

Recycling and Household Waste Sites

Consultation Survey Report

February 2024

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Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who has taken the time to provide their views and feedback as part of the consultation process.

Purpose of this report

This document provides a summary of the findings of the 12-week public consultation undertaken between 1 November 2023 and 24 January 2024, on proposed changes to Leicestershire County Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS). This report reflects the findings of the formal consultation questionnaire, and additional responses received during the consultation period.

Background

Leicestershire County Council continues to face financial challenges, with growing demand for county council services and general price rises (inflation) increasing the cost of delivering services. As such financial savings continue to be required, and the council's recently published budget plan included a requirement to make savings from the RHWS. The following proposals were put forward for public consultation and are estimated to save approximately £420,000 per year:

- Closure of three of the Council's RHWS: Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby.
- Change to part time opening at the Bottesford RHWS.
- Reduce summer opening hours at all RHWS.
- Introduce Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.

Consultation methods

The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire (see appendix) accessed via the 'Have your say' page on the Council's website, with an email address provided to enable residents and stakeholders to ask questions about the consultation or request the questionnaire in alternative formats. A variety of other stakeholders were also consulted, such as district councils, parish councils, neighbouring Waste Disposal Authorities, and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG).

Additionally, six online focus groups were held which sought the views of a sample of Leicestershire residents in general and also those from areas specifically impacted by the proposed site closures. The feedback from the focus groups can be found in the separate Focus Group Report.

About the respondents

In total, 5,638 responses were received (5,635 online and 3 paper/postal responses). Results have been reported based on those who provided a valid response, i.e. excluding the 'don't know' responses and no replies from the calculation of the percentages, where applicable. The following provides a summary of the responses. All results, including the open comments, have been passed to the service for reference and further consideration.

In reply to Q1, the majority of responses (95%) were from Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland residents. A smaller percentage (3%) were from interested members of the public and residents from another county (1%). These and other roles selected are summarised in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Summary of Q1: In what capacity are you responding to this survey?¹

Response	#	%
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident	5,316	94.7%
Interested member of the public	149	2.7%
Resident of another county	68	1.2%
Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee	16	0.3%
Leicestershire County Council staff member	10	0.2%
Representative from a parish, district or borough council	14	0.2%
County, district or parish councillor	12	0.2%
Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group	6	0.1%
Representative of a business or private sector organisation	4	0.1%
Representative of another public sector organisation	2	0.0%
Other (please specify)	17	0.3%

Those who indicated they were responding as a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident, resident of another county and interested member of the public were asked a series of demographic questions, of which:

- 53% were female and 46% were male, with 1% indicating that they use another term
- The highest proportion were aged 55 to 64 years (23%)
- 19% indicated that they had a long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity
- The majority identified as white (96%) and 4% identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic group
- 43% said they lived in Harborough and just over a third (34%) said they lived in Charnwood
- Over half were employed, either full-time (42%) or part-time (12%), with 10% self-employed and 29% wholly retired from work

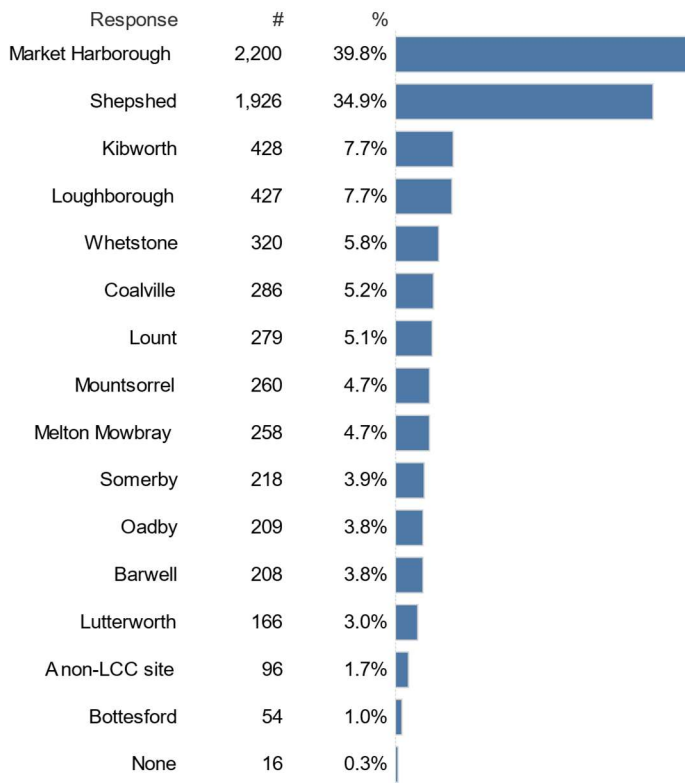
Use of recycling and household waste sites

Residents and interested members of the public were asked which RHWS they used.

¹ Those who selected 'other' in response to Q1 included those indicating that they were family members of Leicestershire residents, or a homeowner, a former resident, site user, Charnwood Housing Residents' Forum member, a resident of Shepshed, and a resident in a neighbouring council area.

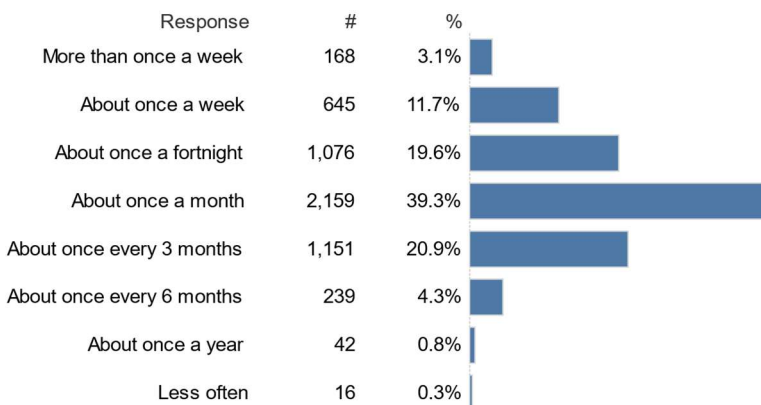
Overall, 40% of respondents indicated that they used Market Harborough and 35% indicated that they used Shepshed. Chart 2 below provides further details of all sites selected in response to this question.

Chart 2: Summary of Q5: Which, if any, of the following sites do you use? (multiple choice)²



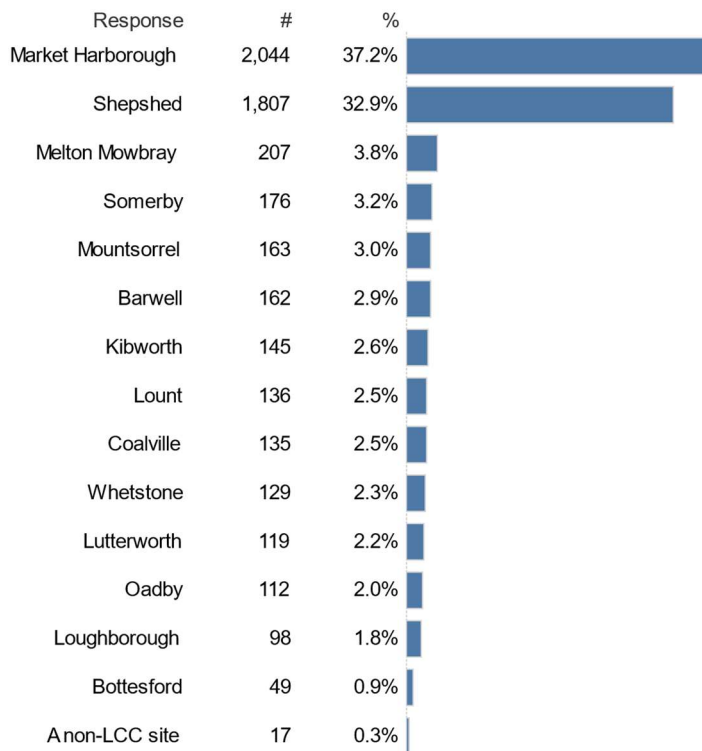
Those who said they used a RHWS were asked how often they use a site. As Chart 3 below shows, the most popular frequency selected was about once a month (39%). This pattern is broadly similar when looking at frequency of usage by specific site(s) used.

Chart 3: Summary of Q6: On average, how often, if at all, do you use a site?

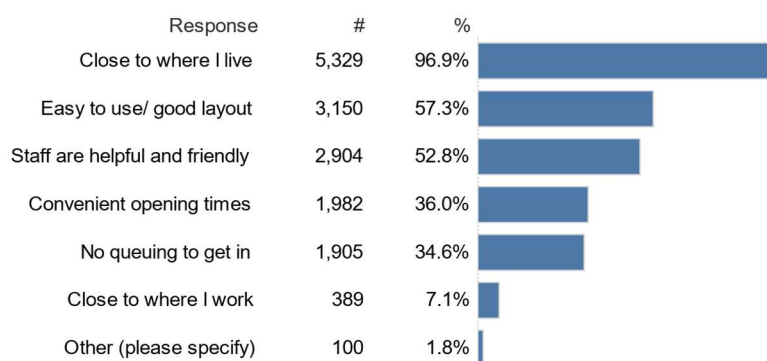


These respondents were also asked which site they used most often. Over a third (37%) said they used Market Harborough most often, with a third (33%) selecting Shepshed as the site they used most often. See chart 4 for further detail.

² Please note this question was multiple choice and respondents could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

Chart 4: Summary of Q7: Which site you use most often?

When asked what their main reasons were for using each site, the majority of respondents said it was close to where they live (97%). Over half said they used the site because it was easy to use/had a good layout (57%) or because staff are helpful and friendly (53%). Over a third (36%) said it was because the site had convenient opening times or that there was no queue to get in (35%). A smaller proportion of respondents said it was close to where they worked (7%) or for other reasons (2%).³ See Chart 5 for more detail.

Chart 5: Summary of Q8: What are your main reasons for using this site (multiple choice)?⁴

³ 'Other' reasons provided for use of the site included recycling, environmental concerns and the avoidance of landfill, convenience, safety, disposal of garden waste and opening days/times.

⁴ Please note this question was multiple choice and respondents could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

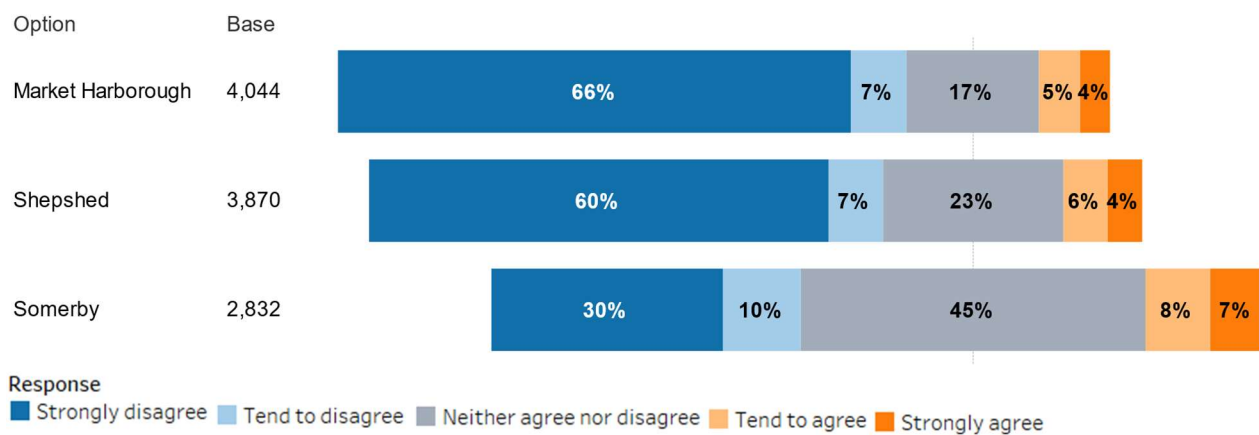
Views on the proposals

Proposal 1: Recycling and household waste site closures

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to close the sites in Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby.

As Chart 6 below shows, the majority disagreed (66% strongly disagree, 7% tend to disagree) with the proposal to close the Market Harborough site. The majority of respondents also disagreed with the proposal to close Shepshed (60% strongly disagree, 7% tend to disagree). Regarding the proposal to close Somerby, a notable proportion selected 'neither agree nor disagree' (45%) and 40% of respondents disagreed (30% strongly disagree, 10% tend to disagree).

Chart 6: Summary of responses to Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close the following sites?



Respondents were asked a follow-up question to Q9, 'Do you have any comments on the above? A total of 3,794 respondents (67%) provided an answer to this question. A number of key themes were identified from these comments, which are summarised below.

- Fly-tipping:** concerns about the potential impact of closures on fly-tipping was the most notable theme amongst comments. This included views of a 'false economy' and that the cost of future fly-tip removal would be greater than proposed savings. There were also concerns over 'hidden' costs and costs for landowners, farmers and local district/borough councils, including their capacity to manage this. Many also highlighted a reliance on local volunteers to clear fly-tipped waste and the impact closures would have for them. Many noted that fly-tipping was already a local issue (particularly in Market Harborough and Shepshed), that it had increased during Covid-19, since restricted opening hours and since charges were introduced. Added consequences of fly-tipping noted included the impact on wildlife, risk of fly-tippers falsely advertising waste removal services, and concern that recent years' work to reduce fly-tipping will be reversed. Related comments also raised concerns regarding policing and enforcement, signage, and education.
- Other environmental impacts:** comments under this theme included references to the impact on air pollution and carbon reduction targets, particularly if residents are required to travel further to an alternative site or cannot combine car journeys with other reasons (e.g. for work). Burning waste was also raised as a specific concern. Many were concerned that residents would use general waste bins rather than recycle or practice good waste disposal, also that residents were already receiving reduced

collections and smaller refuse bins. Concern was also raised regarding the costs to local authorities of separating waste in general waste bins. Comments highlighted the potential impact on kerbside refuse collection, including delays and capacity. Many noted that recycling was becoming more difficult (including insufficient local facilities such as bottle banks, food waste collections) when it should be encouraged and made easier.

- **Wider environmental impacts:** some were concerned about waste building up on or around properties, leading to health and safety issues. References were made to the potential social and/or wellbeing impacts if closures affect the ability to keep areas clean and tidy. Also mentioned was the potential impact on road surfaces due to increased travel and the cost of repairs. Others raised concerns or questions regarding the future of the land of the sites that are proposed to close, and whether there would be opportunity to buy it.
- **Population and housing growth:** one of the most frequently noted concerns amongst comments was that the proposed closures were in areas of housing growth, particularly Market Harborough and Shepshed. Many felt that the population size and scale of local housing developments highlighted the need for a local site. Respondents also suggested that the increase in use and Council Tax income from new housing would reduce the cost per visit to sites and queried the use of these funds. Concern was also raised regarding a reduction in green land for housing, and the recycling and waste needs of new householders, those living in apartments or high-density housing.
- **Suitability of alternatives:** respondents raised concerns about the Kibworth site, namely the location of the site near a busy road (known locally as an accident 'blackspot'). Many expressed strong concerns about accessing and exiting the Kibworth site, both in terms of traffic levels and safety. The need for additional traffic safety/control improvements (e.g. traffic lights, road layout) around the Kibworth site was noted by a number of respondents. Concerns were also raised about traffic levels and queuing at other alternative sites, including Loughborough, Melton, and Kettering.

Comments raised doubts about capacity and increased usage at alternative sites, including the fact that these were already busy (in particular Shepshed and Loughborough). Reduced opening was already seen as an issue and some questioned whether alternative sites would have increased opening hours. A number of comments raised concerns about the impact on staff workloads at alternative sites. Several comments highlighted how existing sites complement each other, for example in opening hours. Other more general concerns about alternative sites included the quality of service, accessibility, inconvenience and travel time, inability to recycle certain items and the potential impact on neighbouring council areas (including whether they had been involved in the consultation that may potentially impact their sites). The potential for future expansion at alternative sites (specifically Loughborough) was also questioned.

- **Positive feedback regarding sites proposed to close** (particularly Market Harborough and Shepshed): these comments included positive feedback about the staff, location, convenience, accessibility, general running of the site and confidence that waste would be recycled.
- **Economic impact:** concerns about additional costs during the current economic climate were raised, including transport/fuel. Other respondents were concerned that the proposals would affect those who struggle the most, including lower income households. Some noted that they were already paying increased charges for garden waste collections, whilst others were not because they felt that it was not cost-effective. Some residents also feared that they may need to pay private companies to remove waste or were worried that local businesses may increase charges to reflect increased waste transport costs. Concerns were raised regarding the economic impact on businesses (including those using or located near the sites), the local economy (e.g. shopping habits and footfall), countryside tourism (due to fly-tipping) and those looking to move to areas impacted by the proposals. Others mentioned costs associated with removing the sites and the impact on local employment and/or existing staff.

- **Disproportionate impact on certain groups:** these concerns included reference to older people, those with mobility or health issues, and families. Some mentioned issues with how accessible and user-friendly alternative sites were (particularly Kibworth) and the relative ease of using other sites (particularly Market Harborough). Impacts on other groups highlighted included carers, those with no transport or those that owned specific vehicles (e.g. vans). Many felt that their area, including rural areas, were being underserved, damaged, and these residents felt overlooked. This was particularly notable amongst comments related to Shepshed and Market Harborough. Concerns raised regarding Somerby include the potential impact on local horse riders and lack of public transport.
- **Council decision-making concerns:** many questioned existing decisions made to refurbish and update existing sites prior to the consultation, including Kibworth, Shepshed and Market Harborough (including the view that the Harborough site should have been upgraded instead of Kibworth). A number of respondents also questioned other local decisions, notably the development of the marketplace in Shepshed and the decision to install a waste incinerator in Shepshed. Other decisions that were criticised include housing (particularly in Market Harborough), flood prevention, and the lack and/or withdrawal of infrastructure and core facilities (which was particularly notable in comments related to Shepshed).

There was general disapproval of council management and decision-making processes, including priorities and the perceived lack of common sense, lack of joined-up thinking, not listening to or being 'out of touch' with residents and questioning whether planning rules had been fairly applied. There was some general criticism of specific councils including Leicestershire County Council, Harborough District Council, Charnwood Borough Council and elected members, including reference to the impact of decisions on future local votes.

Some queried money received from housing developers, how Council Tax monies were being spent, with others questioning whether they were getting value for money for the Council Tax they pay or of the view that recycling was generating income for the council. Many highlighted the amount of Council Tax paid and were against any further cuts. General strong feelings of disagreement with the proposed closures were noted.

- **Concerns about the proposal details:** a number of questions were raised regarding the rationale presented for some site closures. Some reasoned that data presented in the supporting information did not reflect a true picture, for example they presented reasons for the decrease in site usage not being linked to demand (e.g. closures and restrictions during Covid-19, permit requirements introduced, lack of information on opening times). Others questioned the figures including trip count, comparisons made, and that the data presented did not include or mention the impact of brown bins. Some respondents felt that the map and seven-mile radius provided did not sufficiently reflect the travel impact on residents who would need to use an alternative site. Respondents also questioned the distance calculations and actual travel time. Others felt that there was no overlap in site locations.

There were also questions regarding the financial rationale, the costs to run sites, and how much or whether the proposals would save money. Some also felt that the proposed savings were relatively small. As mentioned above, many queried whether the increased cost of managing fly-tipping had been considered and more information (including financial detail) was requested by respondents, some of whom felt there was a lack of detail (including costs and how waste would be disposed of). Whilst many said they understood the council's financial situation and the need for savings, they did not feel that the proposals were the right approach. Respondents questioned the wider rationale presented (such as comparisons with other council areas) and disagreed with the view that fly-tipping would not increase or that there would be negligible impact on residents.

Many felt that the proposals were short-sighted and had not been thought through. A number of respondents also noted that the proposals did not account for other factors, such as an ageing

population, population/housing growth, equality analysis, travel/highways assessment, increased costs at other sites, analysis of how levels of recycling may change and concern that the longer-term costs would outweigh any short-term benefits. There was also the view that the proposals did not tackle the problem from source and focus on reducing packaging.

Several comments questioned what the land would or could be used for, whether the real reasons for the proposals had been outlined (including the balance between political and budgetary reasoning). Others were concerned about the future of other sites, particularly Lutterworth. A number queried whether/what other options had been considered and were concerned that a decision had already been made or doubted the validity of the consultation survey.

- **Positive comments regarding the proposals:** although the majority of comments reflected disagreement and/or concern about the proposals, some did indicate support for the proposed closures. Reasons included proximity/access to alternative sites, the need for savings, low usage, size of the site and limited opening times. A number of comments in support of the proposals did so with conditions (e.g. improved opening hours at other sites) or suggested that it was the least worst option.
- **Suggestions:** many respondents urged the council to reconsider the proposals, particularly site closures. A number of suggestions and/or alternative approaches were put forward and are summarised below.

Suggestions regarding savings and/or alternative approaches to the proposals included:

- Reduce/change opening days/times (e.g. open nearby sites on different days, rotate staff)
- Make efficiencies at sites (e.g. reduce staff, use volunteers, fewer sites with better recycling options or reduce range of accepted items), make energy efficiencies (e.g. solar panels), reduce costs (including the use of private businesses), online appointment booking, CCTV for smaller sites (unmanned)
- Make savings elsewhere, for example council offices, use of contractors, other council projects, discretionary spending, staffing levels, expenses
- Consider closure of another site (e.g. Kibworth, Loughborough) or relocate sites instead
- Consider use of the current incinerator site for Shepshed residents to dispose of/recycle waste
- Review charging approach, with some respondents indicating that they would be willing to pay (either to use a site or in their Council Tax bill) to keep their local site open
- Generate income (e.g. by selling unwanted items). Reference was also made to co-operatives and partnerships (e.g. with Freegle) or to explore sponsorship and/or developer contributions
- Reduce frequency of kerbside collections during winter months
- Consider other areas' examples, including piloting larger or more bins
- Listen to residents that are local to each site and ask for views on other ways to save money, including the creation of an independent panel
- Lobby central government/MPs for more funding
- Delay the decision until after key events, such as the general election and A606 works
- Free permits for residents (to prevent cost of/use by residents from outside the council area)
- Pilot the proposals first (in particular the closure of the Market Harborough site)

Suggestions if the proposals were to be implemented included:

- Review traffic management for the Kibworth site
- Use the land of the proposed closed sites to provide facilities for local residents
- Change kerbside collections (e.g. provide a mobile service or allow kerbside collect of certain items/provide garden waste bins for free or a reduced cost). Include garden waste collection in Council Tax bill or combine reduced opening with a brown bin collection
- Consider whether residents could use the neighbouring council sites if their local Leicestershire site were to close
- Provide more information on alternatives and ensure alternatives accept various types of waste

- Continue to promote benefits of using the sites and provide clear guidance on how and where residents should dispose of household waste
- Consider mothballing site(s) for potential future re-opening
- Increase opening hours of alternative sites nearby those proposed to close
- Do not charge for the disposal of DIY waste
- Greater deterrents for fly-tipping, including education and increased fines
- Provide details to residents on how savings will be used and/or pass savings back to residents (e.g. reduce Council Tax if closing a site, with reference also made to students paying reduced Council Tax if only resident for part of the year), provide fuel vouchers and an air purification service.
- Avoid redundancies and move staff from closed sites to sites with the highest usage
- Review planning permissions/stop further developments (or keep sites open)

Other suggestions included:

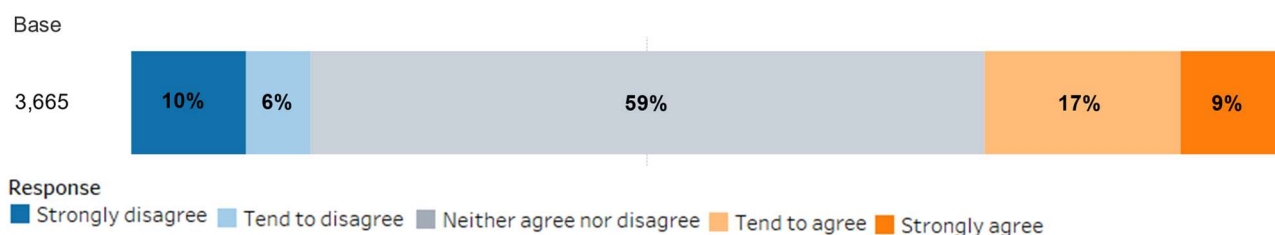
- Focus more on protecting communities
 - Only allow certain waste (e.g. that which can generate income)
 - Focus on recycling and appropriate disposal of non-recyclable waste
 - Allow long-term permits
 - Do not close Oadby or Lutterworth sites
 - Open more sites, or sites should be open more and not less
 - Site staff should help older people and those with disabilities or mobility issues
 - More checks should be made on trades people using the sites (e.g. to check licences)
- **Other comments:** various other comments were provided, including those with no opinion, or those that felt the proposals would not impact them (e.g. not nearby or did not use sites). References were made to other local issues, for example traveller sites, poorly maintained roads, and the inability to use neighbouring councils' sites. Some felt that residents deserve or have a right to such services locally and that they were a necessity. Several comments also suggested some misunderstanding about who was responsible for the proposals, with references to specific district councils. Reference was made to the impact of the rise in online shopping and home deliveries, the role of sites in emergency waste disposal during unforeseen events and their role in raising awareness/educating around environmental awareness and responsibility. Another view noted was that once sites are gone, they are then lost, and the cost of any future sites would mean investment (whereas existing sites only required maintenance).

Proposal 2: Changes to opening days

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site.

Overall, over a quarter (26%) of respondents agreed with the proposal (9% strongly agree and 17% tend to agree) and over a tenth (16%) disagreed with the proposal (10% strongly disagree and 6% tend to disagree). Over half (59%) responded 'neither agree nor disagree' (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Summary of responses to Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site?



Following Q10, respondents were asked the follow up question ‘Why do you say this?’ A total of 1,843 respondents (33%) provided an answer to this question. A number of key themes were identified from these comments, many of which are similar to those referenced previously in comments following Q9:

- **Fly-tipping:** concerns were raised about the potential impact of this proposal on fly-tipping. Many felt that greater convenience, such as increased opening and flexibility, would help stop fly-tipping, whereas closing at busy times (such as on Sundays) would encourage fly-tipping. There was concern that confusion over opening times could cause an increase in fly-tipping, and that this was already an issue since the opening days had been reduced. Other related concerns included the financial impact of fly-tipping on district/borough councils and farmers, who are already under significant pressure.
- **Opening times:** some comments reflected the view that the Bottesford site needs to be open for more than 3 days a week or every day. Others also felt that the Bottesford site needs to be open when it is convenient for residents, especially at the weekends (including on a Sunday).
- **Agreement with the proposal:** a number of positive comments did indicate agreement with the proposal to continue the 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site, alongside an understanding of council budgets and the need to save money.
- **Suggestions:** respondents made various suggestions regarding the proposal, particularly suggestions regarding opening times. These included:
 - Stagger opening to match highest usage
 - Weekend opening (particularly Sunday)
 - Close/open all sites on the same day
 - Open on Monday instead of Thursday (to enable post-weekend waste disposal)
 - Ensure that opening times are widely publicised
 - Summer opening hours are too long so should open 9am-5.30pm
 - All sites should be open less days and for less time (or open part-time during weekdays)
 - Consider joint working with Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire, if they have a site nearby, which might enable closure of the Bottesford site
 - Approach the Government for funding
 - Open other sites more frequently (if closing sites)
 - Offer paint recycling at Bottesford
- **Other comments:** these included references to no opinion, or no impact (for example not nearby or do not use the Bottesford site). There was some concern around the impact of this proposal on increased queuing times at the Bottesford site, pressure on other sites and increased travel and emissions, and the impact on staff. Reference was made to the impact of new homes in the area, concerns over reduction in relation to value for money/service and the view that all sites should be easily accessible.

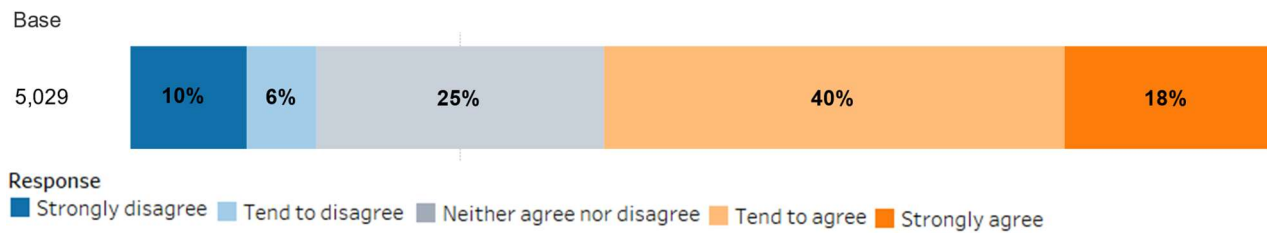
A number of comments referred to other sites. For example, regarding Melton, comments included concern or disagreement with changing opening times and concern regarding capacity if other sites are closed. Regarding Market Harborough, comments included support for retaining the site, the suggestion to reduce the opening times rather than closing, fly-tipping concerns, and reference to the suitability and/or safety of using and accessing the site at Kibworth. Regarding Shepshed, comments included concerns over the impact of closing the local site, including fly-tipping concerns. The justification for retaining another site for a small population was also questioned.

Proposal 3: Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change the summer hours at all sites (except Bottesford).

Chart 8 shows that over half of respondents (58%) agreed with the proposal (18% strongly agree, 40% tend to agree). A quarter (25%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal and over a tenth (16%) disagreed with the proposal (10% strongly disagree and 6% tend to disagree).

Chart 8: Summary of responses to Q11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the summer hours?



Following Q11 the follow-up question 'Why do you say this?' was asked and 1,907 respondents (34%) commented in response to this question. Key themes noted are summarised below.

- Positive comments regarding proposed opening hours:** many respondents supported or felt that the proposed changes to opening hours were acceptable. They felt that the proposed hours would allow most residents to access the sites and that they would be able to plan or work around the proposed hours. There was support for weekend and late-night opening during the week, with the view that two late nights are sufficient. Others noted that a good level of service was currently provided and felt that sites did not need to be open until 7pm every day. Some respondents also appreciated that views from the previous consultation had been considered. Comments included the suggestion that the proposal would improve staff work-life balance and wellbeing.
- Negative comments regarding proposed opening hours:** some respondents raised concerns about the proposed opening hours which included concerns about access for those who work, particularly shift workers and those who work weekends. Others felt that sites were not open enough currently or that the proposals were inconvenient, not sufficiently flexible or impractical. There was also the view that life had changed since the previous consultation in 2019.
- Changes to opening hours preferable to site closures:** a significant number of respondents felt that changes to opening hours were preferable or should be considered as an alternative to site closures, and that changes to opening hours were a pragmatic alternative to closures. Comments under this theme included agreement with the proposal for shorter opening hours to other sites on the condition that the Market Harborough, Shepshed or Somerby sites remain open.
- Council's financial position and decision-making:** some felt that the proposals seemed fair and reasonable. Others felt that although the proposals were less than ideal, they made sense to achieve savings. Respondents also referred to Council Tax in their comments. These included concerns about service levels, expectations and the amount of Council Tax paid. Whilst some comments indicated a preference for a small increase in Council Tax to retain current levels of service, others did not want an increase in Council Tax and/or expected a discount should the proposals be implemented. Other comments under this theme included concern that the service had already been reduced and that if the proposal was implemented, they would not want any further service reductions for a number of years.

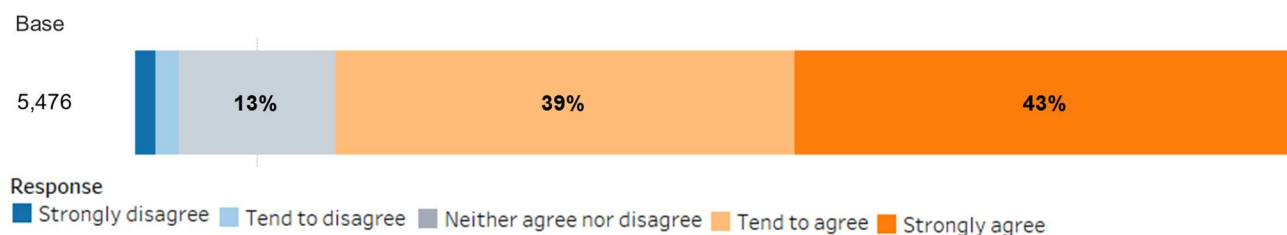
There was also the view that the proposals did not generate significant savings compared to the overall budget, and that the council should manage its budget better, making savings elsewhere (with suggestions including staffing efficiencies and street lighting savings). Some were concerned that the decision regarding site closures had already been made.

- **Suggestions regarding alternative opening hours/days:** respondents suggested a wide variety of alternative opening patterns. These are summarised below.
 - Enable those completing DIY/gardening work to visit at the end of the day (e.g. open later in the evening, including weekends, or increased opening during the summer and on bank holidays). On the other hand, some comments included the view that longer opening hours in the summer were not needed, or that sites were not used much after 5pm
 - Other suggestions included opening later than 9am, opening Bottesford 4 days per week and opening one weekday and/or weekend day until 7pm
 - Whilst some felt that site should be open seven days a week or that current opening hours should be retained, there were some suggestions to reduce opening times. These included the suggestion to close all sites on Sunday, close on Easter Sunday, or shorten winter opening hours to allow for increased opening during the summer
 - A trial and review of the new hours was proposed, along with the view that some sites should be open more to compensate for those proposed for closure
 - There was also the view that changes to opening hours should be implemented immediately rather than waiting until April 2025
- **Negative impacts of proposals:** a number of comments highlighted concerns regarding potential negative impacts of the proposals. These included fly-tipping (and associated costs), staffing concerns, queuing (including air pollution/carbon emissions), site capacity and traffic concerns (including those specifically related to Kibworth). Respondents were also concerned about the impact on recycling rates and the use of residual (black) bins, also noting that not all could afford to pay for garden waste collection bins.
- **Other comments:** some respondents, particularly those that were retired, felt that the proposals had no impact on them. Others felt that the proposals regarding opening hours were confusing and noted that it was already hard to remember which days sites were open. With this in mind, suggestions included the need to communicate well to minimise wasted journeys, and to ensure sites close at the advertised closing time. Some respondents felt frustrated by the lack of data supplied as part of the consultation and noted the importance of using data to support decisions. There was also disagreement with the proposed change to opening times at Melton, or the view that a question on this should have been included in the survey. There was some general criticism and wider concerns amongst comments, for example the view that sites are run inefficiently, the permit system is too complex, and concerns around new housebuilding in areas where sites are proposed to close. Other suggestions include sharing staff between sites, allowing foot traffic at sites for those without a car, and improving technology at sites to increase recycling.

Proposal 4: Closing Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to close all sites on Christmas Eve. The majority (83%) of respondents agreed with the proposal (43% strongly agree and 39% tend to agree). A small proportion (4%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal (2% strongly disagree and 2% tend to disagree). Under a fifth (13%) selected 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to this question (see Chart 9).

Chart 9: Summary of responses to Q12: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close on Christmas Eve?



Following Q12, respondents were asked 'Why do you say this?' and 1,720 respondents (31%) provided an answer to this question. The key themes are summarised below.

- **Support for the proposal:** many comments showed support for the proposal and outlined several reasons, including support for staff having leave prior to Christmas, low usage, minimal impact and low demand on Christmas Eve, a positive alternative to site closures and financial savings. Some respondents felt that this was the least worst proposal of the consultation as a whole. Others suggested closing on other days to make further savings, for example New Year's Eve and Good Friday.
- **Disagreement with the proposal:** whilst many comments reflected support, there were some comments against the proposal. Reasons included the view that Christmas Eve is a working day for many residents, the need to open as kerbside collections are reduced over Christmas and concern that the proposal to close on Christmas Eve would increase fly-tipping. Comments included the suggestion to close earlier rather than for the entire day.

Impact of proposals

Respondents were asked 'Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these proposals?' In total, 3,098 respondents (55%) answered this question. Overall, the majority of respondents were not supportive of the proposals and many expressed anger and disbelief that the proposals were being considered, particularly site closures. Many comments were in support of keeping the sites at Market Harborough or Shepshed open, with several comments in support of retaining the site at Somerby. Key themes noted amongst comments are summarised below.

- **Fly-tipping concerns:** an increase in fly-tipping was the main concern noted amongst respondents, along with concerns over the associated increase in costs to clear additional fly-tipping and the view that costs would outweigh any savings. Some believed that the council were 'passing on' the cost and responsibility of clearing fly-tipping to district and borough councils. An increased risk of fly-tipping in rural areas was frequently mentioned, with this being considered unfair on private landowners. Other comments included the view that fly-tipping was damaging town areas and that rogue waste traders would be responsible for a large proportion of any fly-tipping increase. Other related concerns were that the proposals would encourage an increase in illegal waste collection and the use of bonfires to dispose of rubbish.

- **Increased use of household waste bins:** people felt that the council should be making it easier for people to recycle, not more difficult. If closures went ahead, respondents felt that this would result in an increase in the amount of waste being disposed of in the residual (black) bin or fly-tipped.
- **Safety and suitability of Kibworth as an alternative site:** respondents felt that access to Kibworth was a serious accident risk. They mentioned that the area was already dangerous and busy, the site was located on a fast road and on a bend, along with the risk of increased queues and traffic congestion, with some questioning whether a risk assessment had been carried out. Concern was also raised over traffic on Leicester Road where the new prison, housing and industrial units are to be built.
- **Housing growth:** the scale of housing growth in both Shepshed and Market Harborough areas was highlighted and many questioned how the council could consider closing sites in areas of rapid growth.
- **Impact of increased traffic:** increased traffic pollution was another key theme and respondents associated this with the additional environmental impact, which they felt contradicted the council's green messaging. Traffic congestion was a key concern and often linked to accident risk, pollution, wear and tear on roads and general environmental impact.
- **Travel time:** extra travel time and additional fuel costs were mentioned, with many saying that people would not be prepared to travel extra distances. Respondents from Shepshed highlighted the additional distance to Loughborough, adding to road congestion, pollution and fuel costs which would be very unfair in a cost of living crisis. Respondents also commented that Mountsorrel and Loughborough sites are both very busy (with Loughborough already difficult to access) and redirecting from Shepshed would cause traffic congestion and queues at alternative sites.
- **Concerns regarding Shepshed:** respondents felt strongly that Shepshed was being overlooked or unfairly affected by another local service reduction, along with the view that the area was solely attracting new housing, which in itself provided a reason to keep the site open.
- **Support for proposals:** although the majority of responses expressed concern or dissatisfaction with the proposals, there were some supportive comments. Some of these respondents suggested that they understood the financial constraints of the council and accepted the proposals if the closures and other changes were necessary to save money. A few respondents that said the proposed changes did not directly impact them, and a few felt that the proposals were well thought out or seemed sensible. Additional comments acknowledged that people do not like change, but that they would soon get used to it, and although it is a cost saving measure with a service reduction, residents would still receive a local recycling and household waste service. Another view accepted the proposed changes based on the provision that sites would be open in the evenings and at weekends.
- **Suggestions:** various suggestions were made, many similar to those mentioned in earlier questions:
 - Reduce hours/days instead of closures, or pilot extending all opening hours at all sites first to see if this reduced fly-tipping
 - If sites close, then other sites should be open every day to compensate
 - Making savings/efficiencies elsewhere, including reclaiming unpaid Council Tax and reducing other council services
 - Lobby Government for more funding, or change of central government
 - Ensure that any changes made are well publicised and clear for the public
 - Generate income (e.g. sell items and use money raised to support running of the site and assist people on low incomes)
 - Introduce a booking system (Birmingham cited as an example) to alleviate queues
- **Other comments:** Other comments included concerns and criticism of council decision-making. Respondents fed back that proposals were short-sighted in the context of growing towns and environmental messaging (e.g. promoting public transport or less car use), and that those living in rural

areas or villages already received less services. There was also the view that closure would be a short-term gain and could be impossible to reverse. Others questioned the money spent on the refurbishment of the site at Kibworth.

Other various impacts of the proposals were highlighted, which included the impact on those without transport, those with mobility problems or older people. Some were worried about the impact the proposals could have on jobs. Concern was raised about the need to store items for longer before being able to dispose of them and the need for traffic management near sites. It was felt that reducing summer opening hours at the weekends would reduce time available for people to complete work and visit sites during weekends. The need for Christmas opening to cater for residents' waste needs was also noted.

There were some references to Council Tax, including the view that a service should be provided based on the amount of Council Tax that residents pay, or that there should be a reduction in Council Tax if the proposals were implemented. Some respondents already experienced reduced collections and additional waste charges, with some confusion noted over which sites people were allowed to use. Comments featured a number of negative comments about the council, including staff, budgets and the wider council agenda.

Alternative options

Respondents were asked 'Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household waste sites that you think we could consider?' A total of 2,505 respondents (44%) answered this question and key themes echo a number already mentioned in response to previous questions. These key themes are summarised below.

- **Reducing operating hours and opening days at the sites proposed for closure and at other sites in the county:** many respondents felt that this could make further savings. Some said that restricted opening was preferable to complete closure, and it was suggested that this approach must lead to further savings based on the rationale provided for the proposed closures. Alternative opening hours and days were suggested such as weekends only, one day per week and restricted hours (e.g., two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon). References were made to accommodate people who were working and needed evening or weekend opening times. Lots of support was shown for the sites being open at the weekend, even if restricted during the week. There was some support for alternating the days open between sites which were closer together (e.g. Shepshed and Loughborough). Many respondents felt that further savings could be made by restricting the opening hours and days at sites not proposed to close, which could also help retain the three sites proposed to close.
- **Staffing:** changes to staffing were suggested, as concerns were expressed about the high number of staff and whether this could be reduced as a way to make savings (although some respondents did recognise potential health and safety considerations related to staffing reductions). Lack of engagement by some staff was noted and questions were raised around the necessity of some staff roles. Whilst some felt that staff directing residents to disposal containers seemed unnecessary and costs could be reduced if this were to stop, others raised concerns about whether 'meet and greet' was necessary at sites. Suggestions were made as to whether staff could rotate around all sites, especially if opening times were reduced. Others suggested that if staff were currently employed using external providers or agency, then to consider direct employment instead. The use of volunteers, community and other groups was also suggested. Technological suggestions to reduce staffing included the use of automated systems at sites, such as self-service arrangements and automated number plate recognition.
- **Reuse and recycling of materials:** many respondents suggested it would be good to be able to purchase items from the sites or have more areas for the reuse and refurbishment of items. Some respondents

felt that many of the items being thrown away could have a second lease of life, and this could be an effective way to generate income, with bikes and furniture frequently mentioned. Several said they supported the idea of having a shop or store at the sites, whilst others felt the creation of online shops or using existing platforms (such as eBay) would be a good idea. It was suggested that working in partnership with local registered charities and community groups to allow the removal and resale of good quality items could reduce costs. Many referenced examples of other sites with a shop or store for buying second hand items. Suggestions were also made for volunteers to support these activities. Along with the sale of useable second-hand items, many respondents wanted the sale of compost at sites to be reinstated and saw this as an opportunity to generate income. There was some concern about whether maximum value was being sought for high-value items, such as scrap metal. Respondents also suggested negotiating contracts with businesses to ensure the best costs were being achieved.

- **Charging/fees and income generation:** suggestions were made around charging a standard fee for visiting sites, either in the form of a charge per visit (suggested amounts varied between 0.50p to £3.00 per visit) or an annual fee through a chargeable permit. Allocating an annual allowance and charging for visits that exceed the allowance was offered as a solution. Also, respondents suggested charging based on vehicle type (e.g. paying more for using a van rather than a car) and charging residents that live outside of the county, or in another district to where the site is based. References were made to automating payments where possible and the potential use of QR codes for entry. Respondents suggested charging for specific types of waste to generate income (e.g. TVs, mattresses and paint), whilst others requested that current charges be removed. Some suggested that the council should charge businesses and traders to use sites, whilst others highlighted misconceptions around permits and business use of the sites. Other suggestions under this theme included lobbying Government for fair funding, increasing Council Tax, increasing fines for environmental crimes (e.g., fly-tipping), and seeking contributions from housing developers to support local infrastructure (including recycling facilities).
- **Kerbside collections:** suggestions were provided around improving the frequency, quantity and range of kerbside collections (e.g. electrical products, bulky items), which would mean less demand for disposal of waste at sites. Respondents proposed a reduction in the current charges for chargeable kerbside services, especially garden waste. Some requested the removal of charges for garden waste and bulky waste collection, noting that if residents had to pay for this waste to be collected then this may increase demand at specific sites. Some suggested improving the availability of recycling banks, especially for small electrical items and the placement of large skips for communities to use rather than visiting a site.
- **General efficiency savings:** overall efficiency of councils in Leicestershire was questioned along with financial planning and spend on projects, with some seen as unwanted or unnecessary. Respondents queried council structures and upper-tier management, and asked whether proposed savings could be met by reducing senior officers and councillors as part of a restructuring exercise. Questions were also raised regarding the use of money to support equality and diversity activities. Respondents highlighted a need for general contract efficiency and wanted assurance that contracts were being managed effectively, to ensure that it was the best value, whilst others queried whether there was a competitive tendering process in place.
- **Site-based efficiencies:** suggestions included investment in innovative technologies to improve waste sorting and recycling, whilst reducing costs at sites, such as an online appointment system and energy saving measures (e.g. solar, wind power, LED lighting). Suggestions also included outsourcing the running of the service to private contractors.
- **Other suggestions:** respondents made various other suggestions, including:
 - Move the Shephed site closer to the Newhurst Energy from Waste plant to reduce travel
 - Provide an out-of-hours service with skips outside the site when closed
 - Pressure producers and manufactures to take responsibility, including packaging quality

- Promote waste reduction (e.g. through education, reuse, and repurposing items), raise public awareness of recycling and environmental responsibility, especially in regard to what can be recycled at home. Involve businesses, schools, and local community groups to help raise awareness about the RHWS service.
- Effective communication with residents about when sites are open
- **Concerns raised:** further to the suggestions, concerns were also raised on the impact of the proposals. Overall, the main concern noted was fly-tipping and the potential increase of this if the proposals were to go ahead. Many of these respondents felt that the cost of clearing increased fly-tipping would negate any potential savings. Requests were made for the council to continue monitoring fly-tipping. It was also noted by respondents that some measures to increase income, such as introducing a fee, could also potentially increase fly-tipping.

Other concerns were raised regarding new housing developments and respondents felt that if these developments were prevented there would be less waste. Many respondents felt that they were unable to answer the question due to a lack of supporting information, including the breakdown of the running costs of the affected service. There were several concerns from residents about increased use of the Kibworth site due to the proposed closure of Market Harborough, who felt that the access to the Kibworth site was dangerous.
- **Positive comments:** some comments noted that respondents felt the proposals seemed sensible and did not have further suggestions.

Any other comments

The consultation survey also asked for any other comments about the proposals. In total, 1,668 respondents (30%) answered this question. A large proportion of respondents expressed disagreement with the proposals. Many were of the opinion that the current proposals were short-sighted and would result in more money being spent on managing the adverse impacts the proposals would have (primarily the proposal to close three sites). A small number of respondents agreed with the proposals, stating that although the proposed changes were not ideal, they understood the current financial position the council was in, and that savings have to be made. Whilst many acknowledged the need for the council to make savings, some respondents were opposed to any reductions that would impact recycling and household waste sites. It was felt that these sites are an essential service used by many and that the impact of the proposals for all communities would be serious. Key themes noted amongst the responses align with many concerns mentioned in comments to earlier questions and are summarised below:

- **Environmental impacts:** a repeated theme throughout the comments centred around fly-tipping. There were a large number of concerns about the increase in fly-tipping if the proposed sites were to close and the costs that the council would incur as a result. Another concern was distance, as travelling to alternative sites would increase the carbon footprint, thus impacting the environment. The proposals were deemed contradictory to the council's Net Zero aims and some felt that anything that conflicts with this agenda should not be actioned.

A lot of concerns were noted regarding household refuse bins. Respondents felt that household refuse bins were being filled with waste that should be disposed of at the recycling and household waste sites. Although people who pay for garden waste bins advised that they may not be as impacted by site closures and reduced opening times, they commented that those who cannot afford to pay for a garden waste bin may be negatively impacted by the proposals. Some questioned where people's garden waste would go if they did not have a garden waste bin.

- **Suitability of alternative sites:** a lot of respondents expressed concerns about the safety element of travelling and accessing the Kibworth site due to the entrance of the site being located on the busy A6. Traffic concerns resulting from long queues and the high risk of road traffic accidents were a repeated theme throughout these comments. The need to travel to an alternative site was a common theme, with many feeling that the additional travel was inconvenient, time-consuming and that residents would not be willing to do this. Some felt that centralising services in this instance would not work.
- **Housing developments and local growth:** related to the proposal to close three of the sites, there were a lot of comments surrounding housing developments and growing communities in the areas of Market Harborough and Shepshed. There was a level of distrust from some respondents, who believed that a deal would be broken between the council and local housing developers if the proposals were approved. Questions were raised about what would happen to the unused sites/land, how the money would be used if the land were to be sold and whether the infrastructure levy on developers could be used to offset the costs of running these sites. Some respondents wanted more transparency from the council surrounding the long-term plans. Alongside this was an overall fear of growing towns losing valuable services, such as local waste sites, when there were already limited resources in certain areas.
- **Efficiencies in council buildings and staffing:** some comments focussed on the need for efficiencies in council buildings and staffing structures. These focussed on management-level jobs, the number of councillors and the costs of running County Hall. Those that mentioned County Hall felt that the office space was not being used the same as it was before Covid-19 but was generating the same costs, if not more, with energy bills. A few respondents were concerned about the job losses that would result from the proposals to close three sites. Some shared positive feedback about the staff at some of the sites and were concerned about the impact job losses would have on them/their families in the current financial climate. Some respondents queried why Leicestershire County Council was the lowest-funded council and suggested more effort should be made to lobby the Government for more funding.
- **Other comments:** a range of other comments were noted, including concerns regarding council decisions and Council Tax. A lot of comments focussed on the money spent on remodelling the Kibworth site and felt that this money could have been saved to avoid the proposal to close sites. Council Tax charges were mentioned throughout the responses. Most of these respondents felt that residents were paying increased Council Tax for reduced services. Many expressed that they did not trust the council, felt that the proposals had already been decided and that resident and stakeholder views were not being taken into consideration. A request was also made for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the proposals with officers.

Regarding the consultation specifically, some felt that the consultation had not been well publicised and were unaware of the consultation had it not been for a neighbour/friend who had signposted it to them. A lot of comments were made about the demographic details collected at the end of the survey. Some felt that this was intrusive, unrelated to the actual consultation, added no value and represented another tick-box exercise carried out by the council.

- **Other suggestions:** a number of other suggestions were made, most of which have been highlighted in previous responses but are included below for reference:
 - Use discretionary funding to help with the council's current financial struggles and aim to stop making cuts to core services
 - Tackle accessibility issues, including making information about recycling and household waste sites and how to dispose of waste easy to find on the council's website
 - Generate income, including use of re-use shops, sale of green waste and compost, annual access fees for all sites, skip trailer rental service, and adopt income-generation ideas from other councils (e.g. King's Lynn council and Norfolk who send recyclable items to Holland for processing)
 - Reducing opening times at all sites to avoid any closures.

Additional consultation feedback

In addition to feedback provided via the online consultation survey, views on the proposals were also provided via email/letter/meetings from district councils, parish councils, neighbouring waste disposal authorities, the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG).

LECG – Feedback from the meeting on 10 November 2023:

- If the Shepshed tip closes then 20,000 households will have to travel to the other side of Loughborough, to Coalville or Mountsorrel, these sites will experience long queues.
- Closure of sites may lead to an increase in fly tipping in both urban and rural areas.
- Costs can be significant to clear up illegal dumping of waste/fly tipping, and may lead to rises in council tax, so is it worth closing three sites which may impact on costs even further?
- Need to back up online consultation with focus groups to get views from groups the council may find hard to reach, particularly older people and the digitally excluded.
- Review which languages require translation for communications, as it may not be essential for some.
- Distance and travel times to alternate waste sites is not straight forward, congestion and built-up areas can be an issue.
- Those with cars will travel further and queue, creating a negative impact on communities and wildlife.
- Those without cars, will be further impacted as they will need to store the waste material until it can be collected by the recycling and waste management system. Another eco nightmare.
- False economy for the Leicestershire County Council to propose the closure of some waste sites as the population is increasing.
- More public communication on the proposals needed such as putting posters in local libraries and leisure centres, providing a full year of information on opening times, and providing clear information on which sites 'do what'.
- Concerns about older people in the Somerby area having to travel further to the next nearest RHWS in Melton Mowbray.
- Suggestions for the county council to consider; provide more 'mini' accessible local waste sites, provide small electrical drop off points in the centre of towns or community neighbourhoods (like bottle banks), continue using Leicestershire Matters to communicate changes, and promote the council's bulk waste collection service.

Harborough District Council email feedback:

- There needs to be a full analysis of the impacts of decisions.
- Within Harborough District the Environmental Services Team have successfully changed the national trend of increased fly tipping for 4 years running. This has taken significant resources and was achieved despite the initial charging for certain DIY items by the county council which saw fly tipping increase within the area and across Leicestershire, especially around locations of RHWS.
- Concerns about the additional vehicle movements at Kibworth if the Market Harborough site were to close. Kibworth sits on the main A6 and at a crash site where only recently someone lost their life. Concerns over queueing on this road posing a significant health and safety hazard. Would like to know how traffic movements have been mapped and the view of the Highways Department at the county council.
- Concerns over fly tipping in laybys and around entrances to sites. If the proposals go ahead, will the collection authority be compensated for additional clear ups of these offences?

- Proposed changes to opening times at all sites will exacerbate the frustration if sites were to close. Therefore, additional opening hours will probably be required to negate the closures and additional vehicle movements.

North Northamptonshire Council email feedback:

- North Northamptonshire Council (NCC) are concerned about the closure of Market Harborough, whereby the closure could lead to some cross over to their facilities.
- While Kibworth, in Leicestershire, is Market Harborough residents' closest site, NNC sites are then the next closest before other Leicestershire sites.
- Kibworth is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday meaning that on those days Corby or Kettering could be the closest open waste site. Furthermore, Kibworth closes at 4pm when it is open while North Northants site open until 6pm which may mean previous users of the Market Harborough facility may look to use these sites instead.
- NNC will be undertaking postcode checks to assess the current scale of any cross-boundary use of the NNC waste site network to allow them to assess the potential scale/cost of the issue. This may lead to NNC having to implement a residents only permit system, at a cost to the authority.
- Somerby and Shepshed proposed closures and proposed permanent changes to opening hours at Bottesford pose no concern to NNC.
- NNC has no comments on proposed changes to summer opening hours and proposed Christmas Eve closures.

Hathern Parish Council email feedback:

- Closing the Shepshed site will further exacerbate fly tipping as a result of people not traveling to sites in Loughborough or Mountsorrel.
- New houses on the Garendon estate will increase the demand for a nearby waste site. Such a large development would benefit from a waste site located nearby in Shepshed. Concerned the increase in houses could increase fly tipping issues.
- Traffic congestion in Loughborough is already a problem. Adding further trips to Loughborough RHWS site will make this worse.
- Should people travel to sites located some distance from Hathern (Loughborough being the closest) this will inevitably increase air pollution due to greater travel. With so many campaigns around reducing air pollution this is a contradictory measure.

Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee - points raised at the meeting on 2 November 2023:

- The Kibworth site had been redesigned to draw traffic away from the main road to reduce congestion. A traffic assessment would be carried out to assess whether the Kibworth site would cope with potential increased usage should the Market Harborough site be closed. This would be made available to Members as part of the consultation. A member expressed concern that the housing growth proposed for Harborough would increase visitor numbers to the RHWS, and would therefore, increase use of the Kibworth site and place increased pressure on local roads. They were advised that future housing growth was one of the criteria in determining the proposals and that there was not a direct correlation between increased housing and a growth in waste as there had been a change in recycling behaviour post Covid 19. County councillor Mr. Boulter asked that his reservations to the proposals related to traffic assessment and management around the RHWS site in Kibworth be noted in the minutes.
- A report would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2024, setting out the outcome of the consultation and presenting revised proposals should they be changed following the consultation, prior to submission of a report to the Cabinet for a decision on the future of RHWS.

- There were significant funding gaps across the council and all departments were being asked to make significant savings to enable other services, for example Adult Social Care, to be supported. The Scrutiny Review Panel had explored various factors to determine which sites would reduce opening hours, or would be proposed for closure, which included usage numbers and cost of operating, for example. The Director recommended that Members looked at the Scrutiny Review Panel report which was now available on the Council's website.
- The council did not currently have a policy on usage of RHWS by people living outside of the Leicestershire border, although this had been considered by the Scrutiny Review Panel. Data showed that usage of RHWS was reciprocated across boundaries and was usually determined by people's commute to work. Members recognised that policing cross boundary usage would be a challenge. The consultation questionnaire allowed for people to identify their location, so cross boundary usage would be evident.
- For sites proposed for closure, the land occupied would be 'mothballed'. Members were assured decisions about what would happen to vacated sites would be made in the future once final decisions had been made about the RHWS.
- Leicestershire had 14 RHWS, which was more than in other neighbouring counties. The statutory duty placed on councils was to provide the ability for householders to dispose of their rubbish and the offer had to include the weekend period. The location and number of sites was discretionary and based on need and locality.
- The level of fly tipping in an area was linked to the level of enforcement carried out by district councils, and not linked to the availability of RHWS in the locality. Levels of deprivation in the area was also a contributing factor to the levels of fly tipping.
- The Scrutiny Review Panel was keen for the consultation questions to be succinct and direct rather than include wider information for residents to consider. Members said that it would be useful to include information in the consultation on the Council's statutory obligations to enable people to be fully informed when responding to the consultation.

Appendix – Survey questionnaire

Have your say on proposed changes to recycling and household waste sites

Leicestershire County Council remains the lowest funded county in the country and continues to face financial challenges. Growing demand for county council services and general price rises (inflation) are increasing the cost of delivering services. This means we are going to have to find more savings in the future, despite having made £250m of savings since 2010.

The council's recently published budget plan includes a requirement to make savings from the recycling and household waste sites (often referred to as the 'tips'). We estimate the changes proposed below would make savings of £420,000 per year.

The proposals being put forward below are those seen as being able to offer the best balance between how much money can be saved and the impact on our residents and site users. The proposals include:

- Closing Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites
- Changing the opening days at Bottesford and Melton Mowbray recycling and household waste sites
- Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites
- Closing on Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

Please read the supporting information provided before completing the questionnaire.

View our informative map on Social Pinpoint for more information about our Recycling and Household Waste Sites

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

Please note: Do not use the back button on your browser/device as you may lose your response.

Please note: Your responses to the main part of the survey (including your comments) may be released to the general public in full under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any responses to the questions in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire will be held securely and will not be subject to release under Freedom of Information legislation, nor passed on to any third party.

Q1 In what capacity are you responding to this survey? Please select one option only.

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident
- Resident of another county
- Interested member of the public
- Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee
- Leicestershire County Council staff member
- Representative of a business or private sector organisation
- Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group
- Representative from a parish, district or borough council
- Representative of another public sector organisation
- County, district or parish councillor
- Other (please specify)

Please specify 'other'

Q2 If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group or council, please provide your details.

Name:

Role:

Organisation:

Q3 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

- Yes
- No

Q4 Which area do you live in?

- Blaby
- Charnwood
- Harborough
- Hinckley & Bosworth
- Melton
- North West Leicestershire
- Oadby & Wigston
- Leicester City
- Rutland

Use of recycling and household waste sites

Q5 Which, if any, of the following sites do you use? Please tick all that apply.

- Barwell
- Bottesford
- Coalville
- Kibworth
- Loughborough
- Lount
- Lutterworth
- Market Harborough
- Melton Mowbray
- Mountsorrel
- Oadby
- Shepshed
- Somerby
- Whetstone
- A non-Leicestershire County Council site
- None

Q6 On average, how often, if at all, do you use a site?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- About once a fortnight
- About once a month
- About once every 3 months
- About once every 6 months
- About once a year
- Less often

Q7 Which site do you use most often?

- Barwell
- Bottesford
- Coalville
- Kibworth
- Loughborough
- Lount
- Lutterworth
- Market Harborough
- Melton Mowbray
- Mountsorrel
- Oadby
- Shepshed
- Somerby
- Whetstone
- A non-Leicestershire County Council site

Q8 What are your main reasons for using this site? Please tick all that apply.

- Close to where I live
- Close to where I work
- Convenient opening times
- Easy to use/ good layout
- No queuing to get in
- Staff are helpful and friendly
- Other (please specify)

Please specify 'other'

Our proposals

Proposal 1: Recycling and household waste site closures

We are proposing to close the Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites from October 2024. We estimate that by closing these three sites we will save approximately £270,000 a year.

Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites are proposed for closure as they have significant overlap with other sites or are a lot more expensive per visit than other sites.

Please refer to the supporting information for more detail on why these sites have been selected for closure.

Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close the following sites?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Market Harborough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shepshed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somerby	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have any comments on the above? Please be specific around the site(s) you are referring to.

Proposal 2: Changes to opening days

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bottesford recycling and household waste site was open 5 days a week Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday). More recently, the site has been open 3 days a week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We propose to make this change permanent.

For information, we also intend to amend the Melton Mowbray recycling and household waste site days of opening. The Melton site is currently open Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). We are proposing to change the opening days to Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday). The site will continue to be open 5 days a week.

For a table of our proposed site opening days, please refer to the supporting information.

Q10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site?

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly
agree | Tend to
agree | Neither
agree nor
disagree | Tend to
disagree | Strongly
disagree | Don't know |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Why do you say this?

Proposal 3: Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites

Throughout the year, with the exception of Bottesford, all sites will continue to be open on Saturday, Sunday and Monday and **either** Tuesday and Wednesday or Thursday and Friday.

We propose to change the summer hours at ALL sites as follows from April 2025:

- Saturday, Sunday and Monday 9am to 5pm
- All other days will remain as 9am to 7pm

The last time we consulted about the waste site opening times (in 2019), residents and site users told us that they wanted to be able to visit the sites after work on weekdays. The proposed changes will therefore leave all sites open until 7pm on two weekdays in the summer months to cater for those working during the day. These proposals would equate to a saving of £150,000 a year.

Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the summer hours?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why do you say this?

Proposal 4: Closing Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

At the moment the recycling and household waste sites are all closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. We are also proposing to close ALL sites on Christmas Eve from 2024 onwards. We experience low numbers of visits on Christmas Eve compared to other days in December so believe the impact would be limited.

Q12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close on Christmas Eve?

Strongly
agree

Tend to
agree

Neither
agree nor
disagree

Tend to
disagree

Strongly
disagree

Don't know

Why do you say this?

Impact of the proposals

Q13 Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these proposals?

Alternative options

Q14 Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household waste sites that you think we could consider?

Any other comments

Q15 Do you have any other comments about our proposals?

About you

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies, and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice, address the needs of all sections of the community and promote and advance equality of opportunity.

Many people face discrimination in society because of their personal circumstances and for this reason we have decided to ask these monitoring questions.

We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Q16 What is your gender?

- Male
 Female
 I use another term

Q17 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- Yes
 No

Q18 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q19 What is your full postcode?

This will allow us to see how far people live from one of our sites. It will not identify your house.

Q20 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

- Yes
 No

Q21 What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only.

- White
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Other ethnic group

Q22 Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

- Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)
- Employee in part-time job (less than 30 hours per week)
- Self employed full or part-time
- On a government supported training programme
- Full-time education at school, college or university.
- Unemployed and available for work
- Permanently sick / disabled
- Wholly retired from work
- Looking after the home
- Doing something else

Q23 What is your sexual orientation?

- Bi
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual / straight
- I use another term

Please click the 'Submit' button to send us your response.

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

When the consultation closes on Wednesday 24th January 2024, we intend to report the results back to Cabinet in April 2024.

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the county council and its partners. Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected in this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the council's records management and retention policy. Information which is not in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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