

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL OPTIONS



Report Reference A-25-08
Meeting Date 23rd February 2026
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Deputy Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

In September 2023, it was agreed to review options for green waste disposal. The Deputy Town Clerk has investigated the following options to reduce the time spent travelling, for the committee to consider. The Town Council's strategic plan sets out an objective to expand the Town Ranger service to increase the cleanliness, maintenance, and attractiveness of the Town. In June 2023, it was agreed to purchase a tipping trailer to meet the demands put on the Town Ranger following the increase in managed spaces and the volume of green waste material. Green waste is anything from grass cuttings, pruning, timber, leaves, tree stumps and wood chip.

Prior to the increase in council-managed spaces, the Town Ranger service had created little in the way of green waste with the Ranger utilising strategic spaces to collect leaves and detritus to allow it to break down naturally in the local area. The Town Ranger has opted to mulch grass across the year instead of cut and collect operations to assist in reducing handling waste.

Where the Town Ranger cannot utilise strategic spaces and they are required to remove the various materials, they have been utilising the council's relationship with Cheshire East to dispose of the collected materials at their depot in Macclesfield. The Town Ranger visits the Macclesfield depot once a fortnight in the quieter periods of the year but in the last few weeks to cover the leaf fall and autumnal waste the Town Ranger reported this can increase to three times per week.

The Macclesfield depot will accept most green waste materials but will not take logs or timber. It takes on average one and a half hours to get to the depot, dispose of the material, and then return to Knutsford. This factors in an average amount of traffic on the two journeys.

2.0 GREEN WASTE OPTIONS

2.1 GREEN WASTE SKIP

Previously a green waste bin collection was investigated but companies could not guarantee the waste would not be sent to landfill. A similar option is the use of a 14m³ skip on hire from a local green waste processor company based in Lower Peover. The company processes and screens the waste, eventually turning it into useable compost. This skip could be stored at the Longridge depot. We have agreed an allocated amount of space with Cheshire East but this space is limited. The skip can only be used for green waste and cannot include litter, treated or painted timber, food waste, root balls or stumps, and concrete or aggregates. Each skip would cost £350.

2.2 GREEN WASTE DROP

The Town Ranger currently undertakes this function, but the Deputy Town Clerk investigated facilities with a shorter travel time. The closest facility is based in Lower Peover and would provide the skips as above. The cost to tip the 6m³ trailer at the site is around £75 and is a 10–15-minute drive away. Again, the green waste would be processed, screened, and turned into useable compost. The site is manned, and they will take clean green waste that will compost, woodchip, logs, and for an extra charge they will take stumps. They will not take litter, treated or painted timber, food waste, and concrete or aggregates. This requires no additional space, but the estimated additional cost would be between £1,950-£2,850 per year.

2.3 CREATE COMPOST

At the cemetery the groundskeeper made some compost piles in 2021 with the aim of creating compost to use in council managed projects and to share with community groups. Due to time constraints the compost creation has not been successful.

The cemetery does have a small amount of space to create a compost area. An area could be made available to store green waste materials and then once or twice per year a shredder could be used to break down the material. This could be an area in one of the corners and a hedgerow could be planted to shield the operation from those visiting the cemetery. This may require works to some of the trees to lift branches. This area could be moved to a more suitable and properly designed area if any extension of the cemetery occurs. The position of the composting area needs to be carefully considered so it does not compromise the integrity of the trees which run around the perimeter of the cemetery. Hiring a shredder with a 50mm diameter intake for one day currently costs around £98.

2.4 LONGRIDGE DEPOT USE

A concrete bay could be constructed at the Longridge depot for the Town Ranger to store and process green waste into usable compost. Further exploration into this option would be required, and managing the volume of material dealt with by the Town Ranger would likely require the purchase of a small loader to enable processing and transfer of the waste into compost. The council has put forward interest in assuming control of the Longridge depot to Cheshire East Council, but they are unwilling to transfer ownership as it is a functional asset they require to deliver their service in Knutsford. Last year the Town Clerk negotiated an increase in usable space to facilitate a better delivery of our services. This space currently houses a container, the Town Ranger's van, a trailer, and a water bowser. There is not currently space within our allotted area to deliver this scale of compost creation. A project such as this should be considered if the council takes over the management of the green spaces in Knutsford.

2.5 CONTINUE USING CHESHIRE EAST FACILITY

The Town Ranger has an established relationship with the staff at the Macclesfield depot and has in the past been able to remove items to the depot that would fall out of the green waste classification. The disadvantage to this is the distance and time taken to utilise this service. There is no direct cost to this option, but some time cost.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee approves the continuation of the current method, namely utilising the free Cheshire East Council facility.