

## **Cabinet – 15 December 2021**

### **Bulky and Garden Waste Update**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Oliver Butler

**Related portfolios:** None

**Service:** Clean & Green

**Wards:** All wards

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Aim**

- 1.1. To deliver sustainable, efficient and customer focused recycling and composting services for residents.

#### **2. Summary**

- 2.1. The bulky collection service is for the removal of large household items, such as white goods, rolled carpet, cookers, bicycles, mattresses, and furniture. Under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990), the council can make a reasonable charge for this service.
- 2.2. This report outlines proposals in relation to future service delivery options for 2022/23 financial year.
- 2.3. This is a Key Decision because it will result in the council incurring potential loss of income which is significant, having regard to the Council's budget for the service and is likely to have impact on two or more wards within the borough.

#### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Cabinet approve a trial to determine if there is a demand for a premium bulky waste collection service for any residents who are unhappy with current waiting times for collections.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approve the continuation of the current garden waste collection service as the most cost-effective option.

## **4. Report detail - know**

### ***Context***

- 4.1. 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), the council has a number of statutory obligations including:
- 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.
- 4.2. In accordance with the national waste strategy, we want to prolong the lives of the materials and goods that we use with a view to nudge residents away from the inefficient 'linear' economic model of 'take, make, use, throw'. A more circular economy (re-use, remanufacture, repair, recycle) will ensure resources are kept in use for as long as possible. It will also allow the benefit of maximum value from them, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of their lifespan.
- 4.3. The Environment Bill sets out a framework to ensure waste and energy policies are environmentally sustainable, in order that the natural environment is protected and the climate change emergency is addressed.
- 4.4. As a local authority, we are committed towards net zero carbon and driving up our recycling and composting rates. The future direction of our front line service delivery models will have an impact on our ability to meet such targets. This report focuses on medium term options for bulky and garden waste.

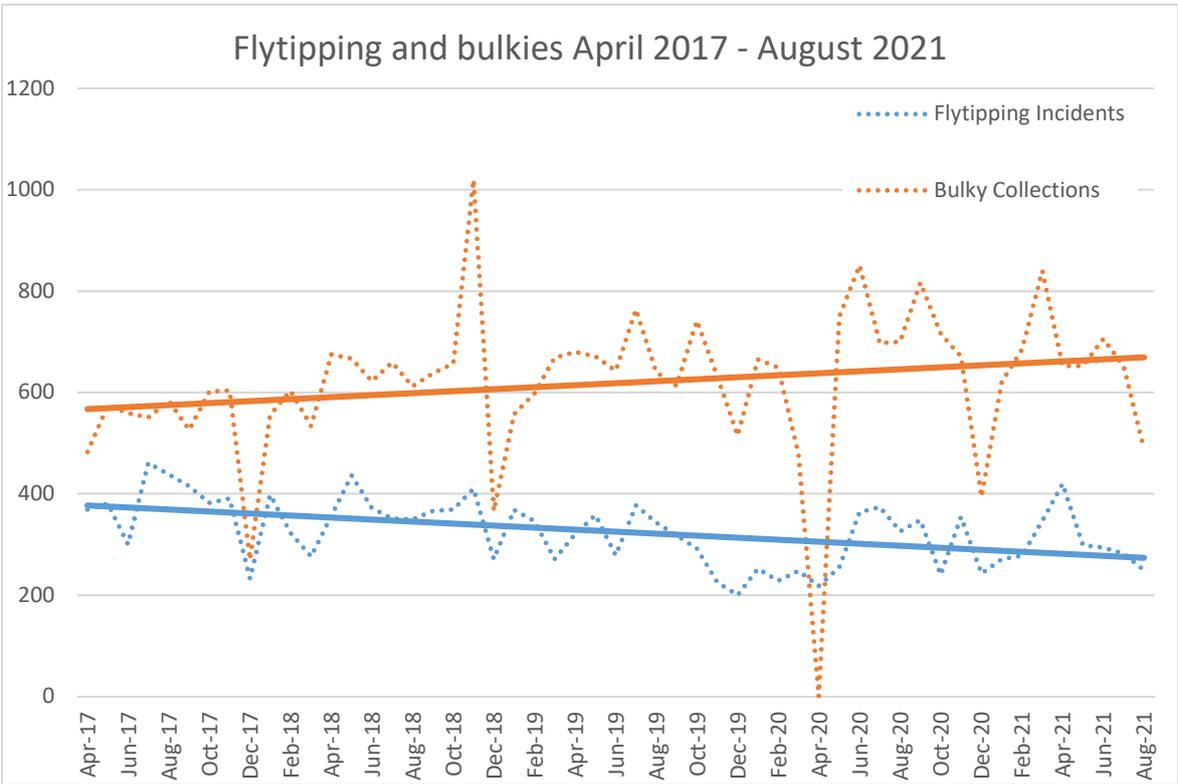
### ***Bulky Waste Collections***

- 4.5. The Council is obliged under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) to collect household waste. Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, the Council can apply a reasonable charge for collecting items that are either in excess of 25kgs or of an irregular shape or size which cannot be contained in the standard residual waste bin. Unlike charging for garden waste, the ability to charge for bulky waste is not expected to be changed by the Environment Act 2021. Residents can also transport to the nearest household waste and recycling centre (HWRC). This cate
- 4.6. Cabinet last formally reviewed bulky item collections on 5 September 2018 as part of a wider review to tackle fly-tipping. A trial was carried out which included 3 pilot schemes run in succession. This included HWRC sites opening seven days per week, free neighbourhood skips and free bulky item collections.
- 4.7. Following the trial Cabinet approved funding to extend HWRC opening from 5 days to 7 days per week.

- 4.8. Skip trials were, deemed unsuccessful and this option was not considered further.
- 4.9. Free bulky collection uptake exceeded demand and within a couple of weeks the three month pilot allocation of collections were fully booked. The scheme came to a close until charges (£15 to £45 at that time) were re-introduced following the trial period. The trial operated from 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The trial was limited to one free collection per household on a first come, first served basis. The collection would be based on a maximum of five items for any one household over the three month period. Data was inconclusive and did not suggest any direct impact on the reduction of levels of fly tipping in the borough.
- 4.10. During 2020 charges for bulky collections were reviewed and a standard charge set at £10 for three items, to encourage residents to dispose of bulky items responsibly and reduce fly tipping. Demand for the service has been high with waiting times of around four weeks. The income budget was reduced by £39k to reflect the expected reduction in income.
- 4.11. Over the past five years, trends show an increase in demand for bulky item collections. Fly tipping has shown a decline in the same period (see Figure 1 below).

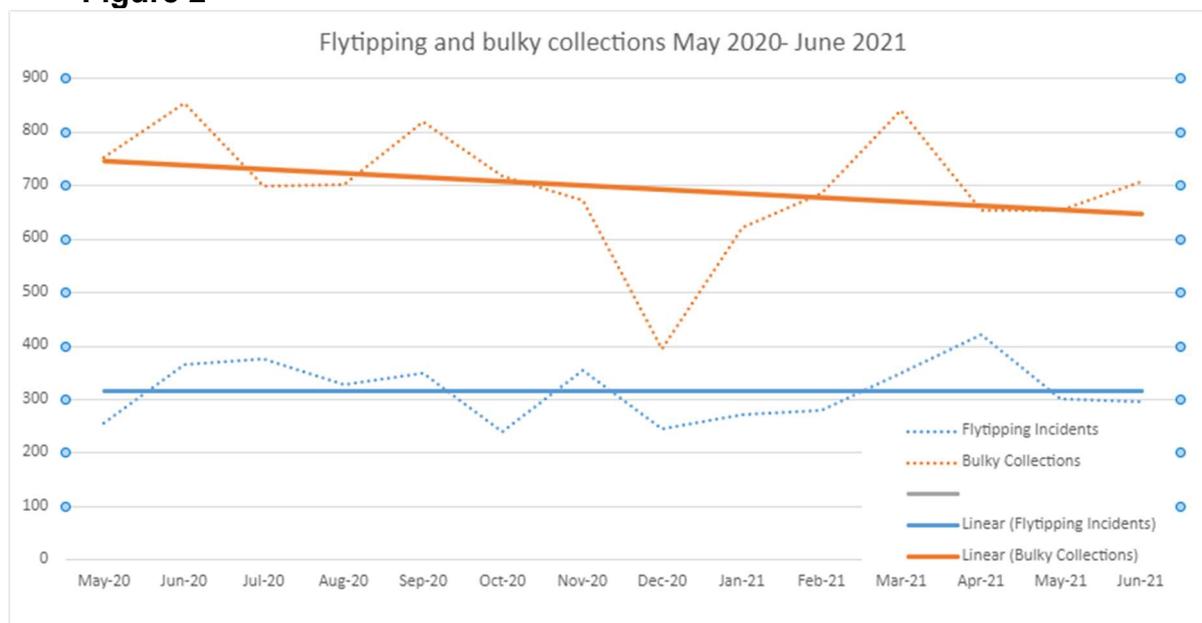
**Figure 1**

- Spike in demand in October 2018 due to free trials
- Decline in demand in April 2020 due to service suspended during Covid lockdown
- Decline in demand in December – seasonal trend



- 4.12. Figure 2 below, highlights that since May 2020, bulky item collections show a decline in uptake, whilst the fly-tipping trend has remained constant.

**Figure 2**



- 4.13. Charges in Walsall prior to 2020 were broadly comparable to neighbouring authorities. The current charge of £10 is the lowest in the region.

Council	Charge	Items
Walsall 2021 to present	£10.00	1 to 3
Walsall prior to 2020	£15.00 £30.00 £45.00	1 to 3 4 to 6 7 to 9
Birmingham	£33.00	Up to 10 items
Cannock Chase	£35.00	Up to 2 items
South Staffordshire	£30.00 £60.00 £90.00	1 to 3 4 to 6 7 to 9
Sandwell	£13.34 £20.02 £40.03 £13.34	One item 2 to 4 items 5 to 8 items Fridge / freezer per item
Wolverhampton	£27.00 £54.00 £25.00	Up to 5 items Up to 10 items Up to 3 electrical items
Lichfield	£15.75	First + £6.50 each item thereafter
Dudley	£24.03 to £64.10	Range of items
Solihull	£14.50 £23.00 £30.00	One item 2 to 5 6 to 10
<b>Mean average charge</b>	<b>£26</b>	<b>1 to 3 items</b>

### **Garden Waste Collections**

- 4.14. The garden waste (brown bin) service is a kerbside collection service for residents to dispose of their garden waste. The service operates for 34 weeks of the year (April to November) to accommodate the growing season and autumn leaf fall.

240L brown wheeled bins are provided and collected fortnightly. The last collection of the season is the last full week of November.

### ***Council Corporate Plan priorities***

- 4.15. The proposals link to the corporate plan priorities in that:
- 4.16. Internal Focus – modernising our services to meet the ever changing environment and behaviours, striving to improve customer satisfaction and support Walsall in being a resilient council.
- 4.17. Communities – our residents and communities are at the heart of what we do, and in tackling environmental crime will reduce pollution and a blight on our neighbourhoods and green spaces and make Walsall a better place to live and work.

### ***Risk management***

- 4.18. The current operational arrangements include one collection vehicle with a team of two staff. This provides 30 allocated slots (households) per day. Demand for the service since the charge was reduced to £10 has been consistently high and waiting times have been around 4 weeks. This poses a risk of failure in meeting customer demand and/or residents choosing alternate means of disposing of their bulky items, potentially irresponsibly.

### ***Financial implications***

- 4.19. The current net cost of running the bulky waste service is £108k. The recommendation to provide a premium service option can be funded from within existing budgets.
- 4.20. The recommended option is likely to generate additional income, but this cannot be quantified at this point.
- 4.21. The council's policy is that chargeable services should cover their costs. To achieve this there would need to be an increase in the charge to £22.50 per standard collection.
- 4.22. The continuation of the current garden waste service will be covered from existing budgets. Therefore, there are no further financial implications related to the recommended option.

### ***Legal implications***

- 4.23. Under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990), the council can make a reasonable charge for this service.

### ***Procurement Implications/Social Value***

- 4.24. None arising from this report.

### ***Property implications***

- 4.25. None arising from this report.

### ***Health and wellbeing implications***

4.26. None arising from this report.

### ***Staffing implications***

4.27. None arising from this report.

### ***Reducing Inequalities***

4.28. Equality impact assessment screening has been carried out and a full equality impact assessment is not required.

### ***Consultation***

4.29. None carried out.

### ***Climate Change***

4.30. The council is committed towards net zero carbon and driving up our recycling and composting rates. The future direction of our front line service delivery models will have an impact on our ability to meet such targets.

## **5.0 Decide**

5.1 Options for the bulky waste collection service are set out in the table below:

<b>Option</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Implementation timeline</b>
1	No change to the current service. Continue to charge a flat rate £10 per three items and resource with 1 collection team.	Immediate
2	No change to current pricing of £10 per three items. Fund additional resources to meet demand (assumed demand on 50 collections per day)  The additional revenue cost would be £91,185 per annum	April 2022
3	Increase bulky item charges in line with regional pricing structures, giving consideration to white goods and incremental price based on number of items.	April 2022
4	No change to the current service, but introduce a premium service (e.g. £50 for 3 items) for express collections. Initially this would require a trial to determine the level of demand and the resources required.  <b>(Recommended)</b>	April 2022

4.31. Options for garden waste collections are set out below:

Option	Proposal	Implementation timeline
1	<p>No change to existing service delivery, with fortnightly collections for period of 34 weeks from April to November.</p> <p>Service for 2021/22 - last day of collection Friday 26 November 2021</p> <p>Service for 2022/23 - from 4 April 2022 to 25 November 2022, 34 weeks.</p> <p><b>(Recommended)</b></p>	Immediate
2	<p>Increase collections by a further 3 weeks in 2021/22 from 29 November 2021 to 17 December 2021 (3 teams)</p> <p>Additional cost of £18K for 2021/22 financial year.</p>	Immediate
3	<p>Increase collections by a further 6 weeks(40 weeks per annum), service running from mid-March to mid-December each year (5 teams March / 3 Teams Dec)</p> <p>Service would commence on 14 March 2022 until 16 December 2022.</p> <p>Additional cost of £48K per annum</p>	March 2022

## 6.0 Respond

6.1 After consideration by Cabinet, the approved recommendations will be implemented with further briefings provided to the Portfolio Holder and Corporate Management Team at appropriate timescales if necessary.

## 7.0 Review

7.1 There will be regular updates from clean and green services on contract performance and financial monitoring with Corporate Finance, the Portfolio Holder and Directorate Management Team as appropriate.

## Background papers

None.

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Executive Director

6 December 2021



Councillor Oliver Butler  
Portfolio holder

6 December 2021