

The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership

Annex E

Community engagement and involvement

No Time to Waste: The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy

Introduction

Policy three of the Core Strategy says that the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership will:

“help householders and individuals to reduce and manage their wastes through the provision of advice and appropriate services.”

The delivery of the whole Strategy rests, to a significant degree, on the willingness and desire of Oxfordshire residents to take responsibility for their waste. This is not a ‘one way’ responsibility. Some of the decisions facing the Oxfordshire authorities have major financial and service design implications and the views of residents will need to continue to be taken into account. Therefore, during the development of this Strategy, the OWP engaged and involved the community through two exercises:

1. During the initial development stages of the Strategy (October 2005 – January 2006) a representative Community Panel was used to gather the views and concerns of residents, so these could be fed into the Strategy process from the outset;

2. When the main elements of the strategy were becoming clear, but before finalisation, a wider public engagement exercise entitled 'No Time to Waste' was conducted. It explained the challenges faced, set out the emerging responses, promoted awareness and debate, and invited views.

The results of this second exercise were then fed into the final process of the Strategy formulation. This Annex reports respectively on both exercises.

Community panel

The Community Panel comprised residents from each of Oxfordshire's Districts areas. Where possible it reflected the male/female split, age and ethnic diversity present within the County. There were four meetings of the Community Panel over the early Strategy development period.

The main functions of the meetings were to:

- Identify issues that members of the community might raise about waste management in Oxfordshire, or in response to the Strategy;
- Respond to all subjects raised or explain the issues behind them. The desired outcome of this was that the Community Panel would gain a better understanding of the issues involved in the management of their waste;

This would then give the members of the panel a better footing to make comments on the Strategy as it was being developed and, hopefully, give them confidence in the overall process.

The meetings involved:

- Presentation of key information;
- Followed by discussion in groups to consider elements of choice and to debate priorities and direction for the Strategy.

All comments and opinions of the Community Panel were fed back to Officers and Members at OWP workshops and waste review meetings. Four Community Panel meetings were held at the Oxford Town Hall. Each Community Panel meeting was held at a specific stage in the Strategy's development.

First meeting – 26 October 2005

The first meeting had two purposes:

1. To give some background information on waste management, including current legislation;
2. To present the Strategy development process.

A discussion then developed about the aims and objectives for Oxfordshire's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The following key points were made in full group discussion:

- The panel understand the need to reduce waste going into landfill;
- Reduction –
 - The Community Panel think it is important to deal with waste upfront in terms of reducing waste generated;
 - there is a need to deal with waste at the root of the cause, work towards waste reduction and need to focus on consumerism in relation to packaging;
- Incentives for households to recycle to the maximum is important;
- People's housing situation affects their ability to recycle and get involved;

- Emissions from vehicles used to collect waste etc. could be reduced by switching to alternative fuels;
- The Community Panel gave two examples illustrated to show how other counties and countries force the householder to think about the amount of waste they produce:
 - **Montreal, Canada:** give a limit on the amount of waste put out for collection, any waste above the limit incurs a charge.
 - **Cambridgeshire:** have a larger bin for recyclables and smaller bin for other wastes
- If people are charged they might be more inclined to dump their waste in the countryside, i.e. fly tip;
- Economic incentives –
 - supermarkets should have a packaging levy;
 - offer incentives instead of charges/tax/levies;
 - people who recycle should get lower council tax – it should be council tax driven;
- As a Country we should fine people who do not recycle etc;
- The stricter Governments become, the more it narrows choices and it gets harder to monitor activity or behaviour;
- There should be a by-law passed to ensure each individual Authority manages its own waste within its own area and has responsibility for the waste.

Three breakout groups were formed to consider more closely the aims and objectives for the Strategy. Comments included:

- It should meet Government guidelines;
- Financial costs are important (the Community Panel do not want to see Government fines for Oxfordshire);
- The Strategy should be realistic in terms of the influence and power of Local Authority i.e. it should not try to do things that are undeliverable;
- A decent safe service should be provided;
- Communications –

- education/information from advertising – should reach everyone and should start at school;
- increase awareness of waste reduction and recycling;
- let people know what happens with their waste etc and how they can contribute/help;
- A Jamie Oliver approach could be taken – i.e. there should be local and national radical change and big shake up like the high profile school dinners issue.
- It should be simple to make a contribution to (participate in) recycling and composting schemes, particularly in difficult places like flats;
- It should consider fuel for the vehicles i.e. bio diesel;
- It should recommend buying in bulk;
- It should build in incentives and increase awareness of packaging issues;
- There should be more publicity and campaigns work should have a bigger profile;
- Recycling businesses could have more of a role;
- Big businesses should take more responsibility for waste e.g. packaging, recycling etc.

Second meeting, 2 November 2005

The purpose of the second meeting was to present and discuss the evaluation criteria that would be used to assess the options for the Strategy.

The meeting began with an update on the discussion from the previous meeting (Meeting 1). This was followed by a whole group discussion about what was important to the Community Panel with regard to waste and the collection service they receive. General comments received from the group are detailed below:

- Standards of service seem to be low, collection of rubbish causes a mess and this is not cleaned up immediately;
- Oxford City need to consider the advice they give out i.e. bin bags are required to be set out the night before collection but this allows vermin to break into them which causes a mess;
- Is it possible that the poor service provided by bin men is because of the poor perception people have of their job?
- Bin men are paid relatively well;
- There is not just a litter element to rubbish collection but also noise pollution from glass collection and vehicles;
- Recycling is not cost efficient but it makes people feel good;
- It is important to consider the issues involved with transport of materials for recycling;
- The group's knowledge –
 - the group need to know the background to recycling before it can make decisions;
 - it's difficult to choose criteria without knowing more information.

The group then split into three breakout groups to discuss evaluation criteria in more detail. The main points from each group were fed back at the end of the session. The key points were:

- Transport is important – it should consider environmental, traffic congestion, reduce road mile, emissions, and health and safety issues;
- What would be the costs of converting Didcot power station into an incinerator?
- Economic tools –
 - increase levies on products that are difficult to recycle;
 - incentives for shops/ restaurants to consider packaging;
- Invest now for the long term;
- Happy to spend the money now for the benefits in long term;

- It shouldn't be all about the cost;
- Good planning is important;
- Should look at best practice from around the world;
- Need good advertising/ awareness/ education;
- Need a countywide system that is streamlined – joint working;
- Would like the best environmental value;
- Effects on the environment should be considered;

The Community Panel was then asked to apply weightings to the criteria they considered to be important. The criteria and weightings did not match that of the OWP and Officers of the Project Team. However, the top three criteria after the Community Panel's weighting exercise are detailed below:

1. environmental impact
2. cost
3. education.

Third meeting, 16 November 2005

The purpose of the third meeting was to present and discuss the options being developed for:

- waste reduction and reuse
- recycling and composting
- residual waste treatment.

The group split into breakout groups to discuss the option sets, their implications for the Strategy and how practical they would be to implement. Key points raised were:

Waste reduction and reuse:

- Glossy magazines should be recycled too;
- Non-reusable nappies should be taxed, much like alcohol and cigarettes;
- Nappy laundering service should be promoted, and information on it should be included in nappy packs;
- Composting –
 - home composting bins should have a low price £5 – £10 to encourage more people to buy and use them;
 - composting bins should come in varying sizes to suit different numbers of people living in households;
 - garden makeover shows should publicise composting as a normal activity to be undertaken by everyone;
- The use of paper bags or bags for life over plastic ones should be heavily promoted;
- The glass deposit system should be re-introduced;
- Junk mail –
 - unwanted mail service (Royal Mail) – doesn't stop mail sent directly to the "The Occupier";
 - need a similar law on spam on the internet, as senders of junk mail advertising (loans etc);
 - OWP Could introduce a fine on newsagents that allow junk flyers into newspapers – this was disagreed by the group because it is not necessarily the newsagent that allows the flyers to go in;
- With regards to reuse, items such as mobiles and phones should be taken back by the producer/supplier or supermarkets should take them in return for store card points;
- There is a need for incentives so that purchasers return packaging used for large items such as TVs, or for the supplier to pick up packaging once the item has been taken home. The packaging could then be reused;

- Alternatively there could be recycling bins/skips at schools where people could take their recycling. As an incentive the school could receive credits in relation to the amount of recyclables they collect;
- Scout collection items for recycling and re-use is not seen in Oxfordshire.

Collection:

- The group was not happy with the fact that some Districts charge for collection of bulky waste while other Districts don't – this will encourage fly tipping;
- All attendees were generally happy with current waste collection system;
- Improvements could be made through synchronising the collection systems (i.e. frequency etc.);
- They would like a collection system that collects as much as possible;
- All Districts should standardise collection receptacle and colour but give choice on size, so as to help people use the system;
- OWP need to lobby developers to provide recycling facilities at new housing developments;
- Can crushers could be provided with recycling boxes or sold at discount to encourage the utilisation of space;
- They can see the advantages in having an alternate weekly collection like Cherwell District Council's;
- Dirty MRF –
 - Districts could streamline the collection so that all waste is collected in one black bag and a dirty MRF used to pick out the recyclables – however it is important not to lose awareness;
 - it was also noted that a dirty MRF would mean that some recyclables lose their value to market and so this may have a negative affect.

Residual Waste:

- There was no dislike for any particular type of treatment;
- Incineration –
 - was discussed as being appropriate but only after the maximum effort is made to reduce waste and all recyclables previously removed. This would ensure that only the minimum amount is burnt;
 - is for waste that has no other options available for disposal;
- There is strict legislation for current treatment technologies in comparison to old methods with regards to fumes and gases, and the environment;
- Where would the facility be located in Oxfordshire?
- Waste could be transported outside of the County but this would mean adverse affects on the environment through road miles and vehicle emissions – the group was concerned about this.

Fourth meeting, 24 January 2006

The fourth meeting:

- Presented the preliminary results from the waste reduction and reuse Evaluation work and the recycling and composting Options Evaluation work for the Strategy.
- The options developed for the residual waste treatment Evaluation were also presented for discussion.

Waste reduction and reuse options

The group split into three discussion groups to consider the waste reduction and reuse options and Evaluation results. Each group was asked to consider which option would be the most effective and to identify any problems that they thought might arise. Key points made were:

- A linkage was made between glass bottle returning to supermarkets and using reusable bags. Carry bottles for return into shop in bag and use the same bag to carry new shopping out;
- Opt-in for paper bills etc, automatically get no paper bills, spam etc;
- Smart shopping –
 - requires changes to be made with packaging at producer level;
 - is dependent on the producer of the packaging, removing wrapping at the shop does not minimise waste, it just shifts where the waste is collected;
- Composting –
 - is problematic with new housing and limited garden space;
 - there is a need to change the perceived association of composting with ‘gardening’;
 - some people have just grass in their garden, they could have a compost bin that is just for green kitchen waste;
 - it was noted that composting produces compost and not everyone wants/needs compost.

Waste collection options

The Community Panel was also divided into three discussion groups to consider the waste collection options and Evaluation results. Again, each group was asked to consider which of these they thought would

be the most effective and what they thought would be required in order to make them work successfully. Key points made were:

- The fortnightly frequency for all collections is good, if given the correct collection receptacle (i.e. bin with lid);
- There would have to be some exceptions made for housing that may not be able to accommodate a number of collection receptacles;
- It should be expected to take a while for a new system to become established. There might be problems with the amount of recyclables collected over two weeks and service might have to change to weekly;
- A new system would require flexibility with bin size, collection frequency for different housing types;
- There are real problems with perception of residuals being collected over two weeks;
- The group agree with stopping black sacks, far better to use reusable bins;
- Fortnightly collections may be too confusing for some people and they may not bother – lots of public awareness is required;
- The receptacles should all have stickers on stating what can and can't be put in for collection;
- The number of bring banks should be increased and all supermarkets should have them.

Waste treatment options

The three discussion groups considered the waste treatment options, which of these they thought would be effective and which they felt would be the most appropriate for Oxfordshire. Key points raised were:

- There are no strong feelings for any type of treatment;

- The maximum waste reduction and recycling efforts must be made before any type of treatment used;
- A treatment facility should not have any adverse environmental effects and should have limited transport involved with its process or getting to it;
- The type of facility considered should also deal with the waste completely (e.g. there is some risk with future markets for outputs of certain treatments).

In summary, composting and smart shopping have real potential to reduce waste. Also, the group are happy with fortnightly collections if supported by appropriate receptacles and frequency.

Public Engagement: “No Time to Waste”

Background

The OWP began developing a Public Engagement exercise in Spring 2006. This was to inform and involve County residents with the future of waste management in Oxfordshire; and in particular to introduce the need for change and the future options for delivering this change.

Objectives

The main objectives of the public engagement exercise were to:

- Raise the profile of waste management in the county and the need for change;
- Take initial steps to establish a community leadership role for the OWP (i.e. to lead and inform debate);

- Seek basic customer feedback on key themes to be addressed by the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2005 to 2030).

Approach

Due to rigid time constraints, the public engagement exercise was limited to a five-week period (Friday 2 June – Sunday 7 July). This was extended to 17 July to enable people who went to the last few roadshows to take away forms and consider their response before sending them in. In order to maximise public engagement during this short-time period, a clear focus was given to delivering key messages via a hard-copy booklet and web pages. A wide range of communications activities was also used to ensure on-going publicity and distribution of these key messages. Table 1 shows how the objectives for the engagement were fulfilled.

Objective	How fulfilled
Raising the profile of waste management, the need for change and the OWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roadshows • website • advertising.
Seeking feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard-copy booklet form • website form • newspaper and Friends of the Earth forms.

Table 1 – Fulfillment of public engagement objectives

A public relations company was commissioned to develop an ‘identity’ for the public engagement exercise and to support the production of an attractive and accessible booklet (this is in the supplementary information). The theme ‘No Time to Waste’ was chosen, with a strap line of ‘It’s time to change the way we deal with our rubbish’.

The information booklet was developed by the PR company with the OWP. In particular it covered:

- The current situation regarding waste management in Oxfordshire;
- Why this cannot continue;
- The potential costs if we do not act;
- Progress to-date on waste reduction and recycling;
- Reduce, reuse, recycle;
- The options for dealing with residual waste;
- Oxfordshire Waste Partnership's waste Strategy;
- A feedback form with the following questions
 - *What would help you to reduce the amount of waste you produce?*
 - *What would most help you to recycle more?*
 - *Are there any waste collection, waste reduction, recycling or waste disposal issues that you think we should consider as we prepare to finalise the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy?*
 - *Other comments*
 - *What is your postcode?*
 - *Where did you get this leaflet?*

In total, 17,000 No Time to Waste booklets were printed and these were made available to members of the public at libraries, leisure centres, council offices, one-stop-shops and other public buildings. They were also handed out at special roadshows and other promotional events/activities organised or supported by members of the OWP (e.g. Wild Waste Show, environmental fairs etc.). A small number of booklets were directly mailed to all County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils and Community Action Groups. The No Time to Waste web pages provided information to further expand on issues raised in the booklet, as well as giving people an opportunity to feedback on-line.

The web pages were hosted on the Oxfordshire County Council website under the URL www.notimetowaste.org.uk. A link was provided from the homepage of all six Councils, the County Council intranet and the Oxfordshire 'schools' intranet'. In total, the web pages received 1,162 views and 707 visits. The associated news pages

(i.e. press release pages) on the county council website received 195 views and 153 visits.

Table 2 below summarises the communications and outreach activities employed as part of the public engagement exercise.

Activity	Summary
Press releases	<p>These successfully resulted in a wide-range of media coverage including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A feature article in the Oxford Times (launch)• Coverage in the Banbury Guardian, Herald Series and Oxford Mail• Interview on BBC South Today• Interviews on Touch FM, Fox FM, Mix 96, BBC Radio Oxford.
Radio advertising	<p>A 30-second radio advert ran on Fox FM between 12 June and 2 July, which is estimated to reach 195,000 county residents aged 15+.</p>
Bus advertising	<p>40 street liner bus adverts ran across the county bus network between 12 June and 7 July. This is estimated to have reached at least 60% of the County's adult residents.</p>
OWP roadshow events	<p>Cherwell District Council's waste promotions trailer was temporarily re-branded with No Time to Waste livery (a picture of this is in the supplementary information).</p> <p>Each District Council was asked to host a minimum of two roadshow events using the trailer as a backdrop and these were promoted via press releases, on the web and using posters where possible.</p> <p>The road shows had two specific aims. First, to take the Public Engagement's key messages out to communities and offer expert advice first hand. Second to provide another opportunity for individual councils to promote waste reduction and recycling issues.</p> <p>In total, 15 road show events were held, each attracting approximately between 30 and 100 visitors. There were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 roadshows in Cherwell• 3 roadshows in Oxford City• 4 roadshows in South Oxfordshire• 2 roadshows in the Vale• 3 roadshows in West Oxfordshire.

Table 2 – Communication and outreach activities for the Public Engagement exercise

Feedback responses

As part of the Public Engagement exercise, Oxfordshire residents were invited to give their views and opinions on the issues set out in the booklet and on the 'No Time to Waste' web pages.

In addition, other organisations helped to contribute to this important debate. In particular, the Banbury Guardian ran a copy of the OWP response form for their readers to complete. Also Friends of the Earth (FoE) distributed a 'Yes to recycling, No to incineration' form to their membership in Oxfordshire and through other promotional activities. The FoE forms broadly replicate the questions posed in the OWP No Time to Waste booklet, with pre-printed answers to:

Q2 What would help you to recycle more?

"I agree with Friends of the Earth, comprehensive recycling, including weekly collections of sorted recycled materials and segregated food waste; bi-weekly collections of un-sorted waste; and charged-for garden waste collections."

Q3 Are there any other waste collection, reduction of disposal issues that you think we should consider?

"I agree with Friends of the Earth: the use of Mechanical Biological Treatment using anaerobic digestion for unsorted waste, and segregated food waste municipally composting using in-vessel composting. I do not wish to see Oxfordshire's waste burnt in any kind of incinerator"

Responses to all the feedback forms returned between 2 June and the extended deadline of 17 July have been processed. More forms arrived after this date but were not included in the analysis.

In total, 891 response forms were received. Table 3 below shows how the responses were received.

Source	Number of Responses
OWP Booklet	330
On-line form	169
Banbury Guardian form	15
Friends of the Earth form	377
Total	891

Table 3 - Number of responses received from each source

The geographical breakdown of response is set out below in Table 4. However, this is an approximate split, as some postcode areas straddle more than one district.

Source	Number of responses					
	Cherwell	Oxford	South	Vale	West	Other
OWP Booklet	53	60	119	47	46	5
On-line form	32	59	35	21	17	5
Banbury Guardian	15	0	0	0	0	0
Friends of the Earth	32	142	68	87	32	16
Total	132	261	222	155	95	26

Table 4 - Geographical breakdown of responses

Key messages

Below is a summary of the high-level key messages for the OWP that came out of the comments on the feedback:

- The OWP should look to take on a community leadership role to address excess and unnecessary packaging at source (i.e. manufacturers) and/or at distribution (i.e. supermarkets);
- Continue to work to improve recycling in the County;

- Engage the community through on-going public information and education;
- Note that a significant proportion of respondents (although not necessarily residents) are against incineration;
- Individual authorities should look to expand the breadth of their recycling schemes and ensure consistency when applying schemes.

Detailed comments

There were many detailed comments both in answer to the three main questions posed and as 'other comments'. These are broken down below by question.

Q1. What would help you to reduce the amount of waste you produce?

The clear message regarding waste reduction is to address it at source (or distribution) perceived excess and unnecessary packaging. Typical comments include: *"Get supermarkets and manufacturers to use less packaging"* or *"persuade manufactures to use less packaging (maybe a reduction in council tax for shops that use less packaging)"*. It was also suggested that packaging should be recyclable and that a greater number of products should be produced in packaging that is refillable or returnable.

Plastic bags and unsolicited mail are also cited as waste reduction challenges and it was suggested by a number of respondents that a *"compulsory charge for carrier bags"* should be levied and that the volume of *"unsolicited adverts in post and attached to papers"* should be reduced. Figure 1 gives more detail.

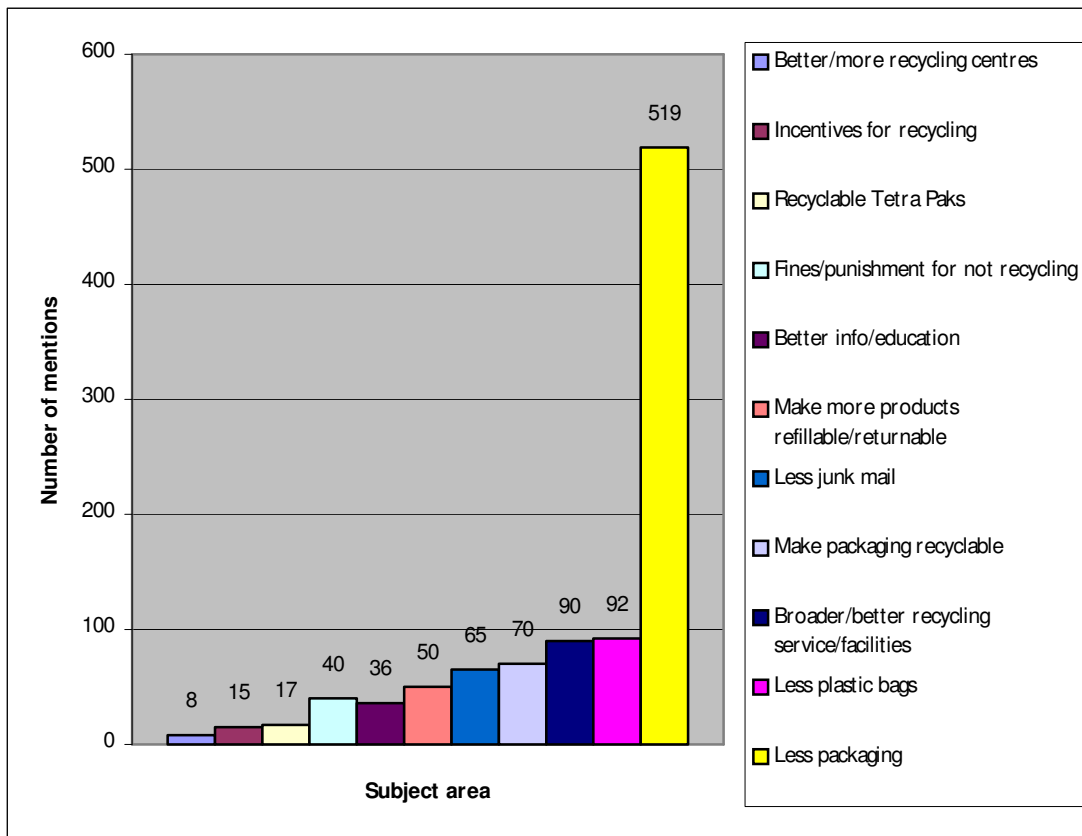


Figure 1 – Responses to Q1 What would help you to reduce the amount of waste you produce?

(Base: Comments given on OWP Leaflets, OWP Web Forms and OWP Banbury Guardian Form, FOE Leaflet)

Q2. What would most help you to recycle more?

The clear message from respondents, regarding recycling, is that individual Authorities should look to expand the breadth of their doorstep recycling schemes by including additional materials and ensure consistency when applying schemes. Analysis by District Council area suggests that for Cherwell and South Oxfordshire this is glass, for Oxford City and the Vale of White Horse plastic and for West Oxfordshire green waste. Figure 2 shows more detail.

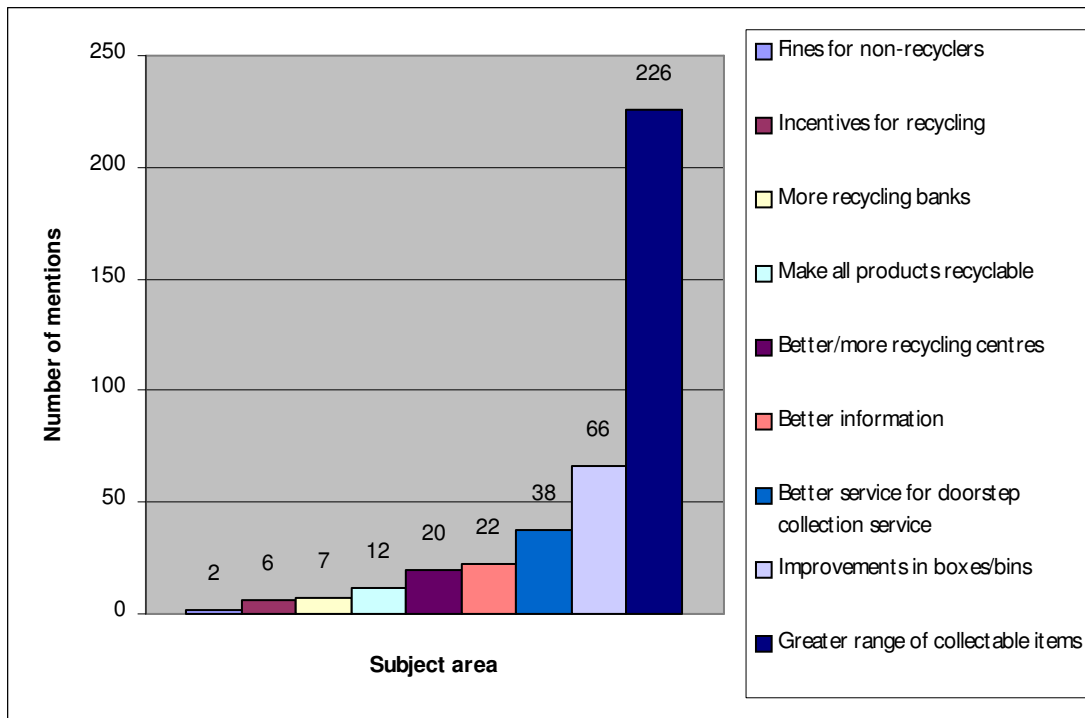


Figure 2 – Responses to Q2 What would most help you to recycle more?
 (Base: Comments given on OWP Leaflets, OWP Web Forms and OWP Banbury Guardian Form)

The text from the pre-printed Friends of the Earth response card (377 responses) is not shown in this chart.

“I agree with Friends of the Earth, comprehensive recycling, including weekly collections of sorted recycled materials and segregated food waste; bi-weekly collections of un-sorted waste; and charged-for garden waste collections.”

Q3. Are there any waste collection, waste reduction or waste disposal issues that you think we should consider as we prepare to finalise the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy?

Respondents took the opportunity to repeat messages or raise issues that others had commented on elsewhere when presented with the

‘catchall’ questions regarding the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy and the open comments question.

Again, doorstep recycling was the predominant issue, although some respondents did use this as an opportunity to comment on the future waste disposal technologies available to the OWP. Figure 3 shows more detail.

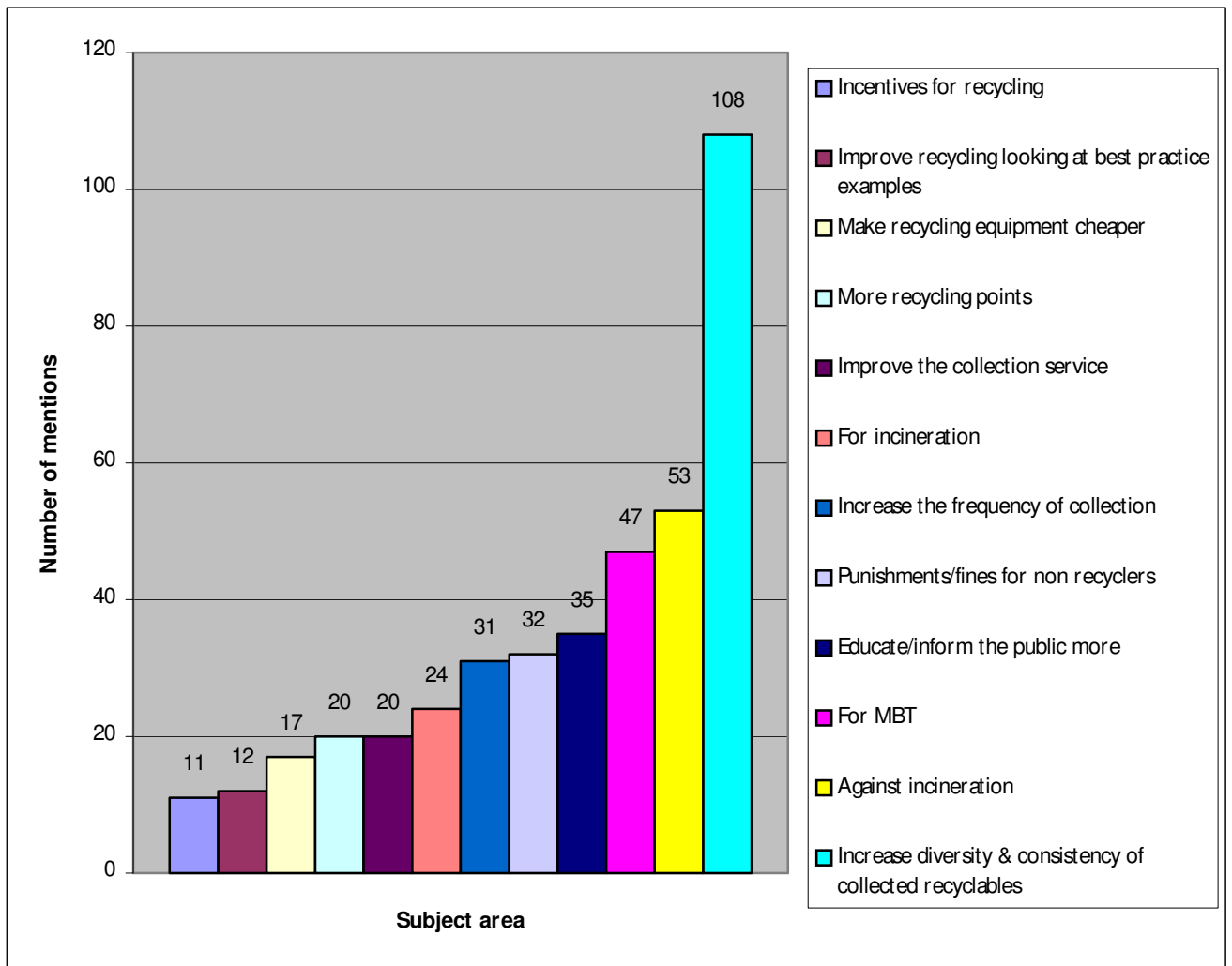


Figure 3 – Q3 Are there any waste collection, waste reduction or waste disposal issues that you think we should consider as we prepare to finalise the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy?

(Base: Combined OWP Leaflets, Web Forms and Banbury Guardian Returns)

The text from the pre-printed Friends of the Earth response card (377 responses) is not shown in this chart.

"I agree with Friends of the Earth: the use of Mechanical Biological Treatment using anaerobic digestion for unsorted waste, and segregated food waste municipally composting using in-vessel composting. I do not wish to see Oxfordshire's waste burnt in any kind of incinerator"

Other comments

Other comments are summarized in Figure 4.

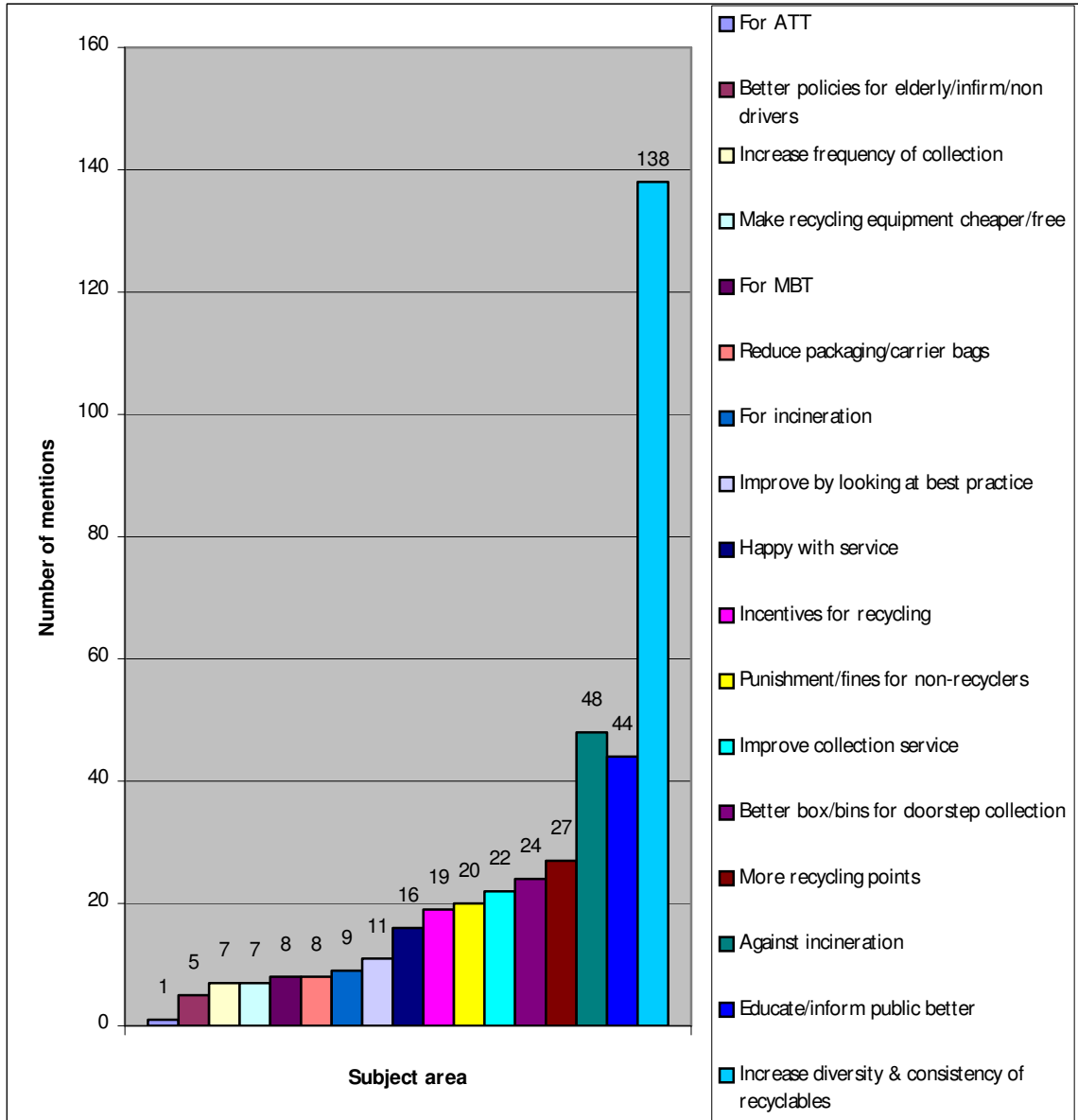


Figure 4 – Other comments

(Base: Comments given on OWP Leaflets, OWP Web Forms and OWP Banbury Guardian Form, FOE Leaflet)

Conclusion

The Community Panel and the Public Engagement exercises provided public engagement and involvement for the Strategy development process. The Core Strategy also includes provisions for feedback, complaints, compliments and comments in the future.

Supplementary information

- 1. No Time to Waste Booklet**
- 2. No Time to Waste Promotional Trailer**



2. Waste Trailer

