

North Northamptonshire Council

Garden Waste Collection Service Consultation 2022

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the harmonisation of the garden waste collection across North Northamptonshire can be found below.

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Harmonisation of the Garden Waste Collection Service

Why are you reviewing the Garden Waste Collection Service?

Following local government reorganisation last year, the new unitary council has inherited different approaches to the fortnightly kerbside garden waste collections from the previous local authorities:

Former District and Borough Charges:

Corby Borough Council	East Northamptonshire Council	Kettering Borough Council	Borough Council of Wellingborough
No extra charge	£55 annual subscription charge	No extra charge	No extra charge
All year collection	All year collection	All year collection	March to November collection

North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) want to harmonise the garden waste collection across the area, so all residents receive the same service.

Does the Council have to collect my garden waste?

Councils are required by law to collect garden waste separately from other waste and recycling streams and Councils are allowed to levy an additional charge for the service. 65% of all local authorities in England now charge for garden waste collections as a non-essential, opt-in service.

Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 Schedule 1 P 4 lists the types of waste that waste collections authorities (NNC) must offer collections for (if requested) but may make a charge for doing so. Garden waste is classified as Household waste for which charges can be made to households.

Not everyone needs or uses the garden waste service. Having a subscription charge means those that use the service help to pay for its running costs and those that do not use the service, do not pay for it.

What is the Council proposing?

North Northamptonshire Council wants to harmonise the garden waste collection across the area, so all residents receive the same service and it is funded in the same way.

To harmonise the kerbside garden waste service the Council needs to consider the following:

- To determine which months of the year a kerbside collection service would operate.

- To establish whether a universal garden waste service would be provided to all residents without an additional charge, and should that occur, to consider what impact this will have on other Council services.
- To establish whether a subsidised subscription-based garden waste service would be provided to residents who wish to subscribe to the service and pay a subscription charge.
- And, if a subscription charge was to be levied, the level of this charge.

Funding to Local Government has gradually reduced over the past few years and therefore we need to make tough choices about how we provide our services and how they are funded.

Who will this affect?

This will affect everyone that uses the garden waste kerbside collection service, irrespective of whether their current service includes a subscription charge.

It also affects residents who do not require a garden waste service but may be paying towards its operation through their Council Tax.

How much does it cost the Council to run the service?

It currently costs the Council approximately £3 million pounds every year to provide this service as it is.

How would the Council pay for this service if there is no subscription charge?

Funding to Local Government has gradually reduced over the past years and therefore we need to make tough choices about how we provide our services and how they are funded. With finite budgets the Council would have to consider other options for funding the service and would face difficult choices on prioritising funding in other areas.

How will the proposed annual subscription charge be calculated?

This will be calculated by looking at the current costs incurred by the Council for the containers, collection and administration of the garden waste service.

If a subscription charge is introduced, would the Council be making a profit?

Any subscription charge would aim to cover the cost of the service. If the charge generates a surplus, it would be used on supporting other Council services.

What do other Councils do?

In recent years and in response to budgetary pressures the number of councils who charge for garden waste has increased. In 2012/13 30% of local authorities in England charged for garden waste collection, and in 19/20 the number had increased to 61% of local authorities. According to figures from Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), in 2018/19, the average price charged for the collection of garden waste in England was £43 per year, within a range of £24 to £96. Regionally, 10 other councils charge for the collection of garden waste

and their annual subscription fee ranges from £30-£57, with an average price of £42 charged. West Northamptonshire Council has also recently harmonised their garden waste service and implemented a subscription service of £42 per year. The current charge in the area of East Northamptonshire is £55 per year. Some private operators also offer a collection service, some of whom charge higher amounts.

When are any changes likely to happen?

If the Council decided to make any changes, we expect the service to change by Autumn this year. We will tell you about any changes through press releases, communications on social media and communications on our website following the Executive's decision in July.

Charging

I've not had to pay for my garden waste to be collected before, so why is the Council considering to introduce a charge now?

There is a need to harmonise the service across North Northamptonshire as currently residents are receiving different services and some are paying a subscription charge. We have received several requests from residents asking us to address this issue.

Why do Councils across the country charge different amounts for the same service?

The charge is proposed at varying levels based on the actual cost to deliver the services, Councils are not allowed to make a profit from delivery of these services, so the charges are designed to cover the full cost of delivering the service. The charge in future years will reflect the costs and could go up or down as contributing factors like fuel costs and energy prices fluctuate, as well as being affected by the overall number of people who use and pay for the service.

I already pay Council Tax, why is the Council consulting on charging for garden waste collections?

North Northamptonshire Council harmonised Council Tax across the area in April 2021 and now seeks to harmonise the garden waste service.

The Council does not have to provide free garden waste collections as this is material for which the Council may make a charge for collections. The service costs the Council approximately £3,000,000 a year.

Currently many households in the area have their garden waste collected by the Council without a subscription charge. This means the Council funds the service from its wider budget, such as monies from within the Highways budget. So, every household, even those who do not use the service still have to contribute to its running costs through their Council Tax.

Residents of former East Northamptonshire who wish to use the service pay an annual subscription charge. This means only users of the service pay for it. So if you live in a flat, or you have paid to have a low-maintenance garden, you are not required to contribute to an additional service you do not need.

Since April 2021 residents have been asking North Northamptonshire Council to harmonise the garden waste collection across the area, so all residents receive the same service.

Will I receive a reduction in my Council Tax if you start charging for this service?

No. Council Tax is collected and distributed to the Council, Fire and Police Services and others. The proportion that is allocated to the Council is used to fund core services. Any income generated from an opt-in kerbside garden waste collection subscription service will go towards funding this service.

Council Tax legislation does not create a service contract, it is a way of funding local authorities and therefore there is, under the Council Tax legislation, no requirement to provide any service in return for payment.

Can you reduce the proposed charge by stopping the service in the winter?

At present, legislation requires the Council to provide a garden waste service. The legislation does not specify the frequency of the collections or whether they need to operate all year. Unless future legislation prevents the Council from doing so, we may consider reducing the garden waste service during the winter months depending on the outcome of the consultation.

Will there be help for residents without the means to pay or who are in receipt of benefits for a bin?

The Executive will consider whether it thinks it appropriate to offer any discounts if a subscription charge for garden waste is introduced.

Alternative ways to dispose of your garden waste

Will I still be able to take garden waste to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)?

Yes, you can continue to take your garden waste to any of North Northamptonshire Council's HWRCs free of charge.

Do you supply home composters?

Yes, we offer a discounted home composting bin available through this website: [Compost Bins - Getcomposting | Get your Council Compost Bin](#)

Bins and collections

Will my collection day change?

Once the Executive has decided which service to introduce across North Northamptonshire, it may be necessary to rearrange the collection routes. Where possible we will try to keep collection days the same however this cannot be guaranteed. We will inform you if your collection day is going to change.

Will there be a ban on garden waste in household waste bins?

It is already council policy that garden waste is prohibited from being disposed of in household general waste or recycling bins. We may not empty your bin if the collections crews find unwanted material in your bin.

Will Christmas trees be collected free of charge from residents without bins?

This will be dependent on the nature of the future service and will be part of the overall decision by the Executive in July.

Will you take extra garden waste placed beside the bin?

No, we will only collect garden waste that fits within the garden waste bin provided.

Who owns the bins?

The Council owns the garden waste bins.

Will I be given a new bin?

No, you can continue to use the garden waste bins you currently have.

Will I have to pay to replace my broken or lost garden waste bins?

If the bin is damaged by our crews or has degraded due to normal wear and tear, then they will be replaced free of charge. If a bin has been deliberately damaged, lost or misused by a householder then a charge may be incurred.

Can I give my bin away or sell it?

No, the bin is the property of the council.

The environment

Won't this increase the amount of fly-tipping?

Whilst there is a perception that fly tipping increases. The data does not support this. The majority of fly tipping relates to waste from small and medium enterprises and often contains evidence relating to construction, demolition waste, waste relating to businesses (tyres/house clearances etc...) and other household waste. We will be closely monitoring fly tipping as it links closely to our littering and fly tipping strategy and have strategies in place to deal with and disrupt this, in the unlikely event that we see increased incidents of garden waste fly-tipping.

Won't this increase the amount of waste going to landfill?

No. The majority of North Northamptonshire waste is either recycled or goes for energy recovery. It is already the policy for the Council that household general waste containers should not be used to dispose of material that can be composted or recycled.

Have you considered the environmental impact of more people driving to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres?

Yes, we have accounted for the expected increased throughput at those sites.

We are being encouraged to recycle. Will this service mean that we don't meet recycling targets?

No. Later this year, North Northamptonshire Council is expected to produce its Waste Strategy, and we expect to set realistic targets that also take account of our commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 as well as national recycling targets

How will this help the environment?

North Northamptonshire Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

It is important to dispose of all waste responsibly and in a manner that reduces harm to the environment. The most environmentally friendly way to deal with garden waste is to compost it in your garden. It is not good for the environment to put it in the black bin with your general waste because this waste goes towards either energy recovery or energy production. Garden waste has a high water content and therefore uses a lot of energy to burn so using these disposal methods is not a good way to dispose of garden waste.

Garden waste collected through the garden waste service or at the Council's Household Waste and Recycling Facilities (HWRCs) is turned into compost for use in farming or horticulture. There is also a financial cost to the Council for disposing of waste. The cheapest option for the Council is for residents to compost at home. The most expensive disposal option for the Council is the general waste, which is another reason why it is important to reduce as much waste as possible being disposed of through this route.

Providing a universal garden waste service without an additional charge to all residents requires the Council to drive refuse vehicles along every road even if residents choose not to use the service. A subscription service means the Council only drives to properties who have opted to pay for the service and are likely to need a collection. As a result, it is likely that a subscription service will require fewer vehicles and use less fuel, both of which are better for the environment.

Other information

What happens to the garden waste you collect?

The waste is tipped at a composting site where it is shredded and put into windrows (large, long heaps). The waste is turned regularly to improve oxygen content, distribute heat to regulate the temperature and to distribute moisture. The whole process takes in the region of sixteen weeks to produce a product which can then be screened to remove any contaminants (such as plastic) before use. It can then be used as a soil conditioner.

Do you sell composted waste for profit?

No, it costs the taxpayer to collect and dispose of this material at composting sites. The output does not meet the strict quality standards that are required to enable this product to be sold for horticultural purposes. Instead, the output is used locally in agriculture as a soil conditioner

Do the proposals include food waste?

No, this consultation is only focussing on garden waste. Proposals regarding the collection of food waste will be determined by the Executive at a future time to reflect emerging Government guidance.

How can I have my say?

How can I give my views?

You can give us your views by completing our [online questionnaire](https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/garden-waste-service). Or by typing <https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/garden-waste-service> into your browser.

You can also access this online questionnaire free of charge at any North Northamptonshire Council library. Customers are asked to check the opening times of the library you wish to visit and book an appointment in advance. Please see the [Library website](#) or telephone 0300 126 3000 to check times and make a booking.

Alternatively, you can email or send your comments in by post using the contact details below.

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If you would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format (including paper, easy read or large print) you can also contact us by telephone: 0300 126 3000 (option 4 Waste & Recycling followed by option 1 for Waste & Recycling).

When is the deadline for giving my views?

The consultation started on Monday, 14 March 2022 and will close at midnight on Sunday, 17 April 2022.

What will happen with my response and when will a decision be made?

Once the consultation closes, we will collate all the feedback received and present this information for the North Northamptonshire Council's Executive to consider when making

their decision on how to deliver the kerbside Garden Waste Collection Service for North Northamptonshire. We expect this to happen in July 2022.