

Garden waste collection service changes January 2020 FAQs

The way that we deal with waste in North Somerset will make an important contribution to our climate emergency strategy and have a positive impact on the environment through reduced vehicle emissions.

Due to rising cost pressures, there's no longer enough money to provide the same service in the same way, and the council made the decision in January 2020 to introduce an annual £50 per bin charge to fund the garden waste collection service.

Charging for collecting garden waste is consistent with all our neighbouring councils with the income generated from the annual fee funding the service. The charge will help to support a move towards composting and minimising garden waste, which will deliver important climate change priorities.

The garden waste collection service charges are due to start in the second half of 2020.

Your consultation response will be used to decide which payment options are available, how best to provide composting support and community composting, and whether a discount will be available to existing users of the scheme.

The results will be published during the early summer and you will be contacted later in the year with the full details of the garden waste collection service scheme.

On the following pages you'll find answers to commonly-asked questions about the service changes that may arise as you go through the consultation questions.



Why are you introducing an annual charge for collecting garden waste?

To make a positive contribution to our newly declared climate emergency by promoting home and community composting which, in turn, will reduce the amount of vehicles collecting garden waste and transporting this waste from our transfer station to the composting facility in Gloucestershire.

Garden waste collection is not a statutory service and rising costs and pressures on our budget mean we need to introduce a charge which funds the garden waste collection service and preserves our budget for paying for other vital services such as care and support in the community. This proposal will help the council save £450,000 from its budget in 2019/20 and £450,000 the following year at a time when we need to close an £18m gap between our income and the cost of services over the next four years.

Not all properties require the garden waste service so we feel an annual charge is fair, as only those residents using it will be charged.

When will I have to start paying the charge?

The charges are due to be implemented in the second half of 2020. Households will need to opt into the new service and will receive plenty of information to let you know how to do this.

Prior to this, consultation will take place between February and April this year and will include how to sign up, payment options, the size of the bins, how to access composting support. The results of the consultation will be communicated during the early summer.

How much will the service cost?

The cost will be £50 per bin per household each year.

What will the fee pay for?

The £50 fee will pay for a garden waste bin to be emptied for a year. The frequency of collections will be the same as with the current service. Residents already receiving the service should continue to use their existing containers.

I have already paid to register for the current service. Do I still have to pay £50 each year?

The one-off charge was to register for the current service and paid for the administration. Any household that wants to continue receiving a garden waste collection will be required to pay the £50 per year. However, the consultation will explore whether there is any potential to offer a one-off discount for existing users.

Will you offer different bin size options?

The consultation will consider this. We recognise the need to provide a solution for households with limited storage space. Reusable bags will continue to be offered to those households where there are access issues.

If I don't sign up, will you remove my bin?

The consultation will explore this and the relationship with a possible one-off reduction for those households already registered.

Why isn't this paid for by council tax?

Council tax is part of the national taxation system with rules for its administration set by central government. Council tax is not dedicated to the provision of specific services from the council.

Garden waste collection is not a statutory service and rising costs and pressures on our budget mean we need to introduce a charge which is paid for by households using the service which funds the service and preserves our budget for paying for other vital services such as care and support in the community.

How will you know who has paid?

The consultation will explore how best to manage the service including payment and the administration. Only households that pay will receive a collection.

Won't people just fly tip or put it in their black bin?

For households who decide not to opt in to the collection service we will encourage home or community composting and provide support to get people and communities started.

We all have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment and fly-tipping is illegal. Garden waste is also not permitted in your black bin which also has limited capacity.

How does charging help the environment and climate emergency?

We will be promoting home and community composting, which is by far the cheapest and most sustainable way to deal with garden waste. Composting garden waste provides a nutrient-rich soil enhancer and reduces the waste-miles travelled to zero. No bins to put out each week, just a great free product to help your plants grow better.

The more people who home compost, the fewer collection vehicles travelling around to collect garden waste and the fewer vehicles required to transport the garden waste from our transfer station in Weston-super-Mare to the composting facility in Gloucestershire. This all results in less climate impact.

If I don't sign up, what can I do with my garden waste?

Your choices will be either to home compost or take your garden waste to one of our three household waste recycling centres.

We will also be encouraging community composting schemes, like the one already running in Winford, so that may provide another option for some people.

When will this start?

We'll be consulting between Feb and April on the details of the scheme with the view to implementing the new service later in 2020. We'll ensure that households receive information well in advance of the start of the new service. We're keen to ensure that we design the details based on the feedback from residents.

Our household is on a low income. Will we still have to pay £50 if we want to receive the service?

Households which qualify for the council tax support scheme will also qualify for a reduced rate on the garden waste collection service. The percentage of discount applied will be the same as the percentage discount received for council tax.