

7 September 2017

Chargeable Garden Waste Collections

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr C Jones – Clean and Green

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Walsall Council currently collects garden waste 14 times per year between April and October. Over 94,000 households have a brown garden waste bin, and each year we collect approximately 14,000 tons of garden waste which is turned into compost.
- 1.2 Since 2010 the council has saved approximately £160 million by making efficiencies, and reducing, ceasing and changing services. However amid an ongoing challenging financial outlook, the council anticipates the need to save a further £25 million over the next two years.
- 1.3 In October 2016 Walsall Council's Cabinet approved the introduction of charging for garden waste collections, subject to further consultation. This would make a saving in the region of £300,000 and give the potential to extend the service and collect garden waste for more months of the year than we currently do. Such an approach has been implemented in a number of other local authority areas.

Saving - Introduce Charging for Green Waste Collections - £300,000

Net Saving				
	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021
	£0	£0	£0	£0
Estimated Saving	(300,000)			
Revenue Investment	0			
Net Saving	(300,000)			
Capital investment				

The saving was deferred to 2018/19 to allow appropriate public consultation to be carried out.

- 1.4 We know that residents value the garden waste collection service. Introducing a charge for garden waste collections is likely to reduce both participation in the service, and the amount of material collected for recycling. This will impact on the recycling rate and disposal costs.

2.0 Reason for scrutiny

- 2.1 Scrutiny Committee have requested an update on the proposal to introduce charging for garden waste collections and the public consultation process.

Recommendations

- 1) That, the Committee note the content of the report and provide a view on the direction of the service.

4.0 Report Detail

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The estimated saving of £300,000 is based on 20% of residents participating in the scheme and an estimated annual charge of £30. The chargeable service could operate for up to 11 months per year, from mid January and mid December, closing for only four weeks to accommodate changes to residual and recycling collections over the Christmas and New Year period.
- 4.1.2 The savings are generated by reduced staff and vehicle numbers plus income generated through the introduction of a charge. All staff reductions would be agency staff. There may or may not be a fall in disposal costs as waste that is not collected at the kerbside is likely to be displaced to the HWRC's (Household Waste Recycling Centres) or put in the grey residual waste bin.
- 4.1.3 A charged service will be demand-led and will change year on year. It is envisaged that residents who use the service will sign up to an annual service agreement. The council will incur costs to administer this process and this cost is reflected in the identified saving.
- 4.1.4 The current garden waste service is scheduled to cease at the end of October 2017. Communication and promotion of the chargeable service would start in autumn 2017 in readiness for the new service to commence in March 2018.

4.2 Consultation Exercise

- 4.2.1 Following the decision by Cabinet in October 2016, public consultation on the introduction of a charge for garden waste collections has been undertaken between 9 June 2017 and 7 August 2017.
- 4.2.2 The consultation exercise was designed in conjunction with the corporate consultation team and residents were asked to give us their views on charging for garden waste collections by completing a questionnaire (see Appendix 1)

4.2.3 The questionnaire tested their views on several aspects of the proposed service including:

- How much they participate in the current garden waste scheme
- Which option the council should adopt for the future garden waste collection scheme
- If they would be willing to pay for the collection of garden waste
- How much they would be willing to pay
- During which months they would use the service
- Would they like to be able to buy an extra garden waste bin
- How the introduction of a charge would affect their household.
- How they would dispose of garden waste if they chose not to pay for the collections.

4.2.4 There were two aspects of the consultation exercise;

Postal Survey

A postal questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 13,819 households who have a brown garden waste bin. The postal surveys had to be returned by 30 June 2017, participation was voluntary. Over 2,800 replies (20%) have been received from the postal survey.

Online questionnaire

Households who did not receive a questionnaire could have their say by completing the questionnaire online at www.walsallbins.co.uk. Paper copies were provided on request to anyone who could not complete the on-line version. The on-line survey closed on 7 August 2017 and responses are being reviewed.

4.2.5 At the time of writing this report the data from both survey methods is being verified and analysed and will be used to inform the design of the new service.

5.0 Resource Implications

- 5.1 Currently the garden waste collection service uses seasonal agency staff and hired refuse collection vehicles during the collection period. On the basis that a reduced number of households will participate in the chargeable service, staffing and vehicle requirements will reduce. Staff reductions will be agency employees.
- 5.2 The Council currently has a disposal contract in place to recycle the garden waste which ends in March 2019. This Contract does not have a minimum annual tonnage so reduced tonnages can be accommodated.

- 5.3 There are no property, capital or revenue investment requirements associated with this saving.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 As a Unitary Authority, Walsall Council has the responsibility for both waste collection and waste disposal. As a Waste Collection Authority (WCA) and Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) Walsall Council has a number of statutory obligations. These include:

- A duty under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) to collect household waste and, if requested, commercial waste within Walsall.
- Responsibility under Section 48 of the EPA 1990 to arrange and provide places for the disposal of waste collected by Walsall Council within its function as a WDA.

- 6.2 The free collection of garden waste is not a service the council has to provide by law. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives councils the option to introduce a charge for the service.

7.0 Citizen Impact

- 7.1 This service affects over 90% of households in the borough. It is popular with residents and has a high participation rate. There is likely to be a negative impact for customers and the service changes may:-

- Increase fly tipping
- Be unpopular with residents
- Make residents put garden waste in the grey rubbish bin or worse the recycling bin
- Make some less affluent residents feel excluded from the scheme
- Increase demand at the HWRC sites, particularly on Bank Holidays

- 7.2 It is likely there will be an increase in customer complaints regarding the introduction of a charge for a service that was previously free.

- 7.3 There is a financial implication for residents, residents will however:

- Have the opportunity to recycle their garden waste for eleven months per annum as opposed to the current seven.

- Have the opportunity to pay for additional bins/capacity subject to garden size and waste generated. Current policy only allows one bin per household.
- Have the opportunity to undertake home composting but this may have limited appeal to some residents.
- Continue to dispose of garden waste at the local HWRC site

8.0 Environmental Impact

- 8.1 There are potential negative environmental implications with this proposal.
- 8.2 There may be an increase in fly tipping in the borough or the potential for rogue traders who are not licensed to carry waste, to offer the removal of waste and dispose of the waste illegally.
- 8.3 Some householders may choose to have garden bonfires to dispose of grass cuttings and other garden waste that they are unable to contain within their grey (residual waste) bin. This would have a negative impact on air quality and also a negative amenity impact for householders of neighbouring properties.
- 8.4 Clean and Green Services would look to promote home composting in tandem with introducing the charged service.

9.0 Performance Management

- 9.1 Currently approximately 14,000 tonnes of garden waste are collected from the kerbside each year. This makes a significant contribution to the recycling rate. With the introduction of a charge, less green waste is likely to be recycled and recycling rates in Walsall are likely to reduce.


10.0 Equality Implications

- 10.1 The consultation questionnaire was available in larger print and alternative formats on request.
- 10.2 The council offers an assisted collection service to anyone with a disability or mobility problem where no-one in the household is able to wheel their bins to the normal collection point. The collection team will collect the resident's bin from an agreed location, empty the bin and return it to the agreed location. If a resident is eligible for an assisted collection this would include the garden waste bin if they chose to participate in the scheme.
- 10.3 All residents have access to the fortnightly domestic refuse and recycling collection service.

10.4 The Council has two Household Waste Recycling Centres that are free for all residents of the borough to use.

Contact Officer:

Mark Holden – Head of Service, Clean & Green

 01922 654290

Mark.holden@walsall.gov.uk



Walsall Council

Garden Waste Consultation 2017

Have your say on charging for garden waste collections

The council needs to save approximately £25 million over the next two years. In February 2017 Walsall Council's Cabinet agreed, subject to further consultation, to introduce a charge for garden waste collections from March 2018, making an estimated saving of £300,000.



If we are unable to make these savings then this amount of money may have to be found in other ways – by putting up council tax, introducing other fees and charges or by cutting other important services.

This questionnaire is designed to understand your views and establish the potential uptake of a paid for garden waste collection service. No final decisions have yet been made and your response will be used to inform the future of the garden waste collection service.

For further information visit www.walsallbins.co.uk

Please tick the box(es) that apply to you/your household and write in your answer where applicable. Please read the instructions carefully as not all questions may apply to you.

The closing date for responses is 30 June 2017.

The survey is being run by Walsall Council in adherence to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. Rest assured, your opinions are in confidence and are important to us. We ask a few questions about you/your household to allow us to monitor the range of people who have responded and to better understand the results. Any personal/sensitive information you provide in this questionnaire will only be used for the purpose of this research and service design and will be kept confidential. Completed questionnaires will be shared with an external organisation for the purpose of data entry only and returned to the council for the purpose set out above. All processing will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section 1: Garden waste

Q1. Regardless of how you dispose of it, does your household produce any garden waste e.g. grass cuttings, weeds, leaves, tree and hedge trimmings? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Yes **Go to Q2.**

☐ No **Go to Section 2 (Q7)**

Q2. Do you compost any garden waste at home in a compost bin or compost heap? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q3. Which of the following applies to you? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ I have a brown wheeled bin for garden waste that I have put out for collection at least once in the last 12 months

Go to Q4.

☐ I have a brown wheeled bin for garden waste but have **not** put it out for collection in the last 12 months

Go to Section 2 (Q7)

☐ I do not have a brown wheeled bin for garden waste

Go to Section 2 (Q7)

There are currently 14 garden waste collections a year (fortnightly April to October).

Q4. Out of a possible 14 collections, approximately how many times a year do you put your brown garden waste bin out for collection?

Please write in the number of times as a single number not a range.

Q5. Normally how full is your brown wheeled bin for garden waste when you put it out for collection? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Full to capacity

☐ About half full

☐ Don't know

☐ More than half full

☐ Less than half full

Q6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the current garden waste collection service provided by Walsall Council? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Fairly dissatisfied

☐ Fairly satisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Section 2: Options for a garden waste collection service

Since 2010 the council has saved approximately £160 million through making efficiencies and reducing, ceasing and changing services. However due to government cuts and ongoing financial pressures, Walsall Council needs to save a further £25 million over the next two years.

The free collection of garden waste is not a service the council has to provide by law. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives councils the option to introduce a charge for the service.

We know that residents value the garden waste collection service. If we introduce a charge there is the potential to improve the service by collecting garden waste for more months each year than we currently do.

Those who sign up to the new paid for service will have the option to buy an additional bin for garden waste.

Q7. Which of the following options do you think the council should adopt? Tick ONE only.

- ☐ Option 1: Introduce an annual charge for garden waste collections
- ☐ Option 2: Stop collecting garden waste from households
- ☐ Option 3: Continue with a free but reduced garden waste collection service and make the savings some other way
- ☐ Option 4: Continue with the current garden waste collection service without any changes and make the savings some other way
- ☐ Don't know/no preference

Q8. How else might the Clean and Green service make savings of around £300,000 a year?

--

Q9. Assuming the new service met your needs and the price was acceptable to you, would you sign up to a new chargeable garden waste collection service? *Tick ONE only.*

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Go to Section 3 (Q10) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe | Go to Section 3 (Q10) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | Go to Q17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not want/require the service | Go to Q17 |

Section 3: Charging for garden waste collections

Please consider the following questions carefully. If the final decision is to charge for garden waste collections, your answers will be used to help design the new service which would commence in March 2018.

Currently the free garden waste collection service operates over 7 months of the year (fortnightly from April to October).

By introducing a charge it would be possible to make collections throughout the year. However, to allow for Christmas and New Year, collections would not be made between mid December and mid January. A system would be introduced to identify brown bins belonging to households that have paid for the service.

Q10. Over how many months of the year do you want a chargeable fortnightly garden waste collection service operate?

Please write in the number of months as a single number not a range. Leave blank if you do not know.

Q11. And during which months of the year would you use the garden waste collection service? *Tick ALL that apply.*

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Last 2 weeks of January | <input type="checkbox"/> June | <input type="checkbox"/> November |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February | <input type="checkbox"/> July | <input type="checkbox"/> First 2 weeks of December |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March | <input type="checkbox"/> August | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April | <input type="checkbox"/> September | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> May | <input type="checkbox"/> October | |

Q12. Based on the answers you gave in Q10 and Q11, what is the maximum amount you would be willing to pay for this service?

Please write in the highest amount you would be willing to pay in pounds and pence. Please do not write in a range.

Q13. Do you think that households who sign up before a certain cut off date each year should be offered a discount off the annual price? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

As a chargeable service it would be possible to offer households the opportunity to purchase additional brown wheeled bins for garden waste from the council. It is likely that a reduced rate annual collection fee would apply to the additional bin(s) on top of the standard annual fee.

Q14. Would you be interested buying an additional garden waste bin(s)? *Tick ONE only.*

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

Q15. If adopted, how might the introduction of an annual charge for garden waste collections affect you and your household?

Q16. And how might stopping the garden waste collection service affect you and your household?

Q17. If your household produces garden waste and you decide not to sign up to the chargeable garden waste collection service, how would you dispose of garden waste in the future?

Tick ALL that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Put it in grey wheeled bin | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not/will not produce garden waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compost it at home | <input type="checkbox"/> Intend to sign up to the new chargeable garden waste service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take it to the tip | <input type="checkbox"/> Other way, please tell us below |

Q18. Thinking of your own household, to what extent, if at all, do the following concern you about introducing an annual charge for garden waste collections?

Tick ONE only on each row.

	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Very concerned	Does not apply
Personal affordability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decrease in the borough's overall recycling rate (garden + other materials)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People fly tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of alternative disposal/composting options at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in garden bonfires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to get to the tip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Longer queues at the tip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q19. Do you have any other concerns about introducing an annual charge for garden waste collections?

Q20. What size grey wheeled bin do you currently have at home for general waste? Tick ONE only.

- ☐ 140 litre bin (smaller than your brown bin)
☐ 240 litre bin (same size as your brown bin)
☐ 360 litre bin (larger than your brown bin)

Q21. Normally, how often do you put your grey wheeled bin out for collection? Tick ONE only.

- ☐ Every collection day ☐ Less often than every collection day

Q22. Normally how full is your grey wheeled bin when you put it out for collection? Tick ONE only.

- ☐ Full to capacity ☐ About half full ☐ Don't know
☐ More than half full ☐ Less than half full

Q23. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following waste collection services provided by Walsall Council?

*Tick ONE only
on each row
and explain why
you say this.*

Very Fairly Neither Fairly Very Don't know/
satisfied satisfied satisfied nor dissatisfied dissatisfied Don't use
dissatisfied

General waste
collections
(grey bin)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Recycling
collections
(green bin)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Local tips/
household
waste recycling
centres*

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

*Local tips are located at Fryers Road, Leamore and Merchants Way, Aldridge.

Section 4: About you and your household

These questions are voluntary, however we ask that you provide this information to help us understand your responses and how they differ between certain groups, household types and areas of the borough.

Q24. Please state your home postcode, excluding the last two letters.
e.g WV12 6, WS1 3

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Q25. What was your age on your last birthday?

Q26. Are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female

Q27. What is your ethnic group? *Tick ONE only.*

- ☐ White ☐ Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
☐ Asian/Asian British ☐ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
☐ Other ethnic group

Q28. Do you or anyone in your household have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your/their daily activities or the work you/they can do? *Tick ONE only.*

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Q29. Which of the following best describes your accommodation? *Tick ONE only.*

- ☐ Detached/semi-detached house or bungalow
☐ Terraced house (including end terrace)
☐ Flat, maisonette or apartment
☐ Mobile home or temporary structure

Q30. How many people (adults and children) live in your household?

Q31. Are there any cars or vans that are owned, or available for use, by you at this household? *Tick ONE only.*

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.