

Cabinet – 5 September 2018

Re Introduction of Fortnightly Collections of Garden Waste – Brown Bins

Portfolio: Councillor Louise Harrison – Clean and Green

Related portfolios: None

Service: Clean and Green Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Following the change in Administration of the Council on the 23 May 2018 a review of the 3 weekly garden waste collection service across the borough was requested with a view to reinstating fortnightly collections.
- 1.2 This report advises members of the costs and implications of re-introducing fortnightly garden waste collections which were previously reduced to 3 weekly collections via the 2018/19 Budget Savings process.
- 1.3 The frequency of garden waste collections was reduced from fortnightly to 3 weekly for the 2018 season, delivering a projected saving of circa £138k per year with the collection season increasing from 30 to 36 weeks between March and November.
- 1.4 A previous saving of £60k had been delivered in 2017 by operating the service over longer days (4 x 9 ¼ hour as opposed to the standard 5 x 7.4 hours), this reduced the number of vehicles required each day but maintained a service over 5 days.
- 1.5 Following the switch to the new arrangements in March 2018, issues have arisen with a significant number of collections not being completed on the scheduled collection day. A number of complaints have been received linked to these missed collections and these issues are now being addressed with the need for utilisation of additional resources on some occasions.
- 1.6 This is a key decision because the cost of reinstating a fortnightly garden waste collection service will require significant additional expenditure and it will have an affect across all Council wards.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet acknowledge the contents of this report and approve the re introduction of fortnightly garden waste collections.

3. Report detail

3.1 Council Responsibilities

3.1.1 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 (including garden waste, but a charge can be made) 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.

3.2 Current Garden Waste Collection Service

3.2.1 The current service is a 3 weekly collection of garden waste in a 240 litre brown wheeled bin over a eight month period (36 weeks) between March and November. Each property receives 12 collections per year.

3.2.2 Currently all low rise and a percentage of high rise properties are served with a kerbside collection service of garden waste including grass cuttings, pruning's, leaves, old plants & flowers, hedge clippings, weeds etc.

3.2.3 The budgeted collection cost of the current service is circa £439k detailed in the table below:

Description	Cost (£)
Staffing costs	280,000
Hire vehicle costs (4 vehicles)	123,000
Fuel	36,000
Total cost excluding overheads / CSS	439,000

3.3 Issues and Impacts of 3 weekly Collections

- 3.3.1 Since the change in service in March this year, problems have been encountered with a significant number of collections not being completed on the scheduled day. At the peak of collections, the number of properties affected has been several thousand a week, the situation is improving with less than 200 properties not receiving their scheduled collection w/c 9 July 2018. Reasons include increased participation and set out rates, time delays in travelling, turn round times at tipping facility and performance of crews. This is creating a projected overspend of circa £35k per annum.
- 3.3.2 The recent change in service has had an impact on household behaviours, the disposal of garden waste and use of the HWRC sites. In April to June 2017, 8,439 tonnes of garden waste was collected, 7,096 tonnes (84%) at the kerbside via brown bins and 1,343 tonnes (16%) was taken by householders to the HWRC sites. In April to June 2018, 7,251 tonnes of garden waste was collected, 5,652 tonnes (78%) at the kerbside via brown bins and 1,599 tonnes (22%) was taken by householders to the HWRC sites. The tonnage collected at the kerbside has significantly reduced but the amount of garden waste taken to the HWRC site has significantly increased. This has resulted in increase traffic movements on the highway and more queuing and waiting at the HWRC sites
- 3.3.3 22,237 waste related calls were handled by the Councils Contact Centre between the 19 March 2017 and 19 July 2017 with 404 jobs raised for missed brown bin collections. During a similar period for 2018, 21,179 calls were received with 882 jobs raised for missed collections (2018 season collections).

3.4 Impacts of changing service and Additional Resources

- 3.4.1 To re introduce fortnightly garden collections it is necessary to reschedule rounds and communicate revised collection arrangements to all households within the borough.
- 3.4.2 It is estimated it will take 13 weeks from a decision to prepare collection schedules, print and distribute communications to residents, recruit additional resources and hire additional fleet. A decision at 5 September Cabinet would not allow fortnightly collections to be introduced prior to April 2019.
- 3.4.3 The additional resources required for fortnightly collections in 2019/20 for a 34 week season would be circa £160k.
- 3.4.4 There would be a minimal number of day changes required to accommodate the re routing of rounds.

4.0 Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.1 The garden waste service links to the current priorities set out in the 2018-2021 Corporate Plan as follows:

- Internal focus – All Council services are efficient and effective. With the brown bin service striving for high levels of customer satisfaction.

5.0 Risk management

5.1 The following risks and control measures have been identified:

Risk:	Control measures:
Additional Funding un available / Alternate savings can't be identified	Additional funding approved by Cabinet / Alternative savings identified and approved by Cabinet

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct implications in relation to 2018/19. The additional resources required for fortnightly collections in 2019/20 based on a 9 ¼ hour day for a 34 week season will be £159,800. The Medium Term Financial Plan is currently being updated and the first draft revenue budget will be presented to cabinet in October for onward public consultation. The budget is a reflection of the Council's priorities and therefore, subject to cabinet approving this return to fortnightly collections, resources will be prioritised to fund this.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications with this report.

8.0 Procurement implications/Social Value

8.1 There is no procurement or social value implication with this report.

9.0 Property implications

9.1 There are no property implications with this report

10.0 Health and wellbeing implications

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications with this report.

11.0 Staffing implications

11.1 It will be necessary to recruit additional Environmental Operatives to operate a fortnightly service. These would be agency employees due to the seasonal nature of the work.

12.0 Reducing inequalities

12.1 It is not considered that the re introduction of fortnightly brown bin collections has an inequality issue but recruitment of additional employees will target minority groups that are underrepresented in the service area.

13.0 Consultation

13.1 Public consultation on a charged for garden waste collection service previously took place between 9 June and 7 August 2017 and results have been previously communicated to 25 October 2017 Cabinet.

13.2 The consultation explored the use of the service, behaviours and willingness to pay, as well as views on four possible options for a garden waste collection service:

- Option 1 - Introduce a 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

13.2 As part of the consultation, a postal questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 13,819 households who have a brown garden waste bin. 3,754 valid responses were received, representing a 27% response rate.

13.3 Based on the outcome of the consultation, the previous Administration decided to provide a reduced free service. Three weekly garden waste collections over a period of 36 weeks between March and November, saving circa £138k per annum.

13.4 However 42% of respondents stated that they thought the Council should continue with the current garden waste collection service (free fortnightly collections over 30 weeks) without any changes and make the savings some other way – Option 4.

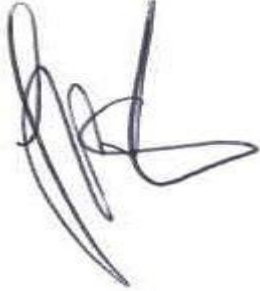
Background Papers

Cabinet Report 25 October 2017 – Garden Waste Charging

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6 August 2018

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28 August 2018