



Waste Services and Street Cleaning Resident Insight Research

Research Report for



**SOUTH LONDON
WASTE PARTNERSHIP**



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1. The Research Programme

1.1 Introduction

The South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) consists of the four south London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton. The boroughs work together to provide more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable waste management, street cleaning and other environmental services to one million residents (400,000 households).

The SLWP holds contracts with Veolia to deliver a wide range of environmental services on behalf of the partner boroughs including:

- Recycling and residual waste collections (domestic and commercial)
- Street cleansing
- Household Reuse and Recycling Centre
- Winter maintenance and gritting
- Gully maintenance
- Haulage and processing of recycling
- Recyclate sales
- Resident communication and engagement services

The contracts with Veolia through which the above services are delivered will end in 2025. SLWP has an opportunity to re-commission these important services and is keen to engage and involve residents in a co-design exercise to ensure the specification for the new services reflect local needs and are fit for the future.

SLWP commissioned Enventure Research to deliver a consultation exercise for each of the four London Boroughs. This report details the findings of the consultation with residents in London Borough of Merton.

1.2 Methodology overview

A mixed-methodology approach of both quantitative and qualitative methods was used for this consultation:

- An interviewer-led telephone/face-to-face survey with 400 residents of the London Borough of Merton, aged 18 and above, with quotas set to achieve a sample that was representative of the area in terms of age group, gender, geographical area, ethnic group and housing type (which also covers the type of waste and recycling service)
- A self-completion online survey targeted at residents of the London Borough of Merton. The online survey was promoted by the Council via its website, social media and at roadshow events. The online survey received 1,898 responses
- Two focus groups with a mix of residents, split by the East and West of the borough, and broadly reflective of the local population

1.3 Survey methodology and responses

Questionnaire design

A questionnaire was co-designed by the London Borough of Merton, SLWP and Enventure Research, and included questions on the following topics:

- Recycling and waste collection services
- Assisted collection service
- Garden waste collection service
- Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre
- Neighbourhood Recycling Centres
- Street cleaning
- Resolving problems and keeping residents up to date

The questionnaire used for the online survey contained the full set of questions, and the representative survey delivered by telephone and face-to-face had fewer questions to ensure it was a realistic and manageable length for respondents to answer.

For reference, a copy of both questionnaires can be found in the **Appendices**.

Representative survey (telephone and face-to-face)

A representative telephone survey was conducted with residents of Merton aged 18 and above by a team of telephone interviewers using a CATI methodology (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing), whereby respondents' answers to questions are directly input into survey software. In addition, some interviews were undertaken face-to-face at various locations across Merton to ensure hard to reach residents were included, such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds and younger residents.

Interviews took approximately 15 minutes for an interviewer to complete with a respondent. Interviewer shifts took place at different times, on both weekdays and weekends (including at peak times).

Before launching the survey, the questionnaire was tested with a small number of residents who were asked to take part and provide feedback on their experience. This helped ensure that the questionnaire was easy to understand, would elicit useful responses, was of a suitable length and that the questions were asked in a non-biased manner to collect valid and reliable data.

In total, **407 interviews** were completed, with research taking place from 16 October to 6 November 2022.

Quotas for the survey were set on age, gender, ethnic group, geographical area and waste and recycling service collection type (housing type), to provide a sample that was broadly representative of Merton residents.

Online survey (open to all London Borough of Merton residents)

To provide all residents with the opportunity to take part in the survey, an online version of the full questionnaire was made available for residents to complete. The online survey was hosted and managed online by Enventure Research between 12 October and 22 November 2022. The survey was open to people aged 18 and above who lived in the borough, with those under the age of 18 or living outside of the borough screened out at the beginning of the survey.

The online survey was promoted via the Council's website and social media channels, such as the Council's official Facebook (including a paid advert) and was promoted at various roadshow events delivered by the Council.

The online survey had more questions than the telephone survey and received **1,898** responses.

Survey responses

In total, **2,305 responses** were received to the survey.

Figure 1 – Survey responses by methodology

Methodology	Number
Representative telephone and face-to-face survey	407
Online survey	1,898
TOTAL	2,305

Interpretation of the findings

Figures

This report contains tables and charts. In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen:

- The question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer
- Only the most common responses may be shown in the table or chart
- Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number so the total may come to 99% or 101%
- A response of less than 0.5% will be shown as 0%

In some cases, response options are not shown in figures if they were not selected by any respondents.

Sampling tolerances

As the representative survey was undertaken by a sample of people who live in the London Borough of Merton, all results are subject to sampling tolerances. Based on ONS mid-2020 estimates, the population of those aged 18 and above is 158,713, meaning that the 407 representative sample size will provide an accuracy of +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence interval. This means with a result of 50%, we can be 95% sure that if we interviewed all residents then the result would be between 45.1% and 54.9%.

Subgroup analysis

Subgroup analysis has been undertaken to explore the representative survey results by gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area of Merton and property/waste collection type. This analysis has only been carried out where the sample size is seen to be sufficient. The percentages shown in the subgroup analysis reflect the proportion of the subgroup who answered the question and gave a particular response. Subgroup analysis has only been carried out for the representative survey, as the online survey is not representative of Merton.

Differences that are statistically significant according to the z-test at the 95% confidence level have been highlighted in this report. The z-test is a commonly used statistical test used to highlight whether differences in results are 'significant'. By this we mean that we can say with 95% confidence that we would see a difference if all residents within a specific subgroup had answered the question.

Other responses

For some questions, respondents were able to select 'other' and provide a free-text response. Where 15 or more 'other' responses have been received, a summary has been provided within the commentary to highlight the most common response themes.

Response scales

Some survey questions allowed respondents to answer questions using Likert scales, such as satisfaction rating scales. As differences between responses within these scales are often subjective, for example, the difference between those who answered 'very satisfied' and 'quite satisfied', these response options have been combined to create total responses and it is these combined figures that have been used in the analysis and commentary.

Terminology

Throughout this report, those who took part in the representative survey are referred to as 'representative respondents', whilst those who completed the online version of the survey are referred to as 'online respondents'.

1.4 Qualitative research methodology

Two online focus groups with Merton residents were moderated by Enventure Research: one with residents from East Merton and one with residents from West Merton. Participants were recruited to the groups to be broadly representative of the borough in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. In addition to the focus groups, a series of one-to-one in-depth interviews were conducted with residents who live in a flat above a shop to glean specific feedback from this cohort of residents.

Focus group and depth interview participants were recruited from the telephone and online surveys, where respondents were asked if they would like to participate in further research on the same topic of the survey. In total, 12 participants attended the focus groups and three in-depth interviews were conducted.

Focus groups lasted for 75 minutes and moderators followed a discussion guide designed by Enventure Research, Merton Council and the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP). The guide followed the same topic areas as the survey to explore them in greater depth and used some of the survey results to facilitate discussion.

The depth interview guide was adapted from the focus group discussion guide to suit a shorter length (30 minutes) and tailored to those who live in a flat above shops to ask specific questions about their recycling and waste service as it differs from the rest of the borough.

The discussion guides can be found in the **Appendices**.

Throughout this report, those who took part in the qualitative research are referred to as 'participants'. Any direct quotes used from the focus groups and depth interviews are labelled with whether the participant was from the East Merton focus group, West Merton focus group or was a resident living in a flat above a shop who took part in a depth interview.

2. Survey Research Findings

2.1 Recycling and waste collection services

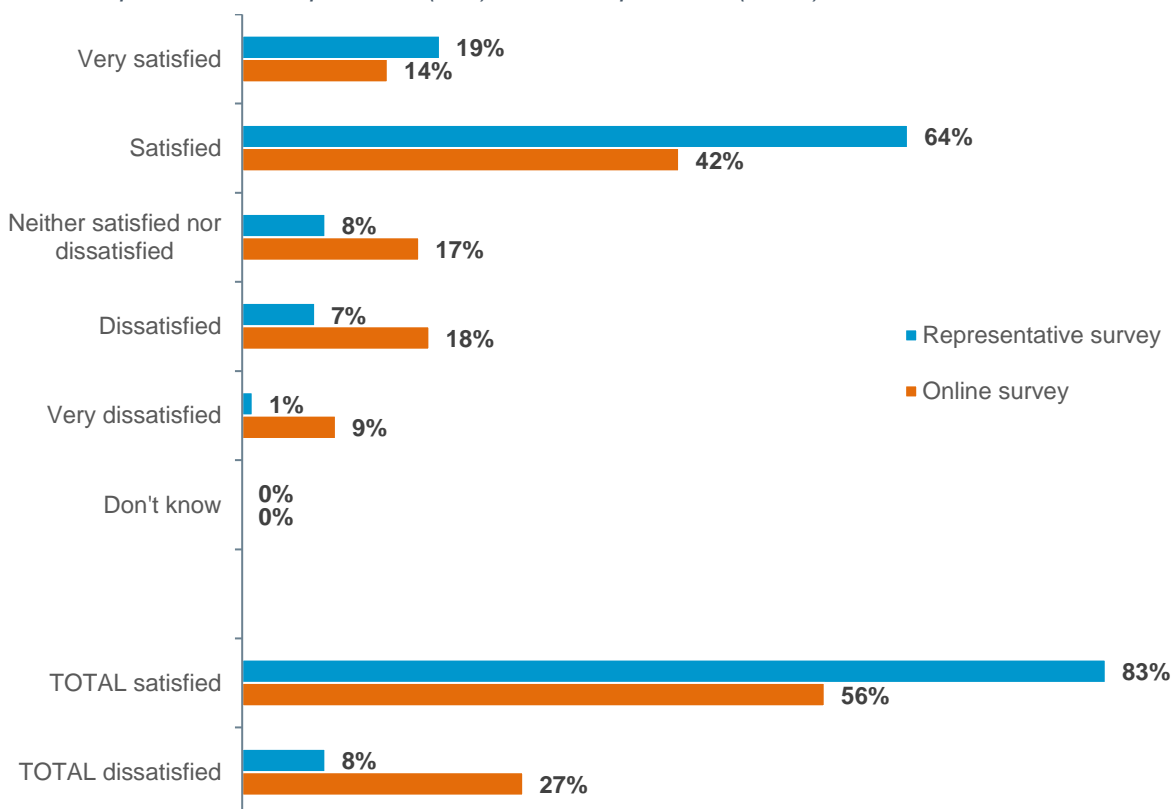
Satisfaction with recycling and waste collection services

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their recycling and waste collection services provided by the Council. One in five (19%) representative respondents said they were *very satisfied* and 64% said they were *satisfied*, giving a combined total of 83% satisfaction. Satisfaction was lower amongst online respondents, with 14% saying they were *very satisfied* and 42% saying they were *satisfied*, giving a combined satisfaction of 56%.

Dissatisfaction was highest amongst online respondents, with just over a quarter (27%) saying they were either *dissatisfied* (18%) or *very dissatisfied* (9%). This compares to 8% overall dissatisfaction of representative respondents.

Figure 2 – (Q4) Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the recycling and waste collection service provided by the Council?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



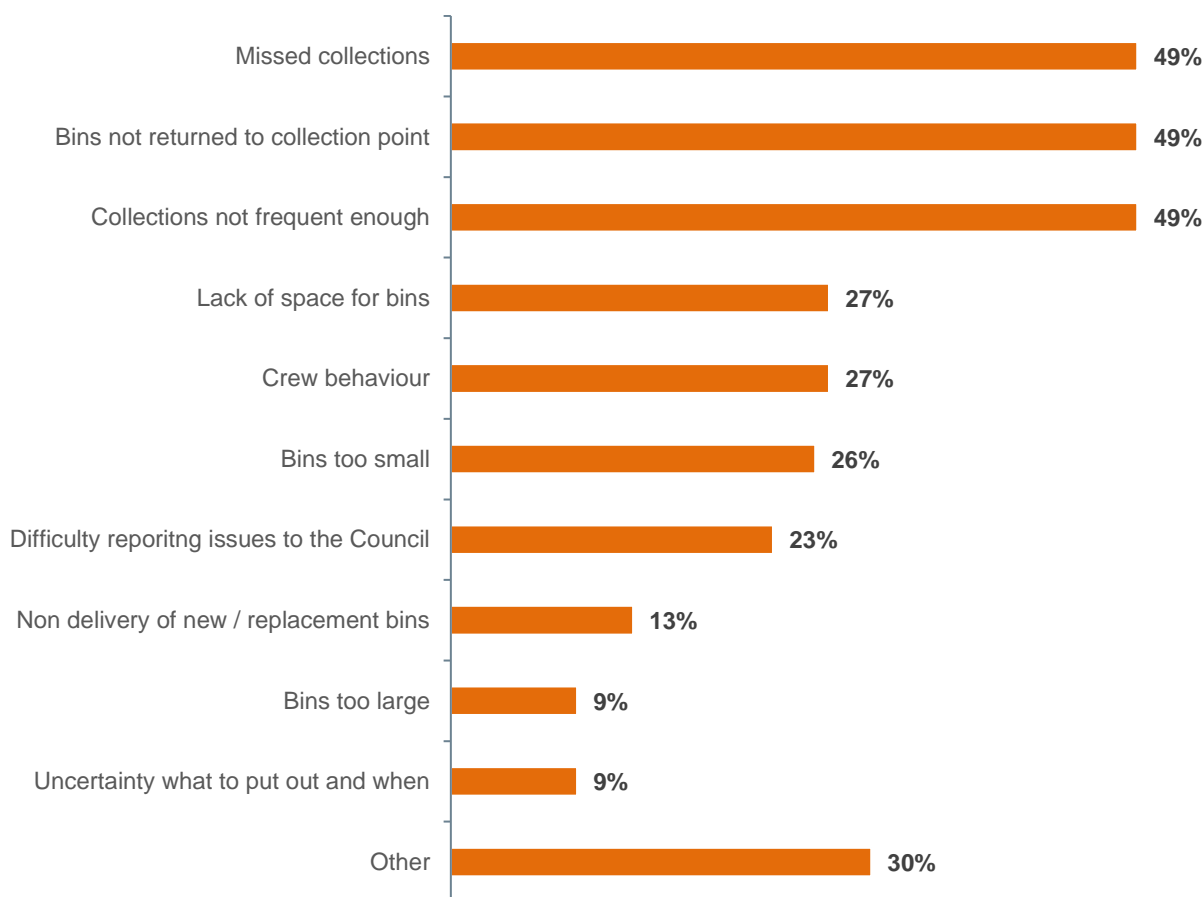
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in houses were *most likely to be satisfied* with the service than those living in purpose built flats (87% compared with 77%)
- Those living in South Wimbledon were *most likely to be dissatisfied* with the service (20% compared with 9% overall)
- Male respondents were *most likely to be satisfied* with the service than female respondents (91% compared with 77%)

Figure 2 – (Q5, online question) Why have you said you are 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the recycling and waste collection service?

Base: Online respondents that said they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' (521) – respondents could tick all that applied

Online respondents were then asked why they said they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the service. The most common responses, provided by half of online respondents were *missed collections* (49%), *bins not returned to collection point* (49%) and *collections not frequent enough*. Other common responses included *lack of space for bins* (27%), *crew behaviour* (27%) and *bins too small* (26%).



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Litter from bins on waste collection day/mess from crews
- Food waste bin not fox proof/doesn't close properly
- Broken bins/crew not taking care
- Want wheelie bins
- Crew mixes recycling, food waste and general waste together

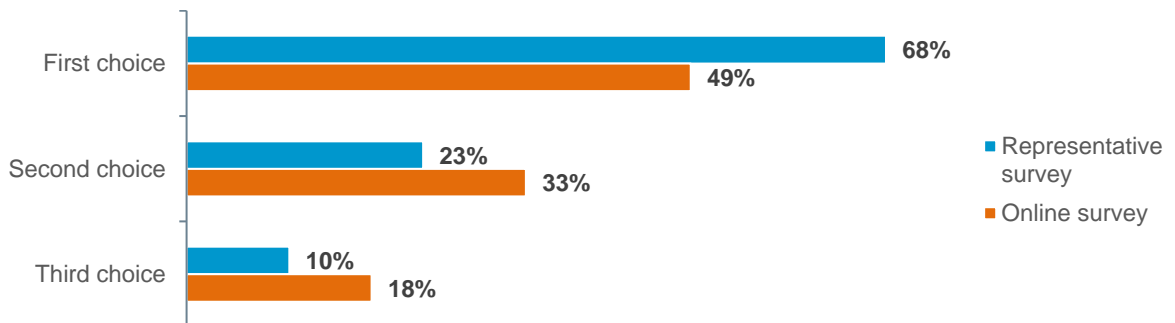
Resident priorities

Respondents were provided with a list of three characteristics and were asked which matters most to them regarding their waste and recycling collection service in the future. This list included environmental benefits, convenience or ease of use, and affordability. As shown in the figure below, *environmental benefits* is ranked as the most important by both respondent types - 68% of representative respondents and 49% of online respondents. *Convenience or ease of use* was ranked in second place by 21% of representative respondents and 46% of online respondents. *Affordability* was chosen by the lowest number of respondents, with 11% of representative respondents and 6% of online respondents.

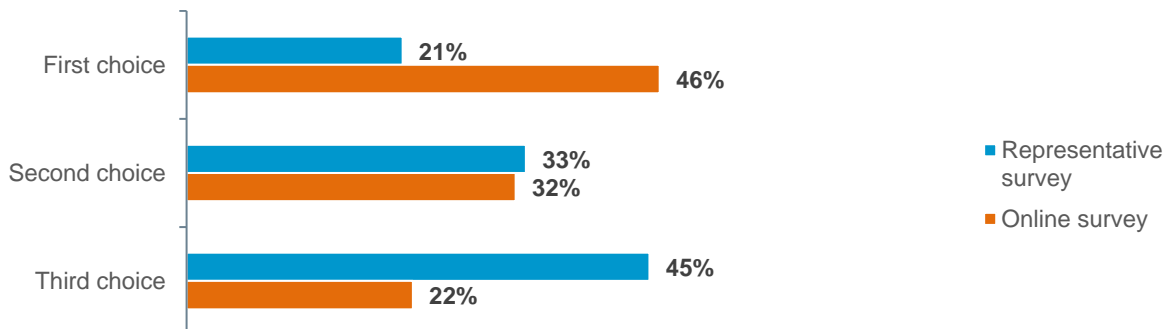
Figure 4 – (Q6) When you think about your recycling and waste collection service in the future, what matters most? (Please rank from 1 to 3, where 1 is the highest priority and 3 is the lowest priority)

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)

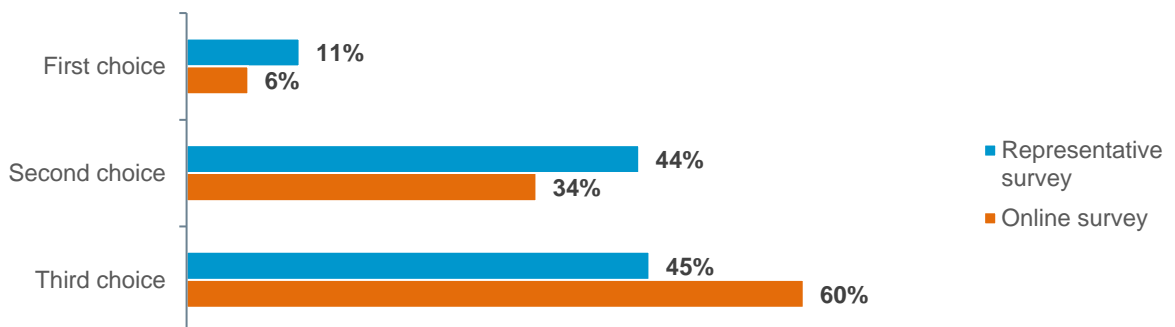
Environmental benefits (carbon reduction, waste minimisation, recycling)



Convenience or ease of use (simplicity of service)



Affordability (to help make sure money is available to fund other Council services)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

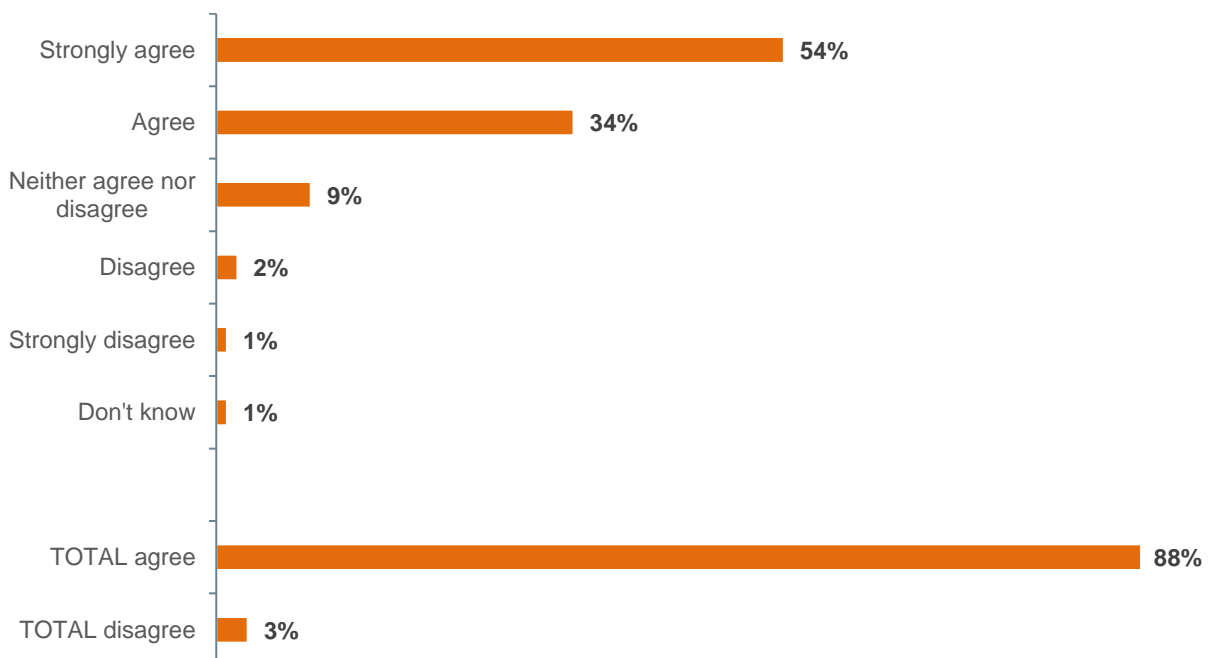
- Those living in South Wimbledon were *most likely to choose environment benefits* as the most important characteristic (87% compared with 66% overall)

Recycling in Merton in the future

Figure 5 – (Q7, online question) To what extent do you agree or disagree that more needs to be done in the future to recycle more and waste less in The London Borough of Merton?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

Online respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that more needs to be done in the future to recycle more and waste less in Merton. Over half (54%) said they *strongly agree* and 34% said they *agree*, giving a combined total agreement of 88%.



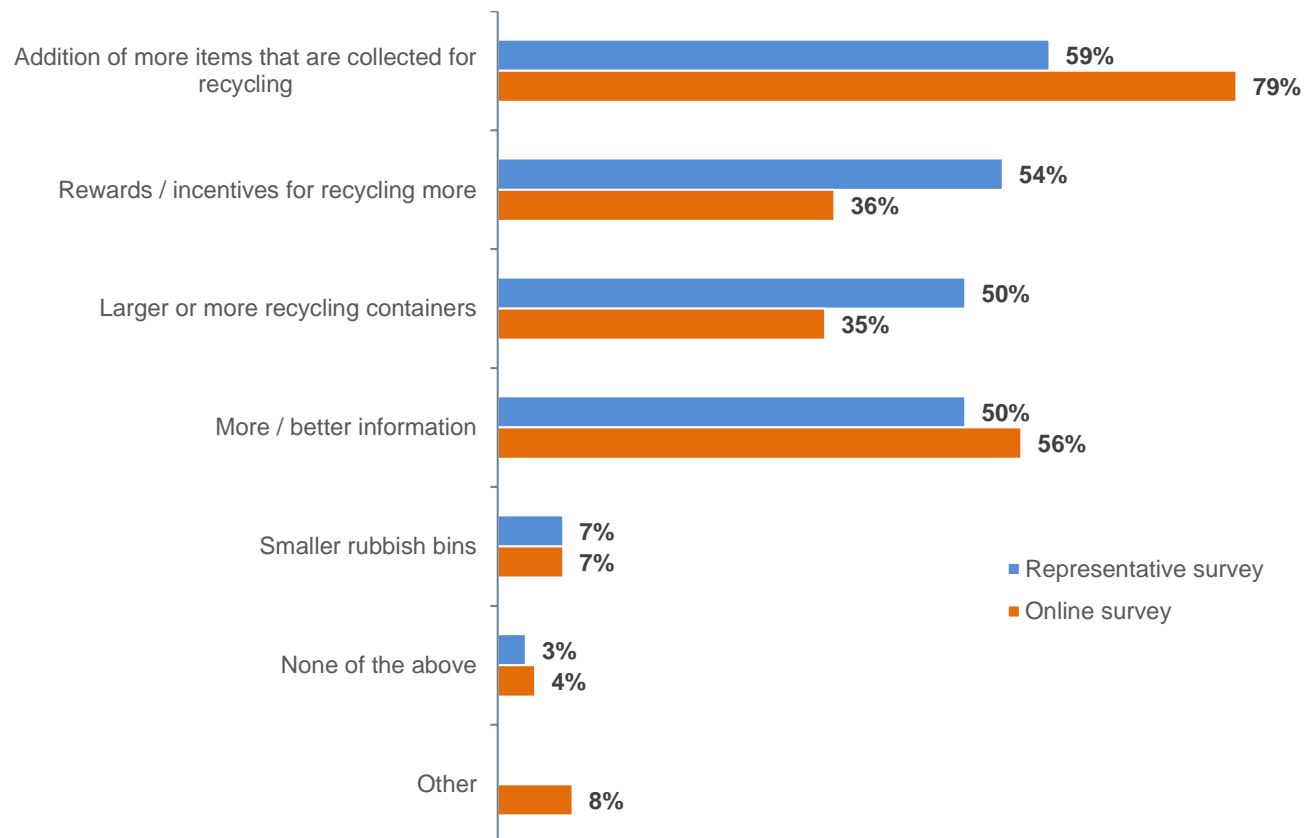
Changes to encourage more recycling

As the London Borough of Merton is keen to identify if there is anything that would encourage residents to recycle more in the future, respondents were asked to identify what would encourage them to do so. Three in five (59%) representative respondents said the *addition of more items that are collected for recycling* and 54% said *rewards and incentives for recycling more*. Half (50%) of representative respondents said *larger or more recycling containers* and *more/better information* would also encourage them to recycle more.

When compared with representative respondents, a larger proportion of online respondents (79%) said they would be encouraged to recycle more items if there was an *addition of more items that are collected for recycling*. However, a smaller proportion said *rewards / incentives for recycling more* (36%) and *larger or more recycling containers* (35%).

Figure 6 – (Q8) Which of the following changes would encourage you and those in your household to recycle more in the future?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898) – respondents could tick up to three responses



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Better quality/fox proof food waste caddies
- Recycling bins instead of boxes
- More frequent collections
- Mixed recycling instead of separate recycling
- Easier access to Garth Road/scrap the booking system

Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in purpose-built flats were *most likely to say addition of more items that are collected for recycling* (71% compared with 59% overall)
- Those living in houses converted to flats were *most likely to say larger or more recycling containers* (63% compared with 50% overall)
- Those living in South Wimbledon were the *least likely to say rewards/incentives for recycling more* (20% compared with 55% overall)
- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham were *most likely to say rewards/incentives for recycling more* (76% compared with 55% overall)

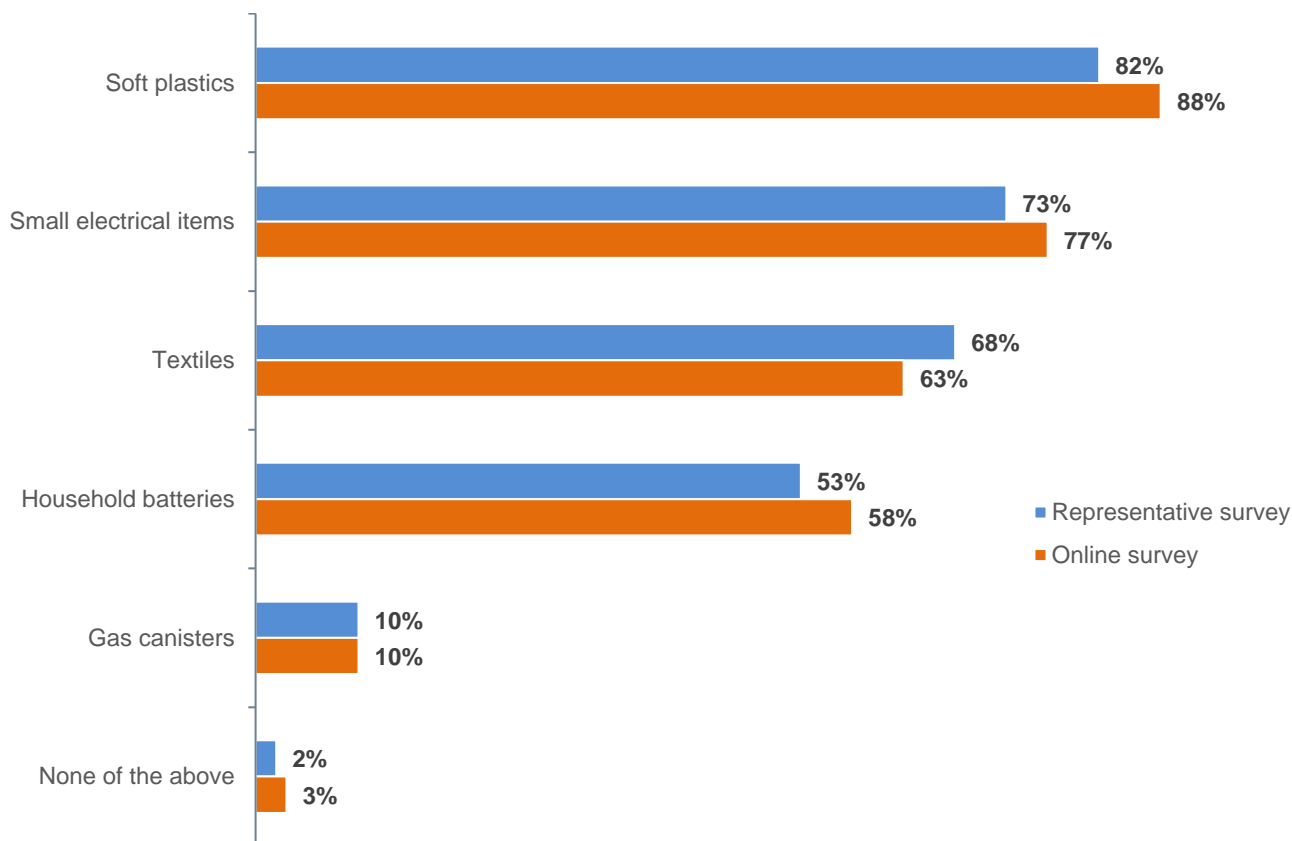
Recycling different items at home

Although respondents can recycle a range of materials in the existing recycling scheme, they were asked which other items they would like to be able to recycle from home in the future. The most popular response given by representative respondents was *soft plastics* (82%), followed by *small electrical items* (73%) and *textiles* (68%). *Household batteries* was mentioned by just over half (53%) of representative respondents, although there was anecdotal evidence that there was some confusion amongst residents as the recycling collection scheme already allows batteries to be collected.

The proportion of online respondents identifying which items they would like to be able to recycle from home were similar to representative respondents; *soft plastics* (88%), *small electrical items* (77%), *textiles* (63%) and *household batteries* (58%).

Figure 7 – (Q9) Which of these items would you like to be able to recycle from home in the future?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898) – respondents could tick all that applied



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

Those living in purpose built flats were *most likely to want to recycle*:

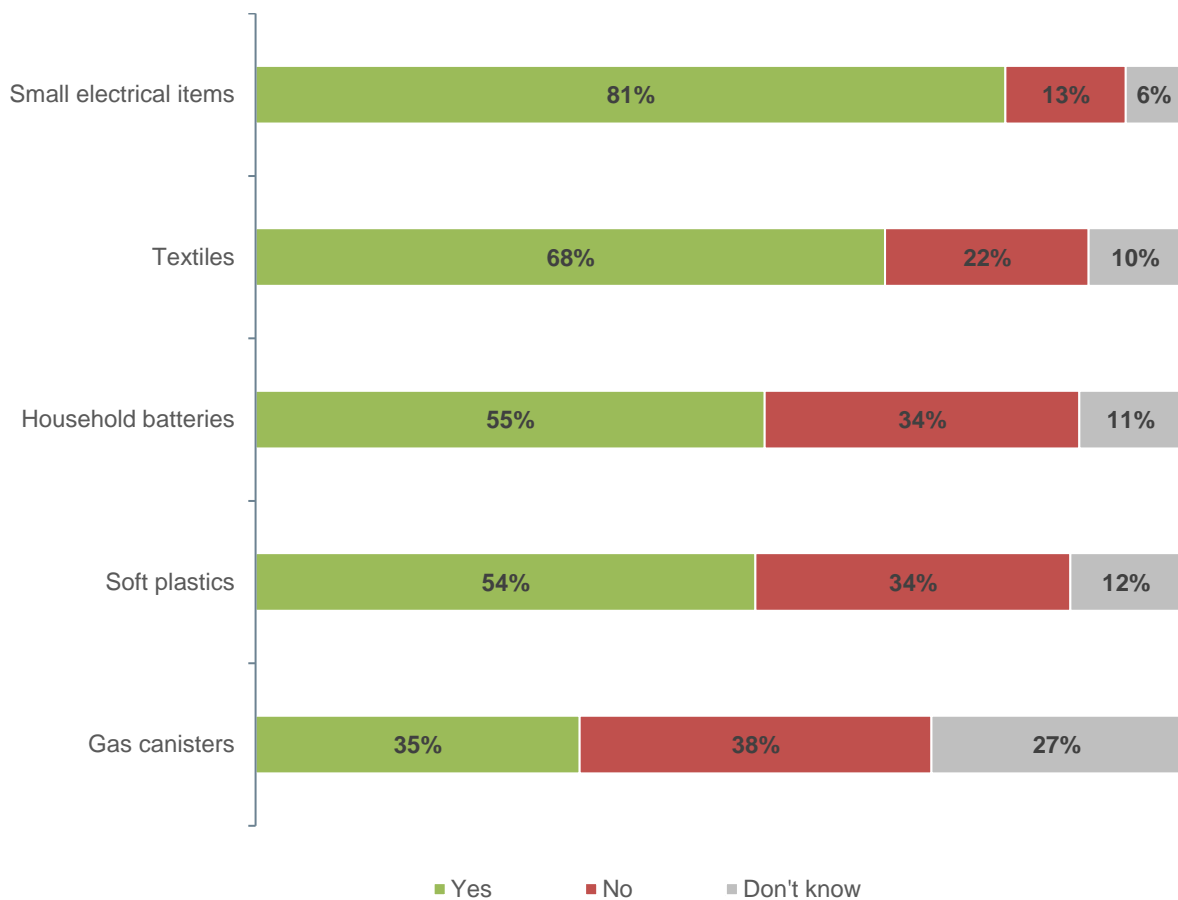
- Soft plastics (91% compared with 82% overall)
- Textiles (80% compared with 68% overall)
- Household batteries (69% compared with 53% overall)

Bookable collection service

London Borough of Merton wanted to explore the appetite for providing a free bookable collection service for different items that households have to dispose of. Four in five (81%) online respondents said they would be interested to have this service for *small electrical items*, 68% said *textiles*, 55% said *household batteries* and 54% said *soft plastic*. Just over a third (35%) of online respondents said they would use a free bookable collection service for *gas canisters*.

Figure 8 – (Q10, online question) If it is not possible to include these items in your standard recycling collection service, would you use a free bookable collection service (via an online form) for these items?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

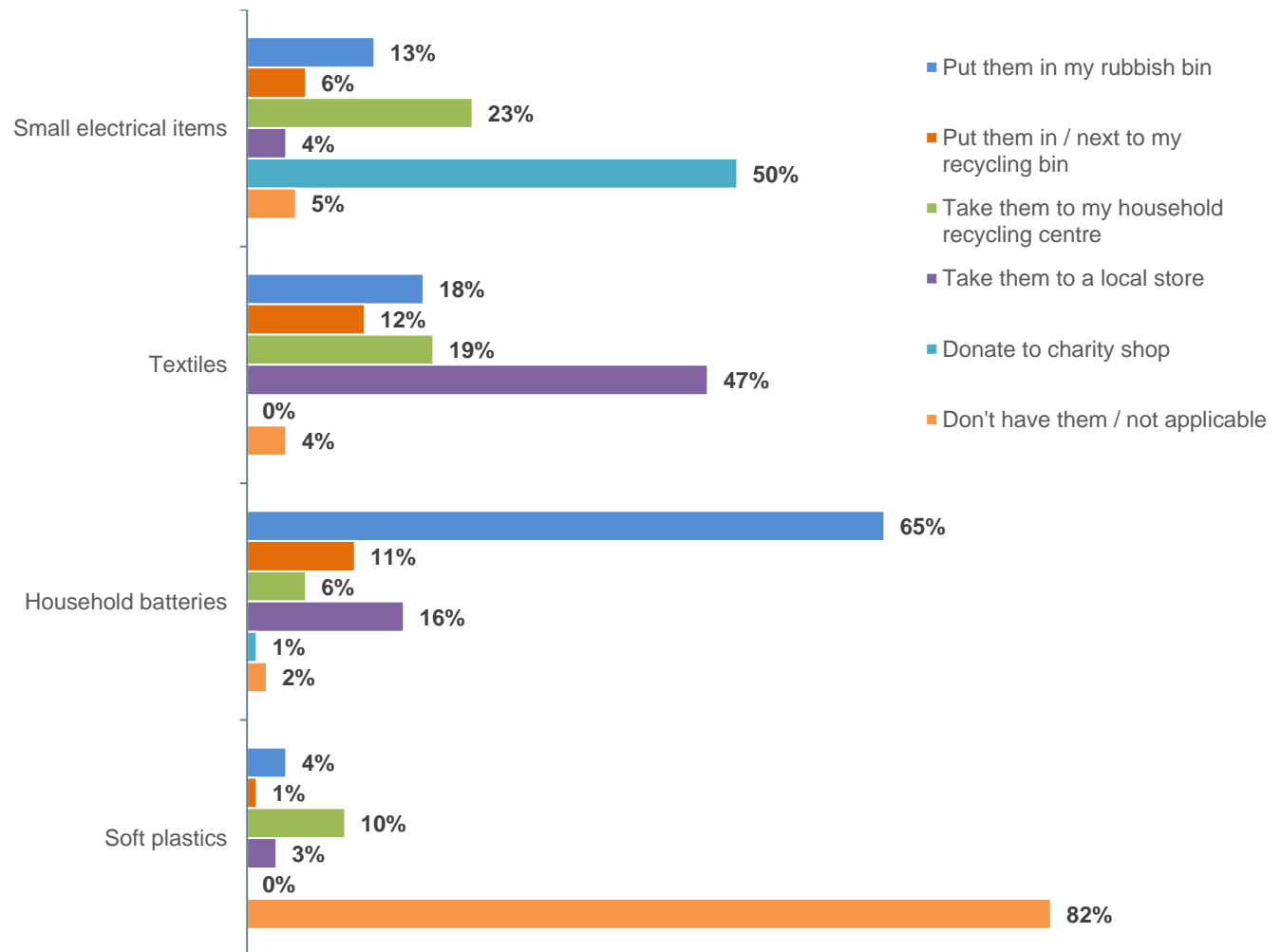


Disposing of items

Online participants were asked what they did with a range of items, such as small electrical items, textiles, household batteries, soft plastics, and gas canisters. Half (50%) of online respondents said they *donated small electrical items to the charity shop* and almost half (47%) said they took *textiles to a local store*. Almost two-thirds (65%) said they put *household batteries in their rubbish bins*, compared with 11% that put them *in/next to their recycling bin*, 6% that *take them to the household recycling centre*, and 16% that *take them to a local store*. For *soft plastics*, one in ten (10%) said they take them to their *household recycling centre*.

Figure 9 – (Q11, online question) What do you do with the following items?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)



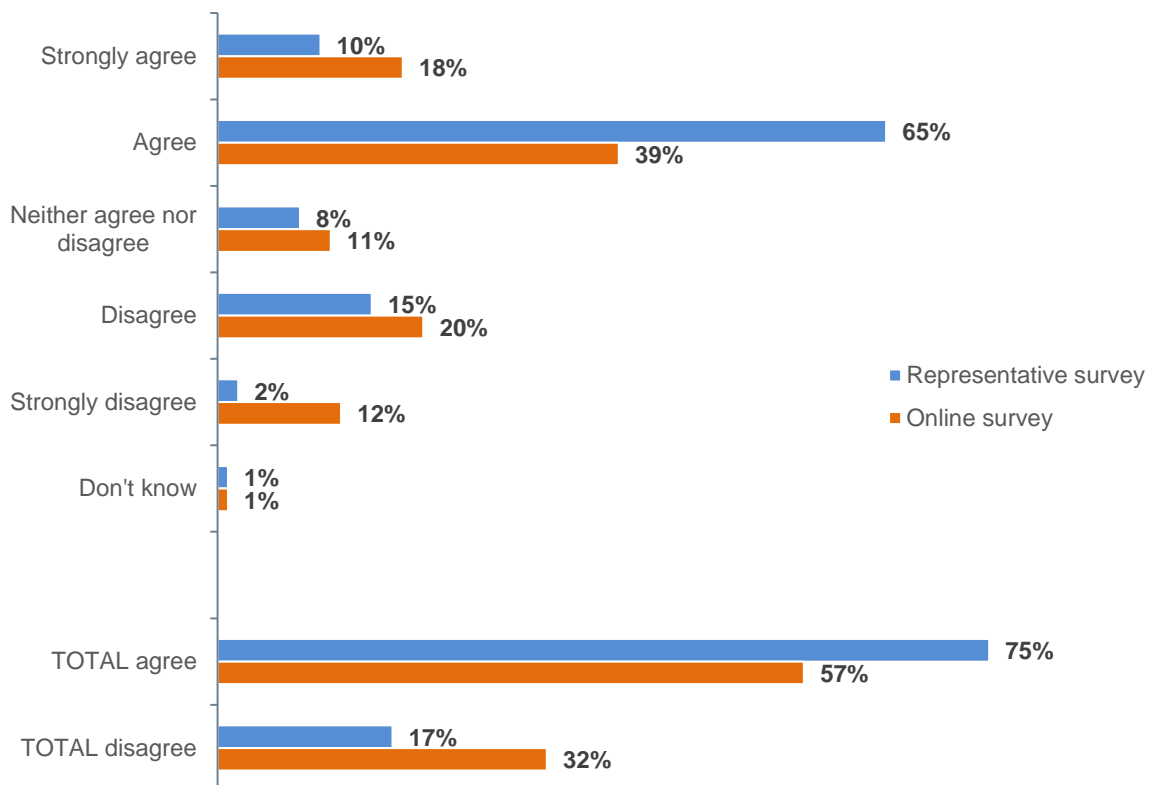
Space in recycling bins/boxes

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that they have enough space in their recycling bins or boxes to recycle all the items they want to. Three quarters (75%) of representative respondents agreed overall that they have enough space, compared with 17% who disagreed overall.

Online respondents were more likely to disagree overall that they have enough space in their recycling bins and boxes than representative respondents (32% compared with 17%).

Figure 10 – (Q12a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have enough space in my recycling bins/boxes to recycle all items I want to.

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



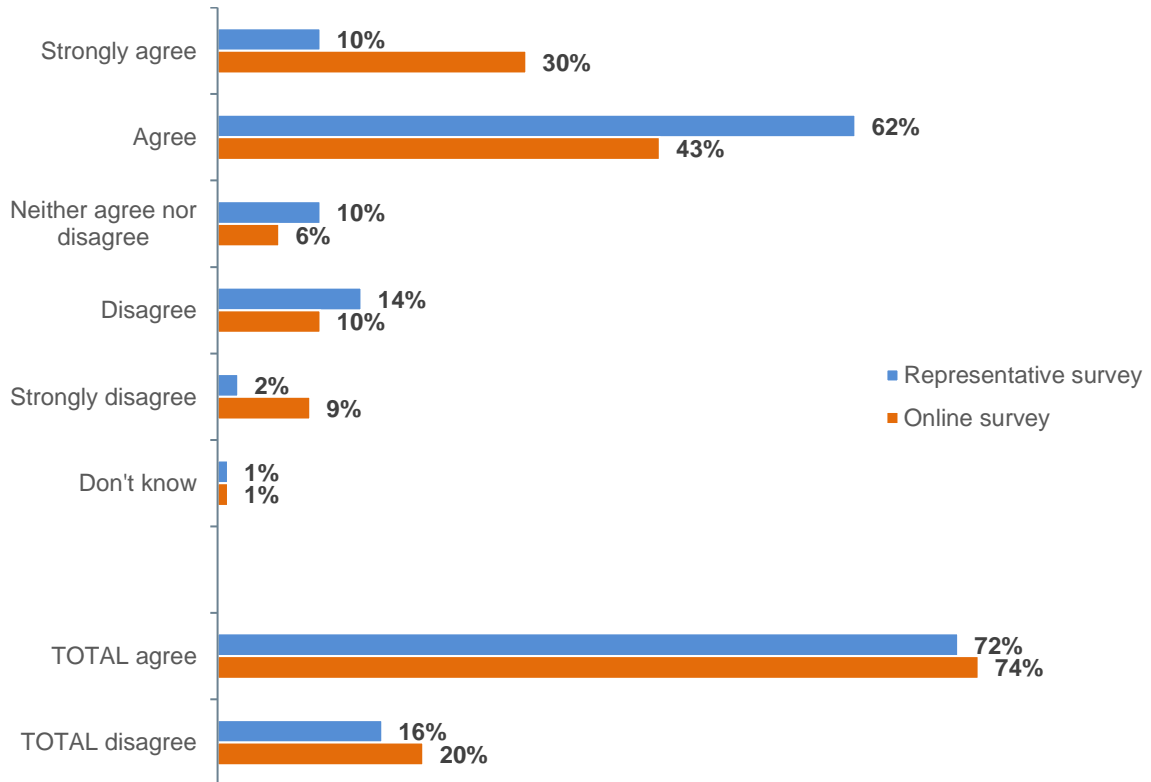
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in a house were *most likely to agree they had enough space in the recycling bins/bags* than those living in purpose built flats (79% compared with 64%)
- Those living in South Wimbledon were *most likely to disagree they had enough space in the recycling bins/bags* (31% compared with 20% overall)

Respondents were then asked if they agreed or disagreed that the bin provided by the Council was large enough for the non-recyclable waste. Just over seven in ten (72%) representative respondents agreed overall, and a similar proportion of online respondents (74%) also said the same.

Figure 11 – (Q12b) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The rubbish bin provided by the Council is large enough for the non-recyclable waste my household produces

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in purpose built flats were *most likely to disagree that the rubbish bin provided by the Council is large enough for the non-recyclable waste* than those living in purpose built flats (23% compared with 18%)
- Those living in South Wimbledon were *most likely to disagree that the rubbish bin provided by the Council is large enough for the non-recyclable waste* (31% compared with 19% overall)

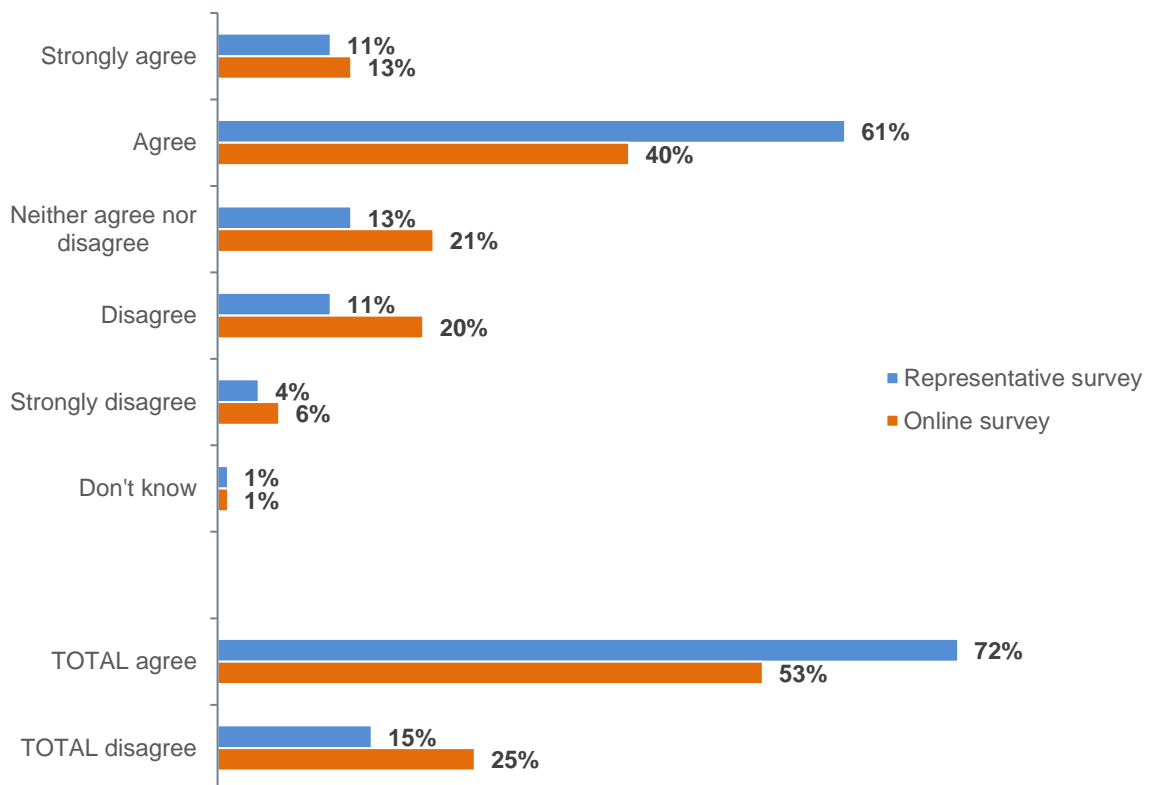
Having the correct information to recycle correctly

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree that they had enough information to recycle correctly. Just over seven in ten (72%) representative respondents agreed overall they had enough information, compared with 15% who disagreed overall.

Over half of online respondents (53%) agreed overall that they have enough information to recycle correctly, which is a smaller proportion than representative respondents (72%). Online respondents were more likely to disagree overall (25%) than representative respondents (15%).

Figure 12 – (Q12c) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel I have enough information to recycle correctly

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

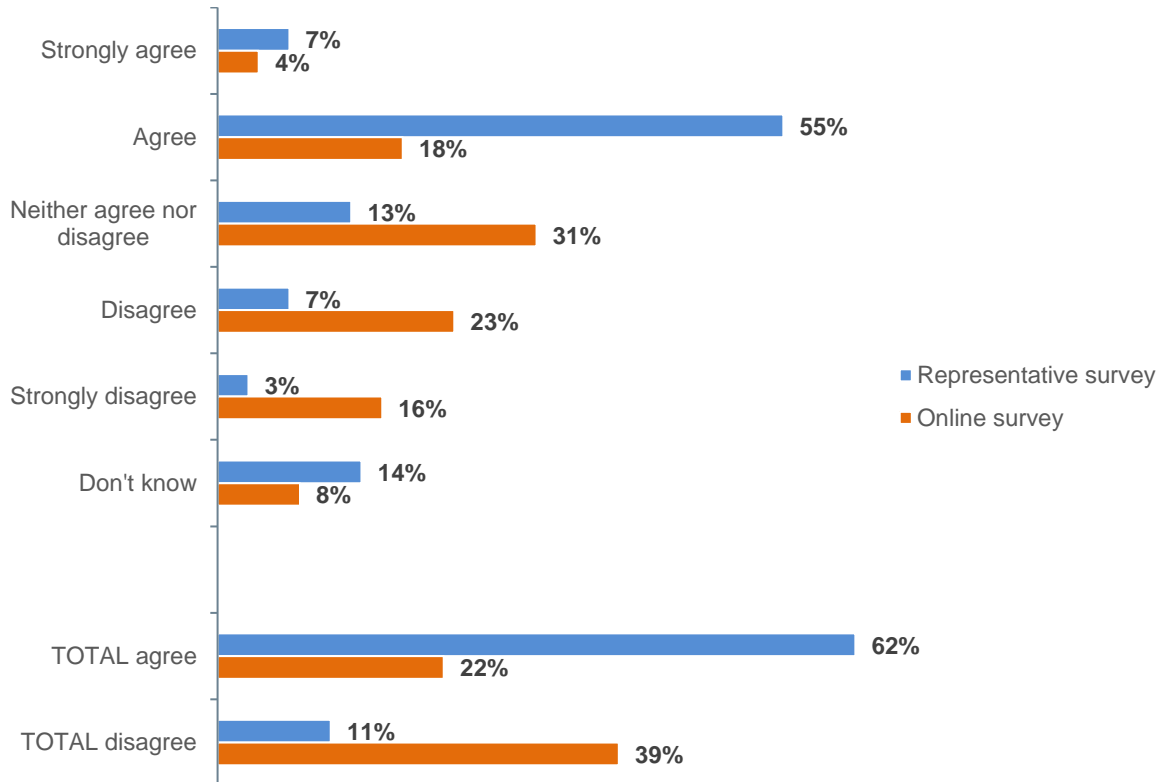
- Those living in houses converted into flats were *most likely to disagree that they have enough information to recycle correctly* (27% compared with 15% overall)

Confidence that recycling actually gets recycled

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that they were confident that what they put in their recycling containers actually gets recycled. Overall, just over six in ten (62%) representative respondents agreed overall, compared with 11% who disagreed overall. Online respondents, however, were more negative, with a larger proportion disagreeing overall (39%) than agreeing overall (22%).

Figure 13 – (Q12d) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I'm confident that what I put in my recycling containers actually gets recycled

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

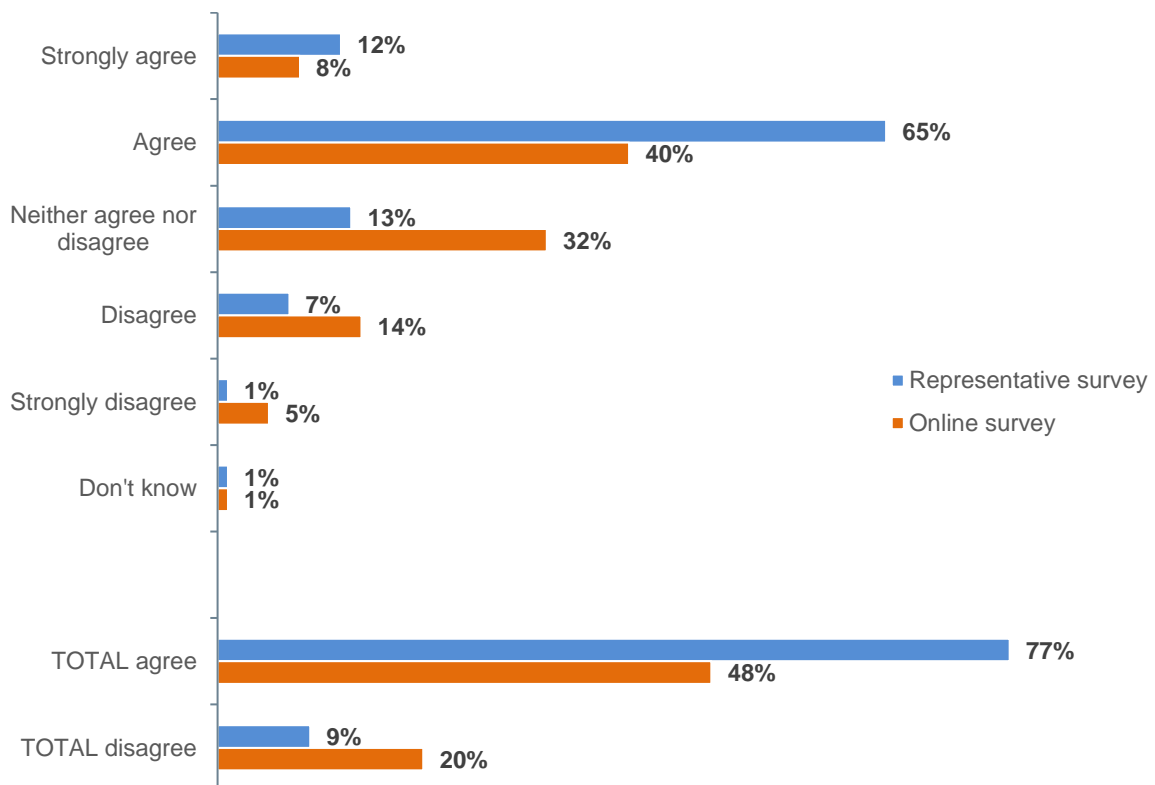
- There were no subgroup differences

Encouragement from the Council to recycle

The London Borough of Merton wanted to explore if residents believed the Council encouraged them to recycle through its engagement activities and provision of information. Just over three-quarters (77%) of representative respondents said they *strongly agreed* or *agreed*, whilst half of online respondents (48%) gave the same answer.

Figure 14 – (Q12e) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The Council encourages me to recycle

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

Subgroups most likely to agree the Council encourages them to recycle are:

Those living in houses (80% compared with 65%)

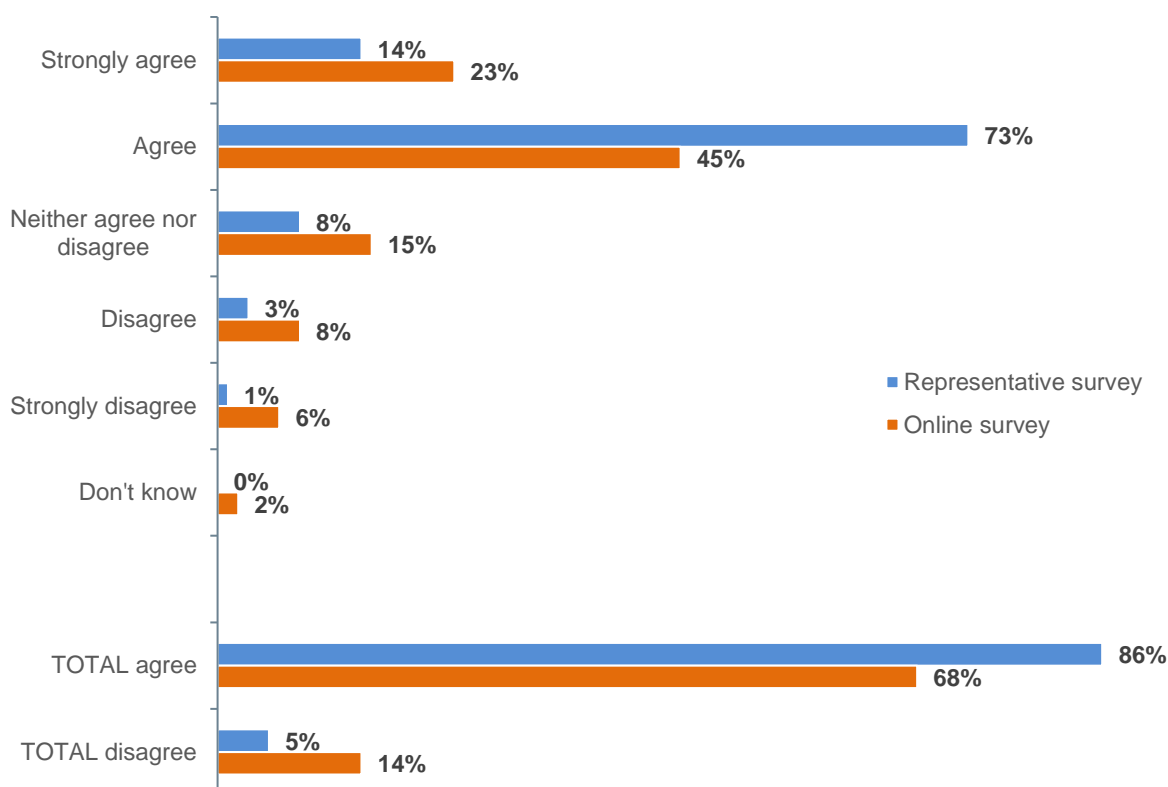
- Those living in South West Merton
- Those aged 55-64 and 65-74 (92% and 84%, compared with 77% overall)

Recycling items not collected by Merton Council

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that they regularly recycled or reused items that were not collected by the Council, by taking them to supermarket collection points, the household waste and recycling centre, or donate them to a charity shop. Almost nine in ten (86%) representative respondents said they agreed overall with the statement, which is a larger proportion when compared with online respondents who said the same (68%).

Figure 15 – (Q12f) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I regularly recycle / reuse items not collected by the Council in other schemes e.g. local supermarket collection points, Household Waste and Recycling Centre, donating to charity shops

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



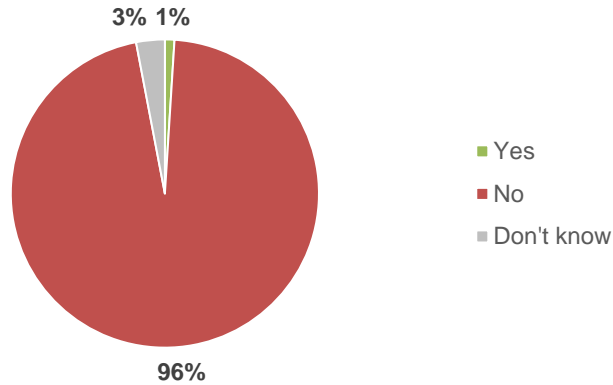
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham were *less likely to disagree* (71% compared with 86% overall)
- Those aged 55-64 years old were *most likely to agree* (98% compared with 86% overall)

2.2. Assisted collection service

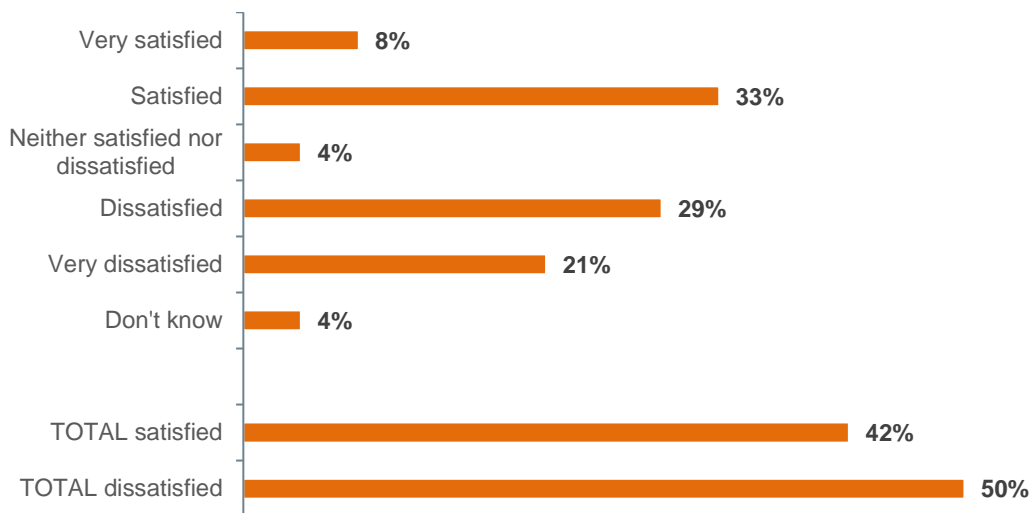
Just 1% of online respondents said they use the assisted collection service.

Figure 16 – (Q13, online question) Do you use the assisted collection service?
 Base: Online respondents (1,898)



Of those that did say they used it, a larger proportion said they were dissatisfied with the service overall (50%) than satisfied overall (42%).

Figure 17 – (Q14, online question) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service?
 Base: Online respondents (24), respondents that said they used the assisted collection service



The main response given when asked what would make the service better, was for crews to return bins and boxes to their original collection points (15 responses) and to have fewer missed collections (seven responses).

Figure 18 – (Q15, online question) What, if anything, would make the assisted collection service better?

Base: Online respondents (24) that said they used the assisted collection service – respondents could tick all that applied

Responses	Responses	%
Crews could do better in returning bins and boxes to their collection point	15	63%
Fewer missed collections	7	29%
Make it easier to report problems (e.g. missed collections)	6	25%
Staff could be more friendly or helpful	5	21%
Nothing	3	13%
Other	2	8%

2.3 Bulky waste

Three in ten (30%) online respondents said they used the bulky waste collection service in the last three years. As shown in **Figure 20**, the most common reasons for not using it was *not had the need to* (39%), *took items to the local household waste and recycling centre* (36%) and that it was *too expensive* (28%).

Figure 19 – (Q16 online question) Have you used the bulky waste collection service in the last three years?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

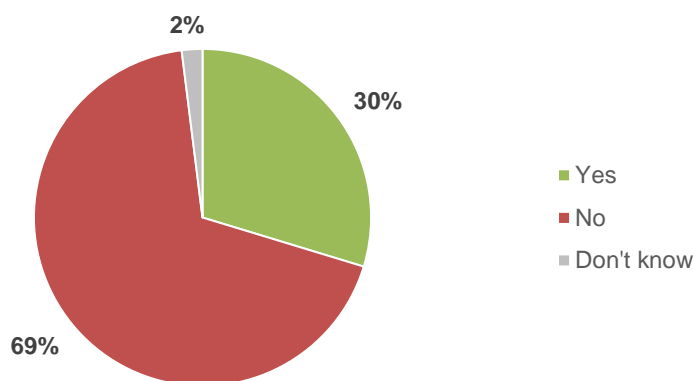
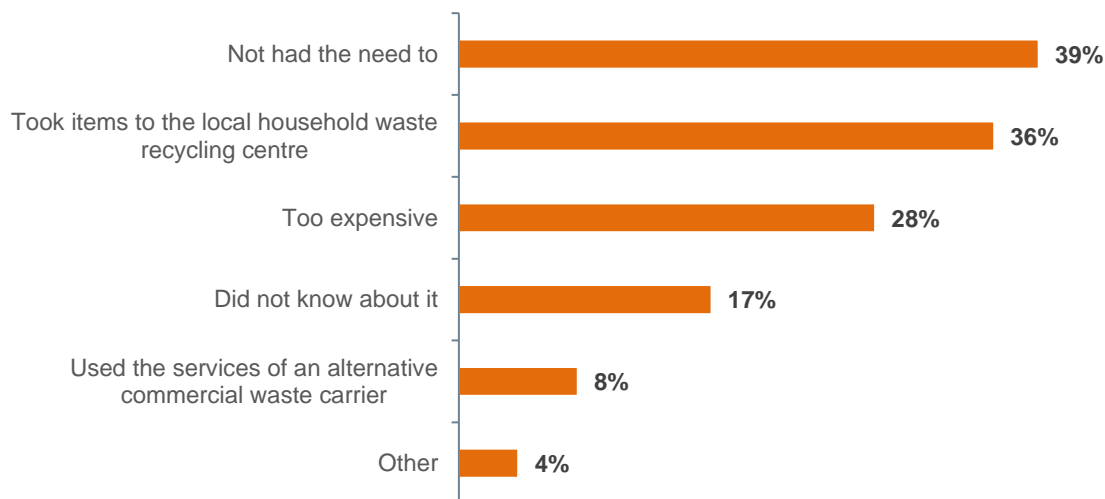


Figure 20 – (Q17, online question) Why have you not used the bulky waste collection service in the last three years?

Base: Online respondents (1,300) that said they have not used the bulky waste collection service



'Other' responses

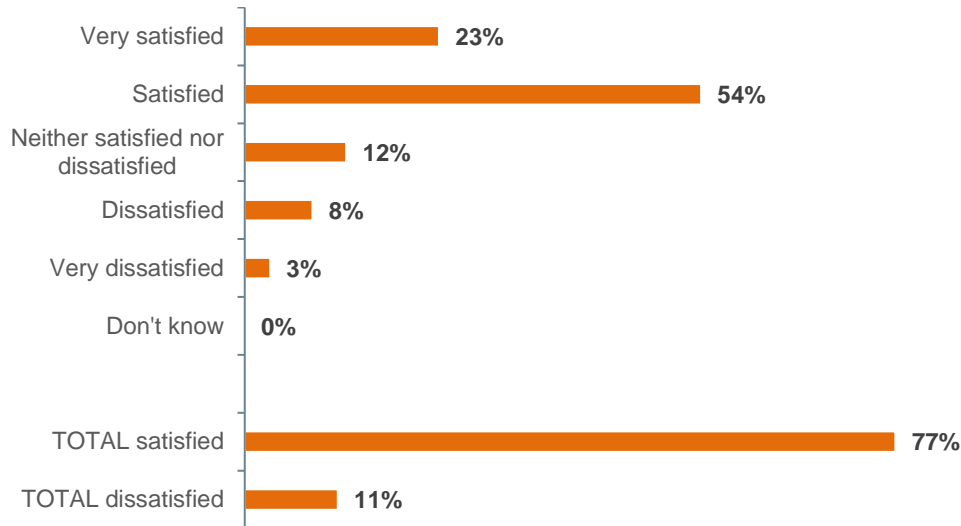
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Type of waste did not qualify for service
- Someone else arranges collection (friend, neighbour, housing association)
- Donated/sold it
- Nowhere to store it until collection
- Inconvenient/difficult booking process

Online respondents that had used the service were subsequently asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the service. Overall, just over three-quarters (77%) said they were satisfied and 11% said they were dissatisfied.

Figure 21 – (Q18, online question) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you received?

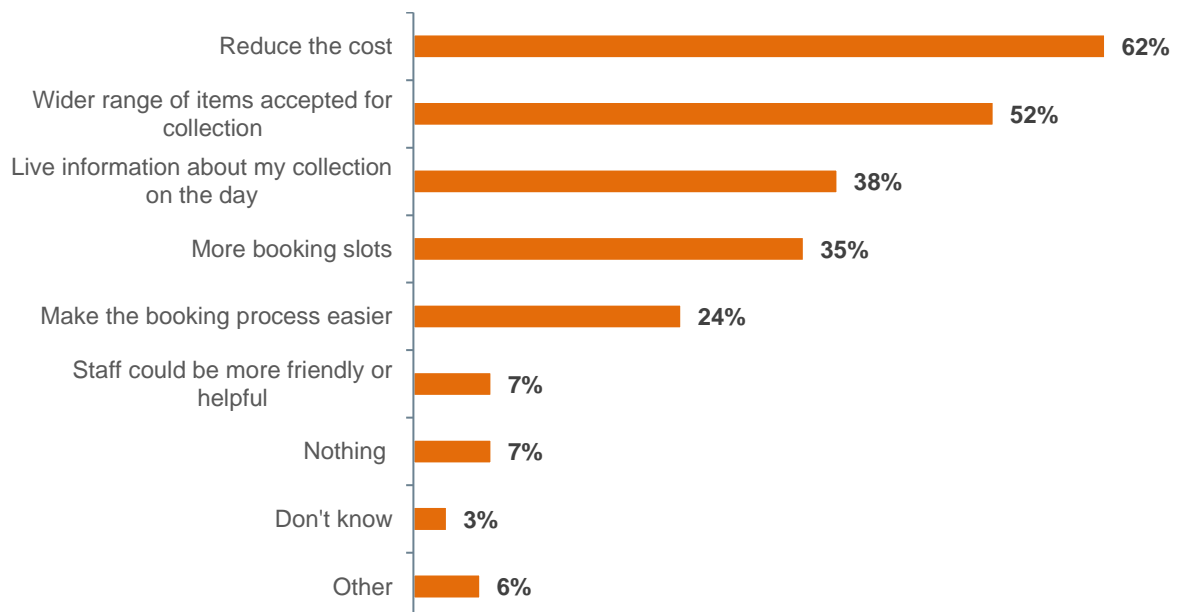
Base: Online respondents (565) that said they used the bulky waste collection service



When asked what would make the service better, 62% said *reduce the cost*, just over half (52%) said *wider range of items accepted* and 38% wanted *'live' information about collection of the day*. Just over a third (35%) wanted *more booking slots* and a quarter (24%) wanted to *make the booking process easier*.

Figure 22 – (Q19, online question) What if anything, would make the bulky waste collection service better?

Base: Online respondents (565) that said they used the bulky waste collection service



'Other' responses

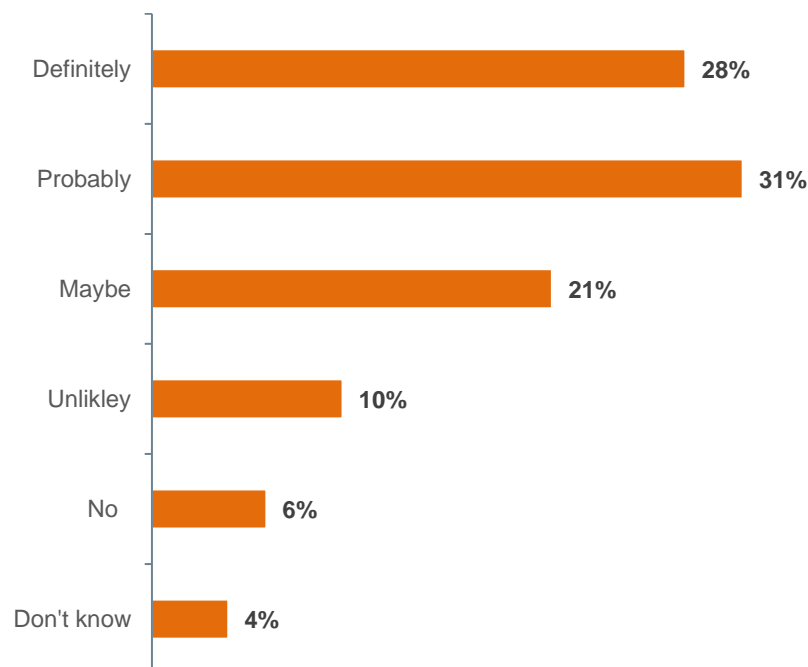
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Remove limit of items per collection
- Provide the service for free
- Remove the need to cover items in plastic sheet/take plastic sheet when collecting items
- Introduce the ability to amend/update the order after booking

Online respondents were also asked if they thought they would use mobile collection points for bulky waste across the borough if they were introduced by the Council. Almost three in ten (28%) said they *definitely* would and a further 31% said they *probably* would. In total, 16% said they would either be *unlikely* to use them (10%) or they would *not* use them (6%).

Figure 23 – (Q20, online question) If the Council introduced mobile collection points for bulky waste across the borough, do you think you would use them?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)



2.4 Garden waste collection service

Just over two in five (42%) online respondents said they subscribe to the garden waste collection service. As shown in **Figure 25**, the main reasons for not subscribing to the service are that it is *too expensive* (43%), *do not produce enough garden waste* (37%) and there are *easier alternatives* (17%). One in nine (11%) simply *do not have a garden*.

Figure 24 – (Q21 online question) Do you subscribe to the garden waste collection service?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

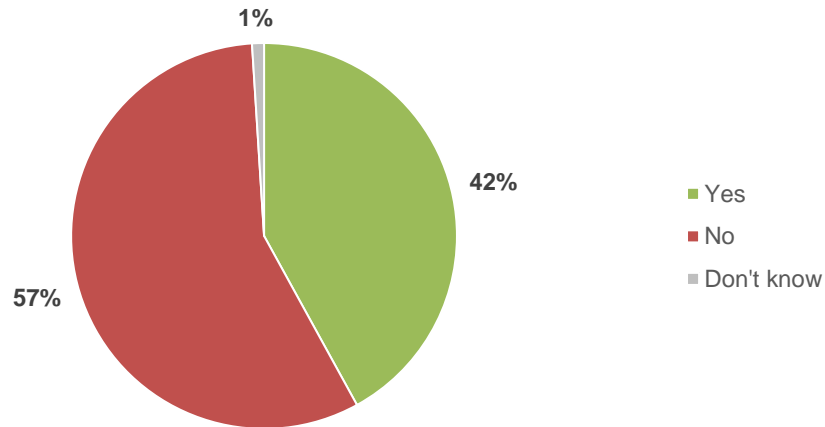
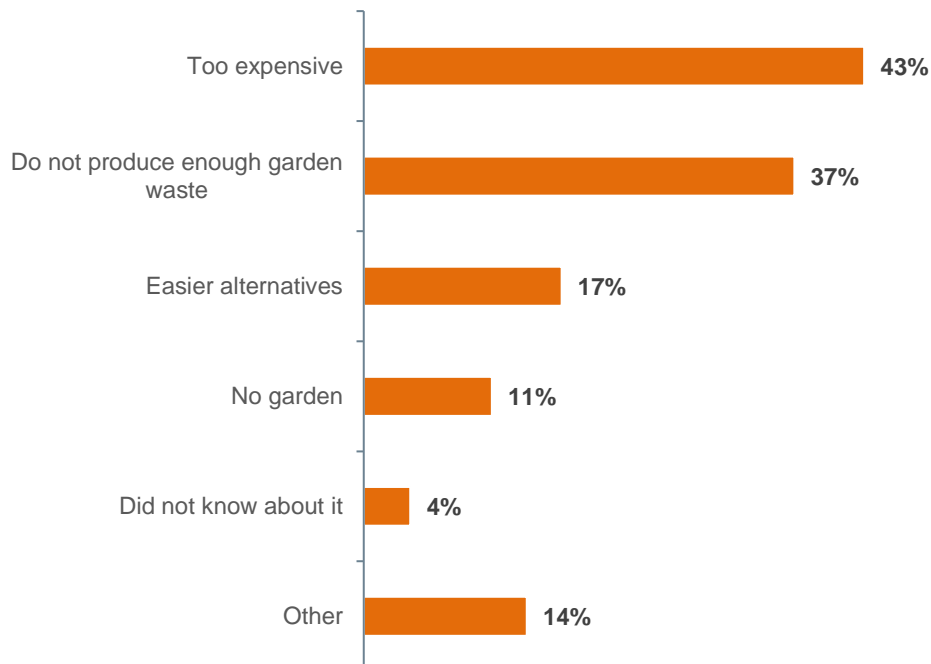


Figure 25 – (Q22, online question) Why do you not subscribe to the garden waste collection service?

Base: Online respondents (1,090) that said they do not subscribe to the garden waste collection service



'Other' responses

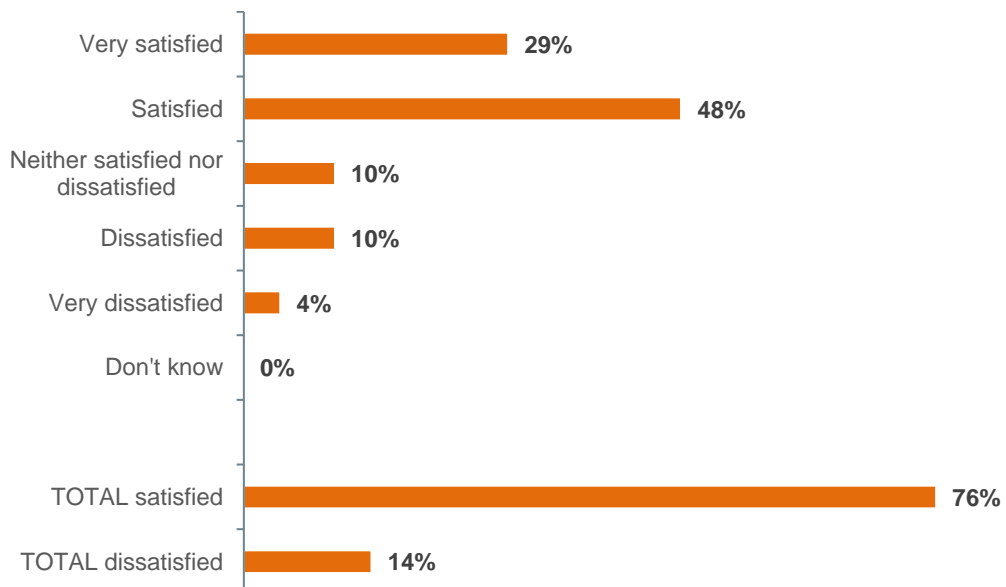
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- I have a gardener who deals with garden waste
- I compost my garden waste
- I share my bin with a neighbour
- Take it to Garth Road HRRC
- Garden waste bins are too small for the amount of waste I produce

Online respondents who indicated that they did use the garden waste collection service were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with it. Three-quarters (76%) of online respondents that used the service were satisfied overall and 14% said they were dissatisfied overall.

Figure 26 – (Q23, online question) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the garden waste collection service?

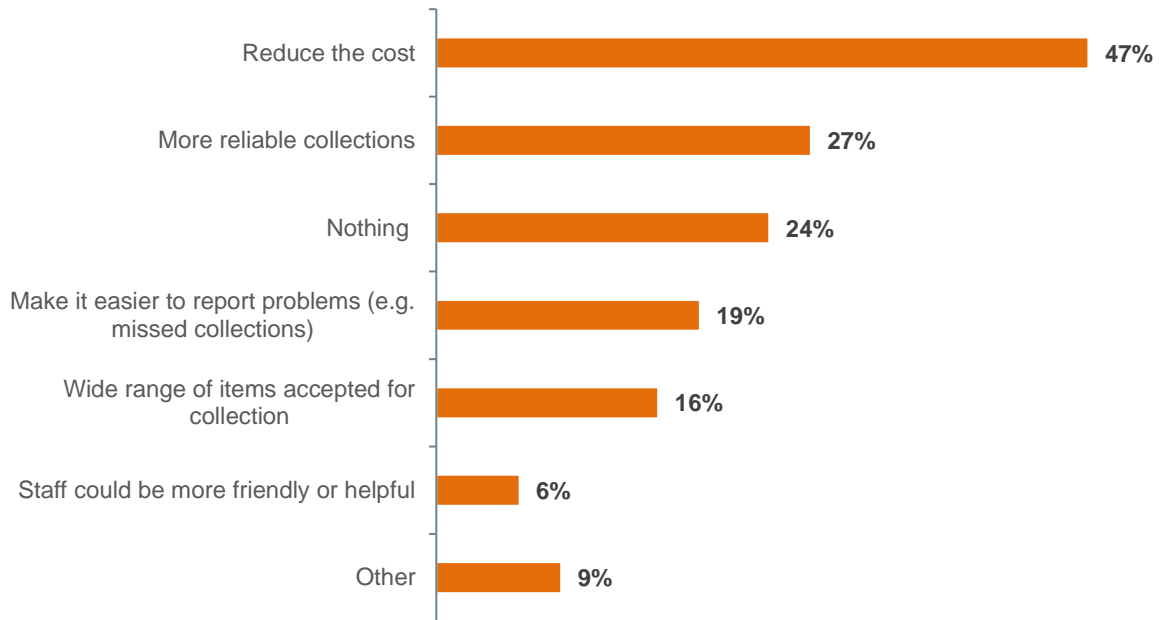
Base: Online respondents (795) that said they used the garden waste collection service



When asked what would make the service better, almost half (47%) said to *reduce the cost*. Just over a quarter (27%) said to have a *more reliable service* and 19% said to *make it easier to report problems*. A quarter (24%), however, said there was *nothing* that would make the service better.

Figure 27 – (Q24, online question) What, if anything would make the garden waste collection service better?

Base: Online respondents (795) that said they used the garden waste collection service – respondents could tick all that applied



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

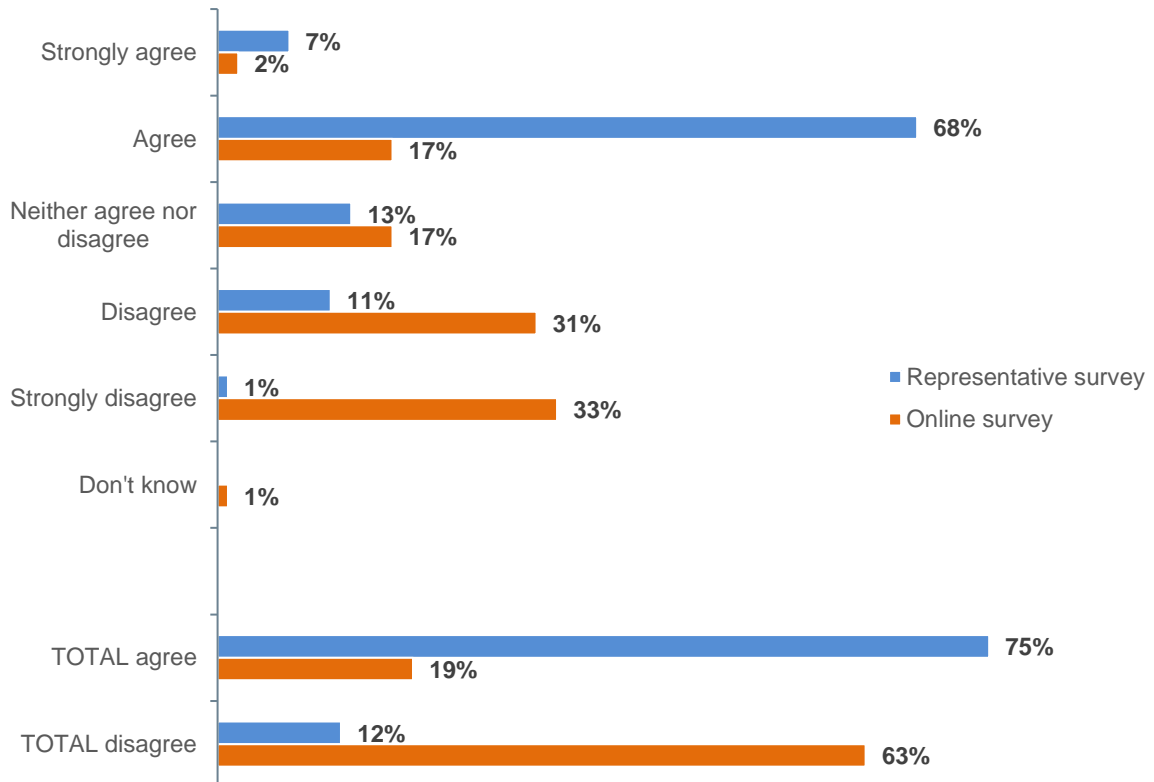
- Bigger bin/free second bin
- More frequent collections overall
- More frequent collections in summer/less in winter
- Don't miss collections

2.5 Street cleaning

Respondents were asked a series of questions about street cleaning services. The first question asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that residential streets in their local area are cleaned frequently enough. Three-quarters (75%) of representative respondents agreed with this statement overall and a further 12% disagreed. However, online respondents were more likely to disagree with this statement overall (63%) than agree (19%).

Figure 28 – (Q25) To what extent do you agree or disagree that residential streets in your local area are cleaned frequently enough?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

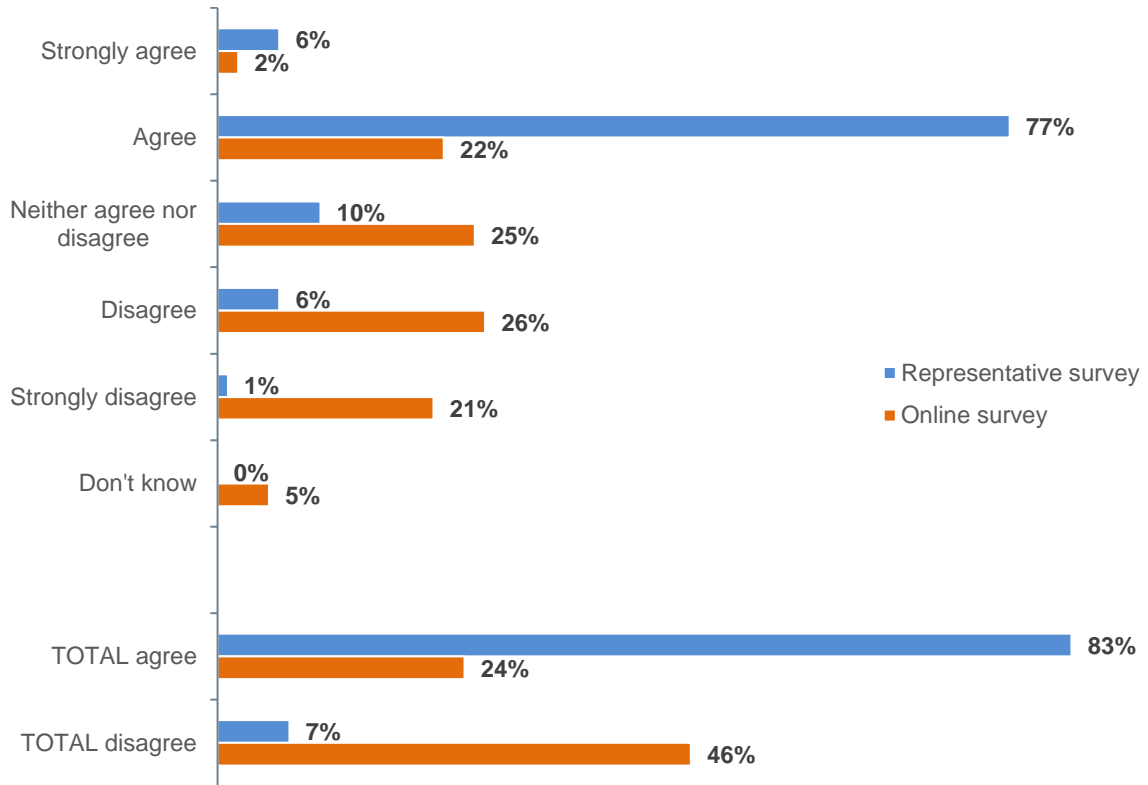
Subgroups more likely

- Those living in South Wimbledon were *most likely to agree* (53% compared with 75% overall)

When asked the same question, but about the local town centre, overall agreement around frequent cleaning increased to 83% for the representative respondents and increased to 24% for online respondents. However, online respondents were still more likely to disagree overall (46%).

Figure 29 – (Q26) To what extent do you agree or disagree that local town centre in your local area is cleaned frequently enough?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences

Street cleaning issues

Respondents were asked how much of a problem a variety of street cleaning issues were in their local area. These included street litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting, fly tipping, weeds on the public highway and full litter bins.

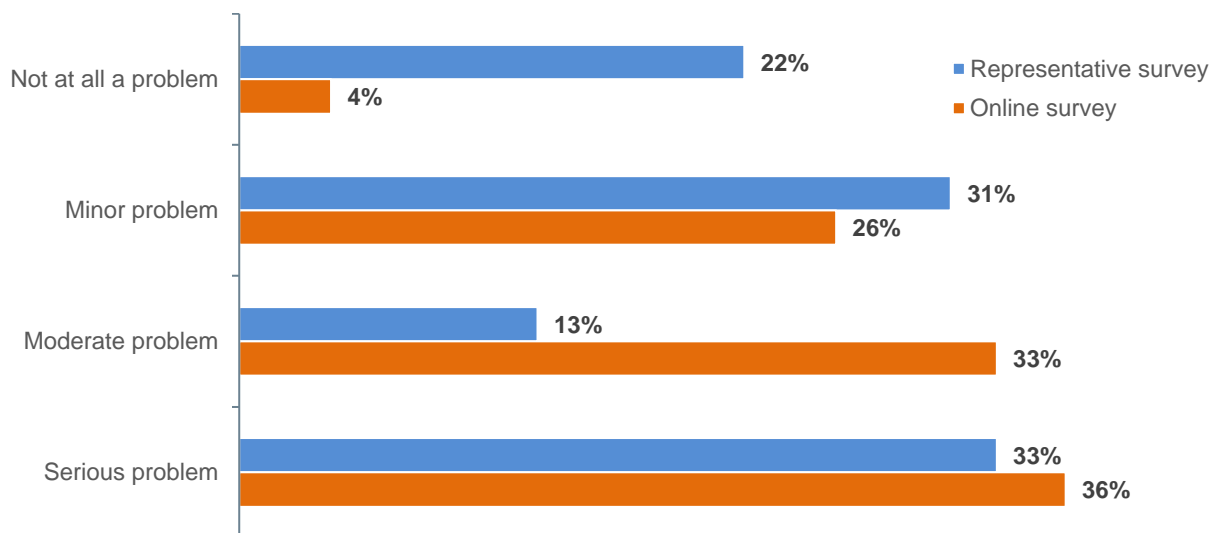
Street litter

Just over one in five (22%) representative respondents said that litter *was not at all a problem* and a further 31% said it was a *minor problem*. A third (33%) said it was a *serious problem*.

Online respondents were less positive, with just 4% saying it was *not at all a problem* and 26% saying it was a *minor problem*. A significantly larger proportion of online respondents said that street litter was a *moderate problem* (33%) when compared with representative respondents (13%).

Figure 30 – (Q27a) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area
Street litter

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

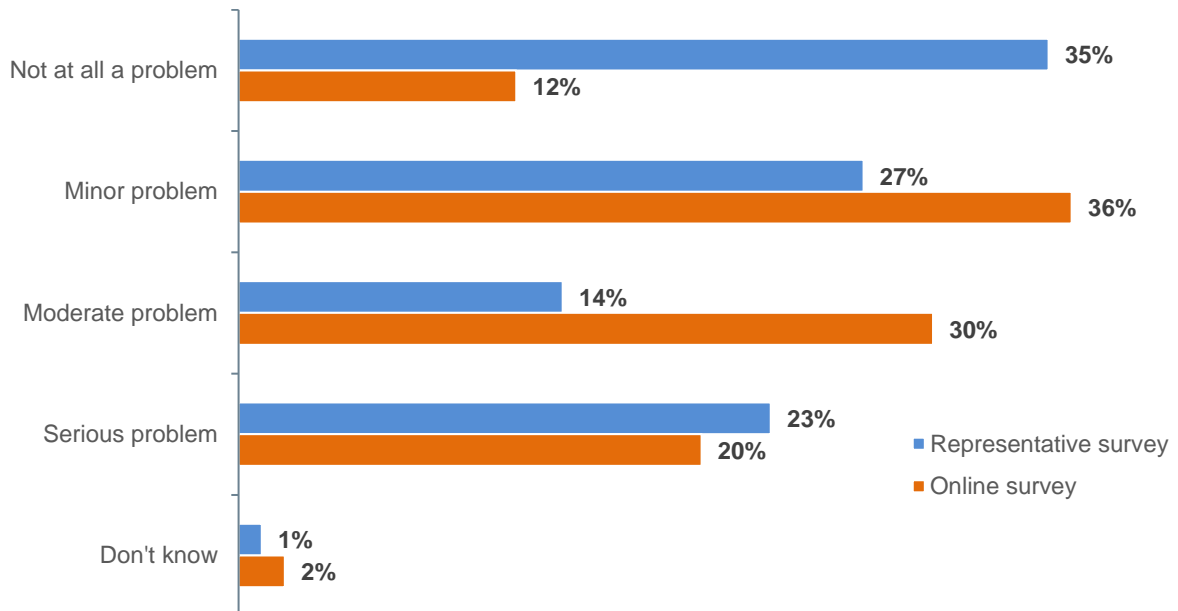
- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham and South Mitcham & Morden were *most likely to say street litter was a serious problem* (63% and 50% respectively, compared with 33% overall)

Dog fouling

Just over a third (35%) of representative respondents said that dog fouling was *not at all a problem* and a further 27% said it was a *minor problem*. Almost a quarter, however, said it was a *serious problem* (23%), which was a slightly larger proportion than online respondents (20%).

**Figure 31 – (Q27b) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area
Dog fouling**

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

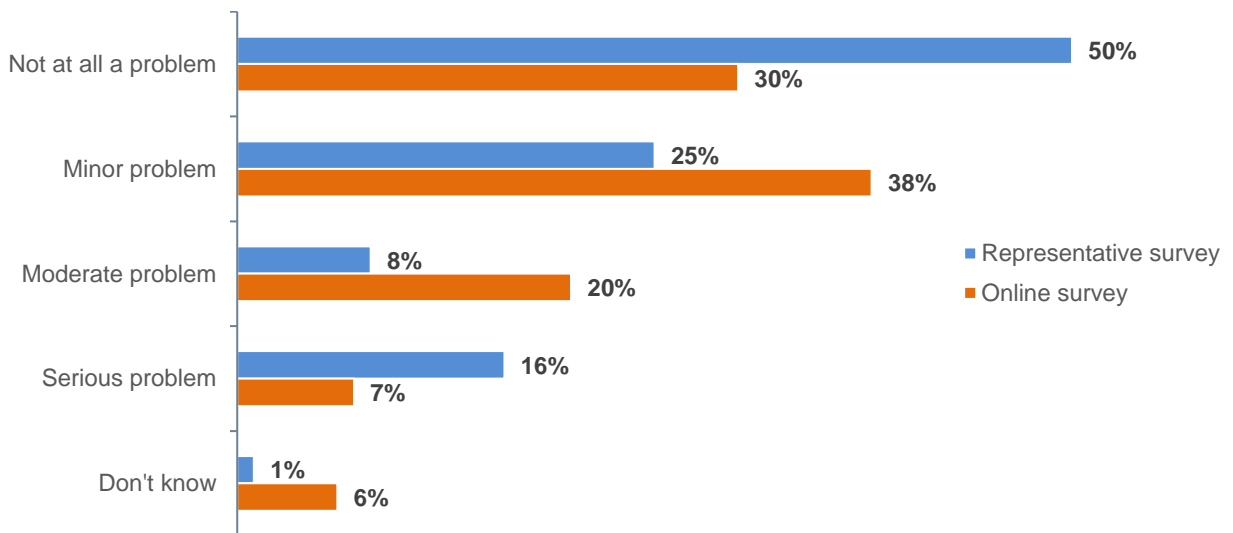
- Those living in South Mitcham & Morden and East Merton & Mitcham were *most likely to say dog fouling was serious problem* (35% and 32% respectively, compared with 23% overall)

Graffiti

Half (50%) of all representative respondents said graffiti was *not at all a problem*, compared with 30% of online participants. A further quarter (25%) of representative respondents said it was a *minor problem*, compared with 38% of online respondents. A larger proportion of representative respondents thought that graffiti was a *serious problem* (16%), compared with 7% of online respondents.

**Figure 32 – (Q27c) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area
Graffiti**

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham, and South Mitcham & Morden were *most likely to say graffiti was a serious problem* (29% and 23% respectively, compared with 16% overall)

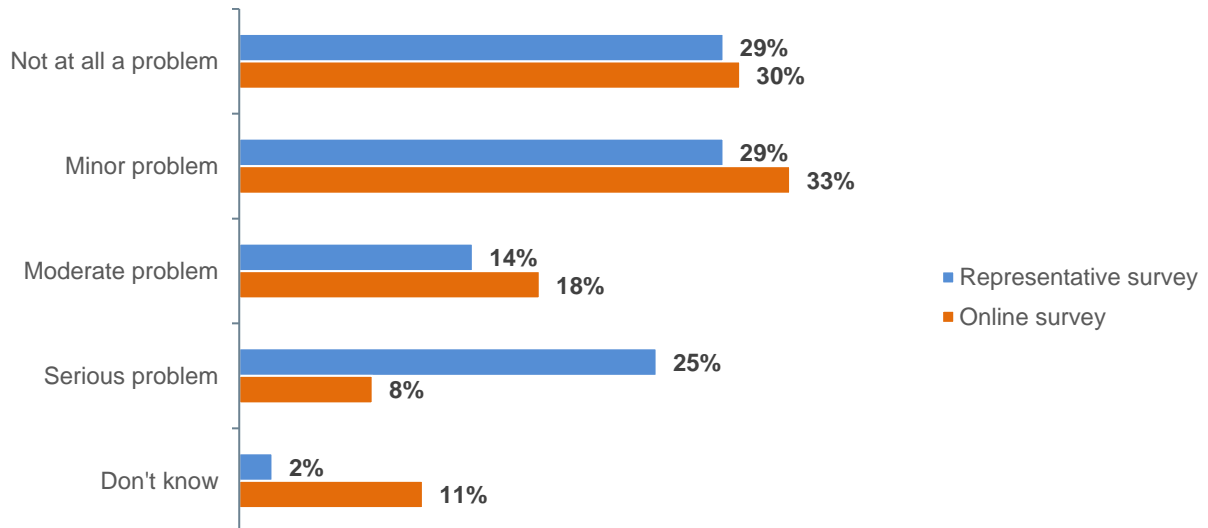
Fly posting

Equal proportions of representative respondents thought fly posting was either *not at all a problem* (29%) or a *minor problem* (29%). Representative respondents were three times as likely to believe that fly posting was a *serious problem* in their local area (25%) than online respondents (8%).

Figure 33 – (Q27d) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area

Fly posting

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

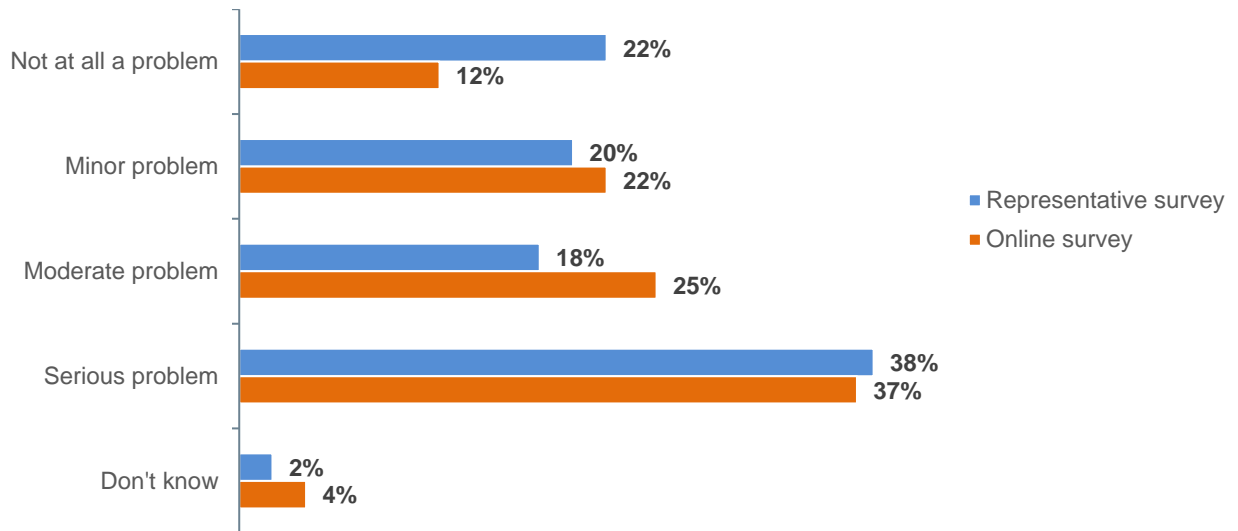
- Those living in purpose built flats were *most likely to say fly posting was a serious problem* than those living in houses (43% compared with 14%)
- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham and South Mitcham and Morden were *most likely to say fly posting was a serious problem* (42% and 35% respectively, compared with 25% overall)

Fly tipping

Fly tipping was identified as a *serious problem* by 38% of representative respondents and 37% of online respondents. Just over one in five representative respondents thought fly tipping was *not at all a problem* and one in five (20%) thought it was a *minor problem* (20%).

**Figure 34 – (Q27e) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area
Fly tipping**

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

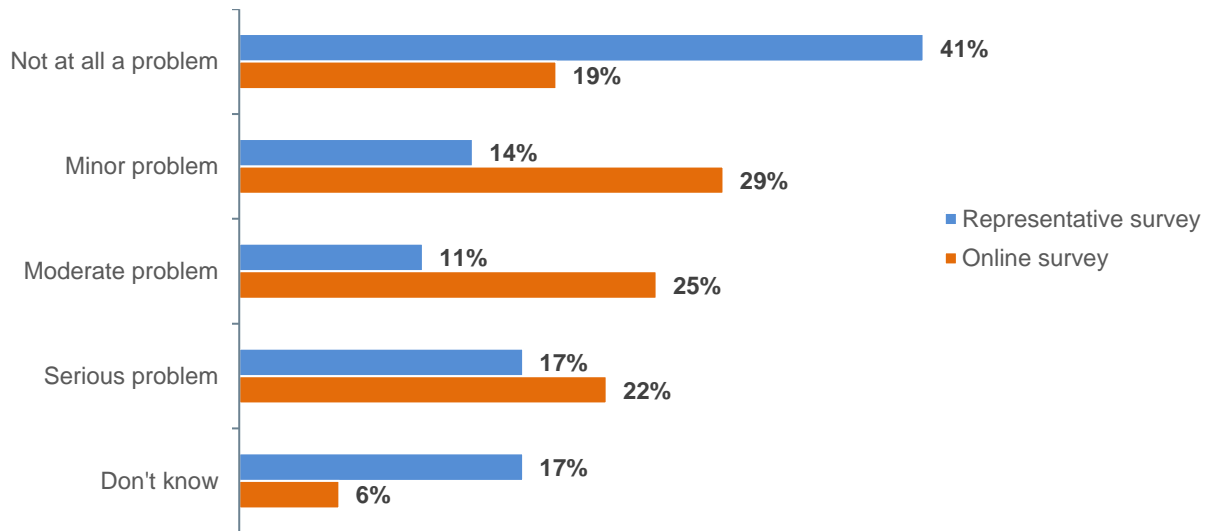
- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham, South Mitcham & Morden and North East Merton were most likely to say fly tipping was a serious problem (66%, 56% and 55% respectively, compared with 38% overall)

Weeds on the public highway

Two in five (41%) of representative participants thought weeds on the public highway was a *not at all a problem*. One in six (17%) believing it was a *serious problem*. A slightly larger proportion of online respondents (22%) thought it was a *serious problem*.

**Figure 35 – (Q27f) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area
Weeds on the public highway**

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in East Merton & Mitcham and North East Merton, were *most likely to say weeds on the public highway are a serious problem* (34% and 26% respectively, compared with 17% overall)

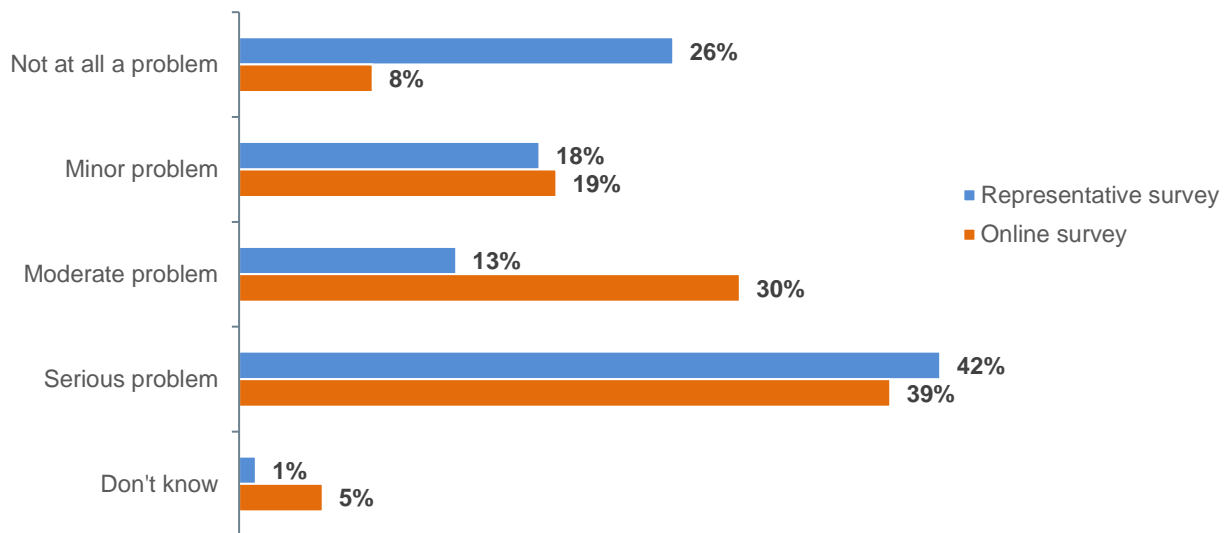
Full litter bins

Two in five (42%) representative respondents thought full litter bins was a *serious problem*, with a slightly smaller proportion of online respondents (39%) saying the same. Nearly two in five (18%) thought full litter bins was either a *minor problem* and a quarter (26%) thought it was *not at all a problem*.

Figure 36 – (Q27g) To what extent are the following a problem in your local area

Full litter bins

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those living in South Mitcham & Morden and East Merton & Mitcham, were *most likely to say full litter bins are a serious problem* (62% and 61% respectively, compared with 42% overall)

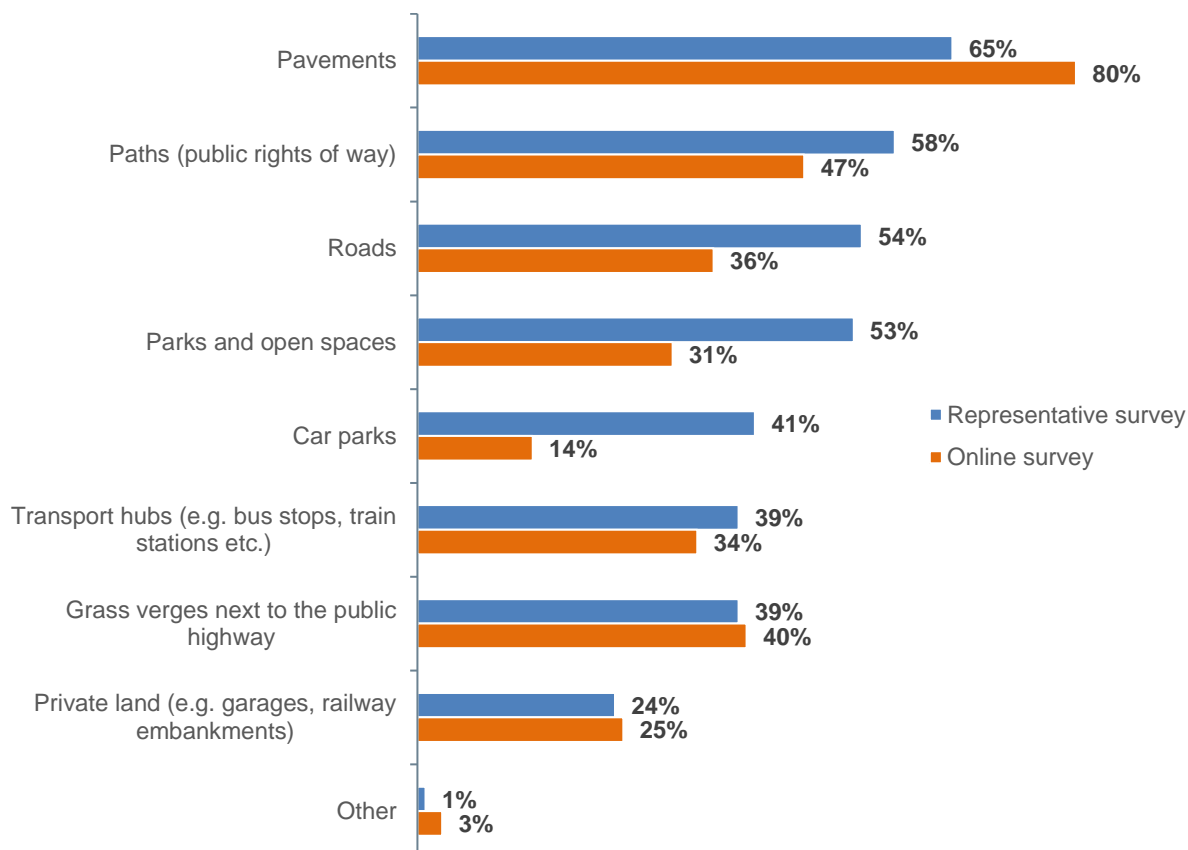
Areas needing more attention

Respondents were asked which areas in their neighbourhood tend to get the dirtiest and would benefit from more attention in the future. *Pavements* was mentioned by the majority of respondents, (65% of representative respondents and 80% of online respondents).

The next most common responses provided by representative respondents were *paths* (58%), *roads* (54%) and *parks and open spaces* (53%).

Figure 37 – (Q28) Which areas in your neighbourhood tend to get dirtiest and would benefit from more attention in the future?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898) respondents could tick all that applied



Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Alleyways
- Gutters/drains
- Overflowing bins in public spaces
- Parks/playgrounds
- All of the options above

Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

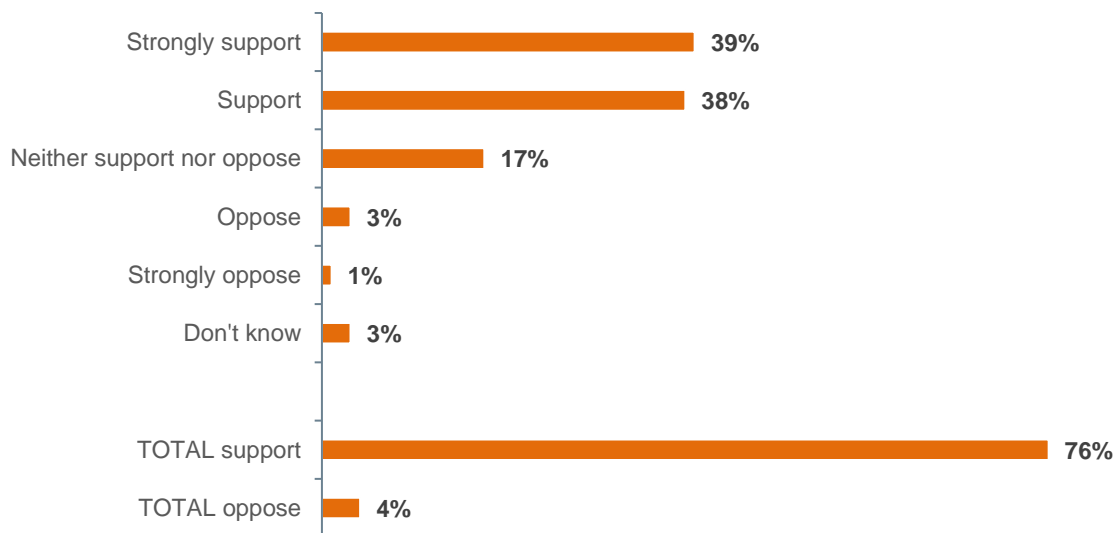
- Those living in South Mitcham & Morden, East Merton & Mitcham were *most likely to say roads tend to get the dirtiest* (73% and 68% respectively, compared with 54% overall)
- Those living in North East Merton and East Merton & Mitcham were *most likely to say parks and open spaces tend to get the dirtiest* (72% and 71% respectively, compared with 53% overall)

Temporary road closures

To help with street cleaning, Merton Council sometimes uses temporary road closures and removes parked cars, which allows crews to give the street and gullies a thorough clean. Online respondents were asked if they support this approach for the future. Three-quarters (76%) of online respondents support this approach overall, with 4% opposing it overall. One in six (17%) said they *neither supported it nor opposed it*.

Figure 38 – (Q29, online question) Merton Council uses temporary road closures and removes parked cars when absolutely necessary to help street cleaning crews get access. This ensures they can give the street and gullies (drains) a thorough clean. To what extent do you support or oppose the continued use of this

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

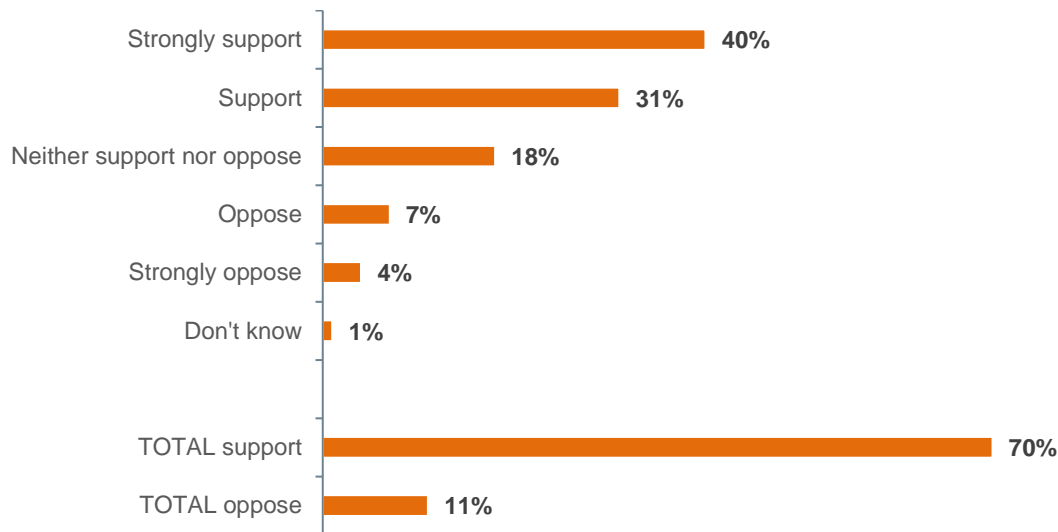


Use of chemicals

Online respondents were asked if they supported or opposed the use of a pesticide-free approach to weed control, rather than using chemicals to control weeds on the public highway. Seven in ten (70%) online respondents said they supported this approach overall, compared with 11% who opposed it overall.

Figure 39 – (Q30, online question) Some Councils have stopped using chemicals like glyphosate to control weeds on the public highway. There are environmental benefits using pesticide-free approaches to weed control, but they are slightly less effective and means some public spaces can look a bit ‘wilder’. To what extent would you support or oppose the Council adopting a pesticide-free approach to weed control?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

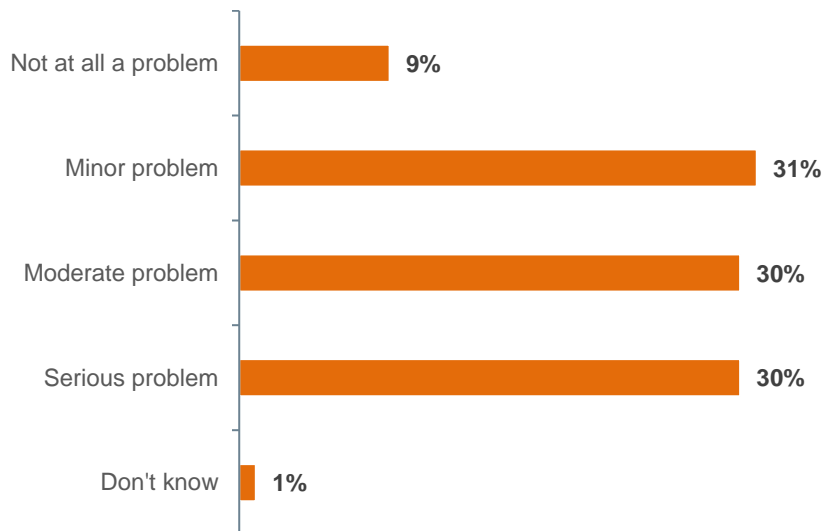


Leaf fall

Online respondents were asked to what extent leaves on the road and pavement in autumn/winter are a problem in their local area. Three in ten (31%) respondents said it was a *minor problem* and just under one in ten (9%) said it was *not at all a problem*. In contrast, three in ten online respondents (30%) said it was a *serious problem* and a further 30% said it was a *moderate problem*.

Figure 40 – (Q31, online question) To what extent are leaves on the road and pavement in autumn/winter a problem in your local area?

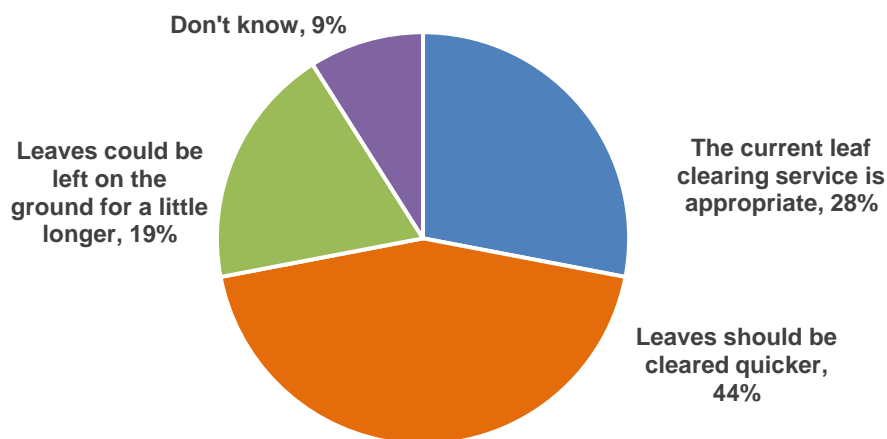
Base: Online respondents (1,898)



Online respondents were given three statements about how quickly the Council should clear leaves each year. Over two in five (44%) online respondents said they think *leaves should be cleared quicker*, and in contrast 19% said leaves could be *left on the ground for a little longer*. Almost three in ten (28%) said the *current leaf clearing service is appropriate*.

Figure 41 – (Q32, online question) Leaf clearance - Which of these statements do you most agree with?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

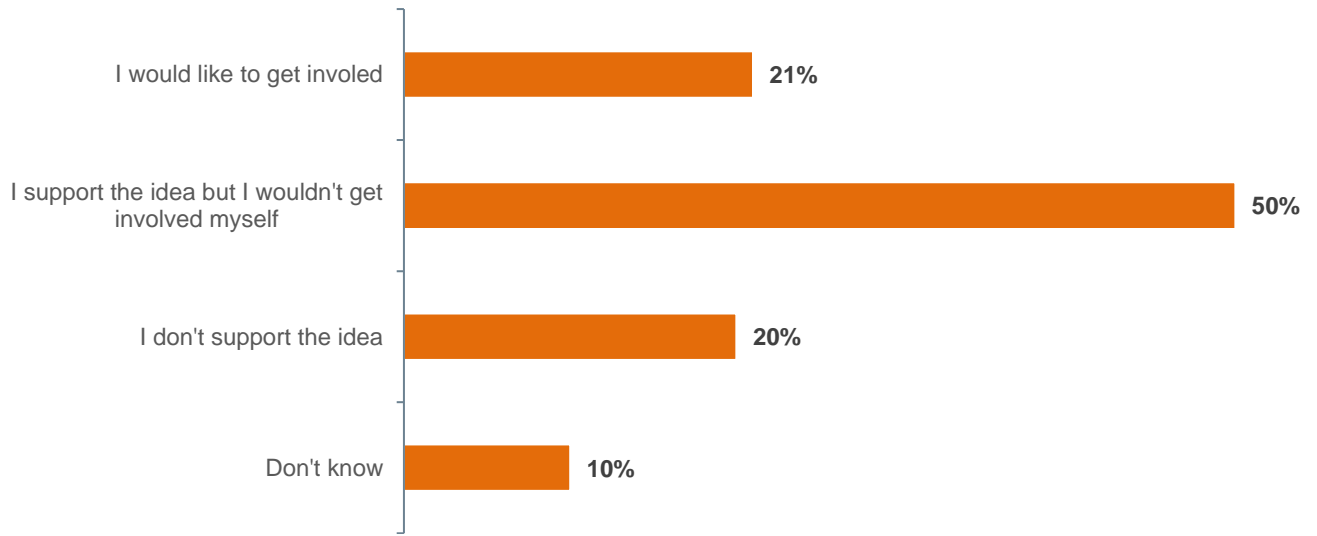


Community involvement

Merton Council is keen to work with local community groups to support them if they are interested in working with street cleaning crews to clear leaves in the autumn and wanted to ascertain the level of interest. One in five (21%) online respondents said they *would like to get involved*. In contrast, a similar proportion (20%) said they *do not support the idea*. Half (50%) of online respondents said they *supported the idea but did not want to get involved themselves*.

Figure 42 – (Q33, online question) Which of the following statements best reflects how you feel about community leaf clearances?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)



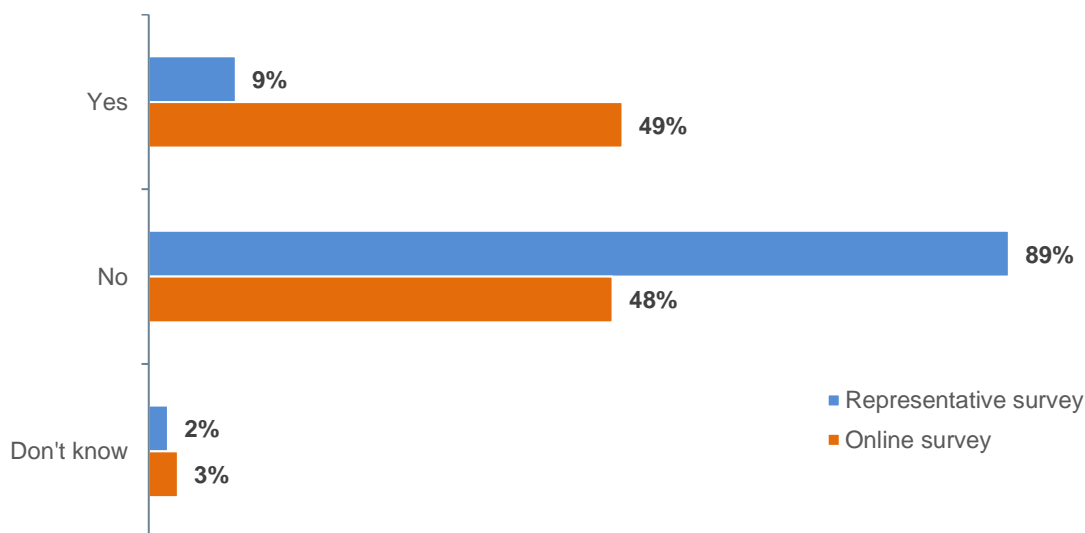
2.6 Resolving problems and keeping residents up to date

Reporting recycling and waste collection problems

Merton Council wanted to explore residents' interaction with the Council regarding the reporting of problems or issues about the recycling and waste collection service. Half (49%) of online respondents said they had reported a problem or issue with their recycling and waste collection service to the Council in the last 12 months, whilst only 9% of representative respondents said they had done so.

Figure 43 – (Q34) Have you reported a problem or issue with your recycling and waste collection service to the Council in the last 12 months?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



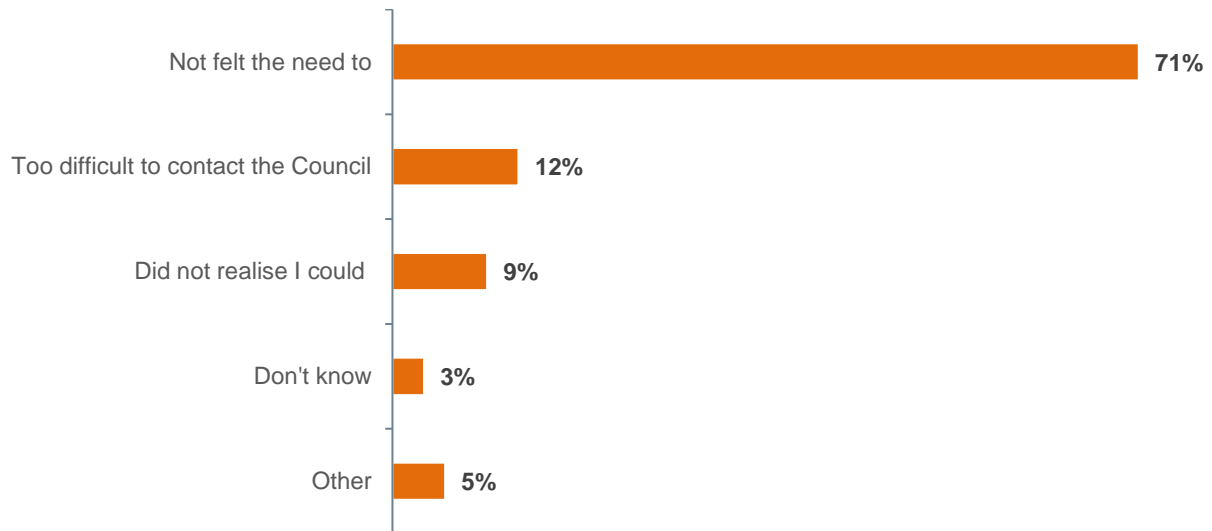
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- Those aged 65-74 were *most likely to say they had reported a problem or issue* (25% compared with 9% overall)
- Those with a physical or mental health condition were *most likely to say they had reported a problem or issue* (27% compared with 9% overall)

Online respondents were subsequently asked to provide a reason for not reporting a problem or issue. The most common response was *not felt the need to* (71%), followed by *too difficult to contact the Council* (12%) and *did not realise I could* (9%). The latter two reasons could indicate that they did have a problem to report but did not contact the Council for those reasons.

Figure 44 – (Q35, online question) Why have you not reported a problem or issue with you recycling and waste collection to the Council in the last 12 months?

Base: Online respondents (908) that have not contacted the Council to report a problem



'Other' responses

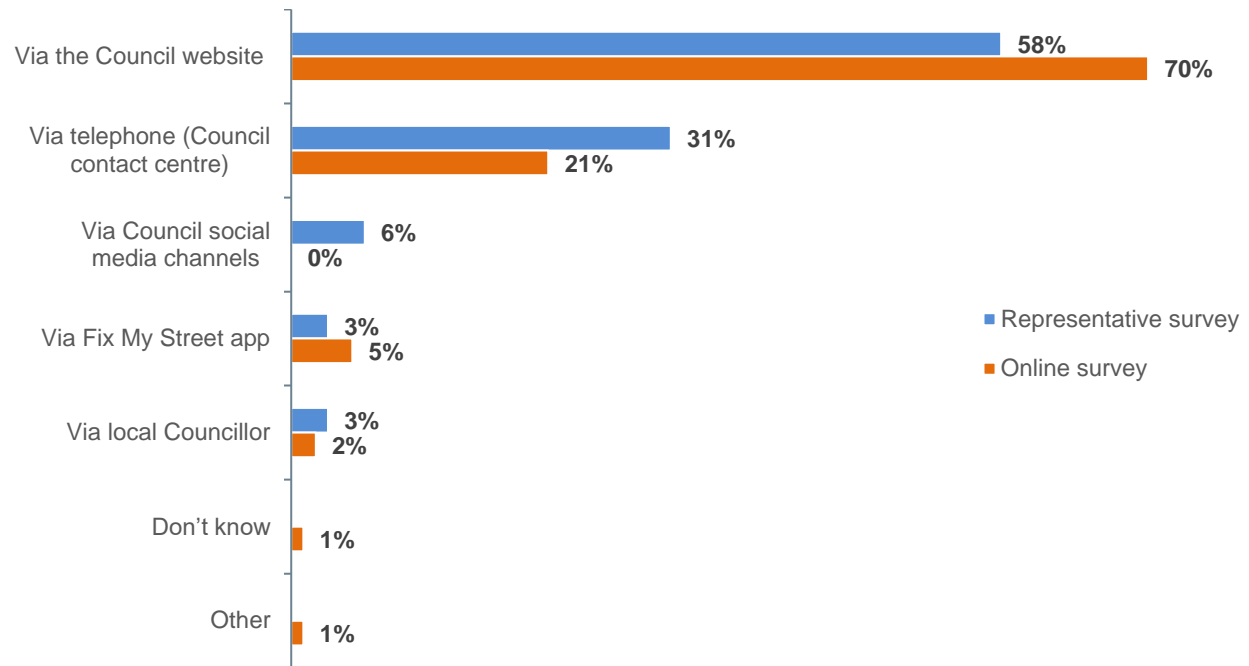
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Have reported an issue in the past and nothing was done
- Disposed of rubbish/waste myself
- Not confident the issue would be dealt with

Respondents were asked how they reported the most recent issue to the Council. The most common way to report their issue was via *the Council website*, which was used by 58% of representative respondents and 70% of online respondents. The next most common method was via *telephone*, which was used by 31% of representative respondents and 21% of online respondents. The full range of responses is shown in the chart below.

Figure 45 – (Q36) How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?

Base: Representative respondents (36); online respondents (936)



'Other' responses

The main 'other' comment was Email

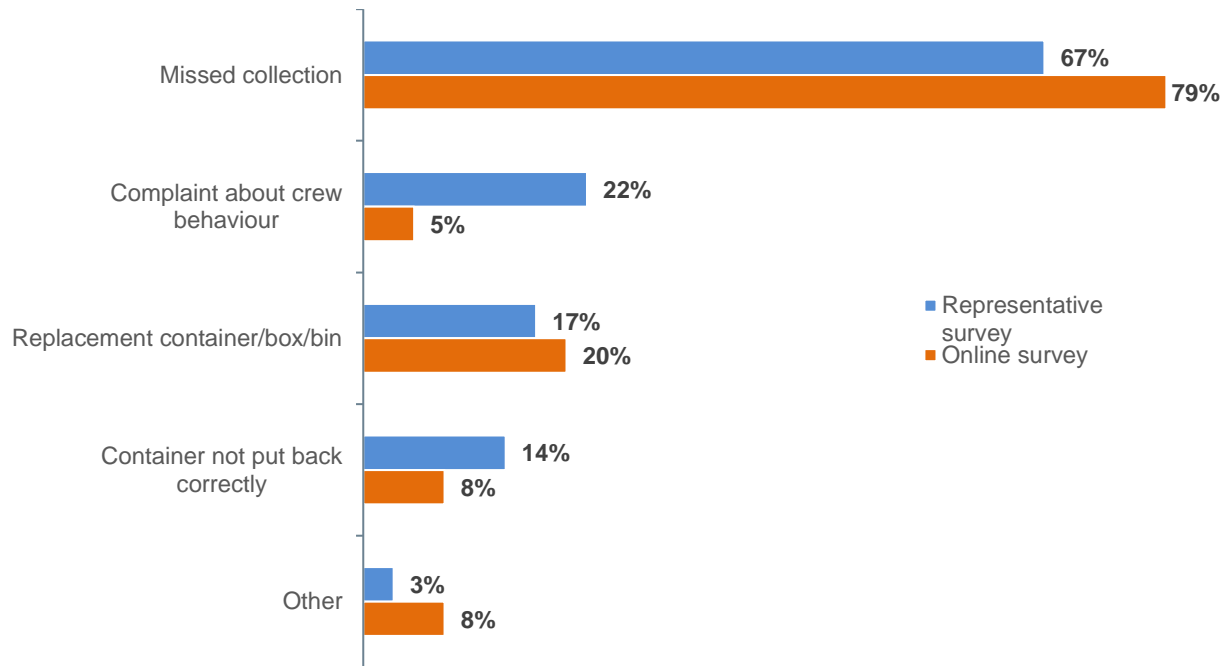
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

When asked what the issue related to, the most common response was *missed collection*, mentioned by 67% of representative respondents and 79% of online respondents. Other reasons provided by representative respondents were *complaint about crew behaviour* (22%), *replacement container/box/bin* (17%) and *container not put back correctly* (14%).

Figure 46 – (Q37) What did the most recent issue you were reporting relate to?

Base: Representative respondents (36); online respondents (936)



‘Other’ responses

The following points are the main ‘other’ comments:

- Fly tipping
- Mess left behind after collection day
- Damaged/broken bin or container

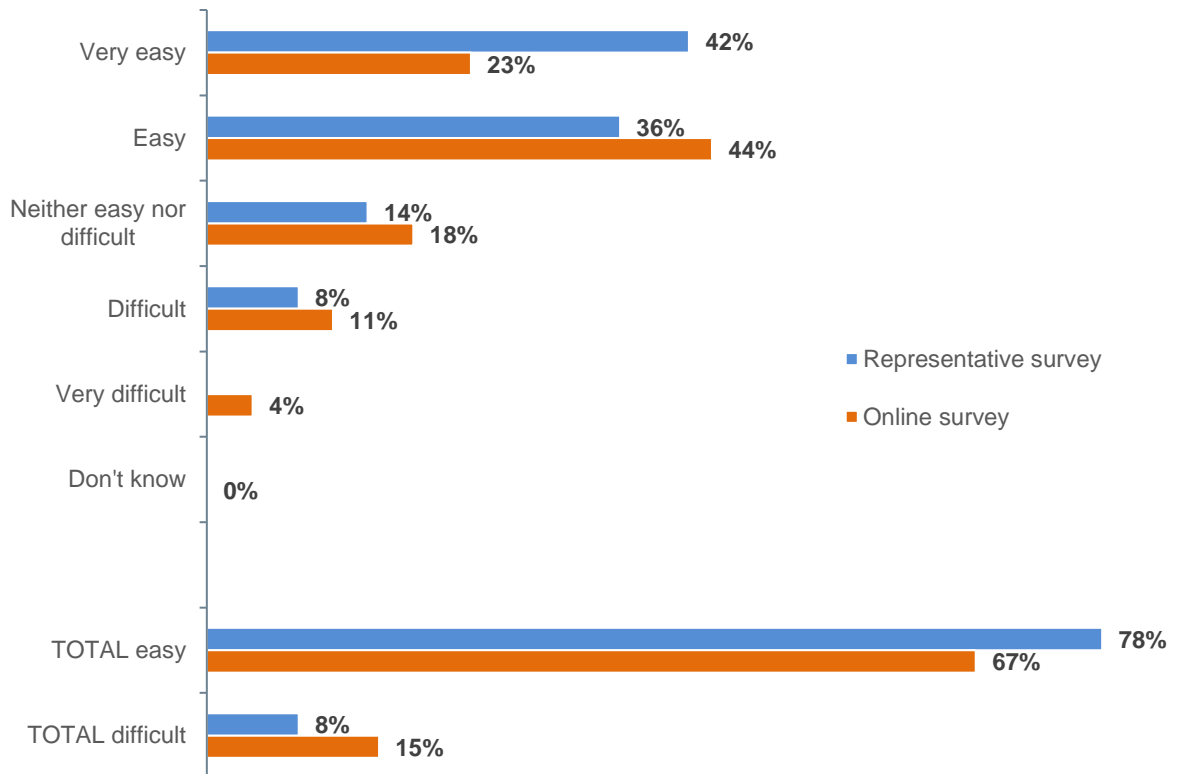
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

When asked how easy or difficult it was to make the report to the Council, a larger proportion of representative respondents said they found it easy overall (78%) when compared with online respondents who said the same (67%). Conversely, online respondents were more likely to feel it was difficult overall (15%) than representative respondents (8%). It should be noted, however, that the base size for the representative respondents is small.

Figure 47 – (Q38) How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?

Base: Representative respondents (36); online respondents (936)



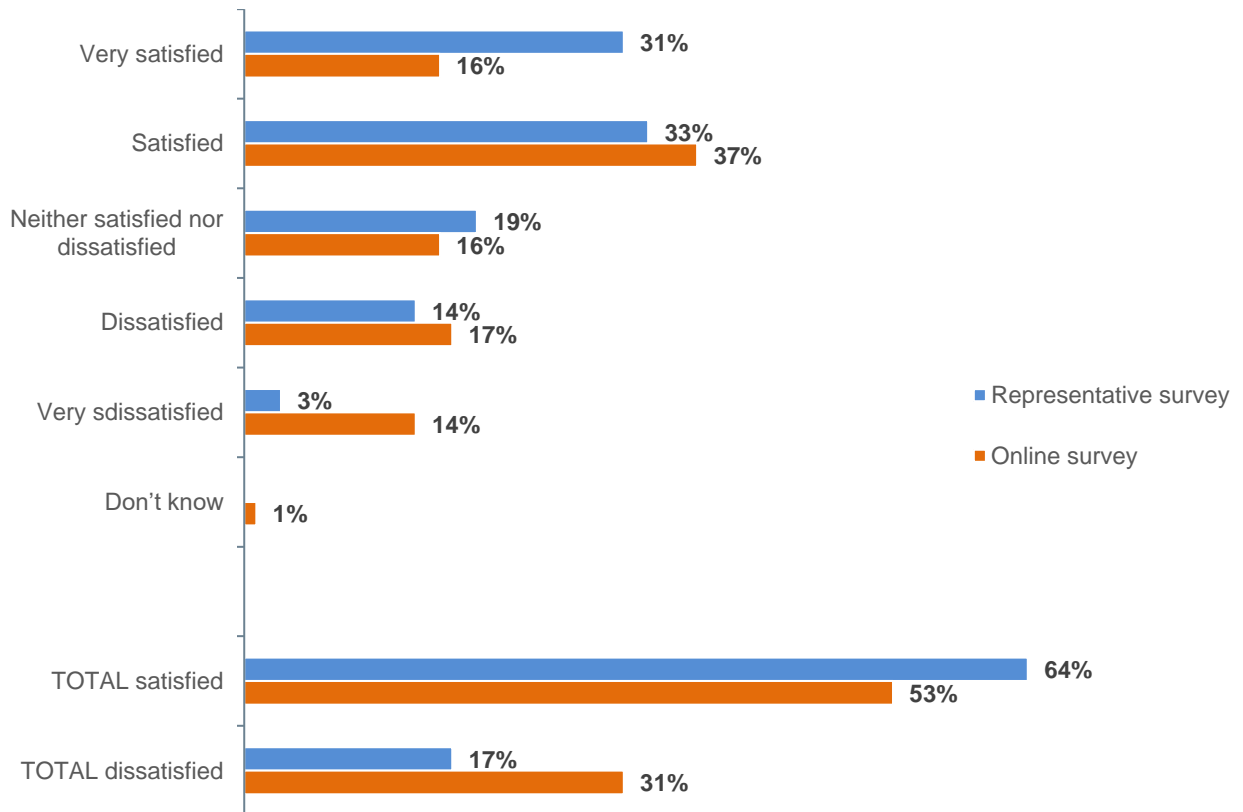
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

Respondents were subsequently asked how satisfied they were with the response they received to their report. Almost two-thirds (64%) of representative respondents were satisfied overall, compared with 53% of online respondents. Overall dissatisfaction was higher amongst online respondents (31%) compared with 17% of representative respondents.

Figure 48 – (Q39) How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?

Base: Representative respondents (36); online respondents (936)



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

Target response times – waste and recycling services

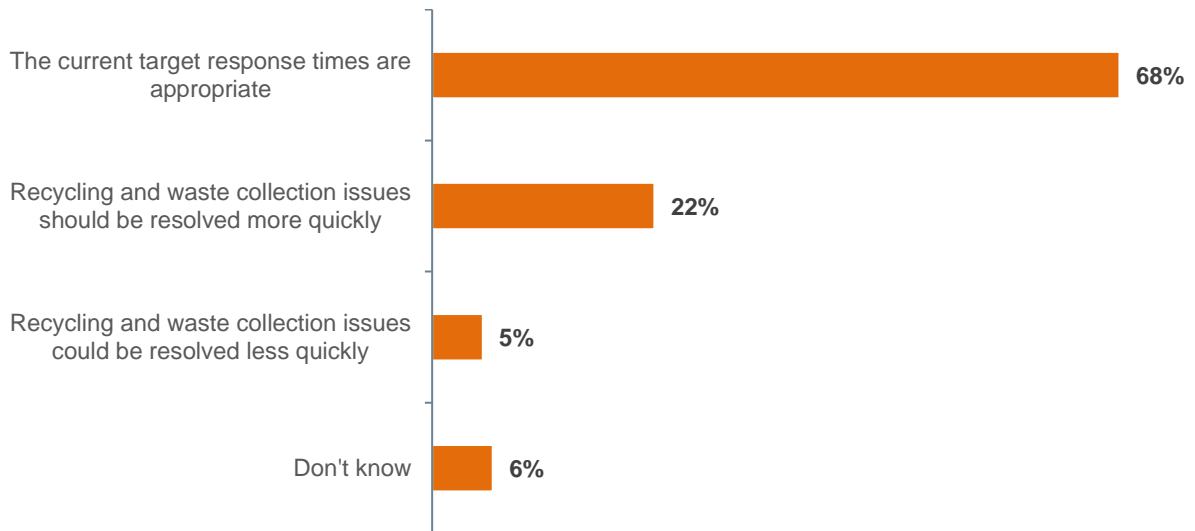
Merton Council has set targets for rectifying a missed collection and for delivering new or replacement containers. It wanted to establish if residents thought these targets are appropriate or if they should be resolved more or less quickly. Two-thirds (68%) of online respondents said the *current target response times are appropriate* and just over one in five (22%) think they should be *resolved more quickly*. Just 5% said they could be *resolved less quickly*.

Figure 49 – (Q40, online question) The current contract sets the following target response times once a report of a recycling or waste collection issue has been received:

- **Return to rectify a missed collection - 2 working days (1 working day for assisted collections)**
- **Deliver new/replacement containers - 10 working days**

Which of the following statements do you most agree with?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

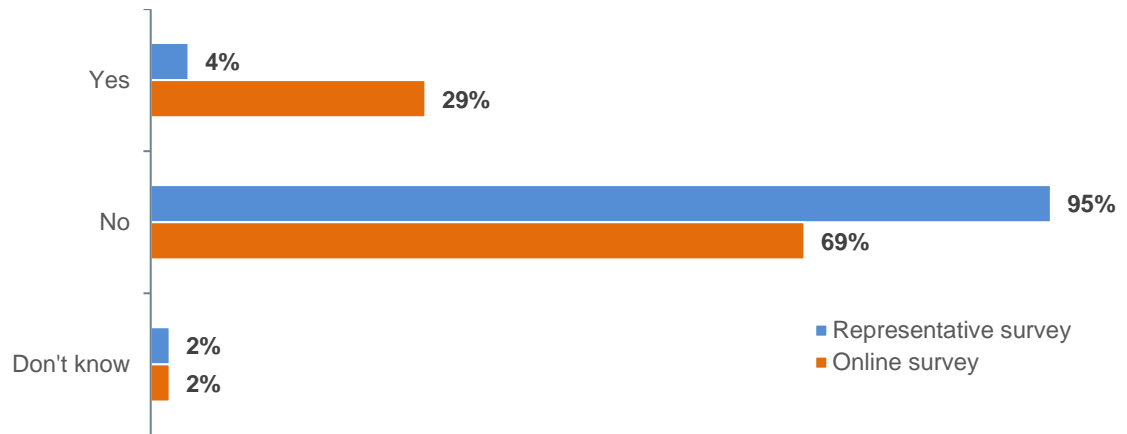


Reporting street cleaning problems or issues

Smaller proportions of respondents said they reported street cleaning problems than waste and recycling problems. A larger proportion of online respondents said they had reported a problem (29%) when compared with representative respondents (4%).

Figure 50 – (Q41) Have you reported a street cleaning problem or issue to the Council in the last 12 months?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online respondents (1,898)



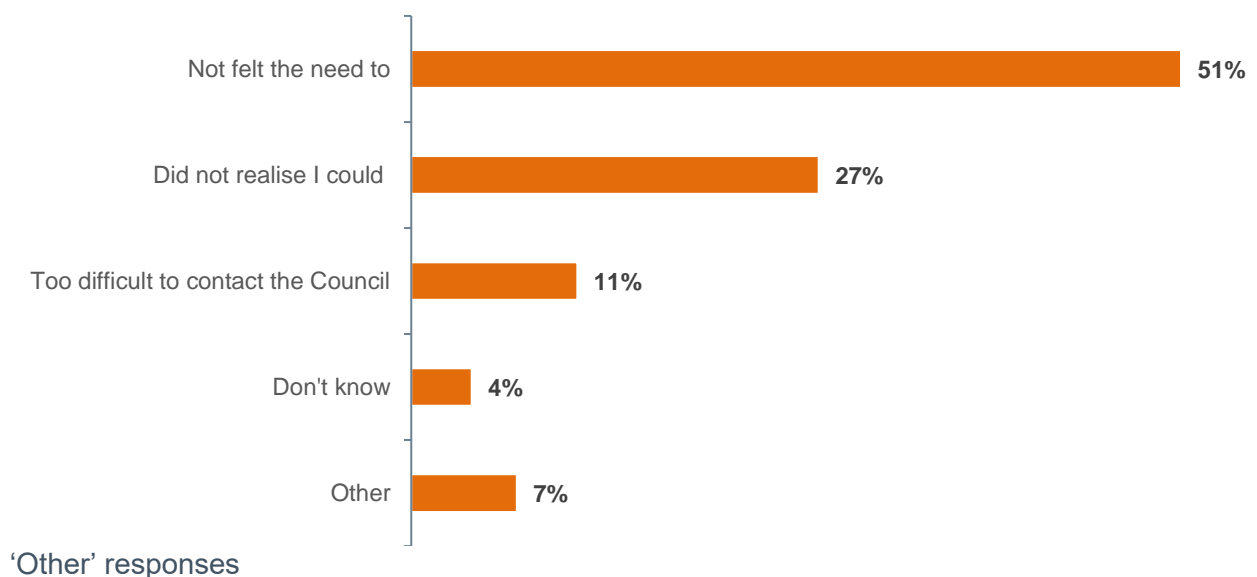
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences

Online respondents that had not reported a street cleaning problem were asked why they had not. Half (51%) said they had *not felt the need to*, 27% said they *did not realise they could* and 11% said it was *too difficult to contact the Council*. The latter two reasons could indicate that they did have a problem to report but did not contact the Council for those reasons.

Figure 51 – (Q42, online question) Why have you not reported a street cleaning problem or issue to the Council in the last 12 months?

Base: Online respondents (1,306) that have not contacted the Council to report a problem



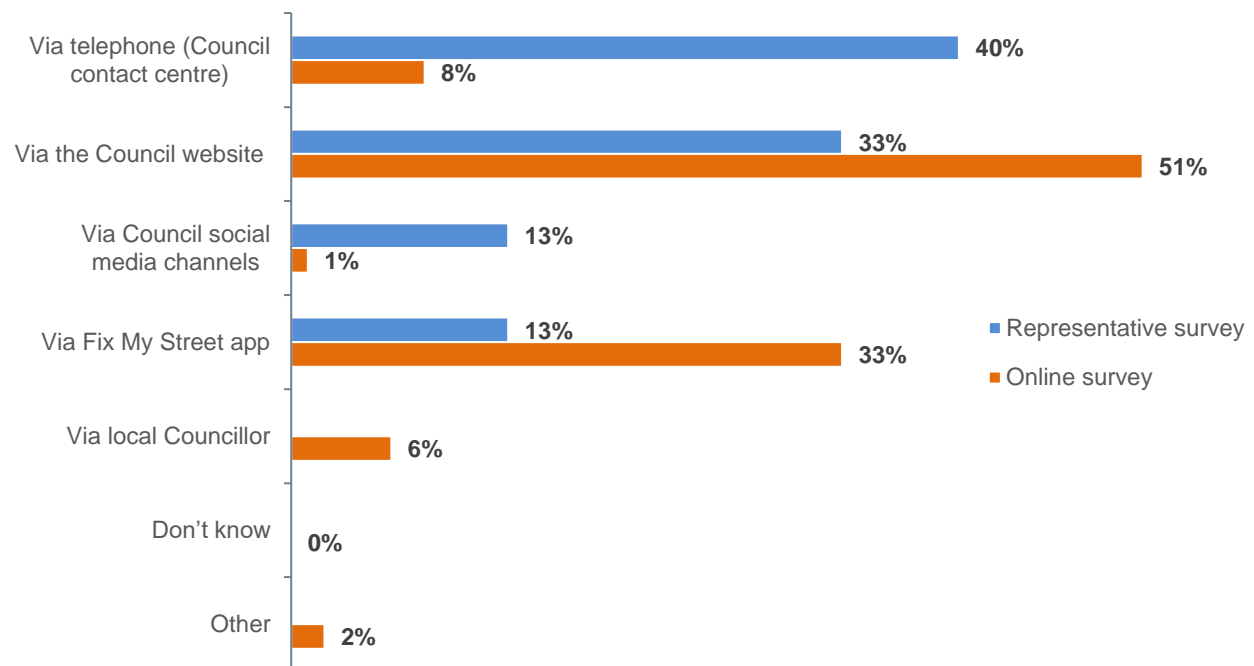
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Have reported an issue in the past and nothing was done
- Disposed of rubbish/waste myself
- Not confident the issue would be dealt with
- Someone else had already reported the issue

Respondents that had reported an issue to the Council were asked how they did so. It should be noted that the number of representative respondents answering this question was small. Of the online respondents, the most common response was *via the Council website* (51%), followed by the *Fix My Street app* (33%) and *via telephone* (8%).

Figure 52 – (Q43) How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?

Base: Representative respondents (15); online respondents (550) that have reported an issue to the Council



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Email
- Love Clean Streets app

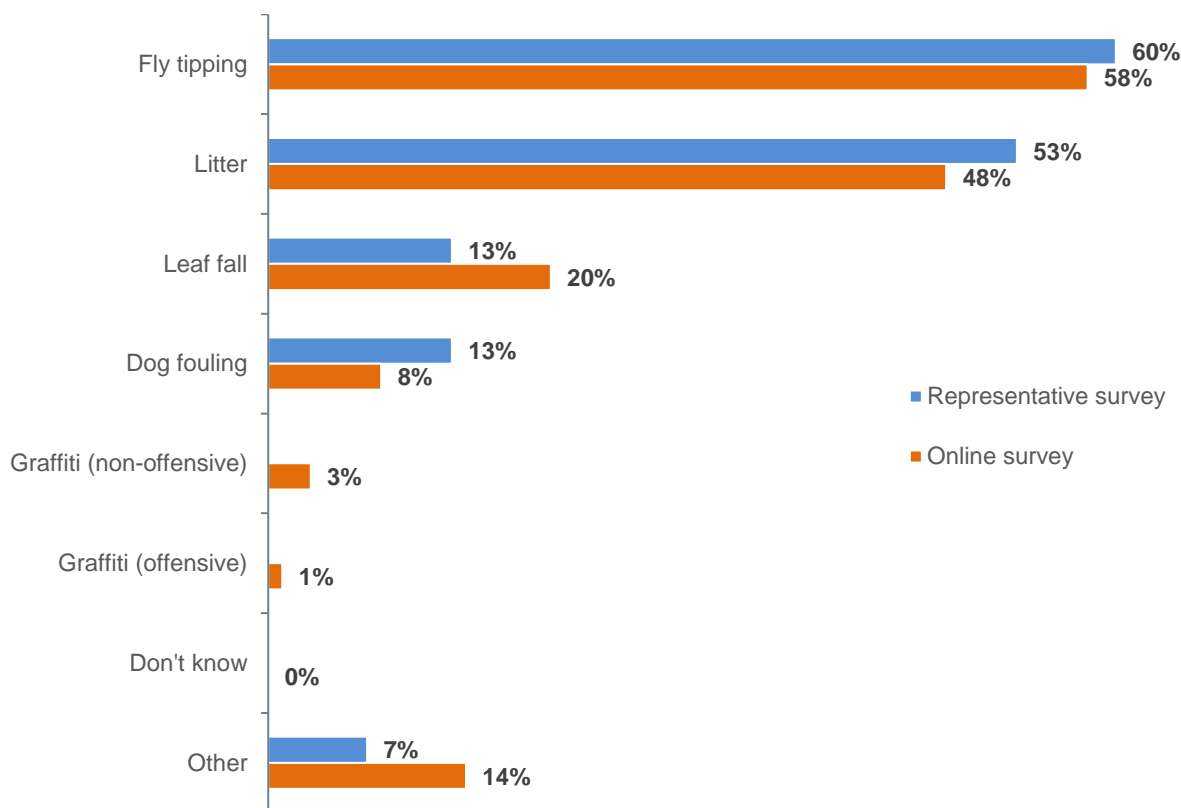
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

Respondents were asked what the most recent issue they reported related to. The most common responses were *fly tipping* and *litter*, mentioned by 60% and 53% of representative respondents respectively.

Figure 53 – (Q44) What did the most recent issues you were reporting relate to?

Base: Representative respondents (15); online respondents (550) respondents that have reported an issue



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Blocked drain/gutter
- Dead animal/roadkill
- Weeds
- Spilled rubbish from bin collection

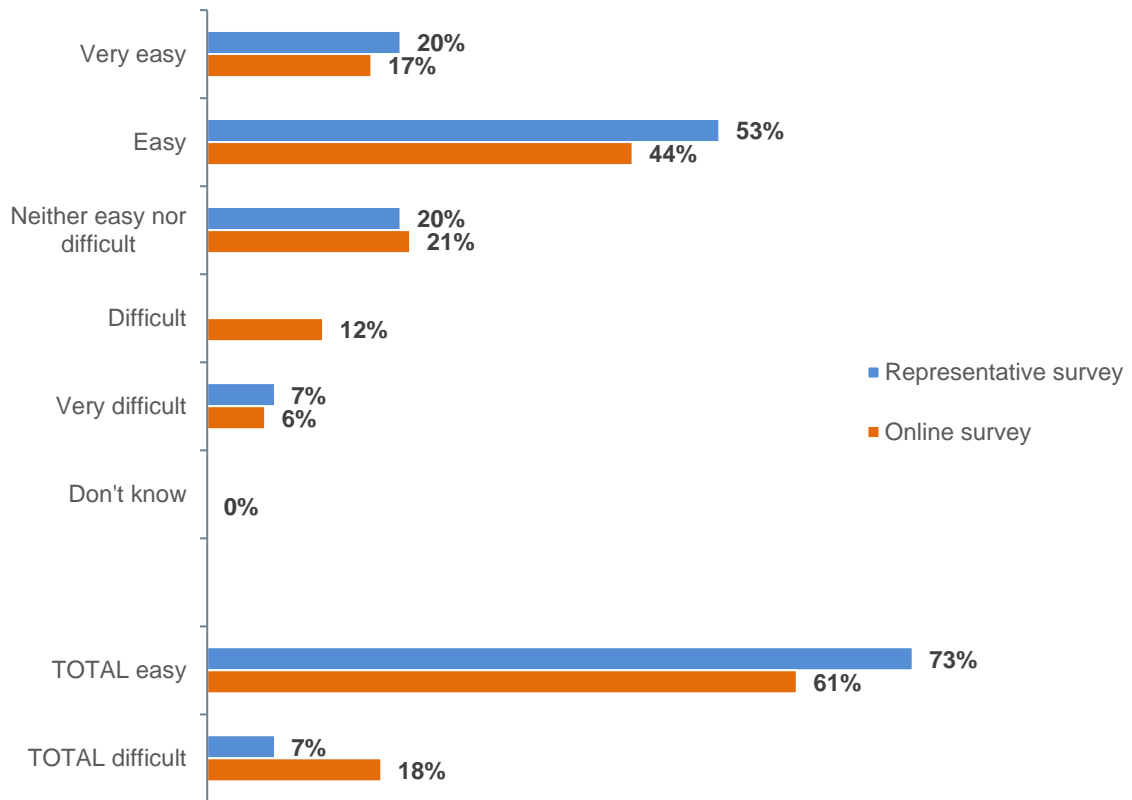
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

The majority of respondents found it easy overall to report the issue to the Council (73% of representative respondents and 61% of online respondents). Almost one in five (18%) online respondents found it difficult overall.

Figure 54 – (Q45) How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?

Base: Representative respondents (15); online respondents (550) respondents that have reported an issue



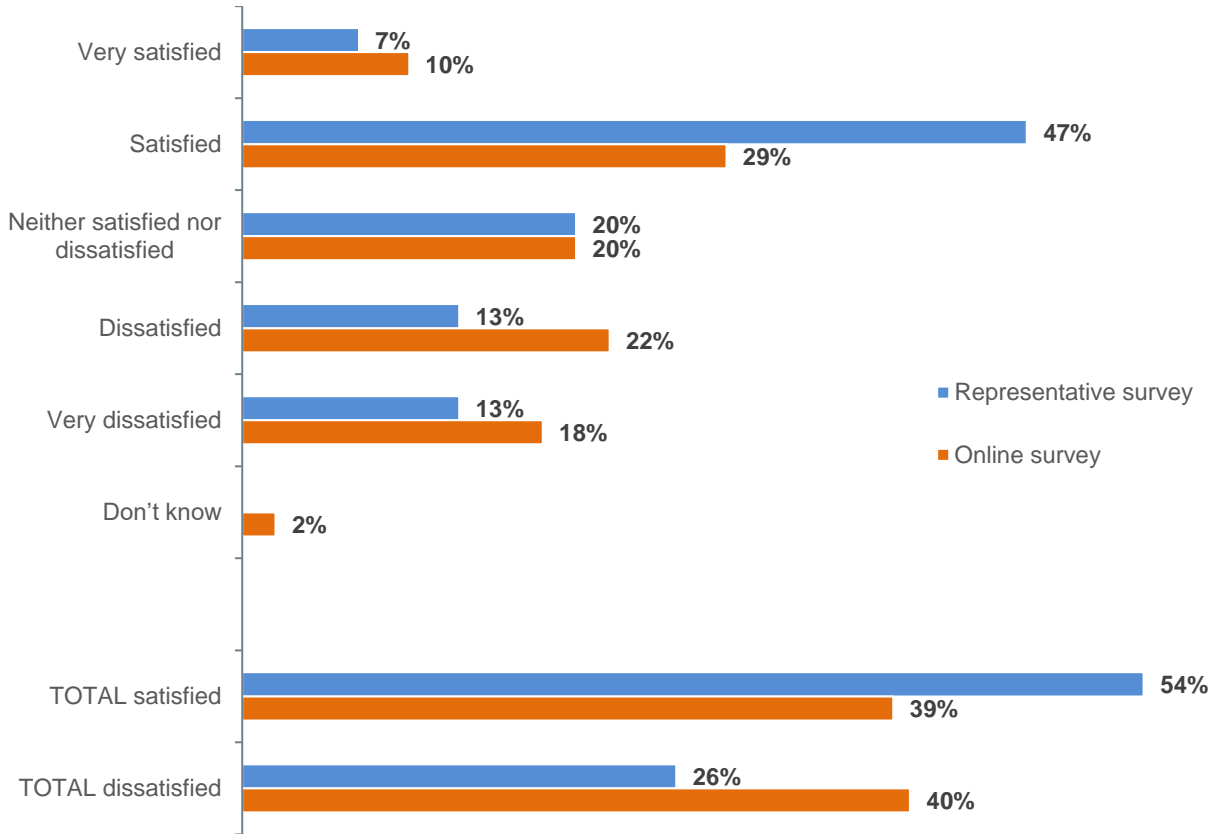
Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

Overall dissatisfaction with the response received to the report was higher amongst online respondents (40%) compared with 26% of representative respondents.

Figure 55 – (Q46) How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?

Base: Representative respondents (15); online respondents (550) that have reported an issue



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

- There were no subgroup differences due to the small base size

Target response times – street cleaning

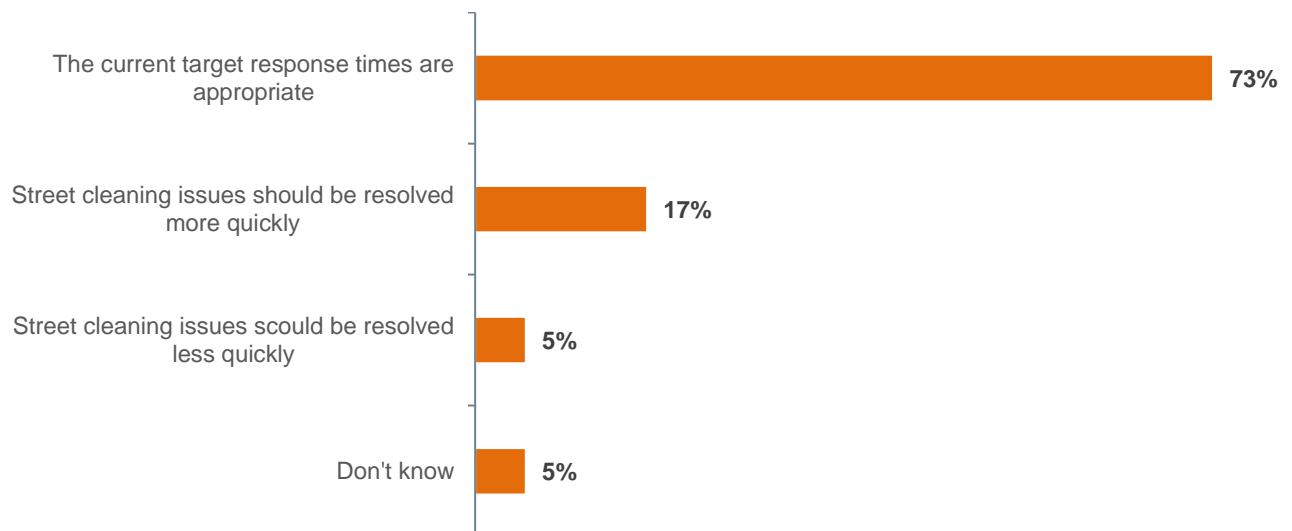
Merton Council has set targets for dealing with street cleaning issues such as fly tipping and graffiti removal. It wanted to establish if residents thought these targets are appropriate or should be resolved more or less quickly. Almost three-quarters (73%) of online respondents said the *current target response times are appropriate* and one in six (17%) think they should be *resolved more quickly*. Just 5% said they could be *resolved less quickly*.

Figure 56 – (Q47, online question) The current contract sets the following target response times once a report of a street cleaning issue has been received:

- Fly tip removal - 1 working day
- Empty full litter bins - 2 working hours (town centres) or 6 working hours (residential areas)
- Clean dirty streets - 2 working hours (town centres) / 4 working hours (residential - dangerous and offensive waste) / 24 hours (residential - other waste)
- Graffiti removal from public buildings/spaces - 24 hours (offensive) / 48 hours (non-offensive)

Which of these statements do you most agree with?

Base: Online respondents (1,898)

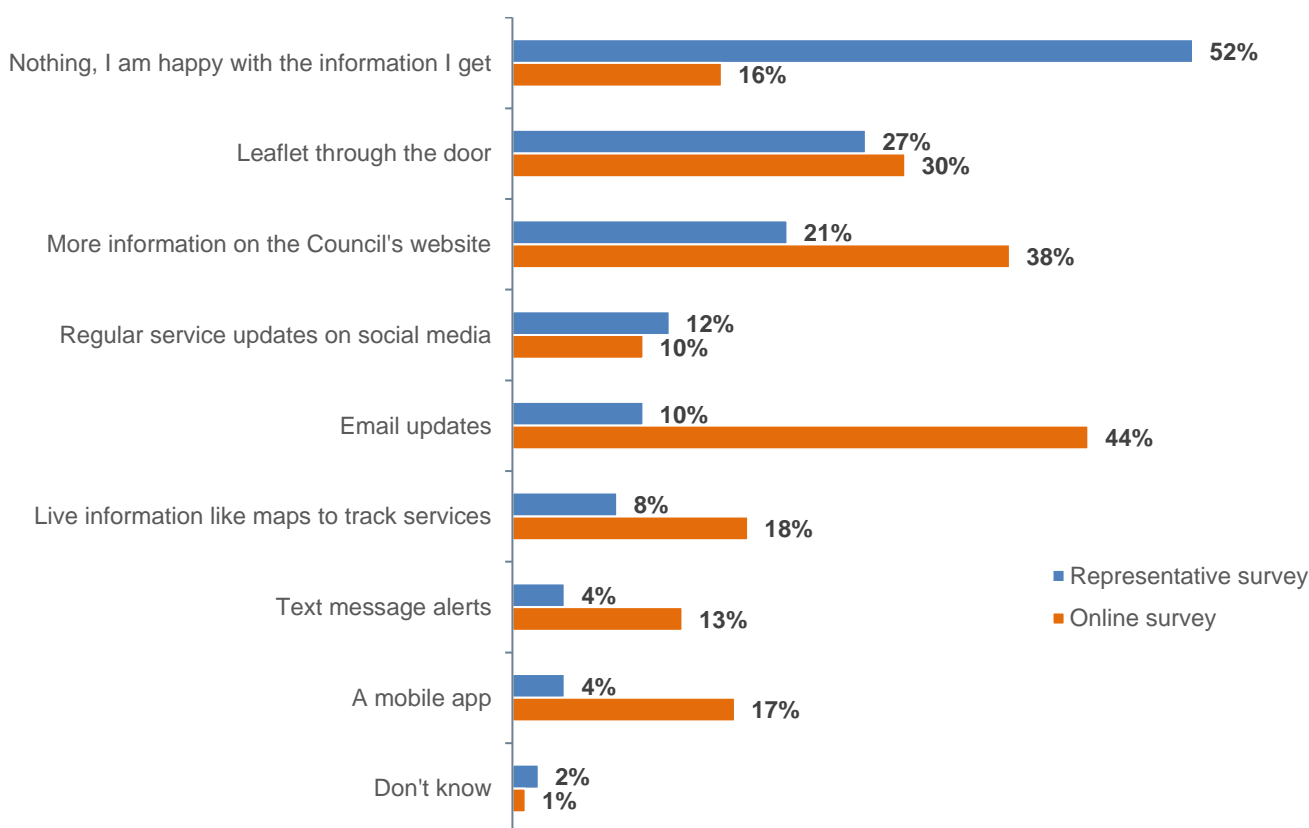


2.7 Communication with residents

Merton Council wants to improve ways of communicating with residents about the waste, recycling and street cleaning services, ensuring they are kept up to date as much as possible. Just over half (52%) of representative respondents and 16% of online respondents said they were *happy with the information they get*. The remaining respondents suggested a range of communication approaches that Merton Council could use. Just over a quarter (27%) of representative respondents said a *leaflet through the door*, 21% said more information on the *Council's website* and 12% wanted *regular service updates on social media*. The full range of responses is shown in the chart below.

Figure 57 – (Q48) We are keen to improve the way we communicate and keep residents up to date. How would you most like to be kept informed about recycling, waste collection and street cleaning services in the future?

Base: Representative survey (407); Online respondents (1,898) – respondents could tick all that applied



Subgroup analysis of the representative survey

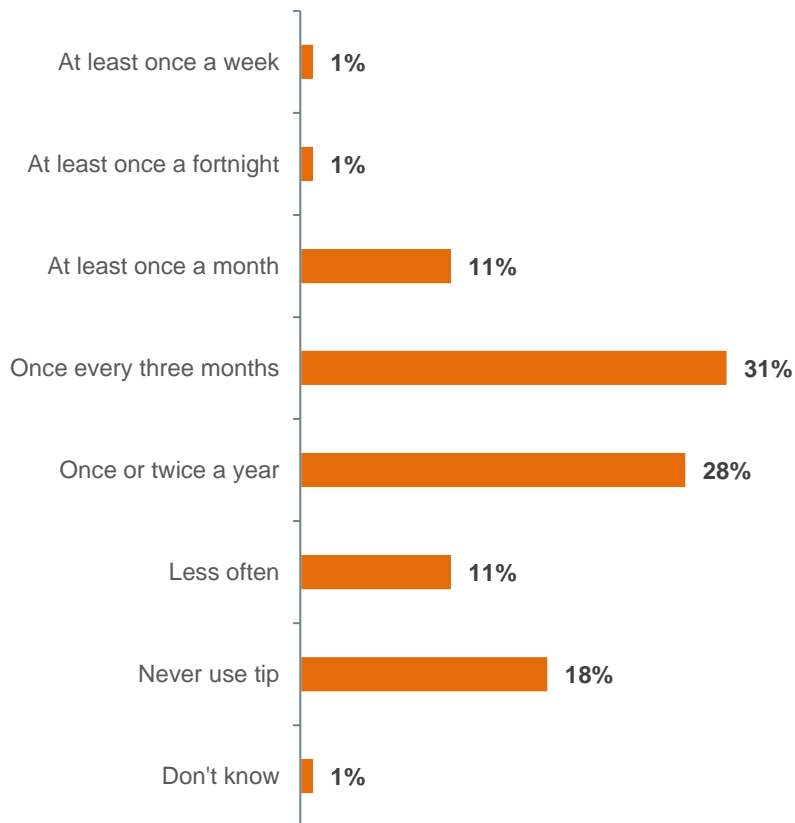
- Those living in purpose built flats were *most likely to say leaflet through the door* (35% compared with 27% overall)

2.8 Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre

Online respondents were asked how often they used the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre. Almost one in five (18%) online respondents said they *never use it*. In total, 12% of online respondents use it *at least once a month* or more frequently.

Figure 58 – (Q49, online question) How often, if at all, do you make use of the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (also known as ‘the tip’)?

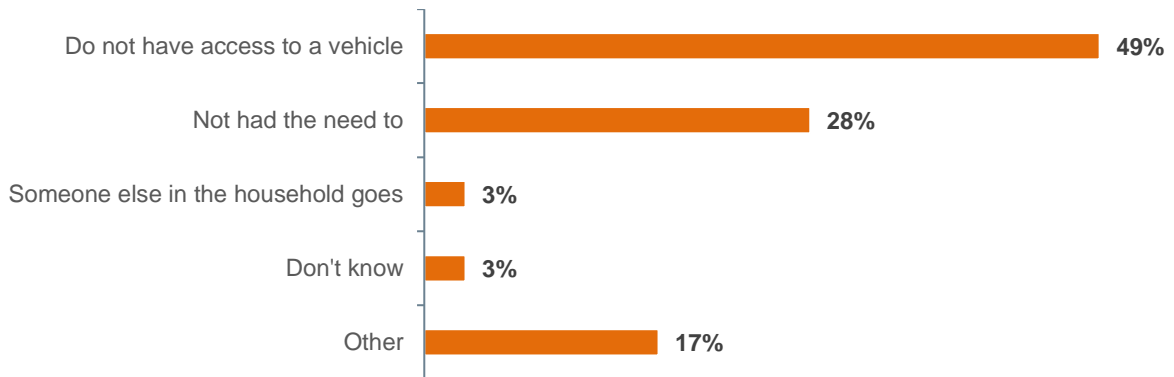
Base: Online respondents (1,898)



Online respondents who indicated that they have not used the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre recently were asked why this was. Half (49%) said they *do not have access to a vehicle*, and 28% said they had *not had the need to*.

Figure 59 – (Q50, online question) Why haven't you used the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre recently?

Base: Online respondents (551) that said they did not use the HRRC



'Other' responses

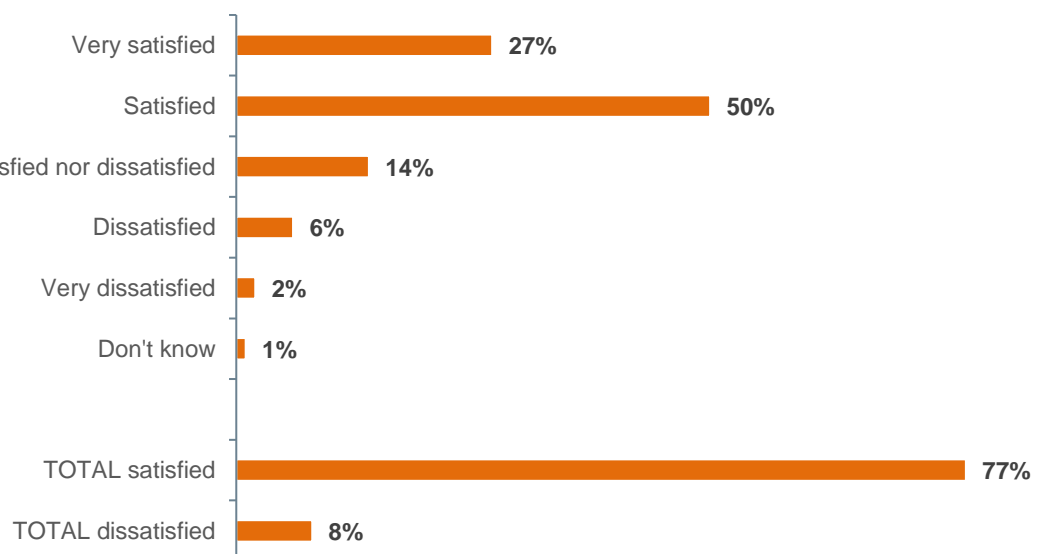
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Didn't know it existed
- Dislike booking system
- Too far away

Those who had used Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre recently were asked how satisfied they were with the overall service provided here. The majority (77%) said they were satisfied overall, whilst only 8% reported being dissatisfied overall.

Figure 60 – (Q51, online question) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre?

Base: Online respondents (1,334) that said they did use the HRRC

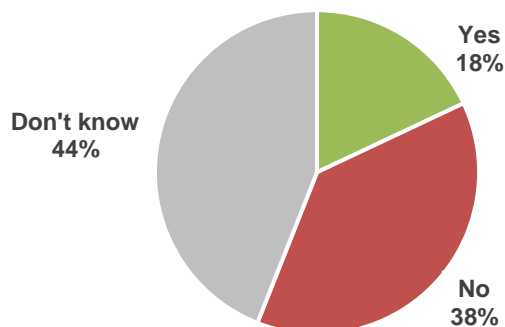


Online respondents that had visited Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre were asked if they thought there were any specific items that are not currently accepted that they would like to be able to take there in the future. Almost one in five (18%) said there was.

The most common items listed were paint, clothes, large electrical items, mattresses, polystyrene, plastic bags and soft plastic.

Figure 61 – (Q52, online question) Are there any specific items that are not currently accepted at Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre that you would like to be able to take there in the future?

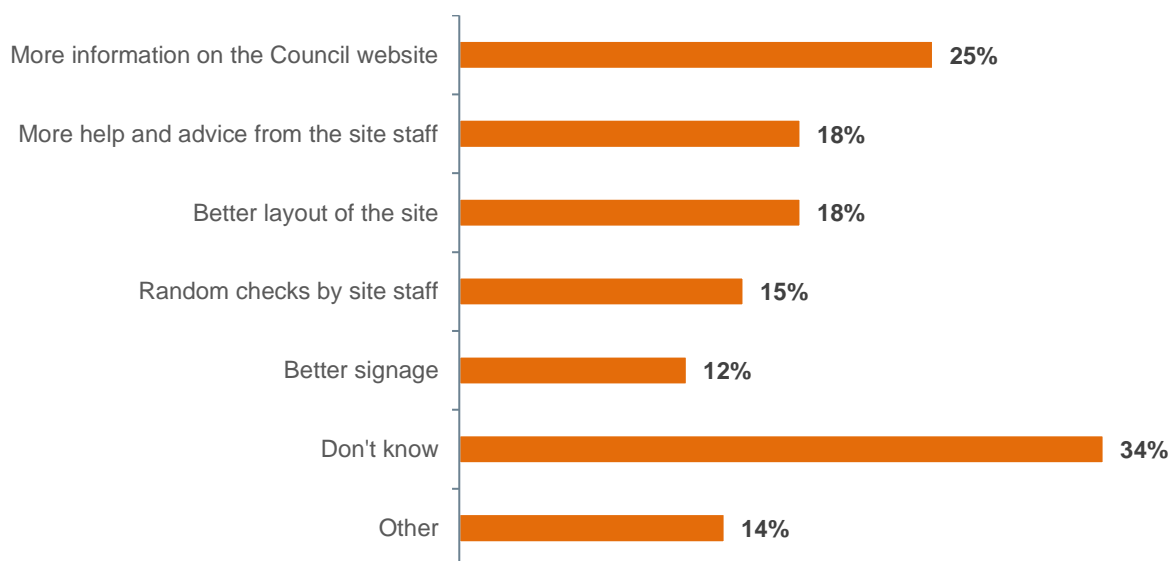
Base: Online respondents (1,334) that said they did use the HRRC



Merton Council is keen to increase the amount of waste that is recycled at Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre. A quarter (25%) of online respondents who had visited Garth Road recently said more information on the Council website, and a slightly smaller proportion (18%) said more help and advice from the site staff and that a better layout of the site would help (18%). A third of respondents (34%) said they did not know.

Figure 62 – (Q53, online question) What, if anything, would encourage you to recycle more of the waste you take to the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre?

Base: Online respondents (1,334) that said they did use the HRRC – respondents could tick all that applied



'Other' responses

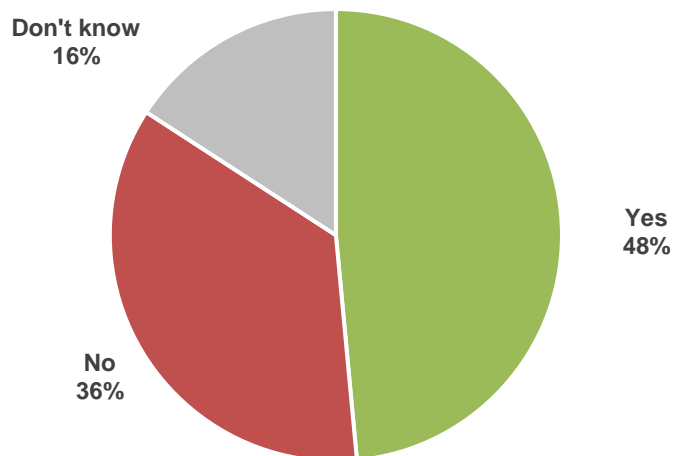
The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Better accessibility for those without a car
- Remove the booking system
- Easier booking system
- Better location/closer to me
- More help from staff with large/heavy items
- Longer/better opening hours

All online respondents were asked if they thought the online booking system to use Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre, which has been in operation since 2020, should continue in the future. Almost half (49%) of online respondents said it should, compared with 36% who said it should not. One in six (16%) said they *did not know*.

Figure 63 – (Q54, online question) An online booking system for visits to the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre has been in operation since 2020. Do you think we should continue to use a booking system in the future

Base: Online respondents (1,898)



Online respondents were also asked if they have any other suggestions for improvements that could be made to the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre. Just over one in five (22%) said they did. The table below lists the suggestions made by the 418 online respondents.

Figure 64 – (Q55 & Q56, online question) Improvements

Base: Online respondents (418) that provided a suggestion(s) for improvement

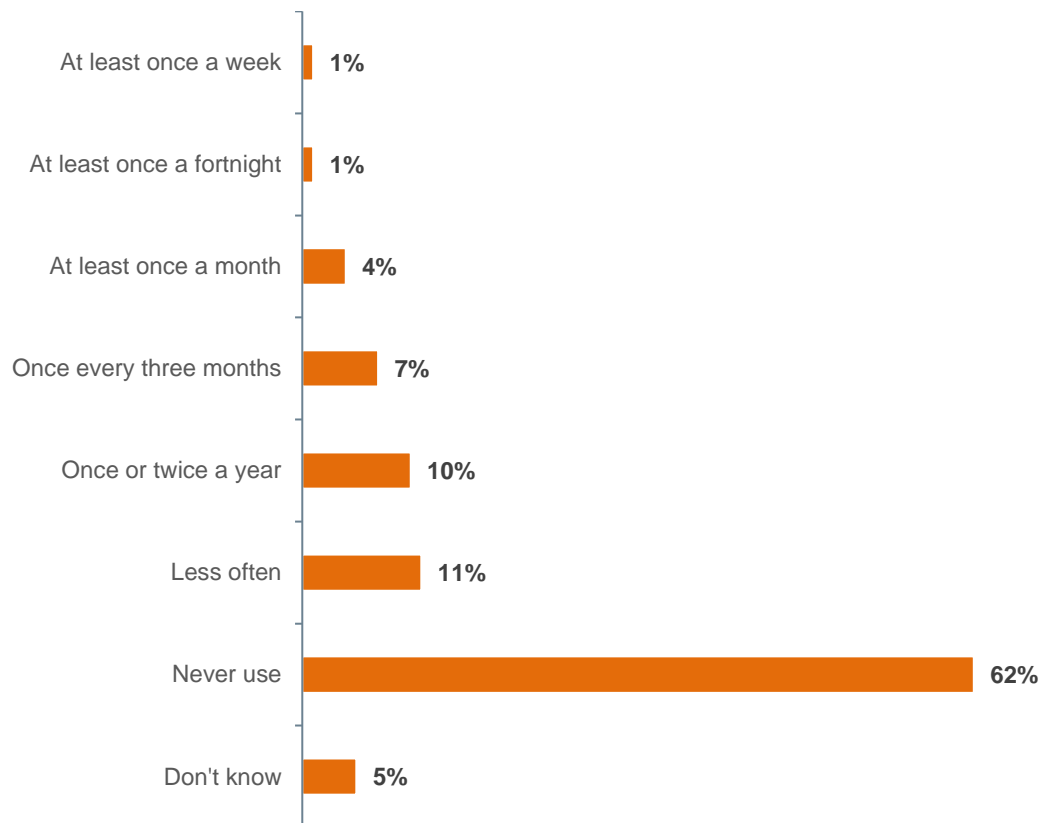
Suggested improvement	Number of respondents suggesting improvement
Remove steps/lower containers	84
More helpful staff/assistance with heavy items	61
Remove the booking system	50
Access for those without a car	49
More accessible location/additional sites	49
Improved/more flexible booking system	38
Better layout/bigger site	37
Promote reuse/place to donate useful items	31
Allow people to take useful items	21
Allow people to visit as often as necessary	16
Improve roads/fix potholes	14
Allow residents to access most convenient site	13
Accept a wider range of materials	13
Free waste collections	12
Better parking/bay markings	12
Cleaner/better maintained	11
Longer opening hours	11
More appointments	10
Advertise it/more information about it	10
Repair/restore/upcycle area	9
Reduce queuing/congestion	9
More helpful/clear signage	9
Resume/expand compost facility	8
Stop ID checks/let everyone use it	6
Longer appointments	5

2.9 Neighbourhood Recycling Centres

There are 13 Neighbourhood Recycling Centres located across Merton for residents to use. Online respondents were asked how often they used any of these centres. Just over three in five (62%) said they *never* use a Neighbourhood Recycling Centre. A total of 6% use them *at least once a month* or more frequently.

Figure 65 – (Q57, online question) There are 13 Neighbourhood Recycling Centres (or ‘bring banks’) located across the borough. How often do you use the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres?

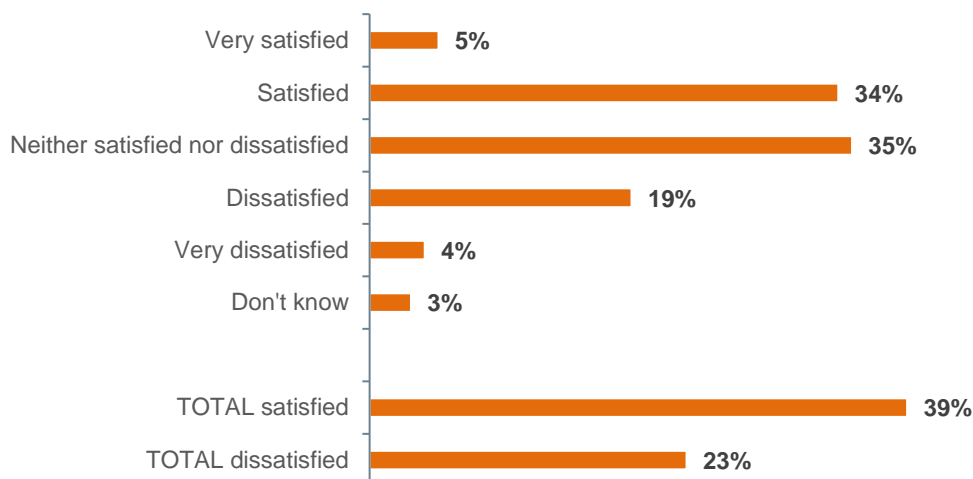
Base: Online respondents (1,898)



Of the online respondents who said they use the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres, two in five (39%) said they were satisfied with these overall compared with 23% who said they were dissatisfied overall.

Figure 66 – (Q58, online question) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall experience of using the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres?

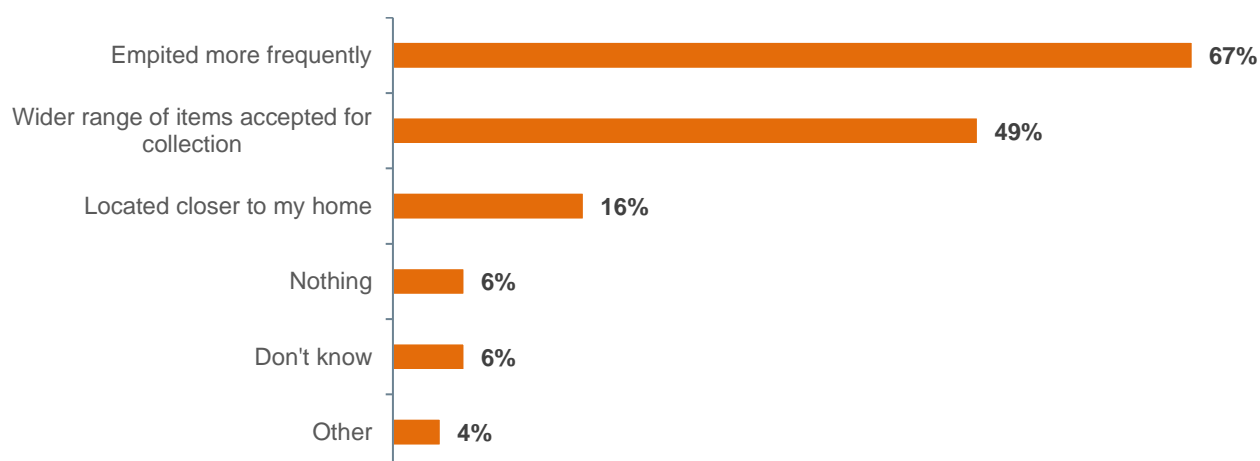
Base: Online respondents (433) that said they did use the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres



When asked if there was anything that would make the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres better, two-thirds (67%) said they need to be *emptied more frequently*, and half (49%) said they needed to *accept a wider range of items*.

Figure 67 – (Q59 online question) What, if anything, would make the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres better?

Base: Online respondents (433) that said they did use the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres – respondents could tick all that applied



'Other' responses

The following points are the main 'other' comments:

- Better maintenance/monitoring of them
- More information/publicity about them

2.10 Additional comments

Online respondents were given the opportunity to include comments about the waste and recycling collection or street cleaning services. The responses have been coded and are summarised below.

Figure 68 – (Q60, online question) Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the waste collection or street cleaning services, and what the priorities should be for the future?

Base: Online respondents (1,313)

Comment	Number of comments
Better/more frequent street cleaning needed/remove graffiti/leaves	339
Boxes/bins should be distributed per house type/better sized bins with lids/better quality recycling bins/more durable/better sizes available	199
More frequent collections	162
Vermin problems addressed/better bins to stop vermin	137
Address fly tipping	134
Should clean up after bins emptied	113
Bins put back in original place/close lids after emptying/better handled by staff so not damaged	106
Better customer service/better staff/communication/information	104
More care with garden tidying/weeds etc/leaves swept/trees maintained	93
Good service in general	82
More information where neighbourhood recycling sites are/more needed/bigger facilities/what are Bring Banks/	77
Initiatives/incentives to encourage residents to recycle/more communication with staff/make recycling easier	73
More enforcement/fines needed	66
More information where recycling goes/what can be recycled	66
More reliable collections	55
Better timed bin collections/cleaning of streets i.e. after bin collection	52
More facilities at local recycling banks/more recycling options in general	51
Address dog fouling issues	44
Prioritise environmental considerations/maintenance of trees/Green issues	42
More litter bins needed	40
Free/cheaper/more bulky waste collection service/garden waste	39
No comment	33
Drains need cleaning/maintained to prevent flooding	33
Bins emptied properly	25
Don't go for the cheap option when taking out the contract/use the best contractor/bring back in house/Keep within UK	23
Service should be supervised better	23
Recycling bins/bags more readily available	21
Install cameras	20

Garden waste should be collected from home	15
Collect all rubbish left out with bins	14
Better basic maintenance of the area	13
Underground bin drops/super bins needed	7
Remove slot collections	7
Human street sweepers not machines needed	6
Listen to residents	6

3. Focus Group Findings

3.1 Recycling and Waste Collection Services

Satisfaction with recycling and waste services

Participants' satisfaction with the Council's recycling and waste services was largely due to being satisfied with the scheme overall, and having reliable and consistent collections

When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their recycling and waste services, a small number of participants reported being satisfied. These participants attributed their satisfaction to being impressed with the scheme overall as they can recycle a variety of materials, being satisfied with the receptacles used to present waste and recycling, and the perception that the process of reporting any issues with the service is good. Another reason for satisfaction with the services was that the collections are consistent and reliable.

It's a smooth service when you report that your bin hasn't been collected, or when you need a replacement bin. That's been very straightforward for me.

Focus group, West Merton resident

It's great that we've got the wheelie bins, as it's stopped the foxes getting at the rubbish.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I can't fault our guys. They turn up every week, even on Bank Holidays, they're not too noisy, they don't throw the bins around too much, and they do what they're supposed to do. I'd probably give them an 8 out of 10.

Focus group, West Merton resident

However, the majority of participants were dissatisfied with the recycling and waste services due to inconsistent and missed collections, as well as several issues caused by collection crews

Participants were surprised that the level of satisfaction recorded in the representative survey was so high as the majority were dissatisfied with the recycling and waste services. One of the main complaints amongst those who said they were dissatisfied was that collections are often inconsistent or missed, which can lead to rubbish piling up making the streets look unsightly and attracting wildlife. Inconsistency with collections was a particular issue for participants, as they did not understand why the same level of service was not provided across the borough.

I am really surprised [at the survey results for satisfaction with services]. I don't know whether there are differences across the borough in terms of who is collecting the waste and recycling...and their attitudes about collecting it.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I think the collection is a bit inconsistent – sometimes if you leave cardboard sticking out they might or might not take it. Your bin lid needs to be down.

Focus group, East Merton resident

They're just unreliable, some days they're picked up on time, some days they're not. The Council gives us strict times to put the bags out, but because I'm working, I just put them out before I leave for work. But most of the time, they're still there when I get back. Sometimes the rubbish is still there for a couple of days.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

Another issue related to the collection crews was the apparent mess left behind after collection days, whether this is waste that has dropped out of bins, or not placing bins back to where they have been presented and being left in roads or on pavements. Participants who reported these issues felt that the crews could do more to tidy up after themselves and were disappointed that residents in wheelchairs or parents with buggies were being forced to walk on the roads when bins are blocking pavements. Collection crews were also seen to be responsible for the damage of residents' bins due to mishandling them or being rough when returning them.

You do get the lighter plastics being blown around which is a tricky one to know how to address. Some of it is down to the weather, but some of it is just down to the collectors themselves. You kind of think 'would it take two seconds to pick up that bit you dropped?'

Focus group, West Merton resident

One issue I have with the bins, is they are always left on pavements, and I know that it's in the contract that staff shouldn't leave bins on the highways. It's terrible that wheelchairs and buggies end up on the road.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I've watched them collecting the bins. I've seen them throwing them and they just get broken and you can't get replacements.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Some participants were dissatisfied with the recycling and waste services because they had witnessed collection crews placing both household waste and recycling into the same lorry. Participants felt this relays the wrong message or image from the Council, as it causes residents to lose trust that their items are being recycled and could even discourage residents from recycling altogether.

I don't have any confidence that the things are recycled as I've seen the purple bags and blue bags into the same lorry which crushes them. It's quite disheartening to see it.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

I've seen a truck coming to pick up both the recycling and waste, so it all got mixed together, so what's the point? I try and recycle but there's no point.

Focus group, East Merton resident

It's good that you can recycle textiles and batteries, but I've seen the bin men, every time, pick up the bag of batteries and chuck them in the grey bin. I've called them several times, and they say that's terrible, but nothing changes.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Other reasons for being dissatisfied with the recycling and waste services include the smell from the household waste bins, noisy collection crews, poor contact information, and bins being contaminated by passers-by.

I think in the summer, black bins should be collected more often as they just stink. They're horrible.

Focus group, East Merton resident

The collection crew can be noisy though. I often wonder who is making so much noise and look out and it's them shouting at each other. This is particularly bad at 5am.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

There's not a proper contact telephone number. I've had to contact my councillor to try and get things sorted.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Where our bins are out on the pavement in front of flats and houses, we find a lot of people who are passing by end up putting their rubbish in the recycling bins which I imagine creates more work and is frustrating.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Those who live in a flat above a shop reported some difficulties in receiving deliveries of recycling bags, which means it is not always possible to recycle

An issue specific to residents living in flats above shops was that it is sometimes difficult to get recycling bags delivered to them, which means that these residents are sometimes unable to recycle. These participants preferred when they were able to collect recycling bags from council buildings across the borough, such as libraries, as they could do so at their own convenience and avoid the risk of missing deliveries.

You used to be able to pick the purple bags up from the library...but now they don't do this and you have to have them delivered, but they won't tell you when they're coming. So you're out at work all day and then the bags just get stolen...and if you don't have the purple bag, they don't pick them up which means you can't recycle.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

The problem is getting the bags, so I end up buying my own, as any bags delivered just go missing and they just leave them outside the door.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

What matters the most to residents

Participants largely agreed that 'environmental benefits' is the most important factor, but would like to know more information about this

When shown that 'environmental benefits' was ranked as the most important factor in the representative survey, participants generally agreed and were not surprised that this is seen as important given the increasing concern around climate change and the environment. It was also felt that these survey results would show the Council that residents do genuinely care about what happens to the waste they recycle.

I agree with the results...It's saying to the Council that we care about the impact that this is having, and we want to make sure that you are genuinely recycling this in a way that is beneficial to the environment. I'm really pleased to see the level of importance that's been placed on it and hope it shows that we're not just paying lip service.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Although the other two things are important, especially affordability at the moment...the overriding thing for me is the environmental benefits and that has to be at the top of everything.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Some felt that, although they agreed that the environmental benefits are important, they would like to see more information about what these benefits actually are and what happens to their recycling once the Council has collected it.

I think we need to know a bit more about what they mean by 'environmental benefits' – it's a very wide term. It needs to be explained more...We have this Merton Matters thing that goes around to every household – they could put some articles in there or on their website.

Focus group, West Merton resident

It would be good to know what happens to our recycling...so that Merton Council has some sort of accountability.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Although, it was highlighted that ‘convenience and ease of use’ is important to ensure that as many residents are recycling as possible

Some participants argued that ‘convenience and ease of use’ was more important than the environmental benefits, as a service that is neither convenient nor easy to use could potentially discourage those who are less motivated or interested from recycling altogether if the service is too convoluted.

I think convenience and ease of use is the most important, as unless it’s easy to use, we’ll be living in a pile of rubbish – they’ve got to make it as easy as possible. When I walk to school, there’s just so much rubbish, and I don’t want to live like that.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I think convenience and ease of use because otherwise people fly tip. It has to be really easy and straightforward to use.

Focus group, West Merton resident

What residents recycle

Participants claimed to recycle the majority of their waste but admitted to being unsure about certain items, particularly plastics

When asked how much of their waste they recycle, participants claimed to recycle the majority as the service allows them to recycle a wide range of items. However, some participants did admit that they are sometimes unsure about how clean items need to be, such as tin cans, as well as being unsure about which bin certain items should be placed in. As it is useful to include what can and cannot be recycled on recycling bags for those who live in flats above shops, it may be beneficial for the Council to explore a similar option for those who recycle in other ways.

Between the boxes that we have for plastic and glass and the paper bin, there’s not much in the other bin at all.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I found out about something I could recycle when I was doing the survey. I’m pretty conscious what I put in the recycling bags, but it’s quite nice having the information on the sides of the bag.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

I’m also never quite sure how clean things need to be. I know they need to be rinsed but I don’t know how well mine is rinsed.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Knowing which plastics are recyclable was a particular issue for participants as they find that there is a fine line between a hard plastic and a soft plastic. For this reason, they felt that the Council could provide more information or support around recycling plastics.

I’ve got quite good now at taking any soft plastics to Tesco... but I think there’s a bit of a line between a hard plastic and a soft plastic – I’m never quite sure on some items. If I’ve got a broken piece of plastic coat hanger, what should I do with that?

Focus group, West Merton resident

I also find it difficult to know what plastics can be recycled and what plastics can't, and where they should and can be recycled. Even though I really care, it takes a lot of time [to research].

Focus group, West Merton resident

One participant said that even when they had tried to search for relevant information on the Council's website, they were unable to find anything definitive so have to resort to searching on Google which they were aware can sometimes provide incorrect information as each local authority is different.

Even when I try really hard, I must admit that I still sometimes worry that I'm putting stuff in my recycling that could be contaminating the rest of it...When you google it, it's confusing because different local authorities handle things in different ways and there doesn't ever seem to be anything definitive on the Merton [Council] website.

Focus group, West Merton resident

The food waste recycling service is good but there are unpleasant barriers such as the smell and attracting wildlife

Whilst some participants were satisfied with the food waste recycling service and felt it had become second nature, the discussion around this service mostly focused on the barriers to do this. The main barriers suggested by participants included not having a food waste caddy, the smell of the food waste being a deterrent, and the food waste caddies attracting wildlife such as foxes and rats.

I gave up with that food waste recycling bin. It blew away, I never got it back, so I just throw everything away in the grey bin.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I just don't recycle food waste – it just smells horrible and doesn't look nice. I know I should do, but it's not nice to do it.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

People put their outdoor caddies on the ground which attracts the foxes and rodents. You need to take the wheelie bin out and put the caddies on top so they can't get to it.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Two participants from the West Merton focus group had recently received a leaflet and some food waste caddy liners and felt this was a good incentive to start recycling their food waste as it provided them with the necessary information and resources to get started. As not all participants had received these, it was assumed that these participants had received the liners and leaflets as part of a targeted campaign, although it was felt that liners should be delivered to all residents as they used to be.

I used to live up north and food recycling was never a thing up there...but I recently received those little bags in the post and thought 'why not?'. It's getting into the habit of doing it now because it's so easy to chuck food into the bin. I'm starting to get there, but it definitely helped getting bags posted through the door. It was a bit of an incentive.

Focus group, West Merton resident

We haven't had green bags delivered for years. I buy mine online because it works out cheaper and you get an awful lot in one go.

Focus group, West Merton resident

We got a leaflet and some bags through the door on our road. They might have been targeting particular areas.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Recycling barriers

Participants were shocked by the 'average Merton bin' graphic

Following undertaking waste composition analysis across the borough, Merton Council and the South London Waste Partnership created a graphic showing the waste that is presented in the average Merton household waste bin. When shown this graphic, participants were shocked at how much recyclable waste is in the average Merton bin, particularly the food waste, which some felt was a 'no brainer' and could not understand why residents would choose to dispose of this in their household waste bin instead of the designated food waste caddy.

I think the food waste is really shocking...Once you get into the habit of it, it can be done really easily and it's a no brainer. I don't understand why people wouldn't do that.

Focus group, West Merton resident

It surprises me about the amounts of scrap metal in the bin.

Focus group, East Merton resident

The plastic bags is really bad.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Recycling barriers suggested by participants include being unmotivated or uninterested, laziness, a lack of information, and inadequate equipment

Participants felt that one of the main barriers to recycling more was simply down to the individual, whether this be laziness, a lack of motivation or being uninterested in recycling. It was believed that it would be more difficult to encourage residents who fall into this category to recycle more as it is difficult to change behaviours which are seen to be inherent.

It's down to education and culture. If you've been brought up with parents who always litter. If they grow up with bad role models, what can you do.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Some people are just lazy and can't be bothered to recycle or throw them away properly.

Focus group, East Merton resident

You can't make those who don't care suddenly care about recycling.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Another key barrier suggested by participants was a lack of information or education about recycling, particularly around items that can and cannot be recycled and where they should go. Participants highlighted that certain areas would benefit from regular information about recycling as they have a high turnover of residents (such as areas with lots of flats or HMOs) and would, therefore, be continually having new residents move into the area with little or no knowledge about the recycling services available to them.

It's about awareness raising...For a lot of people, it's about knowing why and knowing how, and I don't think the borough currently does enough on that...The small things like posting the bags through the door with a leaflet for food waste – giving people the nudge and saying 'this is why you should care'. That's how you're going to change people's behaviour.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I live in a block of flats so we have a different service. Most of the issues are with residents not recycling properly. Every time I go down and open the recycling bin there's just lots of rubbish that other residents have put in there. I'm not sure how you could change this, maybe through incentives.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Having the correct equipment and resources to recycle is also seen as important, as participants felt that not having enough space or the right receptacles to recycle would be a barrier to some residents. Examples included having no space to store wheelie bins, having no waste chutes inside blocks of flats to make separating and disposing of waste and recycling more convenient, and broken or misplaced receptacles.

Where I'm going to, which is a new build, I think with 99% certainty I won't be able to recycle anything as the bin store is far too small...there's not enough space for a recycling bin.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Where I used to live, in a block of flats in Wimbledon, there were no waste chutes, so you had to take all your rubbish and recycling in bags, drag them downstairs and across the car park. People just didn't recycle as it wasn't easy to do. It was so much easier just to put everything in black bags.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I've got three green boxes at the moment, but sometimes they get stolen or broken, but it takes ages to get replacements.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Participants felt that the Council could do more to encourage residents to recycle, such as providing more support around recycling plastics and providing more information about a wider range of recyclable materials

A number of suggestions were made in relation to how the Council can support residents to recycle more. One of the key suggestions was for more support to be offered to recycle plastic items, particularly plastic bags and packaging, as these are commonly used for so many products nowadays. Although it was acknowledged that some supermarkets have collection points for soft plastics, participants said they do not always have the time to collect these and take them back to the store, and therefore felt that the Council should introduce a collection for these items as part of its recycling services.

Plastic bags and packaging is something we get a huge amount of, you can't recycle it, so it ends up in the bin. I just don't have time to collect all my plastic bags and then take them to the shops – I wouldn't do it even though I recycle everything else. The Council could coordinate it even if they don't do it themselves.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Participants also felt that the Council could provide more information about recycling in general and on a more regular basis. They felt this would remind residents who may forget what they can and cannot recycle, and would also remove the need for searching for information online which can be frustrating, time consuming and not always relevant to the borough.

My Dad, who is getting on a bit, does forget what can and can't be recycled. People like my Dad struggle, and might not know where to get the right information, so more help is needed there.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I was checking the Council website about aerosols but there was nothing on the site, so I had to check elsewhere, it was a general website.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

There was also some discussion around whether the Council should inspect the contents of bins and imposing fines, but participants were unsure of the legality and logistics of this

Participants in the West Merton focus group also considered the idea of the Council inspecting residents' bins and imposing fines for contamination, but opinions were mixed. On one hand, it was argued that this could act as a deterrent and make residents more diligent when separating their waste. However, there was some concern about the logistics of imposing fines where communal bins are used in flats, as well as concern around whether bin inspections and subsequent fines would be legal.

Do any other local authorities or countries do spot checks and fine residents when they're discovered to have the wrong things in their bin?

Focus group, West Merton resident

We're in a block of flats and we have a communal bin, so how would that work if something is found to be in the wrong bin? We're the only ones who own our flat in our block, everyone else rents. So would I be responsible for the fine?

Focus group, West Merton resident

Given right to privacy and right to ownership, I can't see that the British government would ever pass a law that says people can be fined for putting the wrong thing in their bins.

Focus group, West Merton resident

3.2 Garth Road HRRC

Participants think that cooking oil, paint and textiles should be easier to recycle at Garth Road

Participants suggested a few materials that they felt should be accepted at Garth Road if they are not already, or easier to recycle at Garth Road if they are currently accepted. The first suggestion was paint, as empty paint tins are currently accepted but residents are unable to take any leftover paint. It was understood that Merton residents can arrange collection of paint via the City of London Corporation, but participants felt that this service should be offered by Merton Council instead.

If you've got an empty paint tin it's fine, but if there's any left in it, I believe Merton [Council] have got an arrangement with the City of London which is really weird, where you can organise for them to come and collect it. They're sitting in my shed at the moment because I don't know what to do with them, so it would be great if they could accept that.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Other examples included textiles, as one participant was told during a recent trip that there is no textiles section, and cooking oil, as one participant said there is a lock on the container for this which is inconvenient.

I save up any cooking oil in a bottle and take it to Garth Road when it's full...but there's a lock on the container. It would be much easier if there wasn't.

Focus group, West Merton resident

We recently went to the recycling centre with a load of cushion covers and curtains, but we were told they don't have a textiles section, so we just had to throw them in the end which I didn't like to do.

Focus group, East Merton resident

There were mixed opinions on the booking system for Garth Road, but most think it should be stopped

Participants who were in favour of keeping the booking system to visit Garth Road mostly put this down to it being an easy process, although they were unsure what the benefits of having this system were now that Covid restrictions are no longer in place.

It's quite easy to book a slot online for the recycling centre.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I quite like it. Now that Covid's gone...I'm not quite sure what the benefit of it is, though.

Focus group, West Merton resident

However, the majority of participants said they were against the booking system and thought it should be stopped as they felt it was unnecessary due to Covid restrictions being lifted, and the impression that the HRRC is often very quiet when they visit.

I don't think it's necessary now. We've been booking slots at various times of the day during the week and there's hardly anybody there.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Another argument for stopping the booking system was the difficulty to get slots at a convenient time, such as the weekend, to fit around work schedules. One participant said they often had to book a weekend slot two or three weeks in advance, which they were unhappy with as it meant storing waste for a prolonged period. It was suggested that, should the booking system continue, the Council should offer weekday evening slots for those who work during the opening hours.

I think the issue we have is the opening times on weekdays...If you work a standard work day until 5pm, it's impossible to get there in the week before it closes so you're reliant on the weekend. And often when we try to book a weekend slot, we end up having to book one two or three weeks in advance because it's the most popular time. And when you're talking about having lots of waste about the house and garden for all that time, it can be quite frustrating.

Focus group, West Merton resident

If it's not possible to stop the booking system, then opening up some slots on weekday evenings would be better.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Several participants had never visited Garth Road, which was mostly due to not having access to a vehicle

Several participants said they had never visited the Garth Road HRRC. When asked why this was, one participant said they did not have the correct ID currently as they had only just moved back to the area and had been told that enforcement of Merton residents using the centre was strict.

I've not used it because I've only just moved back here...and I don't think I have enough of the right ID just yet to prove I'm a resident...I'm told they're quite strict on enforcement.

Focus group, West Merton resident

However, for the majority of those who had not visited Garth Road, this was simply down to not having access to a vehicle, which they said makes it difficult to carry large or heavy items. These participants were having to store their waste at home until someone could take it for them, and felt as though the Council was not providing sufficient support to recycle for this cohort of residents.

I don't have a car and carrying things would just be a pain, so I usually wait until my parents come down and get them to take it back up north with them to their tip.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I don't have a car to go to the tip. So if you have larger items or electrical items which you can't put into the bin, what do you do? I feel they're not making things easy to recycle.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

A couple of participants believed that those without a car were not allowed to visit Garth Road and felt this was unfair as there is a significant proportion of London residents who do not have a car or access to a vehicle. As the Council's website states that residents are permitted to arrive on foot or bicycle, this is likely to be a misconception that the Council could dispel amongst residents without a car to encourage them to visit Garth Road if they are able to.

I did raise the issue of not having a vehicle and not being allowed to use the Garth Road recycling centre, and I said it's against the Equalities Act.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I think it's crazy that we all pay council tax, yet it's only people with cars that are allowed into the tip. We should be encouraging recycling and reducing car journeys. They need to just think through how people without cars get rid of rubbish. You just need easy drop off areas.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

For those without access to a vehicle, it was felt that the Council could provide more free support to dispose of large or heavy items which could also reduce the amount of fly tipping and contamination. Suggestions included more recycling centres across the borough, a free bulky waste service and specialist collections for items such as paint and electricals.

There needs to be smaller recycling centres around the borough, as if you don't have a vehicle you can't get to Garth Road. People have things you can't recycle using the bins, so you need help to recycle large items and electrical things.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Perhaps provide a free service twice a year to collect larger waste.

Focus group, East Merton resident

It would be really helpful to have specialist collections, like for paint and electrical items, or have drop off points. People end up throwing these things in the bin as it's so difficult to recycle them.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

3.3. Neighbourhood Recycling Centres

Neighbourhood Recycling Centres (also known as bring sites) are not used frequently by participants, but those who do use them are dissatisfied with their upkeep and maintenance

When asked whether they used neighbourhood recycling centres across the borough, participants said they tend not to as they can recycle using the kerbside collections or at Garth Road.

I don't use them because everything is either already collected or I take it to Garth Road.
Focus group, West Merton resident

I've only used a clothing bank for some clothes I recycled. The other things like bottles, I just recycle in my bag.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

Those who did use bring sites reported their dissatisfaction with how they are maintained and treated by other residents. One example was that, due to them being emptied infrequently, residents often leave items on the floor next to the containers which looks unsightly. This participant suggested that cameras should be set up as a deterrent for dumping. Another example was residents using bring sites as their own communal bins which meant they were often contaminated and subsequently removed.

I get that people bring stuff down and the bins are sometimes full, but it infuriates me that they just dump it on the floor...because they're not being emptied frequently enough...Maybe there should be some cameras at sites and some sort of penalty.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Some flats were built locally but they weren't provided with proper refuse collections for them. They used to bring all of their domestic refuse and plonk it in the bins in the Coop car park on Wimbledon Chase and this went on for ages. We got CCTV cameras, people got fined, but it didn't matter. The bins had to go in the end because it was very unsavoury and the recycling was all full of waste. It's people's behaviour – if people could use them properly, it would be brilliant.

Focus group, West Merton resident

3.4 Street cleaning

Satisfaction with street cleaning

Participants were generally dissatisfied with the street cleaning in the borough, although a small number were satisfied

Only a few participants said they were satisfied with the street cleaning in the borough, with the main reasons being the perception that their local area and streets were nice and clean, as well as the visible presence of street cleaners.

I do see the streets being cleaned, they are very clean.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

I see my street cleaner quite often, he's doing a good job. He picks up cans and bottles in hedges, but it's like a tide, it's never ending.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Where I live it's all lovely.

Focus group, West Merton resident

However, the majority of participants were dissatisfied with the street cleaning in the borough due to perceiving the area to be generally unclean and not seeing any street cleaning taking place.

Street cleaning is a big problem around here. Fly tipping, dog mess, that kind of things, so overall, not very happy.

Focus group, East Merton resident

We don't really see the street cleaning machines and vehicles at all.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Cleaning the pavements, it just doesn't seem to happen.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Street cleaning is poorer in South Wimbledon according to participants from West Merton

Participants in the West Merton focus group felt that central Wimbledon was cleaner than areas in South Wimbledon, which they reported to have issues such as rubbish, litter and fly tipping, particularly in Merton High Street. These participants believed that if an area looks unclean, it encourages people to contribute to the problem, whereas a cleaner area discourages people from adding to the issues.

From walking around it feels like areas in central Wimbledon are cleaner than areas in South Wimbledon.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I can't put into words how terrible it is in South Wimbledon. Merton high street is constantly strewn with rubbish, black bags, fly tipping. It's down all of the residential streets as well. And because the area looks so unloved...it just encourages more people to do it.

Focus group, West Merton resident

The key street cleaning issues identified by participants include fly tipping, litter, bins overflowing and fallen leaves

According to participants, one of the main street cleaning issues in the borough is fly tipping. There are apparently certain areas or spots across the borough that are known for fly tipping, such as along the railway lines and under trees, and participants felt that despite these being 'hot spots' they were not cleared frequently enough. Common items that are seen as being fly tipped include black bags of rubbish and waste, gas canisters and mattresses.

There's lot of fly tipping near me, gas canisters, mattresses, loads of rubbish, everything.

Focus group, East Merton resident

There's a tree near me that always gets fly tipping. As soon as it's cleared by the Council, more arrives. It's always there.

Focus group, East Merton resident

Another key issue is that the bins situated in public spaces are often overflowing, which can be unsightly and can attract foxes. In addition to this, participants felt that litter was often seen across the borough as well as rubbish spilled across roads following recycling and waste collections, either due to foxes ripping into bags or rubbish spilling out from bins and other receptacles.

We have a slight problem with bins in the park overflowing and not entirely fox-proof.

Focus group, West Merton resident

We live near the Northern Line depot and there's a bridge, and it's disgusting, there's always kebab wrappers, chicken bones, it's disgusting, loads of vomit and beer cans. I always try and avoid it. I've never seen anyone clear it.

Focus group, East Merton resident

With having bags put out overnight, it's really bad, just disgusting. Rubbish strewn all over. I'm not sure what time they come to clean the street but it just gets so messy.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

The majority of participants raised the issue of there being leaves on the pavements and roads across the borough during autumn and winter, which is likely to have been at the forefront of participants' minds due to the timing of the research. This was a particular issue for participants as they were concerned the leaves were a health hazard for residents, and were also concerned with leaves blocking drains which could lead to flooding. Participants felt that more could be done to clear away the leaves during the colder seasons, as they believed that not much was currently being done about them.

At the moment it's the leaves. They're blocking the drains and making the pavements dangerous. You can't walk down some of our roads because it's like an ice rink and there's no attempt to pick them up at all.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Up my road and up Rowan Road, you have to be really careful because it's so slippery. There's layers of it. You can easily go over on it. It just doesn't get cleared and gets left.

Focus group, East Merton resident

If it's been windy, there are leaves on the floor that aren't cleared. It doesn't upset me like litter, but it is slippery for older people, but I'm not sure when the best time is to clear it up.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

Linked to problems with leaves in the roads and pavements, participants also raised the issue of gutters and gullies often being blocked. Whilst some felt that the Council could clean these more often, some felt that this is not always possible due to cars blocking the kerbs which stops street cleaning vehicles being able to reach these areas. One participant, however, said they had noticed an improvement in gutter cleaning which they felt was a result of resident backlash about this issue.

There's so much waste in the gutter, and there's loads of dog mess as well. Particularly when it rains it turns into mush.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I've seen street cleaning being done, but because there's loads of cars parked, they don't clean the gutters.

Focus group, East Merton resident

They don't really clean the gullies enough – it floods if there's a lot of rain. They have got better though because there was a big hoo-ha about that.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Dog fouling is an issue according to participants from East Merton

Participants from the East Merton focus group also suggested that dog fouling was an issue in their local area, although some said it was 'everywhere' rather than just concentrated areas such as parks and residential streets. Although participants conceded that it was cleared up by the Council, they did not feel that this was done frequently or quickly enough and that this element of street cleaning could be improved.

Dog mess is a particular issue though, it's everywhere, it's even hanging from a tree. I see signs saying you'll be fined if you allow dog mess but who is watching?

Focus group, East Merton resident

Dog fouling is terrible on our road. You play dodge the dog poo. It's everywhere. It does get cleared but it takes a few days. I've reported it on a website – clean my street?

Focus group, East Merton resident

It's not just the main roads, it's everywhere. I take my dog into the fields and parks, and it's everywhere.

Focus group, East Merton resident

There is a perception that street cleaners are inefficient compared with previous years due to using inadequate tools and generally being absent

Another complaint made about street cleaning in the borough was the perception that street cleaning staff are inefficient, particularly when compared with the service in the past. Participants felt that street cleaners in previous years used better tools and vehicles, which could often collect more waste and debris than nowadays. It was also felt that street cleaners are generally more absent now than before, with most saying they are rarely seen, whilst one participant complained that their local street cleaner is seen but is often on his phone.

Before the present contract, we had people come to collect the leaves really efficiently...but now they come along with these silly little brushes and spend all day trying to unclump them because they can't pick up a lot of leaves with them... They obviously haven't a clue what to do. They're not using the right vehicles, the right tools, the right manpower. They just aren't up to the job.

Focus group, West Merton resident

We used to have a road sweeper with the little cart thing he pushed around. It was a lot better then, but he's not around anymore. The gutters now, the rubbish, it looks like Beirut in 1972.

Focus group, East Merton resident

I do see the street cleaner, he's usually on his phone.

Depth interview, flat above a shop

3.4.2 Reporting street cleaning issues

The FixMyStreet app is good, but it can often take a long time for issues to be resolved

Several participants had used the FixMyStreet app to report street cleaning issues such as dog fouling, fly tipping and leaves. Whilst these participants generally liked the app and thought the process of reporting an issue was easy, they felt that the time taken between reporting an issue and it being resolved was unsatisfactory as issues took too long to be cleared or were left unresolved altogether. In addition to this, some participants said they have had to report issues several times before they are resolved as they are often told the street cleaning team cannot find the issue that has been reported.

I used FixMyStreet to report fallen leaves and so did my entire street. I was told it would be done at the end of November but that's been and gone now and I haven't seen anybody come. The street is just covered – it's really dangerous.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I think the FixMyStreet app is really good, but the problem is that I spend my life reporting things and probably 50% of the time they come back and say they couldn't find it, when it's really obvious. I end up having to report something about ten times before it's actioned.

Focus group, West Merton resident

If there is fly tipping, it does take time to get it cleared. It needs to be a bit quicker really.
Depth interview, flat above a shop

3.4.3 Volunteering

West Merton participants felt that volunteering is nice in theory, but the Council should not rely on residents to supplement its recycling and waste services

There was some discussion in the West Merton focus group about groups of volunteers that are seen carrying out clean ups in the local community. One participant suggested that the Council could provide volunteers and residents with better tools and resources to help tidy their local area, so that those who wish to look after their community or property can do so efficiently.

We have a volunteer group that cleans up along the railway track and I sweep the leaves outside my own house. I wonder if the Council could at least give us some green bags or tools to pick things up so we at least have the tools to do it ourselves.

Focus group, West Merton resident

However, the majority of participants did not like that residents feel the need to volunteer in this way, despite one of these participants being a volunteer coordinator themselves. It was felt that the presence of the volunteers highlights the gaps in the Council's current street cleaning service, which they felt strongly that the Council should be providing instead of volunteers.

The fact that there are volunteers is just testament to the fact that the Council is not doing what it should be.

Focus group, West Merton resident

I am a volunteer and coordinate a group that goes out across south Wimbledon...and we pick up everybody's litter across the pavements and we sometimes do along the river. But we shouldn't have to do that.

Focus group, West Merton resident

Volunteering shouldn't be taken advantage of and it shouldn't be the solution. It's sticking a plaster over a bigger problem.

Focus group, West Merton resident

4. Respondent profile

Figures 69 to 74 present the profile of those who took part in the representative and online surveys.

Figure 69 – Housing type

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Housing type	Representative survey	Online survey
House	55% (225)	89% (1,685)
House (converted to flats)	12% (49)	4% (79)
Purpose built flats	29% (116)	95 (5%)
Flats above shops	4% (16)	1% (28)
Other		1% (11)

Figure 70 – Gender

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Gender	Representative survey	Online survey
Male	39% (157)	39% (744)
Female	53% (217)	55% (1,038)
I prefer to describe by gender in another way	2% (8)	0% (8)
Prefer not to say	6% (25)	6% (105)
Other		0% (3)

Figure 71 – Age

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Age	Representative survey	Online survey
18-24	11% (44)	9 (0%)
25-34	25% (103)	7% (132)
35-44	21% (84)	17% (330)
45-54	16% (67)	19% (368)
55-64	14% (57)	24% (460)
65-74	6% (24)	20% (380)
75+	2% (11)	8% (137)
Prefer not to say	4% (17)	4% (82)

Figure 72 – Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Physical or mental health condition	Representative survey	Online survey
Yes	6% (26)	
No	82% (332)	
Prefer not to say	12% (49)	

Figure 73 – Area of Merton (based on full postcode)

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Area of Merton	Representative survey	Online survey
North Wimbledon (<i>Village, Hillside, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Park</i>)	(44)	21% (390)
South Wimbledon (<i>Wimbledon Town and Dundonald, Wandle and Abbey</i>)	17% (70)	8% (148)
South West Merton (<i>Cannon Hill, Merton Park, West Barnes and Lower Morden</i>)	21% (86)	18% (338)
East Merton & Mitcham (<i>Lavender Fields, Pollards Hill and Figge's Marsh</i>)	9% (38)	7% (126)
South Mitcham and Morden (<i>Ravensbury, St Hellier and Cricket Green</i>)	13% (52)	3% (64)
North East Merton (<i>Colliers Wood, Graveney and Longthornton</i>)	13% (53)	11% (207)
Did not provide postcode	16% (64)	33% (625)

Figure 74 – Ethnicity

Base: All representative respondents (407); online (1,898)

Ethnic group	Representative survey	Online survey
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	45% (183)	67% (1,265)
White – Any other White background	8% (32)	11% (218)
Asian or Asian British - Indian	5% (19)	2% (40)
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British – Caribbean	4% (18)	1% (24)
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British – African	4% (16)	1% (10)
White – Irish	4% (15)	2% (38)
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group – Asian & White	3% (11)	1% (14)
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2% (9)	1% (10)
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group – Black Caribbean & White	2% (7)	0% (6)
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group – Black African & White	-	0% (4)
Black / Africa / Caribbean / Black British – Any other background	2% (7)	1% (12)
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	-	1% (22)
Asian or Asian British – Tamil	-	0% (5)
Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian background	-	1% (13)
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British – Any other background	-	0% (1)
Other ethnic group – Arab	-	0% (1)
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	-	0% (5)

Ethnic group	Representative survey	Online survey
Any other ethnic group	-	0% (4)
White - Gypsy or Traveller	2% (6)	0% (1)
Other	-	0% (9)
Prefer not to say	12% (48)	10% (192)

Key Findings

Recycling and Waste Services

Satisfaction with the recycling and waste service is generally good

Overall, satisfaction with the service is generally good, however, focus group participants were keen to highlight some of the issues they had experienced. They do like wheelie bins, as these stop foxes and vermin from accessing the waste and making a mess. Satisfaction was higher in the representative survey compared to the online survey. The main reasons for dissatisfaction were due to missed collections, bins not being returned to collection points and the collections not being frequent enough. Survey respondents living in South Wimbledon were the least satisfied.

Crews not returning bins and boxes was highlighted as an issue

There was frustration amongst focus group participants that collection crews rarely returned bins and boxes to where they were initially which caused problems for pedestrians using the pavement, in particular wheelchair users and those with buggies. Some focus group participants even commented that they had lost bins and boxes.

There was concern crews did not pick up litter if it fell out of the boxes of bins

Focus group participants were irritated by the amount of litter that was generated on collection days when litter fell out of the bin or box but not picked up by the crew. Many were particularly concerned as they thought street cleaning was not carried out as much so the litter would just remain.

Some uncertainty that all recycling is recycled

Several focus group participants expressed concern and scepticism that what was put into the recycling boxes actually got recycled and some had seen the contents from both the general waste bin and recycling boxes (or recycling bags for flats above shops) put into the same collection vehicle. Some focus group participants also commented that they saw the bag that they had placed on top of the bin containing batteries, had been picked up and thrown into the general waste by the crew.

There are missed collections and inconsistency in collections

Some focus group participants talked about having missed collections and the inconsistency of collections, although this was particularly evident with flats above shops. Focus group participants wanted to be informed by the Council if there was going to be a missed collection or when the collection was going to be if it was rescheduled. Missed collections was one of the most common responses given by survey respondents that were dissatisfied with the service.

Residents in flats above shops find it difficult to get the bags and want consistent collections

Residents living in flats above shops complained about inconsistent collections, with bags sometimes being left out for a couple of days. Some also found it difficult to get rolls of bags delivered, as they are usually left on the doorstep and are then stolen.

There is uncertainty about food waste because of smells and foxes making a mess

There were mixed opinions around food waste with some focus group participants recycling their food waste, whilst others were strongly against it. There were complaints about the smell generated, but more importantly, that foxes often managed to get into the caddy bins and make lots of mess, which in turn created problems with other vermin.

More information is needed from the Council as to what can and can't be recycled

There is a real appetite to recycle as much as possible, but there is also a lot of uncertainty if some items can be recycled, and how clean items such as cans need to be. Focus group

participants want more information on what can and cannot be recycled. An example includes cardboard packaging with a plastic window, and what soft plastics can be recycled and where to take them as they are not currently accepted in the recycling collection scheme.

Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre

Satisfaction with Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre is generally good

Focus group participants were general pleased with the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre as staff were helpful and most materials were accepted (although they did say more could be accepted). Satisfaction was high amongst survey respondents with over three-quarters saying they were satisfied.

The centre should accept a wider range of items/materials

Focus group participants in the focus group wanted to be able to take items such as paint, cooking oil and textiles the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre, as currently items such as paint end up being thrown away in the general waste. This was corroborated in the survey, as survey respondents wanted to see paint, clothes, large electrical items, mattresses, polystyrene, plastic bags and soft plastics accepted.

Mixed opinions about continuing with the booking system

There were mixed feelings about the booking system that has been in operation, with some citing that it has stopped the need to queue for long periods of time and others saying the system is restrictive as bookings have to be made in advance and residents are restricted as to how many times they can use the centre. Just under half of those completing the survey thought the booking system should continue.

Those without a vehicle struggle to use the centre and can't recycle

Several focus group participants, particularly those that live above shops, said they could not visit the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre as they did not have a vehicle and found it very difficult to recycle some things, as they could not recycle them through the household recycling scheme. Focus group participants wanted to see provision made for those without vehicles to be able visit Garth Road.

Several improvements to Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre were suggested

In addition to accepting a wider range of materials and allowing pedestrian access, suggestions for improvements included removing the steps and lowering containers so people could have easier access, have more helpful staff for heavy items, and a better layout.

Neighbourhood Recycling Centres

Neighbourhood Recycling Centres are not widely used

Only some focus group participants had used the neighbourhood recycling centres and only a small proportion of survey respondents had used them.

Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Recycling Centres was mixed

Satisfaction was mixed, with just over a third saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Containers need to be emptied more frequently

Those survey respondents that did use the neighbourhood recycling centres thought they needed to be emptied more frequently and accept a wider range of items for recycling and reuse.

Street Cleaning services

Satisfaction with street cleaning in the local town centre was higher than street cleaning in residential streets

Generally, focus group participants were dissatisfied with the general level of street cleaning, with survey respondents to the survey generally happier with street cleaning in town centres compared to residential areas. Survey respondents living in South Wimbledon, however, were less satisfied with street cleaning in their residential streets.

Key issues are fly tipping, litter, dog fouling and fallen leaves

The main concerns highlighted by focus group participants were fly tipping, litter, dog fouling and fallen leaves.

Fly tipping was a particular issue in some areas, with 'hot spots' continually be blighted with fly tipping. Focus group participants wanted the Council to do more about fly tipping, particularly in 'hot spots' where there is rubbish left on a regular basis. Nearly two in five survey respondents thought fly tipping was serious problem.

Litter was also seen as a serious problem, with focus group participants complaining that there seemed to be less street cleaning, particularly in East Merton & Mitcham and South Mitcham & Morden.

Focus group participants did say dog fouling was dealt with eventually but did complain that there was a lot of it. Those living in South Mitcham & Morden, and East Merton & Mitcham were more likely to say dog fouling was serious problem.

Three in five survey respondents thought fallen leaves was either a serious or moderate problem, and focus group participants thought it was a key street cleaning issue and should be dealt with quicker, as many pavements end up being slippery and dangerous.

Resolving problems and keeping residents up to date

There are various reasons why residents contact the Council

The main reason the Council is contacted is for missed collection, with other reasons including ordering of replacement containers, complaints about crew behaviour and not returning bins/boxes back properly. The majority contact the Council via the Council website or telephone. Only small numbers used the Fix My Street app. Just over half of the online survey respondents were satisfied with the response they received.

Community involvement /volunteering

Focus group participants could see the benefit but did not want the Council to rely on volunteers

Many focus group participants liked the idea of volunteering but expressed concern that the Council should not become reliant on volunteers as the Council itself is responsible for tasks such as litter picking.

One in five survey respondents said they would like to get involved, and another one in five said they would not. Half, however, said they supported community involvement but would not want to volunteer themselves.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Representative survey (telephone and face-to-face)

London Borough of Merton

Waste Collection Services and Street Cleansing

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Enventure Research on behalf of Merton Council.

Merton Council is planning new waste collection and street cleaning services which are due to start in 2025. It's keen to hear the views of local residents about these vital services.

The Council is not considering any reductions to your collections, or the frequency of them. This consultation is about understanding the improvements you want to see in the future - from clearing leaves to street cleaning, and from recycling to how the council keeps you informed.

The survey will take around 15-20 minutes to complete. Your individual responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be passed on to Merton Council or any third parties and Enventure Research will abide by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct at all times.

Are you happy to take part?

Your answers will be anonymous and confidential unless you wish to provide your contact details to take part in further research. Further details will be provided later in the survey.

This survey is being conducted by Enventure Research, an independent research agency, on behalf of Merton Council. Enventure Research is registered with the Data Controller and is a Market Research Society Company Partner. For more information about Enventure Research, please refer to the company website. All information provided by you will be analysed by Enventure Research, and treated in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Enventure Research will only use information you provide to inform the research. If you have any questions about taking part, please send an email to helpline@enventure.co.uk

Q1 Please confirm you live in the London Borough of Merton

Yes, I confirm I live in the London Borough of Merton - **If not, thank and close**

Q2 What is your postcode (e.g. SM4 5DX)? (OR first four digits of postcode)

Last year, Merton Council collected 67,758 tonnes of recycling and rubbish from households across the borough - that's a 12% reduction over the last six years; a significant achievement at a time when our population is growing. We currently recycle 40.8% of that waste making us the 7th best area for recycling in London.

Q3 Merton Council offers four key collection services to suit different property types across the borough. What type of property do you live in / which waste service do you currently receive?

- House
- House converted into flats
- Purpose built flats
- Flat above shops
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q4 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the recycling and waste collection service provided by the Council?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q6 When you think about your recycling and waste collection service in the future, what matters most? (Please rank from 1 to 3, where 1 is the highest priority and 3 is the lowest priority, by dragging the options from the list on the left into the box on the right)

Q6. Environmental benefits (carbon reduction, waste minimisation, recycling)

Q6, Convenience or ease of use (simplicity of service)

Q6, Affordability (to help make sure money is available to fund other Council services)

Q8 Which of the following changes would encourage you and those in your household to recycle more in the future? (Please pick your top three)

- Addition of more items that are collected for recycling
- More/better information provided about what can and cannot be recycled
- Larger or more recycling containers
- Smaller rubbish bins
- Rewards / incentives for recycling more
- None of the above
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q9 Which of these items would you like to be able to recycle from home in the future? (Tick all that apply)

- Soft plastics
- Small electrical items
- Textiles
- Household batteries
- Gas canisters
- None of the above

Q12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have enough space in my recycling bins/boxes to recycle all items I want to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The rubbish bin provided by the Council is large enough for the non-recyclable waste my household produces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I have enough information to recycle correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm confident that what I put in my recycling containers actually gets recycled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Council encourages me to recycle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly recycle/reuse items not collected by the Council in other schemes e.g. local supermarket collection points, Household Waste and Recycling Centre, donating to charity shops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

There are more than 1,400 streets across the borough that we work hard to keep clean and tidy. This includes clearing 16,000 fly tips, responding to 900 reports of graffiti and servicing 1,000 litter bins.

Q25 To what extent do you agree or disagree that residential streets in your local area are cleaned frequently enough?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q26 To what extent do you agree or disagree that streets in your local town centre are cleaned frequently enough?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q27 To what extent are the following a problem in your local area?

	Not at all a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Don't know
Q27a. Street litter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27b. Dog fouling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27c. Graffiti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27d. Fly posting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27e. Fly tipping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27f. Weeds on the public highway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q27g. Full litter bins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28 Which areas in your neighbourhood tend to get dirtiest and would benefit from more attention in the future? (Prompt if required)

- Roads
- Pavements
- Car parks
- Paths (public rights of way)
- Grass verges next to the public highway
- Parks and open spaces
- Transport hubs (e.g. bus stops, tram stops, train stations, taxi ranks)
- Private land (e.g. garages, railway embankments)
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q34 **Have you reported a problem or issue with your recycling and waste collection service to the Council in the last 12 months?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q36 **How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?**

- Via the Council website
- Via Fix My Street app
- Via telephone (Council contact centre)
- Via Council social media channels
- Via local Councillor
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q37 **What did the most recent issue you were reporting relate to? (Tick all that apply)**

- Missed collection
- Replacement container/box/bin
- Container not put back correctly
- Complaint about crew behaviour
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q38 **How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q39 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q41 **Have you reported a street cleaning problem or issue to the Council in the last 12 months?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q43 **How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?**

- Via the Council website
- Via Fix My Street app
- Via telephone (Council contact centre)
- Via Council social media channels
- Via local Councillor
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q44 **What did the issue you were reporting relate to? (*Tick all that apply*)**

- Litter
- Fly tipping
- Dog fouling
- Leaf fall
- Graffiti (offensive)
- Graffiti (non-offensive)
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q45 **How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q46 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q48 Merton Council is keen to improve the way it communicates and keep residents up to date. How would you most like to be kept informed about recycling, waste collection and street cleaning services in the future? (Please choose your top three)

- Nothing - I am happy with the information I get
- More information on the Council's website
- Live information like maps to track services
- Text message alerts
- Email updates
- A mobile app
- Regular service updates on social media
- Leaflet through your door
- Don't know

About You

This last set of questions relate to your own circumstances and help us monitor that we are speaking to a wide range of residents. Your answers will be strictly anonymous and confidential.

Age **Which age band do you fall into?**

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 18-24 years | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 years | <input type="radio"/> 75-84 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 years | <input type="radio"/> 85+ |
| <input type="radio"/> 45-54 years | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> 55-64 years | |

Gender **What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- I prefer to describe my gender in another way
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Other (please specify)

Disability **Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? (Tick all that apply)**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q61 **Do you have any health conditions which affect you in the following areas? (Tick all that apply)**

- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility/Physical
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Health Diagnoses
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Other (please specify)

Ethnicity **What is your ethnic origin?**

ty

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Tamil |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Gypsy or Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Korean |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Any other White background | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Black Caribbean & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Black African & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Asian & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Any other | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group - Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Indian | <input type="radio"/> Any other ethnic group |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | <input type="radio"/> Other |

Other (please specify)

Further research

Q63 Are you interested in taking part in a focus group to discuss some of the issues around waste collection and street cleansing? The focus group will be held with six to eight other residents, will last approximately 75 minutes and will be held online (via Zoom).

If you are invited to participate and attend a focus group, you will receive a **payment of £40** in the form of an online voucher.

By answering yes, you are agreeing to be contacted by Enventure Research concerning this research. Your contact details will only be used for this purpose and will be deleted after six months.

Yes

No

RN Name

TEL Telephone number

EMAIL Email address

Thank you for taking part in this important survey. Your feedback will help Merton Council design the best possible services for the borough and ensure that they meet the needs of local people.

Appendix 2

Online survey



London Borough of Merton Waste Collection Services and Street Cleansing

Thank you for taking the time to visit our survey on the future of waste services in the London Borough of Merton.

Street cleaning and waste collections - including all your recycling, food waste and rubbish collections - are some of the most important services we provide. They're used by all of us every day, and they have a massive impact on how we feel about where we live. Each year we collect around 70,000 tonnes of waste, recycling as much as 40% of it – making Merton London's 7th best borough for recycling.

But we also know that things can be better, and as we commission a new service to start in 2025, now is the perfect time to have your say on the long-term improvements you want to see across the borough. We are asking as many people as possible to give us their views, and will be analysing all the responses before we set out what we want to see in the new service.

Importantly, we are not considering any reductions to your collections, or the frequency of them. This consultation is about understanding the improvements you want to see in the future - from clearing leaves to street cleaning, and from recycling to how we keep you informed.

The survey should take you no more than 30 minutes to complete (you can save progress and return as you go along). Your individual responses will be treated in the strictest confidence by Enventure (the independent research company conducting the survey on our behalf) and will not be passed on to Merton Council or any third parties.

Your views will help shape the targets we put into the new service from 2025.

Thank you again for taking part.

Natasha Irons
Cabinet Member, Local Environment, Green Spaces & Climate Change

Completing the survey

Your answers will be anonymous and confidential unless you wish to provide your contact details to take part in further research. Further details will be provided later in the survey.

To navigate through this survey, use the arrow buttons at the bottom of each page. DO NOT use the back/forward options in your browser. To remove your answers to a question click on the reset button.

You can save your answers at any point and return to them later. To do this, you will need to use the save button at the bottom of the page and provide your email address. You will then be sent a link to complete the survey at another time that suits you.

How we will use your information and confidentiality

This survey is being conducted by Enventure Research, an independent research agency, on behalf of Merton Council. Enventure Research is registered with the Data Controller and is a Market Research Society Company Partner. For more information about Enventure Research, please refer to the company website. All information provided by you will be analysed by Enventure Research, and treated in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Enventure Research will only use information you provide to inform the research. If you have any questions about taking part, please send an email to helpline@enventure.co.uk

Please complete this survey by **22 November 2022**.

To begin the survey, please click the arrow button below.

Q1 Please confirm you live in the London Borough of Merton

- Yes, I confirm I live in the London Borough of Merton
- No, I don't live in the London Borough of Merton

Q2 Please enter your postcode (e.g. SM4 5DX) - If you do not want to enter your full postcode, please enter the first four digits (e.g. SM4 5). The postcode will not be used to identify individual households.

Recycling and Waste Collection Services

Last year, Merton Council collected 67,758 tonnes of recycling and rubbish from households across the borough - that's a 12% reduction over the last six years; a significant achievement at a time when our population is growing. We currently recycle 40.8% of that waste making us the 7th best area for recycling in London.

Q3 We offer four key collection services to suit different property types across the borough. Please select the type of recycling and waste collection service you currently use:

- Wheelie bins and boxes that only my household uses (used by the majority of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes in the borough)
- Wheelie bins and boxes that I share with my neighbours (used by the majority of properties that have been converted into flats and some low-rise blocks of purpose-built flats)
- Large communal bins that I share with my neighbours (used by the majority of larger blocks of purpose-built flats)
- Bags that I place out at a specific collection point (used by the majority of flats above shops and some houses with no front gardens)
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q4 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the recycling and waste collection service provided by the Council?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q5 Why have you said you are 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the recycling and waste collection service? (Tick all that apply)

- Missed collections
- Non delivery of new/replacement bins
- Lack of space for bins
- Bins too small
- Bins too large
- Collections not frequent enough
- Bins not returned to collection point
- Crew behaviour
- Difficulty reporting issues to the Council
- Uncertainty what to put out and when
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q6 When you think about your recycling and waste collection service in the future, what matters most? (Please rank from 1 to 3, where 1 is the highest priority and 3 is the lowest priority, by dragging the options from the list on the left into the box on the right)

	1	2	3
Environmental benefits (carbon reduction, waste minimisation, recycling)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience or ease of use (simplicity of service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordability (to help make sure money is available to fund other Council services)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Recycling and Waste Collection Services

Merton Council recently carried out a detailed study looking at what's inside the average rubbish bin in the borough. It showed that around half (54.4%) could have been recycled using the Council's kerbside recycling collection service. The majority of this (26.4%) was food waste.

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree that more needs to be done in the future to recycle more and waste less in The London Borough of Merton?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q8 Which of the following changes would encourage you and those in your household to recycle more in the future? (Please pick your top three)

- Addition of more items that are collected for recycling (e.g. soft plastics, plastics bags and film)
- More/better information provided about what can and cannot be recycled
- Larger or more recycling containers
- Smaller rubbish bins
- Rewards / incentives for recycling more
- None of the above
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q9 Which of these items would you like to be able to recycle from home in the future? (Tick all that apply)

- Soft plastics (plastic films, plastic bags, plastic wrapping - e.g. carrier bags, bread bags, crisp bags, flexible plastic lids)
- Small electrical items (e.g. toys, phones and chargers, irons, toasters, wifi routers)
- Textiles
- Household batteries
- Gas canisters
- None of the above

Q10 If it is not possible to include these items in your standard recycling collection service, would you use a free bookable collection service (via an online form) for these items?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Soft plastics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small electrical items	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Textiles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Household batteries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gas canisters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Recycling and Waste Collection Services

Q11 What do you currently do with the following items?

Soft plastics	<input type="radio"/> Put them in my rubbish bin <input type="radio"/> Put them in/next to my recycling bin <input type="radio"/> Take them to my household recycling centre <input type="radio"/> Take them to a local store <input type="radio"/> Dontate to charity shop <input type="radio"/> Don't have them/not applicable
Small electrical items	<input type="radio"/> Put them in my rubbish bin <input type="radio"/> Put them in/next to my recycling bin <input type="radio"/> Take them to my household recycling centre <input type="radio"/> Take them to a local store <input type="radio"/> Dontate to charity shop <input type="radio"/> Don't have them/not applicable
Textiles	<input type="radio"/> Put them in my rubbish bin <input type="radio"/> Put them in/next to my recycling bin <input type="radio"/> Take them to my household recycling centre <input type="radio"/> Take them to a local store <input type="radio"/> Dontate to charity shop <input type="radio"/> Don't have them/not applicable
Household batteries	<input type="radio"/> Put them in my rubbish bin <input type="radio"/> Put them in/next to my recycling bin <input type="radio"/> Take them to my household recycling centre <input type="radio"/> Take them to a local store <input type="radio"/> Dontate to charity shop <input type="radio"/> Don't have them/not applicable

Gas canisters

- Put them in my rubbish bin
- Put them in/next to my recycling bin
- Take them to my household recycling centre
- Take them to a local store
- Donate to charity shop
- Don't have them/not applicable

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Q12 I have enough space in my recycling bins/boxes to recycle all items I want to

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

The rubbish bin provided by the Council is large enough for the non-recyclable waste my household produces

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

I feel I have enough information to recycle correctly

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

I'm confident that what I put in my recycling containers actually gets recycled

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

The Council encourages me to recycle

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

I regularly recycle/reuse items not collected by the Council in other schemes e.g. local supermarket collection points, Household Waste and Recycling Centre, donating to charity shops

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Assisted collection service

Q13 **Do you use the assisted collection service (for residents who are not able to move their bins on collection day)?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q14 **How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q15 **What, if anything, would make the assisted collection service better? (*Tick all that apply*)**

- Nothing
- Staff could be more friendly or helpful
- Crews could do better in returning bins and boxes to their collection point
- Fewer missed collections
- Make it easier to report problems (e.g. missed collections)
- Other

Other (please specify)

Bulky waste collection service

Q16 **Have you used our bulky waste collection service in the last three years?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q17 **Why have you not used the bulky waste collection service in the last three years? (Tick all that apply)**

- Did not know about it
- Too expensive
- Not had the need to
- Took items to the local household recycling centre
- Used the services of an alternative commercial waste carrier
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q18 **How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q19 **What, if anything, would make the bulky waste collection service better? (Tick all that apply)**

- Nothing
- Make the booking process easier
- Reduce the cost
- More booking slots
- Staff could be more friendly or helpful
- 'Live' information about my collection on the day (E.g. estimated time of arrival / confirmation when collection has been completed)
- Wider range of items accepted for collection
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q20 **If the Council introduced mobile collection points for bulky waste across the borough, do you think you would use them?**

- Definitely
- Probably
- Maybe
- Unlikely
- No
- Don't know

Q21 **Do you subscribe to the garden waste collection service?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q22 **Why do you not subscribe to the garden waste collection service? (Tick all that apply)**

- No garden
- Do not produce enough garden waste
- Did not know about it
- Too expensive
- Easier alternatives
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q23 **How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the garden waste collection service?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q24 **What, if anything, would make the garden waste collection service better? (Tick all that apply)**

- Nothing
- More reliable collections
- Reduce the cost
- Make it easier to report problems (e.g missed collections)
- Staff could be more friendly or helpful
- Wider range of items accepted for collection
- Other

Other (please specify)

There are more than 1,400 streets across the borough that we work hard to keep clean and tidy. This includes clearing 16,000 fly tips, responding to 900 reports of graffiti and servicing 1,000 litter bins.

Q25 To what extent do you agree or disagree that residential streets in your local area are cleaned frequently enough?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q26 To what extent do you agree or disagree that streets in your local town centre are cleaned frequently enough?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Street cleaning

Q27 To what extent are the following a problem in your local area?

	Not at all a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Don't know
Street litter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog fouling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grffiti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fly posting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fly tipping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weeds on the public highway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Full litter bins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28 Which areas in your neighbourhood tend to get dirtiest and would benefit from more attention in the future? (Tick all that apply)

- Roads
- Pavements
- Car parks
- Paths (public rights of way)
- Grass verges next to the public highway
- Parks and open spaces
- Transport hubs (e.g. bus stops, tram stops, train stations, taxi ranks)
- Private land (e.g. garages, railway embankments)
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q29 Merton Council uses temporary road closures and removes parked cars when absolutely necessary to help street cleaning crews get access. This ensures they can give the street and gullies (drains) a thorough clean. To what extent do you support or oppose the continued use of this approach?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Q30 Some Councils have stopped using chemicals like glyphosate to control weeds on the public highway. There are environmental benefits using pesticide-free approaches to weed control, but they are slightly less effective and means some public spaces can look a bit 'wilder'. To what extent would you support or oppose the Council adopting a pesticide-free approach to weed control?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Q31 To what extent are leaves on the road and pavement in autumn/winter a problem in your local area?

- Not a problem at all
- Minor problem
- Moderate problem
- Serious problem
- Don't know

Q32 Which of these statements do you most agree with?

- The current leaf clearing service is appropriate and should be maintained in future contracts
- Leaves should be cleared quicker, even if it makes the service more expensive to run in the future
- Leaves could be left on the ground for a little longer if it means the service is cheaper to run and helps the Council protect other frontline services
- Don't know

Q33 Merton Council is keen to support any local residents and community groups who want to help our street cleaning crews to clear leaves that fall in the autumn. We can provide specialist equipment and arrange a collection of full bags. Which of the following statements best reflects how you feel about community leaf clearances?

- I would like to get involved
- I support the idea but I wouldn't get involved myself
- I don't support the idea - leaf clearance is not something residents should have to help out with
- Don't know

Resolving problems and keeping you up to date

Q34 Have you reported a problem or issue with your recycling and waste collection service to the Council in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q35 Why have you not reported a problem or issue with your recycling and waste collection service to the Council in the last 12 months?

- Not felt the need to
- Did not realise I could
- Too difficult to contact the Council
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q36 **How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?**

- Via the Council website
- Via Fix My Street app
- Via telephone (Council contact centre)
- Via Council social media channels
- Via local Councillor
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q37 **What did the most recent issue you were reporting relate to? (Tick all that apply)**

- Missed collection
- Replacement container/box/bin
- Container not put back correctly
- Complaint about crew behaviour
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q38 **How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q39 **How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q40 **The current contract sets the following target response times once a report of a recycling or waste collection issue has been received:**

- **Return to rectify a missed collection - 2 working days (1 working day for assisted collections)**
- **Deliver new/replacement containers - 10 working days**

Which of the following statements do you most agree with?

- The current target response times are appropriate and should be maintained in future contracts
- Recycling and waste collection issues should be resolved more quickly, even if it makes the service more expensive to run in the future
- Recycling and waste collection issues could be resolved less quickly if it means the service is cheaper to run and helps the Council protect other frontline services
- Don't know

Q41 **Have you reported a street cleaning problem or issue to the Council in the last 12 months?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q42 **Why have you not reported a street cleaning problem or issue to the Council in the last 12 months?**

- Not felt the need to
- Did not realise I could
- Too difficult to contact the Council
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q43 **How did you report the most recent issue to the Council?**

- Via the Council website
- Via Fix My Street app
- Via telephone (Council contact centre)
- Via Council social media channels
- Via local Councillor
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q44 **What did the issue you were reporting relate to? (Tick all that apply)**

- Litter
- Fly tipping
- Dog fouling
- Leaf fall
- Graffiti (offensive)
- Graffiti (non-offensive)
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q45 **How easy or difficult was it to make the report to the Council?**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Q46 **How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you received to your report?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q47 The current contract sets the following target response times once a report of a street cleaning issue has been received:

- Fly tip removal - 1 working day
- Empty full litter bins - 2 working hours (town centres) or 6 working hours (residential areas)
- Clean dirty streets - 2 working hours (town centres) / 4 working hours (residential - dangerous and offensive waste) / 24 hours (residential - other waste)
- Graffiti removal from public buildings/spaces - 24 hours (offensive) / 48 hours (non-offensive)

Which of these statements do you most agree with?

- The current target response times are appropriate and should be maintained in future contracts
- Street cleaning issues should be resolved more quickly, even if it makes the service more expensive to run in the future
- Street cleaning issues could be resolved less quickly if it means the service is cheaper to run and helps the Council protect other frontline services
- Don't know

Q48 We are keen to improve the way we communicate and keep residents up to date. How would you most like to be kept informed about recycling, waste collection and street cleaning services in the future? (Please choose your top three)

- Nothing - I am happy with the information I get
- More information on the Council's website
- Live information like maps to track services
- Text message alerts
- Email updates
- A mobile app
- Regular service updates on social media
- Leaflet through your door
- Don't know

Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre

Q49 How often, if at all, do you make use of the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (also known as 'the tip')?

- At least once a week
- At least once a fortnight
- At least once a month
- Once every three months
- Once or twice a year
- Less often
- Never use tip
- Don't know

Q50 Why haven't you used the Garth Road Household Resuse and Recycling Centre recently?

- Do not have access to a vehicle
- Not had the need to
- Someone else in the household goes
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q51 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q52 Are there any specific items that are not currently accepted at Garth Road Household Resue and Recycling Centre that you would like to be able to take there in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please tell us in the box below what you would like to be accepted at your reuse and recycling centre in the future

Q53 What, if anything, would encourage you to recycle more of the waste you take to the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre? (Tick all that apply)

- Better layout of the site
- Better signage
- More help and advice from site staff
- More information on the Council website about what can and cannot be recycle at the site
- Random checks by site staff to ensure recyclable materials are not being thrown away
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Q54 An online booking system for visits to the Garth Road Household Resue and Recycling Centre has been in operation since 2020. Do you think we should continue to use a booking system in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q55 Do you have any other suggestions about improvements that could be made to the Garth Road Household Resue and Recycling Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q56 Please write your suggestions here.

Neighbourhood Recycling Centres

Q57 There are 13 Neighbourhood Recycling Centres (or 'bring banks') located across the borough.

How often do you use the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres?

- At least once a week
- At least once a fortnight
- At least once a month
- Once every three months
- Once or twice a year
- Less often
- Never
- Don't know

Q58 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall experience of using the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q59 **What, if anything, would make the Neighbourhood Recycling Centres better? (Tick all that apply)**

- Nothing
- Emptied more frequently
- Wider range of items accepted for collection
- Located closer to my home
- Don't know
- Other

Other (please specify)

Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the waste collection or street cleaning services, and what the priorities should be for the future?

About You

This last set of questions relate to your own circumstances and help us monitor that we are speaking to a wide range of residents. Your answers will be strictly anonymous and confidential.

Which age band do you fall into?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 18-24 years | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 years | <input type="radio"/> 75-84 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 years | <input type="radio"/> 85+ |
| <input type="radio"/> 45-54 years | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> 55-64 years | |

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- I prefer to describe my gender in another way
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Other (please specify)

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? (Tick all that apply)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Do you have any health conditions which affect you in the following areas? (Tick all that apply)

- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility/Physical
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Health Diagnosais
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Other (please specify)

What is your ethnic origin?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Tamil |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Gypsy or Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Korean |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Any other White background | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Black Caribbean & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Black African & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Asian & White | <input type="radio"/> Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Any other | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group - Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Indian | <input type="radio"/> Any other ethnic group |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | <input type="radio"/> Other |

Other (please specify)

Further research

Are you interested in taking part in a focus group to discuss some of the issues around waste collection and street cleansing? The focus group will be held with six to eight other residents, will last approximately 75 minutes and will be held online (via Zoom).

If you are invited to participate and attend a focus group, you will receive a **payment of £40** in the form of an online voucher.

By answering yes, you are agreeing to be contacted by Enventure Research concerning this research. Your contact details will only be used for this purpose and will be deleted after six months.

- Yes
 No

Name

Telephone number

Email address

Thank you for taking part in this important survey. Your feedback will help Merton Council design the best possible services for the borough and ensure that they meet the needs of local people.

Please click the [submit button](#) below.

Appendix 3

Focus group discussion guide

SLWP Waste Services and Street Cleaning Focus Group Discussion Guide

London Borough of Merton

Please note this discussion guide is intended as a guide to the moderator only. Sections may be subject to change during the course of the focus groups if, for example, certain questions do not illicit useful responses. Wording and explanations may change to suit the audience.

BEFORE GROUP START TIME

- Participants asked to join five minutes early and wait in waiting room to allow the group to start on time
- All participants asked to review the joining instructions
- All participants will have completed the online or telephone survey

Introduction (10 mins)

- Moderator introduction
- Background to the research:
 - The Council is planning a new waste collection and street cleaning service, due to start in 2025, so it, together with South London Waste Partnership, wants Enventure Research to undertake research to help them understand residents' thoughts on waste services and street cleaning
 - They want to find out what improvements you think could be made in the future
 - We have recently conducted a telephone survey with residents, which was representative of the borough, and an online survey open to all Merton residents
 - We are now exploring residents' thoughts in more detail about a few different topics by holding a couple of focus groups
- This group is your opportunity to give us your thoughts and opinions about the waste and recycling collection service and the street cleaning service.
- Confidentiality:
 - Everything said during this discussion is confidential. There are no right or wrong answers
 - Enventure Research is an independent research agency, not part of Merton Council or South London Waste Partnership
 - We may use quotes from this discussion within the report, but these will remain anonymous and any identifying information will be removed.
 - Market Research Society Code of Conduct and GDPR – ensure confidentiality.
 - All views and opinions of all present are important and valid.
- The group will be recorded – thank you for completing the online consent form. The recording will only be used to listen back to and write up notes. It is not passed to anyone else, including Merton Council or South London Waste Partnership, and will be securely deleted once the research project has finished. Please don't talk over each other.
- **Moderator to start recording and ask everyone to confirm again that this is OK.**

START RECORDING

- The session will last approximately 1 hour 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Just so we can get to know each other a bit, I'd like you to introduce yourself with your:

- First name
- Where you live
- Something interesting about your self

I'll call people's names out in the order I see you on my screen.

Waste and Recycling Services (25 mins)

Satisfaction with waste and recycling collection

- How satisfied are you with the waste and recycling service provided by Merton Council?
- Is one service better than the other? Why?
- What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?
- In the recent telephone survey, 83% said they were satisfied (very satisfied and satisfied). What are your thoughts about that result?

Ranking of what matters the most (Q5)

- In the survey, we asked respondents to rank three things in order of importance:
 - Environmental benefits (carbon reduction, waste minimisation, recycling)
 - Convenience or ease of use (simplicity of service)
 - Affordability (to help make sure money is available to fund other Council services)
- What is the most important thing to you? Why do you say that?
 - In the survey, the most important thing was environmental benefit – 68% said it was the most important, with convenience or ease of use being the second most important (21%) and then affordability the least important (11%) – What do you think to these results?

Recycling collection (exploring why resident do/do not recycle materials)

- How much of your waste do you recycle? What do you recycle? Why don't you recycle other materials? What would encourage you to recycle more?
- If environmental benefits were rated the most important by 68% of respondents, why isn't the recycling level higher? It's currently 40.8% (7th best in London).
- Do you recycle food waste? Why not? Explore – hygiene – smells, rodents? Not able to store food waste?
- Do you use the garden waste collection service? If not, how do you deal with garden waste if you have it?

Increasing recycling

- Do you think the Council does everything it can to help residents recycle as much as they can? What does the Council do well? What could they do better? What could the Council do to make it easier to recycle?

Average bin composition

- Merton Council recently undertook a waste composition analysis (basically looking through residents' bins to see what materials were in them). I'm going to show you an image of an average bin and what materials are in it.

Show Merton average bin graphic

- More than half (54.4%) of what is in the average Merton bin could have been recycled using the recycling collection service and other material – plastic film/plastic bags and wood/scrap metal could also be recycled using local stores and the Recycling Centre (another 16.3%).
- What are your thoughts about the different percentages and amount that could be recycled but isn't being recycled? Is it what you thought? Do any of it surprise you? How do you think your bin compares to this?
- What do you think residents themselves need to do to increase recycling, given what we've just talked about?
- What do you think the barriers to increase recycling could be? How can these barriers be overcome? Lack of information / knowledge? Apathy? Physical barriers?

Reducing waste in the first instance

- What can/should the Council do to encourage a reduction in waste in the first place?

Reuse and recycling centre (10 mins)

- Have you visited the Garth Road reuse and recycling centre (or other centres)? What has been your experience? If you haven't visited, any particular reason?
- Are there any items not currently accepted that should be?
- Are there any other services or facilities that should be there? Explore things like facilities to repair things, ability to leave things for reuse, charity donations
- Currently, you have to book a slot to use the centre – what do you think of this system? Does it work? Should it stop?
- Have you spoken to any staff at the centre? Did they help / answer your query?
- Are there any improvements / changes that could make the centre better and encourage more recycling?

Bring sites (5 mins)

- Do you use any bring sites or recycling points – usually situated in supermarket car parks for example? What has your experience been like? How satisfied are you with the bring site?
- Are there any improvements that could be made?
- Are there any other materials that they could accept?

Street cleaning (20 mins)

Street cleaning includes a range of services – sweeping roads, pavements and public land, clearing weeds, dealing with fly-tipping, dog fouling, drain and sewer problems, fly-posting, graffiti, dead animals and to help with the service, co-ordinating the street champion volunteers.

- What do you think about street cleaning in town centres and in your local area?
 - Where do you think the problems are particularly? In your own street/local area, the local shopping parade, main town centre, or elsewhere?
 - What are the main issues?
- Survey results showed that 75% of respondents thought their local residential streets were cleaned frequently enough, and 83% thought the streets in the local town centre were cleaned frequently enough. What do you think of these results?
- Do you see any fly tipping? Is there a particular area that is worse than others?
 - 38% of survey respondents said fly tipping was a serious problem and 18% said it was a moderate problem. What do you think to these results?
- What about dog fouling, graffiti and leaf fall in the autumn? How are these dealt with, are they an issue? If so, are they dealt with quickly?
- How would you improve the street cleaning service (all the things we've spoken about)? What would you concentrate on if you were responsible for street cleaning?

Summary and close (5 mins)

Based on everything we have discussed today:

- What are the most important points we have discussed today?
- Is there anything else that Merton Council needs to consider in terms of improving the services or encouraging residents to recycle more?

Moderator to:

- ***Thank everyone for their time and input***
- ***Any other questions/points to raise?***
- ***Explain how incentives will be administered - £40***
- ***Thank & close***



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