Lifting the lid:

The rising number of microchips in our bins and why it matters

A Big Brother Watch report

December 2009

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Key findings

- **68 local authorities** in Britain and Northern Ireland have **installed microchips in the rubbish bins of at least 2.6 million households**.

- A previous FOI survey from March 2009 found that 42 local authorities had installed microchips in their residents' bins, which **equates to a 62 per cent rise in just 12 months**.

- **Only one local council in Britain** has agreed to pilot one of the Government's "pay-as-you-throw" schemes in the twelve months that they have been on offer, but several local councils are **quietly installing the infrastructure with which to monitor our waste habits**, ready for a political and public climate that is more amenable to bin microchips.

Executive Summary

Since the pilot programme in South Norfolk eight years ago, the number of councils investing in microchipped bins has steadily risen. The most recent study prior to this report found that 42 local authorities had installed microchips in the rubbish bins of around two million households in Britain.[1]

This research note is an audit of the number of councils who have placed microchips in their residents' rubbish bins, the cost of the scheme in the past year and how the data about individuals and families could be used. Through Freedom of Information requests sent to every single local council in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Big Brother Watch has compiled a definitive list of those local authorities that have created the infrastructure through which to monitor our waste habits.

[1] Cocks, D. *Residents threaten to destroy bin microchips* (Daily Telegraph, 16 March 2009) - http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/5002005/Residents-threaten-to-destroy-bin-microchips.html

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Microchips in Bins – A Brief History

South Norfolk council was the first local authority to adopt bin microchips, in autumn 2002. They were given a £1.1 million grant from DEFRA, which was used to buy bins fitted with microchips and lorries with onboard computer systems to record bin weights.[2]

By 2006 it had become apparent that the system was not working. Monitoring each bin individually slowed down the speed of rubbish collections and the microchips were producing inaccurate and conflicting data. In addition, the Council Leader John Fuller claimed the scheme had led to a huge increase in fly-tipping, saying:

> *"A system that sounded good on paper in London failed to work at 7.30am on a cold and wet Monday in December in South Norfolk. It was time to bin the technology."*[3]

A year later, a new administration took control of South Norfolk Council on a manifesto commitment not to introduce "pay-as-you-throw" using bin microchip technology and the scheme was terminated.

In August 2006, then environment minister Ben Bradshaw warned that people could one day be forced to pay for the amount of rubbish they produce. *The Guardian* reported soon after that '*microchips capable of assessing the weight of rubbish thrown out by each household have been quietly fitted to thousands of wheelie bins.*'[4]

A subsequent investigation by BBC One's *Real Story* found that more than 30 councils had installed microchips in their rubbish bins. The Local Government Association

[2] *Micro-chipped bins: questions & answers* - http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/environment/1919.asp
[3] Weaver, M. *Microchip bin tax scheme to go ahead despite failures* (Guardian, 17 June 2008) - http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jun/17/waste
[4] Muir, H. *Wheelie bin microchips could alert councils to big polluters* (Guardian, 28 August 2006) - http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2006/aug/28/localgovernment.science

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defended the councils, with Paul Bettison, chairman of the LGA's environment board, backing the proposal for "pay-as-you-throw" schemes:

> *"If you were going to go to a system of charging it is a fair assumption that you would need to a way of doing this without having someone read it and jot it down. Certainly a chip in the bin would be one way of doing that if a council wanted to be given that option in the future."*

In a policy document entitled Waste Strategy for England 2007, David Miliband, then Environment Secretary, disclosed proposals to allow local councils to implement a "pay-as-you-throw" scheme using wheelie bins fitted with electronic sensors. A survey conducted by Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme claimed that Blackpool had already spent £3 million on a new bin contract, while Crewe and Nantwich had spent £3.5 million on their next generation of wheelie bins.[5]

In January 2009, the Press Association surveyed more than 100 councils in England, with none saying they were planning to apply to take part in a pilot of "pay-as-you-throw" household waste schemes, which form part of the Climate Change Act.

[5] Sherman, J. *'Chip-and-bin' tax aims to force more recycling* (The Times, 24 May 2007) - http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1832321.ece

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Microchips in bins – The Problems

PRIVACY

Placing microchips in bins capable of monitoring the content or weight of household refuse produces yet another piece of data for the state on an individual's private life that it has no right to have. As a by-product of a person or family's home life, waste has the potential to reveal significant details about their domestic habits. What we eat, where we shop and what quantities of food, clothes, medical and prophylactic products and other goods we use is of interest to various different industries as well as the Government when targeting their latest healthy-eating or anti-smoking campaigns.

The vast majority of microchips currently in use are collating the weight and whereabouts of residential rubbish bins. The weight of a bin and whether it has been put out for collection are pieces of data that can reveal whether a household is at home or on holiday. The waste databases at local councils are subjected to only minimum security checks and offer significant potential for a breach of privacy.

Microchips in bins are the latest in bin surveillance technology, but the desire of central and local authorities to inspect our waste habits has manifested itself in more conspicuous forms in recent times. In September 2009, Northampton County Council sent hooded men unannounced to over 1000 households across the district to rifle through residents' rubbish bins. The council defended the action, which would have been remarkably alarming for residents, stating that it was part of a week-long waste analysis study by the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership for eight local authorities.[6]

In Lancashire, the County Council has spent £60,000 a year conducting twice-yearly inspections of residents' rubbish bins. As with the Northampton case, householders were

[6] *Council hires hoodie spies to rummage through bins and see what is being thrown away* (Daily Mail, September 2009) - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1216680/Council-spies-dressed-hoodies-rifle-residents-rubbish-waste-analysis.html

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not warned beforehand and the inspectors arrived bearing no identification. Councillor Tony Martin, Lancashire's cabinet member for resources and performance, explained the inspections saying: "*We are trying to make sure people dispose of their rubbish appropriately as they are not supposed to throw items like electrical goods away.*"[7]

People do not like their local authority looking through their bins, whatever the reasons. A poll carried out for Big Brother Watch by *PoliticsHome* in late October 2009 found that more than 8 out of 10 people opposed putting microchips in bins to encourage recycling.

In response to the statement "Placing microchips in refuse bins which monitor the waste I throw away is an acceptable measure to encourage recycling", do you:[8]					
	Total	**Con**	**Lab**	**Lib Dem**	**None**
Strongly agree	**5**	3	7	7	5
Somewhat agree	**11**	7	15	19	8
Somewhat disagree	**14**	11	17	16	12
Strongly disagree	**68**	78	59	56	73

PUNITIVE FINES

Whilst the invasion of privacy posed by bin microchips therefore meets with strong disapproval from the public, of equal concern is the opportunity they offer for councils to impose fines for putting rubbish in the wrong bin, recycling incentives or "pay-as-you-throw" schemes.

[7] Irvine, C. *Bin police rummage through rubbish at dawn* (Daily Telegraph, April 2009) - http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/lawandorder/5156014/Bin-police-rummage-through-rubbish-at-dawn.html

[8] *PoliticsHome interviewed 1,353 adults between 20-23 October 2009. Results are weighted by party ID to reflect the UK at large.*

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The current fines regime in Britain is among the most punitive in the world, as this section from the Department of Communities and Local Government document 'How to improve residential areas' demonstrates (emphasis added):

> *Under section 45(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, local authorities have a statutory responsibility to collect household waste. Under section 46 of the Act,* ***the public must place their domestic waste in the type of receptacle specified by the local authority****. Local authorities may specify which material should go into a particular receptacle and what householders should do so that the receptacles are emptied. To fulfil this responsibility, they should send a section 46 notice to all householders.*
>
> ***Anyone who fails to comply with a section 46 notice without a good reason risks conviction in a magistrates' court, where the maximum fine is £1,000****. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives local authorities the power to issue fixed penalty notices to householders for breaching a section 46 notice.*[9]

In addition to this strict fines regime, last year it was revealed that a provision of the Climate Change Act means any executive order from ministers to provide all local authorities with powers to variably charge for waste collection will not be subject to Parliamentary approval. According to the *Daily Telegraph*:

> *Government departments are anticipating that almost two-thirds of homes will face the new fees regime, internal documents show.*
>
> *There is no limit on how much a local authority can charge, but guidance from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs states "charges of*

[9] *How to improve residential areas* (DCLG, May 2007)
http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1185108.pdf

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approximately £50 per year have been sufficient to change the behaviour of households".[10]

Plans to give councils the power to levy charges on households that create the most waste were announced in 2007, but were downgraded to a pilot scheme by five local authorities when Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, with the prospect of an England-wide roll-out set back until 2012/13. However, at the date of this note's publication, no councils have signed up to take part in the pilot.

Despite this, several councils have already implemented fortnightly collections, which put increasing strain on larger households' ability to stay within the Government's stringent bin guidelines. As well as threatening further punitive fines for families, fortnightly collections have also resulted in increased flytipping. Research conducted by the TaxPayers' Alliance found that in areas with fortnightly rubbish collections, flytipping had increased by 11.89 per cent. In places with weekly collections, the rise was just 4.24 per cent.[11]

The move towards fortnightly bin collections has been fueled largely by the EU Landfill Directive which fines councils for putting too much waste in landfill sites. The EU has also commissioned research on EU bin taxes, bringing the likelihood of a "pay-as-you-throw" levy closer to reality.

[10] Swaine, J. *Ministers quietly adopt 'pay-as-you-throw' bin tax power* (Daily Telegraph, January 2009) - http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/4284203/Ministers-quietly-adopt-pay-as-you-throw-bin-tax-power.html

[11] Doughty, S. *Now the bin police get the power to take your car away* (Daily Mail, October 2007) - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-486699/Now-bin-police-power-car-away.html

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Conclusions from the research

Our research reveals that 68 local authorities in Britain and Northern Ireland have installed microchips in the rubbish bins of around 2.6 million households, and have spent over £1 million in the past 12 months on these schemes. This is the largest figure yet recorded for the number of councils investing in bin monitoring technology and comes despite the complete and admitted failure of the first pilot of "pay-as-you-throw" bin collections with microchips in South Norfolk, and despite the fact that only Bristol council has come forward to pilot a "pay-as-you-throw" scheme in the twelve months it has been on offer to local authorities.

With this, and the fact that a ministerial order to impose "pay-as-you-throw" will not require a debate in parliament, our major concern is that local councils are quietly installing the infrastructure with which to monitor our waste habits, ready to go further when they judge the political and public climate for bin microchips to be more amenable.

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Appendix 1

Table indicating which local councils have installed microchips, the number of households with microchipped bins and the cost of the operation and installation of the microchip scheme.

Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Aberdeenshire	70,000	No	£0	There are microchips in some of the recycling boxes initially supplied around 2004/5/6.
Antrim	11,200	Yes	£38,000.00	The hardware fitted to the Council's vehicles is provided as part of a 5 year contract hire arrangement with vehicle suppliers. The annual fee for the provision of this element of the service is £38,000.
Ballymena	20,000	No	£0	Microchips were put into Bryson Recycling red box recycling scheme in 2005, but use was discontinued in 2008.
Basildon	60,000	Yes	£102.00	Used to identify ownership of the bin and monitor crew performance and route efficiency. They are not used to weigh the volume of material which is put out for collection.
Belfast City	125,000	Yes	£27,612	Belfast City Council currently monitors participation rate and contamination of bins through the chips. These chips assist in identifying areas of lower participation and therefore the council can direct resources at that area to encourage householders to play their part in recycling and diverting waste from landfill so that we can meet our obligations under the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS).
Bexley	60,000	No	£0	The Council did have brown 140 litre wheeled bins used for the weekly collection of kitchen and garden waste, which were fitted with a radio frequency identification read-only (RFID) tag, pre-programmed with a unique number.
Blackpool	50,000	No	£0	The chips were installed at bin production at £1.25 per unit circa 2005

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Blaenau Gwent	(see notes)	No	£550,000.00	Wheeled bins will be offered to residents to support the introduction of fortnightly refuse collections – residents may elect not to receive bins and continue to use black refuse bags. Bins issued to residents for use with refuse collections will have microchips installed.
Bournemouth	11,000	No	£0.00	A small number of bins have chips installed. To allow chips to be read and data downloaded, the refuse collection vehicles would have to be fitted with a chip reading unit and they are not.
Bury	50,000	No		
Cheshire East	52,000	Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council ceased monitoring data in 2008	£0	The former legacy authority Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council installed circa 52,000 microchips to its wheelie bins used for collecting plastic, cans and cardboard and circa 52,000 microchips to its wheelie bins used for collecting paper in 2003. Plus circa 20,000 microchips to its wheelie bins used for collecting green waste during the period 2003-2008.
Clackmannanshire	23,265	No	£0	The bins that contain microchips are used to collect garden waste and recycling materials.
Cotswold	39,500	No	£40,000	
Craigavon	15,000	Yes	Operating costs included in normal administration duties	Council intermittently monitors data provided by installed microchips, primarily to manage operational efficiency
Denbighshire	23,000	No	£8,500.00	
Derby	5,000	No		Around 5,000 brown bins delivered in 2003/04 had chips but they were never activated.
Doncaster	96,000	No	£96,000	Doncaster Council has installed RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags in approximately 96,000 green bins used to collect garden waste. The RFID tags were fitted to the bins at the point of manufacture and the cost per bin was approximately £1.

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
East Northamptonshire	10,000	No	£0	In 2003 as part of a trial project with three other nearby councils we introduced a kerbside blue box glass collection. The original boxes for this project were fitted with microchips. However, we have never used the chips to gain any information and have never had the equipment or software to gather the information.
Forest Heath	(did not provide data)	No	£1,800.00	We continue to install chips to any new bins purchased in order to future proof bins at £1 each. We purchased around 1800 domestic bins this year.
Fylde	25,000	No		
Gedling	50,000	Yes	£24,000	Whilst we record the information at present we are not actively using it. The aim is to further encourage recycling by establishing recyclate weights by village/ward/ area/street in order to concentrate our promotional activities in this area to increase our recycling rate.
Great Yarmouth	45,000	No	£0	When wheeled bins were introduced in 2004 / 2005 they were supplied ready – chipped.
Halton	7,600	(see notes)	(see notes)	The Council has installed RFID Tags to approximately 7,600 recycling wheeled bins (not general waste bins) for the purpose of rewarding residents who choose to join a pilot recycling reward scheme currently in operation in parts of the borough. Residents were advised in advance of the installation of the RFID Tags in their recycling bins. The recycling rewards scheme is run in partnership with an American company called RecycleBank.
Harrow	70,000	No	(see notes)	Approximately £1 per bin but only minimal bins were purchased in the year you requested data.
Hastings	26,500	Yes	£0	The microchip information is used to inform us which property the Twin Bin was assigned to. All such bins were purchased in 2007.
Huntingdonshire	8,000	No	£0	A trial in 2003 fitted bins with RFI's but this was abandoned in 2004.
Hyndburn	35,000	No	£0	No monitoring has taken place for the past 4 years and chips are no longer being fitted to containers.
Inverclyde	27,000	No		RFID tags were supplied by the manufacturer with containers however these have not been used

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Kingston upon Hull	11,000	No	£0	Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips were fitted at the manufacturing stage of the 11,000 brown bins deployed in our trial garden waste collections in July 2007. However, the RFID tags were inactive and have never been used or activated.
Lancaster	54,000	Yes	£100,000	The chip is fitted at the time the bin is manufactured. It only costs £1 and future proofs the bin. We have approx 100,000 bins so cost £100,000. All the microchip does is provide a unique identity for each bin which can be read electronically and cross referenced to data from on board weighers etc.
Larne	10,000	No		Microchips are installed in the recycling containers which belong to the Council. The Council is not currently monitoring data
Leeds	215,000	Yes	£16,000	The chip itself only holds one piece of information, an identifying code. When the bin is emptied, the bin is weighed by the lift on the refuse truck and the weight is automatically recorded on a device in the cab against the code that is read from the chip in the bin. Our refuse collection service has a database of all households in Leeds, which is necessary for the delivery of the service. The code on each chip is reconciled with each property on the database. The information is transferred from the cab to this database within the Council offices. The database only holds addresses, the type of bin at each property, the collection route the property is on and the weight of the bin. The information is not used to monitor individual households but is used to help us to understand the overall amount of waste being recycled to help us to plan services in future. The cost of a new wheeled bin is £18.50, of which around £1.00 is the cost of the RFID chip. Leeds City Council replaces approximately 16,000 wheeled bins each year, making the cost of RFID approximately £16,000.
Lisburn	12,000	No	£4,150.00	Approximately one third of brown bins (12,000) were fitted with chips a few years ago as part of a trial of the chipping system however data is not currently regularly monitored

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Mid Sussex	57,000	No		Microchips were installed as part of the early landfill bin purchases when AWC was introduced, however these were never activated. The cost of fitting the chip was £1 per bin at purchase
Newtownabbey	30,000		£1,350.40	Chips installed in dry recyclable boxes and organic waste bins. Installation of microchips discontinued from April 2009. Cost incurred for software programme maintenance.
North Down	(did not provide data)	No	£5,778.00	
North Norfolk	(did not provide data)	No		
Oxford	65,000	No		Rubbish containers used by the Council do contain microchips. However, the microchips are not currently used for recording data for monitoring purposes.
Pendle	12,000	No		Some of the earlier bins for garden waste came from the manufacturers with chips installed but the majority do not.
Peterborough	40,000	No		In 2003 the Council received some 40,000 residential bins which had RFID chips fitted. The Council however does not have any domestic collection vehicles fitted with RFID readers and does not currently have any policy in place to do so.
Redditch	32,432	No		When the alternate weekly collection service was introduced in 2006, it was decided to 'future proof' the new containers by buying wheeled bins with microchips installed, should this be needed in the future. The chips are not and never have been activated and the Council does not currently use the chips to gather any information about recycling collections.
Ribble Valley	70,000	Yes	£17,500	A chip containing the address of each bin will be fitted underneath the rim of the bin. This will help reduce lost or stolen bins, as well as providing us with accurate information about which households are taking part in recycling. Each time the bins are emptied, the chip will be read by equipment installed on collection trucks. The chip will only contain addresses and costs 25p per chip.

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Rother	38,000	No		
Rotherham	50,000	No		The micro-chipped containers were designed to give the Council an indication of how many residents were participating in the Council's recycling collection schemes.
Rushcliffe	47,000	No		Microchips only record location of bins. When the bins were initially delivered each bin was scanned to a specific address which helps us to return any "lost" bins to their rightful owner.
Salford	20,000	No		Chips are in recycling bins for purposes of participation analysis but are not used as no reading equipment has been purchased.
Scottish Borders	52,000	No		
Sefton	115,000	Identifies location	£5,000.00	£1400 per annum (software cost) & £3600 for the licence/ information
South Bucks	5,550	No		
South Kesteven	56,000	No		The company who produced the micro chips which were then installed in the wheeled bin went into liquidation so we have not been able to use the operating system. We have contacted the company who received the remnants of the liquidated company in attempt to get the system operational.
South Norfolk	53,243	No		
South Oxfordshire	53,000	Yes	(see notes)	Chips are used for information on tonnages, dates and times of emptying, missed bins, overweight bins, contaminated bins, tracking stolen bins. New waste collection contract only started in June 2009
South Ribble	45,000	No	£0	When the Grey residual bins were purchased in 2006 we had chips installed at that point in case of any future developments
Spelthorne	36,111	No	£1,000.00	Any bins that we have purchased in the last year have come installed with microchips at a cost of 10p each. We have purchased approx 10,000 bins this year
St Edmundsbury	(did not provide data)	No	£2,915.00	The microchips were used to monitor participation rates when the dry mixed recycling collections were rolled in.

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Tamworth	346	No	£20	
Thanet	10,000	No	£0	There were no installation, administration or monitoring costs associated with microchips during the financial year 2008/9. The chips in the original bins rolled out in 2005 were included in the purchase price of the bins.
Thurrock	55,000	No	£33,000.00	Thurrock Council is not currently monitoring data provided by microchips installed in the rubbish containers, this will commence when a new contract is let later in 2010. Each microchip cost £0.60 to purchase and install.
Uttlesford	26,000	No	£0	Uttlesford District Council purchased wheeled bins in 2006 for the introduction of the current scheme, and these bins do have microchips in them.
Wakefield	54,105	No	£50,000	The council purchased 20,510 garden waste bins and 33,568 paper bins in this period as it was rolling out its recycling schemes to the majority of properties in the district. The bins cost £14.08 each but this includes the cost of the RFID chip which is not stated as a separate amount in the tender submission. The council does require auditable proof that all the bins it has paid for are delivered to properties and as such these bins were scanned as proof of delivery. The council paid 20p for each of these bins to be scanned and recorded as proof of delivery.
Warwick	45,000	Yes	£0	System is operated by our Contractor SITA. Wheeled bins and chips were purchased prior to 2008, funded by Warwickshire County Council. Microchips are monitored for assessing whether bins have been emptied by our contractor.
Waveney	69,000	No	£0	The first batches of blue and green bins purchased between 2003 and 2005 already had them installed as it was originally intended to weigh bins for management information and to balance weights on refuse rounds. Budget cuts prevented the weighing equipment and associated software being purchased so the scheme was never implemented, no bins were weighed and neither was any data collected. As a result, all bins subsequently purchased have not had chips fitted, nor are there any plans to fit them retrospectively.

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
West Lancashire	(see notes)	No	£0	An initial batch of wheeled bins were fitted; at the point of manufacture, with chips. There have been no additional bins/boxes purchased with chips or retrospective fitting. Cannot meaningfully state how many wheeled bins there are within the borough with microchips, due to residents having their original bins replaced and residents locating the chip and removing it.
Wiltshire	80,000	Location only	(see notes)	The chips were purchased as an integral part of the bin price so we are unable to give a separate cost. It is not possible to provide a management cost as this is not recorded separately within the refuse service operational costs. The microchips in the former Kennet District Council area are currently inactive; those in the former Salisbury District Council area are only used for recording address data.
Windsor and Maidenhead	6,800	(see notes)	(see notes)	The use of the chips is an integral part of the pilot scheme so the cost of the chip element is not available as a separate item. Windsor and Maidenhead Council are using chips as part of their trial of voluntary incentive based recycling (through RecycleBank). The schemes are completely voluntary and no data is collected unless the resident sets up a RecycleBank account.
Woking	32,000	No		The Council installed the chips onto the wheeled bins during a pilot scheme (6,000 properties) which started in early 2004, for research purposes. However, once approval was gained to extend the scheme Borough-wide, it was decided that although the bins would be chipped, they would not be used to record any information, unless further legislation was passed by central government.
Worcester	39,400	No		When the alternate weekly collection service was introduced in 2006, it was decided to 'future proof' the new containers by buying wheeled bins with microchips installed, should this be needed in the future. The chips are not and never have been activated and the Council does not currently use the chips to gather any information about recycling collections.
Wyre	25,000	No		Whilst we have no immediate plans to activate the microchips we may, in the future, have to respond to national legislation where we will have to record the amount of non-recyclable waste by weight per household in Wyre.

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Name	Number of households	Currently monitoring microchips?	Cost in past 12 months of installation and/or operation	Notes (compiled from council responses)
Total number of households with microchips in their bins	2,637,052	Total spent by councils in the past 12 months on microchips in bins	£1,022,727	

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Appendix 2

FOI request pertaining to the use of microchips in rubbish bins

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to obtain information about X council's use of microchips in resident's rubbish bins.

To outline my query as clearly as possible, I am requesting:

1. Does X council conduct weekly or fortnightly rubbish collections?

2. Has X council installed microchips in any of the rubbish containers of its residents?

3. Is X council currently monitoring data provided by microchips installed in the rubbish containers of its residents? If so, how many bins is this?

4. Please provide a figure for how much X council's bin microchip scheme has cost to either install and/or operate in the last financial year (1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009)

5. If it exists, a copy of any internal guidance on X council's rubbish bin microchip scheme

For the purposes of clarity, when referring to rubbish bins I would like included all types of wheelie bin, dustbin and recycling bins or boxes.

My preferred format to receive this information is electronically, but if that is not possible I will gladly accept hard copies. I understand that under the Freedom of Information Act, I am entitled to a response within 20 working days. I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing that you have received this request as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

Big Brother Watch

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About Big Brother Watch

Big Brother Watch was set up to challenge policies that threaten our privacy, our freedoms and our civil liberties, and to expose the true scale of the surveillance state.

Founded in 2009, we have produced unique research exposing the erosion of civil liberties in the UK, looking at the dramatic expansion of surveillance powers, the growth of the database state and the misuse of personal information.

We campaign to give individuals more control over their personal data, and hold to account those who fail to respect our privacy, whether private companies, government departments or local authorities.

Protecting individual privacy and defending civil liberties, Big Brother Watch is a campaign group for the digital age.

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If you are a journalist and you would like to contact Big Brother Watch, including outside office hours, please call +44 (0) 7505 448925 *(24hrs)* You can also email **press@bigbrotherwatch.org.uk** for written enquiries.

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