

**Cabinet
Tuesday, 19 September 2023**

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- 14. Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023 - 2043 (Pages 1 - 36)**

Annexes attached

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Oxfordshire County Council Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023-2043

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Background

1. Oxfordshire County Council has a legal duty to provide Household Waste Recycling Centres ([HWRCs](#)) where residents can deposit household waste free of charge. Oxfordshire currently has seven HWRCs, and the sites receive around one million visits each year and accept approximately 40,000-45,000 tonnes of residual and recyclable material each year with a recycling rate of around 65.5%. The facilities are highly regarded in the county and receive high satisfaction ratings when residents when asked about HWRC layout, cleanliness and staff helpfulness.
2. This strategy replaces the 2015 HWRC strategy¹ which aimed to close sites and deliver 3 or 4 super sites. This has proved to be undeliverable due to a number of factors, including the unavailability of large pieces of land for new sites and ongoing resident feedback about the importance of local facilities. It is intended to provide an overarching direction to follow and set out the framework that subsequent decisions can be aligned with, and not intended to set out the detail of individual activities. It will be reviewed every 5 years to ensure it is still fit for purpose and will be accompanied by an implementation plan.

¹ [2015 HWRC strategy](#)



Figure 1: Map of Oxfordshire's HWRC network

3. All authorities in Oxfordshire work together as part of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP) to coordinate and improve waste services to households across the county and have agreed a bold and ambitious joint waste strategy² that has waste reduction, the circular economy, increasing recycling, and reducing waste to landfill as its three key aims. We want to continue to be amongst the best at waste reduction and recycling in the country, lowering carbon and driving a circular economy. Our HWRCs play an integral and essential role in those aims and aspirations taking around a sixth of all the household waste generated in the county. Their performance is already good, but we know we can achieve more and our commitments within the joint strategy commit us to achieving that.
4. Our HWRCs are also an important part of the household waste service offered to residents and complement kerbside waste services offered by the district and city councils by providing an easy and accessible route for residents to dispose of larger or more unusual household items 362 days per year. They are also used by our district and city partners and other waste management services as drop off locations for certain items, reducing transport distances and enabling the efficient management and recycling of a large number of items.
5. While as a group of authorities we manage the waste created by householders, an important part of our service is to help them avoid generating waste in the first place and driving behavioural change by providing the motivation and facilities to aid them transition to the circular economy. We can do this by encouraging and facilitating them to move away from the current take - make – use - dispose cycle into one where goods are kept in circulation for as long as possible, making the most of the resources already in use, saving carbon, and helping to prevent further damage and restore nutrients and biodiversity. Through our waste wizard

² Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2018-2023
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/waste-and-recycling/OxfordshiresResourcesandWasteStrategy.pdf>

look up tool we allow residents to find local solutions for the materials they no longer want/need, prioritising reuse, repair, and recycling before disposal. Our HWRCs can play an increasingly important role in this, by providing a point for repair and reuse and maximising recycling of more niche materials as well as everyday goods and materials.

6. The HWRC service and this strategy aligns with Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Strategy³, contributing towards our action to address the climate emergency by increasing recycling rates and aiding the transition towards the circular economy, and by tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire by providing a universal service to all residents, and contributing towards the health and wellbeing of residents through sustainable waste management practices. The strategy will also form an important part of future community engagement and democratic decision making around the HWRC service.

About this Strategy

7. To provide the standard of service required by legislative and societal changes and to tackle climate change, it is necessary for us to address our current network of household waste recycling centres which are outdated, too small, and need significant investment. In addition, we own less than 50% of the sites and leases and planning permissions are short term meaning long term security of these sites need to be addressed.
8. Our vision is to maintain, enhance, improve and expand our HWRC infrastructure and service to meet the future needs of our residents and the waste management services we operate, building on our high recycling rate, reducing our carbon impact and embracing the circular economy through repair, upcycling and reuse over the next 20 years whilst being mindful of Local Government budgetary constraints.
9. This strategy sets out the high-level drivers for change, and our aims and principles to deliver upon that.
10. The HRWC strategy has several key drivers:
 - a. At present we only own 3 of the 7 sites we operate. Planning and lease expiry on sites are a high risk to service delivery. New sites are expensive and take a long time to develop. Any new sites required would seek to be closer to population centres and look towards the principles of a circular economy and minimise carbon as part of our approach towards tackling the climate emergency.
 - b. Current sites were developed around a landfill service and sites. They do not meet modern standards and are too small to meet the demands of a modern HWRC service. They have lacked investment and, in some cases, need significant repair and maintenance programmes as well as improvements to meet new and emerging legislative and legal standards, for which costs will be unavoidable.
 - c. The population in Oxfordshire is growing and this will mean more waste and more people using our HWRC service. Several of our current sites are already over capacity (meaning residents need to queue to deposit materials) at peak times, and other sites are nearing capacity at off peak times. Congestion on site can reduce recycling as residents who have

³ [Strategic Plan 2022-2025 \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/strategic-plan-2022-2025)

- already queued to enter are less willing to take the time necessary to sort materials into the correct bin. Reduced recycling leads to higher costs and an adverse impact on the environment. As all sites are currently reaching or over capacity, population growth linked to new housing developments will increase the pressure on the sites. A HWRC strategy will aid us seek the investment we require and to plan for this growth and ensure that the right sized sites are located in the right place to meet the need of our residents and our environment.
- d. The role and nature of waste services provided by the council will change over the next few years as forthcoming national legislative and policy changes are introduced. An agile, flexible, and responsive HWRC strategy will enable us to ensure our network is flexible and able to adapt to these changes as well as the growing pressures of population growth within Oxfordshire.
 - e. A key part of delivering the circular economy is increasing the amount of material repaired and reused, we need to ensure that the HWRC infrastructure plays an active part in delivering this. Investing and delivering on our HWRC strategy will enable us to ensure our facilities allow residents to easily donate materials for re-use / re-sale and enable easy and safe recycling and disposal of materials.
 - f. It helps in our action against climate change and is a key component in driving a circular economy by ensuring our network of HWRC's maximise reusing and recycling more items and reducing the need for carbon intensive new materials to be manufactured. Sites already have a recycling rate of over 60%, meaning less materials are sent to landfill or for disposal. The strategy through the HWRCs is also part of the green economy, providing green jobs to those working on site, and those involved in onward management of materials. All of these points and drivers help us plan for and maximise our Climate Action Framework.
 - g. The management of our HWRCs is currently a contracted-out service. An up to date HWRC strategy, along with our overarching countywide joint strategy will provide a sound framework to drive future contract specifications and service delivery.
 - h. To provide a framework which enables us to seek funding from a variety of sources, including from developers where new housing is planned.
11. To inform and guide the development of this strategy, in summer 2021 OCC carried out a public engagement exercise⁴ to determine what residents valued about the HWRC service which received 1900 responses. Key messages from this survey showed that residents did not want to travel far and wanted easy to use convenient sites that had reuse areas and accepted a wide range of materials.
 12. A further consultation in Spring 2023⁵ showed respondents agreed with the aims detailed in this strategy and the proposals to achieve them. Comments and suggestions have been incorporated where appropriate.

⁴ [Let's talk waste and recycling | Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#)

⁵ [Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023-2043 | Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#)

13. In 2022 we commissioned consultants⁶ to investigate circular economy models, and how they could be implemented at HWRCs, along with a carbon study⁷ which looked at the differences in carbon emissions associated with depositing materials through kerbside waste services versus taking them to a HWRC. The feedback from this, as well as results from ongoing waste analysis that identified that over half of the contents of disposal bins could have been reused or recycled on site, have also informed this strategy
14. OCC is currently undergoing several budgetary pressures, and we have been mindful of this when preparing this strategy.

Our primary aims are to:

15. Provide a good quality service for Oxfordshire residents, our waste collection authorities, and other key stakeholders and deliver on our commitments in our joint waste strategy. We will do this by:
 - a. By ensuring we make it easy for and encourage our residents to do the right thing with their household waste and recycling. To do this our HWRC site infrastructure needs to be accessible to everyone, it needs to allow our residents to find and access HWRC sites quickly and easily and the onsite layout needs to be clear and understandable. There needs to be plenty of space to manoeuvre vehicles and unload and deposit materials into the correct containers, or deposit them for reuse.
 - b. HWRCs will support and complement kerbside collection services including provision of suitable space for use by district councils as appropriate. This will enable us to maximise the amount and types of waste they are able to recycle. They will also offer a cost-effective outlet for waste generated through small scale DIY projects by householders and will prevent misuse of the sites.
 - c. Sites will be maintained and will always be safe places to visit and work and be compliant with all relevant legislation.
 - d. Our HWRC service will aim to align and stay aligned with all appropriate County Council policies and procedures, and the action plan will be a key component to deliver this.
16. Develop and promote in-county reuse and repair of household materials taken to HWRCs
 - a. To aid the transition to a circular economy, reuse and repair needs to become a more mainstream activity. Providing facilities that drive this by providing convenient facilities to deposit goods for reuse, along with knowing where to find good quality preloved goods will help to reduce the quantity of 'new' items bought. Reducing the number of new things bought helps to reduce the carbon emissions associated with extraction of materials, manufacture and transport.
 - b. While some out of county reuse from HWRCs currently happens, we would like to take the opportunity while improving and extending sites to explore and maximise

⁶ OCC commissioned study: Technical Note: Review of HWRC reuse solutions. WSP 2022 (internal report)

⁷ OCC commissioned study: Examining the carbon impacts of HWRCs and kerbside collections. Ricardo 2021 (internal report)

in-county on-site and off-site reuse. Reuse and repair shops on-site or situated in nearby towns mean that an increased number of smaller and lower value goods could be reused as they do not need to be transported excessive distances. Offering good quality, lower cost items will also help our residents on lower incomes, or those looking to save money and resources.

17. Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and energy recovery
 - a. The waste hierarchy details the priority order in which waste should be managed – Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle, Recover and Dispose. We want to design and operate HWRCs in a way that helps us reduce the amount of material sent to landfill and for energy recovery. As well as reuse and repair shops this involves increasing the amount we recycle through better segregation of materials on site and increasing the number of materials we accept for recycling. Our residents have stated they would like to see us take steps to limit unsegregated waste being deposited at our sites and we will continue to explore the best routes to deliver that.
 - b. As the impacts of waste become more apparent, and driven by incoming legislation, producers and manufacturers are changing the way that they make and package materials and assisting in their recovery for recycling at the end of their useful life through product return schemes and other mechanisms. OCC supports this change but is aware that this may mean HWRCs evolve to provide a different service. The range of materials we accept may change for example if more material is accepted back for recycling directly by producers and retailers, the material brought to site may be older, more difficult, and expensive to manage and less easily recyclable. Our infrastructure (and budgets) will aim to be flexible to enable us to adapt to this change.
 - c. There may also be the opportunity to act as a collection or return point for retailers to maximise take back schemes. To do this HWRCs will need clean and dry areas to accept and store different material streams.
18. Reduce carbon emissions by seeking to manage waste as close to source as possible
 - a. A recent study⁸ showed that less carbon is emitted when disposing of items (that can be recycled in kerbside bins) using the kerbside collection service as opposed to bringing them to a HWRC for recycling. We will continue to promote kerbside services as the primary route of recycling to minimise carbon emissions, however we will ensure that our HWRC infrastructure retains space to accept these materials where possible to maximise the recovery and recycling of them.
 - b. The carbon study also showed that the impact of transporting kerbside recyclables to a HWRC was small compared to the impact of onward transport of materials to further reprocessing. We live in a global economy, and goods bought and used in the UK are manufactured all over the world. Recyclable materials are traded as a commodity and, in some cases, shipped thousands of miles to be reprocessed. The carbon impact of the transport can be large, and in some countries there are concerns that the recycling is not processed with the same environmental safeguards as in the UK. We

⁸ OCC commissioned study: Examining the carbon impacts of HWRCs and kerbside collections. Ricardo 2021

will aim to use UK based re-processors wherever possible to help to reduce the carbon impact.

- c. To support this, consideration will be given to the provision or use of other supporting infrastructure such as transfer stations or depots for the bulking of goods where materials can be brought from all HWRCs and stored and bulked up for onward transport. It may be appropriate for this to be located on a HWRC, or a separate site.

To achieve these aims we will:

19. Secure, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance, our current HWRC network
 - a. We want to make the most of existing assets and our priority is to secure the current HWRC network so that we retain a minimum of 7 sites for residents. However, over the next few years, several sites are reaching the end of their planning permission or lease arrangements.
 - b. Where it is not possible to stay at an existing site, we will look to move to a new location to serve residents in that area, seeking to expand the site footprint to account for population growth and the space needed to deliver our aims above.
 - c. Where we are staying at sites we will seek to expand and/or reorganise the layout where possible, prioritising additional capacity to accommodate the growing population, for reuse and repair, and to enable us to collect and segregate more materials for recycling and where practical the wider waste management needs for the county.
 - d. We will consider adding additional or replacement sites to further future proof HWRC capacity. The location of these will be determined by population growth, land availability and access to other Oxfordshire HWRCs, and will seek to be as close as possible to centres of population.
 - e. We will seek to ensure all of Oxfordshire's HWRCs have the capacity to serve the residents of Oxfordshire, are fit for the future and meet local and national needs and priorities.
 - f. Site replacement, expansion, reorganisation, and additional sites will all be subject to available funding. Funding will be sought from a variety of sources, including S106 developer funding agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy.
 - g. We will continually look for new ways to innovate and deliver flexible, cost effective, customer focussed HWRC services. We will regularly review and benchmark against best practice elsewhere to maximise recycling, support the transition to a Circular Economy and lower carbon to tackle the climate emergency. All whilst recognising the ever-increasing financial restraints on local authorities and competition with other critically important council services.

20. We aspire to keep materials undercover by building sheltered bays and drop off donation points. This will reduce contamination and damage from inclement weather, and maximise the reuse and recycling potential of the materials and goods we accept
- a. The weather can have a significant impact on the quality of materials that are sent for recycling. Wet materials are heavy, cost more to transport, and can be more difficult to recycle. An indoor HWRC, or skips being sheltered by a canopy will keep materials drier, maximising their recycling potential. This will also help us to comply with best practice to maintain the quality of recycle.
 - b. Covered drop off areas will also make the sites more user friendly. We notice a significant drop off in visitor numbers during wet, cold, or very hot weather and in winter months when it is dark meaning sites are busier when the weather/natural light levels improve. A covered drop off area may mean site usage will be more even, reducing the chance of queuing, maximising the capacity of the sites, and providing a more pleasant user experience.
 - c. Reuse, repair, upcycling, and other circular economy activities are vitally important to help us increase the lifespan of materials and reduce waste, so we aim to include a covered drop off area for reusable materials at each site. HWRCs will have clean, dry areas to store, sort and potentially repair and sell donated materials. Where shops are on HWRCs we also need to ensure that there is adequate parking away from operational areas for shoppers.
 - d. We will explore social value opportunities, including the involvement of the third sector, in service delivery and on sites where business cases exist, and they meet other contractual commitments. Social value will form a key part of future contracts when current contracts expire.
 - e. Opportunities will be explored to incorporate environmental improvements and maximise energy efficiency when designing sites. Solar, green roofs and green fuelling will all be considered as part of the business case.
21. If replacement or new sites are needed, we will locate these as close as possible to centres of population to limit drive times for residents.
- a. We are aware that most items residents bring to a HWRC are large, heavy, or too numerous to carry safely, and therefore they transport them to site in a car. Residents are already able to bring materials to all sites using a bike and/or bike trailer, taxi or hire car. Pedestrian access and locating HWRCs on public transport routes will be considered when identifying new sites in line with OCCs active travel aspirations, though will always be subject to the ability to provide pedestrian access safely. As car ownership trends evolve, more residents may travel to site using a car club vehicle, lift share, or other form of transport. We will keep these in mind while developing access policy to ensure that residents continue to be able to access sites easily.
 - b. By locating new HWRCs as close as possible to centres of population we hope to keep carbon emissions related to travelling to a HWRC as low as possible. However, we recognise that Oxfordshire is a rural county and a proportion of residents will

need to travel longer distances to a HWRC. We encourage residents to combine trips to the HWRC with other journeys where possible, and any future developments will consider innovative approaches and any relevant best practice guidance available. We will also promote maximising the use of kerbside facilities and those provided by third parties for example supermarkets, and our Waste Wizard tool will be a key component in that aim.

- c. We will continue to work with our district and city colleagues to explore complementary use of HWRCs to provide the best values services to our residents where practical and feasible to do so. This will include looking with other partners and stakeholders to co-locate facilities and maximise efficiencies, or the services we and they are able to offer.
 - d. Where possible we will seek to own freehold land on which sites are situated providing greater certainty over the long-term future of sites and reducing the risks associated with leased in sites in accordance with the Property Strategy. We will also explore owning site assets such as machinery and containers, with the aim of reducing mobilisation time between contractors and keeping site management fees a low as possible.
22. We will aim to schedule improvements to HWRCs sympathetically to reduce the impact on residents
- a. We are aware that the closure of a HWRC for site improvement works will impact residents, either requiring them to drive further to other HWRCs, or to store waste for longer in their homes until the HWRC reopens. We will use our best endeavours to ensure that no two adjacent HWRCs are shut for improvement works at the same time, retaining an accessible service for residents who need immediate access to our service.

Implementation

23. An implementation and action plan will be developed once the strategy is approved and will be regularly reviewed and will remain an active plan to drive the service.
24. Infrastructure is a core part of this strategy and implementation will take various factors into account including land ownership, lease length, planning permission and population growth, as well as available budget. Broadly the order of works will be:
- a. Continue with essential maintenance works at all sites
 - b. Secure lease and planning permission extensions at relevant sites
 - i. If not possible, begin site replacement process
 - c. Investigate possibility of improvement and capacity expansion at sites to increase the amount reused, repaired, and recycled – beginning with the sites under most capacity pressure
 - d. Consider the location of any additional sites(s)
 - e. Seek to ensure alignment with other core Council strategies and objectives and those of our partners through our joint waste strategy

23. The strategy and implementation and action plan will drive any future procurement of the management service and improvements in service delivery.

**Oxfordshire County Council
Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy
2023-2043**

Introduction

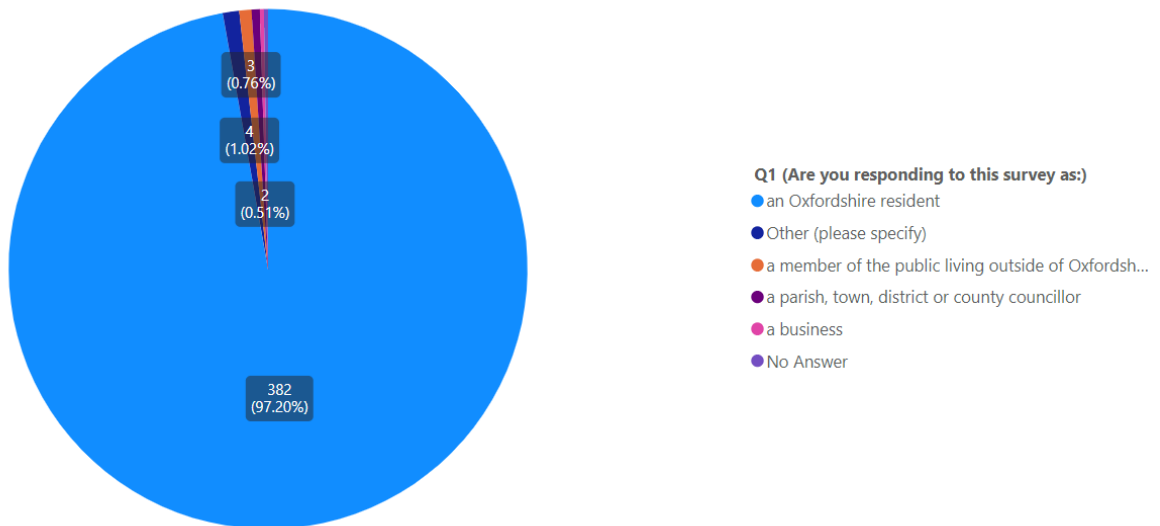
Oxfordshire County Council has seven Household Waste Recycling Centres ([HWRCs](#)). These centres are very popular, with around one million visits every year. They take in 40,000-45,000 tonnes of waste, and 65.5% of this waste is recycled. The HWRCs are an important part of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership's plan to reduce waste, increase recycling, and decrease the amount of waste that goes into landfills. The HWRCs accept a wide range of materials, which helps to increase recycling. Additionally, the HWRCs provide green jobs and help to support the circular economy. The council's HWRC strategy is in line with its plans to address climate change, tackle inequalities, and promote sustainable waste management practices. Finally, the council is careful to consider budgetary constraints when developing its HWRC strategy

About the strategy

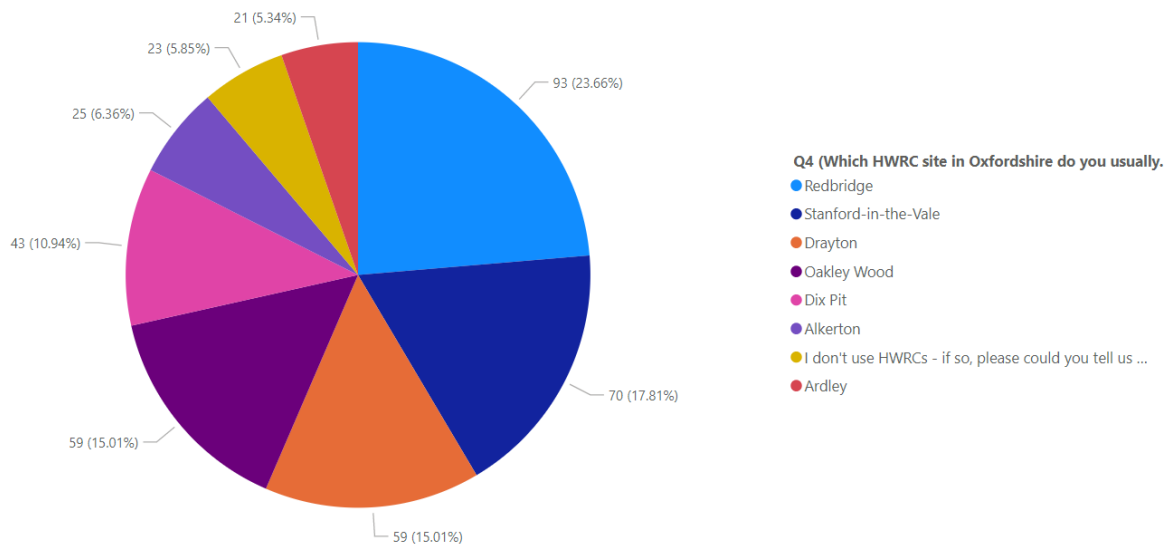
We have developed a plan called the HWRC Strategy that will help us better manage our waste for the next 20 years. Our goal is to fix and reuse more of the things we throw away and follows the idea of the circular economy. We will also review our waste centres to make sure they can work with any new laws and can adapt to the growing population of Oxfordshire. We want to give people places where they can give things to be used again, recycle things easily and safely, and throw things away in the right way.

This new strategy replaces the 2015 strategy to close waste sites and create 3 or 4 super sites. That plan wasn't possible because pieces of land which were large enough weren't available and we know from previous consultations that residents want local facilities to dispose of waste. This new strategy is intended to be a general guide for decision-making and doesn't include detailed actions. It will be checked every 5 years to make sure it is still fit for purpose and will be accompanied by a plan to put it into action.

Q1. Are you responding to this survey as:



Q2. Which HWRC site in Oxfordshire do you usually use?



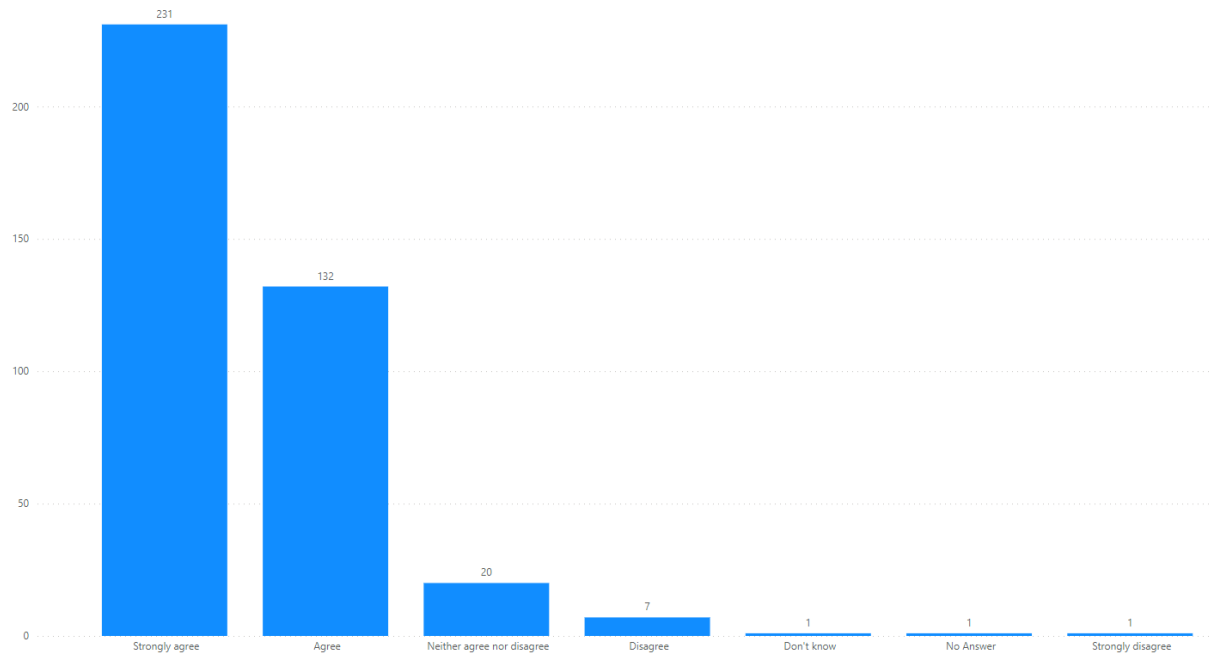
If you don't use HWRCs could you please tell us why?

<p>Not a confident driver/does not have a car Does not live in Oxfordshire Too far away Don't need to – comprehensive collection services Sites are not easy to use</p>

To provide the standard of service required by legislative and societal changes and to tackle climate change, it is necessary for us to address our current network of household waste recycling centres which are outdated, too small, and need significant investment. In addition, we own less than 50% of the sites and leases and planning permissions are short term meaning long term security of these sites need to be addressed.

Our goal for this strategy is to maintain, enhance, improve and expand our HWRC infrastructure and service to meet the future needs of our residents and the waste management services we provide. We want to continue our high rate of recycling, reduce our impact on the environment, and support the idea of a circular economy by encouraging repair, upcycling, and reuse over the next 20 years whilst being mindful of Local Government budgetary constraints.

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this goal?

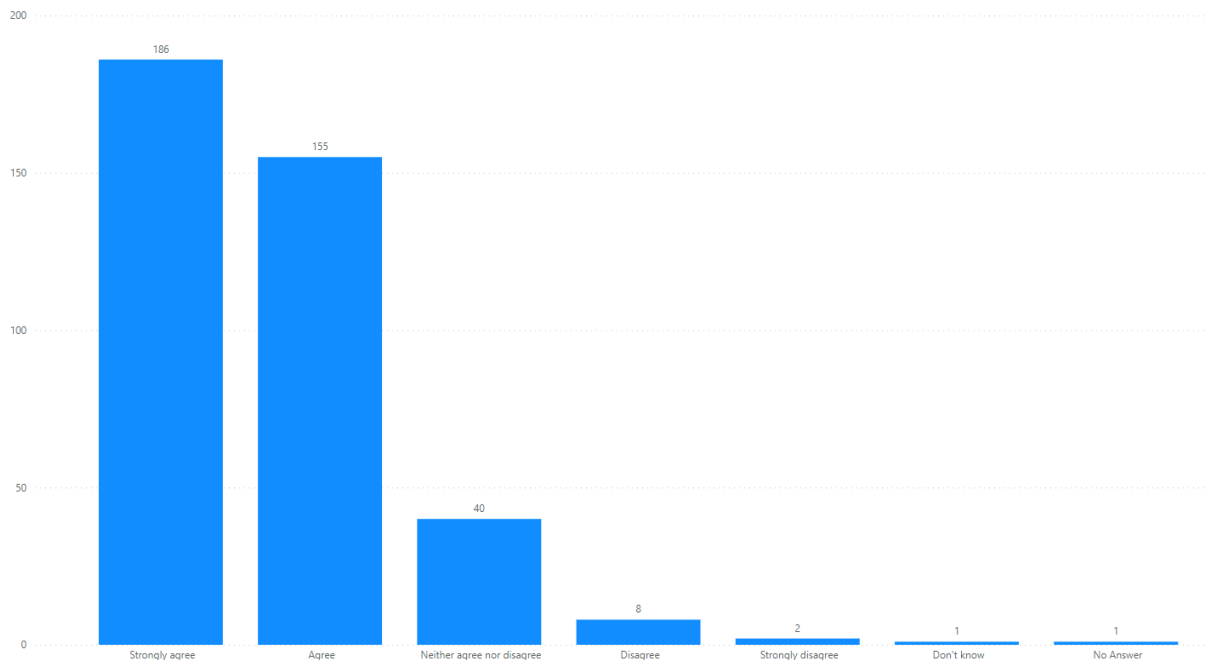


The HRWC strategy has several key factors:

- a. We don't own all of our sites and lease and planning permission expiry are a high risk to service delivery. We want a strategy that enables us to make long term investment decisions regarding sites, maintain infrastructure and invest in a better service for residents
- b. Current sites were developed around old landfill sites, they do not meet modern standards and are too small to meet the demands of a modern HWRC service.
- c. The population of the county is growing, which means more waste and more people using our HWRC service. We need to ensure that we have planned for the growth and ensure that the right sized sites are located in the right places.
- d. Legislation is changing and the type, amount and nature of the waste that is brought to a HWRC will change with it. We need to ensure our sites and service are flexible enough to adapt to this

- e. We want to increase the amount of material repaired and reused and need to ensure that the HWRC sites can play an active part in delivering this.
- f. HWRC's can help us achieve our climate goals. By maximising reuse and recycling we reduce the need for carbon intensive new materials to be manufactured.
- g. Currently, the management of our HWRCs is contracted out to an external service provider. To ensure that we have a solid plan for the future, we will create an updated HWRC strategy that is in keeping with our broader countywide joint strategy. This will help guide how we agree future contracts and deliver services.
- h. To provide a structure which enables us to seek funding from a variety of sources, including from developers where new housing is planned.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these factors? Strongly agree / agree / neutral / disagree / strongly disagree / don't know



Q5 – do you have any other factors to add?

26 comments about the need to consider travel distances – keeping them as small as possible to encourage people to use sites

22 comments supporting/requesting that reuse becomes more prominent on sites, potentially linked to the third sector

19 comments about the fact that HWRC use requires car ownership. This impacts those who do not or cannot drive, as well as those choosing to use the car less for climate reasons. Comments about how this potentially contradicts current policy to reduce car usage.

14 comments about DIY charging/charging for entry to site being a barrier to prevent usage

6 comments requesting us not to close sites

Other comments linked to: the need to stop production of materials that are not recyclable by retailers/manufacturers; the need to change our behaviours and throw less away, the need to ensure that we link with districts to ensure services are complimentary, and the potential to change contract models and bring services in house.

Our primary aims are:

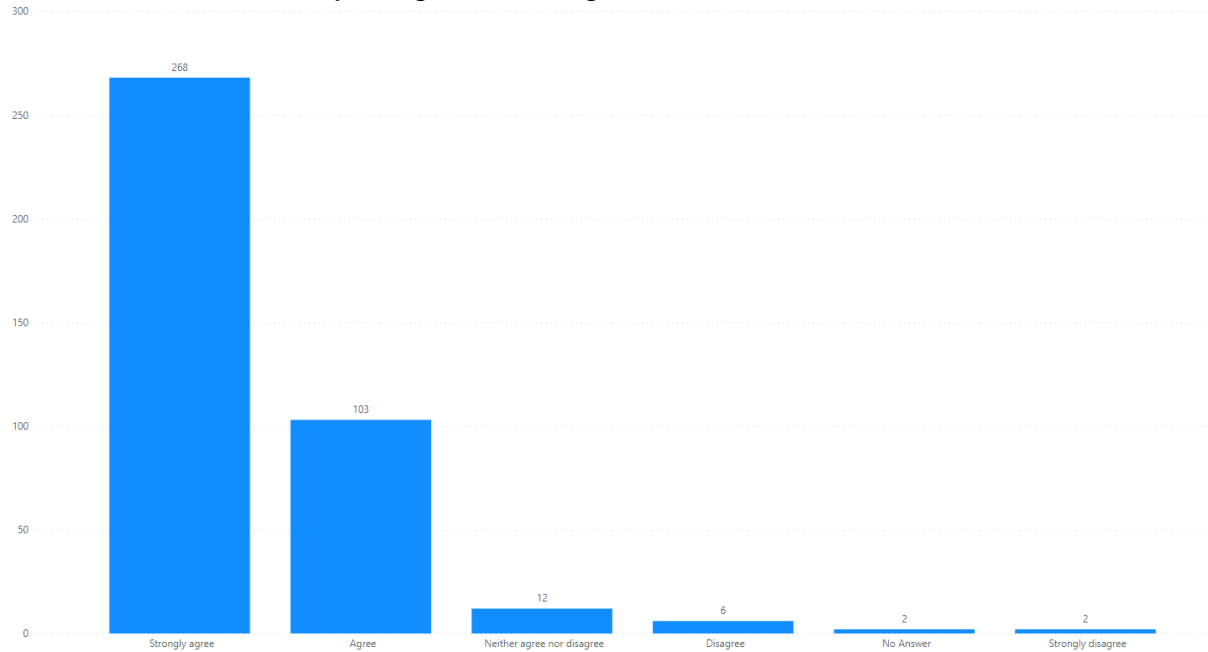
To provide a high-quality, accessible HWRC service to encourage residents to dispose of their waste correctly.

The sites need to be:

- Easy to find, with clear and accessible layouts
- Have enough space for manoeuvring vehicles and depositing materials into the correct containers
- HWRCs are places where people can take large or heavy items that are difficult to dispose of through regular kerbside collection services, providing an affordable way for people to get rid of small-scale DIY home improvement projects

The sites must comply with all relevant legislation and be safe for both visitors and workers.

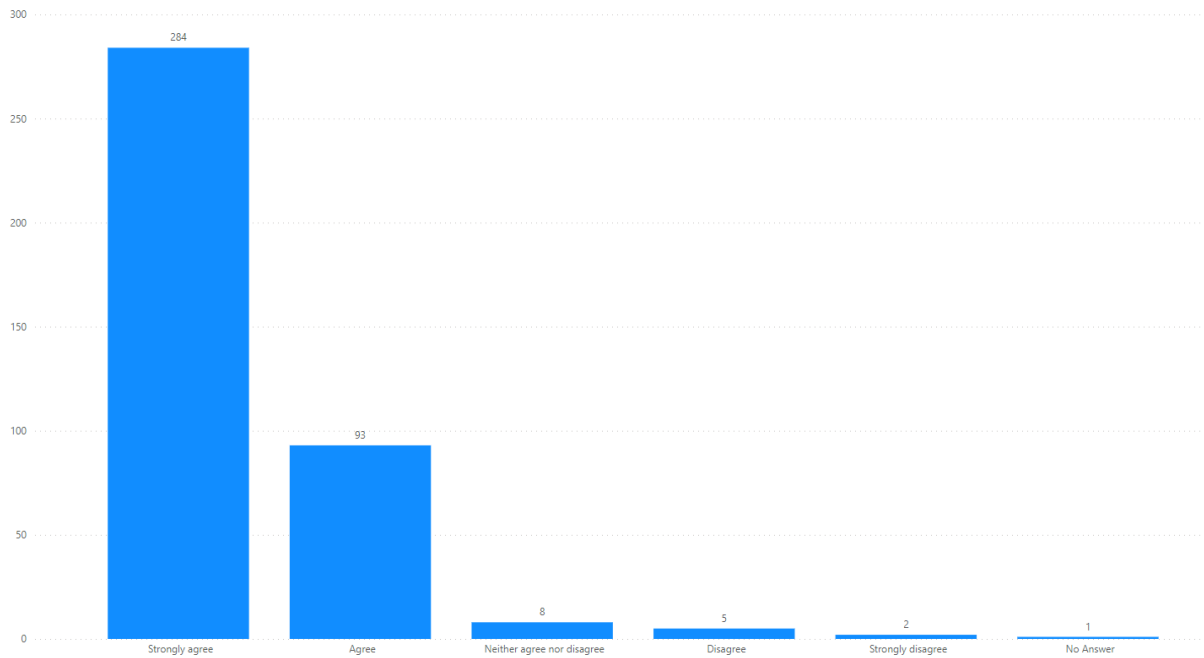
Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?



Develop and promote in-county reuse and repair of household materials taken to HWRCs:

We currently live in a 'linear' economy, where we take, make and then dispose of items. To transition to a 'circular' economy, where goods are designed to be kept in use for as long as possible and to be easy to reuse and repair then recycle at the end of their life, we should focus more on reusing and repairing items. This will reduce the need to buy new, which will lower carbon emissions from extracting, manufacturing, and transporting new goods. The council also wants to investigate setting up more reuse and repair shops both on-site and off-site within the county. This will make it easier for people on lower incomes or those trying to save money and resources to reuse smaller and less valuable items.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?



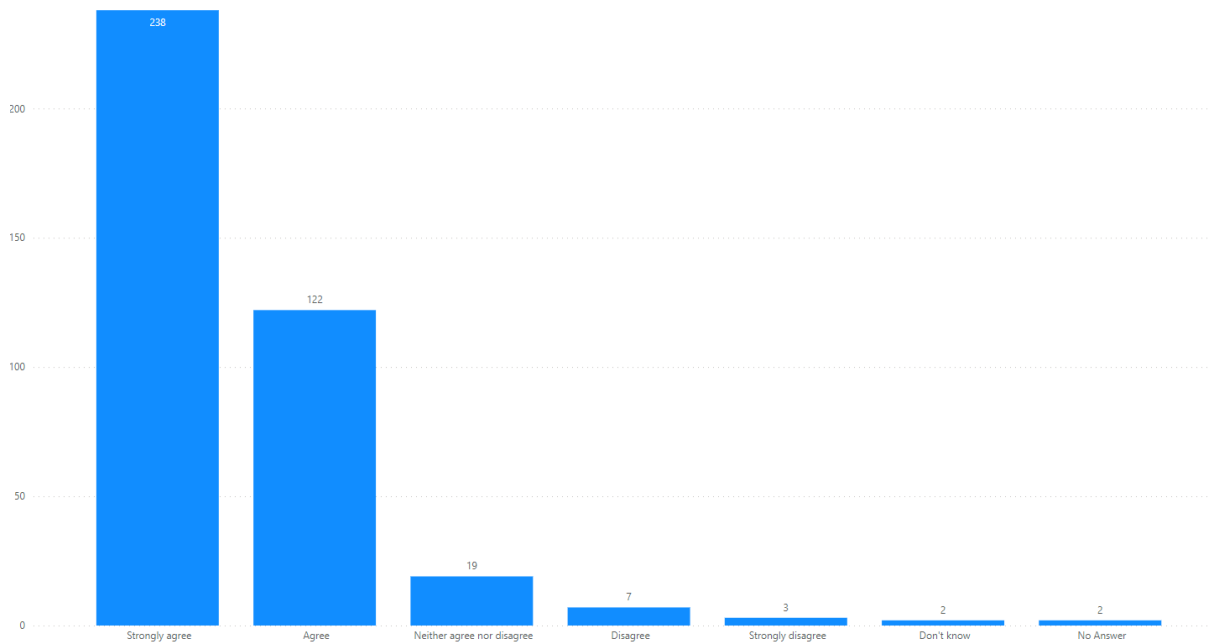
Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and energy recovery:

The 'waste hierarchy' prioritises reducing, reusing, repairing, recycling, recovering, and disposing of waste. We want to run HWRCs in a way that reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and energy recovery. This means improving waste sorting on site, increasing recycling, and finding more ways to recycle materials.

Manufacturers are looking to accept more of their products back directly so they can reuse or recycle them to create new products. We support this change, but it may mean that HWRCs will change their services. The materials accepted may alter, and infrastructure needs to be flexible.

HWRCs may become a collection or return point for retailers to maximise take-back schemes. To do this, they need clean and dry areas to accept and store different materials.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?



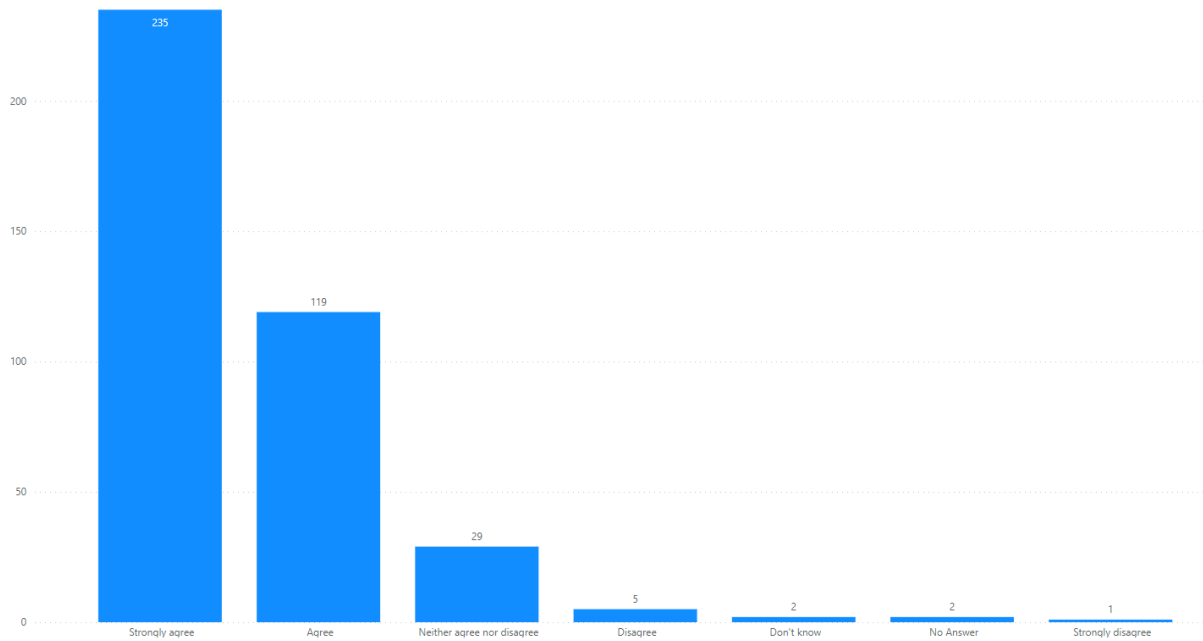
Reduce Carbon emissions by seeking to manage waste as close to source as possible:

A recent study¹ found that using kerbside recycling is better for the environment than bringing items like paper, card, plastic bottles and glass to an HWRC for recycling as it reduces transport emissions. However, HWRCs will still accept these materials to make it more convenient for people.

We should also consider the environmental impact of transporting recyclables for processing, especially when goods are made overseas, which leads to high carbon emissions. To reduce this impact, we should use UK based re-processors and infrastructure like transfer stations for bulk transportation. We could have these facilities on an HWRC site or at a separate location.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?

¹ OCC commissioned study: Examining the carbon impacts of HWRCs and kerbside collections. Ricardo 2021 (internal report)



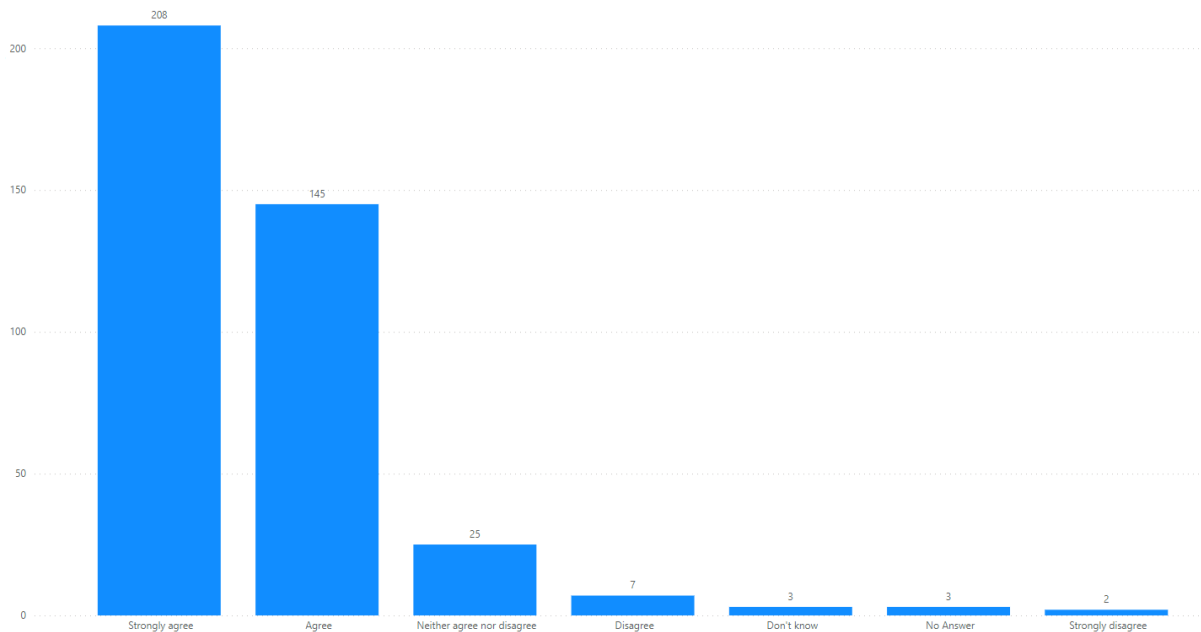
In order to achieve these aims we will:

Secure, maintain and where feasible enhance, our current HWRC network:

We wish to keep at least 7 HWRC sites for residents, but some sites may need to be moved or expanded as they reach the end of their planning permission or lease arrangements. If this happens, we will look for new locations and make the sites larger if necessary, to account for population growth and space needs. We will aim to develop existing HWRCs for reuse and repair and to collect and sort more materials for recycling and waste management.

If funding is available, we may add more sites based on population growth and access to other Oxfordshire HWRCs. The goal is to make sure all HWRCs meet local and national needs and priorities for the future.

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this action?



We will continually look for new ways to innovate and deliver flexible, cost effective, customer focussed HWRC services. We will regularly review and benchmark against best practice elsewhere to maximise recycling, support the transition to a Circular Economy and lower carbon to tackle the climate emergency. All whilst recognising the ever-increasing financial restraints on local authorities and competition with other critically important council services.

Q11. We welcome any ideas or suggestions from residents on how this could be achieved, bearing in mind the well documented financial challenges faced by Local authorities. Please include your thoughts below:

29 respondents commented on the benefits, including financial that reuse could bring

24 people commented on changes that could be made to kerbside collections, including Bulky waste collections and charges.

Again, respondents commented on how the HWRC strategy linked up with OCCs move to reduce car usage and ownership

Other ideas included: the use of compactors, ensuring we have good reverse logistics, keeping an eye on innovations in the sector, selling compost produced from green waste and the need to educate people to reduce waste and recycle more.

We aspire to keep materials undercover by building sheltered bays and drop off donation points. This will reduce contamination and damage from bad weather,

and maximise the reuse and recycling potential of the materials and goods we accept.

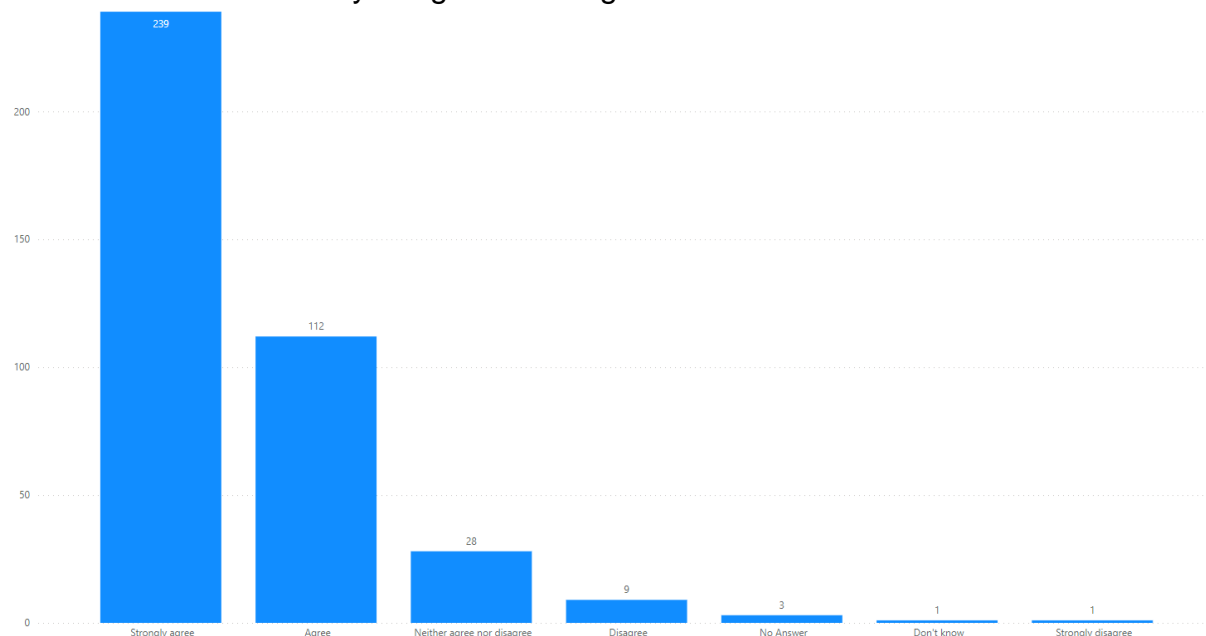
Wet weather can damage materials sent for recycling, leading to higher costs and more rejections. To avoid this, we can provide covered drop-off areas and sheltered skips to keep materials dry, increase recycling, and make the sites more user-friendly.

A covered drop-off area for reusable materials can also support circular economy activities like repair and upcycling, and potentially generate income from resale.

We'll also look into adding environmental improvements like solar and green roofs.

Overall, making HWRCs more weather-resistant and user-friendly will increase their capacity, reduce wait times, and provide a better experience for visitors.

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?



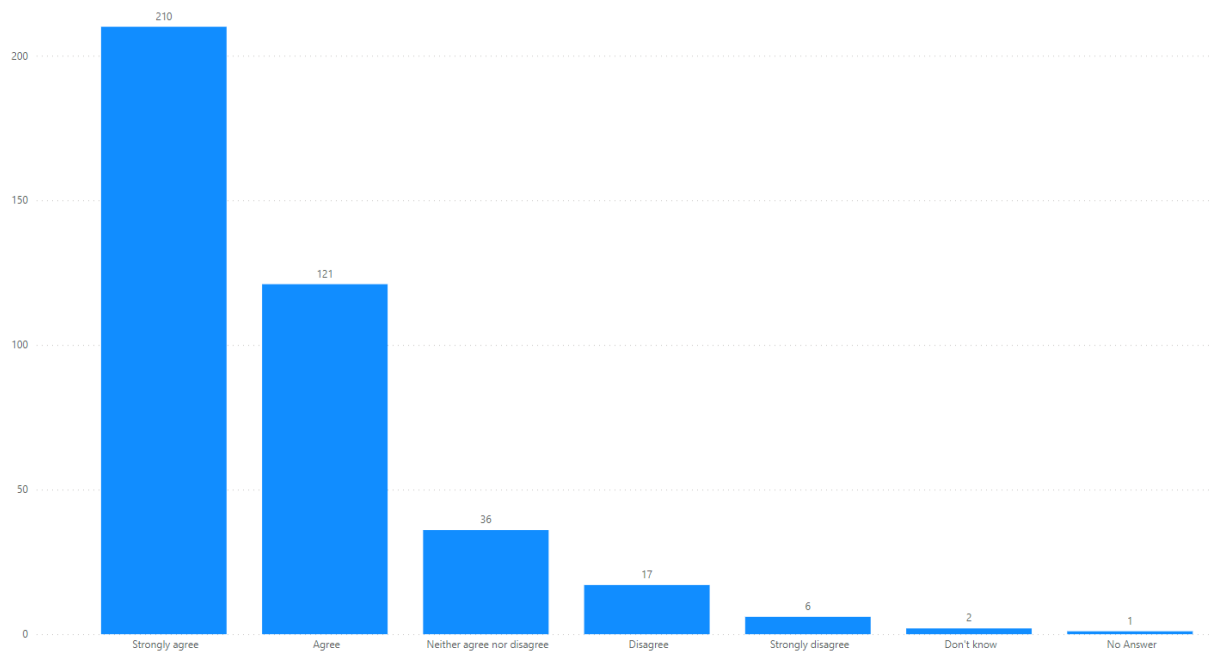
If replacement or new sites are needed, we will locate these as close as possible to centres of population to limit drive times for residents:

New HWRCs will be located near population centres, with consideration for pedestrian access and public transport routes. The aim is to locate facilities in the same place to make them more efficient, and work with partners and stakeholders when possible.

This will also help reduce carbon emissions from transporting items to an HWRC.

We plan to own the land, machinery and containers to keep site management fees low. Since Oxfordshire is a rural county, residents are likely to need to travel to an HWRC. However, bikes and bike trailers are allowed at all sites, and safe pedestrian access at new sites will be considered.

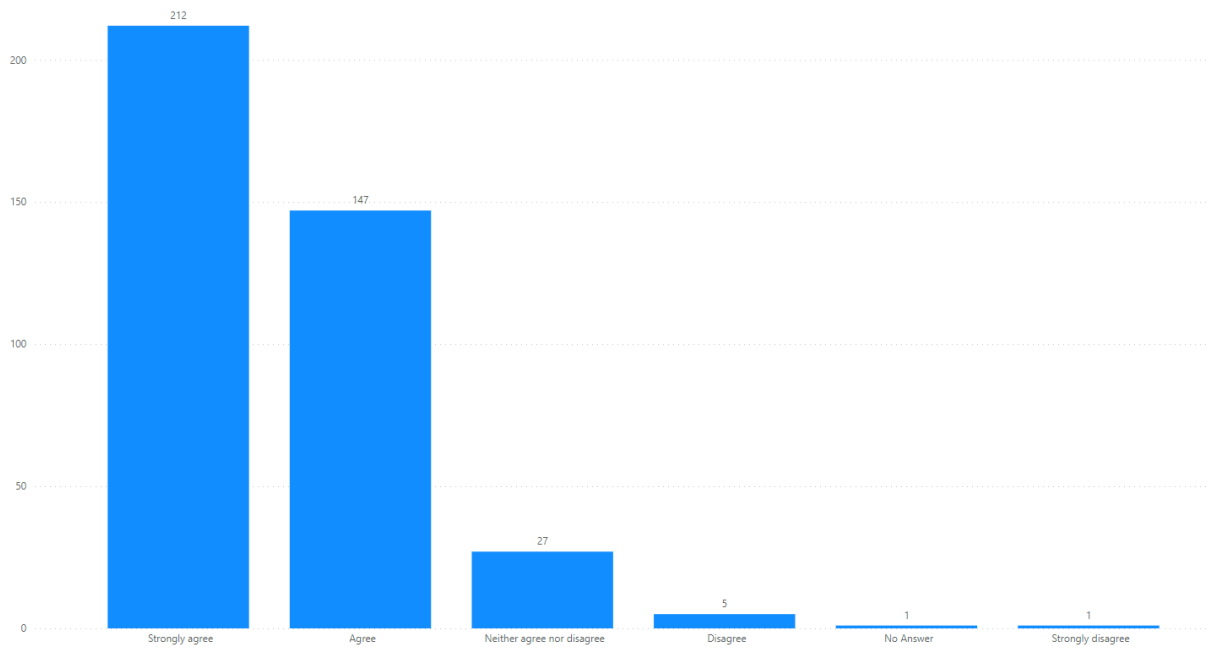
Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?



We will aim to schedule improvements to HWRCs sympathetically to reduce the impact on local residents:

We are aware that the closure of an HWRC for improvement works will affect residents, either requiring them to drive further to other HWRCs, or to store waste for longer in their homes until the HWRC reopens. We will ensure that no two neighbouring HWRCs are shut for improvement works at the same time, retaining an accessible service for residents who need immediate access to our service.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this aim?



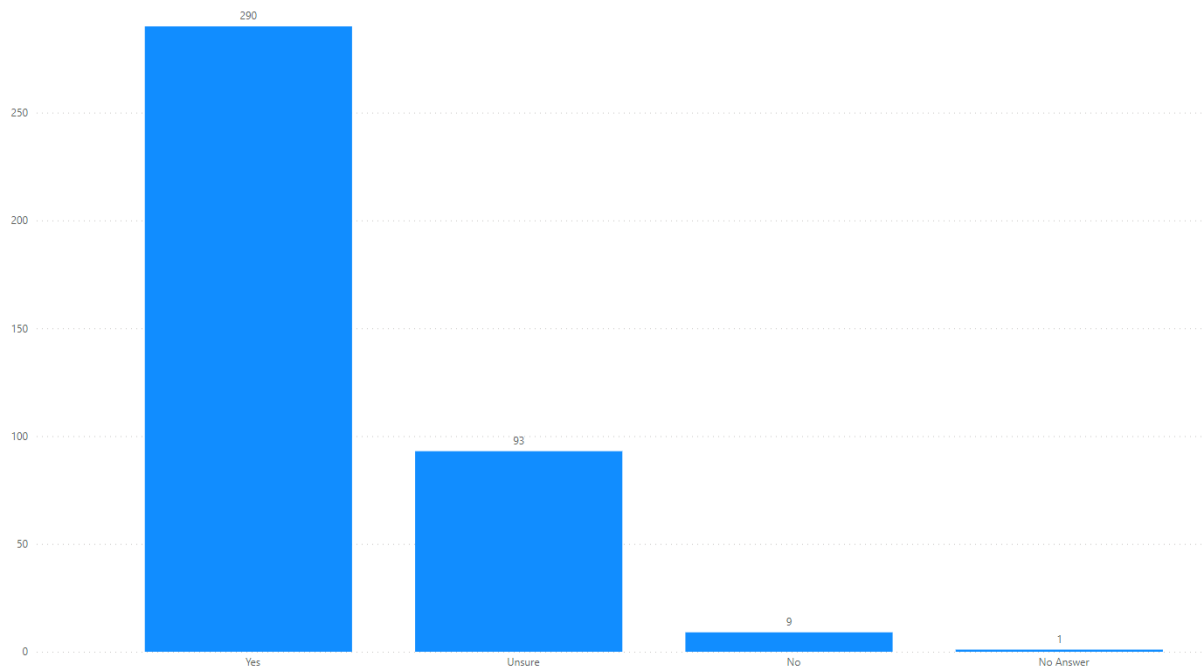
Implementation

An implementation plan for the strategy will be developed and regularly reviewed. It will take various factors into account including land ownership, lease length, planning permission and population growth, and well as available budget.

Broadly the order of works would be:

- Continue to carry out essential maintenance works at all sites
- Secure lease and planning permission extensions at relevant sites
 - If not possible, begin site replacement process
- Investigate the possibility of improving and expanding capacity at sites to increase the amount reused, repaired and recycled – beginning with the sites under most pressure
- Consider the location of any additional sites(s)
- Seek to ensure this plan is a good fit with other main Council strategies and objectives and those of our partners, through our joint waste strategy

Q15. Overall do you believe the strategy will help us fulfil our vision and meet our targets?



Q16. Are there any other comments you wish to make? *Free text box*

Comments around the lack of detail presented in the implementation plan

Comments around the drive to reduce cars and the fact that HWRCs require car usage. Links to kerbside collection systems, including request for them to collect more materials and for cheaper bulky services

Requests to 'change the system'; more recyclable material, less excessive packaging etc

Reuse on site is very popular and people would like to see it introduced as soon as possible.

The need for sites to be staffed by friendly, helpful operatives is clear.

Suggestions for locations for new sites have been provided

Responses received via email from stakeholders and partners

4 Recieved

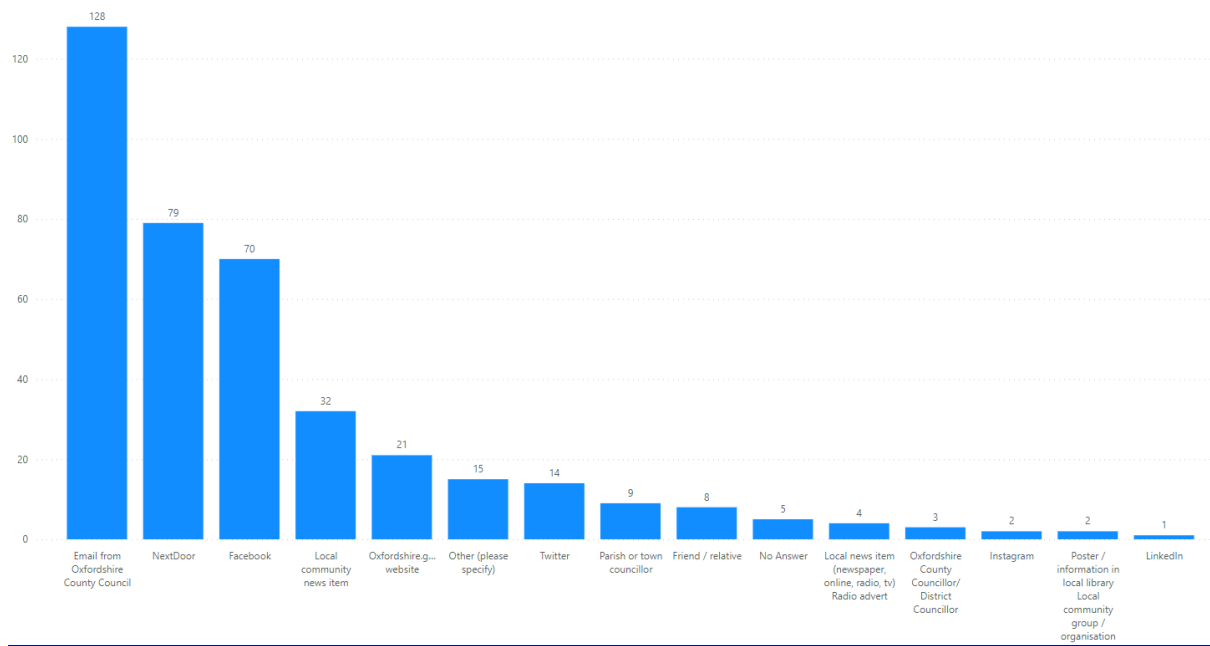
About You

We would like to know more about you so that we can understand more about our customers and residents, as it helps us to know if we are hearing the views of a wide range of people and communities.

If you do not wish to provide any of this information, please select prefer not to say. All information given is anonymous and is governed by the [General Data Protection](#)

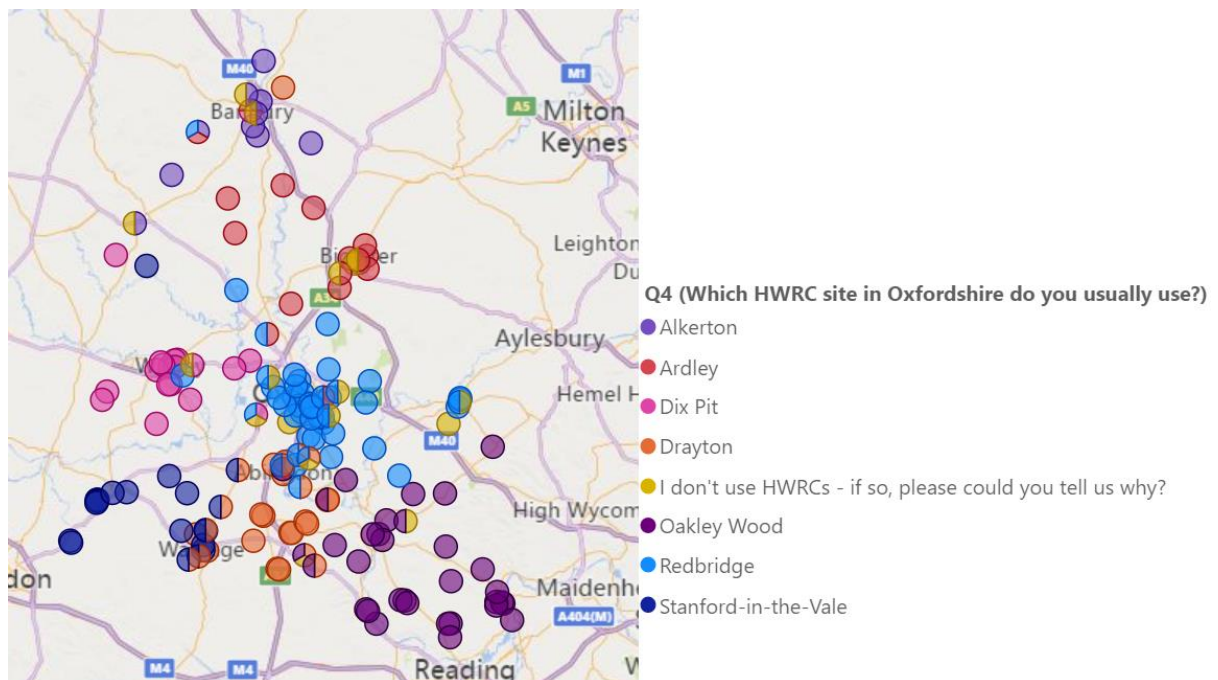
[Regulations 2018.](#)

Q17 How did you find out about this consultation?

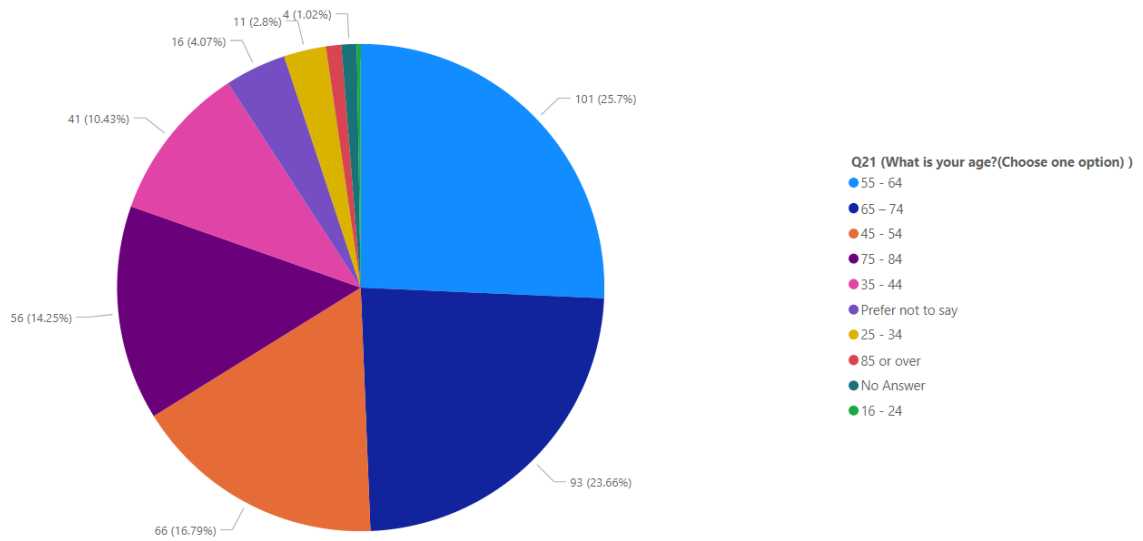


Q18 What is your postcode?
Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5.

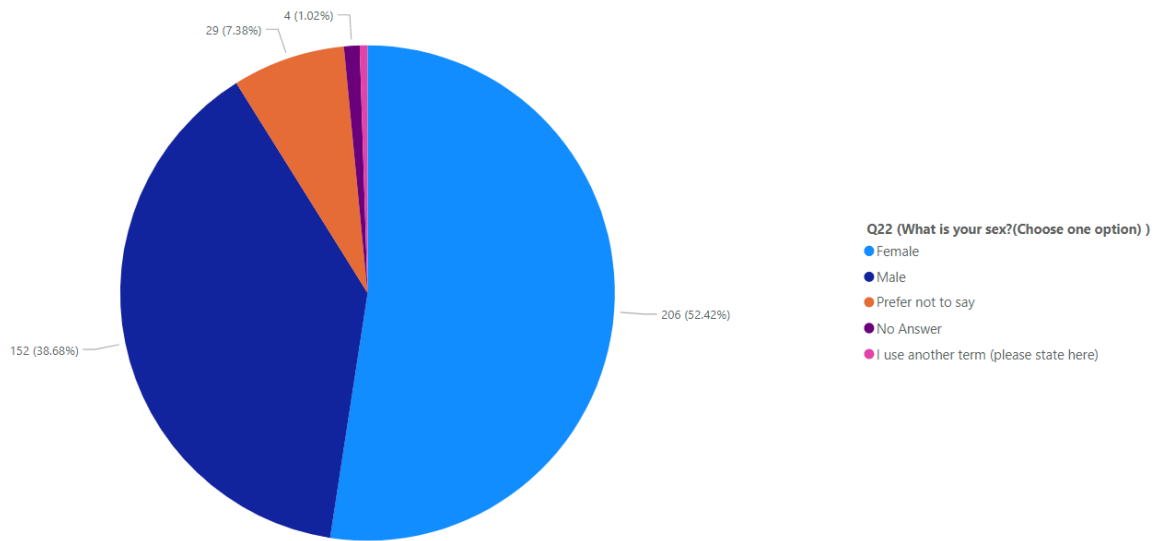
What is your postcode cross analysed with Which HWRC do you use.



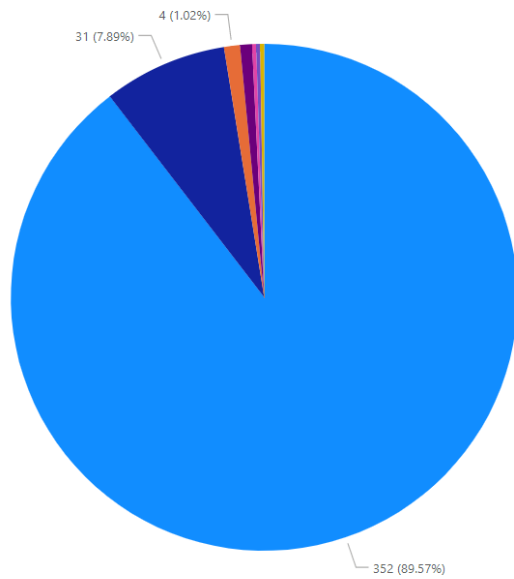
Q19 What is your age?
(Choose one option) *



Q20 What is your sex?
(Choose one option) *

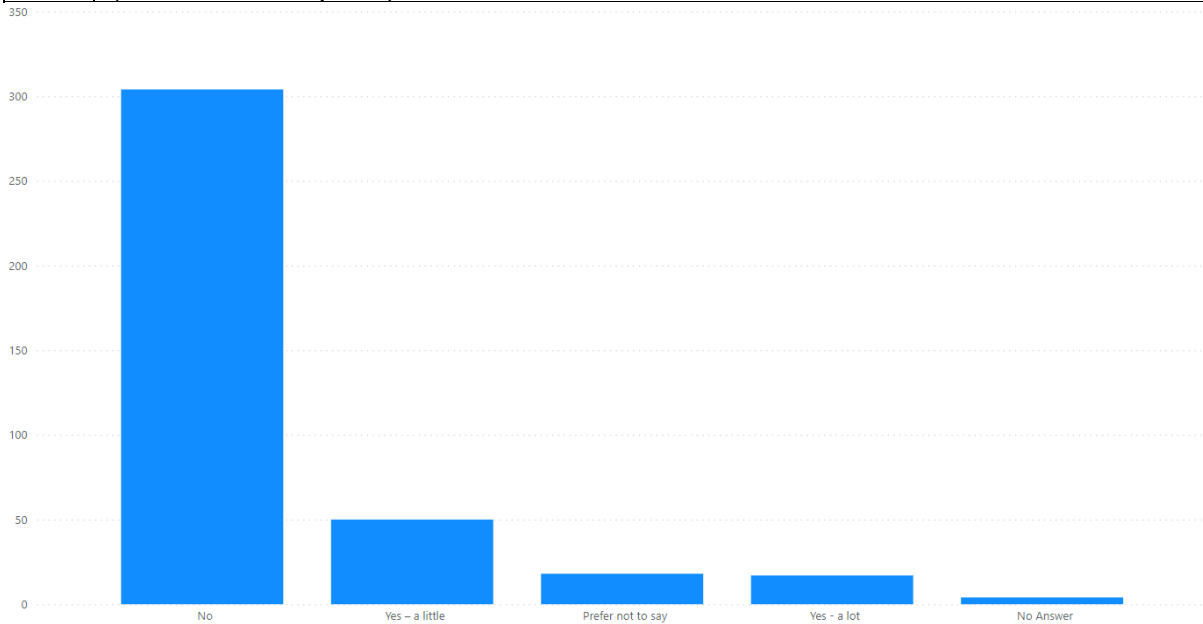


Q21 What is your ethnic group or background?
(Choose one option)*



- Q23 (What is your ethnic group or background?)(Choose one.)**
- White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
 - Prefer not to say
 - No Answer
 - Other ethnic group or background (please specify)
 - Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any ...)
 - Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black...)
 - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbea...)

Q22 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?
(Choose one option) *



Data protection and privacy *

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we (Oxfordshire County Council) have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to open government and this may include quoting extracts from your consultation response in our report.

We will not however, disclose the names of people who have responded unless they have provided consent. For this purpose, we ask that you are careful not to disclose personal information in your comments – for example the names of service users or

children. If you do not want all or part of your response to be made public, or shared with councillors, please state below which parts you wish us to keep confidential.

View Oxfordshire County Council's privacy notice online at:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice

Q23	Please use this space to tell us if there is any specific part of your response you wish to keep confidential:

Stay in touch *

We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county.

Any contact details you provide will be separated from the feedback you have shared in this survey.

Q24	Would you like to sign up?
	Yes
	No

Q25	Please provide your email address below, so we can contact you and send a link to our sign-up page where you can tailor which communications you receive:

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions

Please return the completed survey to:

Freepost OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(No further address details are required and no stamp is needed, but please write **HWRC** on the top left corner of the envelope.)

Divisions Affected – All

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 JUNE 2023

HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE STRATEGY

Report by Bill Cotton

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The Place Overview Scrutiny and Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - Note the draft Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Strategy and its approval timeline;
 - Note the feedback from the draft HWRC Strategy's public consultation;
 - Note the updates to the Strategy as a result of the consultation feedback.

Executive Summary

- 2.** A new Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Strategy has been developed to deliver on OCC's statutory obligations to provide a HWRC service and to meet our aims in the countywide Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP) Waste Strategy. The Strategy sets out our vision to improve the infrastructure and services offered at the Council's household waste sites, building on Oxfordshire's high recycling rates.
- 3.** The new strategy (Annex 1) details our aims and ambitions for the HWRC network, providing an overarching direction to follow to ensure the HWRC network it is not just fit for purpose, but is an active and key component in delivering OCC climate and sustainability ambitions. The HWRC network has a critical role in enabling Oxfordshire residents to produce less waste and recycle more and is vital to embracing the circular economy through repair, upcycling and reuse over the next 20 years.
- 4.** Residents and stakeholders were consulted on the draft strategy for 6 weeks; 27th March to 8th May 2023. Residents stated they were broadly in agreement with the strategy, however, a few changes have been made to the strategy, reflecting their feedback. The updated Strategy will now progress through the OCC Cabinet approvals process.

Background

5. Oxfordshire County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority and, together with the district and city councils, we have one of the highest recycling rates in England along with very low waste arisings per head. We work together under the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership and our countywide waste strategy to deliver against our challenging targets on waste recycling, reduction and reducing waste to landfill. Our network of HWRCs and the HWRC strategy are key components in our obligations to the partnership and the joint strategy.
6. Under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has a legal duty to provide HWRCs for Oxfordshire residents.
7. OCC currently operates 7 HWRC sites. The sites receive around one million visits each year and accept approximately 45,000 tonnes of waste which is around 15% of the total household waste generated in the county with a recycling rate of around 65.5%. The facilities are highly regarded in the county and receive high satisfaction ratings when residents are asked about HWRC layout, cleanliness and staff helpfulness.
8. The previous (2015) HWRC Strategy proposed reducing the number of HWRC's from seven to three or four, closing all existing sites and opening new ones. The strategy was unpopular and has proved undeliverable, with land in the right place and at the right price difficult to find and secure.
9. The new Strategy is proposing securing and expanding (or relocating where this is not possible) existing HWRC sites to manage the expected population increases, legislative requirements and support climate ambitions. It lays the foundation that enables the following:
 - (a) Securing S106 and CIL contributions,
 - (b) Make maintenance, planning, lease and investment decisions with a longer term perspective,
 - (c) Plan how we will deal with population growth/lack of HWRC capacity,
 - (d) Develop the HWRC service to meet future legislative requirements,
 - (e) Help to meet OCC's carbon objectives and enable the transition to a circular economy,
 - (f) Increase Oxfordshire's recycling rates.

Strategy Development

10. A public engagement exercise was completed in summer 2021 to determine what residents wanted from their HWRC service. The feedback from 1911 respondents was very strong that residents did not want sites to shut and valued a local, easy to use service that can accept a wide range of waste materials.

11. In May 2022 OCC Property Services commissioned dilapidation and condition surveys of all 7 HWRC sites. These surveys have informed the options appraisal for the HWRC network's longer-term planning, and the HWRC strategy has been developed to support this longer term planning to ensure Oxfordshire's residents have a safe and secure HWRC network.
12. The new strategy has been developed to be cross cutting, looking primarily at HWRC site infrastructure but also delivery through an actively maintained action plan. It is resident focused, looking to provide the local, easy to use facilities that residents have told us that they want. Expanded and improved sites will encourage residents to embrace the circular economy and to maximise reuse and repair, drive recycling rates up, and helping to support OCCs carbon aspirations.
13. The Strategy has four primary aims, and then details a range of ways in which they may be delivered. The aims are:
 - (a) Provide a good quality service for Oxfordshire residents, our waste collection authorities, and other key stakeholders and deliver on our commitments in our joint waste strategy.
 - (b) Develop and promote in-county reuse and repair of household materials taken to HWRCs
 - (c) Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and energy recovery
 - (d) Reduce carbon emissions by seeking to manage waste as close to source as possible
14. The Strategy has also been developed to allow sites to be reviewed on a priority basis. The possible relocation of HWRC sites (due to lease or planning expiry) can be politically sensitive due to residents wanting close access to a HWRC site. The new Strategy sets the principals for future decision making. Individual site expansion or relocation will be subject to planning permission consultations giving residents the ability to comment on specifics.

Consultation Feedback and Strategy Updates

15. The Strategy's public consultation ran for 6 weeks from 27th March to 8th May 2023 on OCC's 'Lets Talk' consultation platform. Hard copies were also available in libraries. The consultation was advertised at HWRCs, in libraries, through the 'Your Oxfordshire' newsletter and on social media (paid for and organic posts), including the 'next door' application.
16. The full results from the consultation and its questions are provided in Annex B. There were 391 responses submitted through the 'Let Talk' portal and a further 4 responses provided by partners and stakeholders via email. There was a good geographic spread of respondents from across Oxfordshire. Most respondents were users of our HWRC network currently, with only 5% of respondents not currently HWRC site users.
17. The vast majority of respondents, including those from stakeholders and partners, were strongly in agreement with the strategy's goals and aims, and

there was also strong agreement with our proposals on how we will deliver against our aims. This indicates wide support for the Strategy's approach to deliver a HWRC network set up for reuse, upcycling, innovation, and the circular economy.

18. Free text comments showed that respondents are keen for OCC to keep travel distances to HWRCs as low as possible to encourage people to use the sites and there were several requests that OCC does not shut sites. There were also several comments linking the need to use a car to reach HWRCs with the increasing move to reduce personal car ownership. There were also several requests to ensure we coordinate services with the District and City councils to ensure a comprehensive, easy to access waste service.
19. Respondents also used the free text boxes to demonstrate their support for increasing the amount of reuse happening at HWRCs to reduce the amount of material disposed of and generate income. There were also several comments related to the need to work with manufacturers to reduce the amount of packaging produced to help residents waste less and recycle more.
20. This consultation feedback has been incorporated into the strategy update, and the strategy remains committed to the introduction of reuse on sites as soon as we have the space to safely do so. The strategy acknowledges the councils active travel policies and will ensure that our access policy continues to enable residents to visit sites easily using a variety of different transport modes. OCC remains committed to our partnership with the other councils in Oxfordshire and will continue to work with them through the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership to deliver effective and where possible integrated waste services within the county.
21. The strategy also acknowledges the concerns and consultation feedback received around travel distances to sites. Due to future uncertainties, OCC cannot commit to not shutting any sites, as stated within the strategy as OCC does not have security of tenure at some locations, however the strategy has indicated OCC's preference (dependent upon council finance) to secure or, where needed, relocate the sites in our network. Once OCC has done this, then OCC will look at expansion of existing sites to accommodate the increasing population. This may mean new sites are added to the network.
22. This strategy focuses on HWRC infrastructure, and therefore changes have not been made to address the consultation comments about DIY charging, however this have been noted and will be considered as part of the next scheduled review of our waste acceptance policy.
23. The HWRC Strategy does not address our role in lobbying Government and manufacturers as this is included in our countywide Strategy¹.
24. As well as ORWP's countywide waste strategy, the HWRC strategy aligns with a number of OCC's other strategies: the active travel policy, and OCC's net zero

¹ [OxfordshiresResourcesandWasteStrategy](#)

ambitions (through the drive to reduce carbon emissions) and links with OCC's developer funding policy.

Strategy Approval

25. The strategy has been updated following the public consultation, and this updated version will be submitted via the Forward Planning process for Cabinet approval. The proposed approval timeline is as follows:

- SLT 6th Sept 2023
- Informal Cabinet 19th Sept 2023
- Cabinet 17th Oct 2023

Corporate Policies and Priorities

26. The HWRC strategy aligns with several goals in OCCs Strategic plan 2023-2025:

- (a) Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work – by looking to increase reuse and recycling at HWRCs and reduce disposal we are assisting in the transition to a circular economy, and helping to reduce carbon emissions
- (b) Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents – the provision of safe, legal and environmentally sustainable ways of disposing of materials no longer wanted
- (c) Working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit – we contract with several local businesses to help manage waste accepted at HWRCs, and our network is used by a number of charities as a way to dispose of materials.

Financial Implications

27. Consultation publicity and advertising costs were met from existing waste budgets, and Consultation responses have been incorporated into the strategy by existing staff, therefore there are no further financial impacts for strategy development.

28. The Strategy will support the delivery of sustainable and cost effective HWRC service across Oxfordshire and aids the transition to a circular economy through re-use and repair of household materials. Enabling and promoting reuse and repair through reuse shops can generate an income revenue stream helping offset overall service costs.

29. Business cases for Capital Funding to support strategy delivery will be taken on a site-by-site basis in priority order through the relevant Capital boards and approval processes if required.
30. The strategy will also support developer funding requests, reducing the capital burden on the council.

Comments checked by: Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner, filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

31. Paper has been reviewed and no issues raised

Comments checked by: Marina Lancashire, Lawyer - Legal Services, marina.lancashire@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

32. Once approved, delivery of the strategy will be carried out by staff within the Waste Management Group, assisted by Property and Environment and Place Directorate colleagues as required.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

33. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out to identify any impacts on residents with protected characteristics and any additional community impacts. This found that the HWRC strategy is most likely to impact travel distances for residents, meaning sites are either nearer, or closer than they are currently. This may impact carbon emissions (and associated climate impacts) and travel costs.

Sustainability Implications

34. The Strategy has a positive impact on climate action as it supports the waste hierarchy, ensuring the recycling and reuse of household waste. A Climate Impact Assessment is currently being developed. As most residents arrive at HWRCs by car (as materials are often too big or numerous to be carried/transported by bike) conveniently located HWRCs close to centres of population help to reduce the car mileage travelled by residents to visit HWRCs. We also promote journeys to be combined with other activities where possible.

Risk Management

35. Public acceptability of the strategy is likely to be high as the vast majority of respondents, including those from stakeholders and partners, were strongly in

agreement with the strategy's goals and aims. Feedback has been incorporated into this strategy, (or is included within other OCC documents) reducing the risk of public dissatisfaction further.

36. The new HWRC Strategy is the mitigating factor for the following risks and will support the long-term planning for the HWRC network to ensure that it is properly invested in, providing Oxfordshire with a viable, sustainable and safe HWRC network.
- (a) If the HWRC network fails, with sites having to be closed due to leases or planning permission expiring or due to safety issues, this will leave residents without a local HWRC to deposit materials, causing reputational and political issues, and may lead to increased revenue costs as residents place more materials in their kerbside residual bins.
 - (b) As population in the county increases the sites will become increasingly over capacity, causing queuing, issues on the highways network and potentially leading to more waste being deposited in kerbside waste streams and increasing costs.
 - (c) There are a number of legislative changes planned over the next few years that are likely to require additional space on site to accommodate materials. The strategy will help us to address compliance.
37. A risk register for the service is currently maintained, and as each individual business case is brought forward for individual sites, a risk register will be developed for each project.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex A:

HWRC Strategy



HWRC%20strategy%
20FOR%20SCRUITINY.

Annex B:

HWRC Strategy consultation results



HWRC%20consultatio
n%20questions%20FI

Contact Officer:

Rachel Burns,
Waste Strategy Manager,
07789877310 rachel.burns@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2023

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