

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING PUBLIC SATISFACTION SURVEY 2015

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In January 2016, 4000 surveys were sent out to a representative sample of Perth and Kinross residents. The 8 page survey asked questions relating to kerbside waste and recycling collections, recycling points, bulky uplifts, and recycling centres. The purpose was to establish the following:
- Identify householders' attitudes, behaviour and current barriers to kerbside recycling.
 - Identify what would encourage and engage householders participation in kerbside recycling.
 - Explore attitudes, acceptability and satisfaction with the existing kerbside recycling services
 - Explore attitudes, acceptability and satisfaction with Recycling Centres and Recycling Points
- 1.2 The questionnaire received 1067 responses a 26.7% response rate.
- 1.3 The standardised survey was also carried out in two other UK local authorities, and two Waste Partnerships, these were: Blackpool Borough Council; Dorset Waste Partnership; Hampshire Waste Partnership; and Hull City Council. An overview of the services provided by each participating authority and partnership can be found in Appendix 3. The results from each were used to benchmark against each other, as well as set a standard for future surveying.
- 1.4 The survey contained fifteen Key Satisfaction Indicators (KSIs) which fall under three broad categories: Kerbside Collections; Recycling Centres; Communication; and Enquiries/Complaints.
- 1.5 This report provides a summary of the survey results for Perth & Kinross Council, identifies improvements arising from the survey and benchmarking exercise and provides valuable information that can be taken into consideration when considering new initiatives and the re-design of services.

2. KEY FINDINGS

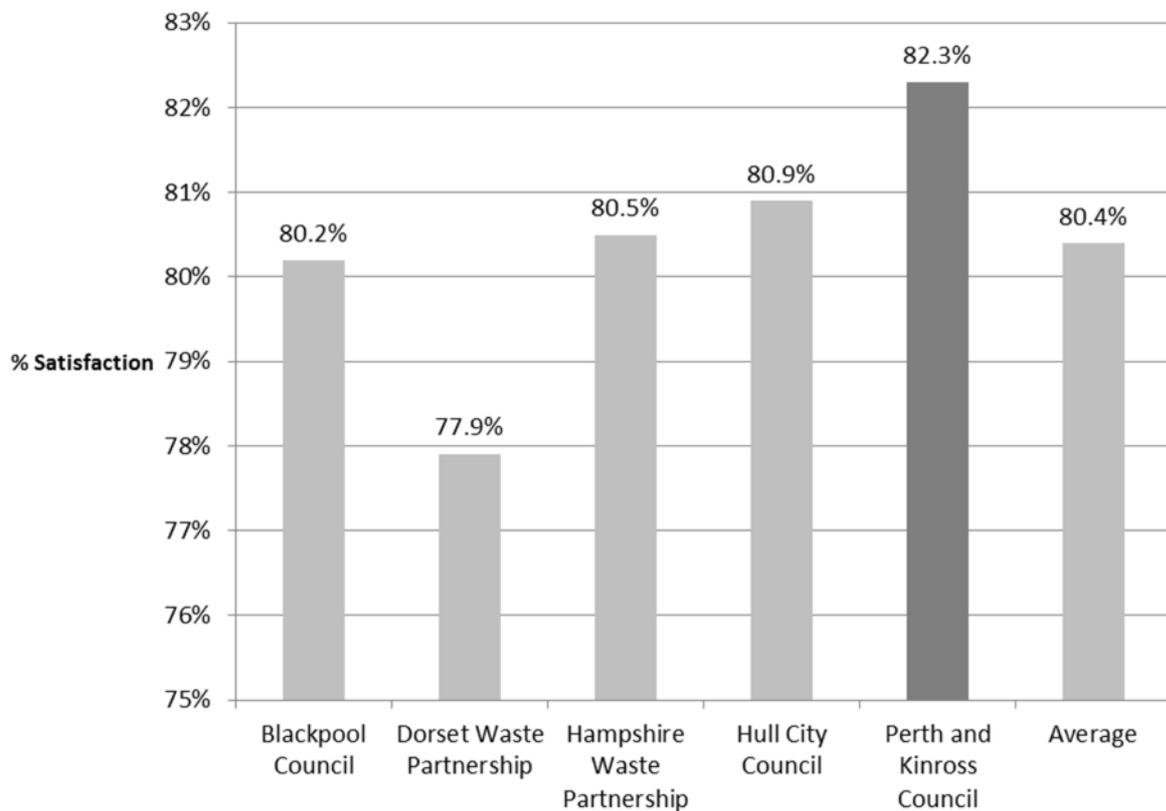
Kerbside Collection

- 2.1 The following graphs show the performance of PKC compared with other participating authorities.

General Waste Collection

- 2.2 Perth & Kinross Council has been ranked 1st overall from the 5 participating local authorities in the satisfaction of the general waste kerbside collection. This is the third year in a row that Perth & Kinross Council has achieved this ranking.
- 2.3 The figure takes in to consideration the size and type of container, as well as the frequency of uplift. This sustained level of satisfaction shows householders are happy with their current general waste collection service.

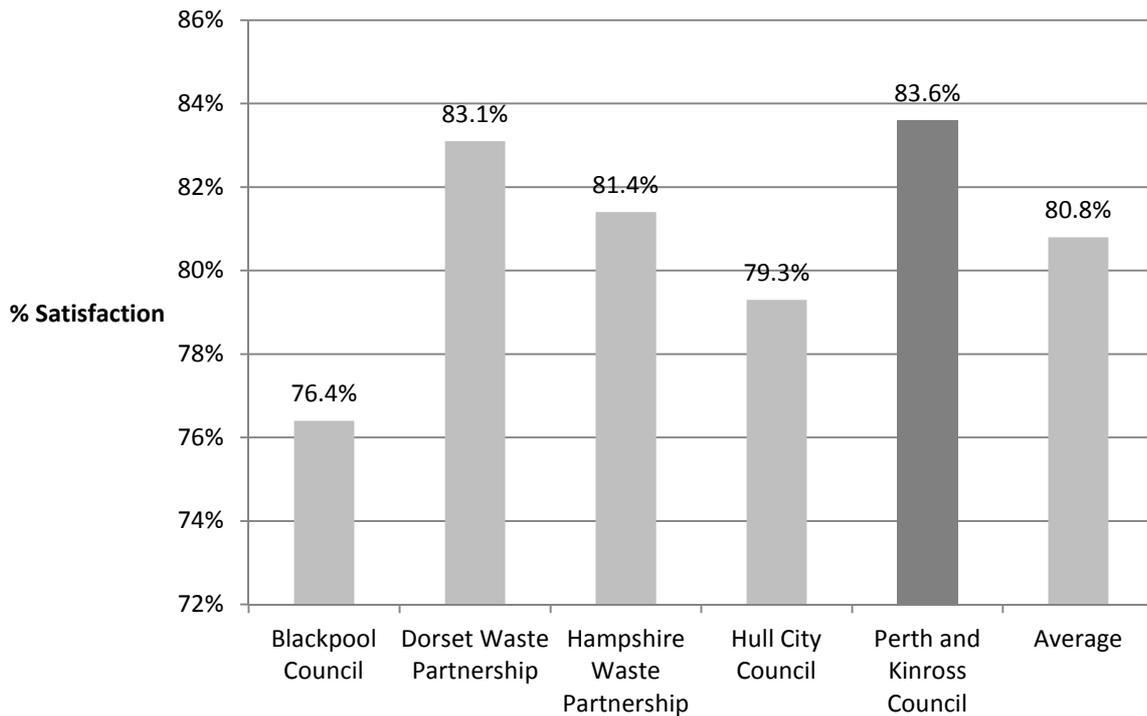
Figure 1: Percentage satisfaction with general waste collection



Dry Mixed Recycling Collection

- 2.4 Perth & Kinross Council improved on last years' ranking, moving from 3rd to 1st overall for recycling collections.
- 2.5 83.6% of respondents said they were either "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" with the Recycling Collection overall.

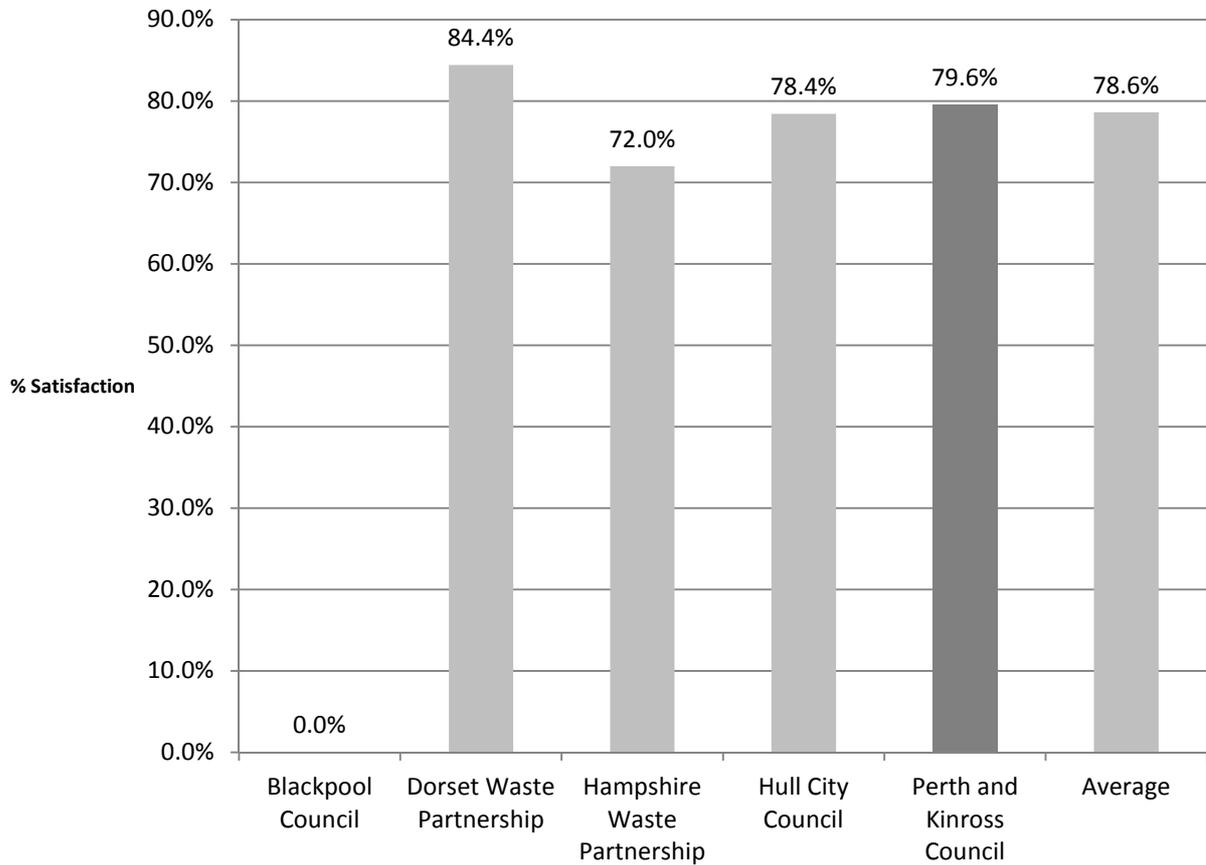
Figure 2: Percentage satisfaction with dry mixed recycling collection



Food Waste Collection

2.6 The Council remained 2nd overall for food waste collection, maintaining a score 0.5% higher than last year. Perth & Kinross Council recorded satisfaction rates above the average for all aspects of service.

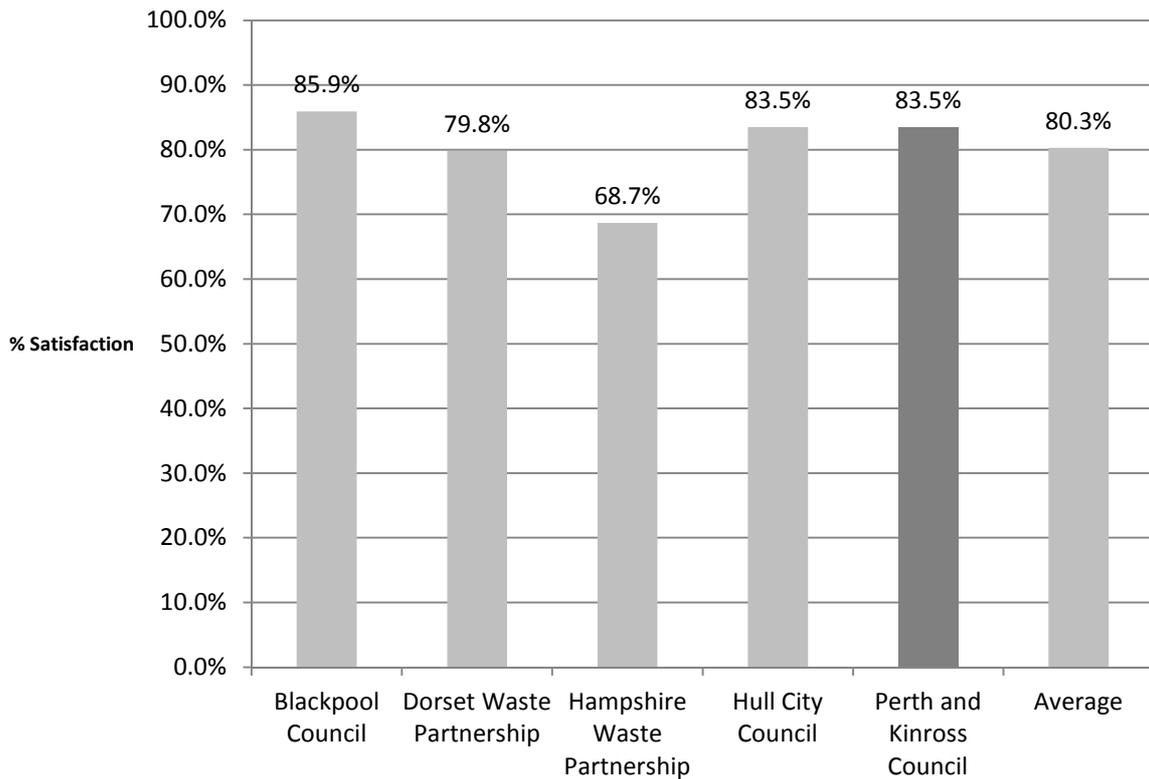
Figure 3: Percentage satisfaction with food waste collection



Garden Waste Collection

2.7 Satisfaction with the garden waste collection again ranked Perth & Kinross Council as 2nd overall. Satisfaction rates have increased slightly in each aspect of the collection service. This result is in line with the slight drop in average satisfaction rates.

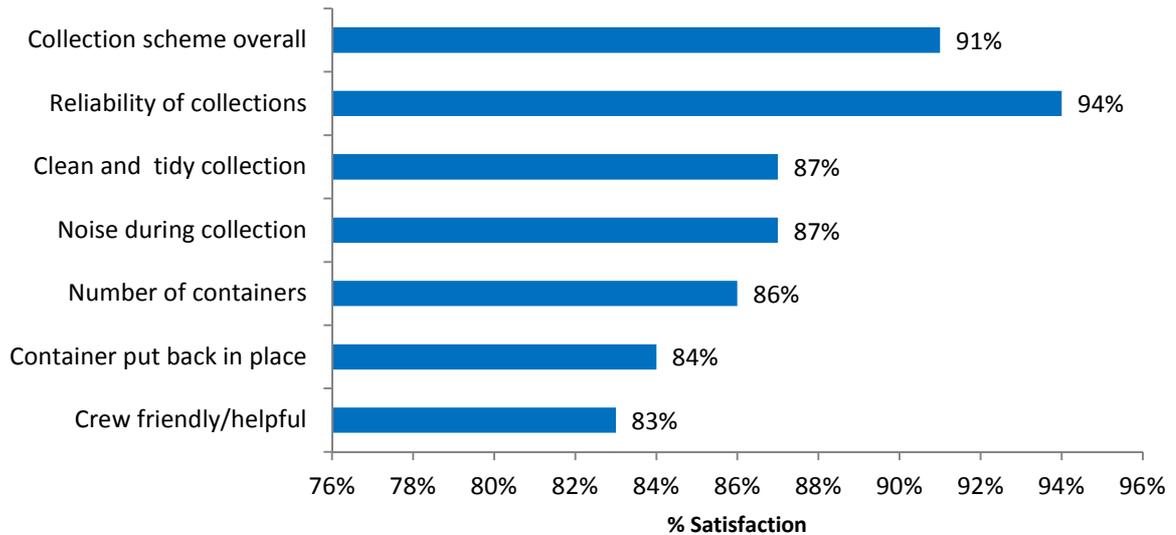
Figure 4: Percentage satisfaction with garden waste collection



Operational Satisfaction

- 2.8 Perth & Kinross Council remain the top ranked local authority for level of satisfaction with operational aspects of service.
- 2.9 The results have remained relatively consistent with last year's figures, with only a slight fall in each category. This shows the Operations Team are continuing to perform at a consistently high level.

Figure 5: Percentage satisfaction with operations



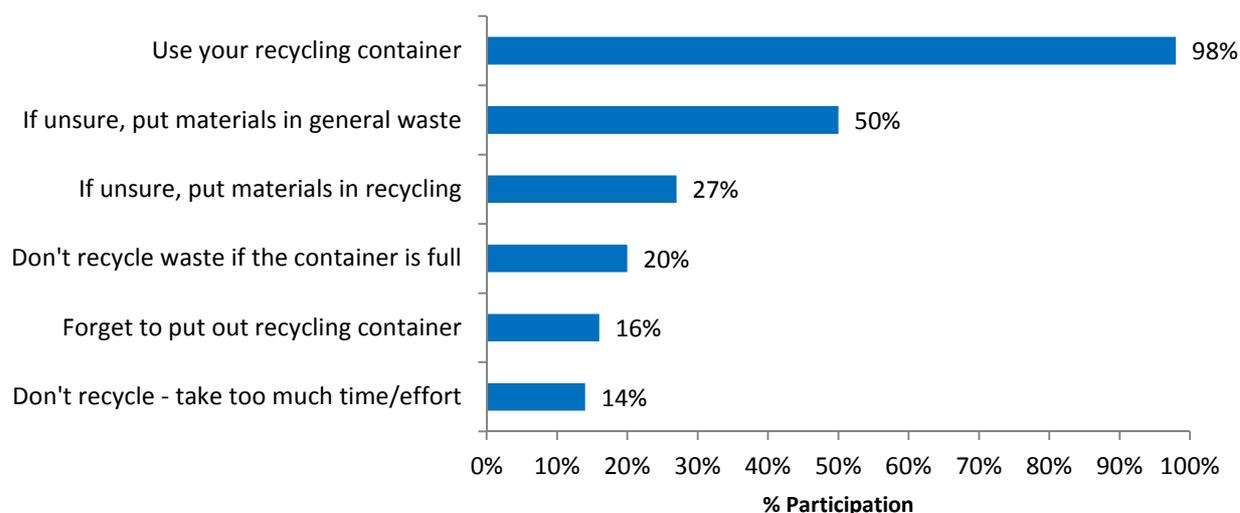
Recycling Collection Aspects

- 2.10 The results from these questions showed that Perth & Kinross Council residents are still happy with the minimal separation and preparation of materials they currently recycle. However, the results again show there is an appetite for improving on the range of materials which can be recycled at the kerbside.

Recycling Behaviour & Attitudes

- 2.11 Householders were asked a series of questions relating to their attitudes and behaviours toward kerbside recycling. A few assumptions can be drawn from the results:

Figure 6: Kerbside recycling behaviour

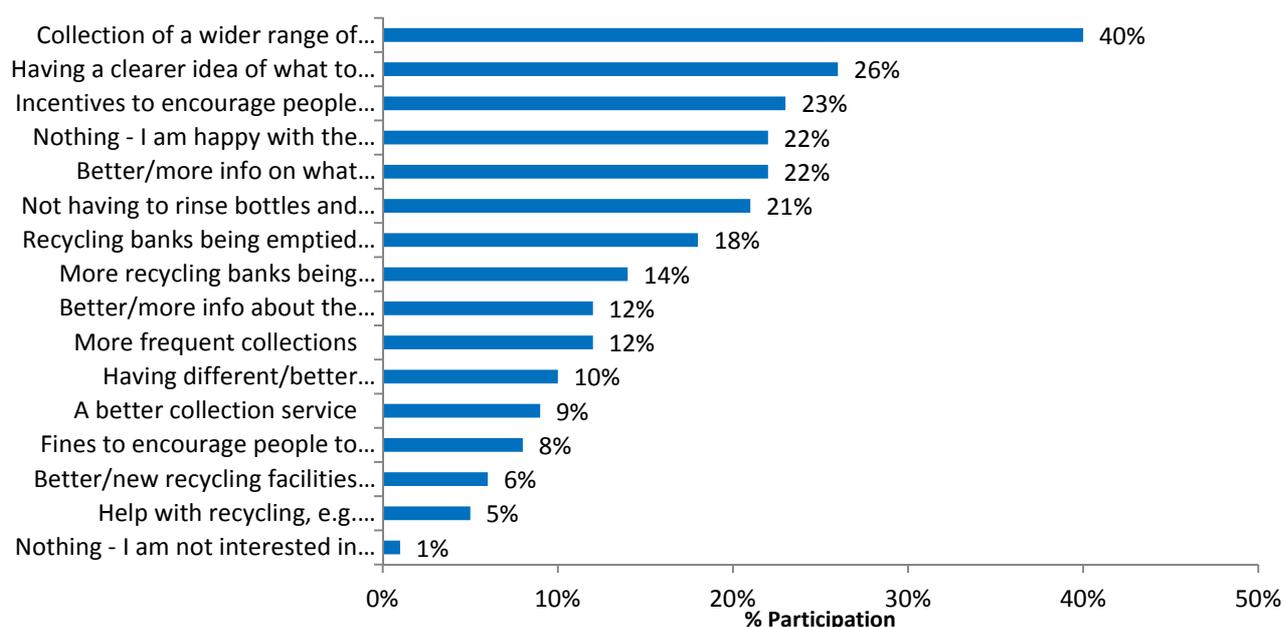


- Following the trend from previous years, 98% of respondents are using the kerbside recycling service, and only 2% state they “never” use their recycling container. This figure again proves the vast majority of householders surveyed are engaged in using the kerbside services, which indicates there is a willingness to continue to recycle.
- 20% of respondents stated they would not continue to recycle when their containers are full. This indicates that the remaining 80% of those surveyed are using Recycling Centres and Points to continue to recycle. Ensuring residents are aware they can receive second recycling bins, or upgrade their smaller 140l recycling to a 240l bin, should help to increase recycling participation.
- 50% of those surveyed will put materials in their general waste bin if they are unsure whether they can recycle them. This has increased by 2% suggesting there is room for improvement in awareness of existing services. There is still scope to improve understanding of the existing services, and further promotion of the various support materials available from the Council such as leaflets or website information.
- In line with last year, only 2% of householders believe it “always” takes too much time/effort to recycle, and 12% of respondents stating it can “sometimes” take too much time/effort to recycle. This 2% is consistent with the finding that only 2% of people state they “never” recycle.

Recycling More

2.12 When asked the question of what would persuade householders to recycle more (respondents could choose more than one answer), the key responses are shown in figure 7.

Figure 7: Encouraging more recycling



- 40% of people stated they would recycle more if it was possible to recycle a wider range of materials. This is a 2% decrease on last year's result, and a 5% decrease from the first survey in 2013. Other responses related to materials and convenience are: not having to rinse bottles and cans before recycling (21%); recycling banks emptied more frequently (18%); and more recycling banks being available (14%).
- In the information category, 26% stated that they would recycle more if they had a clearer idea of what to do with waste/what to recycle. The requirement for more information is also highlighted in the following statements: better/more information on what happens to recyclable material (22%); and better/more information about the benefits of recycling (12%).

Following the trend for the last two years, only 1% of respondents stated they are not interested in recycling more. This continues to prove the vast majority of householders are engaged and willing to recycle.

Special Uplifts

2.13 The final question relating to kerbside collections is that of special bulky waste uplifts. When compared with the other participating authorities, Perth & Kinross Council returned to 1st overall, scoring 5% above the average. Aspects surveyed included:

- Range of items collected
- Cost of collections
- Ease of arranging collection

Recycling Centres

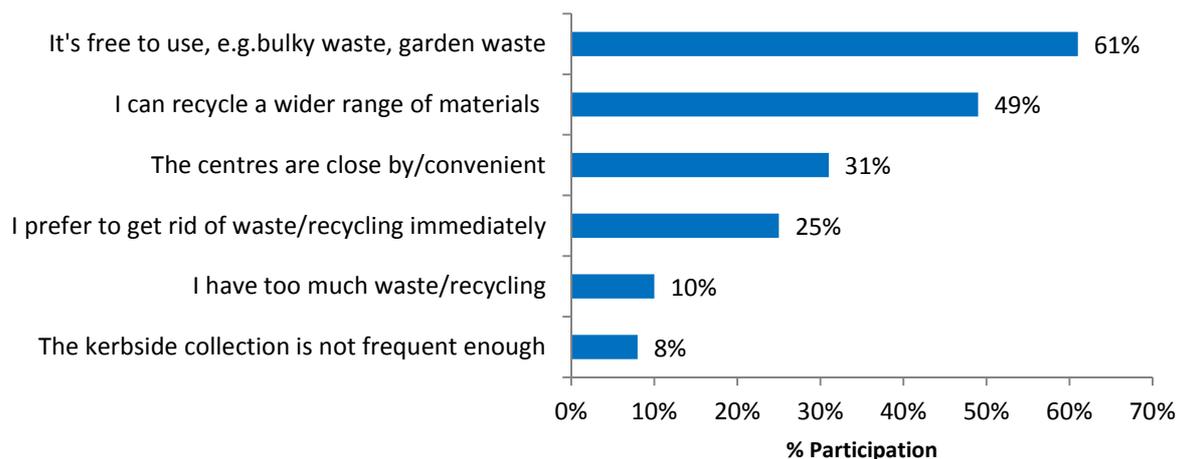
2.14 Perth & Kinross Council has remained 2nd overall for the third consecutive year for satisfaction with Recycling Centres. The rates of overall satisfaction have remained consistent over the three surveys with 86% in 2013, 85.1% in 2014, and 85.6% in 2015.

Use of Recycling Centres

2.15 45% of householders surveyed are using the Recycling Centres on a monthly basis. The reasons given vary (more than one could be selected), as previous years, the three most popular are:

- It's free to use to dispose of bulky or additional waste/recycling
- You can recycle a wider range of materials than using the kerbside service
- Centres are close by/convenient

Figure 8: Recycling centre usage



2.16 Perth & Kinross Council again scored above average on all but one aspect of service. There are high levels of satisfaction with the layout, directional signs, cleanliness, and range of materials you can recycle at Recycling Centres.

Enquiry and Complaint Handling, Communication, and Information Access

2.17 Perth & Kinross Council has dropped to 3rd overall among participating authorities for their enquiry/complaint handling, however access to information in regard to kerbside collections and Recycling Centres remained in 1st place. Enquiry/complaint handling of kerbside collection services has dropped by almost 3%, but remains above the average of all authorities surveyed. Enquiry/complaint handling of Recycling Centres has dropped by almost 5%, and is now below the average for all the councils surveyed.

Kerbside Collection Enquiry/complaints Handling and Information

2.18 Over the last 12 months, only 15% of respondents had contacted the Council with a query/complaint relating to kerbside collections. Householders were asked their level of satisfaction on:

- Ease of getting through to the right person
- The ease of using the website (new question)
- The helpfulness of staff
- Outcome of the contact

2.19 The responses showed an improvement on last years' ranking. However, looking more closely at the raw unweighted data, there is a marked difference in the unweighted rates of satisfaction. For example, the ranking for "Ease of getting through to the right person" improved from 3rd overall to 2nd. However, the unweighted data shows a 9% drop in the number of respondents who are either "fairly", or "very satisfied" with this aspect of service.

2.20 For the first time, the survey sought satisfaction with using the participating authorities' website to make queries/complaints. The level of satisfaction among respondents in Perth & Kinross ranked 3rd overall with 66% of the unweighted responses being made as either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied". Although this result seems low, it is worth mentioning that satisfaction with information on kerbside collections/services remains high.

Access to Information Relating to Kerbside Collections

2.21 Perth & Kinross Council have again ranked 1st overall for the access and provision of information to householders.

2.22 Gaining information through leaflets is still by far the most popular way with 90% of respondents stating that they read these support materials. Other methods used include:

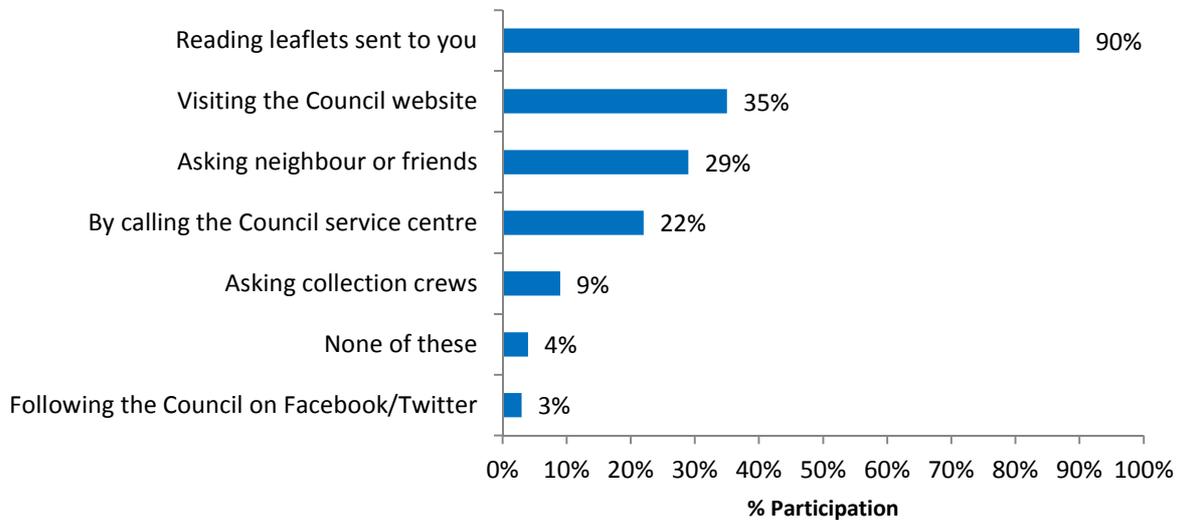
- Visiting the Council website
- Asking neighbours and friends
- By telephoning Council

2.23 Perth & Kinross Council has retained first place ahead of the other participating local authorities, whilst improving their ranking in each aspect of the service. This could be attributed to the implementation of improvement actions from the 2014 survey. These actions included:

- Bringing other support materials in-line with the Garden Food Waste leaflet
- Further use of focus groups to provide effective communications
- Expanding journeys on website to explain what happens to recycling
- Continue giving tool box talks (a brief summary) for frontline staff

2.24 The continuation of improvement actions will help maintain high levels of satisfaction across the board.

Figure 9: Kerbside collection communication



2.25 Similarly to last year, the Council has scored above average on each aspect relating to the provision of information. The level of satisfaction has improved slightly across the board, however the two areas identified for improvement are:

- How to donate items
- What happens to my recycling

2.26 As with last year's survey, the results show, that on the whole, the information available and accessible to householders is adequate, and that the preferred media is in leaflet form.

Recycling Centre Complaints and Information

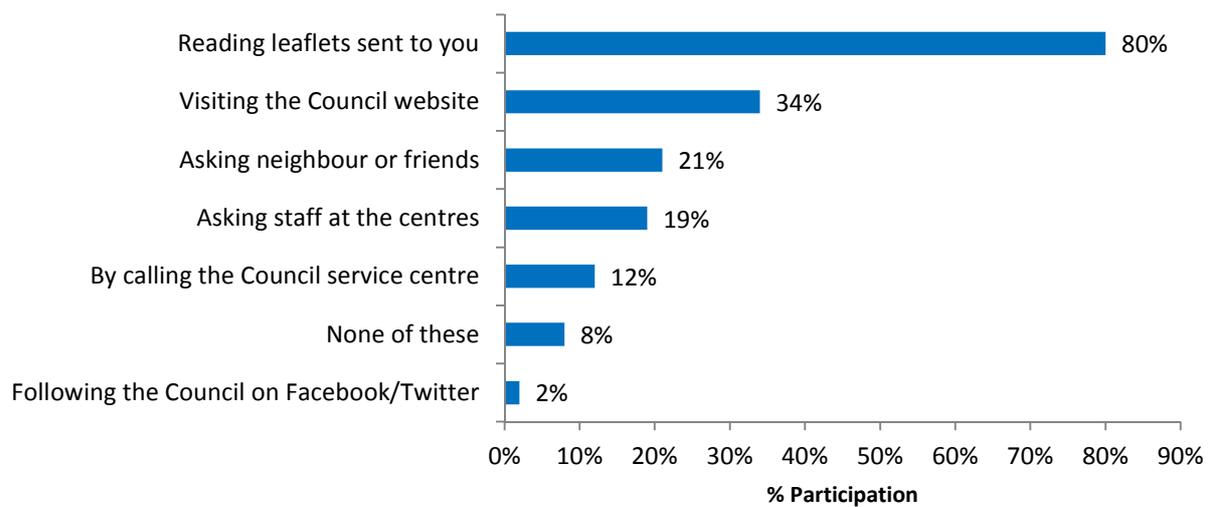
2.27 Over the last 12 months, only 9% of respondents have contacted the Council with a query/complaint regarding Recycling Centres. The levels of satisfaction have dropped for each of the following aspects of service: from 1st to 4th for outcome of complaint; from 2nd to 4th for ease of reaching the right person and from 2nd to 3rd for helpfulness. The only aspect of service which has improved has been the provision of information, where Perth & Kinross has moved from 3rd to 2nd place overall.

2.28 Improving on this aspect of service will be difficult as a response to the outcome of a complaint can be subjective. However, reviewing the Customer Service Centre response scripts will help in ensuring a complaint gets to the right person and that high levels of customer service (including helpfulness) are maintained should improve levels of satisfaction.

Access to Information on Recycling Centres

2.29 The level of satisfaction with the information available on Recycling Centres has remained high, with an improvement in overall ranking. For the third year in succession, reading leaflets sent to them was by far the most popular way of finding out information relating to Recycling Centres. Similar to the kerbside communications, householders used the Council website as the second most popular avenue, with asking neighbours or friends, then asking staff at centres close behind.

Figure 10: Recycling centre communications



3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Looking at the results from this year's survey, Perth and Kinross Council has again managed to maintain a high level of satisfaction from respondents. The vast majority of those surveyed are either "fairly satisfied", or "very satisfied" with the overall collection service resulting in the highest score and top ranking amongst participating authorities. Satisfaction levels remained high for Recycling Centres overall securing second overall ranking for the third consecutive year.
- 3.2 However there is room for improvement in the way the Council allocates complaints/enquires. The increase in the unweighted data for respondents who were "fairly" or "very" dissatisfied in regard to the outcome of contact, could be attributed to a few factors. These could include:
- not getting through to the right person
 - responding staff not being helpful
 - not being given the correct information
 - not being happy with the response given to them
- 3.3 By ensuring complaints and enquiries are allocated correctly, and maintaining high levels of customer service (including helpfulness and knowledge) then improvements can be made. However, the issue of householders not being happy with the response given to them is much more difficult to improve upon.
- 3.4 A key satisfaction indicator which has seen further improvement is that of collection service information Attitudes towards recycling, show that only 1% of those surveyed stated they are not interested in recycling. This again proves there is a captive audience who are willing to use the services provided. Householders on the whole are content with the minimal separation and preparation required to use the kerbside recycling service. They are also willing to continue to recycle even when their container is full through use of recycling centres and points. Just under half of those surveyed stated they are visiting these sites on at least a monthly basis.

4. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

More Materials

- Encouraging further use of kerbside recycling bins:
- Expanding range of materials accepted through the new dry mixed recycling contract in 2016

More Information On What Can Be Recycled

- Providing more information on what can go in each bin:
- Bringing other support materials in-line with new household waste and recycling leaflet

- Utilisation of focus groups to provide effective communications
- Using the new suite of communication resources offered by Zero Waste Scotland

Information On Recycling Journeys

- Providing information on what happens to our recycling:
- Expanding journeys to include new videos for social media
- Continue giving tool box talks (a brief summary) for frontline staff

Improving Complaint/Enquiry Handling

- Providing regular project updates to frontline staff
- Encouraging information sharing among teams, including Contact Centre
- Customer service refresher training for Waste Team
- Pre-empting social media complaints/enquiries through proactively seeking forums for discussion, or running evening Q and A session through the Council's main Facebook page

More Comparable Data

- Encouraging other local authorities to take part to improve benchmarking.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The results from the survey show the vast majority of householders are content with the existing waste and recycling services, and are participating in recycling schemes.
- 5.2 The survey has not only provided an insight into satisfaction rates of the current waste and recycling services offered, but combined with last year's data, have also created a baseline to be used for future benchmarking. The ongoing use of the survey provides valuable information that can be taken into consideration when considering new initiatives and the re-design of services.