not found plastic bin liners that will fit them. Without plastic bin liners the bin gets filthy and smelly, requiring washing and disinfecting each week. Even then, maggots grow in the bin in warm weather. These bins become disgusting for the householder as well as the collection staff. I typically use my own compost bin in the garden because the process using the food waste bin is far too filthy. Also, most seaside places I visit have general waste bins next to one or more recycling bins - but not here. Why not? I am concerned about charging for disposal of small amounts of DIY waste. I strongly suspect that people will either bag the waste and put it in general waste or leave it piled up somewhere near their home. The piled up waste could provide a habitat for hedgehogs, but it could also provide a habitat for rats.”

Selling on of used goods

“Have an area of items that can be reused or have a policy of donation to charities, so many items that one person declares as unwanted are wanted Or liked by someone else.”

“A way of selling on goods rather than perfectly good items going in the containers and then into landfill (Newton Abbot have done this for years)”

“Opening seconds hand markets for the public to be able to reselling their goods. Using local communities and encourage volunteers to cleaning sections in their area.”

“Make recycling easier with improved boxes and change recycling centre to promote recycling of furniture and usable goods like in the Newton Abbot tip shop.”

“Teignbridge council recycling centre has a resale area for up cycling of saleable goods. Torbay council should do a similar scheme, sending less to landfill.”

“Reducing waste crime, waste safety and preserving stocks by making it easy to recycle kerbside and free at recycling centre where reusing 'waste' articles should be promoted by providing a facility at the recycling facility.”

“Having a recycle area like Totnes and Newton Abbot would help to re cycle lots of things. I cry when I go to dispose of things in Paignton when I see what people put in the skips. A large amount of it could be used and less going to land fill. David Attenborough claims not to waste anything.”

Stop kerbside sorting

“It seems to me that the way the recycling is collected is very inefficient; the lorries go very slowly along the road while the people emptying the bins on foot risk life and limb in the road while sorting the stuff into different parts of the lorry. Surely it would be better to have one big wheelie bin for recycling, and have it sorted out in a warehouse later. That way the lorries could get round faster, using less fuel, and probably you would need fewer lorries. Obviously this is more of a long term thing because you have your fleet already.”

“Look at waste collection holistically including the footprint from congestion caused by roadside sorting (compared to bulk collection and sorting at base), fuel use differences, operative costs (they also have a footprint) more recycling from residents seeing it as easier to recycle.”

“Sort for recyclable waste centrally rather than per property - that is the only way to maximise a response to the Climate Emergency.”

“Stop sorting recycle Material at the roadside! The lorries keep their engines running all day long and they hold up traffic longer than necessary. Answer: have recycle bins for recycling material. Pick it up take it back to base to sort preferably by people on community service.”

“The focus should be sorting waste at depot as is done in most successful councils.”

“Stop kerbside sorting, it is a waste of time and causes litter.”

“The current kerbside collection process, generates large amounts of vehicle carbon emissions with constant 'stop / starting', other authorities introduce operate slicker operations to collect recycling products.”

Solar compactor bins

“Solar compactor bins need less emptying and rubbish not on streets. Council to lead by example and not expect householders to do things but not them.”

“If the Council is really serious about its carbon footprint then it should introduce Solar Powered Bins all around the Bay. These are proven to be effective worldwide. After the initial investment the reduction in collections from these bins will reduce emissions by collection vehicles.”

“Greater use of Solar powered waste bins across the Bay. More waste collected, less prone to seagulls and therefore the streets are kept free of litter caused by scavenging.”

“We have no Solar Powered Bins. These are being used to reduce the carbon footprint in many of Britain's towns.”

“As part of the review of its Waste Strategy it should introduce Solar Powered Bins around the Bay. These bins have been successfully introduced in many parts of the UK and around the world but not yet here in Torbay.”

“If Solar Powered Bins were to be added my answer would become yes.” (Q6)

Appendix 2 - Respondent Demographics

Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

Gender	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Female	363	44.4%
Male	397	48.5%
Other	9	1.1%
Prefer not to say	30	3.7%
Blank	19	2.3%

Which of the following age groups applies to you?

Age Band	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
0 to 14	2	0.2%
15 to 24	8	1.0%
25 to 34	42	5.1%
35 to 44	106	13.0%
45 to 54	138	16.9%
55 to 64	206	25.2%
64 to 75	224	27.4%
75 plus	75	9.2%
Blank	17	2.1%

Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?

Disability	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Yes	132	16.1%
No	658	80.4%
Blank	28	3.4%

Effect of Disability

Effect of disability	Number of (positive) responses	Percentage of responses
It affects my mobility	86	65.2%
It affects my vision	15	11.4%
It affects my hearing	26	19.7%
It affects me in another way	44	33.3%

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Ethnicity	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
White	746	91.2%
Mixed ethnicity	12	1.5%
Asian or Asian British	6	0.7%
Black or Black British	6	0.7%
Chinese	1	0.1%
Other	27	3.3%
Blank	20	2.4%