

Household waste collection services, zone one

**Summary of submissions
September 2023**

About PublicVoice

PublicVoice Limited has completed this research project. PublicVoice is a leading research and engagement consultancy headquartered in Wellington, New Zealand. We concentrate on public policy research and consultation, providing services to various local and central government agencies throughout New Zealand. To learn more about our work, please visit www.publicvoice.co.nz.

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Introduction

This report compiles feedback from the public consultation about the proposed waste system for Buller, Zone One. It's important to note that this is a public consultation, not a scientific survey. Thus, the feedback represents the participants' views and may not capture the broader community's perspectives. The insights collected offer diverse community viewpoints and will guide councillors in making informed decisions about the new system.

Background

The proposed changes involve switching from rubbish bags to bins and how residents pay for their rubbish collection. The council must consult with the community under the Local Government Act 2002 as this is a significant change.

For most properties in zone one, this would mean:

- A shift from using 60-litre rubbish bags to having a 120-litre wheelie bin provided by Council.
- Mandatory rubbish and recycling collection.
- Changing from weekly to fortnightly collection of rubbish.
- Paying for rubbish and recycling collection through rates (rather than buying rubbish bags).

The consultation process

The consultation process included:

- Community meetings
- Online survey
- Written submission forms

Three hundred thirty-nine submissions were received.

Community meetings

Buller District Council held community meetings in Westport and Reefton. Residents were invited to join us to hear more about the proposed changes. The Westport meeting was live-streamed on the Council's YouTube channel for people who couldn't be there in person.

Online survey

An online survey was developed and hosted on the Council's website. One hundred fifty-eight submissions were received via online survey.

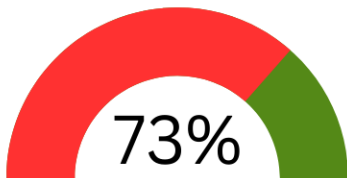
Written submission form

One hundred eighty-one written submissions were received either using the form provided by the BDC or by email/letter.

KEY FINDINGS



Community support



73% of respondents either opposed or strongly opposed the proposed new service, while 21% either favour or strongly favour the suggested changes.

Waste minimalists



41% fear the proposed changes will financially harm minimal waste producers, citing potential negative impacts on recycling and disproportionate effects on pensioners.

Cost



38% of respondents expressed concerns about the higher costs of the new service. The existing system is valued for its flexibility and cost-effectiveness. Many fear increased expenses, especially in low-waste households.

Flexible system



37% of respondents support a 'pay-per-pickup' approach, ensuring charges reflect individual waste generation, particularly benefiting those producing less waste.

Mandatory opposition



21% of respondents oppose the mandatory nature of the service, voicing concerns over diminished flexibility and restricted choices.

Waste concerns



18% fear the new system could boost waste generation. Respondents desire a flexible system aligned with individual waste patterns, which promotes waste reduction.

Data analysis methodology

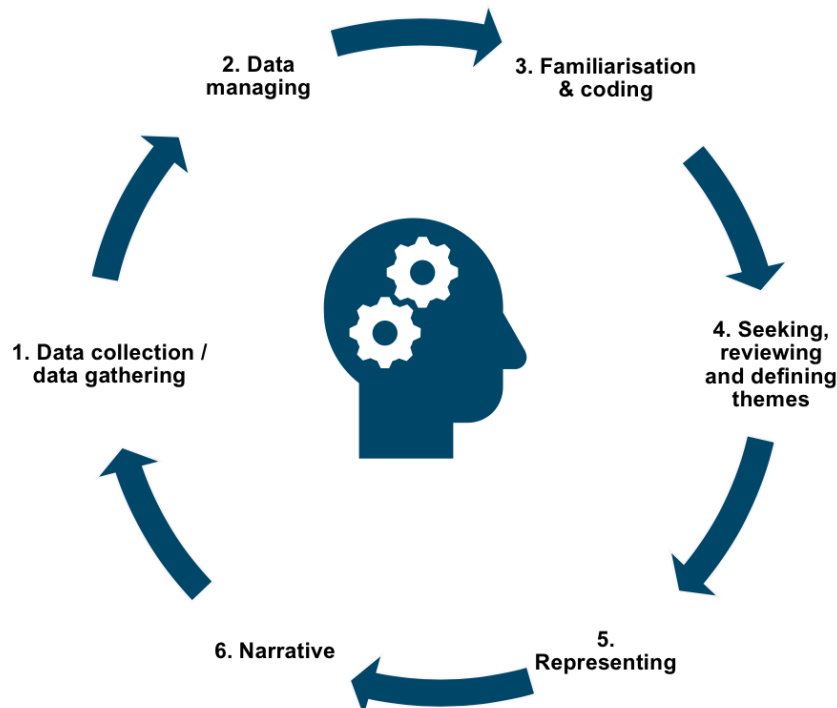
Thematic analysis

For the qualitative analysis of responses from open-ended questions and written feedback, PublicVoice employed a thematic analysis approach. This approach is rooted in the systematic framework introduced by Braun and Clarke in 2006, and it offers a structured method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within data. The following outlines the specific phases of this methodology:

1. **Familiarisation with the Data:** Analysts immersed themselves in the data through repeated reading to understand its content deeply.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** A systematic coding process was executed across the entire dataset. This foundational step organised the data into distinct segments, labelling them to reflect key insights.
3. **Searching for Themes:** Initial codes were subsequently grouped into potential overarching themes and subthemes, providing broader patterns of meaning.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** Themes were refined to ensure their relevance to the coded extracts and the broader dataset. Themes without substantial supporting data or which were overly diverse were reconsidered.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Each theme was meticulously refined to encapsulate its core, with further deliberation on potential sub-themes.
6. **Report Compilation:** The analysis was then articulated into a cohesive narrative supported by pertinent data extracts. This provided a descriptive overview and a deeper interpretative analysis in alignment with the research objectives.

Additionally, to bolster the efficiency and accuracy of the thematic analysis, PublicVoice integrated tools such as MAXQDA and Caplena. Platforms like MAXQDA help streamline the coding process and ensure a comprehensive examination of themes in the data.

The analysis process



Reporting

Tables illustrating the frequency of subthemes associated with each theme have been included to demonstrate the significance of each theme.

Summary of community consultation

What do you think about the proposed changes to household waste collection services in zone one?

Of the respondents to this question, 73% strongly opposed or opposed the proposed alterations to household waste collection services. Specifically, 54% voiced strong opposition, while 19% opposed the changes—conversely, 10% favour the changes, with 12% expressing strong favour. Meanwhile, 5% of respondents remained neutral, neither supporting nor opposing the changes. These findings are detailed in Figure 1 and Table 1.

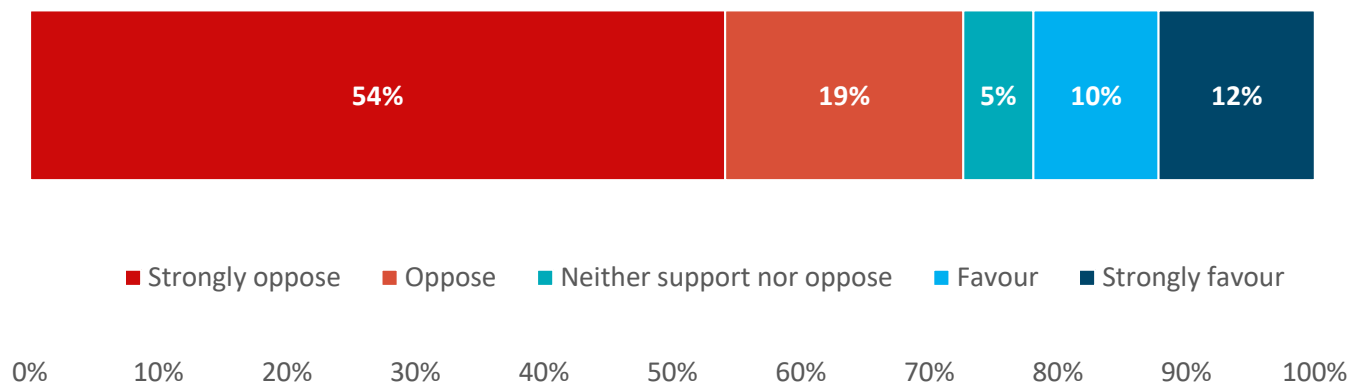
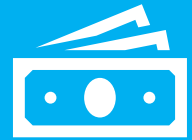


Figure 1: What do you think about the proposed changes to household waste collection services in zone one?

	%	n
Strongly oppose	54%	178
Oppose	19%	61
Neither support nor oppose	5%	18
Favour	10%	32
Strongly favour	12%	40

Table 1: What do you think about the proposed changes to household waste collection services in zone one?

SERVICE COSTS



The topic of service costs emerged as a focal point among the feedback from respondents. Predominantly, there's apprehension about the financial implications of the proposed waste management changes. Respondents expressed concerns about anticipated higher service costs, potential inequities for those producing minimal waste, and the lack of transparent pricing. Furthermore, the debate over who should bear the financial responsibility, especially in the landlord-tenant dynamic, has been highlighted. Lastly, the current pricing structures for rubbish bags and landfill services have been scrutinised, with calls for more affordability and clarity.

Subtheme	Frequency	%
Concern financial inequity for waste minimalists	138	41%
Concern regarding higher cost of new service	130	38%
Concern about uncertainty/transparency in pricing	35	10%
Concern low users subsidise costs for high users	31	9%
Current bag prices are too high	9	3%
Concern landlords have to pay for tenants' bins	8	2%
Concern regarding rent rises for tenants	6	2%

Table 2: Service cost – sub-themes

A detailed breakdown of each subtheme is outlined below

Concern regarding financial inequity for waste minimalists: Some respondents believe that those who produce minimal waste will be financially disadvantaged by the proposed changes. The potential adverse effects of recycling and the disproportionate impact on pensioners are mentioned.

“I do not wish to have a rubbish bin as I don't collect rubbish at all. I don't use council rubbish bags or have bins picked up. I do use the recycling and the glass bins which I'm happy with. I believe user pays and believe that it's unacceptable to expect anyone to pay for something they do not use. I do not need at all for a rubbish bin therefore oppose being forced to pay for one.”

Concern regarding higher cost of new service: There's a significant concern about an anticipated increase in service costs with the new system. The current bag system's flexibility is valued, and there are calls for more affordable alternatives.

“We only use a plastic bag every 6 weeks or so. Even though I prefer the use of the bins, I don't want to pay the equivalent to a bag a week. I also oppose the added costs to our rates as they are expensive enough.”

Concern about uncertainty/transparency in pricing: The lack of clarity in pricing for the new system is prevalent. Respondents feel current rubbish bag prices may not reflect real costs and are sceptical of the mandatory bin system's pricing.

"We are ratepayers who generally use one 60L rubbish bag per fortnight. While we are not opposed to the proposal as such, we do not support an increase in rates to advance this proposal. We consider it unreasonable to ask ratepayers to support a new scheme without knowing with some certainty how much it will cost..."

Concern low users subsidise costs for high users: The fear is that individuals who generate less waste may end up unfairly subsidising those who produce more.

"Should be User Pays. A single person or pensioner on their own should not have to subsidise a large family or a household of say 5+ tenants. In Christchurch they have small bins for 1-2 person properties & larger bins for larger households. Could this not be more appealing costwise to ratepayers?"

Current bag prices are too high: The existing cost of rubbish bags is deemed excessive, especially impacting those on fixed incomes.

"I put out 1 bag at a price of \$9.20 every 3 weeks, there is only me here now. I still think the bags are over priced but we have to get rid of our rubbish. I would burn a lot of it and I have a compost bin. It is a bit of a struggling managing on a pension and paying expensive rates. Don't want to pay anymore. No wonder there is so much rubbish thrown out in the Buller Gorge or the rubbish bins in town overflowing."

Concern landlords have to pay for tenants' bins: Some respondents believe it's unfair for landlords to bear the financial responsibility for their tenants' waste disposal.

"I think bins are a great idea but as a multi property owner I think it's unfair for the house owners to absorb all the costs it should be up to individual people to pay for a bin"

Concern regarding rent rises for tenants: There's apprehension about the potential integration of waste disposal costs into rates, leading to a rise in rents.

"This proposed scheme is obviously going to increase rates. However, for those who own rentals, they will now be paying for rubbish disposal for their tenants. This cost will have to be recouped through a rise in rent which are already high enough. It's going to be a lose-lose all around as far as I can see."

SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION



Service implementation feedback reflected a range of viewpoints, primarily focusing on the proposed system's flexibility, frequency, and fairness. Many respondents are in two minds about switching bags to bins but have clear preferences on how the system should be financially structured. The emphasis lies heavily on a user-pays system, ensuring equity for residents based on their waste generation. While some see the merits of the change, they have reservations about the mandatory nature of the proposals and the resulting implications.

Sub theme	Frequency	%
Prefer more flexible system e.g. pay per pickup	126	37%
Prefer less frequent pickup	10	3%
Prefer more frequent pickup	6	2%

Table 3: Service implementation – sub-themes

Prefer more flexible system e.g. pay per pickup: Many respondents support a more flexible waste collection system. The 'pay-per-pickup' model emerged as a favoured approach, allowing charges based on actual usage. Such a model, respondents argue, ensures that those who generate minimal waste aren't unfairly burdened.

“Ok with the bins being issued. But should be user pays not mandatory. We should be encouraged to create less waste. The fortnightly empty will encourage more waste.”

Prefer less frequent pickup: Some feedback indicates a preference for less frequent bin collections, highlighting benefits like reduced illegal dumping and improved waste management. Not all households generate enough waste for a fortnightly collection, so there were suggestions for monthly pickups or adjustable bin sizes to cater to different needs.

“Definitely NOT mandatory each fortnight. Once per month would suffice most households and still encourage people to think about the amount of household waste they are creating. Each fortnight would encourage people to fill it to get the most out of it- hence more consumption and wastage. Also, older folk or smaller families/couples probably wouldn't fill an entire bin each fortnight. Could have two options- fortnight and monthly- colour code them eg. Green and red (green=fortnightly collection, red= monthly) and charge as needed to household, let people choose and change as requirements change. Standard could be fortnightly unless opt out for monthly Collection fee.”

Prefer more frequent pickup: Contrastingly, several respondents advocate for more frequent waste pickups. Concerns primarily revolve around the potential odour and pest issues from fortnightly collections. Proposals include alternating rubbish and recycling collection days or implementing a weekly collection schedule.

“Think a great idea but rubbish bin collect needs to be weekly”

SERVICE PREFERENCES



Feedback regarding service preferences revealed a spectrum of concerns and suggestions from the respondents. Many expressed unease about potential changes impacting costs, operational ease, and efficiency. A recurring sentiment was the desire for greater control and flexibility over waste management choices.

Sub theme	Frequency	%
Oppose mandatory nature of service	70	21%
Prefer status quo	33	10%
Prefer self-disposal at transfer stations	29	9%

Table 4: Service preferences Table 3: Service implementation – sub-themes

Service preferences

Feedback regarding service preferences revealed a spectrum of concerns and suggestions from the respondents. Many expressed unease about potential changes impacting costs, operational ease, and overall efficiency. A recurring sentiment was the desire for greater control and flexibility over waste management choices.

Oppose mandatory nature of service: A noticeable segment of respondents opposed the idea of a mandatory service. Their feedback highlighted concerns about limited flexibility and having their choices restricted.

“I really like the idea of the rubbish bins rather than the plastic bags but I do not like choice being taken away and the fact that we will be charged for a service we may not use - how does this fit with encouraging recycling and what about cleaning of the bins if stuff is just chucked in?”

Prefer status quo: A group of respondents favoured the current system. They appreciate its structure and expressed reservations about shifting to a new system that might disrupt their current familiarity and perceived efficiency.

“Things should be left as they are, this should NOT be Mandatory, we have a bin and ring when we want this emptied which is about once a month or so. We should not have to pay if we are not getting our bins emptied.”

Prefer self-disposal at transfer stations: Several participants leaned towards self-disposal at transfer stations. This preference stems from a desire for more hands-on control and possibly scepticism towards centralised collection systems. Some see the act of self-disposal as a more direct and accountable approach to managing waste.

“We don't purchase rubbish bags and instead go to the Reefton transfer station once every 1-2 months and it costs like \$20 a trip. We already don't use the kerbside recycling collection service fortnightly because we don't fill up the bin much. We only use the service once every 6-8 weeks.”

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS



A prevailing sentiment expressed by the respondents pertains to the environment and its protection. Their feedback points towards apprehension over the proposed shift from a user-pays rubbish bag system to a mandatory bin system. Many respondents see this as a potential setback in the collective effort to reduce waste and promote recycling. The underlying concern revolves around the lack of incentives for sustainable practices and the possible negative consequences for the environment and conscientious waste reducers.

Sub theme	Frequency	%
Concern that the proposal disincentivises waste reduction	62	18%
Concern that proposal penalises waste reducers	35	10%
Concern that new system won't stop illegal dumping	19	6%

Table 5: Environmental concerns – sub-themes

Concern that the proposal disincentivises waste reduction: Feedback highlighted concerns that the new system might inadvertently promote waste generation. Many respondents advocated for a system that mirrors individual waste production patterns, offering flexibility. Fears about costs, increased propensity for flytipping, and higher landfill use were also raised.

“As I would only use a maximum of 4 rubbish bags a year I strongly object to paying a mandatory fee for rubbish. I recycle what is able to be recycled and compost what I can I don't have the need for a rubbish bin... If I am forced to pay a mandatory fee I won't be inclined to recycle or compost and will just make sure that I get value for money and make sure it is full. The incentive for people to care about recycling, composting and the amount of rubbish won't be there...”

Concern that proposal penalises waste reducers: A significant portion of the feedback centred around apprehensions that diligent waste reducers could be at a disadvantage. These individuals, who conscientiously manage their waste and actively engage in recycling, feel the proposal could increase their costs unfairly. The prevailing suggestion is a shift towards a "user pays" or pay-per-use model, aligning costs more closely with individual waste production.

“...This is a massive dis-incentive to consume less waste. It clearly penalises those of us who produce very little waste, who re-cycle assiduously, and who take the problem of rubbish seriously...”

Concern that new system won't stop illegal dumping: Further concerns were raised about the potential of the proposed system to exacerbate illegal dumping. The community perceives this change as a move away from the established values of waste reduction and recycling. Respondents underscored the need for transparent cost structures and raised questions about the integrity of the proposal in curbing unauthorised waste disposal.

“...Bins won't stop flytipping. Flytippers drive past dump to beach and a fair amount of what is dumped is recyclable could have been left at dump at no cost. Cost might be an issue for some fly tippers, but for most people who fly tip they will continue to do so. People need to be educated and encouraged to lessen the amount of rubbish they produce...”

SUPPORT & POSITIVE FEEDBACK



The variety of responses uncovers a range of sentiments, both endorsing and expressing concerns about the proposed changes to the waste disposal system. While the consensus leans towards the benefits and efficiencies that bins can bring over bags, there are also suggestions and nuances that authorities might consider to make the transition smoother.

Sub theme	Frequency	%
Bins easier to manage than bags	35	10%
General support	18	5%
Will reduce plastic bags	14	4%
Will reduce illegal dumping	13	4%
Support conditional on costs not increasing	9	3%
Cost is reasonable	8	2%
Bins are animal-proof	7	2%

Table 6: Support & Positive feedback – sub-themes

Bins easier to manage than bags: Respondents largely support switching bags to bins, highlighting their easier manageability. They cite bins as more user-friendly, notably in their ability to deter animals and minimise risks linked with sharp objects. Alongside this positivity, ideas like a barcode system to monitor bin usage emerge, suggesting that while bins are favoured, there's room for refining their integration into the waste management system.

“Having a 120L wheelie bin for waste will work much better for us than the current rubbish bags - - bins are much easier for us to use / move - wekas can't get rubbish out of a wheelie bin – ‘sharp rubbish’ can't penetrate a wheelie bin...”

General support: A noticeable segment of the community offers general endorsement of the proposal, recognising its potential to refine waste management practices and contribute to a cleaner environment.

“I'm all for it. Encourage people to dispose of household waste responsibly. Bags are messy, not convenient I prefer an annual fee”

Will reduce plastic bags: The debate around the potential reduction of plastic bags is mixed. Some applaud the transition as a move towards efficiency and reduced illegal dumping, while others put forth alternative measures, like promoting biodegradable bags or introducing community initiatives such as opshops.

“Support the increased efficiencies the proposal represents, including the reduction in plastic bag usage.”

Will reduce illegal dumping: Feedback suggests that introducing user-friendly and animal-resistant wheelie bins might discourage illegal dumping. Embedding the cost in rates is a step that could further minimise fly-tipping and promote a cleaner community.

“With the mandatory rubbish collection - a positive outcome would be the lack of dumping of rubbish in public bins and illegal dumping. There should be no need to do so. It also eliminates the need for plastic bags.”

Support conditional on costs not increasing: While bins are favoured over bags, there's a shared concern about keeping the switch affordable. Respondents suggest the council might look into alternative financial strategies to prevent potential rate increases, emphasising the importance of balancing efficiency with affordability.

“Im in favour of the proposals in terms of its application but not of the price. If the recycling costs \$178 per annum there is no way general rubbish should be at the same cost. Recycling requires far more handling by not only the collectors themselves but the onflow. General waste using bins will be automated...”

Cost is reasonable: Some respondents appreciate the proposed rate structure, finding it fair. They highlight wheelie bins' convenience and potential efficiencies as an asset, suggesting that integrating costs into standard rates could promote wider acceptance and a cleaner environment.

“The proposed changes will be cleaner and more user friendly. The increase in rates is less than one rubbish bag a week and I believe the majority of households would use more than one rubbish bag a week, so even though the changes come with a rates increase most households would benefit financially with the changes.”

Bins are animal-proof: The animal-resistant nature of wheelie bins receives praise. Ease of use and resistance to pests, particularly weka, are key advantages. Even so, there's a hint of concern around environmental considerations, such as plastic usage and its broader implications for sustainability.

“I was about to write and suggest this very thing when you brought the proposal out, so I'm very much in favour. Am tired of cats and dogs ripping the bags open and them not being collected, then having to pick it all up in another bag to start over again the next week.”

BINS



Some respondents emphasised the need for choice in bin sizes, with many advocating for larger options like 240L, catering to varied household needs. They argue that while the 120L bin may suit some, others with larger families or waste habits might find it restrictive. On the contrary, a group expresses reservations about the shift from bags to bins, pinpointing the potential logistical challenges of handling bins. These concerns are especially pronounced for those with mobility limitations, suggesting the changes might inadvertently disadvantage specific community segments.

Sub theme	Frequency	%
Provide choice of bin sizes e.g. 240L	15	4%
Bins harder to manage than bags	9	3%
Concerns about odour and pest attraction	5	1%

Table 7: Bins – sub-themes

Provide choice of bin sizes e.g. 240L: Many community members advocate for more flexibility in bin sizes, recognising different household needs. While the 120L option might suffice for some, larger families or those with specific waste management habits prefer larger 240L bins. The potential strain of a one-size-fits-all approach, particularly concerning cost implications for frequent users, is a recurrent theme. However, the underlying sentiment is a strong desire for customisable options, whether in the form of different bin sizes or alternative solutions to cater to varied waste outputs.

“I do believe if this is to become mandatory for fortnightly collection, households should have the opportunity to choose between a 120l or a 240l bin. As our house hold fills a 240l bin a fortnight so how are we to dispose of the rest of our rubbish that doesn't fit into these smaller bins.”

Bins harder to manage than bags: Transitioning from bags to bins isn't welcomed universally. For a subset of respondents, the logistical challenges tied to bin usage are of concern. This encompasses the difficulties related to transporting and manoeuvring bins, especially for those who might have physical disabilities or limited mobility.

“...The large wheelie bins are also awkward for many people, especially the elderly, or for those who have long driveways. In our case this change will necessitate hitching up the trailer to cart both the recycling and rubbish bins to the start of our driveway. Currently, we can simply put the recycling bin in the car and drop it on the way to work...”

OTHER



The 'Other' section groups together themes and comments mentioned less often.

Theme	Sub theme	Frequency	%
WASTE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS			
	Need for further recycling/waste solutions	18	5%
	Need for local landfill	8	2%
CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK			
	Concern regarding consultation	9	3%
EDUCATION & AWARENESS			
	Public education on waste reduction	6	2%

Table 8: Other - themes and sub-themes

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