

Summary Report: Waste

This report contains summary findings from the public consultation on the draft London Environment Strategy, with a focus on waste. It draws together data from both quantitative and qualitative research. Detailed reports supporting this summary are available from the Greater London Authority Opinion Research and Statistics team.

1. Methodology

Waste public consultation methodology		
Quantitative Research: Surveys on reuse, water bottles and disposable coffee cups were conducted with a representative sample of Londoners and were posted on the Talk London consultation page.		
<u>Representative polling</u>	<u>Talk London Community</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys carried out with a representative sample of the London population aged 18+ on the following dates:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 21st-24th August 2017, with a response of 1,051○ 18th-21st September 2017, with a response of 1,044	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys with parallel content to those conducted with a representative sample, ran from 11th August to 17th November 2017 on Talk London• The sample has not been weighted and is therefore not representative of the London population• The findings from these surveys have been compared against the findings from representative polling, and key differences have been highlighted in the consultation reports	
Qualitative Research: A programme of qualitative research was designed to explore general attitudes to waste amongst Londoners. All qualitative research was conducted with Talk London members. This resulted in a more engaged sample than would be the case in the general population.		
<u>Offline qualitative research (focus groups + interviews)</u>	<u>Online qualitative research (discussion threads)</u>	<u>Correspondence</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four focus groups were conducted on 21st and 23rd August in City Hall, each lasting 90 minutes• Participants were recruited from the Talk London community, and were paid £40 to attend• The groups were split by age as this was identified as a key driver of attitudes towards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 discussion threads on waste ran from 11th August to 17th November on the Talk London community:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Single use packaging (44 comments)○ Increasing repair and reuse (15 comments)○ Minimum level of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The GLA received a total of 1,345 emails from members of the public either writing in as individuals or as part of a campaign• Emails from individuals have

Waste public consultation methodology		
waste • A total of 32 participants attended the session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender: 17 women/ 15 men ○ Age: 15 x 20-35 year olds/ 17 x 40-65 year olds ○ Ethnicity: 26 x white participants/ 6 x BAME participants ○ Housing tenure: 14 x homeowners/ 15 x private renters/ 3 x social renters 	recycling service (66 comments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tackling recycling performance in flats (19 comments) • Analysis of the discussion threads, supported by key quotes, has been included in this report	been included in the analysis for this report

2. Attitudes towards recycling

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Recycling is the first to come to mind when discussing environmental impact:
 - Across the strategy research, recycling and taking public transport were by far the most commonly cited actions that participants gave when asked what they did as individuals to reduce their impact on London's environment.
 - In many instances, participants struggled to think of any environmental actions they took beyond these two things.
- Recycling in the home was seen as a well established social norm:
 - Concern for the environment drives behaviour – there was a strong dislike of landfill and high levels of anxiety about plastic in the ocean.
 - Recycling was seen as on a par with good table manners, i.e. part of your upbringing and something you don't think twice about.
- Recycling in flats was seen to be much more difficult due to:
 - Lack of recycling facilities in some developments, especially older ones.
 - The greater level of effort required, e.g. the council not delivering recycling bags so residents have to go to the local library to collect them.
 - A tendency for apartment blocks to attract fly-tipping.
 - High rates of contamination of recycling in flats.
- The inconsistency of service between boroughs was a source of frustration and confusion:
 - It drives confusion over what can and can't be recycled.
- Certain items were identified as difficult to recycle in current system:

- Some participants felt the council should offer a service for collecting wood, metal, clothes and printer cartridges.
- Participants also felt that it should be made easier to recycle batteries, lightbulbs and old electronics, such as mobile phones.
- Doubts over the integrity of recycling systems is a barrier for some:
 - Participants had many doubts about recycling ending up in landfill.
- Outside of the home, recycling is seen to be much more difficult:
 - Social norms around recycling were not seen to apply outside of the home - waste from the lunchtime crowd was seen as a symbol of this.
 - This is attributed to a lack of facilities, such as recycling bins in public areas.
 - Participants spoke of having to go to some lengths to ensure they recycle waste whilst out and about, such as walking a long way to find a recycling bin / carrying waste home with them.
- Suggestions for improving recycling included:
 - Education campaigns for Londoners.
 - Placing bins in easily accessible positions in blocks of flats.
 - Giving financial incentives to recycle to those living in flats.
 - Pressure on retailers to provide more recycling facilities and to reduce the amount of non-recyclable packaging used in products.

“I find it really frustrating that different boroughs have different approaches to recycling. There must now be a recognised ‘best practice.’ I would also like a better definition of what is and what is not recyclable.”

Talk London Member, 69 years old, Male, Harrow

Summary of quantitative findings (representative polling):

- When asked about support for various recycling policies, all were very well supported with between 85 per cent and 70 per cent net support. The policy with the most support is the policy to collect food waste and the six main recyclable materials consistently across London (net +85 per cent).
- When ranked against each other, 28 per cent of respondents wanted to see the policy of collecting food waste and the six main recyclable materials consistently across London implemented the most. 21 per cent wanted to see the reduction of excess food packaging, and 19 per cent promoting the reduction of food waste:
 - Older and ABC1 Londoners are more supportive of these measures (approximately 10 per cent more support for each policy than younger C2DE Londoners).

Talk London polling results were broadly in line with findings from representative polling.

3. Attitudes towards reuse

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Reuse was a popular concept, but one that participants felt was out of step with London's culture:
 - Reuse is associated with 'old fashioned' values.
 - It was seen to be out of step with the modern economy, defined by upgrading to the latest model / convenient home delivery / products that are not made to last.
- When participants spoke about reuse, it was clear that they were not primarily motivated by environmental concern:
 - It was mainly associated with financial gain.
 - Convenience was also an important driver of behaviour.
 - Environmental concerns were a third tier consideration.
- Cost, time and effort all emerged as significant barriers to engaging with the reuse market:
 - The low cost of goods means that there is often no financial incentive to buy second hand.
 - Concerns over quality are a barrier to buying electrical goods, such as phones or computers, second hand.
 - Lack of knowledge over how to repair items was seen as a barrier to reusing furniture/ electrical goods.

"I believe my council charge to remove furniture, but when I needed to dispose of a wardrobe which was still in good reusable condition, I booked a collection with the British Heart Foundation as donation, and not only did they collect it for free but they managed to sell it."

Talk London Member, 33 years old, Female, Camden

Summary of quantitative findings (representative polling):

- 73 per cent of Londoners have donated items to be reused in the last few years (e.g. to charity shops):
 - Older and ABC1 Londoners are more likely to do this, and women are 20 per cent more likely than men to do so.
 - Of those (23 per cent) who said they have not donated items to be reused in the last few years, over half (58 per cent) said they would consider doing so in the future and just 18 per cent said they wouldn't. In other words, 86 per cent of Londoners are either already doing this action, or would consider doing so.
- Fewer Londoners (34 per cent) have sold items to be re-used in the last few years:
 - Under 50s are much more likely to have done this. However, of those who haven't done this, 56 per cent would consider doing so.

- 46 per cent of Londoners have bought a 'reused' or second-hand item, compared to 48 per cent who haven't.
- Just 18 per cent of Londoners say they have bought repaired items; younger Londoners being much more likely to do so.
- 46 per cent of Londoners say they have got their items repaired in the last few years:
 - There is little difference by age, but ABC1 Londoners are more likely to do so than C2DE. Repairing mobile phones and laptops may feature highly for younger Londoners, whilst clothes and footwear may feature higher for older Londoners.
- 12 per cent of Londoners have rented or leased items:
 - For those who said they haven't rented or leased items in the last few years, just 32 per cent said they would consider doing so, and 51 per cent said they wouldn't.
 - Of those who said they would consider renting or leasing an item, 21 per cent said they would rent a white good or small electrical item, 19 per cent said they would rent an audio-visual device, and just 10 per cent said they would rent clothing. 40 per cent said they don't know.

Talk London polling suggests that Talk London members are more likely to have engaged in re-use and recycle activities (96 per cent saying they have donated to a charity shop compared to 75 per cent of all Londoners), and are more likely to consider re-using or recycling items.

4. Attitudes towards single-use packaging

Summary of views based on qualitative findings:

- There were high levels of frustration with the level of plastic in packaging:
 - Packaging felt to epitomize culture of 'unnecessary waste'
- There was low spontaneous awareness of coffee cups as a waste issue:
 - In the focus groups, most participants did not know that coffee cups were not recyclable.
 - Participants were shocked that this was the case - some felt that coffee cups were designed to 'dupe' customers into thinking that they were recycling.
- Reusable cups were not seen as mainstream:
 - A minority of participants had one but most of those said they tend to only use it at work / home rather than in retail outlets.
 - Many were unaware that you could ask to get your own cup filled up at a retail outlet.
- Participants felt it was unrealistic to expect consumers to change behaviour:
 - Participants saw many barriers to uptake of reusable cups:
 - It is inconvenient, for example they are easy to forget / bulky to carry / there is a risk of spillage / they require cleaning.

- Reusable cups are not the norm and there was concern that they can make you stand out.
 - Habits around coffee / tea consumption are deeply ingrained.
 - Current incentives encourage the use of takeaway cups - tax means it's more expensive to get a mug than a takeaway cup so everyone gets takeaway, even if sitting in.
- Participants felt strongly that this requires a change from government / industry:
 - Participants felt that government stepping in to legislate to ban non recyclable cups was the obvious way to solve the problem.
- Most participants in the focus groups said they avoided bottled water out of 'common sense':
 - There was an attitude of 'why pay for something that you can get for free?'
- Environmental concerns were less prominent:
 - There was a perception that bottled water is only a problem if not recycled.
 - A minority of participants were aware of the wider environmental costs of bottled water (travel / energy).
- But participants felt it was difficult to avoid bottled water entirely:
 - Convenience factors were most often cited, such as forgetting it / not having space in their bag to carry it / risk of spillage / hassle to wash.
 - Closely followed by health concerns over reusing single use bottles (associated with increased cancer risk).
 - Cultural reasons, such as impressing in formal situations / signalling status, were also felt to play a role in bottled water consumption.
- Participants felt it was difficult to find places to fill up water bottles in London:
 - There is a lack of water fountains, particularly when compared to other cities.
 - There is a reluctance to go into businesses to ask to fill up water bottle, as it was felt this was not common practice.
- There is support for measures to tackle this:
 - Popular measures were water fountains, signs in the windows of businesses, jugs of water.
- There was spontaneous support for a deposit return scheme:
 - This was a measure that many had seen working well elsewhere and one that is perceived to have a big impact on recycling behaviour.

"We must create and normalise a refill culture in London, facilitated by massively increasing the availability of free drinking water, and placing refill points in Transport for London stations is the best way to do this."

Talk London Member, 35 years old, Male, Hackney

Summary of quantitative findings (representative polling):

- Londoners think that businesses are not doing enough to reduce waste from coffee cups or plastic water bottles:
 - 51 per cent say they are not doing enough for coffee cups and 52 per cent say they are not doing enough for water bottles.
 - ABC1 and white Londoners are most likely to hold these views.
- 66 per cent of Londoners think that businesses should do more to reduce waste from single use coffee cups and single use plastic bottles:
 - Slightly stronger disagreement comes from older Londoners and slightly stronger agreement comes from ABC1 voters.
- 61 per cent of Londoners say that they would be likely to consider buying a reusable water bottle to reduce the amount of single use plastic bottles sold:
 - 19 per cent say they are already using a reusable water bottle.
 - People who say they are already using a reusable water bottle are more likely to be female, slightly older and white. Those who say they are not likely to consider buying a reusable water bottle are more likely to be male (16 per cent, compared to 9 per cent of women). Those who say they would consider buying are more likely to be an ethnic minority and under 65.
 - Between £2 and £3 is the (mean) average response for the maximum a Londoner would be willing to pay for a reusable water bottle.
- Concern about chemicals in the bottle is the most common reason given for not buying a reusable water bottle:
 - This is followed by Londoners saying they wouldn't use it enough, and that they don't like carrying them around.
- Discounts off the cost of coffee would do the most to encourage people to use a reusable coffee cup (48 per cent):
 - Followed by well-designed reusable coffee cups (26 per cent) and loyalty points (22 per cent).
 - C2DE Londoners are most likely to say that none of the options given would encourage them to use a reusable coffee cup (20 per cent, compared to 9 per cent for ABC1 Londoners). Younger ABC1 Londoners would be more encouraged by discounts and loyalty points.
- More places to fill up water bottles, and more accessible places are what would convince most Londoners to use a reusable water bottle (33 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively):
 - Well designed reusable bottles is the third choice, and more information about where they can be refilled is the fourth choice.

Talk London polling suggests that the Talk London community are more likely to think businesses aren't doing enough to reduce waste from coffee cups and single use plastic bottles (67 per cent and 72 per cent strongly disagree, respectively, compared to 30 per cent and 31 per cent of all Londoners) and are more likely to be convinced by schemes to encourage using a re-usable coffee cup or water bottle e.g. discounts for coffee cups and more (accessible) places to refill water bottles.