

Waste Prevention Draft Strategy 2024-2030

Public Consultation Report

November 2024



1 Background and Methods

Shropshire Council recently drew up a Waste Prevention Draft Strategy for 2024-2030, which is intended to replace the Waste Prevention Plan 2010-2015. The strategy was developed in the first half of 2024 during a time in which the waste management service in Shropshire Council's area underwent significant change in response to the council's challenging financial position.

National waste policy is also changing at scale, reflecting new legislation introduced under the Environment Act 2021. Changes to the waste policy landscape are expected during the term of this strategy and reforms include simpler recycling, the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections, a deposit return scheme and extended producer responsibility. These reforms will serve to assist reduce the quantity of Shropshire's household waste.

Data up to 2023 was used to inform this strategy, sourced from Defra's Waste Dataflow portal. The strategy draws on data from 2013 onwards as this was the mid-point of the last waste prevention plan and provides a decade's worth of data for comparison purposes. Extensive use has been made of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) near neighbour benchmarking group for Shropshire to enable comparison with local authorities with similar demographics.

It was important to obtain public feedback on this draft strategy before its implementation in early 2025. Therefore, a public consultation on the strategy took place from 27th September to 1st November 2024. Public feedback was received primarily through an online survey, which was available on the council's Get Involved pages, and publicised through its newsroom and media outlets. This report presents the results of this consultation.

Quantitative results of the survey are displayed below where appropriate as figures. Qualitative responses were analysed for common themes, which are presented where appropriate in Tables, with examples illustrating the common themes anonymised and provided as quotes.

This report proceeds in the following sections:

- **Section 1: Background and Methods** (this section) explains the context for Shropshire Council's Draft Waste Prevention Strategy 2024-2030. It also provides a brief description of the methods employed in seeking public feedback on the strategy and analysing the results of the consultation.
- **Section 2: Respondents** presents the number and types of responses to the consultation received from the online survey, as well as identifying demographic characteristics of respondents.
- **Section 3: Feedback on the Strategy** offers a detailed overview of the feedback provided on the strategy, including an analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative results.
- **Section 5: Summary and Conclusion** provides a brief summary and conclusion based on the overall analysis of the feedback received.

2 Respondents

There were 281 responses to the online survey, and the vast majority of these responses (98%) were from individual members of the public. Only six respondents said that they were answering the survey on behalf of an organisation. Four of these respondents were answering on behalf of a Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) organisation, and two on behalf of providers of public services. Those organisations represented in the survey that wished to be identified were Shropshire Climate Action (Zero Carbon Shropshire) and Stretton Climate Care.

Respondent gender identity was fairly evenly distributed, though slightly more respondents identified as female than male, which is typical of public consultations of this kind (see **Figure 1**).

Respondents' age skewed older, with a majority of respondents (58%) identifying themselves as between the ages of 55 and 74 (see **Figure 2**). Though Shropshire's average age is older than the national average, the lack of responses from residents under the age of 55 does not reflect the age spread of the population as a whole.¹

In particular, the survey did not reach young adults (under the age of 35), with only 3% of respondents identifying in this age category. This may indicate that younger adults are not as interested in waste prevention, but it also likely indicates that the council needs to do more to engage this population in its public consultations.

Perhaps due to the fact that respondents skewed older, a large portion of respondents (27%) also identified as having a long-term disability or illness that impacts their daily lives (see **Figure 3**). This is important, as it allows respondents to provide perspective on any impacts of the strategy on people with disabilities.

Figure 1: Respondent Gender

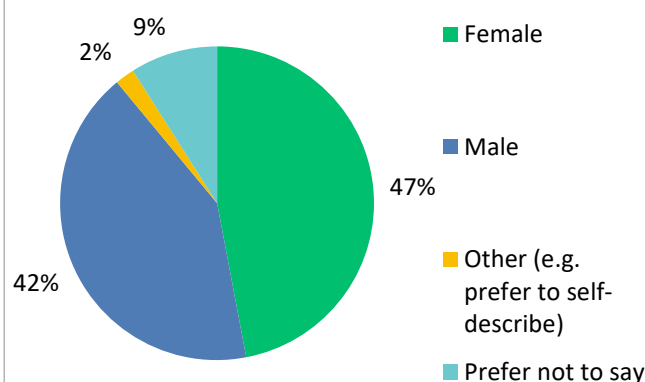


Figure 2: Respondent Age

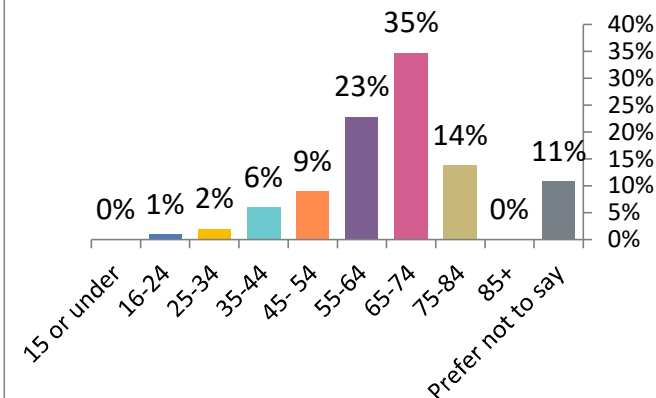
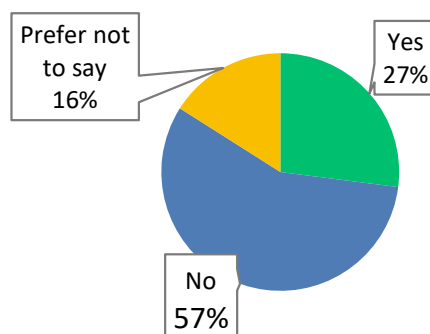
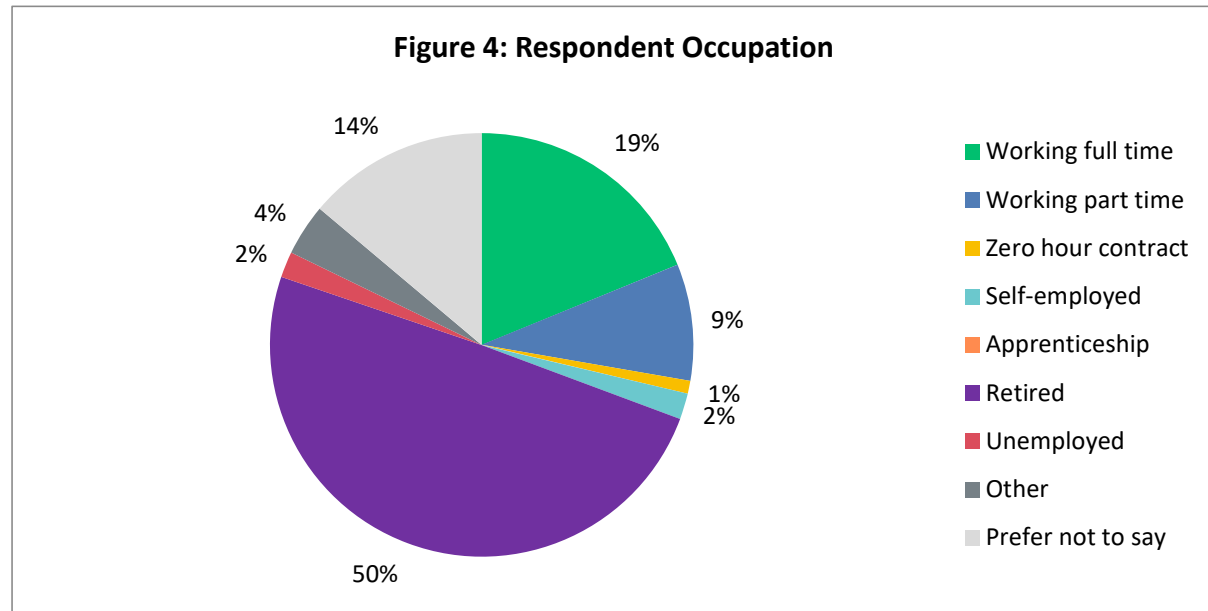


Figure 3: Respondents with Disability



¹¹ See Shropshire's demographic profile on the Shropshire Council [website](#).

Also, probably reflective of the average age of respondents, around half of respondents said that they are retired (**see Figure 4**). Under a third of respondents (31%) said that they were working, either full-time, part-time, under a zero-hour contract, or as self-employed.



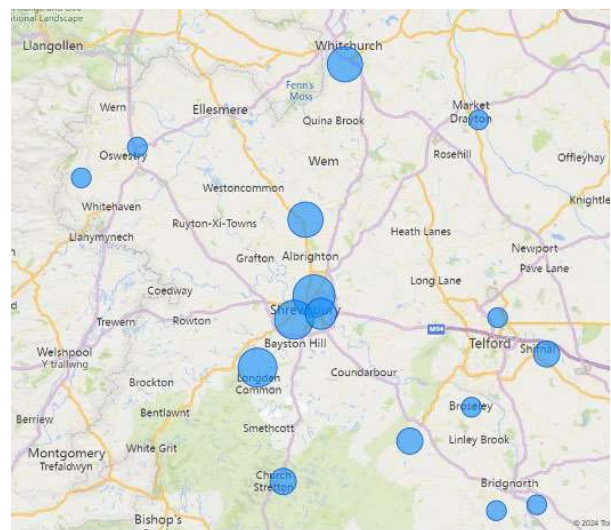
Respondents were roughly representative of the ethnic makeup of the county (**see Table 1**). Additionally, a small percentage of respondents (3% overall) identified with Muslim, Hundi, and Jewish religious beliefs, while the majority of respondents identified as either Christian (30%) or having no religious beliefs (41%). Again, this is fairly reflective of the overall demographics of Shropshire's population.

Table 1. Respondent Ethnic Background	Count	%
Arab	0	0%
Asian (Asian British; Bangladeshi Chinese; Indian; Japanese; Pakistani; any other Asian background).	0	0%
Black (Black African; Black British; Black Caribbean; any other Black background).	1	1%
Mixed (White and Asian; White and Black African; White and Black Caribbean; any other mixed background)	2	2%
White (British; Irish; Welsh)	71	70%
White (Gypsy, Roma or Irish traveler)	1	1%
Other white background e.g. Bulgarian, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, White South African, etc.	3	3%
Other Ethnic Group	2	2%
Prefer not to say or don't know	21	21%

Finally, respondents were asked to provide their postcode for the purposes of providing a sense of whether the survey had reached all parts of the county and whether respondents are representative of a wide area. Roughly half of respondents did so, and their partial postcodes have been mapped and are displayed in **Image 1, below**.

While there is some concentration of respondents in and around Shrewsbury, this is to be expected with the population concentration of Shropshire in this area. What is encouraging is that there are also pockets of respondents located across all other areas of Shropshire, including market towns such as Whitchurch, Church Stretton, Oswestry, Market Drayton, and Bridgnorth, but also more rural areas as well.

Image1: Respondent Approximate Locations

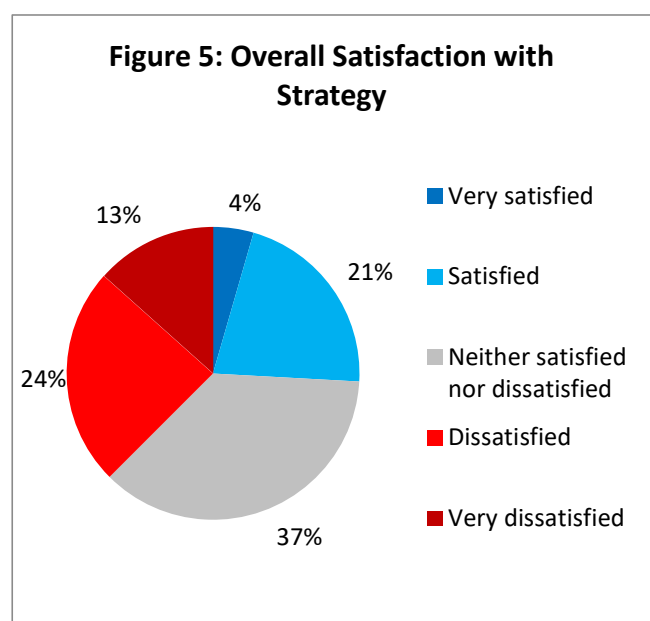


3 Feedback on the Strategy

The majority of respondents (95%) said that they had read the strategy either in part (33%) or in full (62%). Five respondents said that they had not read the strategy.

Overall, satisfaction with the strategy was mixed, with 37% of respondents saying that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the document, and over 25% saying that they were either satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 5). A further 37% of respondents were neutral in their response.

However, when asked more specific questions about the strategy, opinions looked more positive (see Figure 6, below). A majority of respondents (57%) agreed that the strategy outlines the challenges faced and the context. Large minorities of respondents (30-50%) agreed that the strategy vision was well described, that its fit with national and local policies is clear, that it sets out partnership working, that it describes the progress that has been made in Shropshire, and that its priorities are clearly presented.



In addition to the questions posed above, respondents were given the opportunity to provide more detailed responses to open-ended questions about the strategy. The first of these questions asked respondents to provide detailed feedback on **what they felt could be improved upon regarding the strategy**. 68 respondents provided comments in response to this question, which were analysed for common themes. Sometimes more than one theme appeared in one respondent's comments, so overall there were a total of 85 instances of themes that were identified in the

comments. These themes are summarised in **Table 2** in order of the frequency with which they appeared. The most common themes are discussed in more detail below, with anonymised comments provided as examples to illustrate the themes.

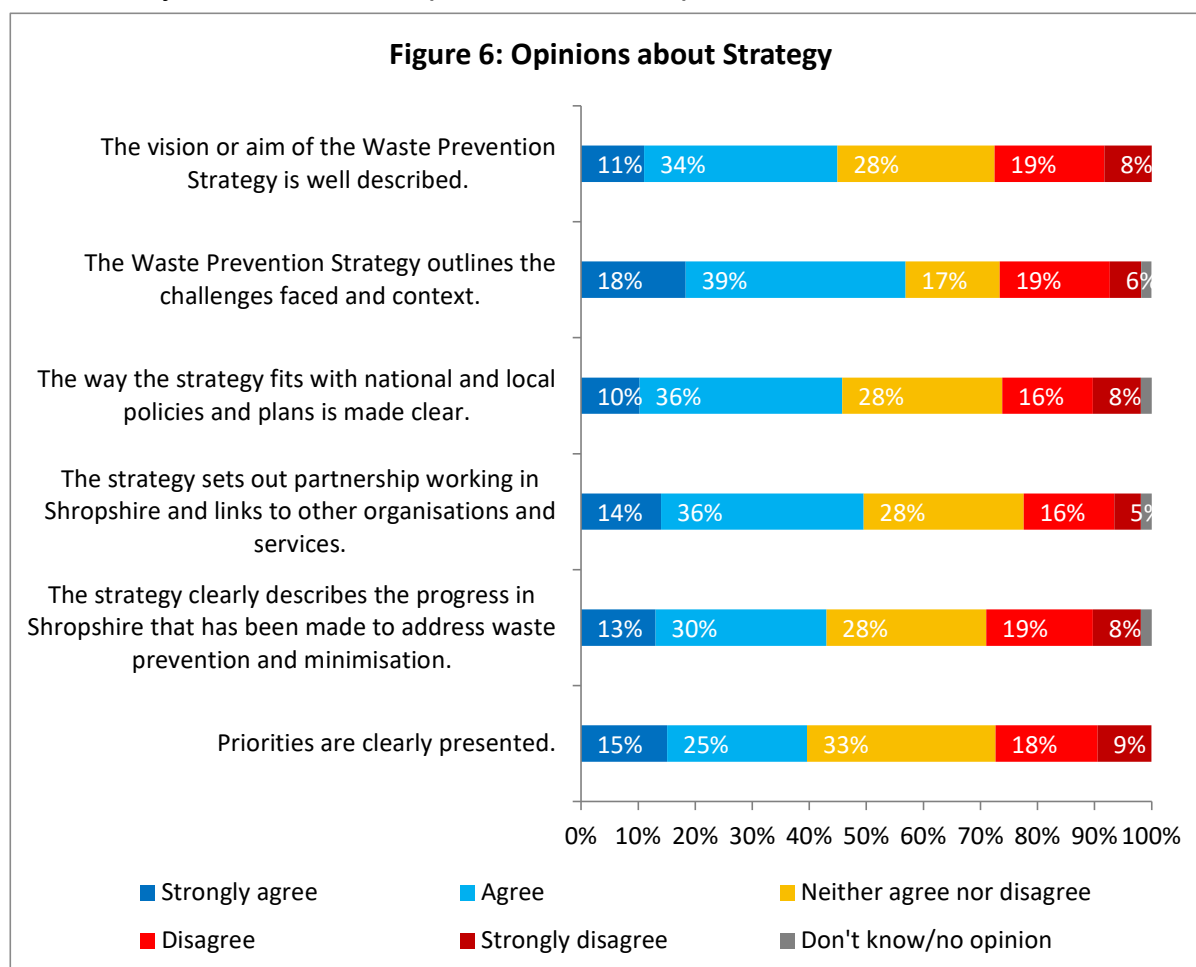


Table 2. Themes - What Could Be Improved?	Count	%
Concerns about specific council practices that don't seem to work	20	24%
Concerns about increases to fly tipping/illegal waste disposal	11	13%
Strategy missing certain things (e.g. improvements in rural locations or addressing problem behaviours).	10	12%
The strategy is not specific enough/provide enough detail	9	11%
Criticism of the council's financial management	9	11%
The language of the strategy is too complicated	8	9%
Concerns about costs/access for residents	5	6%
The strategy does not go far enough toward environmental goals/can make little impact	4	5%
Grammatical or other minor errors/issues with wording of strategy	4	5%
More learning from elsewhere is important to achieve targets/encourage good behaviour	4	5%
Other	1	1%

The largest theme in response to this question, addressed by 20 respondents, was that they are **concerned about specific council practices around waste that**

don't appear to be working from their perspective. Examples of these comments included:

- “Why do we need a blue bag as well as the purple lidded bin? Other authorities allow waste card / paper to go into the bin with plastics etc. This would reduce a further collection.”
- “Not happy with the 18 month wait to be able to dispose of food waste properly. Therefore, as I only have a few pots and artificial grass there is no point having a green bin.”
- “I have paid but not received the sticker for my bin. Kitchen waste should have been thought about in the long-term people won't feel the need to recycle!”

11 respondents said that they are concerned about how new council practices and/or this strategy may contribute to **increased fly tipping or other forms of illegal waste disposal**. Fly tipping emerged as a big theme in the Green Waste Consultation earlier in 2024, and these comments appear to be a continuation of those same concerns. For example:

- “I disagree about booking for HWRC. This seems too rigid a requirement and could lead to more fly tipping.”
- “Charging for green waste disposal and appointments at disposal sites will lead to fly tipping and so cost more in the long run.”

While these bigger themes largely related to council practices, respondents had more specific concerns about the strategy itself. 10 respondents said that the **strategy was missing certain things**. For example:

- “Strategies need to be focussed upon specific areas, especially outlying rural areas within Shropshire NOT just centred upon Shrewsbury. Your strategy highlights the problems of an extremely rural catchment area and the unknown aspects of the rural areas which seem to have an impact on waste management.”
- “The strategy doesn't take into account the fact this is a large rural county and the fact it costs a fortune to drive to recycling centres.”
- “In addition to the promotion of home composting, can the council investigate how they can make this more affordable for households in the area? Perhaps through schemes to discount the purchase of home composting kits, perhaps in partnership with local business and organisations such as the Derwen garden centre, Charlies, Dobbies etc.”
- “Unfortunately the way the consumerism is driven by a need to upgrade to the latest tech equipment etc there would be a need for a major mind set change to reduce the amount of waste produced which would not be easily recycled. Obviously there would be layers of society unable to do so and would rely on make do and mend.”

Four respondents felt that the strategy **does not go far enough for achieving environmental goals**, and four respondents also said that **more learning can be sought from elsewhere**. Examples of these kinds of comments included:

- “It’s worth analysing successful initiatives such as repair cafes to understand why these are so effective at engaging the public. The findings could be applied to other initiatives.”
- “It may be possible to replicate the model of master composters by identifying waste prevention champions across the county who can help to spread the message within their communities.”
- “1) much more emphasis upon encouraging household and community composting. Educating the public about composting and how all garden waste, uncooked vegetable/fruit waste, cardboard, hair, certain textiles etc can be added and kept out of landfill; 2) discussion of provision for and setting up of community composts especially for those who live in apartments without gardens for their own compost bins; 3) I would like you to consider the approach used in the Netherlands where households take waste to local, designated bins - recyclables in certain bins, general household waste in others, thus simplifying and centralising waste collection from these larger bins in public places rather than from each household.”

Nine respondents said that the strategy was **not specific enough or did not provide enough details**. Eight respondents also said that **the language of the strategy was too wordy, or too complicated**. Four respondents also made comments about grammatical or other **minor errors** in the strategy. Examples of these kinds of comments included:

- “I think the strategy could be in a simpler more concise form to expect people to read it and comment.”
- “Much of this document is written in, and addresses issues of, the past tense and is therefore historical.”
- “Format could be changed. Put the action points up front and explain background afterwards. Check for grammatical accuracy.”
- “The strategy focuses on household waste and the methods on how the consumer can cut back on waste. Other than garden and organic waste, there seems to be no mention of what the industrial supply market is doing to reduce the amount of packaging. There was a mention on glass weight reduction, but the amount of packaging is outrageous and it's not the consumers fault. There must be a section on what local government is doing on a policy level to reduce waste from the supply market.”
- “I see no clear path for partnership working and what it will prevent or save.”
- “Far too wordy most people will give up struggling through the waffle. Some very important information about local “not for landfill” resources are not included, e.g. Scrappies which has been running for the last 25 years.”
- “A 49 page document and a very small font makes the reading of the issues very difficult. I was able to see most of the issues and the explanations of the needs. Some of the charts were difficult to analyse with some of the data being dubious - the 20% figure for food that was edible - when from a survey how was this done?”

Finally, nine respondents made comments about their **perception of the council's financial mismanagement** more broadly, and four respondents raised concerns about the impacts of this strategy, or the council's waste management practices more generally, on **residents' finances**.

The next open-ended question for respondents asked them whether there was **anything that they particularly liked about the strategy**. 53 respondents offered comments in response to this question, which were analysed for themes. 60 instances of themes were identified in the comments overall. These themes are presented in **Table 3**, with examples given below to illustrate them.

Table 3. Themes – What Do You Like?	Count	%
Don't like anything	18	30%
Strategy is well written/detailed/well thought out	11	18%
Liked the case studies/proposed involvement of community groups	8	13%
Strategy could go further to promote environmental goals	6	10%
Criticism of the council/consultation	5	8%
Keeping all 5 recycling centres open/focus on recycling	4	7%
Strategy is realistic/achievable	3	5%
Like the key messages and/or specific initiatives	3	5%
Minor criticisms for report	1	2%
Other	1	2%

The largest theme present in response to the question of whether there was anything respondents liked about the strategy was that they **don't like anything**. 18 respondents said something to this effect. Most of these comments were simply “no” or “nothing” but a few were more detailed. For example:

- “No, I don't like any of it. You start from the wrong premise. Household waste is a finite amount. It won't magically become less because you try and avoid your liability to deal with it. The excess will just end up in laybys, country lanes and anywhere else that can be 'fly tipped' unobserved. Take care with what you wish for.”
- “No, ridiculous idea you'll have more fly tipping cost you more in the long run.”

In contrast, 11 respondents, however, made the point that they **liked how the strategy was written, its level of detail, and/or how well thought out it appears to be**. For example:

- “A focus on the major contributor of waste which is organics and a clear strategy on how to reduce. Good comparisons with national levels.”
- “Well written & clearly set out, with actions at end of each section. Good examples at the end.”
- “Very detailed, with much research clearly set out.”
- “The very long full document seems to cover it all, a lot to take in, but well laid out.”

- “It’s clear and easy to understand and uses stats to set out the problem and support the proposed solutions.”

Relatedly, eight respondents specifically pointed out that they liked the **inclusion of the case studies and/or the proposed involvement of community groups** in the strategy. Comments included:

- “The involvement of local community-based groups as described by the case studies is very encouraging.”
- “Involving community teams, repair shops, allotment holders, food hubs etc.”
- “The focus on prevention and the recognition that the community can play in supporting this.”

Also related to the strategy’s strengths were three comments from respondents who thought the strategy seemed particularly **realistic and achievable**. These were:

- “The strategy when combined with the national waste strategy should improve the country’s task for tackling waste.”
- “It appears well thought out, realistic, and it makes sense to engage representatives from the local community to encourage behaviour change.”
- “It’s honesty in setting out the challenges and accepting that the council will not be in a position to deliver it without community involvement.”

Three respondents also said that they **liked the key messages of the document, or mentioned specific initiatives** that they liked. Additionally, four respondents said **they liked the focus on recycling** and/or keeping the recycling centres open. For example:

- “It’s a decent start. Community composting is good, but needs to be easy to use.”
- “A focus on the major contributor of waste which is organics and a clear strategy on how to reduce. Good comparisons with national levels.”
- “Valuing food and understanding that it’s about behaviour change.”
- “The repairing and recycling of appliances. The more efficient control of trade people using HWRC.”

Six respondents made the point here that the **strategy could go further to achieve environmental goals**. For example:

- “Not strong enough. Not setting out the ‘how’.”
- “Promotion of community composting sites - but you do have to consider the impact and how to ensure that they do not pollute water courses. Repair, re-use and recycle key messages - but then what does the council do to do this (as councils are known for wasting annual budgets in April to use up budget allowances for buying things which are not required, so that they do not get a smaller budget next year). Also need to consider how the council re-use buildings which are partly empty, and old IT equipment which has generally just been skipped in the past.”

- “The 5 “R’s” more emphasis should be on the “refuse” if people unpacked all their foodstuffs and plastic wrapped items in the shop, maybe these businesses will get the message.”

Finally, five respondents used this space to criticise Shropshire Council, the consultation itself, or a minor grammatical issue about the strategy. These comments have all been shared with the service area, but are not detailed here as these themes are covered in other areas of this report.

In the last of the open-ended questions of the survey, respondents were asked whether there was anything else that they wanted to say about the strategy. This question is usually included at the end of consultations, because it can often elicit themes or suggestions that respondents do not bring up elsewhere. However, there are often also overlapping themes with other questions that show up in the responses to this question, and that is the case here as well, as **Table 4** demonstrates.

Table 4. Themes - Anything Else	Count	%
Criticism of green waste / food waste collection changes	17	27%
Criticism of council financial management	13	21%
General criticism for strategy or consultation	10	16%
Support/welcome the strategy	5	8%
More innovation needed/strategy needs to go further	4	6%
Focus should be on retailers more than household consumers (e.g. supermarkets)	4	6%
Concerns about costs/access for residents	4	6%
Better education/culture change needed	3	5%
More details needed	1	2%
Other	1	2%

The three largest themes to emerge in response to this question concerned **criticisms of the current green waste and/or food waste collection charges** and how they have been implemented, **criticism of Shropshire Council’s financial management**, and **general criticism for the strategy or the consultation**. One respondent also reiterated the theme that more details were needed in the strategy. Examples of these themes can be found elsewhere in this report, but some examples include:

- “Still unclear what plan is for collection of food waste that can’t be home-composted, between now & start of food waste collection service.”
- “Improve Shropshire County Council’s financial accountability to the public.”
- “I would like you to take my comments regarding green waste seriously. As well as my comments above, many old people on a pension who cannot physically do their own composting and disposing of lawn cuttings will be the ones to take the brunt of other people’s excesses because of the charge you are imposing.”
- “Total disregard for communities outside of Shrewsbury.”

- “Whoever wrote the document can’t even do simple maths - an increase from £52 to £56 is £4 not £3 stated. How can we trust any of the other figures you have used!”

Four respondents also reiterated the theme that they **would welcome or support the strategy**. For example:

“We welcome this strategy. We’re happy to support this and believe that our circular economy group can work with the council to encourage community engagement.”

Four respondents raised a new theme here, specifically suggesting that **more attention should be paid to retailer waste production than household waste**.

These comments were:

- “I’m not sure that pressure/focus is on supermarkets/retailers/manufacturers etc in supporting this by supplying items with environmentally friendly packaging that can be recycled. Or even no packaging at all.”
- “You will never reduce waste whilst suppliers keep using so much packaging.”
- “As almost all of my waste is single use plastic from retailers, I would like to see Shropshire Council showcasing and rewarding retailers who sign up to reducing their single use plastic footprint. Why is supermarket fruit and veg cheaper wrapped in plastic? Even just a Retailer of the Year award would be recognition and celebration of commitment to change as well as good advertising for the retailer.”
- “A mind set change on waste is up and coming but it seems to always place the consumer at fault. In many ways that is true, but the opportunities to reduce waste from the start (markets, shops) is very sparse and rare.”

Four respondents also said that **greater innovation is needed, or the strategy needs to go further**. This is a point that has been raised elsewhere in this report, but an example of such a comment here includes:

- “It is disappointing that ‘Take action to reduce garden/green waste arisings’ puts in fourth place ‘Explore the potential to realise greater value from the compost produced’. I consider this should be in first place. When I lived in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the Council incentivised households to maximise garden waste collection from which the Council then produced useable garden compost, returning two bags of it each year to every household that wanted it.”
- “The United Nations sustainable development goals are great to aim for e.g. reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. If you aim to achieve a higher reduction then you’ll end up achieving the one you’ve set e.g. SDG12.3 goal 50% vs your 20%. Really we should be aiming for the SDG goal - perhaps the strategy isn’t ambitious enough?”

Similarly, three respondents also raised the point here that **further education/ a culture change needed** on this issue. For example:

- “Reduction of waste produced will need an input with education with certain age groups due to poor teaching in regard to culinary and make do and mend

attitude. Composting information needs to be available to all interested parties not to the few online courses.”

Finally, four respondents specifically raised concerns here about **accessibility and cost issues for residents**. This is a theme that has been touched upon in other areas of this report, and was also a large concern raised in the Green Waste Consultation. For example:

- “The council's implementation so far of waste proposals has created struggles for older and disabled people. Having to book for recycling centre visits assumes they will be well enough to attend when they book.”

4 Summary and Conclusion

Summary of Results

Overall, 281 people responded to the public consultation on the Waste Prevention Draft Strategy for 2024-2030. Support for the strategy was mixed overall. However, a majority of respondents (57%) agreed that the strategy outlines the challenges faced and the context, and large minorities of respondents (30-50%) agreed that the strategy vision was well described, that its fit with national and local policies is clear, that it sets out partnership working, that it describes the progress that has been made in Shropshire, and that its priorities are clearly presented.

Key themes raised in support of the strategy included praise for its inclusion of community involvement and case studies for what is working, the detailed and thoughtful approach to how the strategy is written, and an emphasis on recycling and other specific initiatives. Common concerns raised about the strategy included feeling that the language of the strategy needs to be simpler, concerns about the council's current waste management practices (particularly those recently implemented), the council's financial management, and concerns that the strategy does not include enough detail or does not go far enough to achieve environmental goals.

Conclusion

Strong support from respondents to this consultation for community involvement and engagement in this strategy should be taken on board as a particularly important aspect of this piece of work that can, and should, be modelled elsewhere in the council. There is room for improvement in the strategy's language and clarity for sharing with the general public. While many felt that the strategy is detailed and well-written, others felt that the inclusion of a simpler version or summary might be useful for broader audiences.

Many thanks are extended to the individuals and organizations that took the time to respond to the consultation. Overall, the feedback was thoughtful, detailed, and constructive. This feedback will be thoroughly reviewed by the authors of the strategy and, where appropriate and possible, incorporated into the final version of the strategy ahead of its approval.

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