

Appendix 1: Consultation Overview

- 1.1 The consultation opened on the 1st November and closed 4 weeks later on the 28th November.
- 1.2 The objective of the consultation was to gauge whether, when, given the option, would residents prefer to pay a charge for the existing collection of garden waste, or discontinue the service, in light of the financial savings that the Council is required to make.
- 1.3 Residents were made aware of the consultation through the Council's Life magazine, website, text message service, Facebook and Twitter and through local media. Local community groups and charities were also made aware of the consultation. The consultation was hosted online through SurveyMonkey and hard copies were also made available.
- 1.4 The key findings of the Council's consultation response is as follows:

Total number of responses received	4,516
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Number of respondents who use existing garden waste collection service		
Yes	No	Did not answer question
97%	2%	1%

How the current brown bin service is rated					
					Did not answer question
Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	
37%	37%	19%	3%	1%	3%

Ways in which residents dispose of their garden waste			
	Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC)	Other	Did not answer question
Home Compost			
27%	22%	11%	40%

Willingness to pay for garden waste collections		
Proportion of residents prepared to pay subscription rather than see service discontinued	Proportion of residents who would prefer to see the service discontinued	Did not answer question
35%	31%	34%

- 54% of those that answered the question stated that they would prefer to pay a subscription rather than see the service discontinued.

How likely residents would pay, if the following annual charges are introduced			
	£35	£50	£70
Very Likely	22%	5%	2%
Likely	20%	9%	5%
Unlikely	10%	14%	10%
Very Unlikely	48%	72%	83%

How likely residents would be willing to pay for an additional bin				
Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Did not answer question
5%	10%	12%	61%	12%

1.5 For those who said they would not use a chargeable service, residents indicated that they would manage their garden waste in the following ways (please note that it was stated that garden waste could not be put in the black bin and more than one option could be ticked in the response):

- 49% - take the waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (the Tip);
- 48% - they would use other means;
- 23% - would use their garden, home composter or allotment;
- 4% - indicated they would use an alternative chargeable service.

1.6 Just over 1,800 people (40%) provided comments under 'other means' on how respondents would get rid of their garden waste and/or their views on the proposal of discontinuing the service or charging a subscription. The commentary was analysed and below is a summary of opinions: (NB. more than one option could be given):

- Other (28%)
- Dump it (24%);
- Burn the garden waste (19%);
- They would put it the black landfill bin (17%);
- What do I pay my Council Tax for? (10%);
- Food waste concerns (4%).

1.7 Some of the views under 'other' included "I am elderly"; "I have no car"; "what do I do with my shredded paper"; "money is made from the compost waste"; "I cannot afford it" and "I don't know what else I could do with my garden waste".

Appendix 2: Summary of Key Objections and Frequently Asked Questions

The table below further highlights the key objections and concerns raised by residents, as part of the consultation exercise, with an additional commentary providing further clarification or explaining how these will be addressed.

Key Concern/Question raised by Residents	Summary
Cost of the brown bin already paid for by Council Tax.	Council Tax does not cover the full cost of the Council's waste collection services. The existing garden waste service costs in the region of £1.1million per annum to operate and this is subsidised by the Council. If savings cannot be made through the introduction of a charge, there is the risk that this service will be discontinued.
No option to continue with the service as it is in the consultation.	The objective of the consultation was to gauge whether, when, given the option, would residents prefer to pay a charge for the collection of garden waste, or discontinue the service, in light of the financial savings that the Council is required to make.
Food waste	<p>Food waste may be re-directed into the black refuse bin.</p> <p>A focussed campaign for food waste reduction and home composting will be rolled out.</p> <p>Options for the collection and management of food waste will be kept under regular review, for example when service contracts are re-tendered.</p>
Fly-tipping	<p>There is a concern that fly-tipping will increase if a charge is introduced. Other Councils that have introduced a charge have not noticed a significant increase in fly-tipping from garden waste, although it is accepted that fly-tipping is increasing on a national scale.</p> <p>Fly-tipping will be investigated and cleared in line with existing environmental policies. Enforcement action will be taken against those caught fly-tipping.</p>
HWRCS do not accept garden waste	Green garden waste can be recycled at all HWRCS within Hertfordshire (in the green waste containers).
Reduced income for	HCC or local councils within Hertfordshire do not receive income from the sale of compost produced

compost	at contracted facilities.
Refuse bins will be too small to accommodate additional waste	<p>Residents will not be permitted to put garden waste in their black refuse bin.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the standard refuse bin has adequate capacity to temporarily store more food waste and residents will be advised on ways to reduce food waste and will be encouraged to take up home composting.</p>

Appendix 3

I already pay council tax, why is the council consulting on charging for garden waste collections?

We have some very tough choices to make in finding ways to bridge our funding gap. Central government is reducing our financial settlement a further 37% by 2019/20, adding to the year on year reductions seen since austerity measures began. Over that time we have worked hard to deliver efficiencies without impacting on services but, facing a budget gap of £2m, we have no choice but to find alternative ways of funding services, or cutting them completely.

Council tax is a statutory charge based on the occupation and ownership of a property. It helps pay for our services, but we only get to keep 13% of what's collected. The rest goes to Hertfordshire County Council, the police and town and parish councils.

Local authorities do not bill residents only for the services they make use of. Nor do they make deductions from council tax based on non-use of a particular service, or when additional charges or fees are introduced.

Why isn't there an option in the survey to continue the service as it is?

Putting proposals forward for savings is never easy. The brown bin collection service, which not all residents use, is under review.

The aim of our consultation is to understand whether people would continue to use the service if there was a charge.

But why this service, why not find savings elsewhere?

We continually look at everything we do, including whether it's appropriate to introduce, or increase, charges for some services. Many people in Welwyn Hatfield don't use the brown bin service, or use it irregularly.

For those that do, we would like to hear what they think about us continuing the service for an annual fee and how much they think that should be.

What about food waste?

If a subscription service was introduced, you would initially be asked to wrap your food waste and use the black refuse bin.

We will be re-tendering our existing waste and recycling contract for 2020 onwards and that will give us an opportunity to review the different options for food waste collection. In the meantime, changes to waste processing costs may provide an opportunity to introduce a financially sustainable alternative much sooner.

Won't this increase the amount of waste going to landfill and/or fly-tipping?

Over half of councils in the England are charging for garden waste collections, including Three Rivers in Hertfordshire, and there is no evidence to indicate a rise in fly-tipping, or waste being sent to landfill. Whatever the outcome, we will work to ensure garden waste continues to be disposed of responsibly.

How much money will the council make from this?

We face some tough decisions in the years ahead to bridge our funding gap. Central government is reducing our financial settlement a further 37% by 2019/20, adding to the year on year reductions seen since austerity measures began. This consultation is not about raising income for the council, but potentially offsetting the costs of providing this much valued service, which was introduced in 2007.

What can I do with my shredded paper?

Shredded paper can now go into the blue lidded recycling bin and placed in the newspaper recycling caddy or the main part of the recycling bin.

What will happen to my brown bin if I don't subscribe to the new garden waste service?

Initially, the Council would not take back the brown bins as they were assigned to a property. This will give householders a chance to consider the benefits of the new service and allow a person to subscribe and take up the service quickly. The Council would then later in the year consider collecting brown bins from households that don't want to use the service.