

Recycling Centre Bookings Consultation

ECC Response

January 2024

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1. Purpose

Background

As the Waste Disposal Authority, Essex County Council (ECC) is responsible for disposing of waste collected by the district, city and borough councils. ECC has a statutory duty to provide places for residents to dispose of their household waste, free of charge. To fulfil this duty, ECC operates 21 recycling centres across the county.

Since 2022, ECC has been running a pilot to understand if a booking process for visiting recycling centres can reduce congestion and improve operational efficiency.

- in February 2022, a pilot booking process was introduced for vans and large vehicles at the nine recycling centres in Essex that allow large vehicles to visit and dispose of household waste
- in June 2022, the pilot was expanded to include a booking process for cars at Rayleigh Recycling Centre, a particularly busy centre with long queues and complaints from both residents and local councils about congestion in and around the site
- in March 2023, the pilot was extended further to introduce a booking process for cars at all 21 recycling centres in Essex

During the pilot, all recycling centre users (excluding Blue Badge holders, pedestrians and cyclists) need to book before visiting the centres. Users can book online at any time via the [Love Essex website](#) or by phoning the contact centre on 0345 743 0430, Monday to Friday, between 8:30am and 5:00pm.

A user survey during summer 2023, and operational data collected from March to September 2023 was used to inform an interim evaluation, which was published in October 2023.

Following positive user and operational feedback, ECC put forward a proposal to retain the booking process permanently at all Essex recycling centres. A six-week public consultation ran from 9 October until 19 November 2023 to seek public views on the proposal. More than 18,000 people completed the consultation survey to have their say on whether or not a booking process should be kept in place permanently.

Independent analysis of the recycling centre bookings public consultation was carried out by Lake Research and can be read on our [consultation portal](#). This document provides ECC's response to that analysis.

In December 2023 the emerging findings of the consultation and the operational evaluation were discussed at a meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The meeting papers can be read [here](#).

About the booking process

A simple, accessible booking process is in place for all vehicles at all 21 recycling centres. There is a booking system for cars and cars with single-axle trailers, and another for vans, pickup trucks and large trailers at the nine large (van-friendly) sites.

- bookings can be made online via the Love Essex website.
- telephone bookings can be made through the ECC contact centre, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm
- bookings are for a single 15-minute visit for cars, 20 minutes for large vehicles
- bookings can be made with just 15 minutes notice or up to six weeks in advance
- as each recycling centre is different, the number of available booking slots is set on a site-by-site basis
- users can easily cancel bookings that are no longer required

During the pilot, pedestrians, cyclists and Blue Badge holders are not required to book. Residents from nearby areas of Suffolk and Hertfordshire can also use ECC recycling centres due to reciprocal agreements.

Improvements to the booking process have been introduced and tested throughout the pilot in response to feedback from users and site staff, including:

- introducing same-day bookings, up to 15 minutes in advance (subject to availability)
- increasing the number of bookable slots at all sites
- reviewing the timing and duration of planned closures for operational activities
- increasing the time in advance that slots are available to book (up to six weeks)
- adding more information to the website to make it easier to cancel a booking

2. How to read this document

Structure

This report sets out the proposals (“We asked”), the consultation response (“You said”) and the ECC Response (“We will”).

“We will” summarises the actions we are proposing to take as a result of the public consultation and other information such as operational effectiveness.

All survey results are presented as percentages. Respondents could choose which questions they answered so the base size for each question will vary. Unless otherwise stated, percentages displayed are the percentages of consultees answering the question / providing a comment rather than percentages of the total number of consultees responding to the consultation. The questionnaire contained a mix of single and multiple-choice questioning. Where percentages for single choice questions do not sum to 100%, this is either the result of computer rounding for each response code as percentages are displayed as whole numbers, or where multiple points of commentary from a single respondent have been coded individually.

We refer to “vans” in this document for ease of reading. The term “vans” here covers large vehicles such as vans, pick-up trucks and vehicles towing a multiple-axle trailer.

This document summarises and responds to the key themes reported the independent analysis of the consultation responses. For more detail on the free-text responses received, please refer to the relevant section of the Consultation Analysis Report on the [Consultation Portal](#).

Accompanying documents

This document is one of a suite that should be read together to understand how ECC has made its recommendation for the council’s decision on the future of the booking process, as set out in the Cabinet Report which can be read [here](#).

These documents are:

- Consultation Analysis Report (by Lake Research)
- Final Evaluation Report and [previous evaluation reports](#)
- Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA)

Consultation Analysis Report

The public consultation was hosted on our consultation portal Citizen Space. Details of the consultation and a summary of the findings can be viewed on our [Recycling Centre Bookings consultation webpage](#).

The consultation was made available in several different ways. In addition to an online survey, alternative formats were available, including an Easy Read version of the proposal and consultation survey. Large print and paper copies could be printed from the consultation portal or were available on request by phoning the ECC contact centre. It could also be completed by telephoning the ECC contact centre. The majority of respondents completed the consultation survey online.

The consultation survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals. The survey also allowed respondents to explain their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals, and to provide further information or suggestions. 18,123 people responded to the consultation and more than 22,000 comments were recorded. The consultation response has been independently analysed by Lake Research and a report published setting out:

- details of the consultation response
- demographics of respondents
- levels of agreement with the proposal
- themes arising from the qualitative comments

Full details of the findings are provided in the Consultation Analysis Report on our [consultation portal](#).

Evaluation Reports

Part of the pilot process was to evaluate the booking process in terms of operational benefits. We undertook operational evaluations throughout the pilot, including two user surveys in 2022 and 2023, to understand how the booking process was working for users. The evaluation reports should be read alongside the consultation findings:

- [Evaluation of bookings for larger vehicles and Rayleigh Recycling Centre 2022](#)
- [Interim Evaluation Report 2023](#)
- [Final Evaluation Report 2024](#)

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA)

For a detailed assessment on the potential impact on service users with protected characteristics and in levelling up areas and cohorts, refer to the Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA). The ECIA references information collected through the public consultation and operational evaluation process.

Overall, the ECIA concludes that continuing the booking process will not lead to any equality and diversity impacts for service users with protected characteristics. The ECIA is available to read alongside the Cabinet Report [here](#).

3. Proposal for cars

We asked

Key points of the consulted proposal:

- bookings will be required at all sites and opening hours
- bookings will be required for cars and cars with a single axle trailer
- bookings are not required for Blue Badge holders, pedestrians and cyclists
- bookings can be made online via the Love Essex website (www.loveessex.org/bookings) or by telephone through the ECC contact centre, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

Our survey questions:

- “Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to keep a booking process for cars visiting all recycling centres in Essex?”
- “Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about the proposal?” (free-text comment)

You said

58% of consultees indicated they agree with the proposal to keep a booking process for cars for all recycling centres in Essex. 39% indicated they disagree with the proposal. 3% indicated they were unsure.

Respondents from 11 of the 12 district/borough/city councils have indicated at least 50% agreement with retaining a booking process for cars. Uttlesford was the exception where only 22% agreed and 75% disagreed.

57% of consultees (10,242) provided a comment on the proposal for cars.

- 25% of these consultees commented on the positive on-site experience encountered since the booking process was introduced (for example, queue reduction, easier experience, happier staff)
- 24% of these consultees commented on the general process being positive (for example, generally works well, preference to keep it, allows booking at convenient times)
- 6% of these consultees noted that the booking system is easy to use
- 34% of these consultees commented they would prefer no booking process
- 16% of these consultees commented they would like to see a more flexible approach to the booking process such as variations across different sites or operating times
- 19% of these consultees expressed concern with regard to the perceived impact on fly tipping
- 12% of these consultees believe the process has not improved the customer experience / it is inconvenient / a hassle to users
- 12% of these consultees noted concerns with booking calendars and capacity

- 11% of these consultees commented that the booking process discourages / could discourage people to recycle / people will put such waste in domestic bins.
- Whilst in smaller proportions, in total 16% of these consultees suggested improvements to the process and system and noted some concerns with booking functionality.
- 7% of those answering expressed bureaucracy concerns and use of resources
- 3% of those answering referenced equality impacts, such as to consider the elderly / vulnerable / non-tech savvy who are unable to use the internet

For more detail on what consultees said under each of these themes, please see the [Consultation Analysis Report](#).

We will

The county-wide consultation response of 58% approval for the proposal provides a strong endorsement for retaining the booking process for cars. The council considers that a booking process is the most appropriate way to improve operational efficiency and reduce congestion, while maintaining easy access for users.

The result from Uttlesford is noted, but to ensure a clear and consistent county-wide offer, managing demand across the network and for operational benefits across the whole network, a universal, county-wide approach is required.

As a result, the council is recommending a booking process should be retained at all 21 recycling centres for cars.

If a booking process is adopted permanently, the council will use feedback provided through public consultation, user surveys and operational teams to identify further improvements to the booking process.

The following sections provide further information.

Booking Technology

The user surveys carried out during the pilot phase indicated users find the booking system easy to use. Some consultation comments provided feedback on the current booking system and made suggestions for improvement.

To ensure the booking technology works effectively and is fit for purpose in the longer term, the council will:

- review the booking system to identify opportunities to improve or extend functionality
- review the on-site booking technology to ensure it operates effectively for staff and users
- ensure the booking system meets accessibility needs
- continue offering a telephone booking process for users without digital access

Review of booking technology will include both customer and operational functionality and any resulting system changes will be tested with users and staff as appropriate.

Booking Process and Calendars

The council notes that feedback has been provided by consultation respondents, both positive and negative. Common themes were the importance of offering the option to book on the same day, and not limiting the number of visits a resident can make.

The booking process has been developed with close attention to patterns of demand on a site-by-site basis. During the pilot period the process has been improved by:

- introducing the ability to make same-day bookings, up to 15 minutes in advance (subject to availability)
- increasing the number of bookable slots at all sites
- reviewing the timing and duration of planned closures for operational activities
- increasing the time in advance slots are available to book (up to six weeks)
- adding more information to the website on how to use the booking system
- providing access to Essex sites for residents of neighbouring counties through reciprocal arrangements

To ensure the booking process continues to meet operational and user needs, the council will:

- maintain the option of same day booking to minimise the need to pre-plan visits
- continue to open booking slots a minimum of two weeks in advance
- review bookable capacity on a site-by-site basis to ensure operational capacity is maximised, including reviewing how long is typically needed on-site to unload
- review the length of bookable slots
- use data collected through the booking process together with logistical insight to continuously monitor booking patterns to minimise user disruption when recycling centres are required to close for operational servicing
- continue to review provision of reciprocal access for residents of neighbouring counties so the costs of managing waste are fairly borne by all taxpayers

Customer experience

The council notes a range of customer experience feedback has been provided by consultation respondents, both positive and negative. Feedback included positive reflections on the support offered by staff and reduced queues. Other respondents told us the booking process is inconvenient and has not improved their experience.

While some users don't mind queueing or congestion on site, it does impact service efficiency and safety. Although the rationale for a booking process included reducing waiting times and improving the customer experience this is not the sole focus of the booking process, other benefits sought included improving operational efficiency by ensuring servicing vehicles are not waiting in traffic to empty containers and improving on-site safety. Considering operational evaluation, public consultation feedback and user survey results, the council

believes the booking process is supporting a positive customer experience overall, while delivering good service efficiency and value for money.

The council will seek to continue to further improve the customer experience by:

- continuing to seek feedback from recycling centre users
- continuing to monitor congestion on and around sites
- allowing for those users who require more time to unload
- offering flexibility for users who may be delayed or arrive early
- reviewing how users who have not made a booking are managed
- investing in staff training and evaluation to support a high standard of customer care
- exploring how the booking process can further enhance the customer experience, for example enabling users with accessibility needs to pre-request on-site assistance
- reviewing how service and booking information is communicated to users

Flexible booking process

The council acknowledges 34% of the 10,242 consultees providing a comment to this question (19% of total respondents to the car proposal) stated that a booking process is not necessary. 16% of the 10,242 consultees providing a comment to this question (9% of total respondents to the car proposal) suggested that respondents would prefer a more flexible approach to when, where and for which vehicle types bookings are required.

The purpose of the booking process is to smooth usage across the available operating hours to ensure operational efficiency while maintaining easy access for users. It should be noted all recycling centres experience periods when they are over-crowded and busy which impacts customer experience and on-site safety. Whilst a flexible approach might be preferred by some residents, the majority of consultation respondents (58%) support retaining a booking process at all sites and for all operating hours. The council considers moving away from a clear and consistent countywide service is likely to cause confusion over what the process and rules are at each centre, increasing the number of users arriving without booking which could increase congestion on and around sites and reduce the benefit of a more positive on-site experience.

The council also considers introducing periods or recycling centres where booking is not required is likely to shift demand to centres less able to accommodate increased traffic and usage, increasing congestion and reducing operational efficiency at these locations. The booking process can also help the council to understand and plan for patterns of demand and servicing needs at sites that are required to close in order to safely undertake servicing activities, thereby improving operational efficiency and reducing the impact of closures on users.

The council recommends the booking process is implemented county-wide. It will continue optimising the operational efficiency and customer experience using data collected through the booking process, user feedback and insight from operational staff.

Fly Tipping

19% of consultees providing a comment to this question (10% of total respondents) raised concerns about whether a booking process would result in increased fly tipping.

As part of evaluating the pilot, the council has published data and supporting information related to fly tipping – see the [Final Evaluation Report](#). It should be noted national and local studies have not been able to identify any direct link between recycling centre booking systems and fly tipping. Although fly tipping has increased in some areas of the county, it cannot be attributed directly to the booking process as the change in reported incidents is not observed county-wide, and the change follows a historic trend of increasing incidents.

Users have told us that the booking system is easy to use, and operational evaluation has shown that capacity has been available every week across the network of 21 recycling centres. By offering same day bookings, users can access the service without substantial pre-planning.

The council therefore considers that asking users to pre-book a recycling centre visit cannot reasonably be used as a justification to fly tip.

The council will:

- continue to monitor bookable capacity to ensure operational capacity is maximised
- continue to monitor reported incidents of fly tipping
- continue to work closely with district, borough and city councils to take effective measures to identify and take action against those who chose to fly tip despite good levels of resident access to recycling centres being maintained

Recycling performance

11% of consultees providing a comment to this question (6% of total respondents) raised concerns about whether the booking process reduces engagement in recycling behaviour and could increase bulky waste sent to landfill.

Increasing the proportion of waste recycled is a council priority. The amount of waste deposited and recycled has been monitored as part of the evaluation of the pilot booking process. Waste taken to recycling centres has reduced since the pilot began, however this follows a historic trend of reducing waste linked to a greater range of kerbside recycling opportunities and more effective enforcement to prevent businesses using household recycling centres. Recycling performance at recycling centres has not reduced since the booking process was introduced. It should be noted that the primary role of recycling centres is to provide a place for disposal of bulky waste and waste types that cannot be collected at kerbside. In most cases, this type of waste taken to recycling centres cannot be placed in domestic bins so is unlikely to be causing an increase in waste collected at the kerbside. Please see the [Final Evaluation Report](#) for more detailed analysis.

The council believes reducing congestion and waiting times is likely to encourage an increase in recycling through a more positive experience and freeing up site staff to assist customers, a

benefit observed by other councils operating a booking process and [reported nationally \(DEFRA, 2023\)](#).

To ensure as much waste as possible is segregated for recycling, the council will:

- continue to provide recycling centre users with advice and guidance on how to get the most out of the service
- continue to provide recycling centre users with on-site support, directing them to the correct material containers
- explore whether a greater range of materials could be segregated at recycling centres

Bureaucracy / Use of resources

7% of consultees providing a comment to this question (2% of total respondents) raised concerns about the additional bureaucracy and cost of the booking process and whether this presented value for money. The council notes these concerns. The cost of the pilot has been operated within existing staff numbers and service budgets using a low-cost booking technology. A booking process is the lowest-cost solution to tackling the operational challenges caused by congestion whilst maintaining good access for users. Prior to booking pilot there were occasions when congestion required the deployment of site staff to manage off-site queues and in some cases additional staff and/or traffic management measures, at an additional cost. Queues could also delay servicing vehicles access to recycling sites, reducing the efficiency of this activity across the network which had a cost impact. Staff now stationed on the gate, no longer needed to manage traffic on-site, provide an additional benefit of supporting users who need assistance and providing information to encouraging recycling.

Equality impacts

The Council notes concerns raised around equality impacts and the need to consider the elderly, vulnerable and those who are not digitally confident or able to access the internet. Those who do not have access to make an online booking can phone the ECC contact centre on 0345 743 0430 Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm who will make the booking on their behalf. Throughout the pilot Blue Badge holders have not been required to make a booking and the council proposes to retain this exemption if the booking process becomes permanent. It should be noted that the consultation analysis found that support for the booking process increases with age.

To ensure we maintain an equitable and accessible service, if the booking process is made permanent the council will:

- continue to provide an accessible telephone booking option via the ECC contact centre
- promote non-digital options to those who cannot access or use the internet
- continue to review the accessibility and functionality of the booking technology

More information on how we consider and address equalities impacts are provided in our [Equality Comprehensive Impact Assessment](#).

4. Proposal for vans (large vehicles)

We asked

Key points of the consulted proposal:

- bookings will be required at all sites and opening hours
- bookings will be required for visits to the nine van-friendly sites in a large vehicle
- bookings can be made online via the Love Essex website (www.loveessex.org/bookings) or by telephone through the ECC contact centre, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

We refer to “vans” in this document for ease of reading. The term “vans” here covers large vehicles such as vans, pick-up trucks and vehicles towing a multiple-axle trailer.

Our survey questions:

- “Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to keep a booking process for vans, pickup trucks and vehicles with large trailers at van-friendly recycling centres?”
- “Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about the proposal?” (free-text comments)

You said

72% of respondents agreed with the proposal to retain the booking system for vans. 14% disagreed and 14% were not sure. Respondents from all 12 district/borough/city councils indicated at least 50% agreement with retaining a booking process for vans.

19% of consultees (3,092) provided a comment on the proposal for vans.

- 15% of these consultees commented on the general process being positive (for example, generally is a good idea, works well, preference to keep it, prevents abuse / misuse)
- 5% of these consultees commented that their on-site experience is positive (for example reduces / would reduce queues / congestion at centres)
- 27% of these consultees commented on the possibility of different rules for vans (for example, private use vans should be treated differently to commercial vans, vans booking as they have more waste / take more time to unload, vans booking at set times / days only)
- 14% of these consultees commented they would prefer no booking process and 5% commented they would like to see a more flexible approach to using the sites (e.g. booking only needed at weekends / peak times)
- 34% of these consultees expressed concern with regard to the perceived impact on fly tipping and 4% of these consultees believe the process has not improved the customer experience / it is inconvenient / a hassle to users
- 6% of these consultees commented that the process discourages / could discourage people to recycle / people will put such waste in domestic bins

We will

The county-wide overall consultation response of 72% in favour of retaining a booking process for vans provides a strong endorsement for the proposal. This is supported by the operational benefits found through the pilot evaluation such as reducing congestion on and around centres by improving the flow of vehicles and reducing the misuse of recycling centres by those disposing of business waste.

As a result, the council is recommending a booking process should be retained for vans at all nine large, van-friendly recycling centres.

As most comments on this proposal reflect those received under the cars proposal, please refer to the council's response in section 3 above.

The following sections provide further information on themes specific to the proposal for vans.

Booking process and calendars

The council acknowledges some comments received in response to this proposal suggested reviewing the duration of bookable slots for vans and other large vehicles.

Vans and large trailers take up a lot of space at recycling centres and often take longer to unload. This can reduce capacity for users visiting in a car, who typically require less space and time to unload, resulting in longer waiting times and congestion on and around centres. The booking process allows the service to set different visit durations by vehicle type and appropriately allocate bookable capacity between different vehicle types to ensure easy access for different user groups. By having different visit duration and bookable capacity, the service is also able to adjust bookable capacity for large vehicles at high demand times.

To continue maximising operational effectiveness and capacity, the council will:

- ensure the booking process allows for different booking durations for vehicle types
- ensure the booking process allows for different levels of bookable capacity for vehicle types
- continue to review bookable capacity for vans on a site-by-site basis to ensure operational capacity is maximised
- review the duration of bookable slots for vans

Flexible booking process

The council acknowledges 27% of respondents providing a comment to this question (5% of total respondents) asked about the possibility of different booking process requirements for vans. Suggestions included:

- private use vans should be treated differently to commercial vans
- a flexible booking process limiting access to vans to book on set times or days
- the process could be amended to only require bookings for vans, with no bookings required for cars

The council notes the suggestion to review how large vehicles are defined and to treat private van users differently to commercial users. The council has a statutory duty to provide recycling centres for residents to recycle and dispose of their household waste, free of charge. It should be noted that recycling centres do not accept commercial waste. All vans can visit larger recycling centres providing they are carrying the user's own household waste. The categorisation by vehicle type is simple to apply operationally and reduces confusion for customers, while maintaining easy access for all users. A booking process for vans also helps to deter commercial users from attempting to dispose of business waste at recycling centres. Disposing of waste arising from a business or trade activity should be paid for by the commercial enterprise, not the Essex taxpayer.

Although some users may prefer to limit access for vans to certain days/times of day, at which time cars would not have access to centres, this would reduce ease of access to the service for all user groups. The purpose of the booking process is to maximise operational capacity while maintaining easy access for users. The council believes introducing defined times when only vans can make a booking will have the reverse effect as it would limit availability across the week for certain vehicle types. The council also considers moving away from a clear and consistent booking process for everyone is likely to cause confusion over processes and rules at each centre and for each vehicle type, increasing the number of users arriving without booking. This could increase congestion on and around recycling centres and reduce the benefit of a more positive on-site experience.

The council has considered the suggestion to only require vans to pre-book, removing the pre-booking process for cars. It should be noted most vehicles using recycling centres are cars. Therefore, if the booking process focuses on vans only, there is danger operational and customer benefits of smoothing usage for the largest user group will be lost with a negative impact on everyone. There is also a risk that some van users may switch to making more frequent journeys by car in order to avoid pre-booking, which would increase the number of individual visits and increase congestion.

The council recommends the booking process for vans is implemented at all van-friendly sites. It will continue optimising the operational efficiency and customer experience using data collected through the booking process, user feedback and insight from operational staff.

To ensure the booking process is working effectively, the council will:

- keep the definition of large vehicles and what sites these vehicles can use under review

If a booking process is adopted permanently, the council will use feedback provided through public consultation, user surveys and operational teams to review the booking process and identify further improvements.

5. Further suggestions

We asked

- “Is there anything else that you would like us to consider around the future use of a booking system?” (free-text comment)

You said

45% (8,083) of consultees provided a comment at this question.

- 24% of these consultees commented on the general process being positive (for example, generally is a good idea, works well, preference to keep it, can book at convenient times)
- 12% of these consultees commented that their on-site experience is positive (reduces queues / congestion at centres / staff less stressed / happy to help)
- 28% of these consultees commented they would prefer no booking process
- 10% of these consultees commented they would like to see a more flexible approach to using the sites (e.g. booking only needed at weekends / peak times)
- 14% of these consultees expressed concern with regard to the perceived impact on fly tipping
- 7% of these consultees believe the process has not improved the customer experience / it is inconvenient / a hassle to users and 7% of consultees commented that the process discourages / could discourage people to recycle / people will put such waste in domestic bins.
- 5% of these consultees expressed concern regarding booking calendars and capacity
- 5% of these consultees expressed concern regarding bureaucracy and use of resources
- There were also suggested improvements to the process and system put forward (15%). For example, a more straightforward / less time-consuming checking process at the gate and alternative booking systems to online / provision for those unable to go online / make tele booking easier.
- In addition, 2% of consultees answering this question raised concerns that the council had already made a decision about the future of the recycling centre booking process

We will

The majority of consultee comments in response to this question reflect those received under the cars and vans proposals. Please refer to the Council’s response in section 3 and 4 above.

The following sections provide further information on themes not addressed above.

Capacity and usage

5% of comments from respondents to this question (2% of total respondents) raised concerns that recycling centres often appear empty or underused even though the booking calendar shows the centre is fully booked. The council acknowledges these concerns. It should be noted that user satisfaction with traffic flow, congestion and overall experience since the introduction of the booking process is high. The council will continue to review bookable capacity on a site-by-site basis to ensure that operational capacity is maximised.

The consultation process

2% of consultees providing a comment to this question (less than 1% of total respondents) raised concerns that the council had already made a decision about the future of the recycling centre booking process. The council notes these concerns. When the final phase of the booking pilot commenced In March 2023, the council made a commitment to consult the public on the future of the recycling centre booking process in the event that there was a proposal to retain bookings permanently. To ensure a broad response to the consultation, the proposal and ways to respond were strongly promoted through a robust communications campaign during the six-week consultation period. The consultation received over 18,000 responses which have been independently analysed and which have been carefully considered as part of the Council's response and decision making process. More information on the consultation and communication activity is available in the [Consultation Analysis Report](#) .

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