



Abandoned Shopping Trolleys – Consultation Report

Report by Consultation & Engagement Team

March 2024

1. Background and methodology

Between the 13th February and the 12th March 2024, Bolton Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage residents, retailers and wider stakeholders that have a concern over the abandonment of shopping trolleys across the borough, in sharing their reflections on two proposals to tackle the issue. The initial proposal would see Bolton Council adopting and implementing national legislation, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to charge owners set amounts for the costs associated with recovering and storing abandoned shopping trolleys. The second proposal would see Bolton Council implementing a voluntary programme with retailers, which would notify, charge and potentially fine retailers if abandoned shopping trolleys were left unclaimed.

During that period a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging retailers, residents and community volunteers who tackle fly-tipping challenges. An email was also distributed to all key stakeholders, including Elected Members. Supporting documentation was made accessible on the Council's consultation webpages and social media was heavily utilised throughout the period to share key messages about the consultation.

Participants were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of 4 weeks, providing respondents the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts on the proposal. The questionnaire was made available both digitally and offline, with the questionnaire being accessible on the council's consultation web page, as well as in hard copy format, on request.

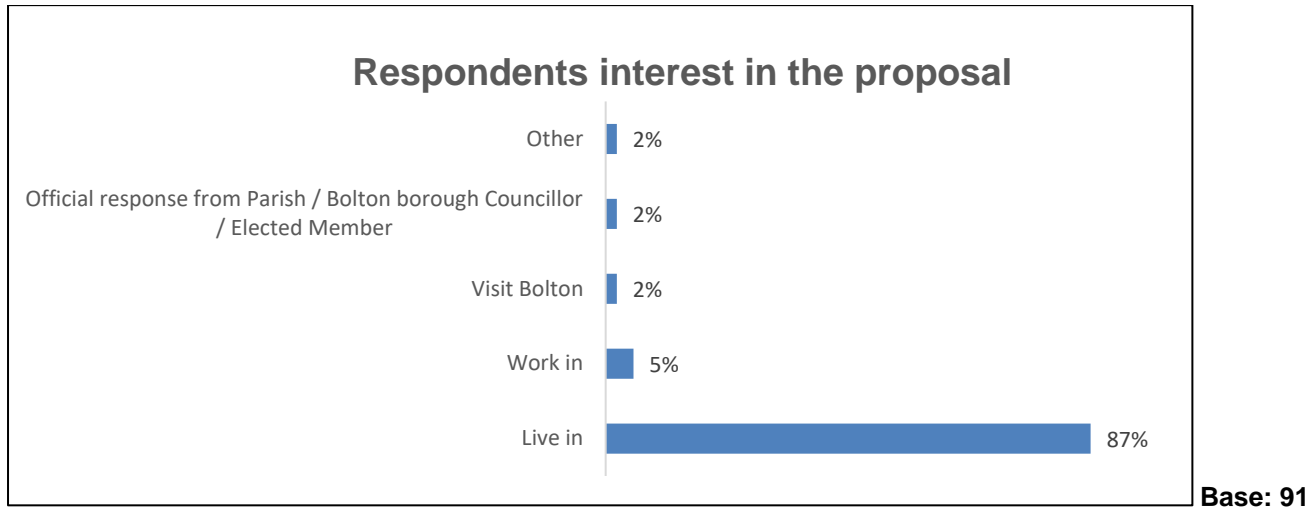
*A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this document, located in Appendix A.

Analysis notes

- Results are presented in the questionnaire format with 'Don't know' type responses removed unless stated.
- Comments have been categorised where feasible. Unless otherwise stated, categories with 5 or more responses are shown. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. A sample of comments [verbatim] are included in the report. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- Base: unless otherwise stated the base is the number of respondents to a particular question.
- Data has been cleansed where appropriate, e.g., comments moved into existing responses.

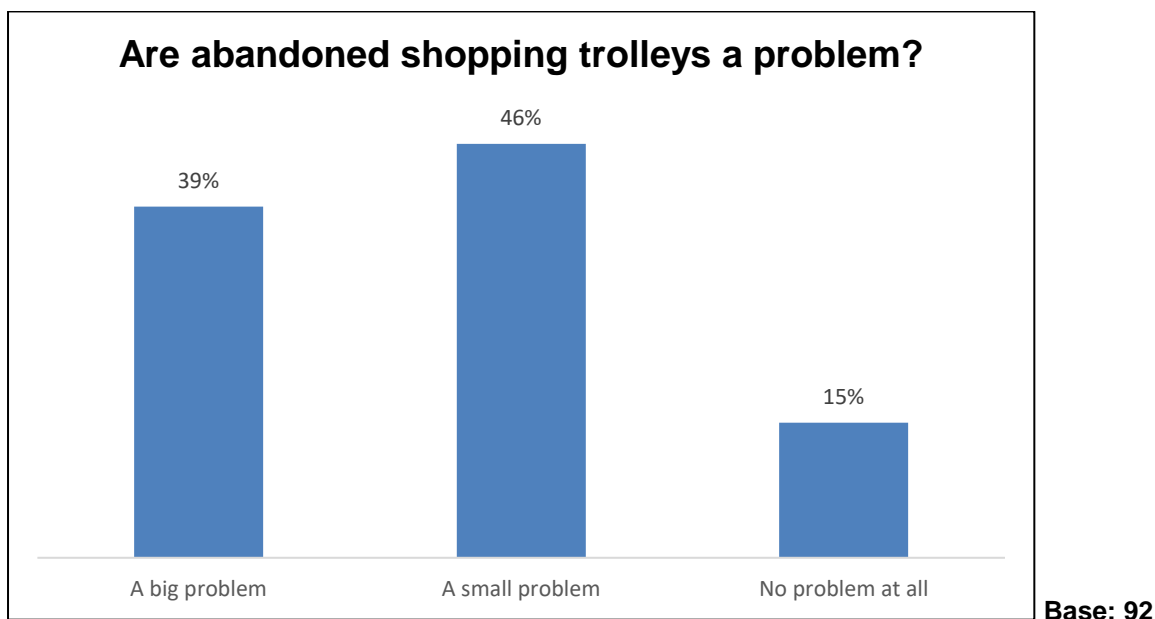
2. Consultation responses

Throughout the consultation period 92 responses were received. 87% (79 responses) live in the Bolton borough. 2 official responses were received from local Councillors in the Halliwell Ward and Little Lever & Darcy Lever Ward. The supermarket retailer, Iceland also provided an official response.



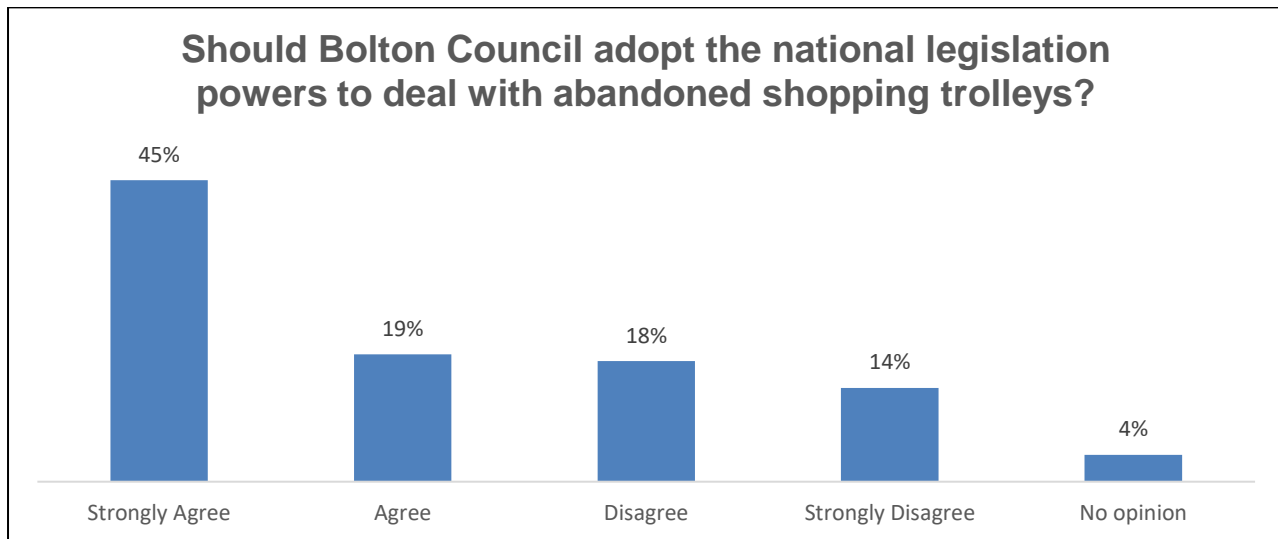
3. The issue of abandoned shopping trolleys in Bolton

Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect upon how much of a problem are abandoned shopping trolleys across the Bolton borough. Of the 92 responses received, 39% (36 respondents) thought that shopping trolleys being abandoned was a big problem. Just under half, 46% (42 respondents) thought it was a small problem. Whilst 15% (14 respondents) didn't think that there was an issue with abandonment.



4. Adopting national legislation

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 [amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005] Bolton Council is able to charge owners set amounts for the costs associated with recovering and storing abandoned shopping trolleys. When asked whether Bolton Council should adopt the national legislative powers to tackle abandoned shopping trolleys, 64% (58 respondents) of respondents agreed with the principle. Just under one-third of respondents disagreed (32% / 29 respondents).



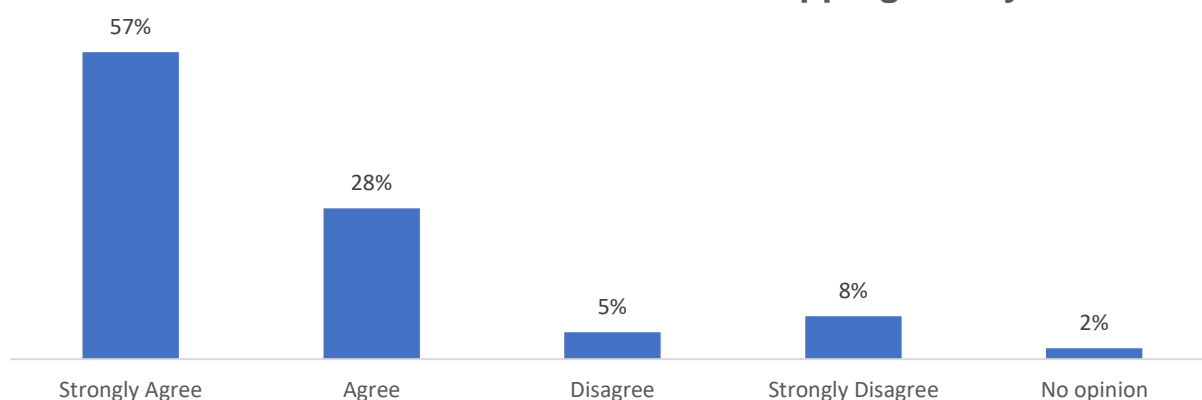
Base: 91

5a. Implementing a voluntary scheme

Bolton Council propose to set up a voluntary scheme, which all retailers who provide shopping trolleys would be invited to sign up to. The scheme would notify members if one of their trolleys had been found, outlining where it was located and asked to retrieve it by 5pm the next working day. The scheme would require retail members to notify the council once they'd collected it. Any retailers who decided not to join the voluntary scheme, or who didn't remove their abandoned trolley by the deadline would be charged in line with national legislation - providing that Bolton Council decides to adopt those powers.

All residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect on the whether introducing a voluntary scheme with retail partners would support the challenges faced by having to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys. Of the 92 responses received 85% (78) of stakeholders agreed with the proposal. 13% (12 respondents disagreed).

Should Bolton Council introduce a voluntary scheme to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys?



Base: 92

5b. Of the 92 responses received only 1 retailer engaged in the consultation (Iceland). However, they were extremely interested in joining the voluntary scheme. Further engagement with retail stakeholders would be recommended, exploring the voluntary option with the sector and what the impact would have.

6. Proposal comments

Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect upon the two proposals and provide any additional comments for consideration. 49 comments were received, which have been grouped and themed into the following categories:

- **General agreement / disagreement**

32 comments were received which highlighted respondents' general agreement, as well as disagreement with the proposal. 15 comments reflected the positive nature of the proposal, particularly with the implementation of a voluntary scheme. However, 17 comments reflected disapproval with the proposal, with comments suggesting that it was a waste of council resources and time.

Agreement:

- *"Abandoned trolleys are dangerous and should be the responsibility of the shop owners. They should be penalised for any trolley that is found abandoned on a public road or footpath".*
- *"I think a voluntary scheme should be adopted in the first instance for a trial period with an option to use binational powers."*
- *"I think a voluntary scheme would be a good idea".*
- *"I think giving businesses the opportunity to register for a voluntary scheme is a good idea. It allows the responsible businesses the chance to retrieve abandoned trollies in a reasonable timescale. Those that choose not to do so should be charged under the national legislation".*
- *"I think the voluntary scheme would be more appropriate."*
- *"It seems fairer to give them a chance to collect them as it certainly isn't the shops who are dumping them."*
- *"Yes 100% use any legislation available."*

Disagreement:

- *“Retailers, like Morrisons, already have a scheme where you can contact them directly to retrieve. Not sure why you'd waste time and money on reinventing the wheel.”*
- *“I do not feel that this is a good use of council time and money given the wider picture waste issues in the borough.”*
- *“If the council were to adopt this scheme, we would end up no doubt with more empty properties. Yes the council is in the red but to do a ludicrous thing like this would no doubt see the end of Bolton from what a great place it once was.”*
- *“I think this is such a small problem that it's not worth doing anything about it and it's diverting resources away from real council problems that affect people's day to day life - such as pavement parking and lack of allotments. I cannot believe that this is even being considered.”*
- *“The national policy is enough, Why complicate things by having a voluntary local policy? It will just take more resources in the form of money and staff time.”*

• **Costs**

10 comments focused specifically on the costs of implementation; the subsequent financial impact on the retailer; and the potential cumulative impact on the consumer.

- *“A voluntary scheme is ok but the charges you talk about are high, people are stealing these trolleys and it seems unfair to make such charges.”*
- *“As the average cost of these trollies is about £200 therefore the proposed fees and or surcharges are too high, it may be more prudent to seek a co-operative with a contractor scheme whereby the council pursue a retailer contributor scheme whereby an approved contractor is licensed through council and retailers local governing bodies who pay for the locating and possible cleaning and refurbishing trollies to be sold back to retailers. I think the council should minimise any cost towards this type of project”.*
- *“I'm all for the council introducing charges to generate income and to punish large corporations for ruining our environments but I really feel that this is poor timing.”*
- *“If powers are used under national legislation, the cost will only be passed onto customers though cost of goods in store. It will not come off profits from the stores.”*
- *“It is clear that the administration of this would probably cost more than the income.”*
- *“The fees for removal, recovery etc seem quite steep - it would concern me that these costs would be passed onto the customer or result in closer of more high street businesses”.*

• **Location of trolleys**

9 stakeholders reflected on geographical locations where shopping trolleys have been abandoned.

- *“Abandoned Asda trollies litter oldhams estate and surrounding areas from the local Asda on Blackburn rd.”*
- *“We find trolleys in green space in rivers in bushes and even up a tree . Burnt out trolleys are also an issue as people fill them with household waste then set the trolley on fire!!”*
- *“Kids are forever pushing each other around in them or dumping them along the footpath at the bottom of sefton lane.”*
- *“As litter pickers we encounter many abandoned shopping trolleys, children tend to use them to play with meaning that they drift around the place when they are not collected, attempts to report to supermarkets usually lead to "we are not in a scheme to have them collected" or "health and safety says we cannot collect them" etc.”*

- **Littering and fly-tipping**

6 comments were received which outline the rising concern with littering and fly-tipping. Some comments thought the proposal could be a disproportionate response, compared to the rise in fly-tipping.

- “As part of the wider picture of fly tipping and littering I feel that trolleys are not a massive issue. Nor do they attract vermin like other abandoned waste.”
- “If a trolley is lost, treat it like fly tipping and dispose of it along with the rest of fly tipped junk once it isn't collected after 5 working days. Sell it for scrap. Nobody would care except the supermarket.”
- “You can't clear up normal rubbish and rely on litter pickers so don't make it a money making scheme.”

- **Alternative options**

5 respondents put forward additional options.

- “48 hours would be a more suitable time frame than next working day. This allows time for teams to be notified and the job booked to attend”.
- “My personal preference is that supermarkets design mechanisms to prevent trolleys being removed.”
- “Stores can have lockdown on trollies when they are out of range, i have seen it in other towns.”

7. Alternative proposals

Residents and stakeholders were asked to put forward alternative options and solutions for the challenges faced by abandoned shopping trolleys across the borough. 29 comments were received which have been themed into 4 distinct areas.

- **Engagement with retailers**

12 comments were received which called for greater engagement with retailers. Some comments called for the proposal to go further and fine retailers, while other comments wanted retailers to explore alternative and sometimes collaborative models for dealing with the problem.

- “Fine the supermarket for each trolley found to be abandoned”.
- “My personal preference is that supermarkets design mechanisms to prevent trolleys being removed.”
- “It's about encouraging the local supermarkets to keep track of their trolleys”.
- “Perhaps an option for retailers facing charges could be to release employees to perform 4 hours 'community service' to tidy up a fly tip/heavily littered spot, decided by Love Bolton Hate Litter.”
- “Set up a reporting app like Trolley wise and maybe try and fund a joint collection service with all supermarkets in the Bolton post codes .”

- **Tackle fly-tipping / enforcement**

9 comments focused on tackling the issue of boroughwide fly-tipping, rather than focusing on abandoned shopping trolleys in isolation. Some stakeholders also called for greater enforcement powers to fine those responsible.

- *“Tackle fly tipping, the causes and the offenders. It is everywhere, Bolton is now just one big dumping ground. I am utterly ashamed of my town, it's an absolute disgrace”.*
- *“Get the ‘this item has been flytipped, we are investigating & will prosecute’ stickers back so that will act as a deterrent to other flytipping. Allow flytipping to be reported with a photo & a pin in a map (it's really hard to describe a junction of backstreets)”*
- *“Consider council time & effort would be better spent on other issues. For example preventing & prosecution for flytipping. This is a significant problem where I live. No trollies present in flytipping hotspots next me!”*
- *“Fine people that are taking the trollies and dumping them”.*

- **General disagreement with the proposal**

5 comments reflected general disagreement with the proposal.

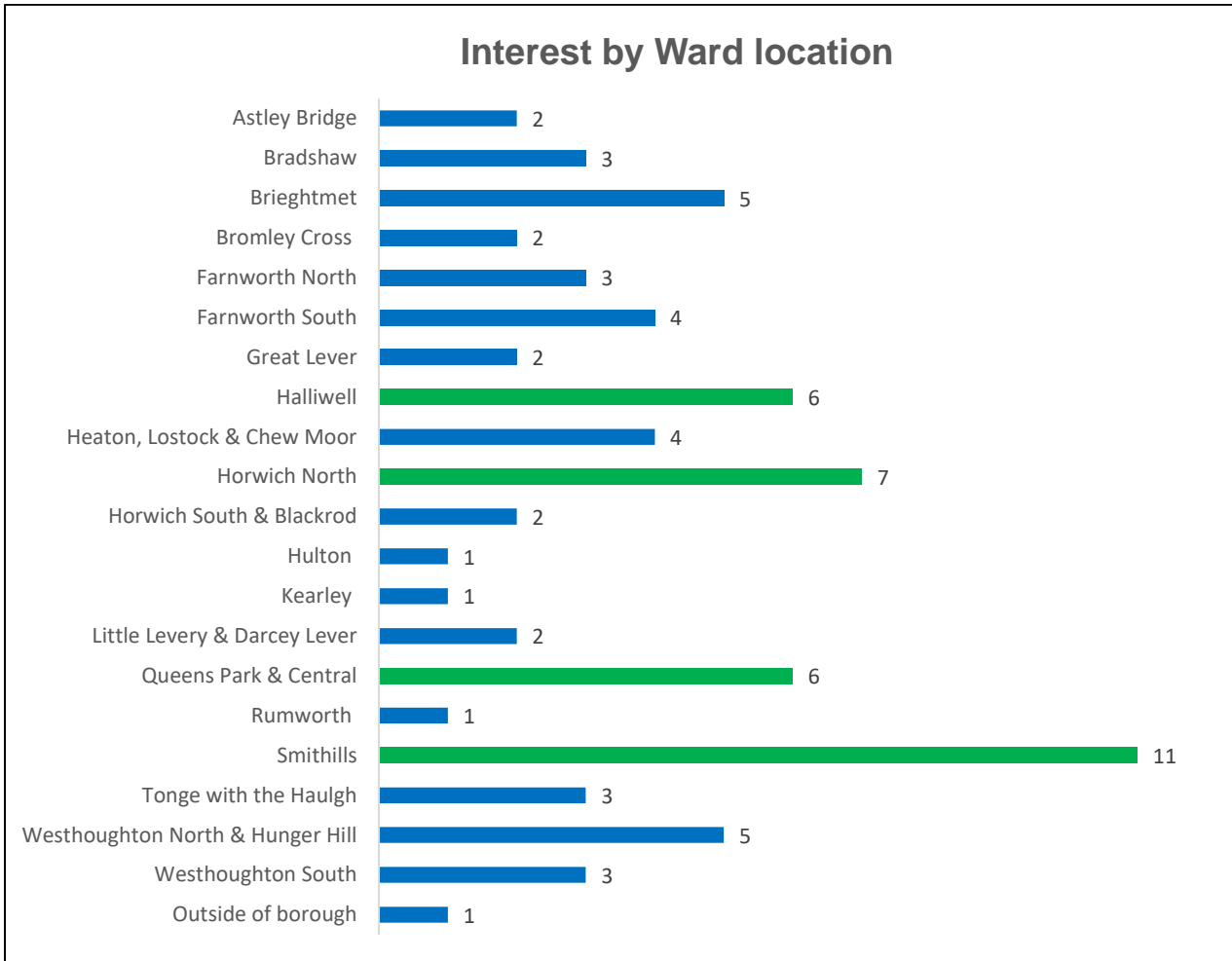
- *“It is clear that the administration of this would probably cost more than the income”.*
- *“Just don't think it's that big a problem. It can be tackled with the national policy without need for more bureaucracy.”*
- *“Consider council time & effort would be better spent on other issues.”*
- *“The charges to return the trolley to the retailer, would seem very high and would probably mean that they just wouldn't bother.”*

- **Other comments**

11 comments were received which highlighted a range of alternative suggestions, to implementing a reporting service for residents, *“a ‘trolley hotline’ to report abandoned trollies & their locations to be collected”*; to investing in additional security measures, *“better security / CCTV around supermarkets would be a help”*. Some comments suggested implementing better social awareness messages, *“I say more education in schools and the community about Abandoned Shopping Trollies”*. Other respondents thought scrapping the trollies to bring in revenue or creating social value programmes would be of more value to the borough, *“scrap the trollies, get an artist to melt them down to make playground equipment or art out of them”*.

8. Demographics:

8a. Geographical The table below outlines the demographics of respondents by geographical Ward. A total of 74 respondents provided their full postcode. The greatest engagement came from stakeholders residing in the Smithills Ward (11), Horwich North (7), Halliwell (6) and Queens Park & Central (6).



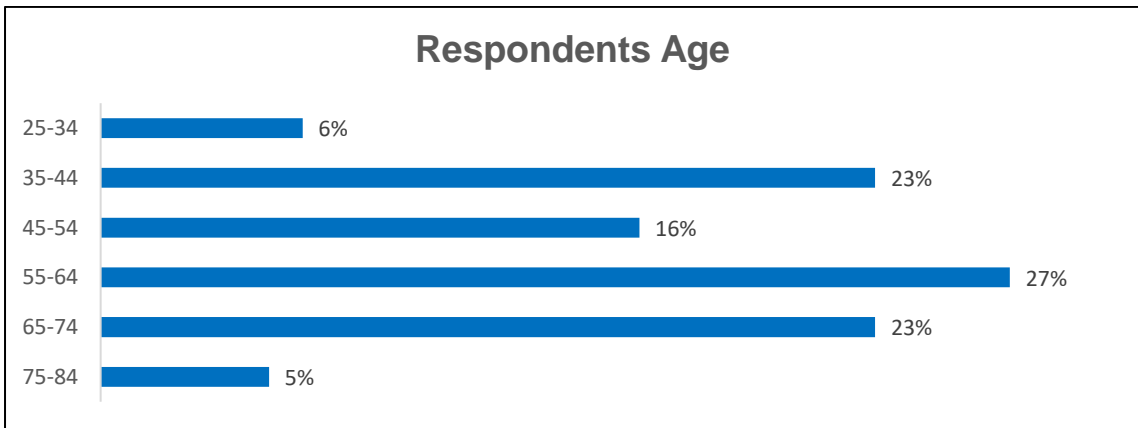
Base: 74

8b. Sex

87 responses were received providing the respondent's sex. 51 respondents identify as being female, 34 as male and 2 respondents identify in another way.

8c Age

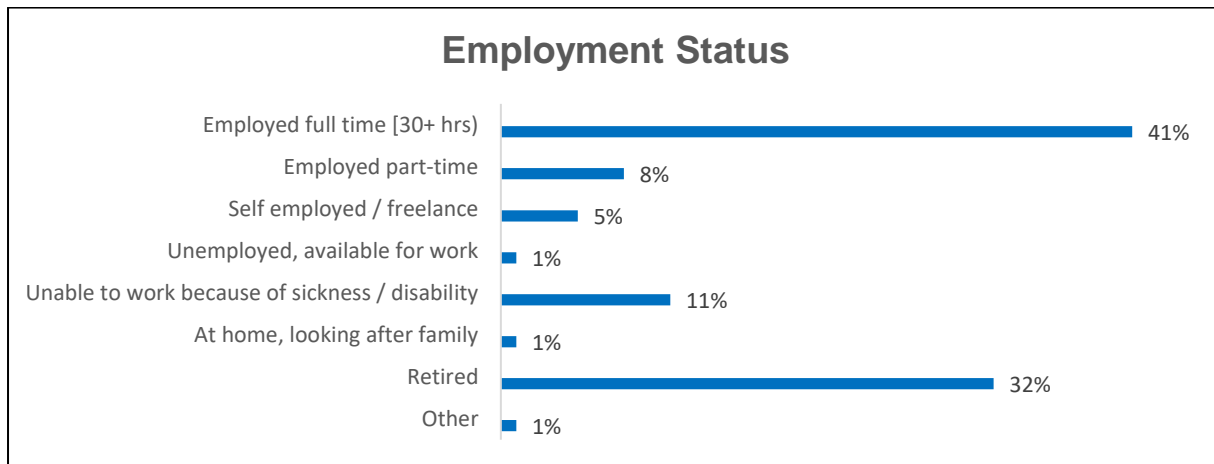
6% (5) of respondents are under the age of 34 years. 66% (57) of respondents are aged between 35 – 64 years and 28% (24) responses were received from individuals above the age of 65 years.



Base: 86

8d. Employment Status

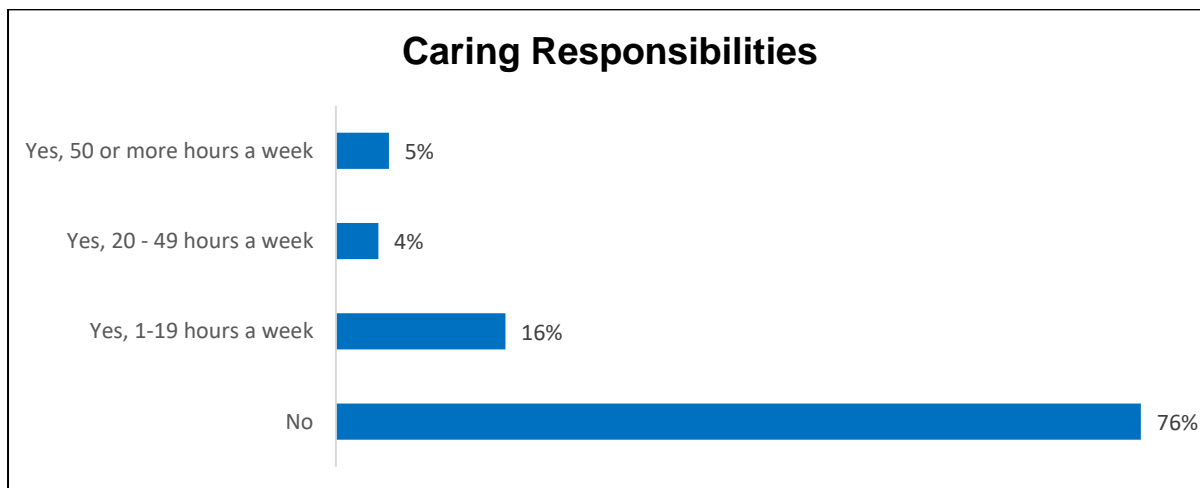
54% (46) of responses received were from individuals in some form of employment. 11% (9) of responses were received from individuals unable to work due to sickness or a disability, and 1% (1) was from an individual who was unemployed, but available for work. 1% (1) of respondents stayed at home to look after the family. 32% (27) of individuals responded as retirees. The person who stated 'other' is a volunteer.



Base: 85

8e. Caring Status

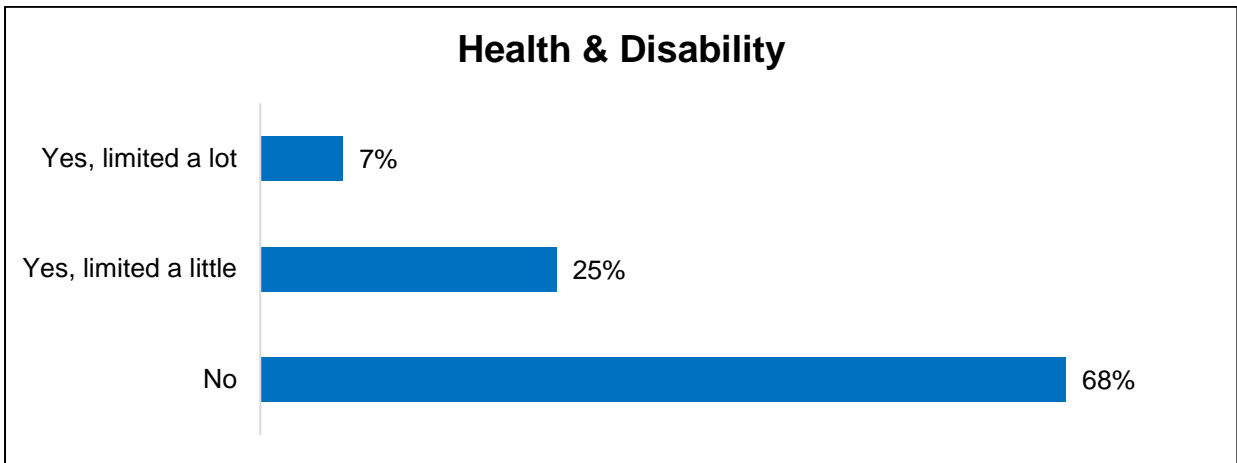
Respondents were asked whether they provide any care or support to individuals with a long term physical and/or mental health difficulties. One-quarter (20) of the 82 responses received had a caring responsibility. 76% (62) don't have any form of caring responsibility.



Base: 82

8f. Health and disability

Of the 81 responses received, just under one-third (26 respondents) had a long term physical or mental health challenge.



Base: 81

8g. Ethnicity

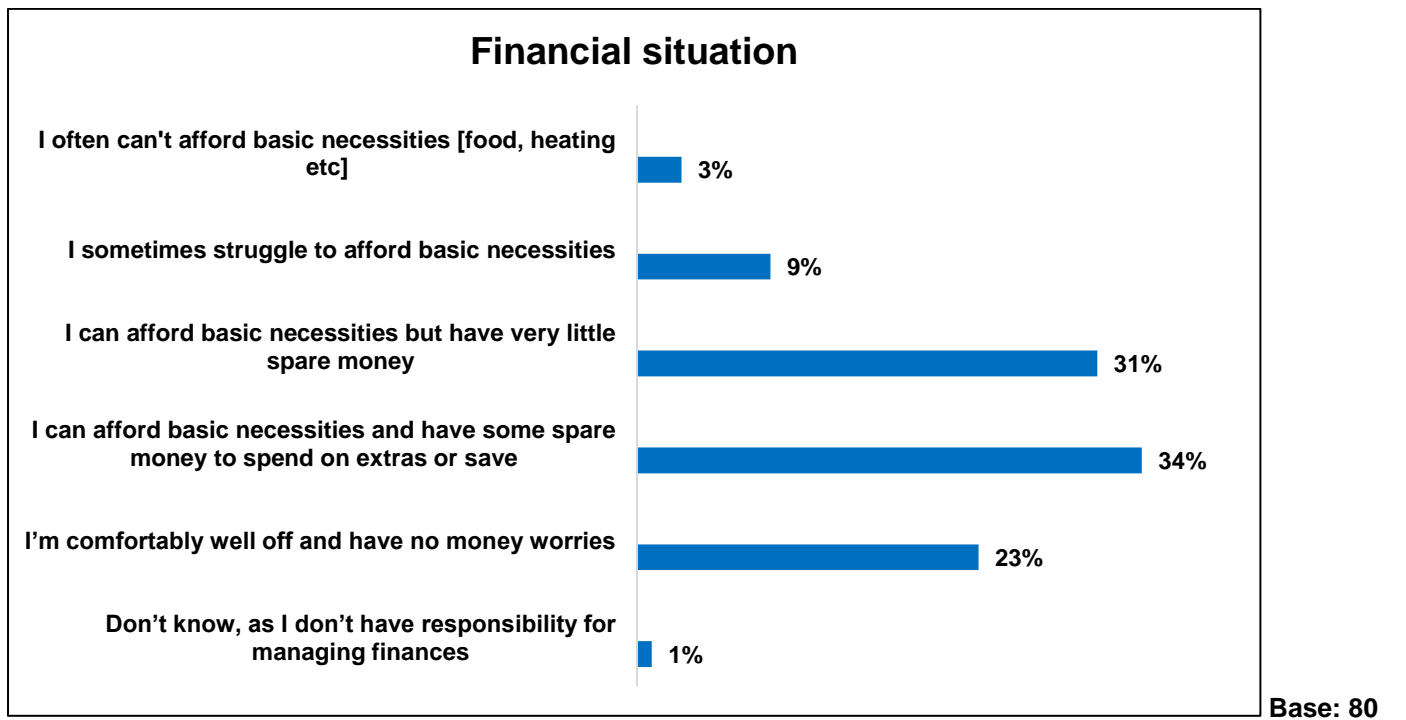
83 respondents provided their ethnicity when undertaking the consultation. 94% (78) report as being white – British. 6% (5 respondents) report as being from other ethnically diverse communities, this includes 2 respondents from the Asian / Asian British community and 3 respondents who report as ‘another ethnic group’.



Base: 83

8h. Financial situation

80 respondents highlighted their financial situation. 57% (45) of respondents can afford basic necessities and / or are comfortably well off. 40% (32) can afford basic necessities, but have very little spare money, or sometime struggle to afford basic necessities. 3% (2) can't afford basic necessities.



9. Summary

Between the 13th February and the 12th March 2024, Bolton Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage residents, retailers and wider stakeholders that have a concern over the abandonment of shopping trolleys across the borough, in sharing their reflections on two proposals to tackle the issue; implementing national legislation and rolling out a voluntary scheme to retailers.

92 responses were received, including 1 from the retailer Iceland, and 2 from Ward Councillors. Just under half of the responses (42) thought the issue of abandoned shopping trolleys was a small problem for the borough. 36 thought it was a big problem and 14 thought that there was no issue.

58 respondents agreed with the principle to adopt national legislative powers and 78 respondents agreed with the principle to implement a voluntary scheme. However, when asked to comment further views were split on the proposals. Where some respondents outlined their agreement with implementing a voluntary scheme for retailers, others disagreed with both proposals. Comments range from the understanding that retailers could opt into other, national schemes; that the retail sector could be disproportionately impacted; that it would be a waste of council resources; or that there was no real issue to warrant a scheme being implemented. Some stakeholders also outlined their concerns with the cost of the scheme, both to deliver the scheme; the cost to the retailer; and the possible cumulative impact to the consumer.

Some stakeholders outlined alternative proposals, including greater engagement with retailers and for the sector to tackle the problem. In addition, there was a call for the local authority to tackle the issue as part of the fly-tipping / littering agenda.

Abandoned shopping trolleys consultation 2024

Consultation closes on Tuesday 12th March 2024

Please complete this form online if possible by going to the 'Active consultations' section of Bolton Council's website at www.bolton.gov.uk, where all background documents can also be found. If you would like paper copies of any of the documents however, please contact the Consultation & Engagement Team on 01204 334875.

Bolton Council are consulting on two methods we would like to take to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys. We would like to adopt powers available under national legislation, and to set up a local scheme which would be voluntary. We would like your views on these proposals.

A summary of the proposals are included in this questionnaire, but please read the background documents for more detailed information.

They can be found online at www.bolton.gov.uk/directory/13/consultations/category/195

Your views will be considered alongside other information to help Bolton Council decide whether or not to adopt the national powers and / or to introduce a voluntary scheme regarding abandoned shopping trolleys.

Why are we considering a voluntary scheme / using national legislation?

For these purposes, the legal definition of a shopping trolley is "a trolley provided by the owner of a shop to customers to enable them to carry goods purchased at the shop". It applies to shopping trolleys in any condition, and includes damaged trolleys and parts of trolleys. The definition doesn't apply to power-assisted trolleys.

The council's current approach is to encourage retailers to stop shopping trolleys being taken in the first place. Owners can fit electronic locking devices which help to prevent shopping trolleys from being taken off their land, and / or require users to deposit a coin or token before using a shopping trolley.

Whilst this approach works well in the majority of cases, a number of shopping trolleys are still abandoned every year in our borough, causing an eyesore to our residents and inconvenience and costs to businesses.

We feel that a voluntary scheme will help us to work with responsible retailers and reduce the numbers of shopping trolleys that are abandoned and unclaimed. However, if the owner hasn't signed up to the scheme or doesn't abide by it, we would like to be able to adopt the national legislation so that we can take steps to remove abandoned shopping trolleys and recover the costs of doing so.

Your response - keeping your data safe

Most questions are optional; just miss out any that you don't want to answer.

The results of this consultation may be made public. If you're responding as an individual you won't be identified in any report as your responses will be anonymised and grouped with those from other people. If you're responding in an official capacity your response may be published but no personal details will be included.

Any personal data you provide will be held securely, in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy, which can be found online:

www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notice

We use Snap Surveys professional software to collect and process your data. Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Their privacy policy can be found online:

www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/

The issue

Q1. How much of a problem do you think abandoned shopping trolleys are in our borough?

- A big problem A small problem No problem at all No opinion

The national legislation

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 [amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005] Bolton Council is able to charge owners set amounts for the costs associated with recovering and storing abandoned shopping trolleys. Currently, these charges are: Collection charge - £50 per trolley. Storage - £5 per day per trolley [for up to 42 days]. Return to owner - £100 per trolley. Trolley disposal - £310 per trolley. If the trolley is not claimed within six weeks, the council can dispose of the trolley and recover the costs from the owner.

The council would remove all abandoned shopping trolleys and serve the owner with a legal notice [within 14 days]. This would tell the owner where the trolley could be collected from, and advise them of the costs the owner would have to pay for the trolley's return or disposal. Once a trolley has either been reclaimed by the owner or disposed of, an invoice covering all costs allowed would be sent to the owner.

The legislation only applies to shopping trolleys which appear to have been abandoned on land in the open air; it doesn't apply to land owned by the owner of the shopping trolley, or any land that the council has designated for storing or placing shopping trolleys.

Q2. How strongly do you agree / disagree that Bolton Council should adopt the powers given to us under national legislation to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No opinion

Voluntary scheme

We would also like to set up a voluntary scheme which all retailers who provide shopping trolleys would be invited to sign up to.

Members would be told where their abandoned shopping trolley had been found. They would be asked to remove it by 5pm the next working day and to let the council know once they'd collected it.

Any retailers who decided not to join the voluntary scheme, or who didn't remove their abandoned trolley by the deadline would be charged in line with national legislation - providing Bolton Council decides to adopt those powers.

Q3. How strongly do you agree / disagree that Bolton Council should introduce a voluntary scheme to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No opinion

Retailers

Q4. Do you own / manage a business within Bolton borough that provides shopping trolleys for customers?

- Yes - please go to Q5 No - please go to Q6

Q5. How interested would you be in signing up to the voluntary scheme?

This does not commit you, it just helps us to gauge interest. If the proposal goes ahead, all retailers will be contacted again and given the opportunity to sign up at a later date.

- Very interested
 Quite interested
 Not very interested
 Not interested at all

Comments

Q6. Please use this space for any comments about the proposal to adopt the powers under nation legislation or to introduce a voluntary scheme to tackle abandoned shopping trolleys

- No comments

Alternatives / improvements

Q7. Please use this space if you'd like to suggest any alternatives / improvements to the proposals

No comments

Your interest

Q8. Which ONE of the following best describes you / your family's interest in this consultation?

- Retailer or retail trade representative - please answer Q8b and c, then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- Live in Bolton borough [Bolton Council area] - please go to Q9
- Work in Bolton borough - please go to Q9
- Study / have children at school in Bolton borough - please go to Q9
- Visitor to Bolton - please go to Q9
- Official response from Parish / Bolton borough Councillor / Elected Member - please answer Q8b and c, then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- Official response from a retailer with shopping trolleys in Bolton borough. You must have permission to submit an official response on their behalf - please answer Q8b and c, then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- Official response from another type of business / organisation / community group. You must have permission to submit an official response on their behalf - please answer Q8b and c then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- None of the above - please answer Q8a then go to Q9

Q8a. Please say what your interest is

Q8b. Please say which ward, business, organisation or community group you represent

Q8c. Please say what your role is - in what official capacity do you represent the business, organisation or community group?

About you

Your answers in this section help us to make sure we are getting views from different types of people. They won't be used to contact or identify you.

Q9. Please give your full postcode

Q10. Are you...?

Q11. Are you...?

- Female Male Identify in another way

Q12. Which most closely describes you?

- Employed full time [30 hours or more a week] Full time student
 Employed part-time [up to 30 hours a week] At home, looking after family
 Self employed / freelance Retired
 Unemployed, available for work Other - please explain at Q11a.
 Unable to work because of sickness / disability

Q11a. If 'other' please explain

Q13. Which age group are you in?

- Under18 55 - 64
 18 - 24 65 - 74
 25 - 34 75 - 84
 35 - 44 85 or over
 45 - 54

Q14. Do you look after, or give any help of support to family members, friends, neighbours or others who need help because they have a long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability, or have problems relating to old age?

Please don't count anything you do as part of paid employment.

- No Yes, 20 - 49 hours a week
 Yes, 1-19 hours a week Yes, 50 or more hours a week

Q15. Are your day-today activities limited because of a long-term physical or mental health condition / illness?

- Yes, limited a lot Yes, limited a little No

Q16. What is your ethnic group?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White British | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British |
| <input type="radio"/> White other | <input type="radio"/> Black, Black British, Caribbean or African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed or Multiple ethnic group | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group |

Q17. Which of the following best describes your financial situation?

This question helps us to see how people are being affected by the cost of living

- I often can't afford basic necessities [food, heating etc]
- I sometimes struggle to afford basic necessities
- I can afford basic necessities but have very little spare money
- I can afford basic necessities and have some spare money to spend on extras or save
- I'm comfortably off and have no money worries
- Don't know, as I don't have responsibility for managing finances

Thanks! Please post to: Freepost RTTT-YTEL-YSXS, Consultation & Engagement Team, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU.