



# Garden Waste Collections - Insights from the First Year

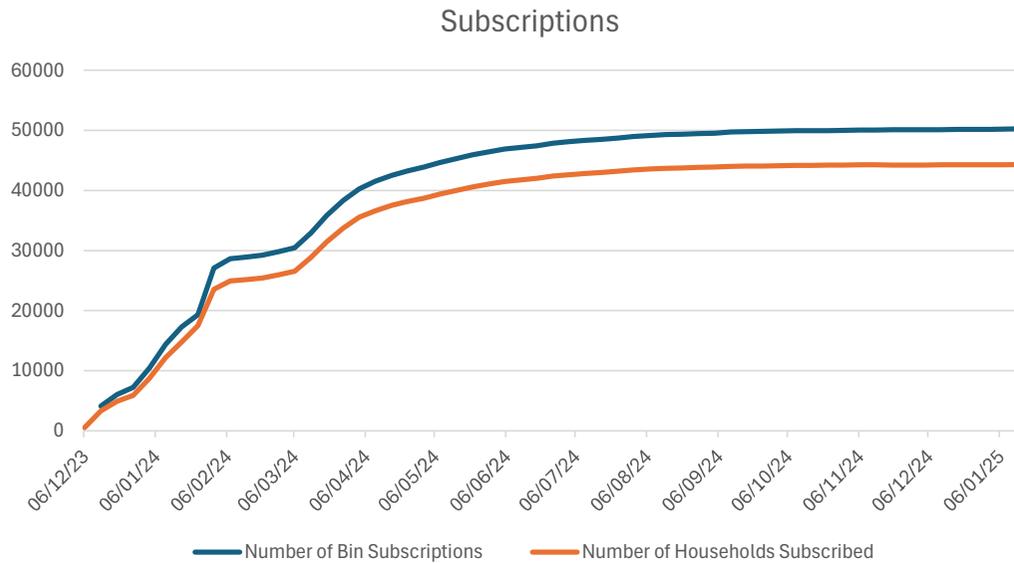
# Key Milestones and Highlights

- ▶ 81% of local authorities in England now charge for garden waste collections including Fenland DC, West Suffolk and Peterborough. The average uptake is 30%-40%
- ▶ The charge was implemented as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy planning.
- ▶ Chargeable garden waste service was introduced in Huntingdonshire in April 2024
- ▶ Area wide charge average was £60, HDC offered Initial early bird (until end of Jan 2024) enabled residents to subscribe for £50 with those who opted to pay by direct debit locking in this price for 3 years
- ▶ The standard subscription price is £57.50 for the first bin and additional bins are charged at £30
- ▶ The subscription period runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April until 31 March, and the number of bin subscriptions ended at 50242 (44317 properties subscribed totalling 50242 garden bin subscriptions of which 5925 are additional bins)
- ▶ Participation in the first year of eligible properties was 65%
- ▶ This generated an income of £2.5m

# Key Impacts

- ▶ We gathered data from other local authorities to understand possible impacts before we implemented the scheme.
  - ▶ Planning was based on the uptake being between 30%-40%- but we achieved 65%
  - ▶ We expected the residual waste to increase as food waste moved from the green bin into the grey bin. WRAP data estimated 10%, Residual waste has increased by 12%
  - ▶ Anticipated that the garden waste tonnage would reduce based on expected uptake rates, which would affect the recycling rate-(68.41% of garden waste continues to be captured by kerbside collections) WRAP data used suggested 60%-65%
  - ▶ The recycling rate has decreased by 7% taking our recycling rate to 49% in 2024/25 (national average 44%) Data suggested between 5%-8% reduction
  - ▶ Predicted income was £1.5m, actual income was £2.5m
  - ▶ Fly tipping was a concern, however data suggested we wouldn't see a significant increase, and we did not see a significant increase outside of annual variations.
  - ▶ Garden fires was raised as a concern, we have not experienced this.
  - ▶ Anticipated impact on other service areas such as the Call Centre, but we ensured the resource was allocated correctly to meet demand

# Participation and subscription data

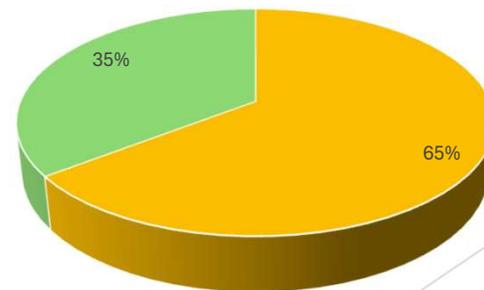


44317 properties subscribed totalling 50242 garden bin subscriptions of which 5925 are additional bins

68620 of domestic properties received a garden bin collection prior to the charge.

65% of these properties have subscribed to continue using the service.

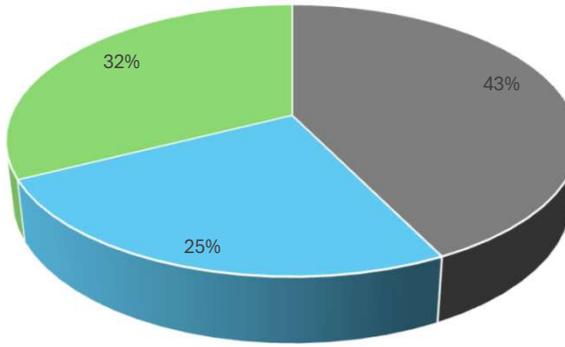
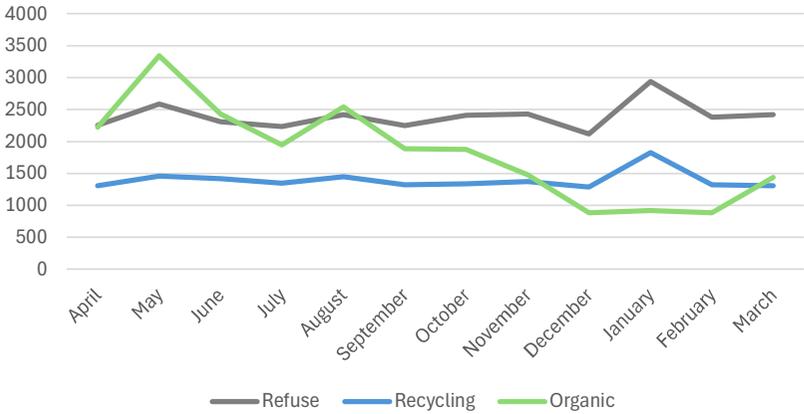
% of Eligible Households Subscribed



Subscribed Not subscribed

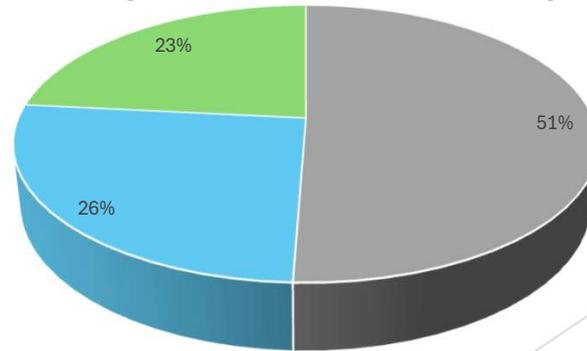
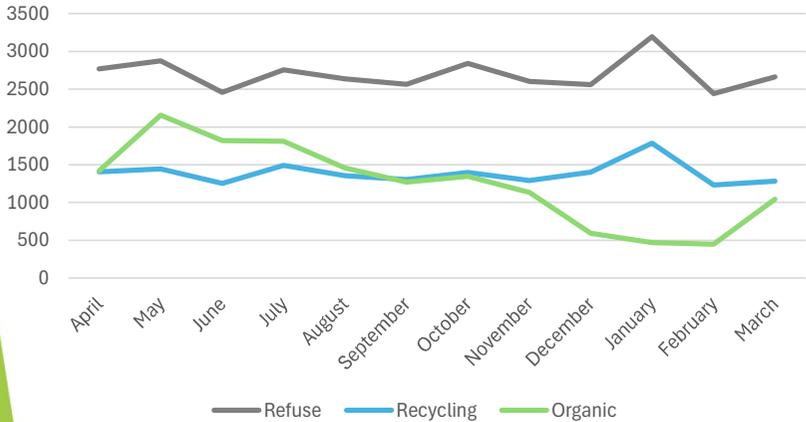
# Impact on Waste Tonrages and our Recycling Rate

Waste Tonrages 2023/24



The increase in residual waste is primarily due to food waste being diverted from the organic bin

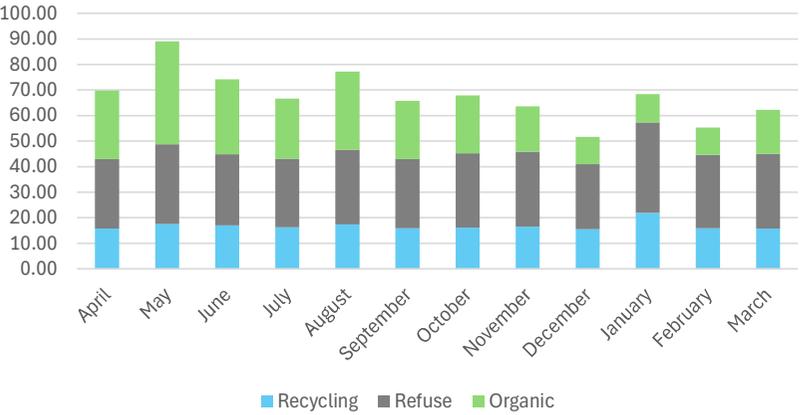
Waste Tonrages 2024/25



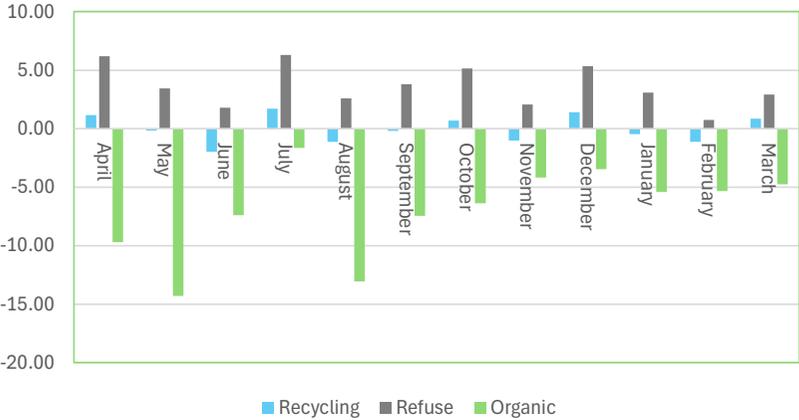
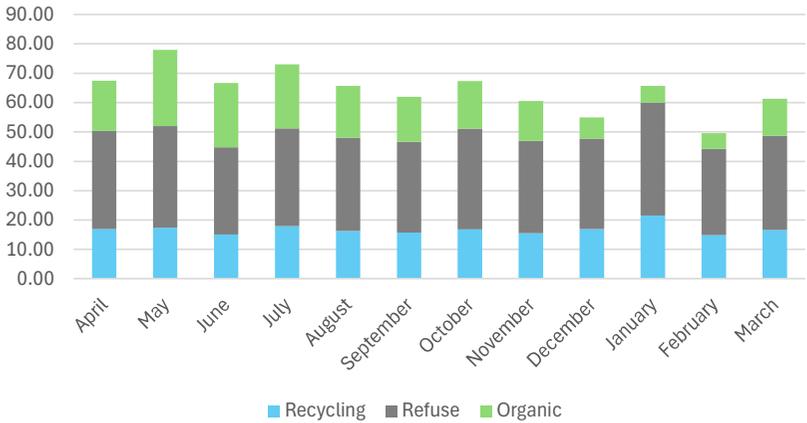
\*The recycling rate is calculated based on the tonnage of waste which is either recycled or composted

# Kg's of Waste Collected per Household

KG of waste per Household - 2023/24



KG of waste per Household - 2024/25

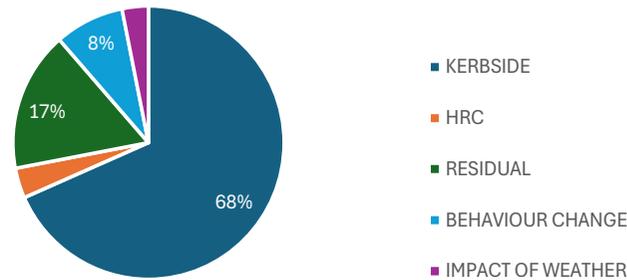


# How garden waste was being disposed of in 2024/25

- ▶ The garden waste tonnage at the household recycling centres has increased by 33.49%,
- ▶ 68.41% of garden waste continues to be captured by kerbside collections
- ▶ There has been an increase in residual waste by 12%
- ▶ Although there has been an increase in residual waste and garden waste going to the recycling centres, 2496 tonnes of waste has disappeared, potentially attributing to 8.26% of garden waste being home composting or by another means.

- ▶ If we compare tonnages to neighbouring authorities; indicative figures show that there was 3.15% less garden waste overall due to weather

Garden waste disposal in Huntingdonshire in 2024/25



	Kerbside Garden	Kerbside Residual	HRC Garden	Total
23/24	21882t	28742t	2352t	52977t
24/25	14970t	32369t	3140t	50480t
	<b>6912t decrease</b>	<b>3628t increase</b>	<b>788t increase</b>	<b>2496t decrease</b>

# Fly Tipping

- ▶ One of the concerns about introducing a chargeable garden waste service was around an increase in fly tipping

Year	Total number of reported fly tip incidents	Number of fly tipped garden incidents	% fly tipped garden waste
2023/24	3078	120	4%
2024/25	3560	184	5%

- ▶ There has been no significant increase in fly tipping of garden waste since the introduction of the chargeable garden waste service.
- ▶ Garden waste fly tips have tended to be associated with waste generated from commercial gardeners
- ▶ Our Enforcement Team have seen not impact on their workloads in relation to garden waste related fly tipping

# Financial Impact

- ▶ The introduction of the 'paid for' service enables us to maintain a balanced budget and removes the need to reduce the provision of other services
- ▶ The Garden Waste Service generated £2.52m in the first year

	Revenue Cost	Income	Nett
21/22	£ 839,096.37	£ 187,411.35	£ 651,685.02
22/23	£ 951,536.77	£ 203,978.75	£ 747,558.02
23/24	£ 956,851.01	£ 217,547.61	£ 739,303.40
24/25	£ 938,090.71	£ 2,530,266.72	-£ 1,592,176.01

# Customer Contact

- ▶ The number of calls received remained good and the call wait times were lower than the previous years. The average wait time for customers calling the call centre was 02:11
- ▶ Temporary additional resource assisted the contact centre with calls relating to the new service. This had a positive impact and helped to effectively manage the call numbers and maintain service levels
- ▶ Collaboration by many teams across the council ensured good planning and delivery including comprehensive communications and digital solutions
- ▶ 8 formal complaints received regarding the implementation of the service
- ▶ 1 compliment received in relation to efficiency of response to query
- ▶ 3975 missed bins reported across all waste streams which equates to 0.070% of scheduled collections were missed, however this remains below the APSE benchmark average of 0.076% across comparative local authorities.
- ▶ The number of missed bins are part of the team's performance metric, and managers work the crews to enhance performance of the service

# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Offering a discounted price (Early Bird) with a three-year lock-in period for residents who signed up by direct debit (DD) proved to be a successful strategy. This created a higher volume of anticipated year 1 subscriptions before the service was operational.
- ▶ Engagement with Town and Parish Councils was developed through the project, which established a network who were used extensively to disseminate messages to their local communities
- ▶ The key to success is resourcing appropriately, with the right capabilities and capacity
- ▶ Tailored marketing is another key to exceeding targets and reaching the community. As a result of carefully crafting the campaign to resonate with the target audience's needs and preferences, the project exceeded its financial objectives. Understanding the audience, leveraging targeted messages, and using channels effectively were essential. Personalised campaigns led to remarkable results in meeting and exceeding objectives, as demonstrated in this campaign.
- ▶ Streamlining processes and integrating systems for the garden waste subscription services not only enhances the user experience but also ensures a smooth transition to Business as Usual (BAU) operations, exemplified by efficient e-forms, secure payment gateways, and automated confirmation systems.

# What's next

- ▶ 2025/26 renewals opened in December 2024.
  - ▶ As of end of April 2025
    - ▶ 42735 properties have subscribed equating to 48654 garden bin subscriptions
    - ▶ 66% now pay by direct debit of which 79% of these auto renewed leading to a smooth transition into the new subscription year
- ▶ The garden waste service is now embedded as part of business as usual within Operations
- ▶ Approval given to continue the following initiatives based on uptake
  - ▶ Reduced price home composters - 400 home composters purchased in the first year
  - ▶ Community garden bins hosted by Parish Council - 4 parish councils have a community site with many others keen to explore sites within their area
  - ▶ Free soil improver for Parishes to make available for residents - 45 parish councils received skip for their community giveaway
- ▶ Weekly food waste collection service will be available for all domestic properties from March 2026. This is mandated and funded by Central Government