

WASTE COLLECTION PILOT - SATISFACTION FINDINGS

Introduction

The Waste Collection Pilot started on 26 October 2020 and has been extended to March 23, 2021. The aim of the pilot is for residents to try out the wheeled bins and identify any issues. It also enables the thorough testing of our equipment and procedures to develop options for new waste and recycling collection methods before the contract renewal in 2023. 84% of councils in England already supply their residents with wheeled bins.

We want to ensure MK residents are completely happy with the process. The pilot allows us to start off with an area that we can monitor, control and evaluate thoroughly. The data sets include satisfaction surveys with residents in the pilot area.

Background

Driven by Milton Keynes Council's ambition to become the Greenest City and the Sustainability Strategy 2019–2050, the Environmental Services Programme is reviewing its future service provision, which includes waste collection. A motion was put forward to Full Council on 17 July 2019, which was referred to Cabinet on 3 September 2019, to explore pilot schemes for waste collection to replace the use of plastic sacks. This included the use of wheeled bins and other waste management solutions that could address the different challenges faced by different estates.

A revised collection system is required to be tested before a borough wide roll out, to collect data, to review the modelling, operational methods and evaluate resident feedback. The pilot will measure ease of use; recycling rate, contamination, carbon management and resident satisfaction.

Methodology

The Covid19 Pandemic has had a direct impact on the approach to engagement. Traditionally a range of options would have been implemented which also included more face to face interactions at public events, physical attendance at meetings and more door knocking in the pilot area. Following government guidance to stay home and minimise contact, this type of engagement has been very limited. Other approaches had to be adopted to ensure that residents knew how to share their views and feedback to the Waste Team. This has been supported by a digital approach.

Methods of communication and engagement;

- Letter direct to all residents in pilot area in advance of start of pilot September 2020
- Information leaflet delivered with bins/boxes October 2020
- Website including banners, dedicated page, FAQs, review/refresh
- E-alerts
- Social media
- Video and audio clip

- Dedicated inbox
- Requests for change of bins/boxes after 4 weeks of pilot in place
- Satisfaction survey hardcopy post card 1 Nov/Dec 2020 and online version
- Satisfaction survey hard copy post card 2 early Jan 2021 and online version
- Regular site visits to New Bradwell starting 26 October 2020 with some resident interactions.
- Gainsborough Close residents' letter and doorstep resident interactions w/c 16 November 2020.

Enquiries;

Timeframe	Number of enquiries	Themes
September – October 2020 After resident letter sent and before pilot started	175	Residents worried about number of bins, capacity issues, storage, street blight and ability to move bins
26 October – end of November 2020 – First month of residents using wheeled bin or boxes in pilot area.	152	We asked residents to work with us during this four-week period to get used to the containers they had been provided with and to make contact after 4 weeks if there were still issues.
2 November – 13 November 2020	9	Specific requests after four-week period ended asking to change either from bins to boxes, or boxes to bins.
16 November – 27 November	34	Gainsborough Close and spur roads changed from boxes to bins following several enquiries from residents and councillors.
December 2020 – February 2021	70	Varied; Why are we still taking side waste? Small minority of residents with bins/boxes and disagree with allocation. Some concerns about areas where residents leave their bins/boxes out on the street rather than returning to property. 5 requests for larger wheeled bins to accommodate larger households

Approach adopted to responding to enquiries

Every effort was made to respond to enquiries within 5 working days. Several standardised responses were developed that can then be tailored for the specific enquiry. Where residents had provided a contact telephone number a telephone call would be made direct to the resident to discuss any issues raised.

Images of Freepost satisfaction survey postcards Satisfaction survey post card 1

The image shows two survey postcards side-by-side. The left one is green and the right one is blue. Both have the Milton Keynes Council logo at the bottom right. The green card asks about space for waste, recycling frequency, and satisfaction with the new system. The blue card asks about room for Christmas recycling, extra bags, and street cleanliness. Both cards include a feedback section for additional comments.

Satisfaction response rates by area where additional comments provided for both surveys (Not all residents included their personal details)

- New Bradwell
- Grange Farm
- Monkston Park
- Monkston
- Brooklands
- Bletchley

The pilot was specifically designed to test wheeled bins and boxes in areas that were known to be more challenging. New Bradwell is an example of an older Victorian area with terraced housing and confined space in streets. There has been a mixed range of issues raised covering street blight, bins too big/too small, weekly collections for all and side waste continues to be contentious. Some residents believe that it should not be collected, others think it should.

Satisfaction Survey Post Card 1

This was scheduled to go to residents four weeks after they had been using the containers provided for the pilot. Post cards delivered on 26/27 November 2020 to 2966 properties. 630 responses received. The majority were received via the Freepost address and others completed online survey option.

Residents were asked which container they have been using?

- Wheeled bins 564
- Boxes 66

Most residents taking part in pilot area have been allocated wheeled bins. Only a small number of properties (approx. 200) were provided with boxes on the basis that refuse vehicles were not able to access their street to collect bins, or they had no suitable storage area for wheeled bins.

Have you got enough space for your waste?

- 78% (491) Yes
- 22% (139) No

Residents with wheeled bins were more satisfied with capacity than residents who have boxes. 81% of residents with wheeled bins state that they have enough space for their waste. This reduces to 42% when residents with boxes were asked.

Figure 1A – Properties with Boxes - Enough Space?

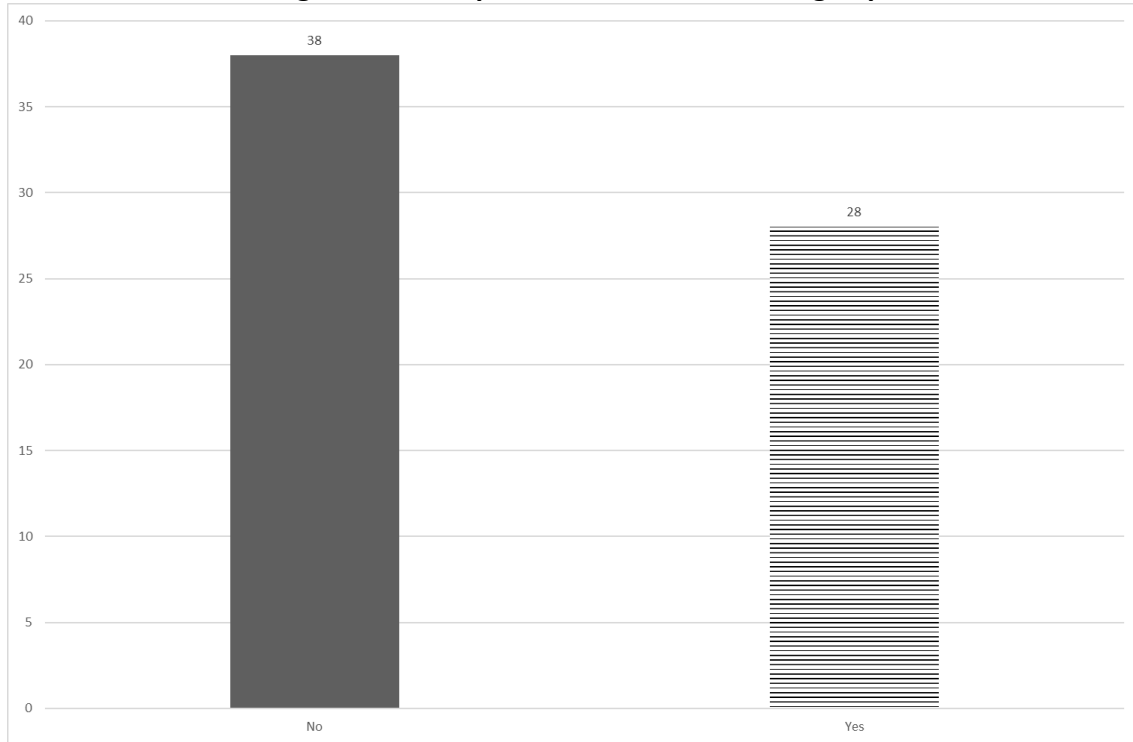
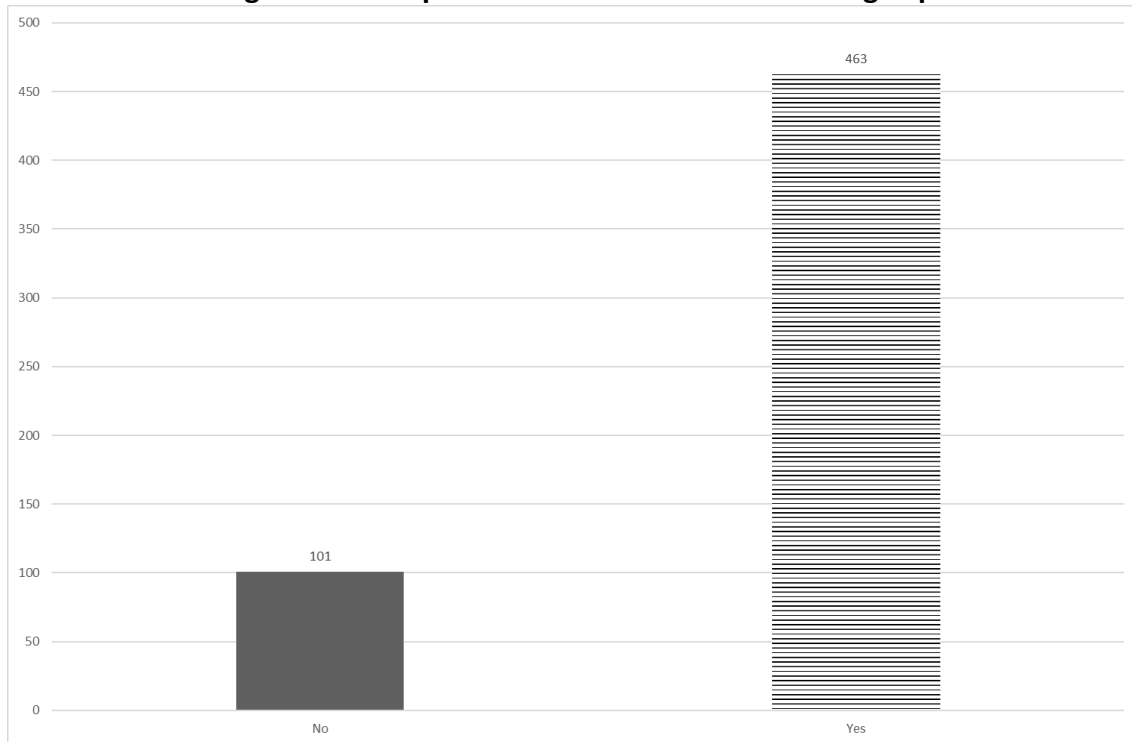


Figure 1B – Properties with Wheeled Bins - Enough Space?



Are you recycling more?

- 42% (267) Yes
- 46% (289) About the same
- 12% (74) no

'Makes recycling easier'

Overall, residents with wheeled bins were recycling more than residents with boxes. Satisfaction and recycling levels were lower for residents using boxes, generally for those who felt they did not have enough space/capacity for the recycling.

Figure 2A – Properties with Boxes – Recycling More?

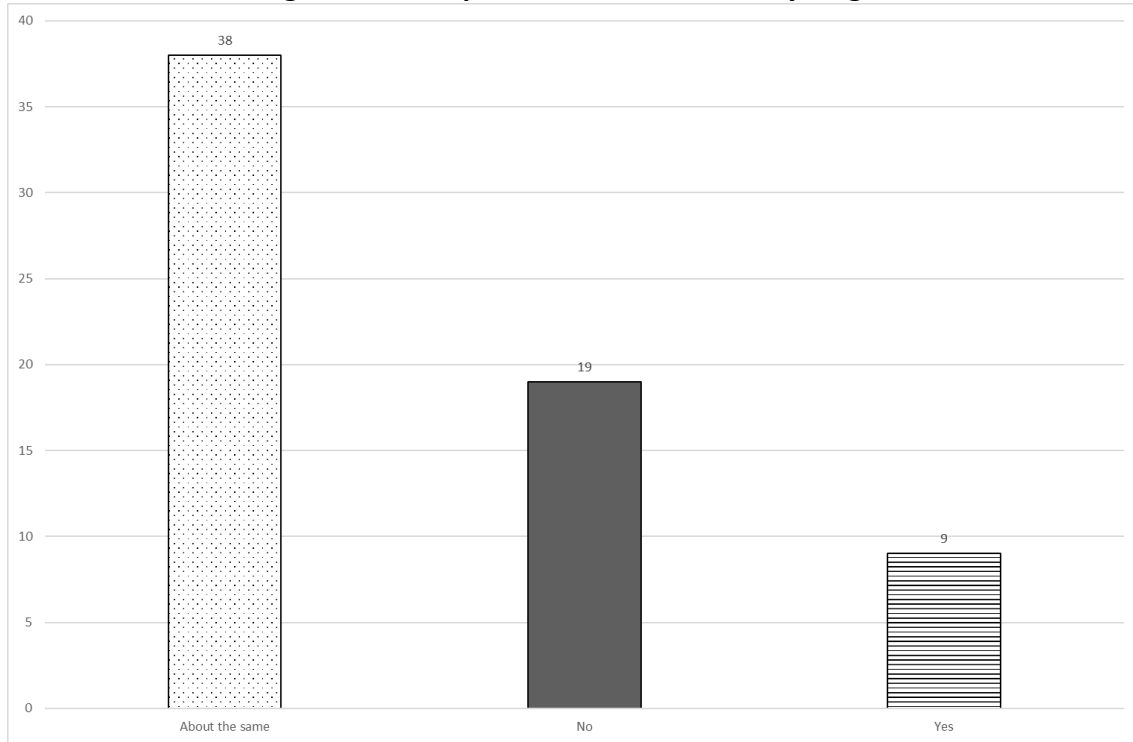
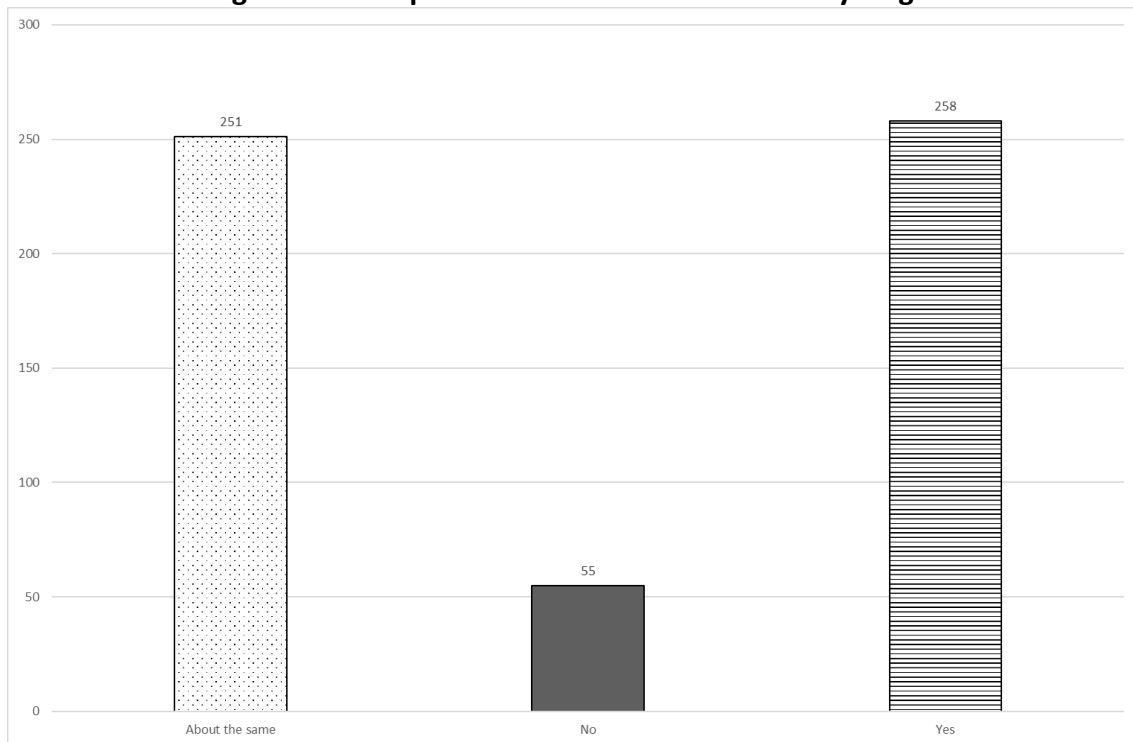


Figure 2B – Properties with Wheeled Bins – Recycling More?



Does your street seem cleaner?

- 56% (351) Yes
- 27% (172) About the same
- 17% (107) No

Feedback from residents using wheeled bins consistently demonstrated that they thought streets were cleaner. The response from residents using boxes was more mixed.

Figure 3A – Properties with Boxes – Cleaner Streets?

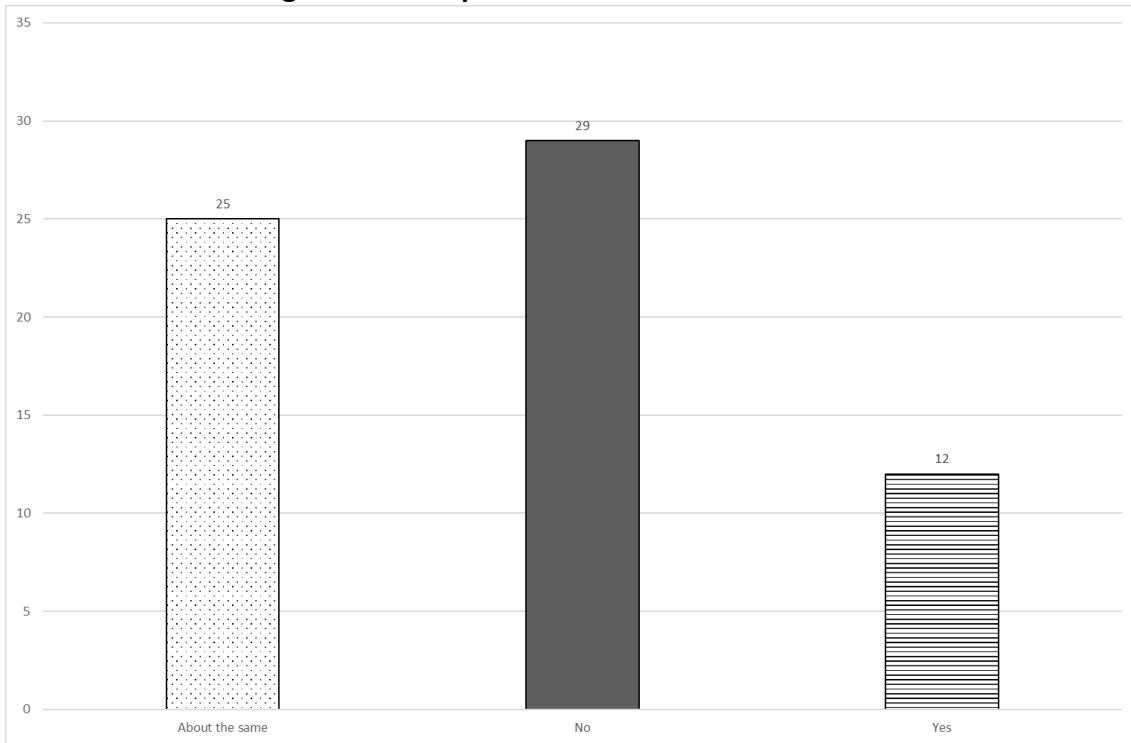
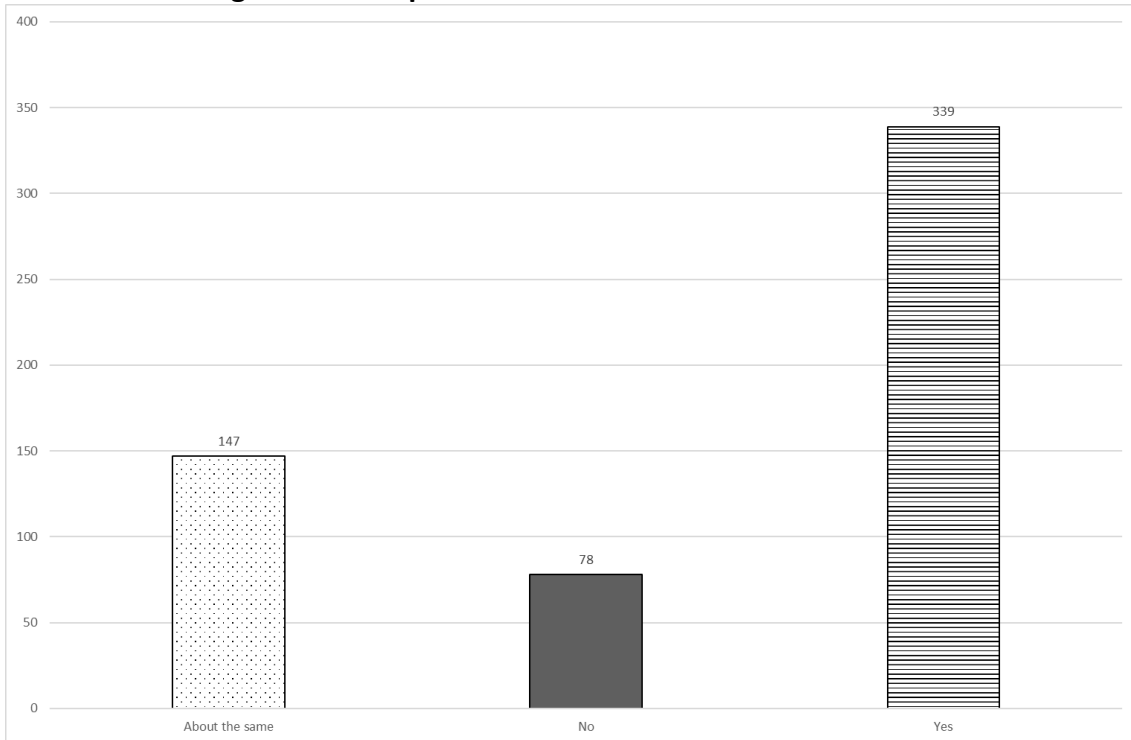


Figure 3B – Properties with Wheeled Bins – Cleaner Streets?



Overall, how satisfied are you with the new system?

- 86% of responses for residents with wheeled bins were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral.
- 82% of responses were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral for both bins and boxes.

Figure 4A – Properties with Boxes – Satisfied?

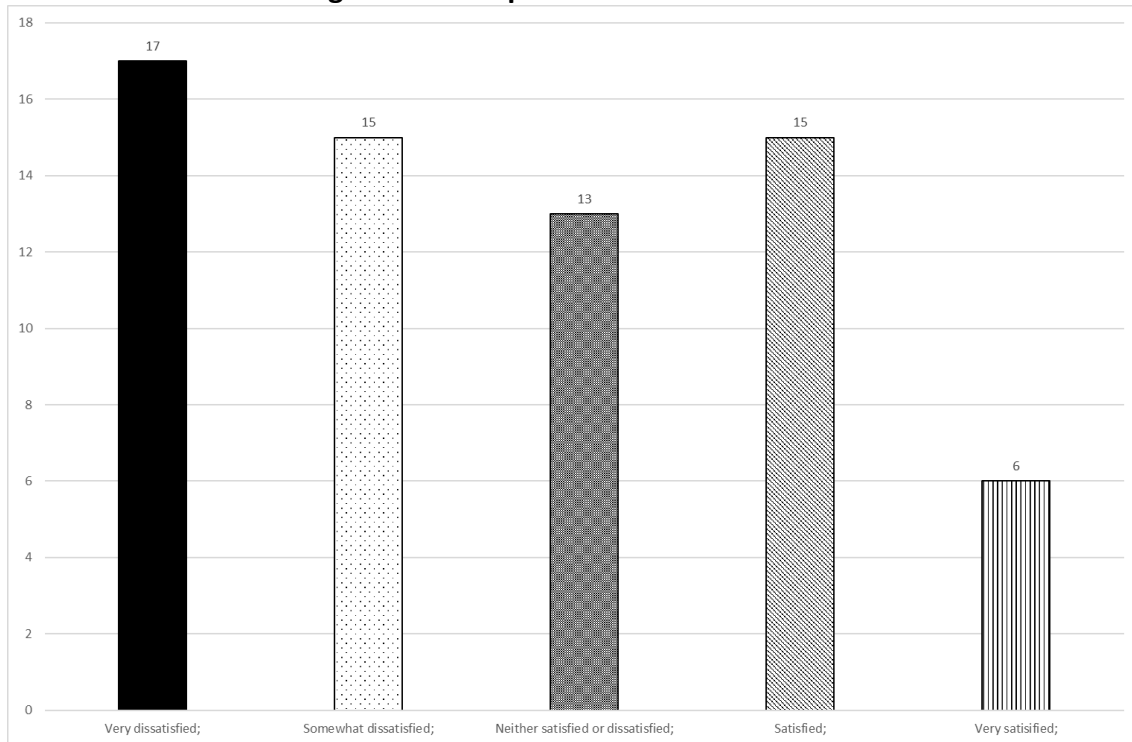
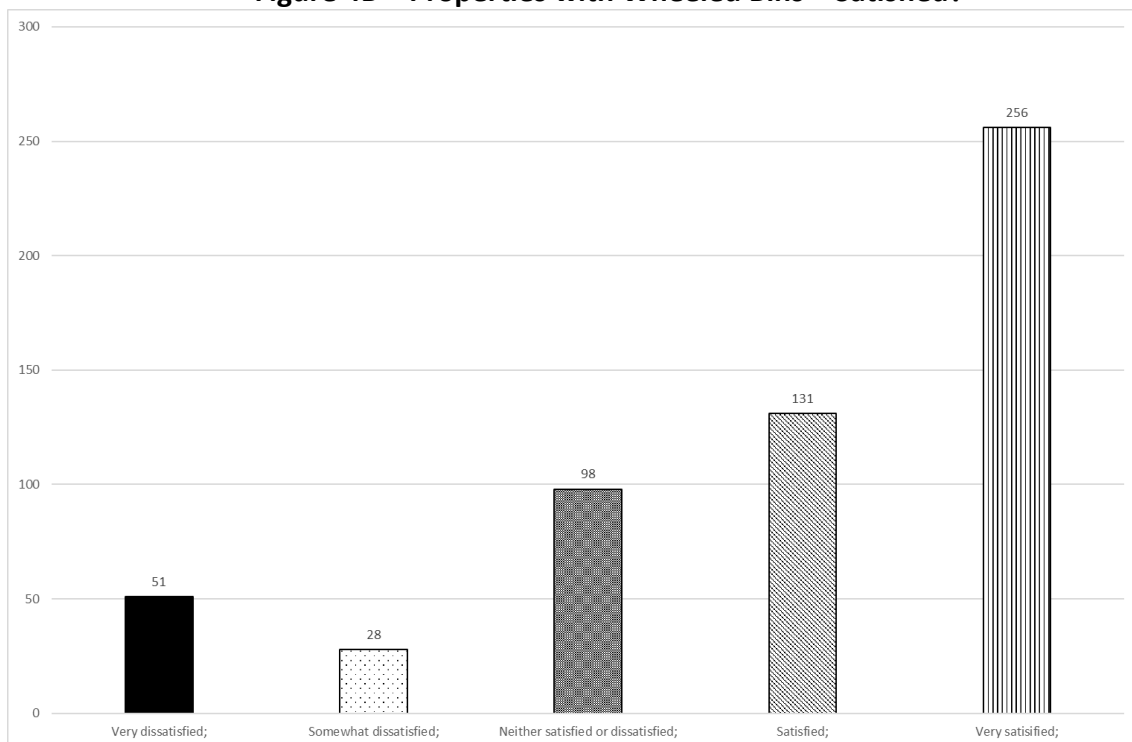


Figure 4B – Properties with Wheeled Bins – Satisfied?



'Been waiting for this, great idea, cleaner and easier to use than plastic bags'

Satisfaction Survey Post Card 2

This was scheduled to enable us to obtain feedback from residents after the Christmas period, which evidence demonstrates generates higher levels of waste. This year, waste levels across all of Milton Keynes were higher than the norm for the Christmas period, with a 70% in glass alone. Most postcards were delivered on the 7/8 January 2021 with some going out to rural areas later in January.

Postcards delivered to 2966 properties and 579 responses received. The majority were received via the Freepost address, with remainder completing online survey option.

Residents were asked which container they have been using?

- Wheeled bins 530
- Boxes 49 responses

Did you have enough room to put all your waste and recycling in the correct bins over the Christmas period?

- 61% (355) Yes
- 39% (224) No

Despite some residents needing to put out extra waste over the Christmas period, 61% still felt they had enough capacity for their waste. Residents using wheeled bins were more satisfied.

Figure 5A – Properties with Boxes - Enough Space Over Christmas?

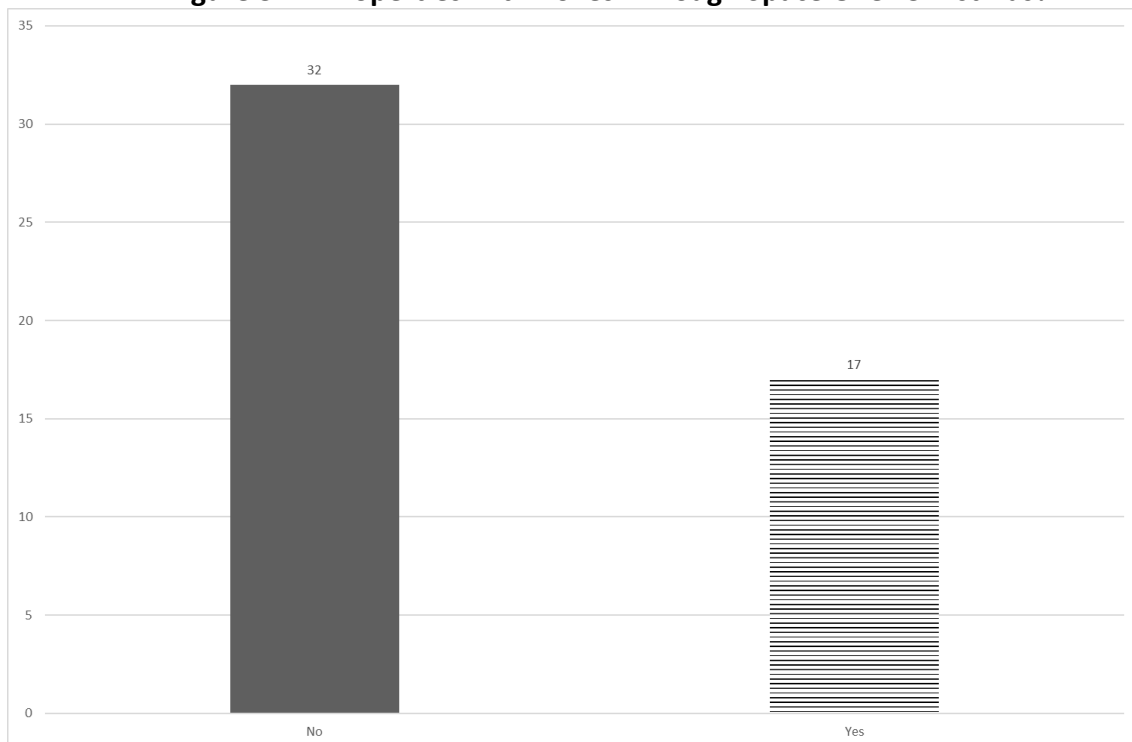
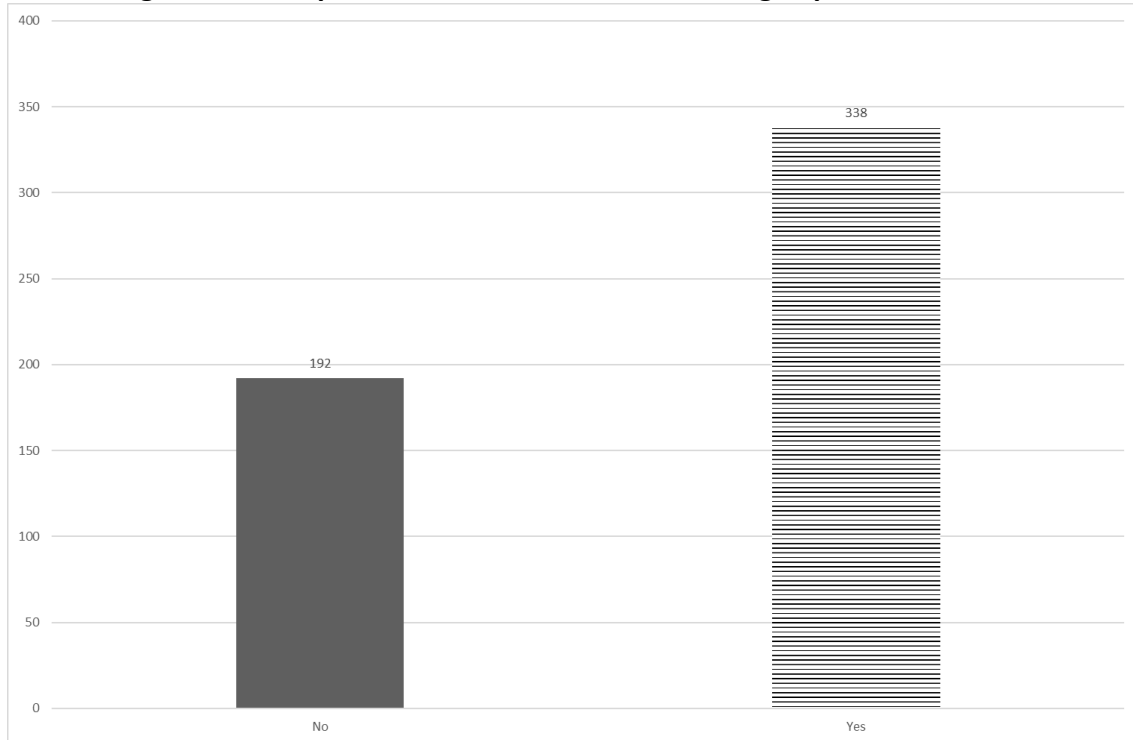


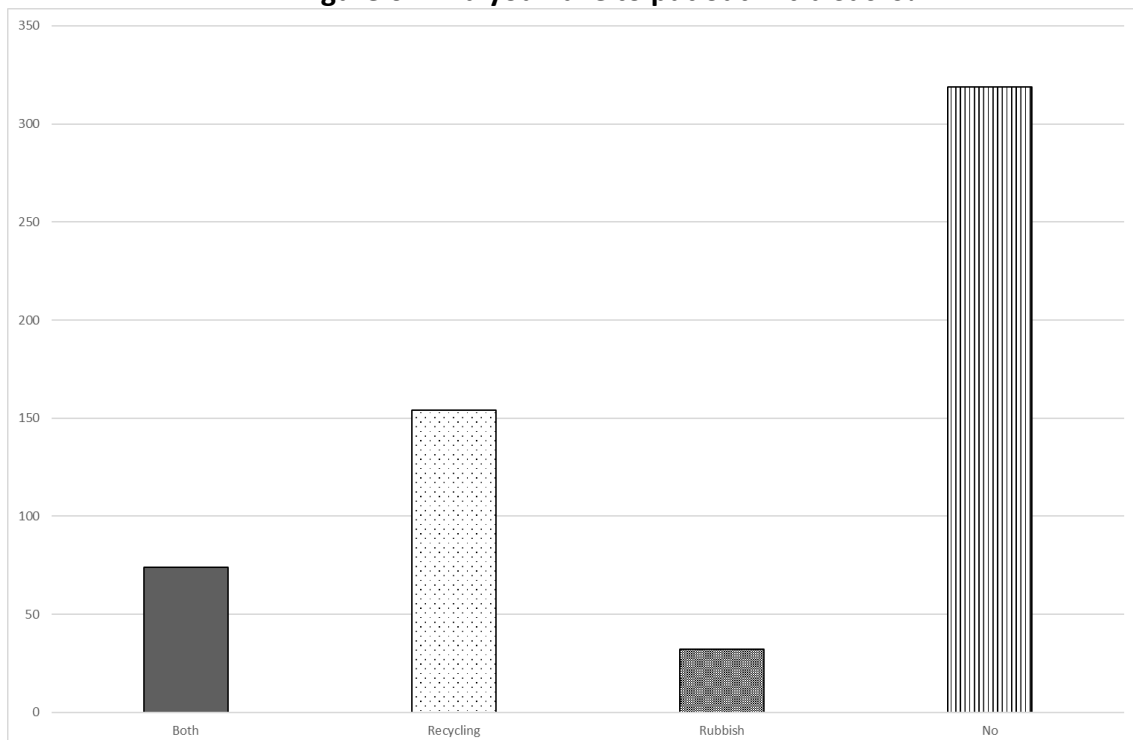
Figure 5B – Properties with Wheeled Bins - Enough Space Over Christmas?



Did you have to put out extra bags?

- 27% (154) Recycling
- 13% (74) Both recycling and rubbish
- 5% (32) Rubbish
- 55% (319) No

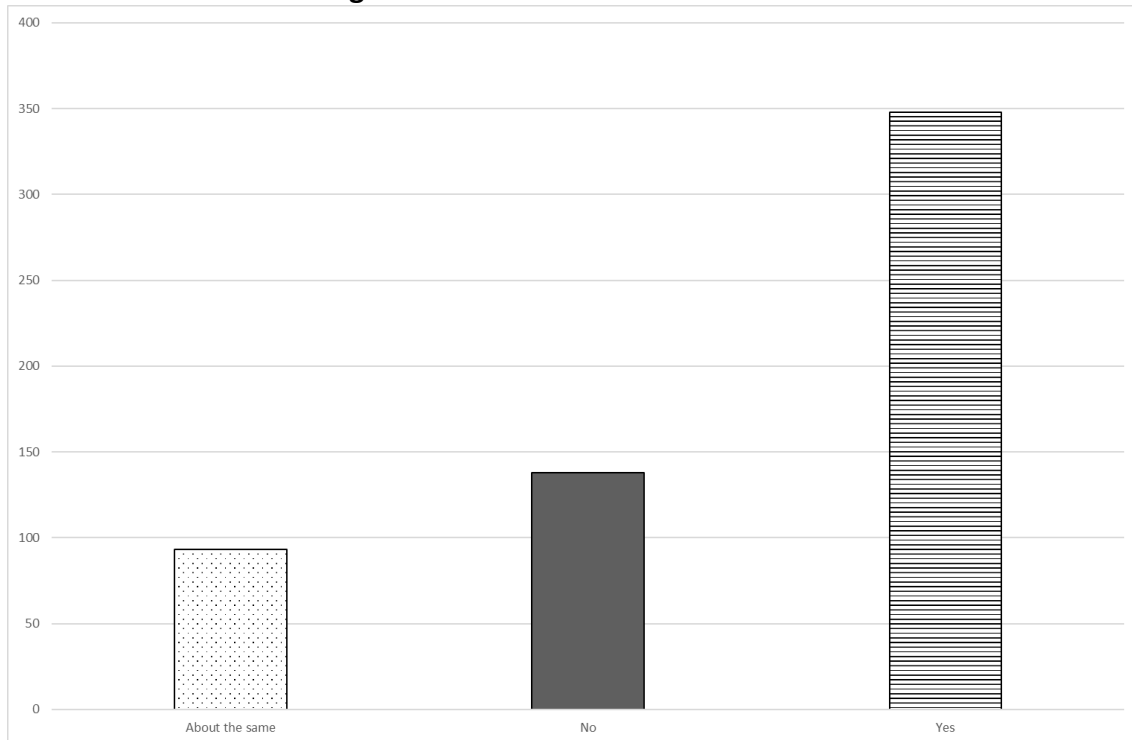
Figure 6 – Did you have to put out Extra Sacks?



Does your street seem cleaner?

- 60% (348) Yes
- 24% (138) About the same
- 16% (93) No

Figure 7 – Does Your Street Seem Cleaner?

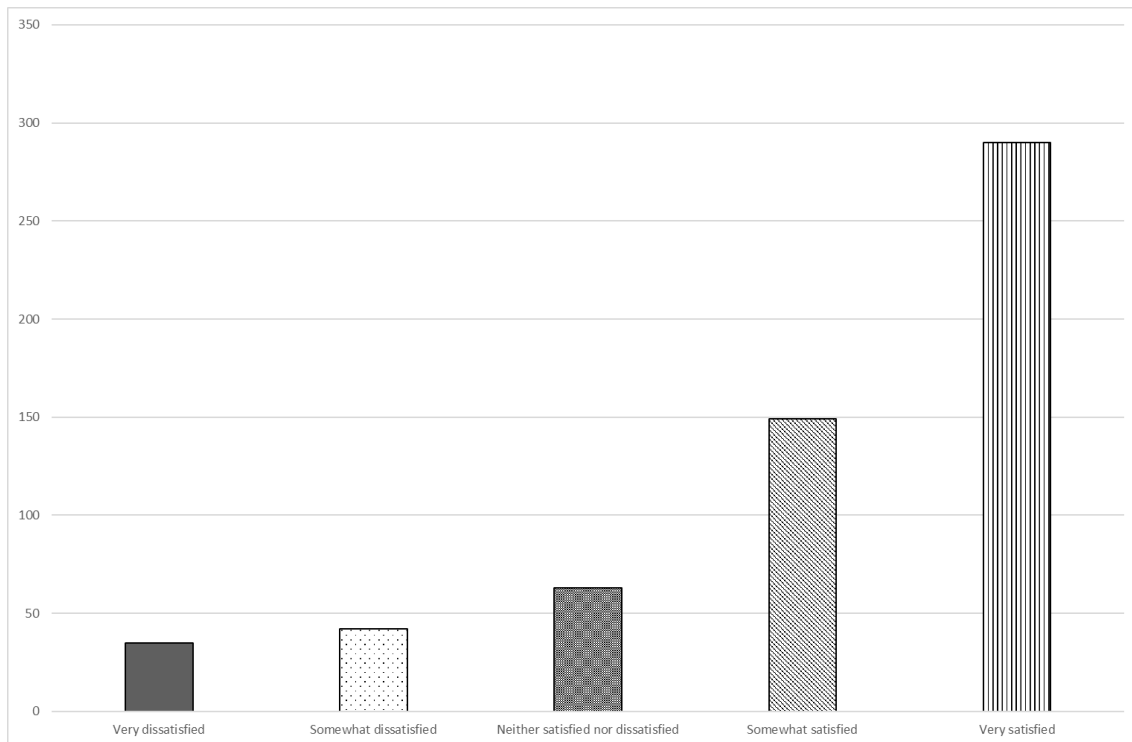


'This is an excellent scheme. Please keep it in place once the pilot has finished. The streets are so much cleaner. The bins are easy to use.'

Overall, how satisfied are you with the new system?

85% of responses for residents with wheeled bins were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral.

Figure 8 – Satisfaction with waste Collection Pilot?



'Love my wheelie bins. So easy to use and no mess!'

87% of responses were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral for both bins and boxes.

Key themes from comments drawn from satisfaction surveys;

- **Moving wheeled bins** - Concerns about moving containers for people with mobility Issues – Once residents started to use the wheeled bins, these concerns largely fell away. Evidence does demonstrate that moving wheeled bins is easier for most people than moving sacks.
- **Storage** – There were some concerns from residents about using boxes in the home and space to store them. There has been concern from residents in areas where garden space is limited about the space that the wheeled bins take up.
- **Street scene** – Mixed feedback. Residents are concerned that wheeled bins being left on the pavement is unsightly and aesthetically displeasing. For others, there are safety concerns about bins possibly blocking pavements and making it difficult for people with mobility issues, scooters and pushchairs.
- **Recycling** – Many residents are recycling correctly, but people are noticing more now where other residents are not and would like to see support, education and action taken.

Satisfaction data/interviews have taken place with the refuse and recycling collection crew. This will be incorporated into the operational data sets.

Conclusion

Engagement rates with residents, parish and town councils and ward councillors within the pilot area remain high. There has been significant interest in the pilot. Before the pilot started, there was a lot of concern from some residents about the change. Once the pilot was implemented, residents did adapt very quickly, particularly to the alternate weekly arrangement for the collection of recycling.

Overall, satisfaction rates are high for the majority of residents using wheeled bins within the pilot area, remaining constant at over 80%. The response to the use of boxes has been more mixed and further work is required to understand other options.

From responses received, 42% of residents are recycling more, as was part of the intent behind the pilot.

On average, 60% of respondents feel that the streets have become cleaner using bins, with less sacks and spillage on the streets.