

SUBJECT:	Chargeable Garden Waste Service
REPORT OF:	Cllr Luisa Sullivan
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WARD/S AFFECTED	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet Members information relating to the chargeable garden waste service and to seek approval to update the subscription arrangements and annual charge.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendation for the chargeable garden waste service to adopt a rolling programme of subscriptions at a charge of £38, to take immediate effect.

2. Background.

- 3.1 The garden waste collection service, via a 240 litre green lidded wheeled bin, was first introduced in 2014/15 with a charge of £45 per annum with an early bird discount charge of £35, if residents subscribed during February.
- 3.2 Table 1 sets out the uptake for 2015/16 and 2016/17; the early bird charge was increased to £36 and the non-discounted rate was increased to £46.

Table 1

Year	Total no green bins	Early bird subscribers	Early bird price	% up-take	Early bird income	Full price subscribers	% up-take	Full price	Full price income	Total income
2015/2016	7637	5907	£35	77%	£206,745	1730	23%	£45	£77,850	£284,595
2016/2017	8415	6548	£36	78%	£235,728	1867	23%	£46	£85,882	£321,610

- 3.4 Included within these figures are a total of 636 residents who have subscribed for a second bin at the early bird rate and 408 residents who subscribed to a second bin at the full price. The budget for income in the current year is £294,000.
- 3.5 What-ever time during the year that a resident joins the scheme, their subscription ends on 31st March, the following year. For instance, if a resident subscribed in November, they would pay the full price and their subscription would end 4 months later. Second green waste bins are charged at the same rate.

3. Discussion.

- 3.1 Officers have looked into options for streamlining the subscription process, at opportunities to make the charge more comparable with other districts and to increase the convenience for residents. With currently 78% of subscribers opting into the scheme at the early bird rate of £36, if the discounted price was removed, it is possible that this would impact on the level of subscription. It is also likely that some garden waste would end up back in the residual waste bins.
- 3.2 Likewise, Members should be aware that although this scheme is very important in terms of the Council meeting and maintaining the current recycling / composting level of over 50%, there is limited surplus capacity in the current collection vehicles. If the participation increased significantly, extra vehicles would have to be purchased and collection crews employed. Officers are currently looking at the additional possible participation rates for this service, should we decide to heavily promote it and the cost/benefit analysis relating to how many additional subscriptions would be required to make the use of an additional vehicle and crews a viable and attractive option. Members will be updated when this piece of work has been completed.
- 3.3 A number of surrounding Councils offer this service to their residents and their current charges are as follows:
- ✓ Chiltern have a set charge of £35 pa (next year £38 being considered)
 - ✓ Harrow £75 pa reduced each month if residents join the scheme part way through the year
 - ✓ Hounslow £50 pa with reduced fee for 6 months only
 - ✓ Three Rivers £35 pa with reduced fee for reduced period
 - ✓ Aylesbury £40 pa
 - ✓ South Oxford £37 pa
 - ✓ Windsor & Maidenhead £35 pa
- 3.4 The average charge of these Councils for a full year is £43.85 (£38.60 if the highest charge of £75 is not included).
- 3.5 The current collection charge for CDC is a flat charge of £35. This is a rolling year subscription, which means that whenever a resident subscribes, they will have a 12 month subscription from that point in time. With the new joint waste team in place it would be slightly easier to have the same charge at SBDC but of course it is for Members to decide the right level of charge for SBDC.
- 3.6 Within CDC, garden waste bins are not removed from any property that decide not to subscribe which saves time and resources involved in the retrieval of those bins. It also provides some encouragement to those residents to reconsider renewing their subscription to the service.
- 3.7 The CDC fees and charges for 2017/18 are recommending increasing the flat rate from £35 to £38, for the rolling year subscription.
- 3.8 Should Members decide to adopt the rolling subscription programme at the fixed rate of £38 for the year, based on the current figures, this would equate to £319,770, but if residents are provided with the ability to subscribe at any time of the year at the same charge, this would make the scheme more attractive as they could chose the timing of their subscription. For instance:

- 1% increase (84 bins) would generate an additional £3,192
- 2% increase (168 bins) would generate an additional £6,384
- 3% increase (252 bins) would generate an additional £9,576

3.9 In terms of the administration of the service, the structure of the new shared waste team is geared up to provide the resilience to manage the steady flow of subscriptions throughout the year, and this was part of the business case for the current structure. This is preferable to the intense early bird period when additional agency staff need to be recruited in order to cope with demand. Similarly, the waste team is discussing with Customer Services the resource requirements for the renewal process required in February 2017. Future resourcing efficiencies will be looked at.

4. Consultation

This report was taken to Environment PAG on 6th December 2016 and was supported by those Members.

5. Options

The alternative option is to change nothing but this will not offer up a more flexible service to customers and will not optimise efficiencies within the Joint Waste Team.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Agreement of the recommendation to introduce a flat rate charge of £38 for a 12 month subscription supports the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18.
- 6.2 Adoption of a rolling programme would reduce the resource implications for the waste team.
- 6.3 Adopting the rolling programme of subscriptions at a flat rate of £38 would align more closely with the partner authority.

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

7.1 This matter is related to the following local and national policy objectives:

- The Council's medium-term aim of helping to provide a clean and decent district where there is pride in, and ownership of, our surroundings and public spaces.
- The current Bucks Waste Partnership target of recycling / composting 60% of household waste collected

8. Next Steps

If approved, to introduce the new arrangements with immediate effect as the renewal programme commences in February.

Background Papers:	It is a legal requirement that we make available any background papers relied on to prepare the report and should be listed at the end of the report (copies of Part 1 background papers for executive decisions must be provided to Democratic Services)
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