

Household Recycling Centres Proposals

Public Consultation Report

June 2024



1 Background and Methods

Background

Like councils all over the country, Shropshire Council is facing an unprecedented financial pressure. The council must make £62m of savings in 2024/25 to keep a balanced budget, and plans to reach this target include difficult decisions, including finding ways of generating income and making savings in order to protect essential frontline services such as adults' and children's social care.

The council consulted on a set of Green Waste proposals, which included changes to hours and/or possible closures of two Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) in Shropshire. There are currently five HRCs in Shropshire, located in Bridgnorth, Craven Arms, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, and Whitchurch.

It is a statutory duty to provide household recycling centres, but legislation doesn't specify how many this must be. The authority can decide what is reasonable for local circumstances.

This report analyses the results of a consultation on Green Waste proposals with a concentration on the feedback regarding the HRCs.¹ The consultation that included an online survey, as well as the ability for residents to complete a paper survey or send feedback via email or written communication.

Communications and Promotion

The consultation was promoted widely. An initial press release was published on the Shropshire Council newsroom website and all of its social media channels, including Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn and NextDoor. Other local media outlets also publicised the consultation, including BBC Radio Shropshire and the Shropshire Star. All Shropshire Councillors were involved in promoting the consultation in their areas, and posters were hung in Shropshire libraries, Shropshire Local, town and parish councils, and other public locations across the county. Finally, and most effectively for the purposes of response rates (see further details in Section 2, below), several emails were sent to the 63,260 subscribers on the council's recycling/waste list.

Methods of Analysis

There were several opportunities throughout the survey for respondents to provide open-ended comments. With over 18,000 responses, and over a dozen questions that required qualitative analysis (in-depth reading and identification of themes within extensive comments), the Feedback and Insight Team determined that capacity required that a randomized sample of responses should be analysed in depth in order to provide the best analysis for the purposes of this report. Therefore a random sample was selected of 1,700 responses,² and these were used to derive the

¹ For a full analysis of the feedback on the other Green Waste proposals, see the Feedback and Insight Team's separate report.

² For an in-depth understanding of how this random sample was generated, see [Survey Monkey's article](#) on collecting a simple random sample from a large dataset.

themes and redacted quotes presented in this report. These responses were all read initially to identify common themes, and each response was tagged for the inclusion of these themes. Tables are presented that represent the presence of the most common themes, and anonymised examples of these themes are provided below where appropriate. Some of the comments will have multiple themes identified within them, and so the “count” in tables represents the number of occasions when a theme was referenced, rather than the total number of comments. The percentage represents the frequency of that theme’s reference among the total number of references.

Quantitative responses were analysed using Microsoft Excel and descriptive statistics are visualised as figures.

This report proceeds in seven sections:

- **Section 1: Background and Methods** (this section) provides an overview of Shropshire Council’s current budget situation that is the backdrop to the green waste proposals under consultation as well as a brief description of the methods employed in analysing the results of the consultation.
- **Section 2: Respondents** presents the number and types of responses to the consultation received from the public, as well as identifying demographic characteristics of respondents.
- **Section 3: Current HRC Use** details responses to questions around how residents currently use HRCs, including what they bring there and travel times.
- **Section 4: Introducing Changes to HRCs** details responses to questions around possible closures or reduced hours at HRCs and how this might impact residents.
- **Section 5: Booking System for HRCs** provides an overview of feedback on the possibility of introducing a booking system for HRC sites in the future.
- **Section 6: Additional Feedback** provides an in-depth analysis of open-ended comments from survey respondents on the proposals, as well as an analysis of all written feedback provided to the council through emails and other letters sent in response to the consultation. This section includes details of suggested alternatives to the proposals.
- **Section 7: Summary and Conclusion** highlights the report’s key findings.

2 Respondents

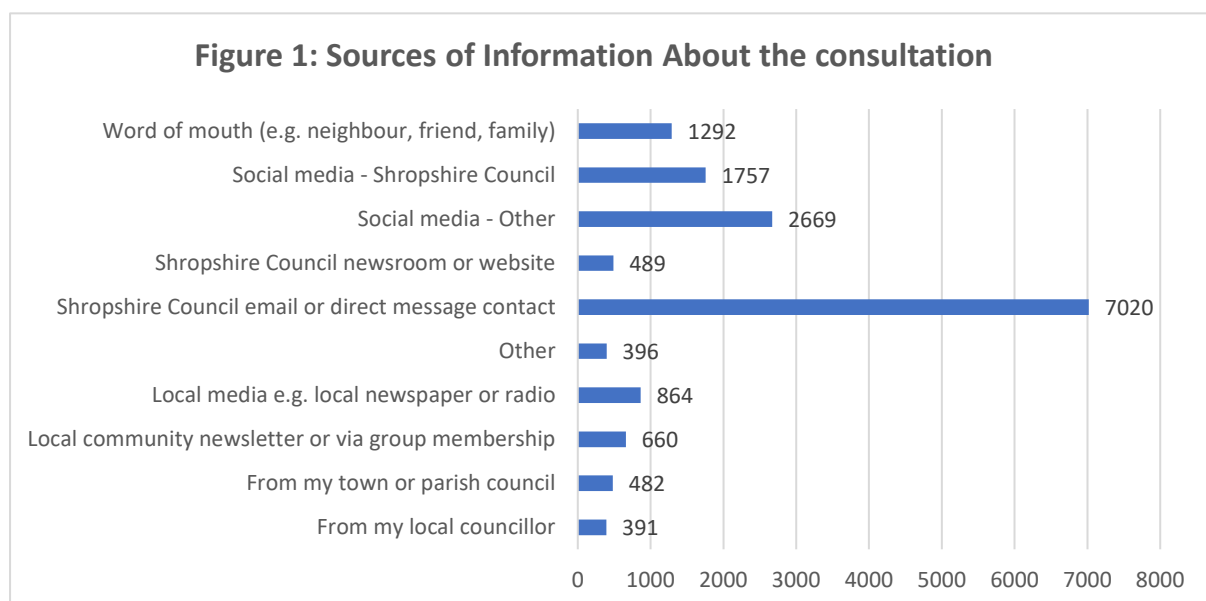
In total, over 18,000 individual residents, businesses, organisations, town and parish councils and other respondents provided feedback on the green waste proposals – an unprecedented response to any of Shropshire Council’s consultations in recent memory. The bulk of the feedback was provided through the survey, which received 17,950 responses.³ Additionally, 91 individuals, groups and local governments provided feedback through letters and emails, by completing the Customer Services feedback form, and even through the online web support form. More details on these additional responses will be provided in a later section of this report.

³ This number includes around 45 paper copies which were returned through libraries or scanned and emailed by residents.

Overall, around 6% of the total population of Shropshire responded to the survey.⁴ The vast majority of those responding to the survey did so as members of the public (98%). However, representatives from town and parish councils (47), voluntary sector organisations (11), public sector organisations (18), local businesses (44) and Shropshire Council elected members and staff (57) also responded to the survey in good numbers.

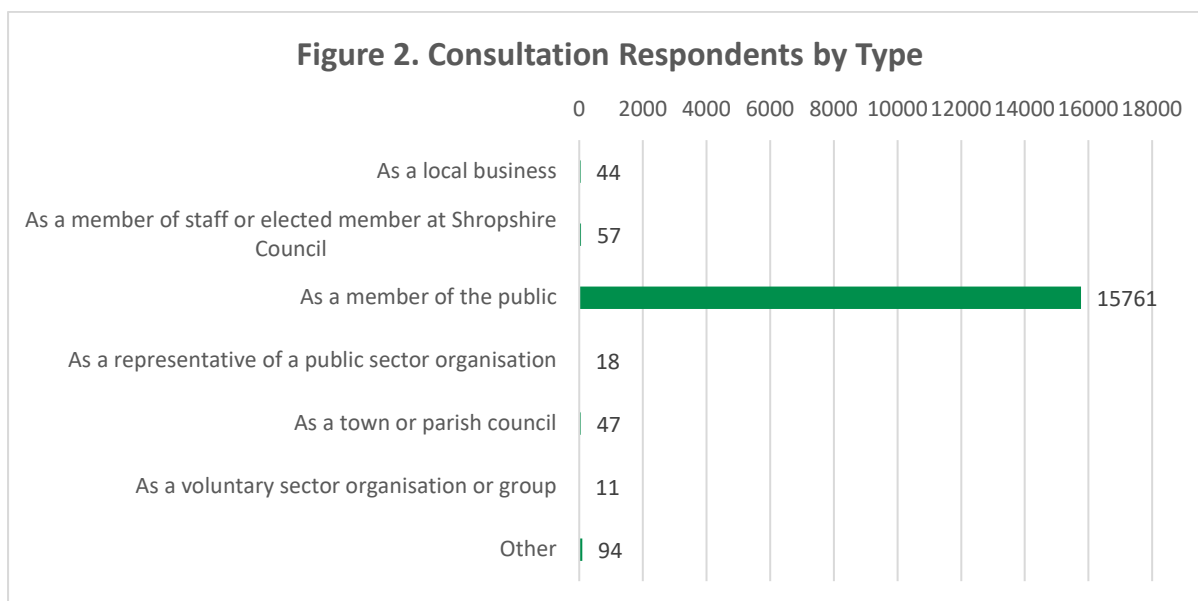
Many of the respondents provided information about themselves within the online survey. This is very valuable information. It provides an insight into a range of the characteristics and allows Shropshire Council and its decision makers to check that responses are balanced and representative of the population and communities within Shropshire. This type of data was not available for the written consultation responses (in most cases only name and email were provided).

All survey respondents were asked how they had found out about the consultation. This informs the way Shropshire Council undertakes engagement activity and can help with future consultations. There were 16,020 responses to the question and **Figure 1** displays the results. As described in Section 1 of this report, an email was issued to members of the public signed up to receive news about waste services to inform them of the consultation. This Shropshire Council issued email was the top way the respondents found the consultation with 7,020 responses (43.8%). 4,426 people had seen the consultation on social media (1,757, 11% on Shropshire Council’s social media channels and 2,669, 16.7% through other social media channels). Word of mouth was another top response.



In any public survey, the respondent sample is usually formed of different types of respondents, so respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the survey – as members of the public, as representatives for an organisation, or in another capacity. **Figure 2** displays the results. The majority of respondents, of the 16,032 who answered the question, identified themselves as members of the public (98.3%).

⁴ See [current population statistics on the Shropshire Council website](#).

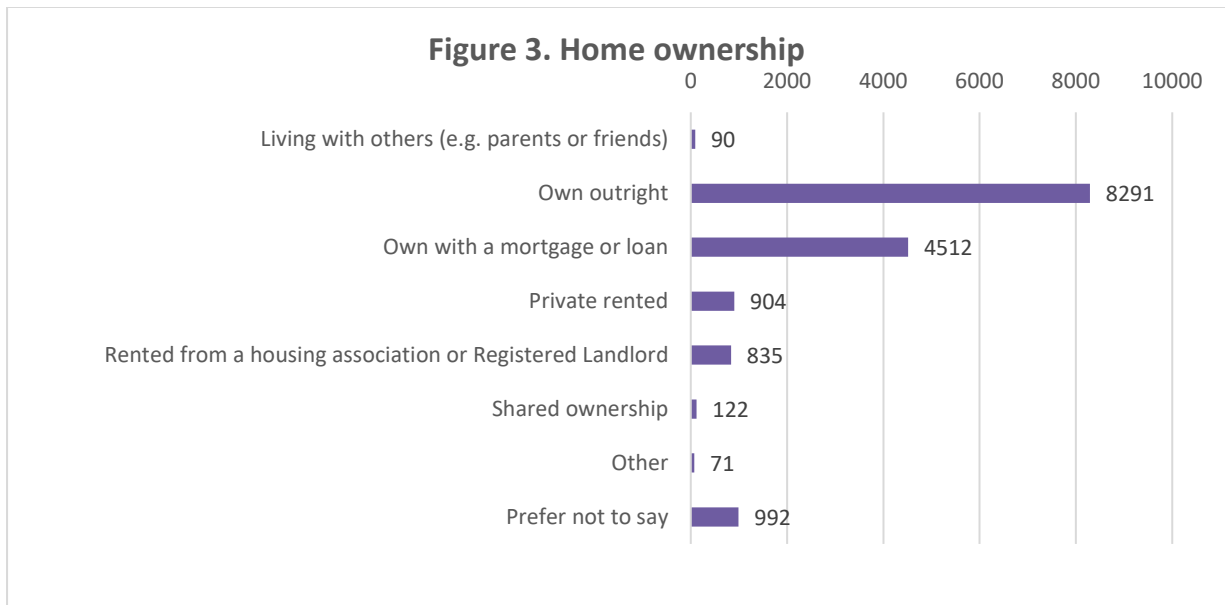


In order to check that the survey sample was representative across Shropshire’s geographical communities (rather than communities with shared characteristics or interests) respondents were asked for their nearest large town within the county. **Table 1** below shows the spread across Shropshire. 15,798 provided an answer and of those 28% were Shrewsbury residents, 14.5% from Bridgnorth and 13.3% from Oswestry. There was also a very good response rate across the other towns within the county.

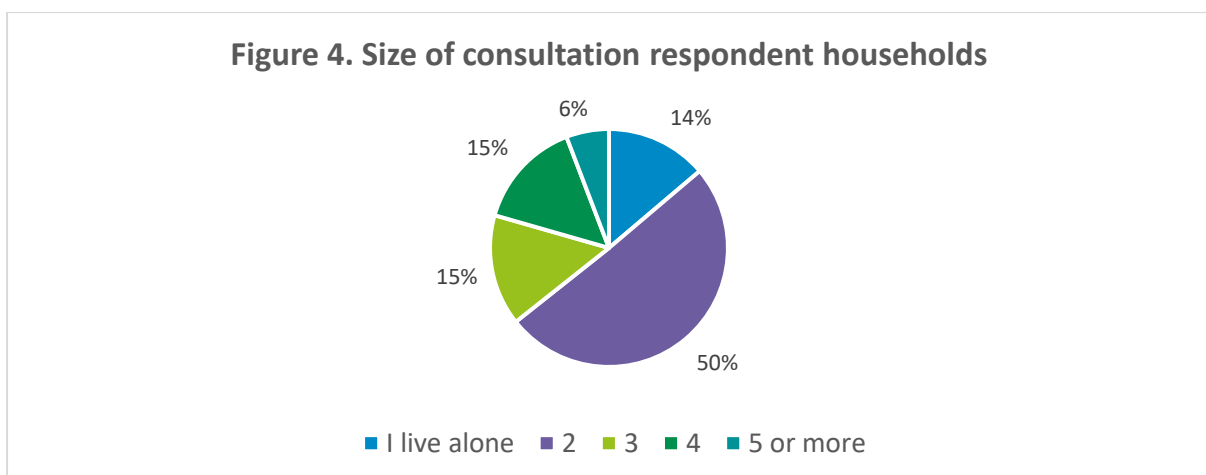
Table 1. Nearest Shropshire Town	Count	%
Bishops Castle	290	1.8
Bridgnorth	2289	14.5
Broseley	259	1.6
Church Stretton	592	3.7
Cleobury Mortimer	248	1.6
Clun	177	1.1
Craven Arms	613	3.9
Ellesmere	484	3.1
Ludlow	979	6.2
Market Drayton	919	5.8
Much Wenlock	244	1.5
Oswestry	2105	13.3
Shifnal	650	4.1
Shrewsbury	4419	28.0
Wem	533	3.4
Whitchurch	847	5.4
Other (please specify)	75	0.5
Don't know	11	0.1
Prefer not to say	64	0.4

75 respondents provided an 'other' option rather than select one of the towns on the list provided. Some of these were out of the Shropshire Council administrative area including Welshpool, Wellington and Telford. Other towns mentioned included Albrighton, Burford, Pontesbury, Minsterley and Woore.

Due to the nature of the consultation, respondents were asked if they own their own home. 15,817 people responded and the results are presented in **Figure 3**. 52.4% of the survey respondents own their own home outright, 28.5% own their home with a mortgage or loan, 5.7% live within private rented accommodation and 5.3% have a property with a housing association or registered landlord.



When considering waste collection, size of household is also an important factor within considerations, and this was the next question asked within the survey. **Figure 4** illustrates that there are more 2 person households than any other type within the survey sample.



Of the 15,650 consultation respondents who provided information on household composition, 13.8% live alone, 50.5% live within 2 person households, 15.1% have a

3 person household, very closely followed by 14.7% within 4 person households. 5 person household were less common at 5.8%.

The age and gender of consultation respondents was also analysed within the survey. 15,713 answered the question on gender and of those 52.3% were female, 39.2% male and 0.3% identified as “other” (e.g. non-binary, or prefer to self-describe). **Figure 5** displays the results.

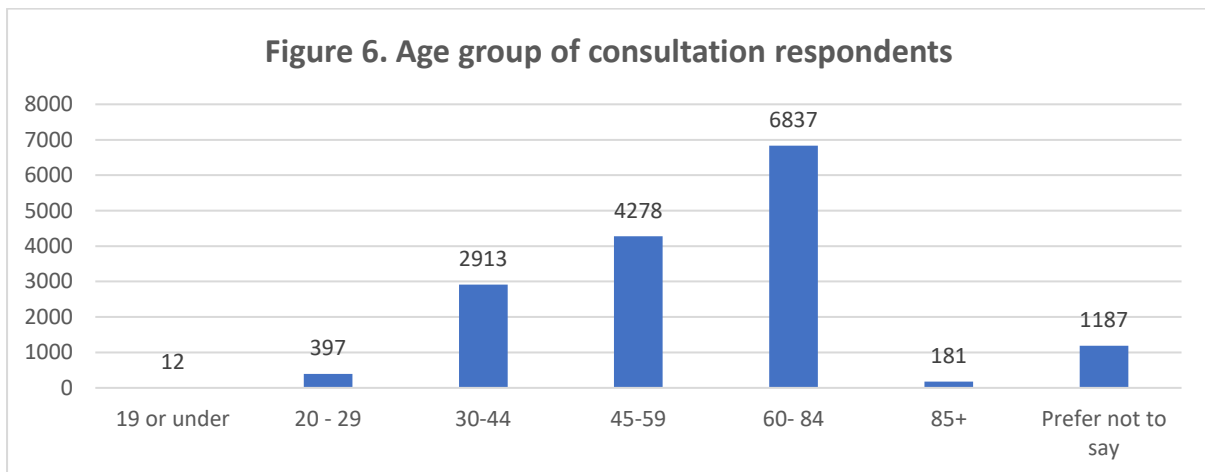
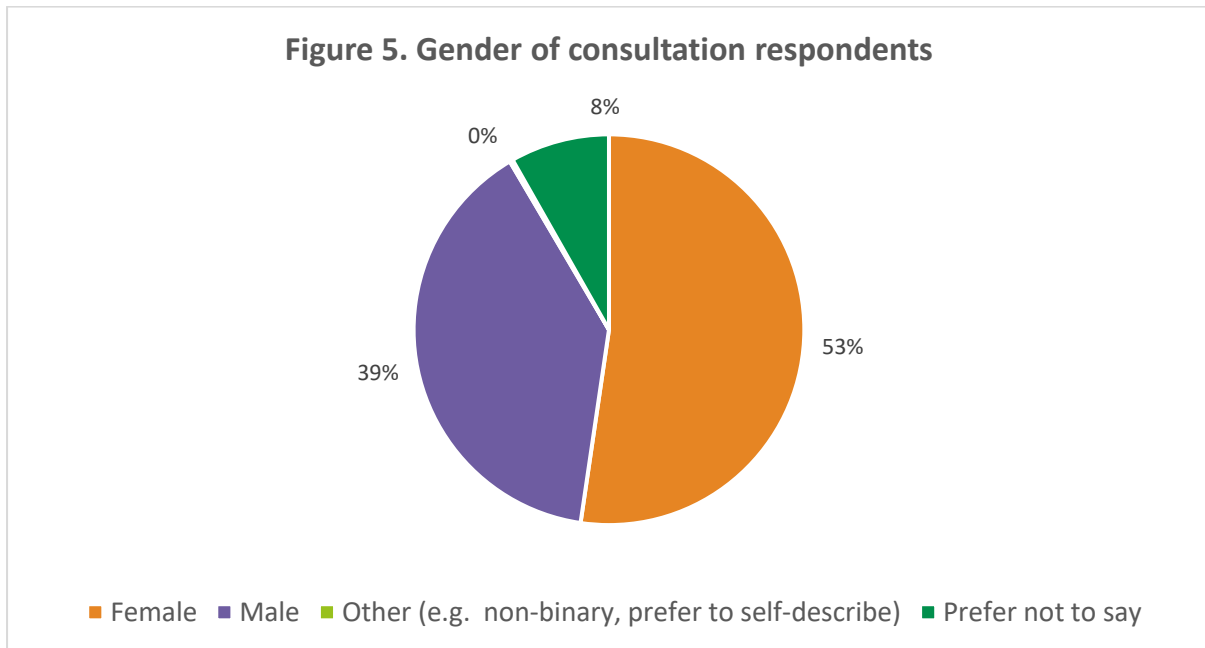
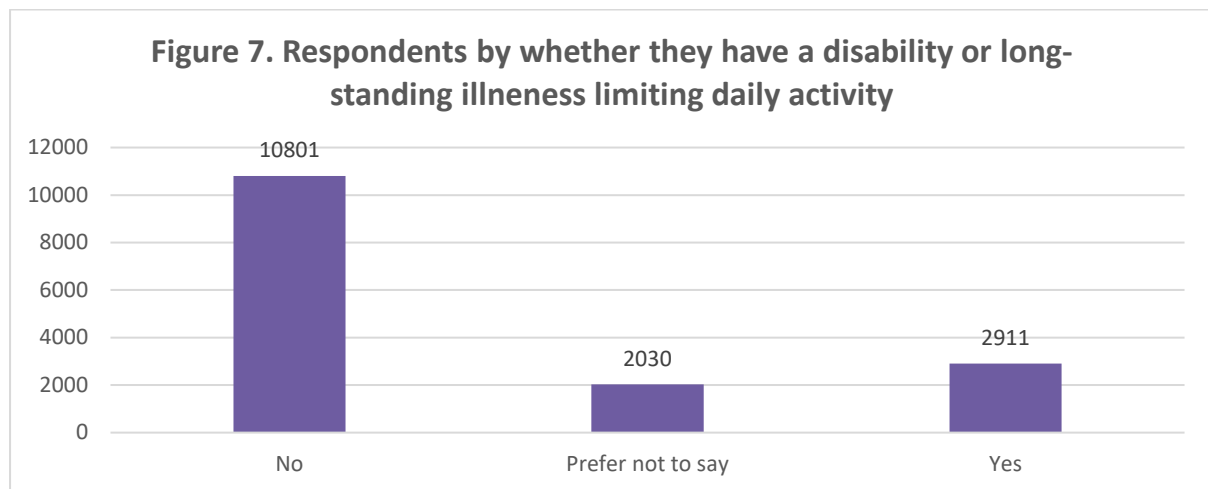


Figure 6 highlights that there were more 60-84 year old survey respondents than any other age group (43.3%). **This is a significant proportion and should be considered as context to the feedback received.** The second top age group are 45 to 59 year olds at 27.2%. There were only 12 responses from those aged 19 or under.

Public consultations should have regard for disability and although not a significant feature within the consultation itself, the survey allowed for feedback about impact and protected characteristics. **Figure 7** suggests that people who report a disability or long-standing illness were represented within the survey sample. 18.5% of the

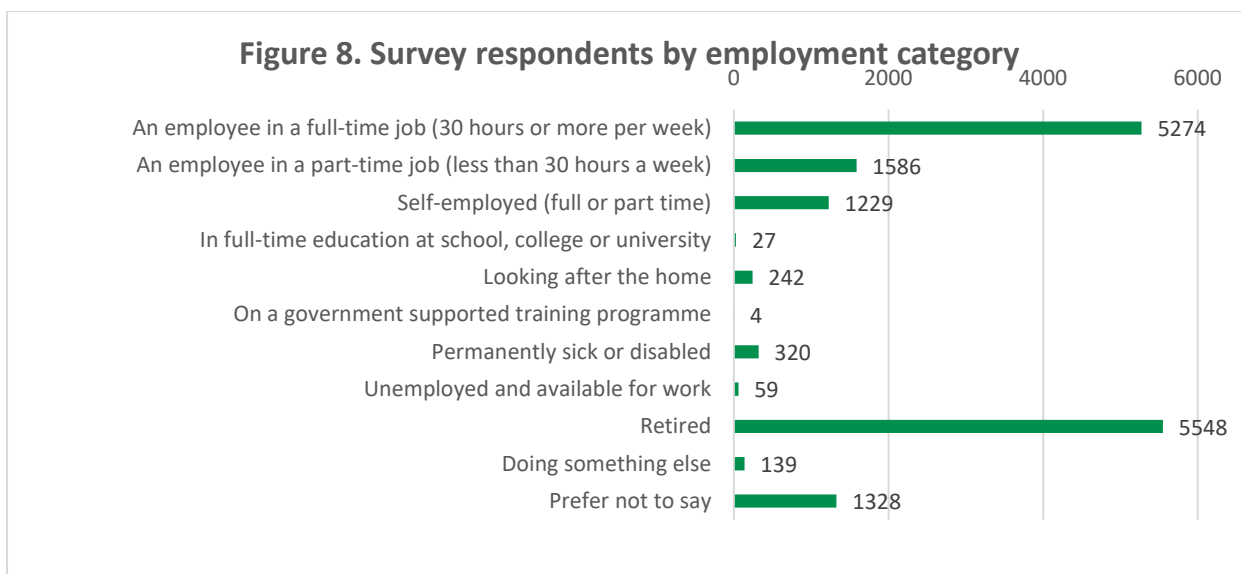
question respondents (15,742 responses) reported that ‘yes’ they do have a disability or long-standing illness that limits their daily activity (68.6% do not).



Shropshire Council includes ethnicity questions in its surveys and consultations to consider whether people of a non-White British background are represented. **Table 2** displays the results. Encouragingly there was some diversity within the feedback, helped by the larger sample size, with 87.8% respondents identifying as White (British, Irish, Polish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Other White).

Table 2. Ethnic Origin	Count	%
White (British, Irish, Polish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Other White)	13798	87.8
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian)	38	0.2
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, Other Black)	16	0.1
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other Mixed)	71	0.5
Other Ethnic Group (Arab, Other)	19	0.1
Prefer not to say	1768	11.3

Consultation respondents were also asked about their employment category as another way of understanding the sample and local representation. **Figure 8** displays the results.



A significant proportion of the sample are retired. This information ties to the large proportion of older respondents who own their own homes outright and live within 2 person households. Encouragingly, there were people within other employment categories to represent the wider population within Shropshire. 15,756 people responded to the question, of those 35.2% are retired, 33.5% are an employee in a full-time job and 10.1% work part time, less than 30 hours a week. A further 7.8% are self-employed full or part time.

Overall, due to the larger survey sample, there are a mix of survey respondents with different characteristics but it should be noted that, **in reflection of Shropshire's population, there is a slight skew towards older age groups, many of whom are home owners and retired.** This should not impact the decision-making process to a detrimental extent, given the nature of the consultation but these results will be used to update the Equality and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment for Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and Garden Waste Charging proposals.

The last question within the section of the survey on demographics asked "We have asked you about the impacts of the proposals above. Do you have any other comments on diversity, equality or social inclusion that you would like us to think about when designing future waste services, please describe below." With 17,950 total survey responses it was not possible to analyse all of the responses but a representative and random sample of the responses to the question have been analysed as discussed in Section 1 of this report, and the resulting themes are shown in **Table 3** below.

Top themes from the comments were concerns about the impact of proposals on older people, people with disabilities, mobility or mental health issues (20%); criticism of the survey question (19%); nothing/services for everyone (19%); and general dissatisfaction with the proposals/council (14%). 13% of respondent comments on this question also touched upon concerns about the financial burden that these proposals might pose to poorer residents.

Table 3. Themes - Equality Impact Comments	Count	%
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Older people/people with disabilities/mobility or mental health issues will be affected more	60	20%
Criticism of survey/questions/equalities question	56	19%
Nothing/services important for everyone	56	19%
Expressions of general dissatisfaction with the proposals/council	40	14%
Financial burden/hits poor harder	39	13%
Potential for digital exclusion	13	4%
Proposals disadvantage rural households	7	2%
Consider providing such consultations in alternative languages/easy read	5	2%
Other	17	6%

Some example comments from those who understood the importance of the question are included below.

Example comments

- “Although I don’t have disabilities I am a full time unpaid carer for my husband who has dementia so my responsibilities are many - I don’t have the time or energy to travel to another recycling centre and will take the easiest option - BIN MORE!!!”
- “I am a carer for my husband who had a stroke and my elderly mother with dementia and sight impaired. It would be difficult for me to travel further to dispose of waste or to pay extra.”
- “As many of your customers are elderly or have a long-term disability, these changes will have a significant impact upon their weekly household activities. Please consider folks like us when making these decisions. Many thanks.”
- “All the proposals made would NEGATIVELY impact on older people and all the vulnerable groups in Shropshire.”
- “Any system which moves away from doorstep collections will have an impact on the elderly and disabled.”
- “Older people are likely to be adversely affected by your proposals.”
- “Accessibility for all groups, having both phone lines and online booking for example for older people, or people with poor eye sight.”
- “As I not allowed to drive due being Reg. Severely sight impaired what arrangements are in place to support people like me?”
- “Consideration of non internet users, visually or hearing impaired and also physically disabled persons.”
- “Do not digitally exclude people by introducing tech apps / website bookings. Do not cause unnecessary mental health issues that will place additional demand on the NHS - closing sites or charging for collections will cause mental health issues including stress, depression, anxiety etc - it will increase financial hardship and I am sure in the long term cost the tax payer more - look at the bigger picture SCC and get a grip.”
- “Don't even pretend that you are concerned with diversity or social inclusion. The proposed changes will have a disproportionate impact on disabled people, older people and those on a low income. This illustrates very clearly that you are happy to discriminate against these groups.”
- “I am likely to need the service as I get older. As a local resident of Bridgnorth I would be very unhappy if the service was moved. The journey elsewhere would make my life more stressful and difficult.”

- “People with limited incomes will be the ones impacted by this the most.”
- “It will discriminate against people with less money. It will make a big difference to them but be meaningless to rich people. There’s a wide range of people living in Shropshire.”
- “I have mentioned this already. Charging for a service will impact on poorer people.”
- “I think more consideration should be given to people on low incomes who don't run a car or are elderly/disabled and find it difficult to dispose of waste themselves. These are people who may be making their best efforts to keep on top of their homes and gardens and losing or being asked to pay for these facilities is the straw that breaks the camel’s back.”
- if you don't have a car? Rural areas receive fewer services already for their council tax. Rural communities will experience the impact of fly tipping.”
- “The proposals impact disproportionately on residents in remoter rural areas by not providing reasonably accessible HRC facilities for such residents. Reliance on smart phone functionality also discriminates against such residents in areas where service quality is poor.”
- “Parents with disabled kids cannot always leave them in the car unattended or leave them at home to go to the tip.”
- “People without a car are further penalised.”

The comments included a range of issues including the needs of people with caring responsibilities, the needs of older people, people with disabilities, people who will find online booking difficult (including those with sight-loss or visual impairment), people without access to a car, people on low incomes and people living in more isolated rural communities.

A large number of comments highlighted that many members of the public do not understand why the needs of people with different characteristics need to be considered. There were some very discriminatory comments within the responses, with considerable distain expressed for the council officers seeking to obtain this feedback. None of those have been used as examples, but a few of the more polite responses are included below for illustrative purposes.

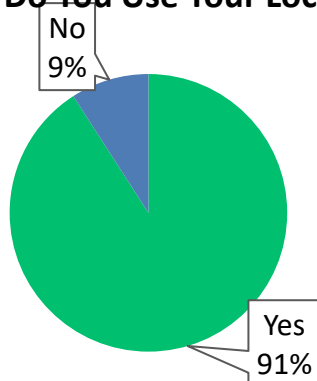
- “Diversity, equality and inclusion should be placed into the grey bin. Get some common sense!”
- “Please do stop this 'wokeness', it adds no value to our lives and costs serious money for no good reason.”
- “Really what a ridiculous question. Diversity!”

It is hoped that the other comments above can help illustrate how members of the community could be impacted and how Shropshire Council is working to understand and mitigate those impacts.

3 Current HRC Use

Respondents were asked whether they use their local Household Recycling Centre (HRC) and a majority (91%) answered that they do (**see Figure 9**).

Figure 9: Do You Use Your Local HRC?



The survey asked respondents which HRC site they use, and the results are presented in **Figure 10** below. However, it should be noted that the results of this question cannot provide an accurate picture of which sites are used most frequently.⁵ Rather, the results of this response are more helpful in discussing the behaviours and characteristics of respondents using those sites.

Figure 10: Respondents' HRC Site Use

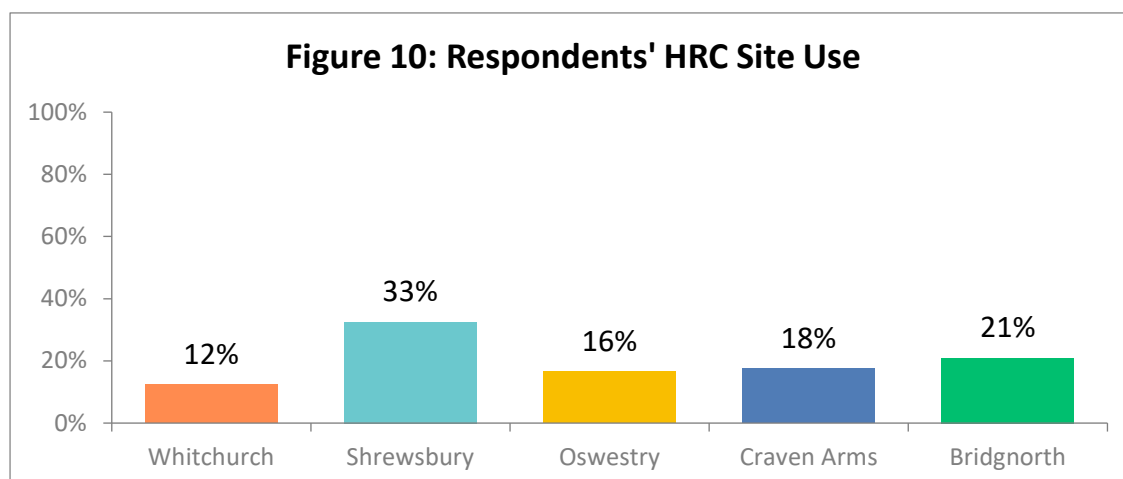
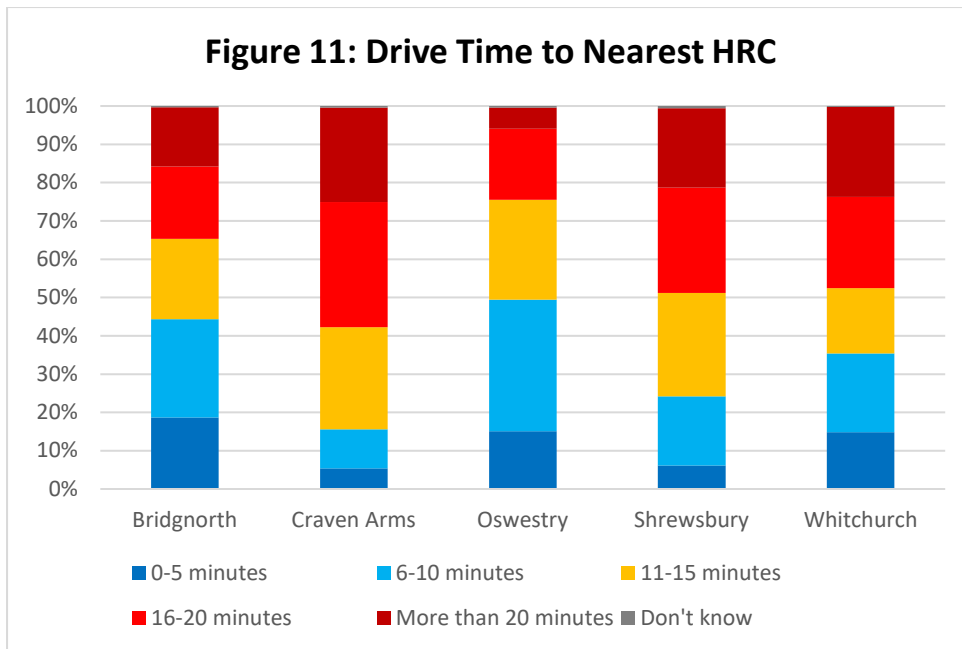
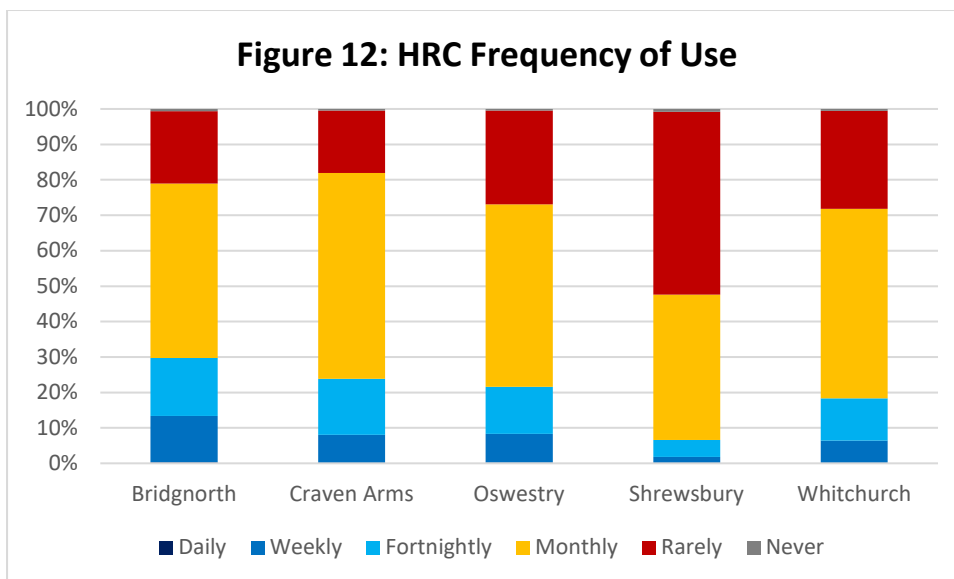


Figure 11 displays the driving distance that respondents report to their nearest HRC site and is organised by each site. Red shades represent longer drives by respondents (16-20 minutes or 20+ minutes) and blue shades shorter drives (0-10 minutes) to the sites. Respondents using the Craven Arms, Shrewsbury, and Whitchurch sites typically have the longer drives, whereas those using the Oswestry site have typically shorter drives.

⁵ This is measuring the local HRC by the respondents, rather than the actual use of the sites. A better measure of site use would be to track the number of customers attending a site within a given time period, but that was outside the scope of this consultation.



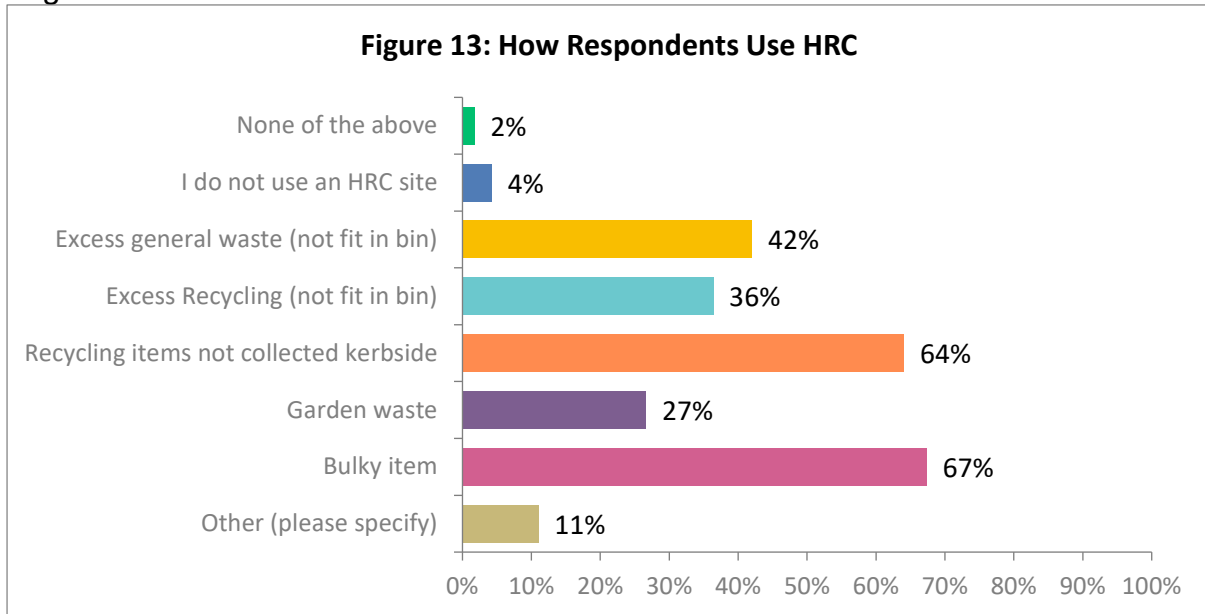
Respondents reported the most frequent use of the Bridgnorth and Craven Arms sites (see Figure 12). Around 30% of respondents whose closest site was Bridgnorth said that they use their local HRC weekly or fortnightly, and around 25% of those using Craven Arms saying the same. In contrast, around 50% of those whose closest site was Shrewsbury said that they use it rarely.



16,841 respondents replied to a question about how they tend to use their HRC. Respondents could select more than one option, and these are presented in Figure 13. A majority of respondents said that they use their HRCs for disposing of bulky items (67%) or recycling items that are not collected kerbside (64%). Most of those respondents who selected “other” also described bringing items that cannot be collected kerbside for waste or recycling, such as paint, electrical items, books, clothing, tetra paks, hazardous materials, etc. If these “other” responses are added to the category “Recycling items not collected kerbside” then this use of the

HRCs is likely the most common reason overall for respondents to make a trip to their local centre.

Large minorities of respondents also use the centres for excess recycling (36%) or general waste (42%) and 27% of respondents said that they use the HRCs to dispose of garden waste.



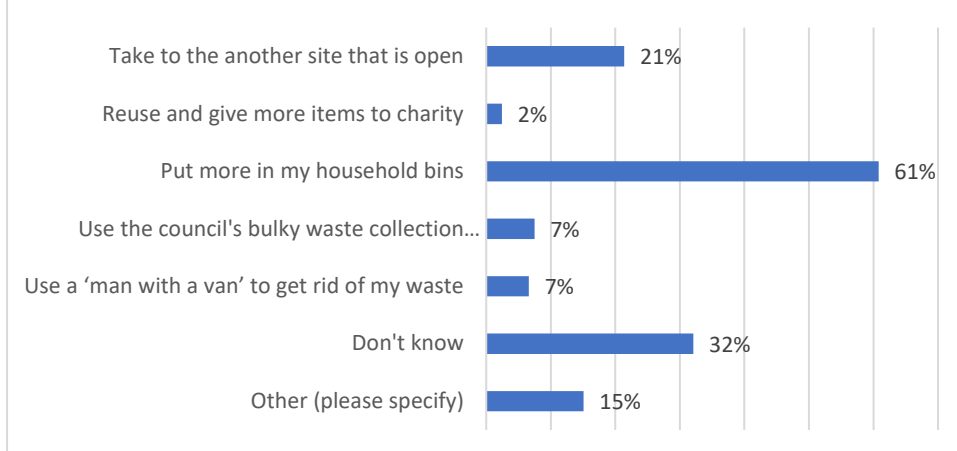
4 Introducing Changes to HRCs

One of the proposals in Shropshire Council's [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2028-29](#) is the closure of up to two HRCs. A possible alternative that the council is considering is reducing opening hours for all of the HRCs. Survey respondents were therefore asked a number of questions about the possibility of closure or reduced hours to HRCs.

Impacts of Possible HRC Closure

First, respondents were asked about what they would be likely to do with their household waste should their HRC close. A majority of respondents (61%) said that if their local HRC closed permanently they would put more into their household bins. This is slightly concerning, given that it was established above that most respondents seem to use their HRCs to dispose of items that cannot be collected kerbside. Just 21% said that they would take their waste to another site that is open. 32% of respondents said they don't know what they would do.

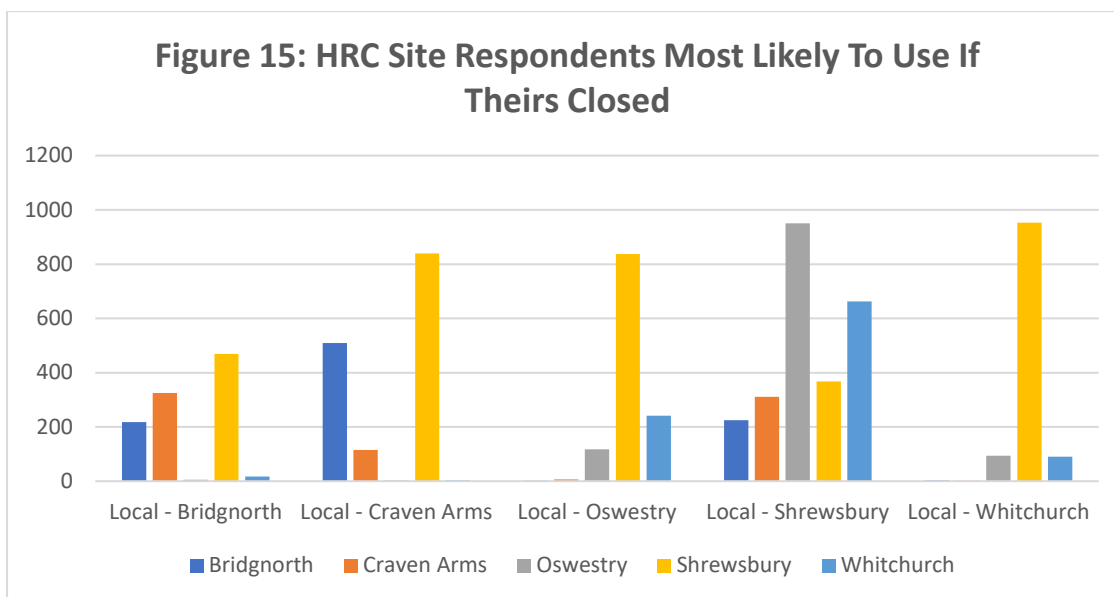
Figure 14: What Respondents Would Do With Waste if HRC Closed



15% of respondents said they would dispose of their waste through “other” methods. A random sample of these responses were tagged for themes, and these themes are presented in **Table 4**. The most commonly cited theme among respondents saying they would dispose of their waste through “other” methods was that they would be likely to fly tip or otherwise illegally dispose of their waste. Also common was respondents saying that they would burn their waste.

Table 4. Themes – “Other” Disposal Method if HRC Closed	Count	%
Illegally dispose (fly tip/dump, etc)	74	43%
Burn it	33	19%
Put more in regular bin/use a skip	18	11%
No options/don't know	16	9%
Too far to another HRC	8	5%
Take to a site outside Shropshire	8	5%
Recycle less	4	2%
Compost/find other sustainable ways	4	2%
Build up/hoarde waste for longer periods	4	2%
Depends/combination of things	2	1%
Other	16	9%

When asked which alternative HRC they would be most likely to use should their local HRC close, most respondents indicated that Shrewsbury would be their second choice (**see Figure 15**). This is perhaps unsurprising, given the centrality of the location. It should be noted, however, that several respondents chose their local site in this question anyway, and that a large percentage (37%) of respondents chose “other” for this question, rather than choosing a secondary site option available.



Common themes among those selecting “other” in response to which HRC they would take their waste should their local HRC close are presented in **Table 5**, below. Most common responses were to not choose any site at all, saying they don’t know where they would take their waste, they wouldn’t use a site, or other sites are simply too far for them to travel. Some sites outside of Shropshire were also referenced, including Telford & Wrekin HRCs, and HRCs in other neighbouring counties such as Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and those in Wales.

Table 5. Themes – “Other” HRC Site	Count	%
Don't know/wouldn't use one	164	39%
Others too far	129	30%
Telford & Wrekin	72	17%
Worcestershire	27	6%
Wales	14	3%
Staffordshire	6	1%
Other	6	1%
Herefordshire	2	0.47%
Cheshire	2	0.47%
Other county	2	0.47%

Respondents were also asked an open-ended question about what impacts (either positive or negative) that closing their local HRC would have on their household. A random sample of these responses were analysed for common themes, and these themes are presented in **Table 7**, with some examples of anonymised comments provided below.

Table 7. Themes – Impacts of Closing Local HRC	No	%
Inconvenient/too far to travel/fuel costs	439	28%
More fly tipping/dumping/burning	355	23%
Bad for environment/less recycling	211	14%
General negative impact	163	11%

Increased financial burden or exacerbate other disadvantage (e.g. disabled, elderly)	117	8%
No impact/neutral	94	6%
Will put waste in the general waste bin/increased landfill	88	6%
Poor council planning/services/management/CT should cover	52	3%
Would be more convenient to use HRC in other council areas	25	2%
Other	3	0.19%

The most cited impact among respondents was that **travel to a secondary HRC site would be too inconvenient due to distance and/or travel costs**. For example:

- “Additional pollution to environment with driving 40 mile round trip and additional cost as result.”
- “It would add a 40mile round trip to a recycling centre in Shropshire, as we are not allowed to use the tip at Plas Madoc, which is the closest other tip.”
- “It is already extremely difficult for me to get to as have to get someone to take me (no car). Any further away and I likely would not be able to access it.”
- “Bridgenorth is a 1 1/2 hour round trip. This is unacceptable.”
- “Further to travel, less likely to try and recycle.”
- “A huge disadvantage from a 20 minute round trip journey to a 90 minute round trip.”

The second most commonly discussed impact was that respondents expected **increased fly tipping** or other forms of illegal waste disposal to be a consequence of HRC site closure. For example:

- “Fly tipping would become out of hand in our rural area.”
- “There would be much more fly tipping. We already get some down our lane, if people have to drive a long way I expect more will happen.”
- “Probably an increase in fly tipping and waste fires.”
- “As a landowner I think people would illegally dump stuff. It already happens, so would get worse. This then falls on private individuals to cover the costs. People are lazy and would rather dump it, then travel a bit further to recycle or dispose of responsibly.”
- “It would be major for me and the community. The impact as such will have negatively on the landscape around us will see more people fly tip and dump causing further work and undue costs to the council to remove.”

Another theme that occurred often was that residents expect an impact of HRC closures to be a **decrease in recycling and other negative environmental impacts**. For example:

- “I would, reluctantly, put valuable recyclable items into general waste. This would be contrary to all we are told to do to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. I would also very much regret the fact that I would have to burn substantially more fuel to transport recyclables to a centre which is considerably more distant. In my case a further 28-mile round trip.”
- “It would be terrible; we would be left with a huge amount of waste we could not responsibly get rid of. We would have to put more recyclable waste into our main black bin, which would have a detrimental impact on the environment.”

- “It would definitely have a negative impact. We currently rely on the local HRC to dispose of excess garden waste and many other items both recyclable and nonrecyclable. It would mean longer car journeys, which will have an impact on the environment.”
- “Less recycling and more landfill.”

Several respondents were also concerned that HRC closures would **exacerbate financial disadvantages or other kinds of disadvantages for vulnerable people**, such as difficulties with access by those with disabilities, the elderly, etc. For example:

- “It would be very hard for me as I can't travel far due to being disabled and always in pain.”
- “We are totally reliant on it as Shropshire does not provide us with clinical waste facilities either those of us with a person with disability and significant amount of clinical and medical waste we would be significantly impacted.”
- “My wife is disabled, and I can't leave her for longer periods of time, and she often isn't able to travel. This would prevent me from being able to use an alternative HRC.”
- “I am 87 years old. I can cope with driving to the Oswestry recycling centre but would struggle to take large amounts of garden waste to any other HRC.”
- “I can only drive in my local town with being disabled so if ours closed in Whitchurch I don't know what I would do about getting rid of excess rubbish and bulky items.”
- “Massively negative impact. Every year there is something else that gets taken away from us all because we live where we live, in a small town. Why should we have to travel so far to recycle something? It costs money in petrol, etc. Feels like we are being punished once again.”
- “Yet more expense on an already massively stretched budget.”

Comments indicating non-specific negative impacts was also a fairly common theme.

Ranking Preferences for HRC Opening Days

As noted previously, one possible option for cost reduction that might help to mitigate permanent closure or one or more HRCs in Shropshire is the reduction of hours at all centres. Respondents were therefore asked to rank their preferred days for HRCs to be open. The question required a forced ranking of days, with respondents ranking the day they most preferred their HRC to stay open being ranked as “1” and the day that they least preferred the HRC to stay open being ranked as “7”. Lower scores, therefore, indicate the most popular opening days, while higher scores indicate the least popular opening day. Results are presented in **Table 6**.

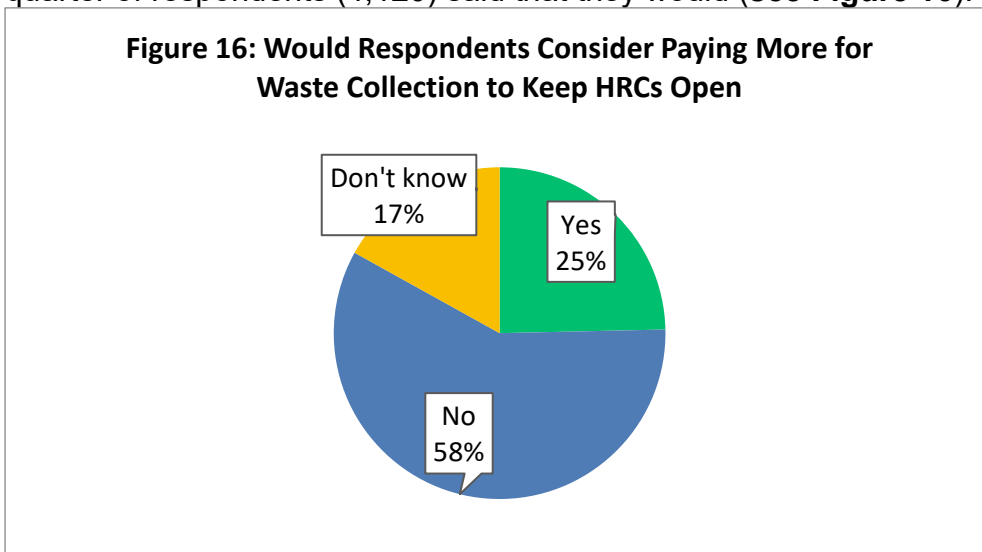
Table 6. Ranking of Preferred Opening Days for HRCs	
Day	Average Ranking
Sunday	2.57
Saturday	3.36
Monday	3.56
Tuesday	4.13

Wednesday	4.54
Friday	4.82
Thursday	5.03

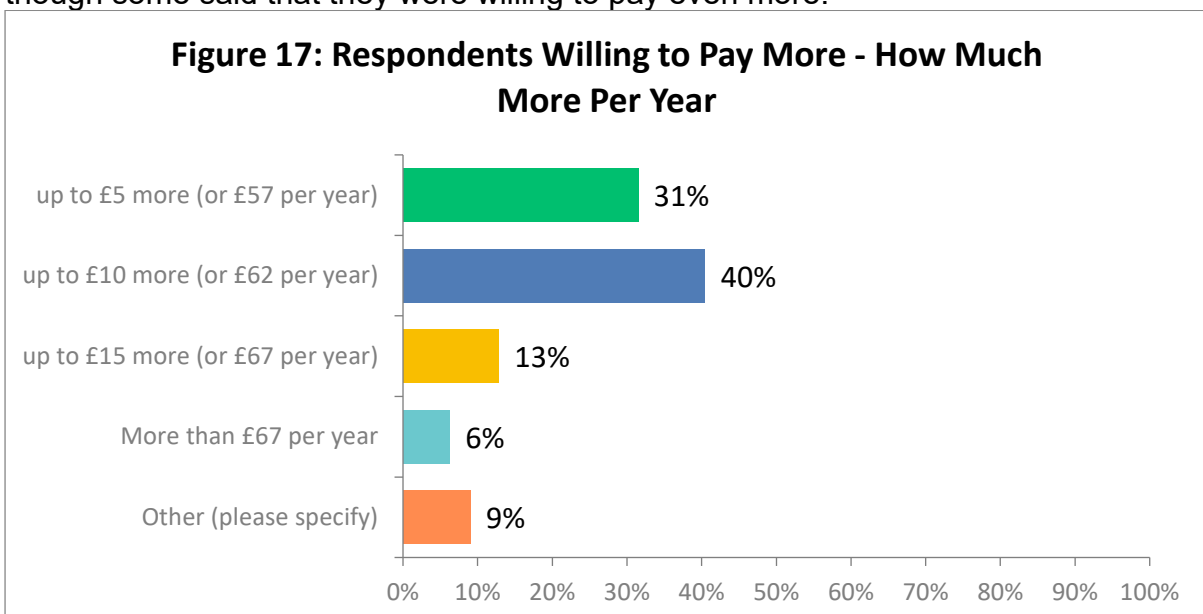
Sundays are clearly the preference for HRC opening days, followed closely by Saturdays and Mondays. Thursdays and Fridays are the days that respondents would find most acceptable for closure.

Paying Higher Charge to Keep HRCs Open

Finally, respondents were asked whether they would be willing to pay a bit more than the proposed £52 per year if it meant that none of the HRCs would need to close. The majority of respondents said that they would not consider this (58%), but a quarter of respondents (4,120) said that they would (**see Figure 16**).



Of the just over 4,000 respondents saying they would pay more per year, most were willing to pay up to £5 or £10 more to help keep the HRCs open (**see Figure 17**), though some said that they were willing to pay even more.



Around 9% of those who said they would be willing to pay more replied with “other” to this question, with the most common responses being that they would pay a bit more than £67 but under £100, others saying they would be willing to pay up to £100, and some saying that their willingness to pay would be dependent on the circumstances, such as whether their local HRC stayed open.

Ranking of HRC Proposals

Overall, respondents were asked to rank their preferences for the different options being considered around the HRCs to reduce costs. Given a choice between the three most likely options being considered by the Waste Management Service, respondents were asked to rank the options they most preferred for the council to make the necessary savings, and which they preferred least. The full results are displayed in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Ranking of HRC Options	
Option	Average Rank
Reducing the operating hours of all 5 HRCs in Shropshire instead of closing two centres permanently	1.20
Closing two HRCs in Shropshire in accordance with the council's target to achieve £62m in savings	2.38
Pay a higher annual subscription for garden waste collection and keep all HRCs open seven days a week	2.42

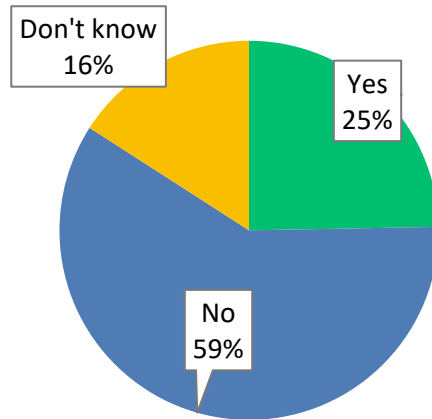
It is clear from the average ranking of the options in **Table 7** that most respondents prefer the council to make cost reductions by reducing the opening hours for HRCs, rather than closing any of the sites or raising the costs of green waste collection above £52 per year.

5 Booking System for HRCs

A further element of the green waste proposals that the public was asked to consider as part of the consultation was whether a booking system should be introduced to the use of the HRCs in the future. The reasoning for the proposal was that a booking system, which is operated at HRC sites in other local authority areas, would reduce waiting time and queues at sites, and enhance the customer experience as staff will have more time to help customers on site.

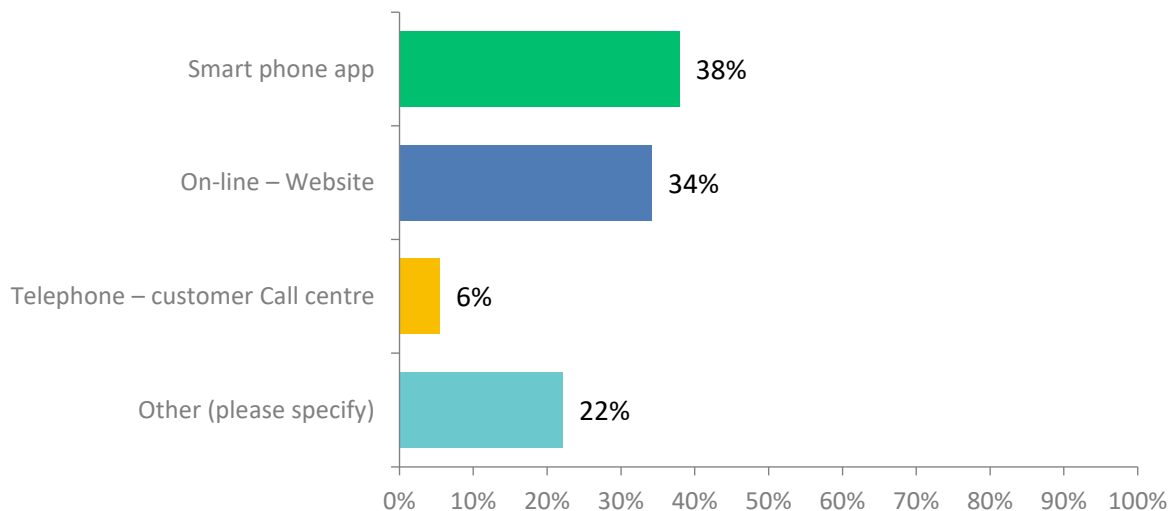
Respondents were first of all asked whether they would support the introduction of a booking system for HRC site use in Shropshire. **Figure 18** displays the full results. A majority of respondents (59%) said that they would not support the introduction of a booking system.

Figure 18: Support Introduction of Booking System



Regardless of how they answered the previous question about supporting a booking system, all respondents were asked how they would prefer to book a slot if a booking system were introduced, and 13,148 respondents answered this question (see **Figure 19** for results). The most popular options were using a smart phone app (supported by 38% of those answering this question, or 4,998 respondents) and through a website (supported by 34% or 4,504 respondents).

Figure 19: Preference for Method of Booking



22% of respondents answered this question with “other”. Most of these respondents used the space to explain they do not want to use a booking system, or to warn against the challenges of introducing an app, or the problems that a booking system would cause for digital exclusion. Other respondents used this space to suggest that a combination of methods for booking would be best, or to suggest other methods, such as text message bookings or the ability to book via 24/7 telephone access be made available.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments to explain their thoughts about the introduction of a booking system for HRC site use. These comments were grouped thematically and the themes are presented in **Table 8** with examples of anonymised comments below.

Table 8. Themes – Booking System Comments	Count	%
Too much hassle to use a system/can't always plan ahead	270	36%
Not necessary/no queues/not applicable	171	23%
Booking would be counterproductive/waste money	111	15%
Would favour system if it was convenient/worked	95	13%
Booking system is digitally exclusive	35	5%
Booking system generally a bad idea	34	5%
General negative comments about Shropshire Council	18	2%
Other	9	1%

The most common theme among the comments on the introduction of a booking system was that using a system would **introduce too much hassle** into going to an HRC to dispose of waste or recycle. Many respondents argued that planning ahead is not always possible, so they would prefer to wait in a queue than have to do so. For example:

- “I think it's good that you can just turn up with your rubbish if it's busy you can wait or go again, I think booking a slot would be too much hassle.”
- “I want to be able to go when I want. It's a long way and if it is rainy or good weather, lots to take into account.”
- “I work full time and can only get to the centre at the weekend, as would a lot of people and I wouldn't be able to get an appointment.”
- “Inconvenient and end up in a telephone queue or if the slot is missed, then miss your chance. Again, another anxiety for elderly and vulnerable.”
- “It's hard enough for logistically for me to get there already without an additional booking system.”
- “I combine journeys into Shrewsbury for other reasons with dropping off recycling (to reduce car journeys) a booking system make this more complicated.”

Another common theme among respondents answering this question was that **booking is unnecessary**, as they rarely experience queues when visiting their local HRC. For example:

- “It is very rare that there is any unacceptable waiting time.”
- “It's difficult to stick to times with traffic etc. most people just accept they might have to queue.”
- “It's not busy enough to need an appointment.”
- “How ridiculous. Theres no need for this as the system works perfectly without it - it's just more red tape and inconvenience and will deter people from using the HRCs which is probably what the council want so they can close them. Just don't.”
- “There is never a queue now. People need to be encouraged to recycle and the requirement to book would only discourage people from recycling.”

Several respondents also used this opportunity to say that a booking system would be **counterproductive or a waste of money to implement**. For example:

- “I have experienced this in Wiltshire where I lived before - terrible. It is another disincentive to recycle. You need to make it easy for people to do this.”
- “I have no issues with the current mode of operation and you present no evidence regarding improved customer service and cost saving, The Council should not mandate the ownership of a smart phone to use its services, especially in a rural area where mobile coverage is poor.”
- “For goodness sake you are looking to save money - do not invest in another ICT system that needs buying / implementing / configuring / maintaining / refreshing you are just spending more and committing to more long term spend - get a grip.”
- “During Covid made no difference and probably wastes more money implementing it.”
- “Members of my family who live in areas where booking has been introduced find that the nett effect is to reduce the volume of waste recycled as the service is very inflexible and becomes a barrier to usage, with more waste that could be recycled going into the general waste bin.”

Another common theme was that some respondents would **favour a booking system**, with the caveat that it would need to work well. For example:

- “It would manage traffic and make better use of shorter opening times.”
- “I support it in theory, however would have concerns over how it would work practically.”
- “I support the introduction of a booking system, as long as it isn't used to restrict the number of visits each household can make to the HRC.”
- “I'd be happy to book but would prefer an option to drop in too.”
- “If booking helped to keep it open it is obviously a better way to go forward. Closing services helps no one in the community.”
- “If it can increase efficiencies and keep centres open then go for it.”
- “If it was quick and easy to book don't see a problem.”

Another important theme to emerge from these comments was the need to ensure that a booking **system did not contribute to or exacerbate digital exclusion** for the most vulnerable Shropshire residents. For example:

- “A booking system relies on people having a computer or a mobile.”
- “Average age is high in Shropshire so many people (50% over 65) do not have smart phone or internet access will lead to queues as people turn up early.”
- “Digital exclusion is still a major issue for many residents so this would be a prohibitive factor & unfair system. Your telephone contact availability is also very limited; just one hour per week (Monday 5-6pm) that is out of normal working hours is not satisfactory for a phone system. Residents should not be forced to have to plan their (often limited) free time to organise dates & times to deposit waste in an acceptable way. Busy working people will end up dumping rubbish because prime slots will probably be in high demand. I'm happy for Shropshire to ask residents for ID / be issued with a vehicle pass to prove they are residents eligible to use the site.”

6 Additional Feedback

Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were asked to provide any other comments they wished to make about the HRC proposals. Many respondents used this opportunity to emphasise previously made points that they felt strongly about. Some respondents used this space to make suggestions for what might be considered as alternatives to the proposals, such as charging for site visits as a means of generating income or introducing a resident ID pass scheme. These comments were once again tagged and grouped thematically, and the themes are presented in **Table 9** with examples given below.

Table 9. Themes – Comments on HRC Proposals	Count	%
HRCs must stay open (general)/vital service/too far to travel if they close	202	30%
Closing HRCs will cause more illegal disposal/be bad for environment	186	28%
Poor council planning/services/management/CT should cover	88	13%
Find another way to make savings (e.g. stop NWRR)	42	6%
Reduce hours if it keeps the centres open	42	6%
General comments of unhappiness/disgust	35	5%
Don't use/no need for booking system	25	4%
Alternative suggestions	17	3%
Charge for HRC use at visit	15	2%
Operate pass/permit system for HRCs	14	2%
Other	2	0.30%

The most common theme expressed in these open-ended comments was the **need for the HRCs to stay open**. For example:

- “All 3 sites facing closure cover large areas and populations....Why should any of us have such a valuable and well used facility removed?”
- “As Shropshire is a county with towns a distance apart, you cannot expect people to travel such a distance to the nearest facility, it is too far....An alternative to full closure of any HRC must be found.”
- “Don’t close any! It will cost more in the long run!”
- “Don't mess with what is probably one of the best things that the council does- charge for green waste yes- but don't muck around with anything else.”
- “HRC a vital local service which I use regularly. There would be no viable alternative, a 60 mile round trip would be absurd to recycle many items e.g. electrical appliances, large packaging material.”
- “HRC's allow people to dispose of waste easily where they know it will be disposed of properly and recycled if at all possible. They are an essential service if we are to become more sustainable.”
- “HRC's should be free, readily available and easily accessible to the public.”

Another very common theme was for respondents to re-emphasise their concerns that the proposals would **lead to increased fly-tipping and be otherwise bad for the environment**. For example:

- “I am convinced closures would lead to more fly tipping.”

- “The more difficult it becomes to dispose of household rubbish, the more it will be illegally dumped by irresponsible people and the more it will cost the council to clear it up.”
- “There is a danger that all the good messaging about recycling and responsibility towards the environment will be eroded as a result of charges, closures and other barriers. Fly tipping will increase as will general irresponsibility with disposal of waste. It is a disincentive.”
- “Will encourage fly tipping which is more costly on the long run and increase individuals carbon emissions.”
- “When we lived in [another local authority area], they reduced the opening of the HRC by two days. Within a couple of weeks "flytips" were pretty conspicuous. Also on the days they were open, they had long queues and often closed early because they were full, not a solution in anyone’s language.”

Many respondents also took the opportunity for open-ended comment to **express dissatisfaction with the council** and the fact that council tax has recently increased, while these plans are introducing proposed reductions in services. For example:

- “Yet another example of us paying more for less due to government policy of starving public services of funds whilst increasing taxes.”
- “You should have managed budgets appropriately and be accountable for these backward looking proposals. It is a disgrace.”
- “Shropshire council is simply passing the buck. Letting everyone down and trying to convince us this is the only way.”
- “Refuse collections are the most visible and obvious service that a council provides and should be free to use. The creeping taxation by another name is a hallmark of contemporary UK.”
- “My council tax has increased, yet I’m now hearing about my HRC being either closed or me being charged extra to keep it open.”

Other themes included requesting that the council **find savings elsewhere** (such as scrapping the North West Relief Road project), expressing disgust overall with the proposals, and suggesting that a booking system is a bad idea, and emphasising that **reduced hours for HRCs is preferable to closing any of the sites**.

A final set of themes centred around suggestions for alternatives to the proposals. These included suggestions that the council could **charge for HRC site visits** and suggesting that the council **operate a permit system** for HRCs, which could include a fee for use. For example:

- “You could always charge per load to the HRC at the gate.”
- “Make sure workmen using the HRC have permits and pay for them!”
- “Limit the amount of times people can visit.”
- “I feel we should pay for what we use. This will encourage us all to think about how much rubbish we are generating.”
- “Could charge to take to the centres. Different rates for size of vehicle.”
- “A local resident permit system is preferable to booking.”

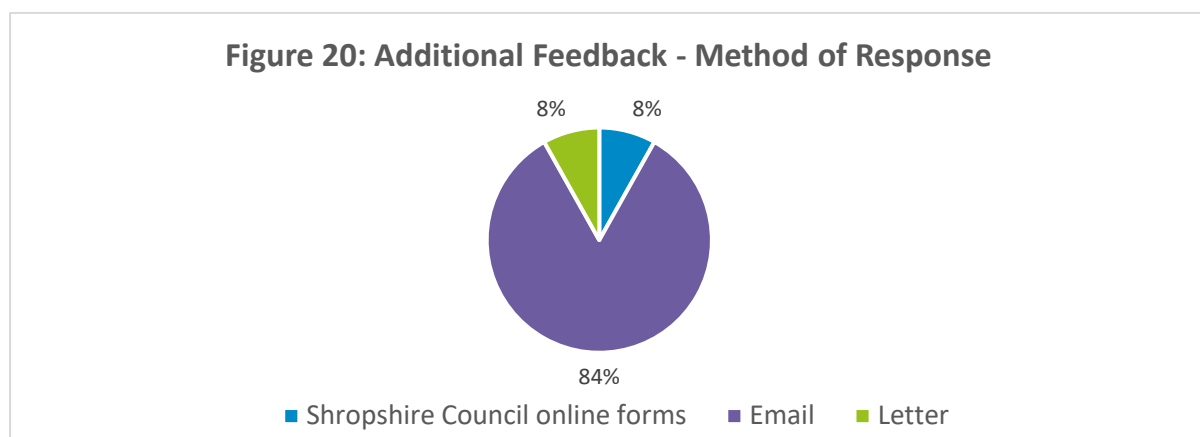
Some **other suggestions** also included having volunteers work at the centres, or reducing council tax rates for those who don't use them. Examples of alternative suggestions to the proposals for HRCs included:

- “Encourage town councils to provide a skip in their town one Saturday every month like Market Drayton town council used to.”
- “Cut down on the staff, I've been to Whitchurch and seen 3 workers all helping people unload their cars, if people can load up a car at home they can unload at the tip.”
- “Consult the on-site workers on ideas to raise revenue from the incoming materials, they are best placed to spot & commercialise opportunities or licence others to do so.”
- “Can you include paper and cardboard with metal and plastic in the purple bin to reduce council staff workload and get rid of the blue bags.”
- “Any measures introduced should be accompanied by greater promotion of ways that green waste can be retained at home or on allotments. Perhaps subsidised compost bins, etc.”
- “Give us an opt out proposal.”
- “Review the footfall at all recycling centres, reconsider how environmentally effective you are as a LA - other LAs use garden waste and food waste to create compost which they then sell to the consumer for profit to help bridge the gap in the monetary shortfall.”

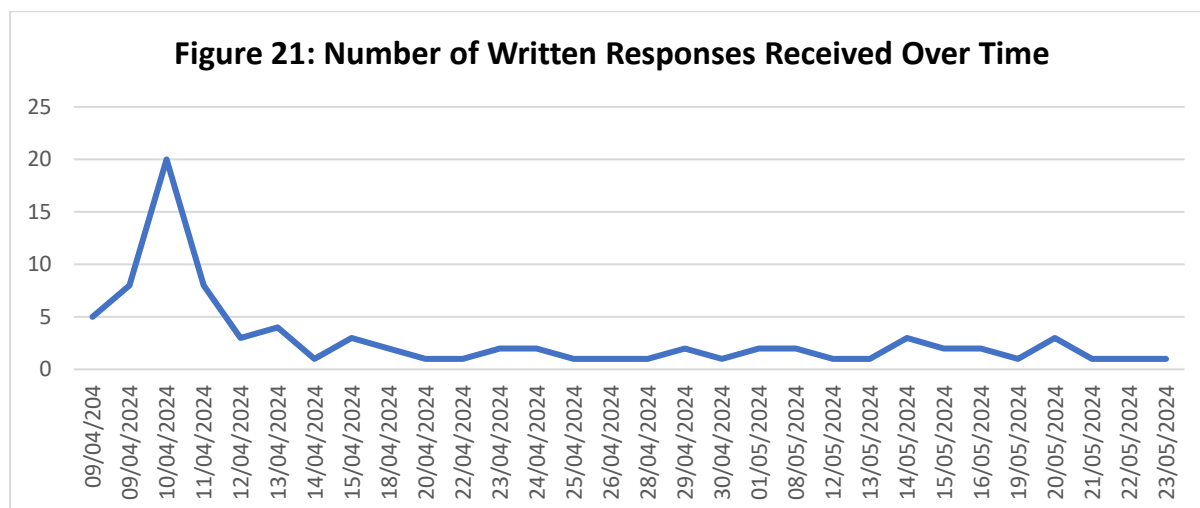
Other Forms of Additional Feedback

Shropshire Council recognises that online surveys can meet the needs of a majority but that other methods of response may be better for some; and can also allow more detailed comments. It is recognised that many of those who provide written responses also completed the online survey (many included a comment to confirm two responses). For this reason, the written consultation responses are analysed and presented separately and some overlap with the survey results should be taken into account within decision making. The responses covered both areas included within the consultation: HRCs and garden waste charging. Each response has been read in full and the key themes analysed and recorded. Results are presented below.

There were 86 written responses provided through the consultation, the majority were in the form of an email. There were 7 more formal letters and 7 respondents completed Shropshire Council online feedback forms. **Figure 20** displays the method of response used.



Many of the written consultation responses were received early in the consultation period, including a majority of emails. Many individuals responded to an invitation from Shropshire Council to participate in the consultation (those signed up to receive Waste related communications from Shropshire Council). **Figure 21** illustrates that engagement through written responses continued through the consultation period.

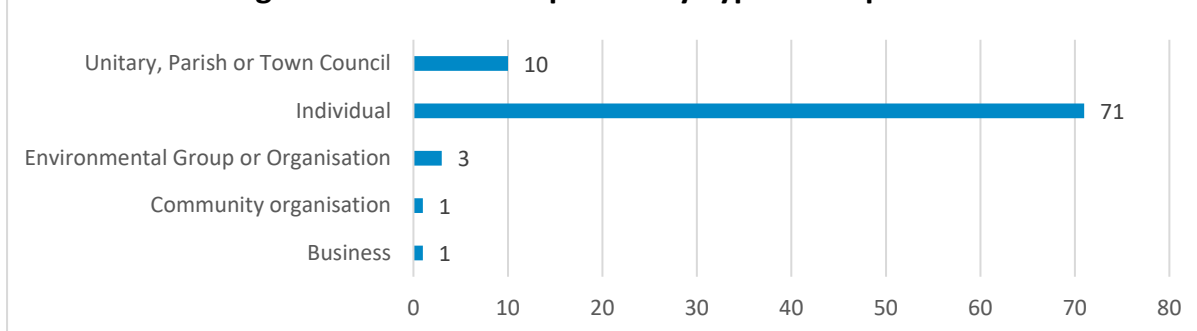


Particular thanks are provided to the organisations who took time to provide letters and more formal responses to the consultation. Many thanks are extended to:

- Ashford Bowdler Parish Council
- Ashford Carbonell Parish Council
- Caynham Parish Council
- Clun Town Council
- Craven Arms Town Council
- Oswestry Town Council
- Shifnal Town Council
- Stretton Climate Care
- Sustainable Bridgnorth
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Willey & District Village Hall
- Wistanstow Parish Council
- Zero Carbon Shropshire

Figure 22 below shows the breakdown of written responses by type. 82% were from individuals, 11.7% from unitary, town and parish councils (listed above) and 3.5% from local voluntary and community sector groups and organisations with an environmental focus. There was only one private sector/ business respondent.

Figure 22: Written Responses By Type of Respondent



Most written consultation responses presented a very clear view concerning the proposals set out within the consultation. Most covered a combination of issues related to potential closures of the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and garden waste charging. **Figure 23** displays the overall sentiment within the 86 written responses.

Figure 23: Overall Sentiment of Written Responses

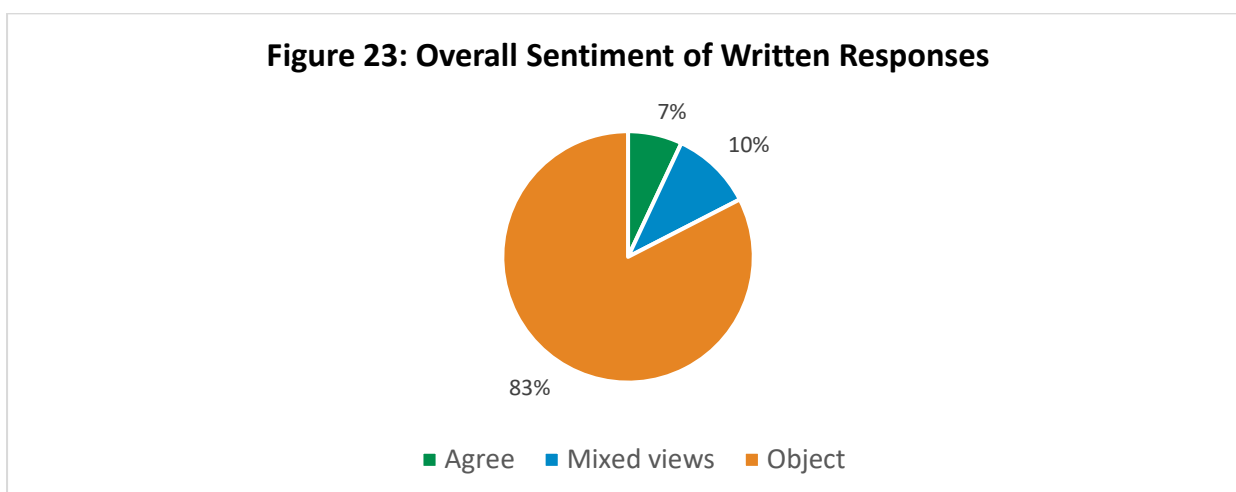


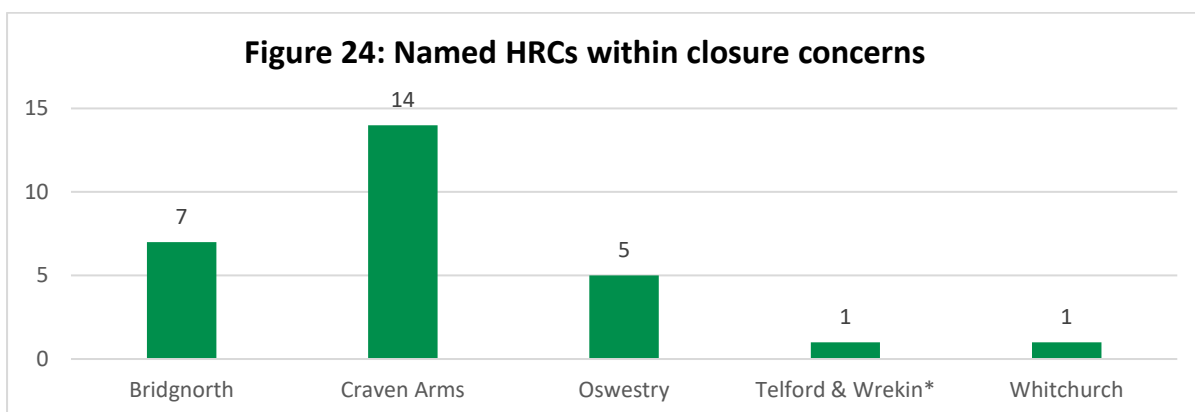
Table 10 below displays all of the themes included in the written responses (by a count of the number of times the issue was mentioned).

Table 10. Themes Identified in Written Responses	Count	% of total respondents
Fly-tipping	45	52
HRC closure	40	47
Travel and reduced accessibility	26	30
Council tax increased enough/ council tax not effectively used	21	24
Cost/ Affordability/impact low incomes	18	21
Concern approach will lead to increase in other costs	18	21
Reduction in recycling/ increase in general waste	18	21
Environmental impact concerns	16	19
Policy concerns (often suggesting alternatives)	15	17
Concerns about council financial mismanagement/ political views	13	15
Importance of encouraging climate aware behaviours	4	5
Impact of suspension of food waste collections	4	5
Increase demand at other sites/ out of county sites	4	5
Other priorities e.g. roads	4	5

Eligibility for non-Shropshire residents	3	3
Reduce transportation of garden waste	2	2
Increase in bonfires and fumes	1	1
Lack of information about which HRCs may close	1	1
Concern that people stop maintaining gardens	1	1
Reduce volumes of waste/ demand	1	1
Feedback - Current limited opening hours at HRC	1	1
Feedback - Object to policy re vans at HRCs	1	1
Feedback - Absence of help at collection centres	1	1

The remaining paragraphs in this section cover the issues relating to Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). It is recognised that there is some overlap and readers are encouraged to view the Garden Waste Charging consultation report (published with this report) for more detail and to explore the other themes raised through the consultation.

47 of the 86 respondents using email, letter or online form, wrote about their concerns related to the closure of HRCs (47% of the written responses). 28 of the 86 respondents explained that their comments were specifically related to their local HRC. **Figure 24** shows which HRCs concerns related to. It is important to stress that this does not reflect the full situation and some of the written responses referenced local petitions underway. These petitions will be formally presented to Shropshire Council and considered as part of the formal democratic process and linked to the consultation. The results from the written responses suggest that concerns relating to the closure of the Craven Arms site were mentioned most frequently followed by Bridgnorth and Oswestry.



*Telford and Wrekin HRCs were mentioned to the potential impact of Shropshire HRC closures and not because they are at risk of closure themselves.

Example extracts of the 47 comments concerned about HRC closure are shown below. Some comments are too long to be presented in full but key points are shown to illustrate the feedback received.

- "...please keep recycling centres open."
- "Instead of closure would it not be better to have restricted opening times say Friday Saturday and Sunday, that would satisfy all, a reduction in expenditure and availability for those in the hinterland."

- "It's less than a year since the Government announced the abolition of charges to dispose of DIY waste at household waste recycling centres. The thrust of this measure was to tackle fly-tipping and waste crime, which is estimated to cost the economy £924m per year in England. Yet Shropshire Council, in its wisdom, in identifying a method of bypassing this abolition, is considering closing two of the five recycling centres as a means of reducing its budgetary deficit. I respectfully suggest that this is vandalism, verging on lunacy. Negative actions have negative consequences."
- "I know that the council is strapped for cash. But I don't feel that closing one or two of the refuse centres in Shropshire is a bright idea. People are also feeling the pinch and also have to budget and forgo necessities. While I don't use the Recycling depo very much - I do use it when necessary but would not want to spend money for petrol just to take a few items to the tip miles away when I can include the visit in my local shopping schedule. As it is, I normally only put my green waste bin out once a month - as a pensioner I appreciate the collection even though I have just a small area of garden. I would consider paying £25.00 per annum for a once a month collection. My green bin is very rarely full to the brim."
- "I have just completed the on-line survey about the potential closure of household waste sites and the suggestion for charging more to collect garden waste. I would like to make the following additional comments: A) The whole system of disposal of waste should be improved and not reduced – it is an essential local service. B) The system for separating recyclable waste from general waste (i.e. that destined for landfill sites) should be improved. C) Local communities should be encouraged and educated more about how both to improve the separation of their waste and to reduce the amount of waste they produced. D) Residents and communities should consider more ways to compost their own waste. E) There should be more local town and village facilities to dispose of glass, plastic and paper/cardboard – perhaps being organised in part by local community groups. F) Residents and Communities need to be made more aware of the need to reduce potential waste, and that the efficient disposal and recycling of waste is an important aspect of tackling climate change. G) GIVEN THE ABOVE POINTS: I AM AGAINST ANY CLOSURE OF SITES AND REDUCTION IN THE SERVICES. Any reduction in services would result in an unacceptable rise in roadside fly tipping, potentially damaging to SSIs & AONB, and incur extra cost of clearing up that would be involved..."
- "...Closing recycling centres would prove even more disastrous. Should Craven Arms recycling Centre be closed, I, for one, would be required to take a minimum 50-mile round trip to dispose of rubbish and non-collectable recycling. Put simply, very few residents would be prepared to go to such lengths and, consequently, will inevitably be compelled to consider alternative means of disposal, legal or otherwise."
- "I think it would be absolute folly to close Craven Arms recycling and waste centre. It is well used and a vital part of Shropshire's recycling programme. It is surely a nonsense to think that requiring people to get into their cars and drive a 50 mile round trip to use facilities such as are available at Craven Arms is in any way sustainable or a good idea."
- "The proposal to close the recycling centre at Craven Arms is utterly ludicrous. The Ludlow centre already closed a few years ago and we now have to make a 24 mile round trip to Craven Arms which is always busy by the way. How

environmentally friendly is that? Where do you expect us to go to? There will be fly tipping everywhere as if it isn't bad enough as it is."

- "Please do not close Oswestry recycling centre down or we will have to drive 20 miles or so to the nearest one. I propose you make people pay a charge at the recycling centres of £1 to come in and use the facilities every time you come in as it would cost £10 to travel back and to until you get to the next recycling centre in Shrewsbury in petrol or diesel, I think that way you will be able to keep the recycling centre open."
- ".....The centres should more correctly be referred to as ""waste management centres"", providing a vital service, and to which members of the public bring items of waste in their own time and at their own expense.....The Oswestry centre, which I visit frequently (most recently yesterday), at least weekly, is very well-used. Closure would mean:
 - o Long and unnecessary journeys for the public.
 - o More recyclable items placed in general waste.
 - o Fly tipping and associated costs.
 - o More bonfires and inevitably, irritating and in some cases, toxic fumes."

As **Table 10** shows, there were many other themes within the comments that are linked to the proposed/potential closure of HRCs including:

- Fly-tipping and concerns that HRC closures could increase costs elsewhere
- travel and reduced accessibility
- concerns about the impact on out of area/neighbouring HRCs
- general policy concerns

A few example comments for each of these topics are included below.

Fly-tipping

- "Please do not close any recycling centres, this will only encourage people to fly tip in the countryside."
- "...Look what happened when people were charged to drop certain things off at the tip or if specific vehicles were used...fly tipping! We certainly don't need that...."
- "...it would also lead to more fly tipping which would not only cause distress and cost to landowners, the council would have additional costs in removing rubbish from public areas."
- "We read with dismay that Shropshire council is considering closing this key site in South Shropshire. In an age where recycling has been much promoted and encouraged to alleviate the problems caused by our 'throwaway society' and often ridiculously high levels of packaging, closure of the recycling centre is going to be very much a backward step. It is very unlikely the residents of Craven Arms, Ludlow and the surrounding districts are going to travel to the next nearest site, which for many would be at least 20 miles away. For the residents of Ashford Bowdler it is already a 25 mile round trip to the Craven Arms site but if the nearest site were Bridgnorth that would mean a 45 mile round trip, on much less hospitable roads, taking almost 2hrs including time at the site, plus cost of extra petrol and more pollution. Closure of any of the sites will lead to more small recyclable items being put in the black bin with the general waste and more fly-tipping of the larger items on laybys and quiet country lanes. As a small village which has several of such places, there is already a problem with litter, old tyres

and occasional kitchen appliances being dumped. WE DO NOT WANT ANY MORE.”

- “Surely charging for green waste bin service is a counter-productive move as the cost of fly tipping will almost certainly increase.”
- “You are accidentally returning us to a world where fly-tipping is normal. Start acting like a council and actually protect services, rather than slashing them.”

HRC closures could increase costs elsewhere

- “If the closure of the recycle centres went ahead waste would start appearing all over what is a very clean county. Then the council would have a lot of clearing up to do?”
- “The carbon emissions from the County could notably increase as a result of additional vehicle movements from thousands of HRC users.”
- “As closure of a site is unlikely to result in a reduction of what the public deems waste, savings in one place will be offset by increased costs in another. In summary, it's very hard to believe that a saving of £62 million is anything other than an illusion, unless the Council is currently being fleeced.”
- “There is likely to be a much larger saving to the Council for refuse collection if proper attention is paid to these types of ‘demand side’ issues...If the present contract does not reflect this imperative, then it is not congruent with the Council’s declared Climate Emergency and should be re-structured. ZCS would welcome the opportunity to engage more constructively with yourselves to move towards a refuse collection system that properly incentivises climate-aware behaviour by all stakeholders and treated the system as an end-to-end process, not just one of collection and costs.”

Travel and reduced accessibility

- “Whitchurch Centre has about 2700 vehicle visits per week from its catchment area, which is validated by a recent click-check at the gate. Assuming with a Closure that only 50% decide to go to Shrewsbury; the rest finding other means of disposal, go less frequently, share with others, or simply fly-tip, with all its costs of clearance. The round trip to Shrewsbury is about 40 miles, and car operating costs assessed by the RAC and others, for a medium car, run at about 50p per mile. Excluding the hour or so of the driver and the queuing in Shrewsbury, the cost of the journey to the car owner will be £20. With 1350 trips per week the enforced weekly cost in loss of spending power to the catchment area of Whitchurch Centre is £27,000, or annually £1,350,000.....There would also be an environmental impact due to the additional vehicle mileage forced on to the community, of 54,000 miles per week, or 2,700,000 miles per annum.”
- “I am writing to express my concern at the potential closure of Craven Arms HRC. It would be my strong preference that Craven Arms HRC does not close. For residents of the surrounding area (for example, we own a home in Church Stretton), the journey to an alternative HRC would be prohibitive: Shrewsbury is approximately 20 miles, as is Bridgnorth, and Telford even further....”
- “I am a member of the public and have lived near Bridgnorth since 1993 when our local recycling centre was in Barnsley Lane which is approximately 10 minutes from my house. The current HRC is another 5 minutes along the A458 and I use it every week/fortnight. For that reason I do not want you to recommend its closure.”

- “It would appear that those market towns outside the periphery of the main county town are being penalised for their rurality. Not only will it be further for those living outside Shrewsbury to take their unwanted items this would also encourage fly tipping....”
- “It will be interesting to see the results of your consultation process but I sense that the decision to close two HRCs has already been made based on your comments. Quite what counts as 'reasonably accessible' is debatable i.e. is it reasonable to have to travel an hour to go to the tip? Basing it on population will by definition favour the larger towns...”

Concerns about the impact on out of area/neighbouring HRCs

- “...total closure of Oswestry would be a disaster considering how large an area it covers, and now that the Welsh centres, at say Plas Madoc, will no longer accept waste from across the border.”
- “The council is suggesting a booking system for use of HRCs. Although this will be inconvenient for some, it will stop people from outside the area bring their waste and recycling here. Telford & Wrekin council is already talking about charging Shropshire residents if they use its HRCs. Worcestershire already insists that users of its HRCs live in the county. Waste from outside the county should be banned from Shropshire’s HRCs unless a reciprocity agreement can be reached under the Marches Forward Partnership.”
- “The Whitchurch catchment area of existing users extends from Ellesmere in the West to Market Drayton in the East, and Malpas in the North to below Wem in the South. Malpas is in Cheshire...”
- “...the proposed reduction in household recycling provision will divert more Shropshire Council residents to use Telford & Wrekin Council facilities which in turn will increase demand...”

General policy concerns

- “...a restructure of the current brown bin service (e.g. less frequent collections in winter) should be considered ahead of the introduction of a charge. The introduction of a charge and its ongoing maintenance also comes at a cost.”
- “The existing provision is good, well used and well managed. The council believe that a waste minimisation / reduction strategy needs to take priority and a focus on this would have significant cost benefits in the long run.”

Some of the comments mentioning concerns about policy were in relation to green waste (please see the Garden Waste Charging Consultation Report for further details).

There were also a few themes only mentioned once, linked to HRCs including:

- Feedback that HRC opening hours shouldn't be limited (and allow working people access).
- Feedback about vehicle height preventing some vans.
- Feedback that more help could be provided for people less able to lift waste at HRCs.
- A request for detail over which HRCs could close.

44 of the 86 written responses included suggestions. The full summary of themes

from those suggestions is included in **Table 11**.

Table 11. Alternative Suggestions	Count	%
Reduced opening days/hours	8	18
Option to pay for part of the year/ Don't collect Winter months	6	14
Reduce number/frequency of collections to reduce costs	5	11
Repair and recycling and up-cycling centres/ Sell waste/compost/biochar	5	11
Smaller community-led composting/recycling sites/ reduce transportation	4	9
Encourage behavioural change - how people compost and reduce waste	4	9
Charging proportionate to size of garden	3	7
Spread cost reductions across centres to remain open	2	5
Fees at HRCs greater for commercial users	2	5
Charges for non-residents	1	2
Make saving elsewhere e.g. Street Lighting	1	2
Allow food waste with garden waste until food collection introduced	1	2
Re-introduce hedge cutting, grass cutting etc. for safety.	1	2
Make agreement with out of area for Shropshire use e.g. Halesfield	1	2

As **Table 11** shows, a number of the suggestions relate to HRCs. A sub-theme within many comments was the suggestion that alternative options need to be considered to spread impact rather than close 2 HRCs.

- 8 responses suggested that, rather than close any HRCs there should be a **reduction in opening days/hours across all sites** to reduce the impact within rural communities (2 comments specifically referred to spreading cuts).
- 5 responses suggested **new functions at HRCs** increasing recycling/re-use and opportunities to sell waste such as compost and biochar.
- 4 responses promoted the idea of small local **community composting** and recycling centres.
- 1 suggested **fees** for non-residents and 2 suggested fees for commercial users.

Some example **suggestions** are included below:

- "In an attempt to be constructive in the search for savings, I could accept a reduction in opening days for each HRC (to be fair this should be across the Council's area) as long as a genuine saving was made. I do not think that a booking system would be practically or financially beneficial. Has any financial analysis of that reduction in opening days/times been prepared and if so what were the results? Have you considered a charging system for the use of HRC's? I suspect that residents from other areas use these HRC's so could you introduce a postcode or council tax identity system to charge a fee for each visit by commercial users and non-residents who should pay more, but get local residents to pay something too. I have not seen any such suggestion, has this been considered? Has any survey been undertaken of how each HRC is used, to assess which days are the most popular, which HRCs are used the most etc? If so where is that information so that we can all see it?"
- "£52 a year would be perfectly acceptable, as would a permit scheme if it meant limiting people from outside the area using the facility (We live in Bucknell which I

would count as 'inside the area'). Opening times are currently very generous, a slight reduction would be acceptable if well publicised. I hope you are able to find a way forward which doesn't include closure of these facilities.”

- “Instead of closure would it not be better to have restricted opening times say Friday Saturday and Sunday, that would satisfy all, a reduction in expenditure and availability for those in the hinterland.”
- “The cost reduction target should be shared evenly across all five Centres.”
- “We support a charge of £60 [for garden waste] a year if this generates sufficient funds to maintain the five HRC’s.”
- “I feel it would be better if you could find another solution such as; selling some of the compost you have made, and also open up your plant green centre and sell some of the flowers to the public.”
- “Maybe revenue could be generated by having perfectly good items brought to the tip / recycling centre available to buy...”
- “‘One man's waste is another man's restoration project!’ If visitors could purchase discarded items direct from the Household Waste Centres, the income raised could be set against the running costs. Either the folks at the Centres could agree a selling price on items set aside or they could be sold on a best offer basis. To save the hassle of cash handling, the Council could set up a separate (central?) account for electronic payment.”
- “The Food Hub and other groups are looking at developing some medium scale community composting sites. This would enable people to dispose of green waste safely and legally and with no added cost, which would reduce risk of fly tipping, huge queues at recycling centres or neglect of hedges etc. Perhaps SC would support this by providing suitable sites on unused council owned land? Or helping with initial set up?”
- “The HRCs should remain free of charge for residents of the area but introduce a fee for service option for non-residents and trades. The fees can be based on weight and type of material being disposed of. No charge for metals, electronics, electrical appliances, used paints and oils or solvents. Lower charges for green waste. Higher charges for general waste and construction materials. I believe increasing the scope of the HRCs would generate increased revenue for Shropshire Council.”

7 Summary and Conclusion

This report presents the findings of a public consultation on Shropshire Council’s proposals to introduce changes to the operation of HRCs in the county. The consultation aimed to gather feedback from residents and stakeholders on the current service, the potential impacts of the options being considered on Shropshire residents, and possible alternatives to the proposals.

Summary

The main findings of the report are as follows:

Respondents

- An unprecedented number of people responded to the Green Waste Proposals Consultation, with over 18,000 people (around 5% of the population

of Shropshire) taking part in the survey and/or writing a letter to the council having their say.

- Demographic analysis indicates that respondents were fairly representative of the population of Shropshire, with good participation from locations around the county, including rural areas, and participation among non-white ethnic groups was also proportionate to the demographics of the county.
- While the population of older people is higher in Shropshire than in the national average, still respondents aged 60-84 were overrepresented among respondents in this survey, possibly indicating a high level of salience for this topic among this group. Those who own their home outright or own their home with a mortgage and those who are in full time work or retired were also highly engaged with this survey.
- A large number of organisations, including town and parish councils, responded to the survey and/or directly to the council in writing to provide their views on the proposals.

Current HRC Use

- The vast majority of respondents (91%) said that they use their local HRC.
- Respondents using the Craven Arms, Shrewsbury, and Whitchurch sites typically have the longer drives, whereas those using the Oswestry site have typically shorter drives.
- Around 30% of respondents whose closest site was Bridgnorth said that they use their local HRC weekly or fortnightly, and around 25% of those using Craven Arms saying the same. In contrast, around 50% of those whose closest site was Shrewsbury said that they use it rarely.
- A majority of respondents said that they use their HRCs for disposing of bulky items (67%) or recycling items that are not collected kerbside (64%), though further analysis of those indicating they use the HRC for “other” disposal indicates that recycling items not collected kerbside is probably the most common reason for respondents using the sites.

Introducing Changes to HRCs

- A majority of respondents (61%) said that if their local HRC closed permanently they would put more into their household bins. This is slightly concerning, given that it was established above that most respondents seem to use their HRCs to dispose of items that cannot be collected kerbside.
- Just 21% said that they would take their waste to another site that is open. 32% of respondents said they don't know what they would do.
- When asked which alternative HRC they would be most likely to use should their local HRC close, most respondents indicated that Shrewsbury would be their second choice.
- Many respondents indicated that that would not know what to do with their waste, or that they would dispose of it in undesirable ways such as fly-tipping taking it to HRC sites outside of Shropshire for disposal.
- Most cited impacts from residents on the possibility of HRC closures was inconvenience, increased fly-tipping, negative environmental impacts and disadvantages to vulnerable residents.
- Were HRCs to stay open, but reduce hours, Sundays are the preference for HRC opening days, followed closely by Saturdays and Mondays. Thursdays

and Fridays are the days that respondents would find most acceptable for closure.

- A majority of respondents said they would not consider paying more than £52 per year for green waste collection in order to keep the HRCs open. Those who said they were willing to pay more were most likely to be willing to pay either £5 more per year (31%) or £10 more per year (40%).
- Overall, respondents prefer the option of reducing the hours of all 5 HRCs in Shropshire, rather than closing any of the centres permanently or paying a higher annual subscription.

Booking System for HRCs

- A majority of respondents (59%) do not support the introduction of a booking system for HRC use.
- A smart phone app (38%) and website (34%) were the most preferred methods for booking should a service be introduced.
- Many respondents objected to the introduction of a booking system because they feel it would overcomplicate things, make accessing the sites more difficult, cause issues with digital exclusion, or generally be unnecessary.
- Those residents who favoured a booking system indicated that they would only do so if booking was easy and saved the council time and money.

Additional Feedback/Suggestions

- Additional concerns expressed by survey respondents beyond those detailed above such as worries about travel times, costs and increased fly-tipping included frustrations with council management of services and finances.
- Many alternative suggestions to the proposals were offered both in the survey responses and in the letters to the council. These included introducing on-site charges for use of the HRCs, operating a permit system, charging businesses more for using the sites, and even encouraging local town and parish councils to invest in skip provision and removal.

Conclusion

The proposed changes to the green bin collection service and the HRC operation have generated a high level of interest and engagement from the residents of the council area, who have expressed their views and concerns through the online survey and written submissions. The majority of the respondents are opposed to the changes, mainly because of the potential negative impacts on the environment and households, particularly those with disabilities, mobility issues and those on low incomes. The consultation has also elicited a range of alternative suggestions and ideas for improving the waste management services and achieving the council's budget goals. The council will carefully consider all the feedback and suggestions received from the consultation before making a final decision on the proposed changes.

The consultation provided valuable insights and feedback from the residents and stakeholders, which will inform the decision-making about the proposed changes. Shropshire Council thanks all of the respondents for their unprecedented participation and contribution to the consultation and invites them to stay involved

and updated on the progress and outcomes of the changes by visiting the council's [2024/25 Budget Page](#)



June 2024

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