

Council  
21 July 2026

## **QUESTION 1**

### **Question from Councillor James Lawrence to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Liz Frost.**

Last year there were a series of missed garden waste bin collections, 5 different days each with one or two routes missed between July and September 2025, as per a briefing note sent to all councillors.

Since the circulation of this briefing note in September, and with a focus on College Ward as that is what I am informed about (however this issue appears to affect the entire borough) there have been several further missed collections:

- 3rd Nov 2025: unusual vehicle breakdowns
- 20th April 2026: staff sickness
- 1st June 2026: staff sickness
- 4th June 2026: staff sickness
- 29th June 2026: staff sickness

Are we adequately resourcing our garden waste service, that we charge residents for? Is the temporary solution as advertised on our website and communicated to all councillors, set to become a permanent one?

### **Reply from Councillor Frost**

Thank you for your question.

The challenges for our waste and re-cycling collections are operational issues caused by the shortage of drivers and the effects of absenteeism, holidays or sickness. We do have enough staff to adequately resource our services, although at present have several vacancies which we are trying to fill, however recruiting is difficult. We have increased the salary with an extra market payment and are hoping that this will help find the drivers we need to fill the vacant positions.

When the shortage first started it was felt best to drop garden waste collections, but this has caused issues due to the high amount of green waste produced in the summer months and the fortnightly collections. Therefore, we have now decided that, on days where we are short of LGV drivers, we will drop the dry recycling as we can collect this the following week, whereas if we drop garden waste it is four weeks between collections. Further, dry re-cycling material does not rot down and is still in good condition to be recycled within the two-week window.

All other materials are still collected within the weekly window

When we do need to collect the dry recycling at a two-week interval, this follows the collect service given in the other councils in Surrey. However when we are fully staffed, we can operate the premium service enjoyed by residents, providing a

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weekly collection of all materials, with the exception of garden waste which is a two-weekly collection.