

Garden Waste Charging 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, included planning to introduce an annual subscription fee for the collection of garden waste from properties in the Shropshire Council area. Collecting garden waste isn't an essential service that councils must provide free of charge statutorily, and around 80% of English councils already charge for this service; many have been doing so for several years.

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. Shropshire Council is therefore also considering reducing the number of household recycling centres in the county or reducing their opening times.

This report analyses the results of a consultation on Green Waste proposals with a focus on the proposals regarding charging for garden waste collection and suspending food waste collection until April 2026.¹ The feedback analysed 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

¹ For a full analysis of the feedback on the changes to the Household Recycling Centres proposals, see the Feedback and Insight Team's separate report.

sample was selected of 1,700 responses,² and these were used to derive the 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 Garden Waste Disposal** details responses to questions around how residents currently dispose of their garden waste. This information can help decision-makers to gain a sense of current public use of the service.
- **Section 4: Introducing Charges for Garden Waste** details responses to questions around the proposed charges and how residents would respond to the introduction of a charge for their green waste, as well as the impacts that this change might have on residents.
- **Section 5: Suspending Food Waste Collections** includes responses to questions about current use of food waste collections through the garden waste bin, as well as detailing respondents’ sense of the impacts that suspending this collection until April 2026 would have.
- **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

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.

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.

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.

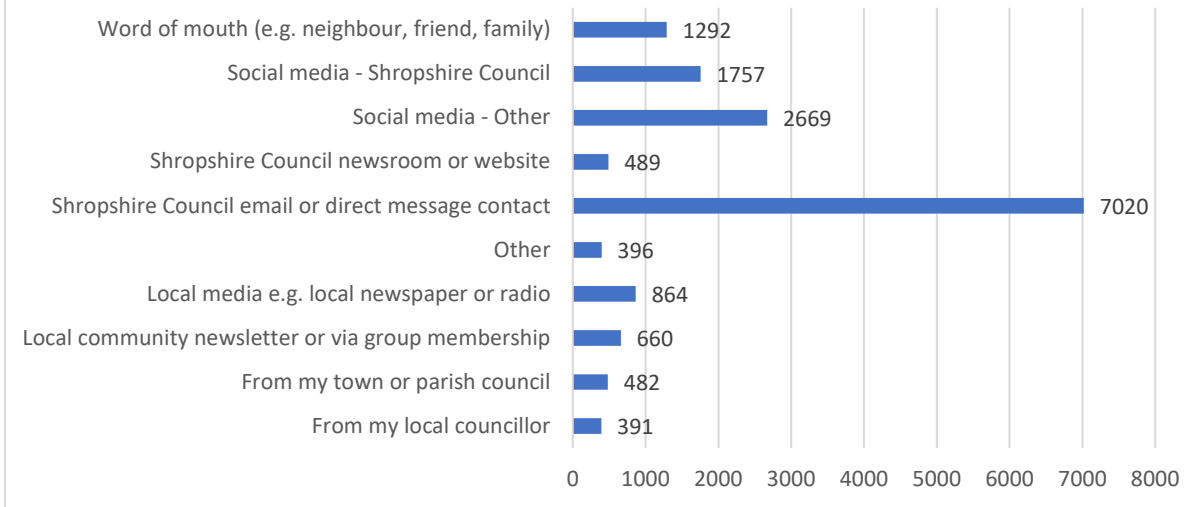
Many of the respondents provided information about themselves within the online survey. This is very valuable information. It provides an insight into a range of the characteristics and allows Shropshire Council and its decision makers to check that responses are balanced and representative of the population 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.

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

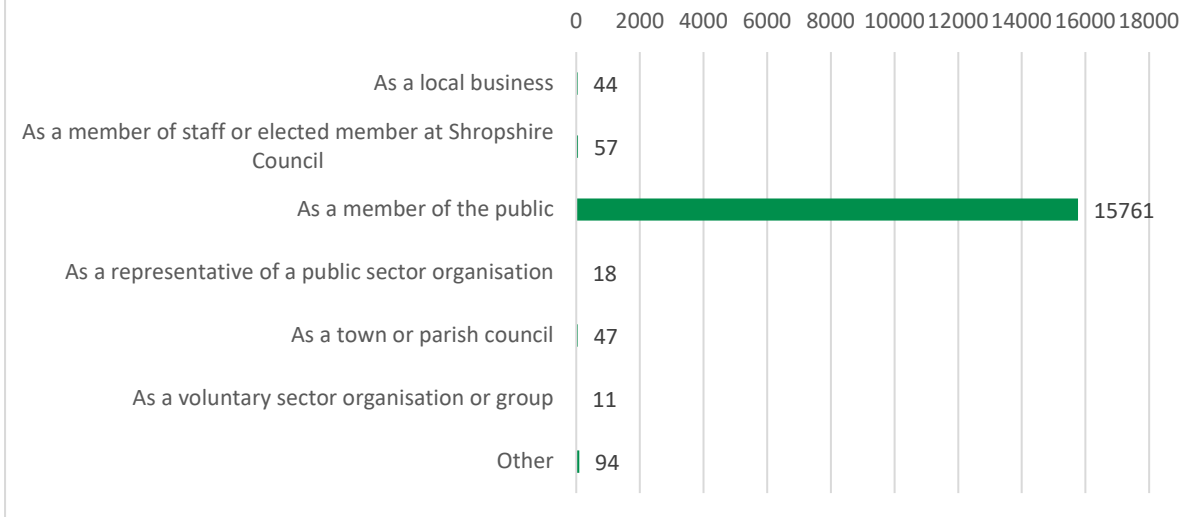
⁴ See [current population statistics on the Shropshire Council website](#).

Figure 1: Sources of Information About the consultation



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%).

Figure 2. Consultation Respondents by Type

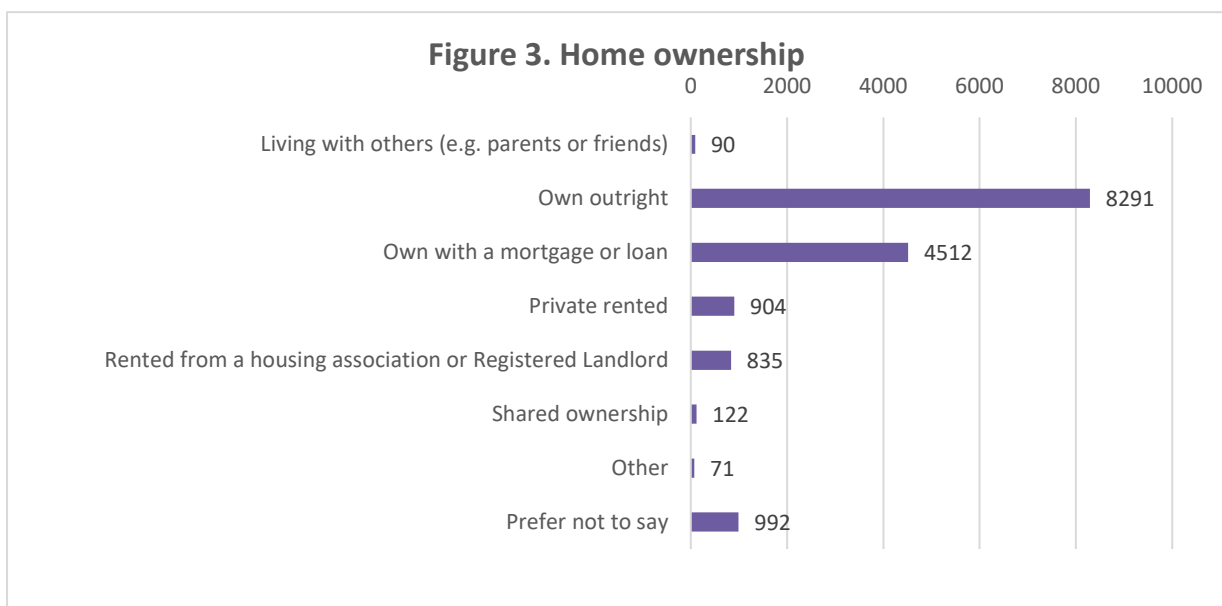


In order to check that the survey sample was representative across Shropshire’s geographical communities (rather than communities with shared characteristics or interests) respondents were asked for their nearest large town within the county. **Table 1** below shows the spread across Shropshire. 15,798 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.

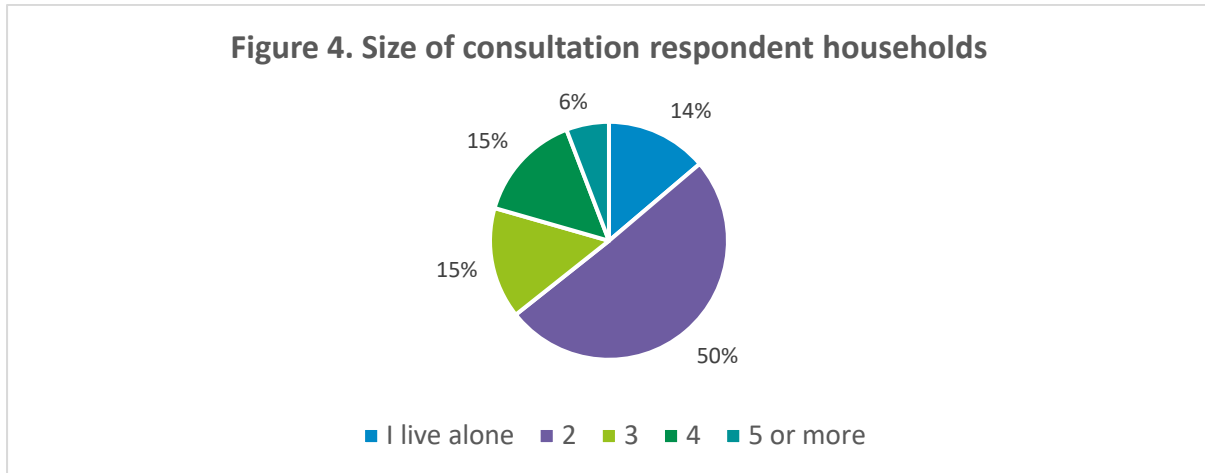
Table 1. Nearest Shropshire Town	Count	%
Bishops Castle	290	1.8
Bridgnorth	2289	14.5
Broseley	259	1.6
Church Stretton	592	3.7
Cleobury Mortimer	248	1.6
Clun	177	1.1
Craven Arms	613	3.9
Ellesmere	484	3.1
Ludlow	979	6.2
Market Drayton	919	5.8
Much Wenlock	244	1.5
Oswestry	2105	13.3
Shifnal	650	4.1
Shrewsbury	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.

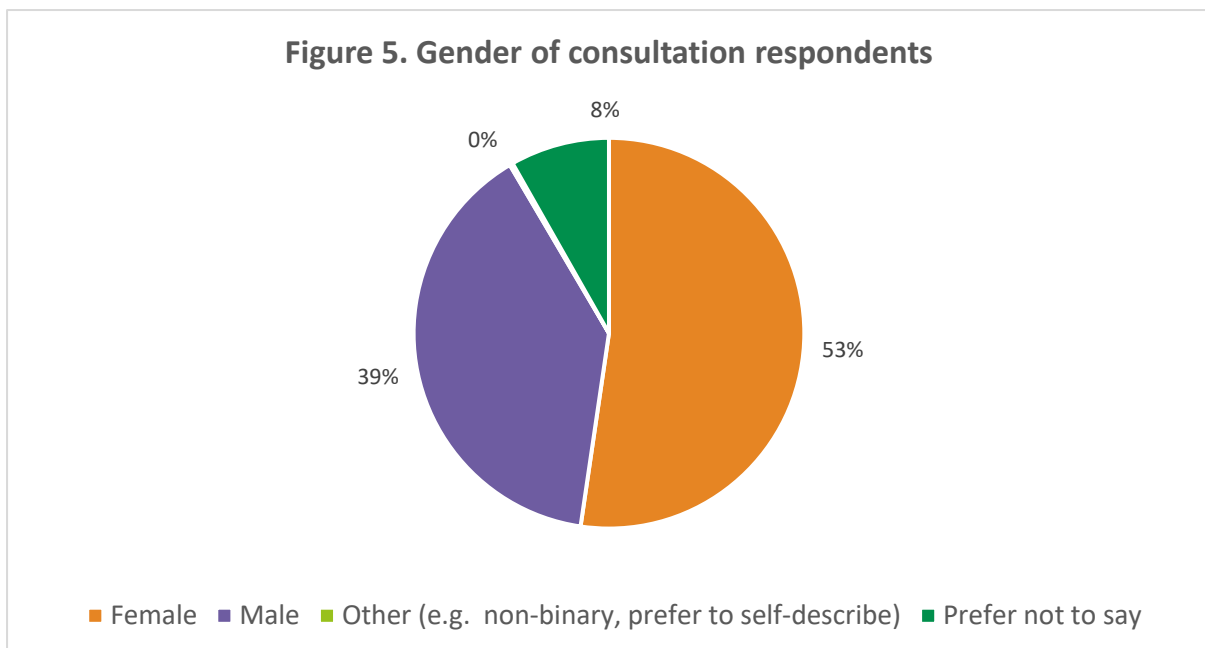


When considering waste collection, size of household is also an important factor within considerations, and this was the next question asked within the survey. **Figure 4** illustrates that there are more 2 person households than any other type within the survey sample.



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.



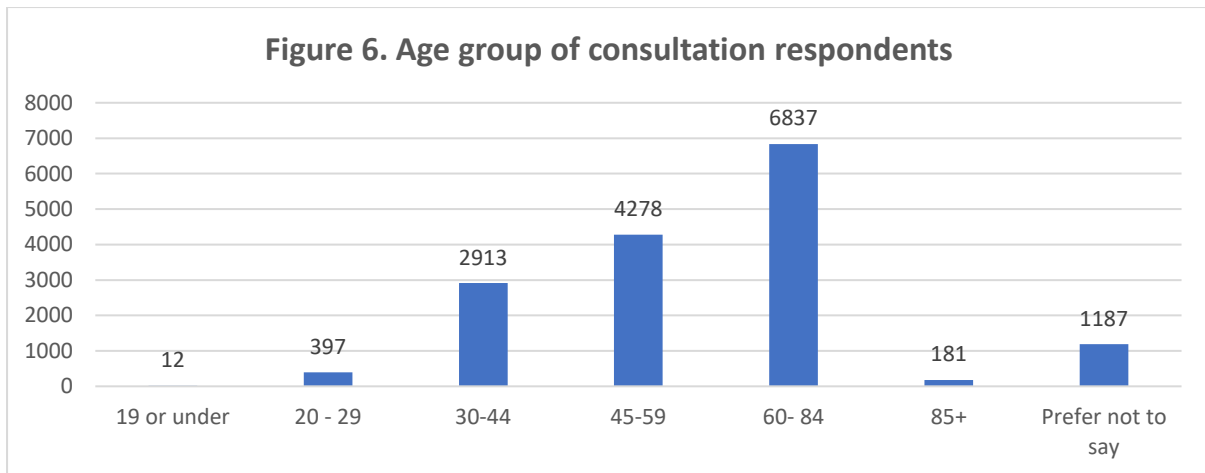
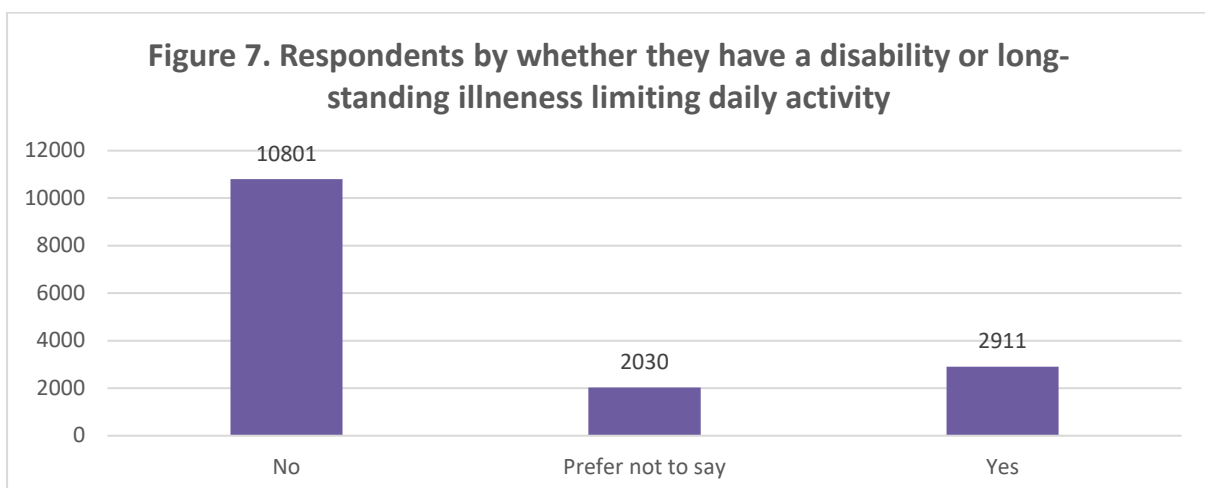


Figure 6 highlights that there were more 60-84 year old survey respondents than any other age group (43.3%). **This is a significant proportion and should be considered as context to the feedback received.** The second top age group are 45 to 59 year olds at 27.2%. There were only 12 responses from those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

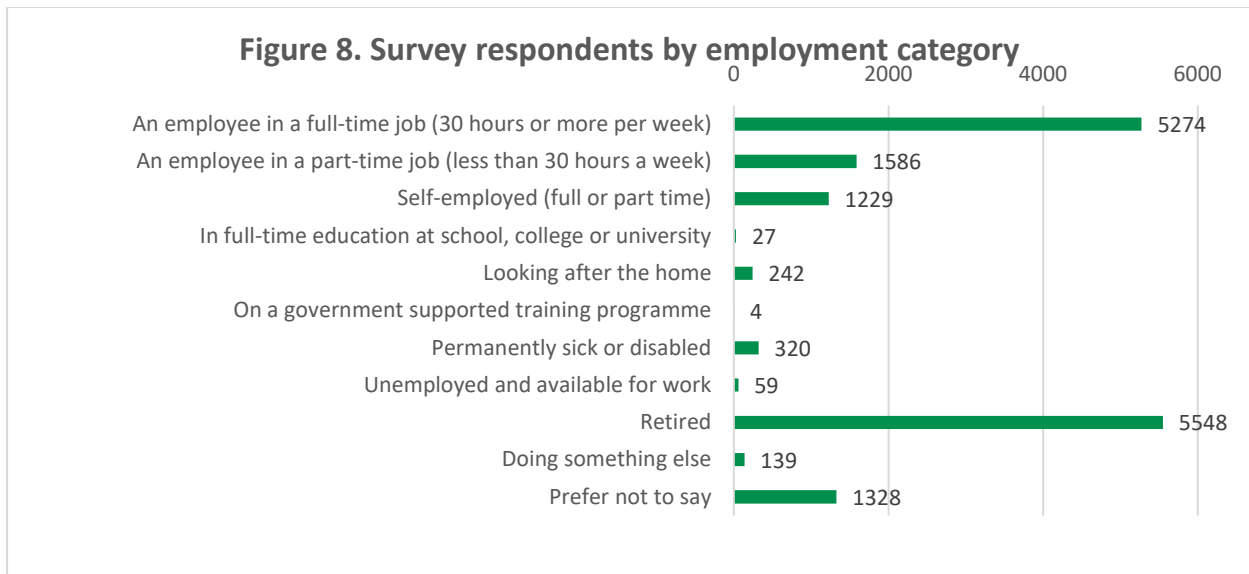


Shropshire Council includes ethnicity questions in its surveys and consultations to consider whether people of a non-White British background are represented. **Table 2** displays the results. Encouragingly there was some diversity within the feedback, helped by the larger sample size, with 87.8% respondents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

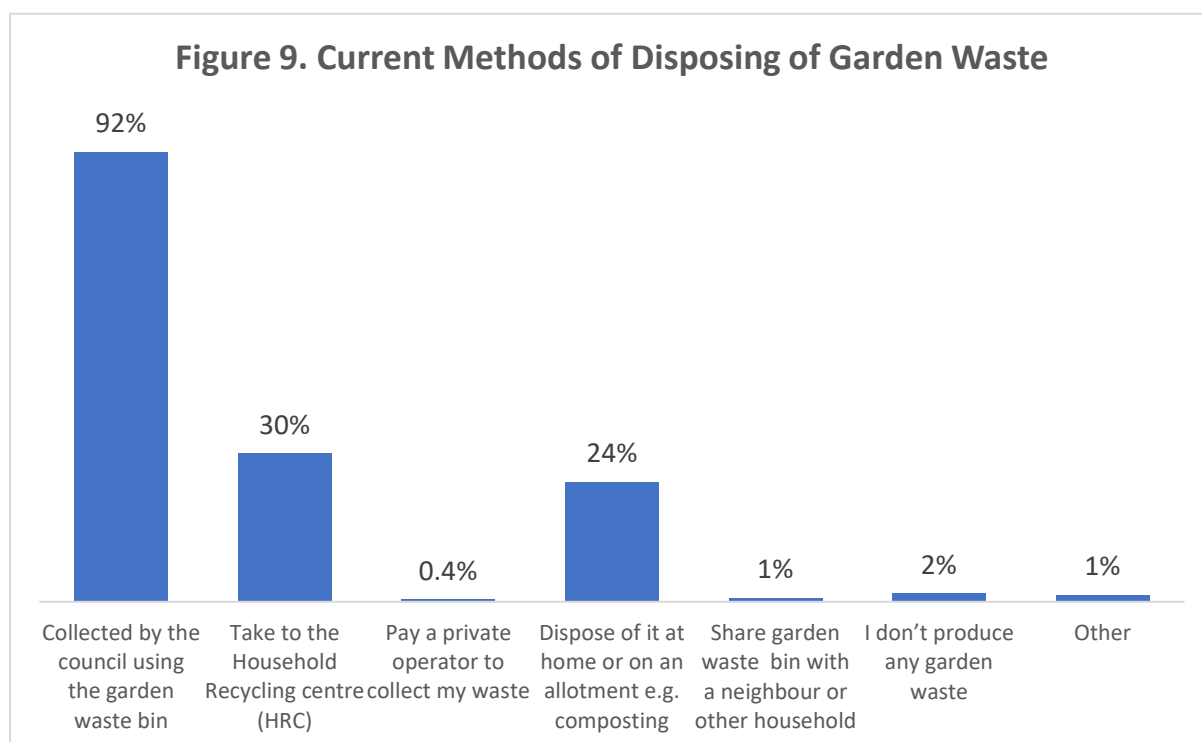
- “Diversity, equality and inclusion should be placed into the grey bin. Get some common sense!”
- “Please do stop this 'wokeness', it adds no value to our lives and costs serious money for no good reason.”
- “Really what a ridiculous question. Diversity!”

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 Garden Waste Disposal

An overwhelming majority (**99%**) of survey respondents reported that their property has a garden, with only 192 of the 17,783 respondents who answered this question saying that their property does not have a garden.

Respondents were given the opportunity to report how they currently dispose of their garden waste, and respondents could choose multiple methods of disposal. See **Figure 9** for results. A large majority of respondents (92%) noted that they use the garden waste disposal bin provided by the council, though large minorities also used Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) (30%) and composting (24%) to dispose of garden waste.

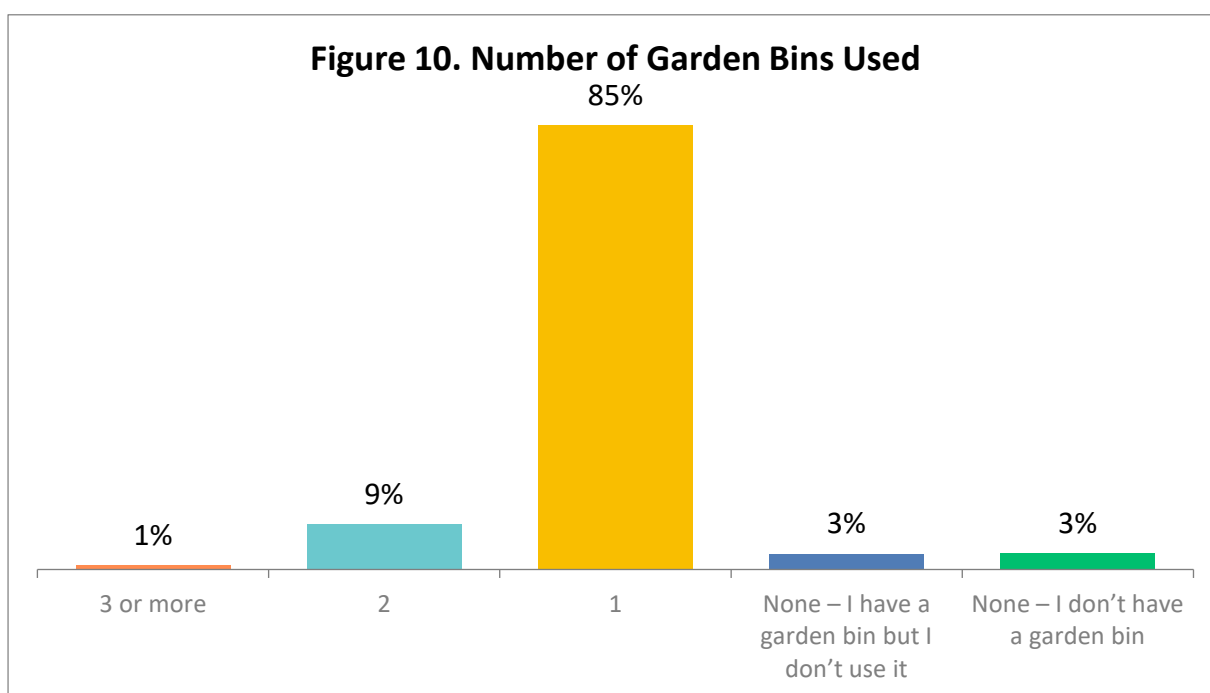


Some respondents indicated that they dispose of their garden waste in other ways. These open-ended responses were grouped thematically, and the themes are listed in **Table 4**, below. These responses indicate that other methods of disposing garden waste include at-home burning or other forms of on-site disposal such as farm middens, collection in multiple bins and using communal bins.

Table 4. Themes - 'Other' Garden Waste Disposal Methods	Count	%
Compost it/other at home disposal (e.g. farm midden)	118	25%
Council bin collection/more than one bin/bag collection	87	19%

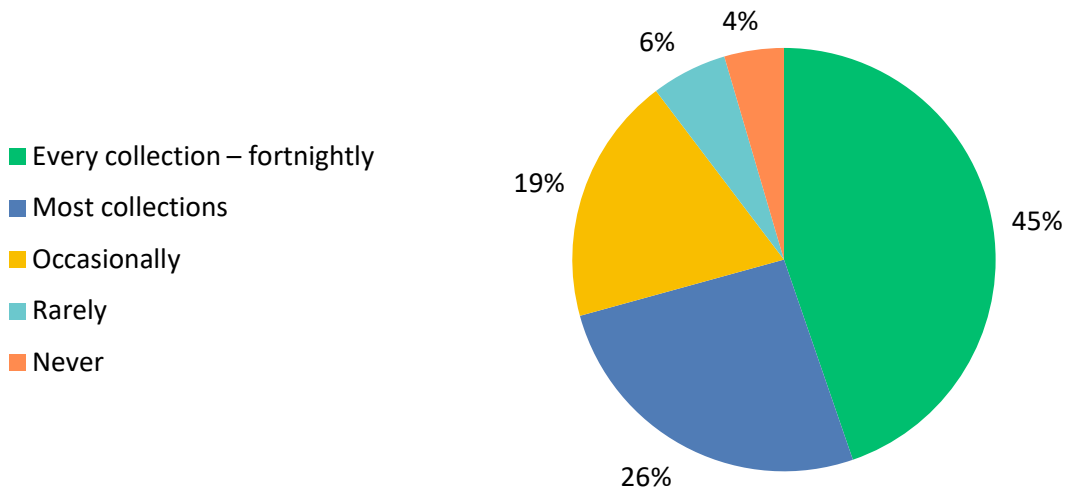
Very little/no waste/hardly ever put bin out	72	15%
Burn it	57	12%
Take it to recycling centre	51	11%
Pay for an additional green bin(s)	29	6%
Use neighbour's or communal bin/gardener takes away	20	4%
Bin also used for food waste	7	1%
Other	26	6%

When asked about the number of garden bins that they currently use, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they use 1 garden bin (**see Figure 10**). However, a little under 10% of respondents (1,535) use 2 garden bins.



While a majority of respondents do not put their garden bin out for every fortnightly collection, a large minority (44%) said that they do, and a further 26% of respondents said that they put their garden waste bin out most collections (**see Figure 11**). This indicates that a majority (71%) of respondents are frequent users of the garden waste collection service.

Figure 11. Frequency of Putting Bin Out for Collection



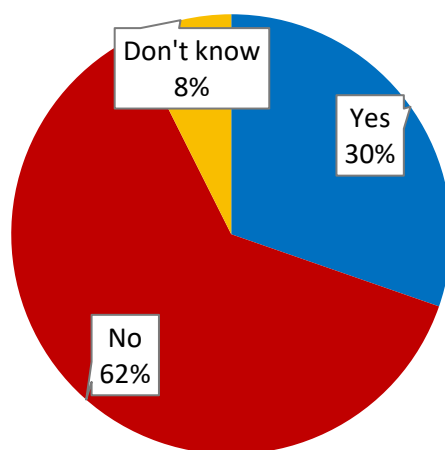
4 Introducing Charges for Garden Waste

Introducing a Charge

Respondents to the consultation were informed that Shropshire Council is proposing to introduce a £52 annual charge to maintain the garden waste removal service, which residents currently receive without additional charge.⁵ Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether and how introducing this charge might change the way that they deal with their garden waste going forward.

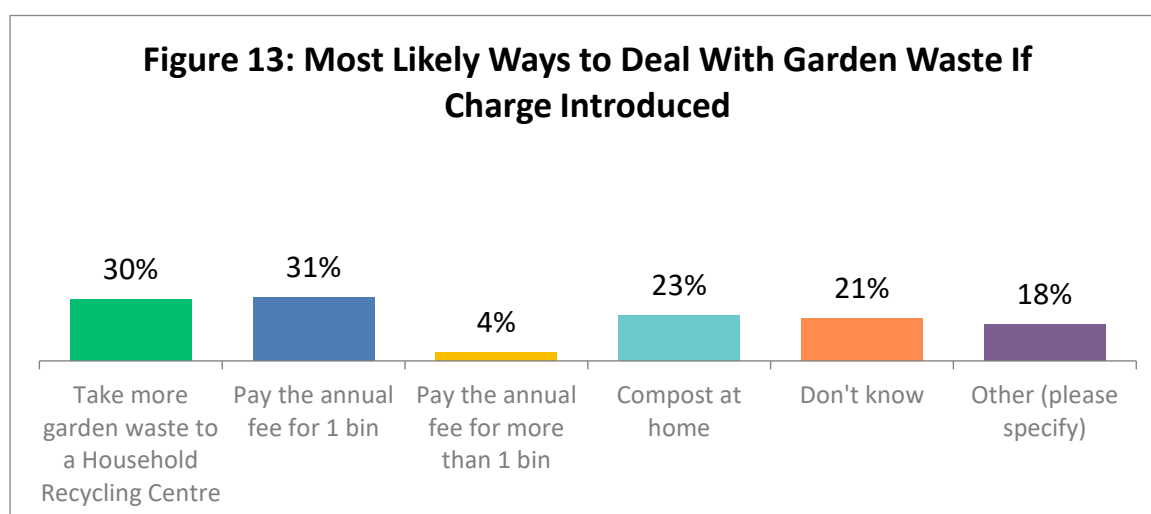
When asked whether they think £52 per year is a “fair charge” for maintaining the service, most respondents said they do not think it is (**see Figure 12**).

Figure 12. Is £52 Per Year A Fair Charge?



⁵ It should be noted that several consultation respondents indicated that they do not think garden waste removal should be referred to as ‘free’ since this service is currently financed, at least in part, through Council Tax payments.

Dealing with Waste If Charge Introduced



Respondents were asked to indicate how they would be most likely to dispose of garden waste going forward if the charge were introduced. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate more than one response (see **Figure 13**).

Just over a third of respondents (35%) indicated that if a charge were introduced, they would pay the annual fee for 1 bin or 2 bins. A similar percentage of respondents (30%) said that the charge would change their behaviour so that they would take more to a Household Recycling Centre. 23% of respondents said that they would compost at home to deal with Garden waste.

Many respondents (21%) said that they “don’t know” how they will deal with their garden waste if the charge is introduced, and a large percentage (18%) also indicated that they would dispose of it in “other” ways. These “other” responses allowed for open-ended comments, which are grouped thematically in **Table 5**, below.

The largest theme among those who said they would deal with garden waste in other ways said they would put it in their general waste bin instead (33%). 13% of respondents saying they would deal with their garden waste in other ways said they would fly-tip or illegally dump their waste, and 12% said they would burn it.

Table 5. Themes – “Other” Ways Respondents Will Deal with Garden Waste If Charged	Count	%
Put in general waste bin	223	33%
Already pay enough/council services poor	100	15%
Fly tip/dump illegally/leave to accumulate	91	13%
Burn it	82	12%
Don't know/concern about lack of options	35	5%
Take to recycling centre	27	4%
Pay the fee/do the same as currently	24	4%
Don't produce enough waste for this to matter	24	4%
Can't afford to pay	23	3%
Compost (or other sustainable disposal on own land)	18	3%

Consider sharing with neighbours/communal waste disposal	9	1%
Other	24	4%

15% of the comments provided in this open-ended question also touched on frustrations around paying enough for the service through their Council Tax and/or frustrations around paying “more for less”. For example:

- “I wouldn't pay. CT gone up enough with less in return.”
- “Would rather not pay. Already pay enough in council tax.”
- “The rural villages are only provided minimum services by the council and the major towns are the beneficiaries of all of these authorities services... You should consider charging the towns and leaving the free service to the villages.”

Impacts of Charging

Respondents were asked to provide details about the impacts that charging for garden waste might have (whether positive or negative). Many of the respondents answered this open-ended question, and several important themes emerged, which are summarised in **Table 6** and discussed in more detail with examples below.

Table 6. Themes – Impacts of Charging	Count	%
Additional Financial Burden	455	29%
Already pay enough/council services poor	385	24%
Increased fly tipping/dumping/burning	233	15%
No impact	187	12%
Would be ok to pay if HRCs stay open	80	5%
Increased use of regular bin for green waste	68	4%
Difficulty in accessing alternative options	43	3%
Reduced recycling and composting	38	2%
General negative comments	36	2%
Increased recycling/composting	29	2%
Find the savings another way	21	1%
Other	17	1%

The most common theme respondents expressed that they would struggle to afford the **additional financial burden** of the proposed charge of £52 per year, especially in the context of rising costs of living, council tax, and other bills. Some said they would have to cut back on other expenses or skip meals to pay for the service. For example:

- “Already struggle to pay bills so will make it harder.”
- “As 2 pensioners we cannot afford any extra expense.”
- “The pressure of the current cost of living is particularly difficult for families and the elderly.”

Second most common was for respondents to express their frustration and anger with the council for proposing the charge, **citing dissatisfaction with council**

services, and that they already pay enough council tax to receive poor services in return. Some cited the poor condition of the roads, the lack of amenities in rural areas, or the wasteful spending of the council on other projects. Some also said that they felt the charge was unfair and discriminatory, as it would affect people with gardens more than those without. For example:

- “I feel we already pay council tax which is meant to cover these services.”
- “It’s another increase on top of Council Tax rise. I am also paying more road tax supposedly to maintain roads etc. and Shropshire Council roads with potholes are a disgrace with more expenditure from us to repair wheels and tyres. We pay more yearly as pensioners for less service - get rid of your management excesses!”
- “Just another ‘free’ service to disappear. The council seem to think it is normal to increase charges without improving efficiency.”

Another common concern among the respondents was that the charge would encourage **increased fly tipping** and people otherwise dumping their garden waste in inappropriate places, such as roadsides, fields, parks, or other people's bins. Several also indicated that they would burn the waste. These respondents often noted that this behaviour would create environmental and health hazards, as well as additional costs for the council to clear up the waste. For example:

- “Fires in gardens, sheds. Rats! People will dump garden rubbish where they can.”
- “Charging for it will result in more illegal fly tipping.”
- “I understand that cuts must be made, but think this will encourage people not to bother or to fly tip.”

Some respondents said that they would not pay for the collection and would instead dispose of their garden waste in their black bin or burn it in their garden. This would **reduce recycling and composting** and increase the amount of waste that goes to landfill or creates air pollution. For example:

- “Unlikely to recycle garden waste.”
- “I wouldn’t recycle much. I suspect the garden would look worse.”
- “I wouldn’t be able to afford it and prob wouldn’t do as much recycling as I currently do.”

Several respondents mentioned that they would have **difficulty in accessing alternative options**, saying that they would not be able to take their garden waste to a recycling centre, either because they do not have a car, they have mobility issues, or they live too far away. Some also said that they do not have space or capacity to compost their waste at home. These respondents felt that they had no choice but to pay for the collection or let their garden waste accumulate. For example:

- “As we are both older residents we would be unable to get the waste into the car so have no other alternative.”
- “I have assisted collection because I am elderly and disabled with osteoporosis, osteoarthritis and a heart condition. I have 2 green waste bins because I am unable to manoeuvre a full bin to the collection point. If I half-fill each bin I can just manage to do it and the crew collect and empty both. In the future I would still need the collection service, whether there is a charge or not as it would be impossible for me to dispose of my green waste myself. Under your proposal I am going to be paying double what an able-bodied customer will pay to collect the same weight in green waste, just because I am disabled. This proposal is prejudiced against disabled customers and has not been thought through from the disabled perspective. If you are on assisted collection, it is for a very valid reason and any charge should be set on the property, not the number of bins.”
- “I have a terminal illness, I can’t cut my grass so someone has to do it for me, I barely put my green bin out so I don’t think it’s fair.”

A few respondents also expressed some more positive feelings. For example, 80 respondents’ comments included themes around being willing to pay the charge if it helped to maintain the services of Household Recycling Centres. Additionally, 187 respondents said that the charge would have no impact (positive or negative) on them and 29 respondents said that charging for garden waste removal would make them more likely to compost or recycle their green waste.

5 Suspending Food Waste Collections

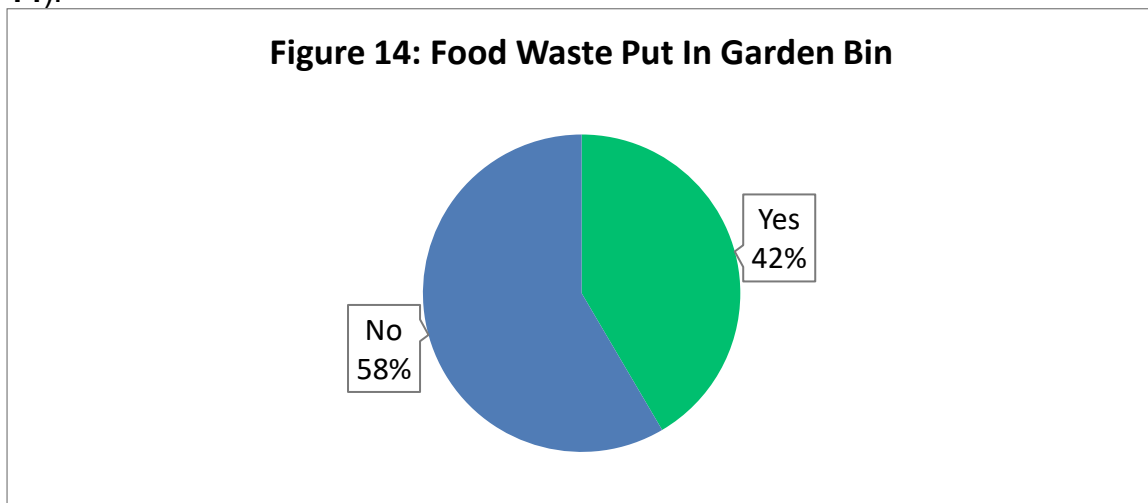
By law, a charge cannot be made for the collection of food waste. Currently, Shropshire Council collects food waste free of charge for residents who put their food waste into their green waste bins. The consultation proposals explained to residents that introducing a charge for green waste collection would therefore mean that all the properties where food waste is presently collected with garden waste (approximately 75% of all Shropshire properties) will have the service suspended even if they subscribe to the garden waste service.

However, it was explained that, as set out within the Environmental Act 2021, there is now a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities in England to provide a weekly food waste collection to all households beginning from the 1 April 2026. Shropshire Council have been working with the DEFRA food waste programme and have now developed several collection options.

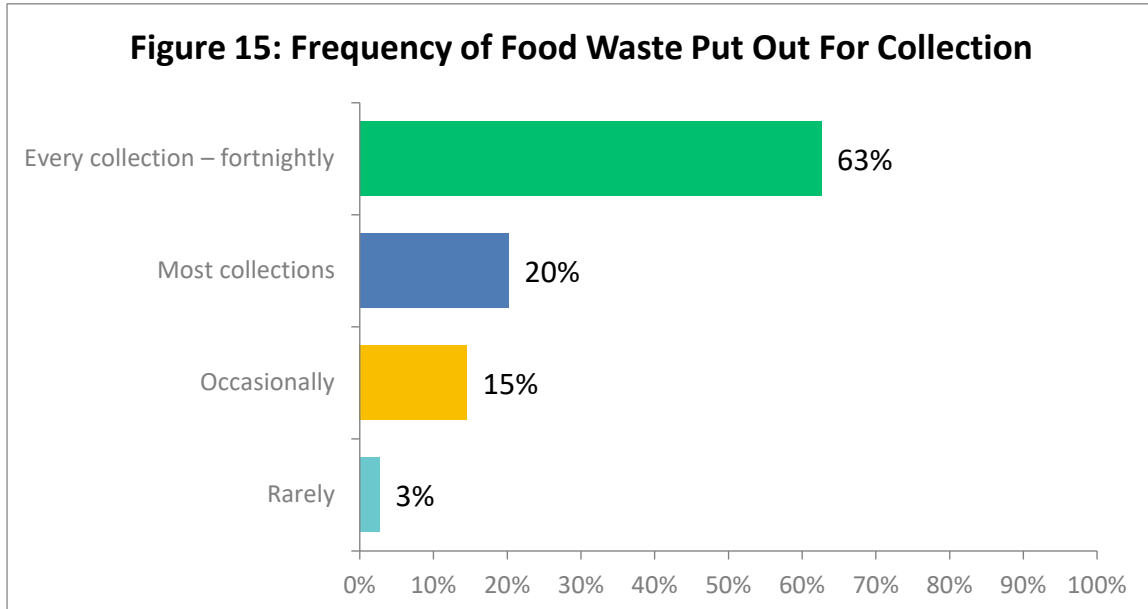
This means that introducing a charge for green waste collections before April 2026 date would require the suspension of food waste collections until April 2026, at which point all properties in Shropshire will receive a new weekly food waste collection service.

Survey respondents were asked whether they put food waste in their garden bin. 17,420 respondents answered this question, and of these, a majority (58%) said that they do not use their garden waste bin for food waste, though a large minority (42%)

said that they do currently use their garden waste bin for food waste (see **Figure 14**).

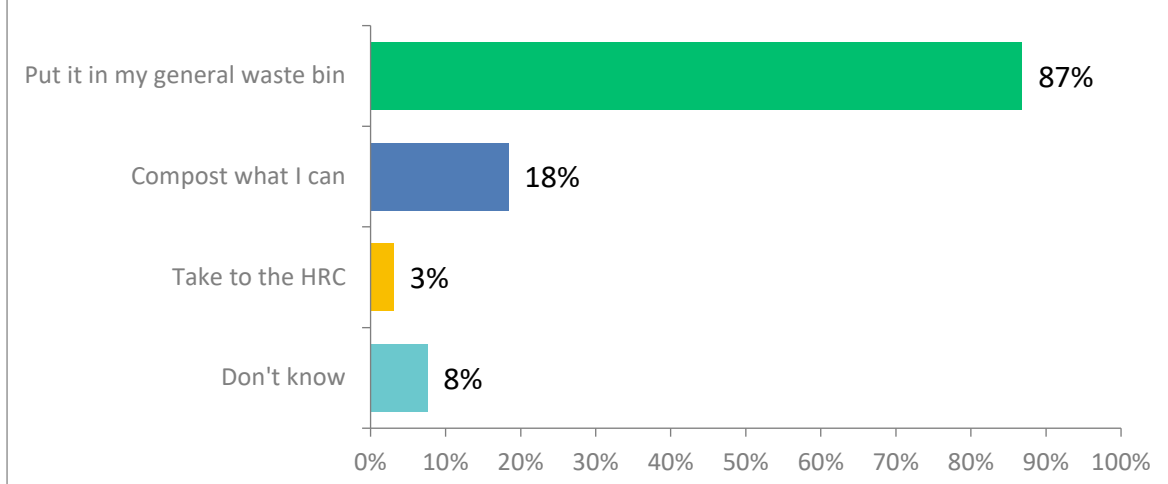


Those respondents who said they do put their food waste in their garden bin were asked to say how often they do so. The responses from the 7,147 respondents who answered this question are presented in **Figure 15**, below. Of those respondents who do put their food waste in their garden waste bin, the majority do so on a fortnightly basis for collection. Taken together, of those who dispose of their food waste using their garden waste bin, a large majority (83%) do so every collection or most collections, meaning that stopping the collection will certainly have an impact on how a large number of households currently dispose of their food waste.



When the same set of respondents who said they currently dispose of food waste in their garden waste bin were asked what they would do with their food waste if Shropshire Council stopped collecting food waste, most (87%) said that they would dispose of it in their general waste bin (see **Figure 16**). For this question respondents were able to tick all options if they chose to, yet there is still a clear preference for putting their food waste alongside their general waste should proposals be implemented.

Figure 16: How Respondents Would Dispose of Food Waste If No Longer Collected with Garden Waste



Finally, respondents who had said they currently put their food waste into their garden waste bin for collection were asked to provide any further comments on this aspect of the proposals. These open-ended responses were tagged and grouped thematically. They are presented in **Table 7** and further discussion and examples of some of these themes are provided below.

Table 7. Themes – Comments About Food Waste	No	%
Backward step/will be bad for the environment	113	23%
Will increase vermin/fly tipping/bad smells	79	16%
More people will put food waste in general bin or still use green bin	78	16%
Continue current service	51	10%
General comments of unhappiness/disgust	51	10%
Poor council planning/services/management	40	8%
Paying more for less	23	5%
Changes are fine/proposals aren't applicable to them	21	4%
Find the savings another way	14	3%
More need for HRCs as a result/keep HRCs open	7	1%
Other	20	4%

The most common theme expressed in these open-ended comments was that stopping food waste collections would be a **bad for the environment** and a backward step in the Shropshire Plan's aim to create a healthy environment. For example:

- “Seems quite short sighted to stop something that people are doing. It will be hard to engage them again.”
- “Feels like a backward step in recycling more garden waste will end up in normal waste.”
- “Getting everyone to recycle food waste has been brilliant. This is a backwards step.”

- “I think we should be encouraged in recycling, not forcing people to just chuck it into the general waste.”
- “It’s going backwards. We have opportunities for recycling and now it’s being taken away? What’s the point of recycling?”

The second most common theme expressed in these comments was that stopping food waste collections through the garden waste bins will **encourage fly tipping and vermin problems**. For example:

- “Likely to cause food waste accumulation. Attract vermin if composted. A very bad idea.”
- “Mix food with garden compost and you get rats.”
- “More fly tipping as some people can’t fit enough in their black bin as it is.”
- “People will dump it and it’ll attract rat infestations.”

Another common theme among respondents was to express a desire for the council to **continue the current service**. Many of the respondents’ comments tagged with this theme were confused as to why the food waste collection service had to stop if charges to garden waste were introduced. **This perhaps indicates that communications around the reasoning for this aspect of the proposals should be made clearer**. Others also complained about the problems that stopping food waste collection and restarting it in 2026 would cause in terms of public confusion and lack of engagement in recycling efforts. For example:

- “Why is it necessary to stop collecting food waste with garden waste if I’m subscribing? Are you (the council), completely changing your processes in waste handling, why can’t the existing process continue?”
- “Why not allow food waste to be placed in the garden waste bin until April 2026 as a goodwill environmental gesture and emphasise it is not part of the paid for service!”
- “You just said it was a legal requirement. How can you suspend this service?”
- “Why not continue as we are for 2 years - this suspension will confuse people.”
- “Strongly disagree that we should suspend when we will have to reinstate anyway in 2026.”

Several respondents also said that they or others would have no choice but to **dispose of their food waste through their general waste bin**, or to continue to put it in with the garden waste collection. For example:

- “It would just move the food waste from one bin to another. I’m not an environmental expert, but I suspect it would increase/create the already pungent smell at the landfill sites.”
- “It would mean an increase in general household waste.”
- “My volume is not that great so just adding to my general waste would be the easiest.”
- “This would then go into general waste and I presume it would go into landfill or be incinerated. Therefore, incineration would be a waste of compostable matter.”

Other common themes included frustration with the council and its management, feeling like residents are paying more for less, and arguing that savings should be made in other ways.

6 Additional Feedback

Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were asked to provide any other comments they wished to make about the chargeable green waste 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 different schedules for collections, or other waste-related ways to save money or generate income. These comments were once again tagged and grouped thematically, and the themes are presented in **Table 8** with examples given below.

Table 8. Themes – Anything Else to Say	No	%
Won't pay/shouldn't have to pay/can't afford to pay	261	22%
Will encourage bad behaviour (vermin/fly tipping/bad smells/improper bin use)	237	20%
Poor council planning/services/management	192	16%
Suggests alternative collection system/schedule	124	10%
General comments of unhappiness/disgust	90	8%
Worry about impacts of HRC closure/happy to pay to keep HRCs open	82	7%
Cost is ok/lower amount suggested as ok	70	6%
Backward step/will be bad for the environment	62	5%
Find the savings another way	46	4%
Other	21	2%

The biggest theme to emerge from these comments was for many respondents to re-emphasise their **concerns about paying for the service**. For some, this was expressed as frustration over having to pay for something they had not paid for before and felt was a council duty. For others, this was expressed as concerns for themselves or others about an ability to pay for what is seen as an essential service. For example:

- “I repeat I would not pay.”
- “Who on earth thought it would be a good idea after a 5% council tax increase to then propose charging people more.”
- “You are charging us for a service we have already paid for. How long before we are charged for all our bins and cardboard collections?”
- “A backward step at a time of rising household costs. The council needs to become more efficient at managing its budget so that basic services are continued.”

Other respondents reiterated concerns that the proposals will **encourage bad behaviour**, such as illegal dumping, improper bin use, leading to vermin and bad smells. For example:

- “I consider that if the bins are removed altogether yes a lot of people will take the rubbish to the recycling centres but a certain amount of society won’t bother and just dump it all in the countryside causing all kinds of health hazards to humans and wildlife let alone spoiling our beautiful countryside and water courses.”
- “Will divert garden waste to landfill and fly tipping.”
- “We definitely believe that this will lead to an excess of fly tipping, probably in the rural areas as easier to dump rubbish unseen due to lack of policing.”

Another common theme in these comments were to express **frustration with Shropshire Council’s management, planning and delivery of services**. For example:

- “Another example of Shropshire Council retreating from any semblance of providing a service to the people who it allegedly is there to support. There is little reason for your continued existence.”
- “Awful proposal. My dad is 85 and loves gardening and puts his garden waste out fortnightly. He doesn’t drive, has worked all his life, never claimed benefits and pays his council tax...so why should he pay additional charges to have his garden refuse collected. This proposal is terrible. Councils need to manage their finances better and stop paying hierarchy extortionate salaries.”

Several respondents took the opportunity to use their comments **to suggest alternative possibilities** for either collection or charging options that the council might consider. Many respondents suggested that collection periods be **reduced or stopped during the winter months or reducing the frequency of garden waste collections overall**. For example:

- “Cannot the collection interval be greatly extended particularly during autumn and winter to enable costs to be reduced.”
- “Consider a reduced service during winter months.”
- “Half the price and pick up April to October only.”
- “Possibly collect monthly?”
- “Will there be an option to having the green waste collected every 2 or 3 months?”

Other respondents offered suggestions around **pricing tiers, or discounting** for households who opt to pay for more than one bin. For example:

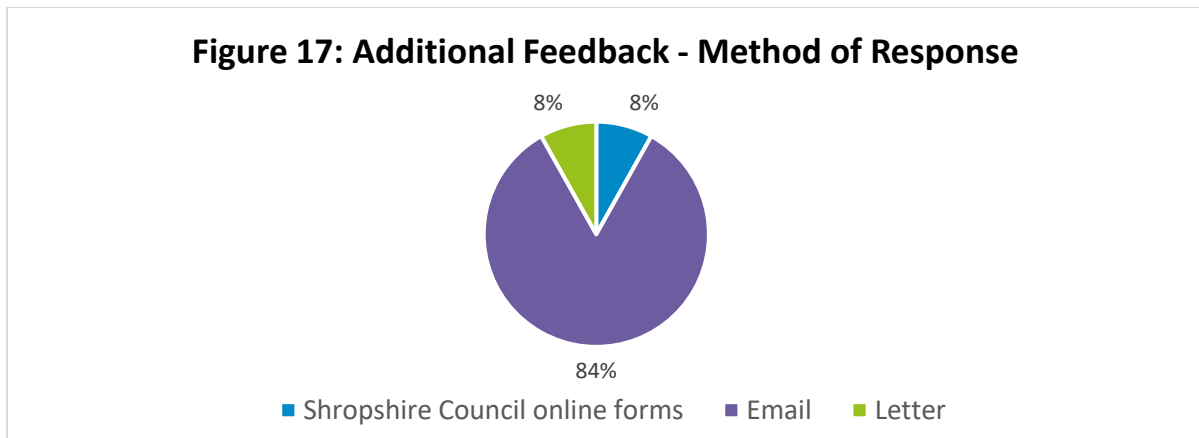
- “Is there a discount if you have 2 green bins?”
- “Reduced charges for elderly and single occupants.”
- “Should have options for part yearly or seasonal tariff.”
- “Will there be any discussion around creating a system for one-off payments to have green bins collected for people with smaller gardens who may only need minimal collections?”

Other Forms of Additional Feedback

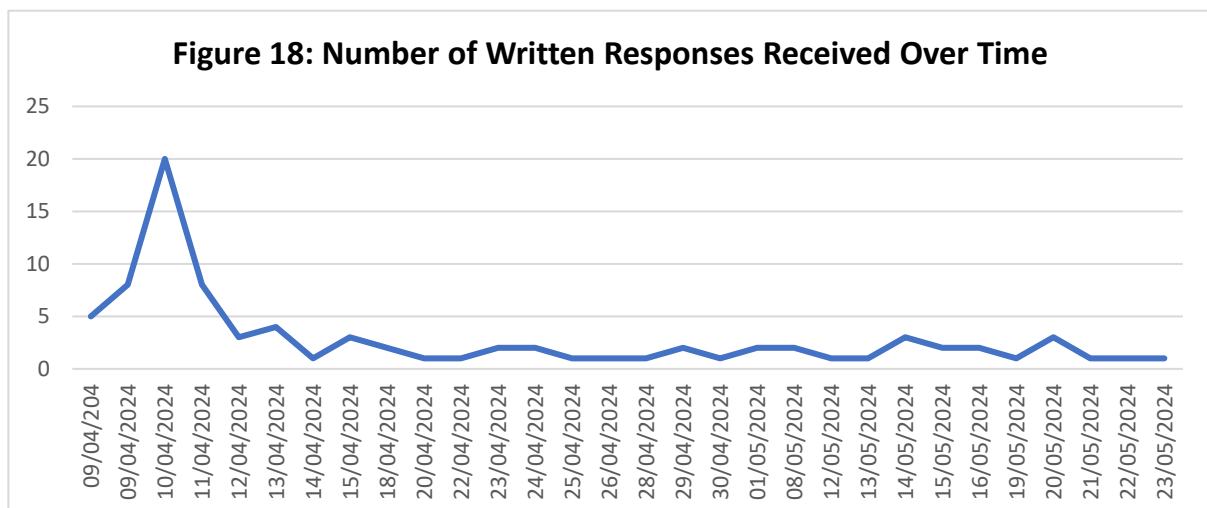
Shropshire Council recognises that online surveys can meet the needs of a majority but that other methods of response may be better for some; and can also allow more detailed comments. It is recognised that many of those who provide written responses also completed the online survey (many included a 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: Household Recycling Centres (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 Shropshire Council online feedback forms. **Figure 17** displays the method of response used by percentage.



Many of the written 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). However, as **Figure 18** (above) illustrates, engagement through written responses continued through the consultation period.

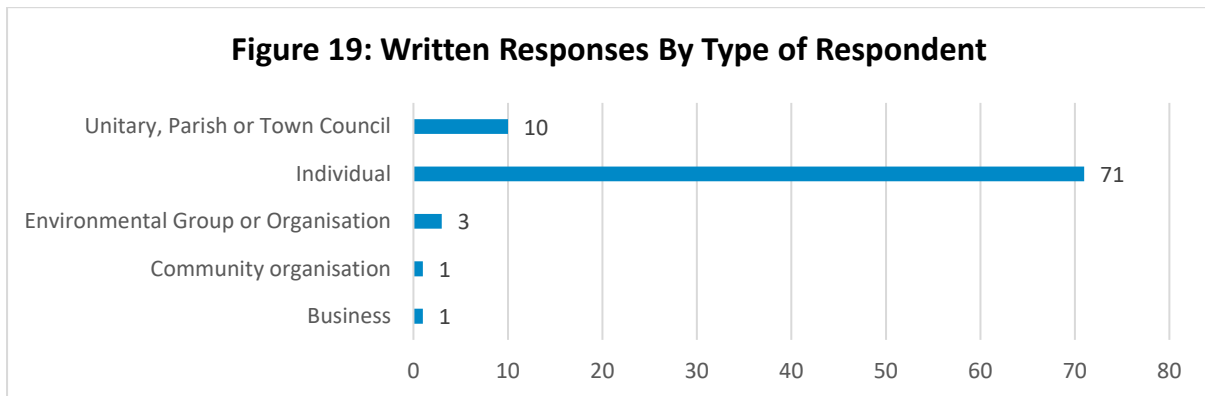


Particular thanks are provided to the organisations who took time to provide letters and more formal responses to the consultation. Many thanks are extended to:

- 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 19 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.



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 20** below displays the overall sentiment within the 86 written responses. Overall, the majority of written responses were indicating an objection to the proposals, or mixed sentiments. Only 7% (or 6 letters) expressed full agreement with the proposals.

Figure 20: Overall Sentiment of Written Responses

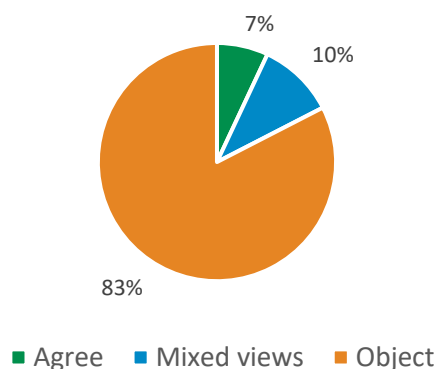


Table 9 below displays all of the themes included in the written responses (by a count of the number of times the issue was mentioned overall in correspondence).

Table 9. 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 cover the issues relating to garden waste. It is recognised that there is some overlap with Household Recycling Centres and readers are encouraged to view the Household Recycling Centres consultation report (published with this report) for more detail (the second top theme on HRC closure is covered within that report alongside other relevant themes such as travel and accessibility,

transfer of costs elsewhere etc. alongside other comments and examples).

As **Table 9** illustrates, top themes related to garden waste were:

- Fly-tipping
- Council tax increased enough/ council tax not effectively used
- Cost/ Affordability/impact low incomes
- Reduction in recycling/ increase in general waste
- Environmental impact concerns
- Policy concerns (often suggesting alternatives)
- Concerns about council financial mismanagement/ political views

Below, examples of redacted quotes are provided to illustrate each theme.

Fly-tipping

- “If this is implemented, I can foresee illegal tipping to greatly increase.”
- “...I believe if you start charging people they will not maintain their gardens and could illegally start dumping garden waste all over the County causing environmental issues and more significant costs to you the council having to remove it, process it...”
- “...Will it encourage people dumping in others bins without permission? Or Fly tipping etc., Thank you for any information.”
- “Surely charging for green waste bin service is a counterproductive move as the cost of fly tipping will almost certainly increase. As the bin is also used for food waste where will that be going - down the drains?”
- “Having seen many comments on Facebook, it is clear this will simply lead to people no longer using the service, but putting garden waste in their household bins or fly tipping it.”
- “Please do not start charging for garden waste collections, this will only encourage people to fly tip in the countryside.”

Council tax increased enough/ council tax not effectively used

- “I feel this email is disingenuous as the email states that garden waste collection in Shropshire is free. This is an incorrect statement. Residents do already pay for the garden waste collection - we pay for it in our council tax.”
- “Haven't the public had enough price increases, including Council Tax, without an additional bin collection tax. I'm a pensioner and certainly could do without paying a bin collection tax!!”
- “I would have thought that two 77yr old people living in a 2 bedroom band c bungalow paying over £2000 per year council tax whose only income is the state pension and one of us dose not receive the full amount plus a little interest are paying enough.”
- “Once again even after this year's Council tax increase we are faced with less services for more money Instead of punishing us why doesn't Shropshire council do some in-house cuts to Councillor's expenses and civic meals etc”
- “I do not agree with the charge for garden waste as we pay enough council tax. We are a retired couple.”
- “We already pay significant Council Tax, and hire a 2nd garden bin for approx. £70 a year. While I understand the need to cut costs & generate revenue, I personally object to paying extra for a service that should be included in Council

Tax services.”

- “We already pay through the nose for Shropshire council services, the council tax continues to increase and yet you continue to look for ways to cover your costs, as a Shropshire council customer I find it incredulous that you are even suggesting that paying council tax customers be asked for additional charges to be incurred to facilitating paying for green waste services on top of the existing waste collections services.”

Cost/ Affordability/impact low incomes

- “Requiring payment for green waste collections will impact on lower income households that are already struggling to meet their household bills.”
- “There is no way I am paying this £52. I pay enough in council tax. You may collect my bin at your convenience. Thankyou.”
- “Nobody has any spare money to give anymore! Shropshire isn't a highly paid county and with the cost of living's recent massive increases and hikes, which vastly outweigh any wage or pension increases, we have working people and children in poverty! Shropshire Council has not helped itself with buying shopping centres and playing the property market, the people weren't asked about that and I can practically guarantee that they'd have resisted it, after all, who buys shopping centres when online shopping is increasing exponentially? That wasted millions of pounds in funding. Additional money for garden waste will start at £1 a week but we know, that'll rise, just like everything else.”
- “It is all very well saying its only a pound a week, but for hard pressed pensioners and families the extra pounds we have to pay add up. Our council tax has increased. In the countryside we pay for services, not available to us, such as street lighting. We pay more for home heating oil, as we have no access to gas....”
- “Cost for green waste. As a pensioner and a widow I am unable to dispose of garden waste myself now. Although as a pensioner we have had an increase everything else is going up not in proportion to our income. I already pay tax so any increase is swallowed up. Making a payment for green waste will not only affect us but also single parents and anyone on any sort of benefit. I am not in agreement of this cost.”
- “To advise you, if a charge is brought onto collection of green waste, I cannot afford this charge, cost of living crisis, low household income; all my green waste will be legally disposed of in my black waste.”

Reduction in recycling/ increase in general waste

- “It is likely that residents who are not able to, or do not want to, pay for a green waste collection will use their black bin to dispose of green waste; or worse contaminate their dry recycling bins.”
- “The immediate result would be an increase of refuse in the general refuse collection.”
- “Clearly as your Impact assessment states, green waste will be placed in the general waste, and this will be incinerated rather than composted which will result in a considerable increase in carbon emissions to the atmosphere.”
- “The benefits of the Pyrolysis Project speak for themselves. However, introducing a charge for the collection of green waste would prejudice its success, serving only to reduce its resultant volume, thereby threatening its profitability, whilst

simultaneously negatively impacting its environmental gains. Many of Shropshire's households will choose to follow the Council's lead and cut their own discretionary services! True, not all Shropshire's households have or use a green bin, but they, together with the Council, would all benefit from this project."

Environmental impact concerns

- "How can the council be proposing not to collect food waste separately if food waste goes into general waste for landfill that will increase the amount of methane being produced and only add to greenhouse gases. This is madness"
- "If the council start charging for this service the countryside will be littered [with] garden waste. Is this what the council wants?"
- "Let's DO something positive for "climate, sustainability and biodiversity"

Policy concerns (often suggesting alternatives)

- "Shropshire Council's primary objective should be to reduce the volume of waste (of all types) collected. In the case of green waste, we consider that there should be a very high charge (e.g. at a level of at least £20 per bin for each time it is emptied where there is a clear alternative such as composting (rather than disposal) for the property (i.e. unless it is a flat or other property without a garden where composting could be carried out). Properties where garden maintenance is carried out by a third-party should not be exempt and these should be encouraged to use larger-scale composting facilities."
- "Introducing charges for green bin collection may have adverse consequences for our environment and public health. It is likely to lead to an increase in illegal dumping and improper disposal of waste, which could result in unsanitary conditions and environmental pollution. This goes against the objectives of promoting sustainability and ensuring a clean and healthy living environment for all residents. I urge the council to stop exploring this potential 'cash cow.' Like other councils who have closed recycling centres to try and manage costs, perhaps Shropshire Council are considering a similar course of action – what happens when you have closed all of them, then what?"

Concerns about council financial mismanagement/ political views

- "The Council's present situation is their own fault. It's due to bad management and lack of funding from this corrupt, lying and manipulative Conservative Government. We've already faced an increase in Council Tax and now they want us to pay for their gross negligence. It's called 'Passing the Buck.' It's simply appalling that we, the general public, are having to pay for services that are already covered in our Council Tax. What do they want – blood?"
- "Many residents already feel exploited by the ever-increasing Council Tax and wonder what they are receiving in return? If this proposal proceeded, it will not stop or reduce the overall issue of Council financial waste. That requires a root and branch overhaul and not just targeting the unfortunate and beleaguered householder."
- "This proposal is totally unacceptable. As pensioners (and we're not the poorest) 8% of our total annual income goes on council tax, that's without road tax and again our appalling pot holed roads. I know 14 years of useless conservatives have wasted billions and there's less coming in but then again Shropshire Council haven't exactly been savvy have you?"

It is worth noting that quite a few comments included mention that the respondents were retired/pensioners. This was not recorded as a theme in itself but is important information and a consideration for inclusion within the available Equality and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment. Many linked their status as a retiree/pensioner to the cost of the annual garden waste collection and some, but not all, mentioned concerns about charges.

44 of the 86 written responses included suggestions for alternatives to the proposals that might be considered. The full summary of themes from those suggestions is included in **Table 10** below. Many of these suggestions echo in more depth the proposals from survey respondents offered above and a few are more detailed.

Table 10. Alternative Suggestions	Count	%
Reduced opening days/hours	8	18
Option to pay for part of the year/ Don't collect in 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

Some example suggestions are included below (examples related to HRCs are included within the Household Recycling Centre Consultation Report). Top themes for garden waste charging included:

- There were 6 requests for an option to pay only for **part of the year** (excluding Winter months).
- 5 suggestions mentioned **reducing the frequency of collections** to reduce costs.
- 4 focused on encouraging **behavioural change**.
- 3 called for **fees proportionate to garden size**.
- **Composting** was also mentioned for garden waste.

Suggestions included, for example:

- “On a personal level (accepting we are a household of 2) although we are strong recyclers! , our bin (over a 2 wk period) is rarely more than 25% full. Given the nature of the items recycled (glass / cans / plastic bottles & food trays etc) there is no ‘smell’ associated with said recycling, given its contents are fully enclosed, it’s not even more unsightly whether it’s a 1/4 full or 3/4’s full! So, maybe, MONTHLY collection should / could be a consideration?”
- “May I suggest that instead of charging a blanket amount, including for people

who maybe only occasionally need it, you collect only during the summer months.”

- “...reduce the collection to once every THREE weeks during the winter, when there is less ‘green bin activity’ and reinstate the two-weekly collection from Easter through to November.”
- “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.”
- “If green bins are emptied every other week then surely we only need to pay £26 per year?”
- “Since the consultation was launched, Defra has announced that councils will be allowed to collect food waste with green waste. Councils will also be allowed to comingle paper with other dry recyclables. We support both these moves as reducing the number of bins will increase recycling, especially for those that do not have sufficient room for recycling containers.”
- “1. Provide each resident with a compost bin to recycle their own green waste. 2. When collecting general rubbish, attach a trailer onto the back of the bin lorry to collect green waste at the same time. 3. Identify hot spot local council owned area/farmland that could accept green waste collections that some residents could deposit their own waste at this facility.”
- “Firstly, why do we have Garden Waste collections during the winter months - waste of money very few if any of us in the road put out our garden waste bins during this period, but they still come around for it every two weeks. - STOP from Oct to March.”
- “The facility could be just once a month and none in November, Dec and Jan/ Feb when grasses aren't cut. Think on before you drop these free collections.”
- “I do have concerns that someone who has a lawn the size of a postage stamp would pay the same as someone with a huge lawn, trees and a privet hedge the length on Hadrian's wall.”
- “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...Residents and communities should consider more ways to compost their own waste....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.”
- “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. This would also have the advantage of improving the Council's ranking nationally.”
- “Use the garden waste to turn into sellable compost instead.”
- “I have been considering a solution for our small isolated village Silvington. Silvington has around 17 households and is miles away from the nearest village, garden waste pickup point or town. My solution is that if the village was to stop using the councils garden waste services and dispose of any garden waste ourselves (compost, natural fertiliser etc) would the council be willing to offer a compensatory amount to the village on an annual basis for the reduced use of council resources? This solution would save the council fuel, time, wear and tear

on dust bin lorries and enable workers to focus on other areas. This would help ease the traffic on our narrow minor roads and have less of a negative environmental impact if the lorry did not need to make the out of the way drive to our village every fortnight. We believe this would have a positive impact on the council's money saving plans and that a compensatory amount to our village would not impact this.”

7 Summary and Conclusion

This report presents the findings of a public consultation on Shropshire Council’s proposals to introduce an annual charge for green waste collection and stop food waste collection until April 2026. The consultation aimed to gather feedback from residents and stakeholders on the current service, the potential impacts of the proposed changes on Shropshire residents, and possible alternatives to the proposals.

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.
- The vast majority (92%) of respondents currently dispose of their garden waste through collection by Shropshire Council, and most (85%) use only one bin on a regular basis (45% use it every collection, and a further 26% use it most collections).

Introducing Charges for Garden Waste

- A majority of respondents (62%) do not think that introducing a £52 per year charge to maintain garden waste collection services is “fair”.
- Only 35% of respondents indicated that they would pay the annual fee for 1 or more bins to be collected should charging be introduced for the service.

- Should the charges be introduced, respondents indicated that the most likely impacts would include increased financial burdens for people who are already struggling with cost-of-living increases, increased fly tipping and the consequences of this such as increased vermin populations, reducing and discouraging recycling and negative environmental consequences.
- Several respondents also raised concerns about not having any suitable alternative options to dispose of waste due to accessibility issues (e.g. disabilities, age, no transport, etc.) should they not be able to pay the charges.

Food Waste Collection Suspension

- A large minority of respondents (42%) indicated that they currently dispose of food waste in their garden waste bins. Of these, 83% said that their food waste is collected in their garden waste bin either every collection or most collections.
- Most respondents (87%) who currently dispose of their food waste in the garden waste bin said that they would put it in their general waste bin should food waste no longer be collected along with garden waste.
- Comments on the proposals to suspend food waste collections in the garden waste bins until April 2026 included concerns that this suspension would have detrimental impacts on the environment, would encourage fly tipping and problems with vermin, and would cause confusion.

Additional Feedback/Suggestions

- Additional concerns expressed by survey respondents beyond those detailed above 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 reducing or stopping green waste collections during off-peak seasons, introducing pricing tiers or discounting for low-income or low-usage households, and encouraging behavioural changes that would increase alternative methods of disposal such as composting and recycling.

In conclusion, the consultation reveals a mixed response to the proposed changes to the green bin collection service, with more respondents expressing concern, anger or frustration about the proposals, citing fears of environmental damages and financial burdens for those already struggling with the cost of living as the most compelling reasons against adopting the Council's proposed plans. Some respondents offer constructive suggestions for alternatives that might mitigate these problems, but still provide savings, such as suspending collections during less busy times of year or offering discounts for lower-income households.

The consultation provided valuable insights and feedback from the residents and stakeholders, which will inform the decision-making about the proposed changes. The 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](#).

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