

Public Consultation Summary Report September 2007



Zero
Waste
to Landfill
by 2020

a) Introduction

This is a summary report of a consultation carried out in summer 2007 to provide members of the public with the opportunity to comment on Staffordshire's Zero Waste to Landfill strategy. The central aim of this strategy is to increase re-use, recycling and to stop using landfill sites by 2020.

This extensive public consultation took place between 10 July and 15 September 2007. The consultation was designed and implemented by Counter Context Ltd who were commissioned by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) on behalf of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Municipal Waste Board (JMWB).

b) Aims and Objectives

This public consultation was designed to:

- Raise the public's awareness of the issues raised by, and the potential solutions highlighted in, the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy.
- Obtain the public's views about their level of understanding of the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy and their opinions about the issues raised and the solutions proposed.
- Establish the acceptability of "Energy from Waste" as a treatment option for residual waste.
- Ensure that the public are involved in the development of the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy.
- Obtain a comprehensive, statistically-valid and robust account of the views generated by the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy of a representative sample of the Staffordshire population (circa 1,000,000 people¹).

¹ Including the population of Stoke-on-Trent.



c) Methodology

This public consultation incorporated a range of techniques to encourage people to become actively involved in the development of the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy. The techniques used can be grouped into two categories:

Direct - information and consultation activities made available and distributed directly to members of the public.

On Demand - information materials and resources made available for access by members of the public.

i. Direct Techniques

Table A below describes the direct techniques that were used and how information materials were distributed.

Table A – Direct Techniques

Technique	Distribution	Number Distributed
Briefing Pack - introducing the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy and the ongoing consultation.	Sent to all elected members representing constituencies in Staffordshire.	300
Summary Document and Longer Questionnaire - This document was designed to provide more detailed information for those people actively interested and involved in the debate about long-term waste management.	Sent to all Parish Council representatives in Staffordshire.	500
	Made available online	N/A
Consultation Booklet and Shorter Questionnaire - The central element of this public consultation was the production and distribution of a clear and concise consultation booklet and response slip about the Zero Waste to Landfill strategy.	450 Community Access Points located around Staffordshire.	24,450
	100 exhibitions located around Staffordshire.	2,100
	Central Library distribution Roadshows.	8,000



<p>Discussion Groups - Members of the public were also able to contribute to this consultation via a series of facilitated discussion groups.</p>	<p>These discussion groups were convened in Leek; Lichfield; Rugeley; Wombourne; Tamworth; Stafford; Burton on Trent; Newcastle Under Lyme</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>On-street Interviews - Members of the public were also able to contribute to this consultation via on-street interviews with, MRS accredited market researchers.</p>	<p>In total 1008 interviews were carried out in all nine districts in Staffordshire.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

ii. On Demand Techniques

These direct techniques were supported by two “on-demand” methods that members of the public could access at their convenience.

Online Portal – www.staffswaste2020.info

This public information and consultation programme was supported by a comprehensive online portal which presented all of the consultation materials and links to other relevant and useful resources.

In total 3145 unique visitors accessed the online portal between 9 July 2007 and 15 September 2007.

Telephone Information Line – 0845 300 6630

During this public consultation programme a dedicated telephone information line was made available for all enquiries relevant to the strategy and ongoing consultation activities. This information line was staffed during normal office hours (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday) with an answer phone facility for after-hours calls.

In total approximately 25 calls were received during this consultation.



This consultation was also supported by:

- a series of launch events that took place on 9 and 10 July 2007
- radio broadcasts and pre-recorded interviews with representatives from the JMWB
- an article which appeared in Staffordshire County Council’s newsletter, “Your Staffordshire”
- the publication of a series of press releases in regional newspapers.

d) Consultation Responses

The table below shows the number of responses received during this consultation.

Table B – Number of responses received

Consultation Method	Number of Responses
Shorter Questionnaire	1156
Longer Questionnaire	35
On-street interview	1008
Telephone calls (comments)	2
Letters	32
Total	2233

Shorter Questionnaire

In total 1156 shorter questionnaires from the consultation booklet or County Council newsletter were returned. This shorter questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of six statements. The summary findings were:

1. There was considerable agreement with the proposition that the councils in Staffordshire should do more to reduce the amount of waste produced in the county. In total 94.6% of respondents either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” which this statement.
2. In total 93.9% of respondents either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the councils should plan and work so that at least half of household waste is recycled and composted.



3. 95% of respondents agreed in some way that they had responsibilities to recycle and compost more of their waste.
4. 85.2% of respondents agreed in some way that Staffordshire should plan to stop using landfill sites because of environmental considerations.
5. There was a considerable level of agreement (85.2% of respondents) with the proposition that Staffordshire should plan to stop using landfill sites because disposing of waste in this way will become increasingly expensive.
6. Over 90% of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the proposition that Staffordshire should convert more residual rubbish into energy.

The 1,156 respondents offered 1,156 further comments about different aspects of the strategy. Each comment has been reviewed and, where possible, they have been categorised where comments have addressed similar issues.

These comments covered 48 broad categories, the most frequent (167 comments, 11% of all comments) was a request for kerbside collection of a greater range of recyclables, particularly plastic (of all types) and cardboard.

The second most frequent comment (157 comments, 10.4% of all comments) was a call for pressure to be put on businesses, particularly supermarkets, to reduce excess (unnecessary) packaging on goods (particularly food) and for necessary packaging to be recyclable or biodegradable.



Longer Questionnaire

In total only 35 copies of this longer questionnaire were returned.

Considering this low response rate it would not be appropriate to analyse these responses as the quantitative results would not yield statistically valid findings. Nevertheless, these 35 responses have been considered during this consultation.

The comments offered by these 35 respondents are provided in the full report.

Discussion Groups

Participants in the discussion groups were invited to consider the following issues:

- What should be done to reduce the amount of waste produced in Staffordshire?
- What should be done to increase the amount of waste which is recycled?
- What views, if any, they had about the proposal to reuse rubbish by converting more residual rubbish into energy.

Participants were then asked to consider where they thought the onus of responsibility lay in seeking to reduce, recycle, reuse Staffordshire's municipal waste. In particular they were asked to offer their views about the role of:

- the individual
- local and central government bodies
- other organisations including businesses.

A full account of the discussion groups is provided in the full report.



On-street Interviews

The summary results stemming from the on-street interviews were as follows:

- 28.2% of respondents who agreed to be interviewed said that they had previously heard about the Zero Waste to Landfill by 2020 strategy.
- On average, 93.7% of respondents either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that “Staffordshire must now decide how to deal with the increased amount of rubbish that will be produced in the future”.
- On average, of 93.4% of respondents agreed in some way that councils in Staffordshire must work more with local people to reduce the amount of waste they produce.
- Over 90% of respondents across the county said they would support schemes designed to reduce, reuse and recycle rubbish.
- An overwhelming majority (average 94.2%) of respondents agreed in some way that the councils should plan and work so that at least half of all household waste is recycled and composted.
- Over 90% of all respondents agreed in some way that they had a responsibility to ensure they recycled and composted more of their waste.
- In general, and compared to financial considerations such as saving council money, respondents are encouraged to recycle more of their waste by the thought that doing so would protect the environment.
- Respondents were asked if there were any other reasons why they recycled. The two most regularly cited reasons were:
 1. to protect the environment and safeguard future generations
 2. we are responsible for our own waste.

Respondents were then asked to think about what encouraged them to compost. As with recycling, respondents said they were encouraged by environmental considerations, rather than by financial reasons, to compost more of their waste.



Respondents were then asked if there were any other reasons why they composted. The two most regularly cited reasons were:

- composting is good for the garden/environment
- it is easy to do.

Over 50% of respondents “strongly agreed” that Staffordshire should work towards stopping using landfill sites by 2020.

Respondents were then asked to think about three contributing factors for making the decision to stop using landfill sites by 2020. The three factors that respondents were asked to consider were:

- they take up valuable space in our countryside
- they would create more pollution
- disposing of waste in this way will become increasingly expensive.

The percentage of respondents who either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with these statements was then used to create a rank based on what percentage of respondents agreed in some way with these statements. This rank is:

First: 89.5% agreed that landfill would create more pollution

Second: 85.8% agreed that landfill would take up valuable space in the countryside.

Third: 83.5% agreed that disposing of waste in landfill will become increasingly expensive.

94.9% of respondents agreed in some way that Staffordshire should do something with leftover rubbish, known as residual waste.

Respondents were told that there are different technologies available that turn residual waste into energy, electricity and heat. Respondents were then asked to indicate how important they thought the following factors are in deciding which technology to use:

- Technology that protects the local environment
- Technology that is safe and reliable
- Technology that provides the best value for money



- Technology that helps combat climate change
- Technology that maximises the amount of energy we can produce from residual waste

On average, respondents thought that the most important factor to consider when selecting technology to convert residual waste into energy was ensuring that it is “safe and reliable”.

Respondents also thought that protecting the local environment and ensuring maximum efficiency were also important considerations. Of all the six factors presented, respondents thought “value for money” was the least important. This response is consistent with the general responses expressed earlier that financial considerations were not as important factors for increasing recycling and composting when compared to environmental considerations.

At the end of the interview respondents were asked to express a view about two statements.

1. Staffordshire needs to get as much benefit from our residual waste as possible.
2. Staffordshire needs to look at ways that converts more of our residual waste into electricity and/or heat.

A large majority of respondents agreed with both statements. In particular 97.3% of respondents agreed in some way that Staffordshire needs to get as much benefit from our residual waste as possible. 95.8% of respondents agreed in some way that Staffordshire needs to look at ways that converts more of our residual waste into electricity and/or heat.



Finally, 320 individual comments were made by interviewees at the end of the interview.

These are summarised in the table below.

Table C – Numbered comments and topics mentioned

Topic Mentioned	Number of Comments
Need to be able to recycle other materials	55
Dubious about concept of waste to energy	39
In favour of waste to energy	34
Need more frequent collections	31
The councils should do more to be efficient generally and should do more to support recycling	27
Concerned about cost effectiveness of converting waste into energy	26
Need more information about energy from waste and how to recycle	23
Need more recycling bins	18
There is too much packaging	18
The public should do more to improve recycling rates	15
No facilities for people in flats	4
Should reward those who recycle	3
Need more storage areas for the bins	2
Miscellaneous comments	31

E. Comments received via the telephone information line

During the consultation two comments were received via the telephone information line.

F. Letters received during the consultation

During this consultation 32 letters were received from members of the public. These letters are presented in their entirety in Appendix 12 of the full report.