

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT ON: INTRODUCTION OF A CHARGE FOR DOMESTIC GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 49-2019

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to introduce a charge for domestic garden waste collections during the financial year 2019/20.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Committee is asked to note the content of this report and approve the introduction a charge for the garden waste collection service commencing on 1 March 2020.

2.2 To set the initial annual charge at £35 per bin, and agree that any future increases will be brought back to committee for approval as part of the annual review of charges process.

2.3 To set the charge for providing standard size composting bins at £20 per bin including delivery.

2.4 To remit the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services in conjunction with the Executive Director of Corporate Services to consider the feasibility and options of a concessions scheme.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The proposed scheme is based on an estimated 40% take up of the service, and levying an annual charge of £35 per bin for fortnightly collections taking place between March and November each year.

3.2 The financial implications associated with implementing the scheme (excluding any concessions) are as follows:

<u>Financial Year</u>	<u>Net/Cost (Saving)</u>
2019/20	£55,000
2020/21	(£436,000)
2021/22	(£549,000)

3.3 Staffing, communication and IT costs in year 1 associated with setting up the charging scheme are estimated at £69,000. This cost would reduce to £35,000 in subsequent years. The set up costs have been factored into the saving figures shown in 3.2 above.

3.4 The upfront cost of implementing the scheme in financial year 2019/20 will be met from the Change Fund and savings for the following financial years will be reflected in the Neighbourhood Services Revenue Budget.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 introduced a requirement on local authorities to provide householders with collection services for dry recyclable waste and food waste. The collection of garden waste is however not a statutory service that Dundee City Council has to provide to householders, and under the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992, local authorities can levy a charge for the collection of certain types of household waste, including garden waste.

- 4.2 Charging for garden waste is common practice in England and Wales with over 50% of councils charging for this service. In Scotland, four councils have now introduced a charge, including two neighbouring councils, Angus, and Perth & Kinross. A number of other Scottish councils have intimated they are considering introducing a charge in future years. One authority, Scottish Borders, elected to discontinue garden waste collections in 2014, and instead promote home composting, disposal at Household Waste Recycling Centres or the use of private collection companies. Charges set by the Scottish councils range from £25 to £35 per bin per year. In England and Wales the charge ranges from £18 to £96 per bin with an average charge of £42 per year.
- 4.3 Angus Council's take-up figure during the first year of operation was 46% of applicable households, with this figure dropping to 45% during the second year. Perth & Kinross have indicated a take-up figure of 54% during the first year of operation. The take-up rate in both Perth & Kinross and Angus Councils vary depending on factors such as access to household waste recycling centres and housing make up. Carrying out a comparison with broadly similar areas in Dundee would suggest a take-up rate of approximately 40% of applicable households during the first year of operation.
- 4.4 Information hangers to be placed onto the handle of bins by the waste operatives will be used to inform households of contamination within any of the recycling bins and to explain what material is acceptable. Garden waste placed into the residual waste bins would result in an increase in tonnage through the MEB waste to energy plant at a potentially significant cost. To minimise the likely impact of garden waste finding its way into the residual waste stream following the introduction of a charge, it is proposed to extend the use of the information hangers to identify garden waste as a contaminant within the residual waste bin, instructing that this waste should be disposed of via the brown bin service or free of charge at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Garden waste or residual waste presented in sacks alongside the residual bin or garden waste bin will not be collected. These measures will be widely communicated to householders at the outset of the scheme implementation.
- 4.5 As part of the changes to household waste and recycling collections within the city, the assisted collection service was extended to include paper & card, and plastics, metals and cartons recycling bins. It is now proposed to further extend the assisted collection service to include garden waste bins for eligible householders who have purchased a permit. This enhancement of the service will be communicated to all households at the outset of the scheme implementation.

5.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

- 5.1 Letters will be sent to all households approximately 3 months prior to the start of the charging period. This letter will advise them of how to register for the service, how to make payment, what to do if they have multiple bins and how they can arrange for bins to be removed if they do not wish to participate.
- 5.2 Householders will be encouraged to register online wherever possible and staff at various Dundee City Council offices will be able to assist householders who do not have internet access at home. Payment can be made over the phone or via the secure website using their debit or credit card. Payment can be made in person at council offices – locations and full details will be specified in letters sent to residents.
- 5.3 Once payment has been received, householders will receive notification of their registration to the scheme within 21 working days. The registration documents will include a sticker which includes the address of the registered property and detailed Terms & Conditions associated with the service. The sticker will be placed on the bin by the householder and will indicate to the collection crew that the address is included in the scheme. Only those bins displaying a valid sticker will be emptied.
- 5.4 Householders will be able to sign up at any point during the charging period, but there will be no part year reductions for householders who sign up at a later date.
- 5.5 The frequency of collections will not change. It is proposed to continue to operate every two weeks throughout the year from March to November. Collection details will be advertised on the council website and will be displayed on the collection calendars.
- 5.6 Householders who do not sign up for the scheme will be encouraged to dispose of garden waste free of charge at the HWRCs at Baldovie and Riverside.

- 5.7 Home composting is an easy way to turn kitchen and garden waste to turn into a free and reliable source of nutrient rich compost. Dundee City Council has joined a National Agreement Framework and can offer residents home composting bins at competitive prices. Many different styles and sizes of bins are available to suit all budgets, with the composting units ranging in size from 220 litre to 330 litre capacity. The most common form of composting bin will be available to purchase from Dundee City Council at a price of £20 per bin including delivery.
- 5.8 Further details about the reason why the scheme is being introduced, how it will operate and details on how to order a home composting bin will be displayed on the council website. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be created to provide more information to specific queries.

6.0 COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 A defined communications strategy covering the proposed changes to the garden waste service will be created. It is recognised this proposal presents an opportunity to further promote the existing waste and recycling service by engaging with householders and providing further information to influence positive behaviour change across the full range of recycling services.

7.0 START DATE

- 7.1 The 1 March 2020 start date is considered to be the earliest practical date for preparatory work to be completed across the range of services inputting to the scheme prior to the implementation date.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The Council Management Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

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Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

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February 2019

Committee Report No: 49-2019

Document Title: Introduction of a charge for domestic garden waste collections

Document Type: Policy

New/Existing: New

Period Covered: 07/01/2019 - 07/03/2020

Document Description:

Committee report seeking approval to introduce a charge for domestic garden waste collections from 1st March 2020. Report details a charge per bin per year to cover the cost of providing the collections to households, as well as the expansion of the assisted collection service to cover garden waste bins.

Intended Outcome:

It is intended that Committee approve the proposed course of action and that preparatory work then begins in advance of the charges being introduced from 1st March 2020. All households who purchase a permit will then be issued with a bin sticker to identify their household as having paid the charge and will thereafter receive all scheduled brown bin uplifts from 1st March 2020 onwards. Households who opt not to purchase a permit will no longer receive brown bin uplifts from 1st March 2020 and will have their brown bin removed on request.

How will the proposal be monitored?:

Data will be collected on the number of households who purchase permits as a percentage of the total number of households eligible for brown bin collections and this will be used as the benchmark of success of the scheme. In addition, tonnages of garden waste collected via household kerbside collections for the period March 2020-February 2021 will be compared to the previous 12 months and cross referenced against the tonnages of garden waste deposited at HWRC's during that same period to ascertain any decrease in overall garden waste tonnages sent for recycling. Similarly, the tonnage of general waste produced during these same time periods will be assessed to determine how much garden waste is disposed of within the general waste bins and the associated costs for this calculated and offset against the income received from the charges.

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A. Equality and Diversity Impacts:

Age:	Positive
Disability:	Positive
Gender Reassignment:	No Impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership:	No Impact
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No Impact
Race/Ethnicity:	No Impact
Religion or Belief:	No Impact
Sex:	No Impact
Sexual Orientation:	No Impact

Equality and diversity Implications:

The expansion of the assisted collection service to cover garden waste (brown) bins will have a positive effect on elderly and disabled residents who currently receive no assistance in moving these bins on collection day. However it is recognised that the ability of these residents to pay the charge may mean that the positive impacts may not be fully realised.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

The expansion of the assisted collection service has a positive impact & requires no mitigating action, however, the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Corporate Services has committed to investigating the feasibility of a concessionary scheme.

Is the proposal subject to a full EQIA? : No

The expansion of the assisted collection service to cover garden waste (brown) bins will have a positive effect on elderly and disabled residents who currently receive no assistance in moving these bins on collection day. However it is recognised that the ability of these residents to pay the charge may mean that the positive impacts may not be fully realised.

B. Fairness and Poverty Impacts:

Geography

Strathmartine (Ardler, St Mary's and Kirkton):	Not Known	
Lochee(Lochee/Beechwood, Charleston and Menzieshill):	Not Known	
Coldside(Hilltown, Fairmuir and Coldside):		Not Known
Maryfield(Stobswell and City Centre):	Not Known	
North East(Whitfield, Fintry and Mill O' Mains):	Not Known	
East End(Mid Craigie, Linlathen and Douglas):	Not Known	
The Ferry:	Not Known	
West End:	Not Known	

Household Group

Lone Parent Families:	Not Known
Greater Number of children and/or Young Children:	Not Known
Pensioners - Single/Couple:	Not Known
Single female households with children:	Not Known
Unskilled workers or unemployed:	Not Known
Serious and enduring mental health problems:	Not Known
Homeless:	No Impact
Drug and/or alcohol problems:	Not Known
Offenders and Ex-offenders:	Not Known
Looked after children and care leavers:	Not Known
Carers:	Not Known

Significant Impact

Employment:	Not Known
Education and Skills:	Not Known
Benefit Advice/Income Maximisation:	Not Known
Childcare:	Not Known
Affordability and Accessibility of services:	Not Known

Fairness and Poverty Implications:

The annual charge per bin for garden waste collections may have an impact on households in poverty but this is not known at present. For households who wish to participate the annual charge would need to be paid in full at the time of application.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

Careful consideration has been given to whether the proposed charges can be sensitive to poverty through concessions or means testing and the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Corporate Services has committed to investigating the

feasibility of such a concessionary scheme. There is no obligation for householders to participate in the service and many households across the City will have no requirement for disposal of garden waste as their property has no garden (e.g. flats and tenements). Furthermore, all residents have access to free disposal of garden waste at recycling centres and are able to dispose of garden waste within general waste bins. For these reasons it cannot be argued that there will be a negative impact on households experiencing poverty.

C. Environmental Impacts

Climate Change

Mitigating greenhouse gases: Positive

Adapting to the effects of climate change: Positive

Resource Use

Energy efficiency and consumption: Positive

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment

Air, land and water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open and green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

A potential decrease in tonnages of garden waste sent for recycling is anticipated, based on feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities who have implemented a similar charging system in recent years. This has been offset to some degree by increased tonnages deposited at Recycling Centres and so DCC intend to widely promote the free disposal option at recycling centres as part of the communications campaign linked to the charging scheme. In addition, greater information will be provided to households on the importance of recycling and the details of the recycling processes for garden waste to provide assurances for householders that this material is not simply disposed of alongside general waste.

Environmental Implications:

As subscriptions to the new service are identified, existing collection routes will be reconfigured to align these with the actual numbers of collections required - resulting in more efficient vehicle movements and reduced emissions as a result.

D. Corporate Risk Impacts

Corporate Risk Implications:

Corporate Risk Mitigating Actions:

Financial risks relate to the increased disposal charges DCC may face if significant quantities of garden waste currently sent for recycling are disposed of in general waste bins following the introduction of the charge. The net costs to the council (assumed) are less than £250k and an extensive communications campaign will be undertaken to stress the importance of recycling and encourage residents to make use of the free recycling facilities at Recycling Centres if they prefer not to pay the annual charge for their garden waste bin. Censure from press and public is expected to a certain degree as any additional charges introduced by a Local Authority are likely to face an element of resistance - particularly when the impact of the charging proposals in neighbouring authorities are noted. As the charging for garden waste is now something of a national trend, many residents are anticipating this change and many households within DCC do not have access to gardens and therefore do not require this service. DCC therefore do not see the potential for significant, widespread censure and will take steps to engage with the press and public in advance of and during the introduction of the proposed changes in order to mitigate the impact of these.