

Decision under Delegated Powers Garden Waste Collection Charges 2021/22

Officer Making the Decision

Matthew Bradford – Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces

Recommendation

That the charge levied on residents for the fortnightly collection of Garden Waste is increased in line with the table below:

Payment Method	Charge 20/21	Revised Charge 21/22 (effective 1 st April 2021)
Direct Debit	£40.00	£41.00
Other	£45.00	£46.00

Reason

The increase in charges are required due to:

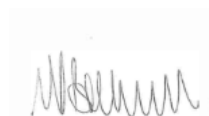
1. The cost of providing the collections increases by RPIX each year.
2. To offset increased costs incurred through the introduction of increased security measures (permits).
3. To meet the income targets established by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy

Authority for Decision

Section 8.3 of the Constitution gives delegated authority to Heads of Service to undertake the periodic review of fees and charges raised within their service area and falling within the scope of the Council's Income and Charging Policy Framework.

Decision and Date

Approved 11th March 2021



Matthew Bradford
Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces

Background

1. This decision will increase the charges for the Garden Waste Collection Service to £41.00 per annum for Direct Debit payers, and £46.00 per annum for non Direct Debit payers.
2. The collection of Garden Waste is a discretionary service provided by CBC as an enhancement to the statutory residual waste and recycling collections. The service was introduced in 2006 and has always been chargeable. There is a difference in charge between Direct Debit payers and those paying by other methods. This reflects the cheaper administration costs for Direct Debit payers.
3. The annual payment is due prior to service commencement and there are no options to spread the cost over the year. This is due to the additional transaction costs of taking payment in instalments. Providing this option would put additional pressures on the budget and make the need for further price increases highly likely.
4. The impact of the changes will be experienced by those residents with gardens. Residents who live in flats, apartments or houses without gardens are not considered to be significantly affected by the proposed change.
5. Alternatives to subscription to the service are:
 - Home composting. Subsidised composters are available from Leicestershire County Council for £11
 - Taking the garden waste to a Household Waste and Recycling Centre. This is not a viable option for households without the use of a car. Leicestershire County Council has also introduced a booking system with set appointments in order to monitor visitors (as a result of Covid-19 associated measures)
 - Reducing Garden Waste e.g. Removing the grass collection box from the mower and leaving the grass to mulch down.
6. Many authorities charge for the collection of Garden Waste with the average cost nationally estimated to be in the £40 per annum region. Across Leicestershire there is a mixed picture with some authorities charging and others providing the service for free. As a result of the withdrawal of Recycling Credits, it is understood that other district/borough councils in the County will be reviewing their charges, or implementing charges where free collections have been made previously. At the time of writing, each Council had not ratified their proposals for 21/22 onwards. A summary of existing charges is provided below.

Authority	Current Charge 20/21	Notes
Blaby DC	140ltr bin for £25.60 240ltr bin for £37.90	Garden waste collections are made fortnightly during summer (March to November) and monthly from December to February.
Harborough District Council	£55.00	9 month service (April – November and the following March of that financial year)
Hinckley and Bosworth BC	£30.00	25 collection, every two weeks (except for the two weeks between Christmas and the New Year).
Leicester City Council	£47 Direct Debit £52 Non Direct Debit	March to November
Melton BC	£57.00	Operated independently by the Council's Waste Contractor. Fortnightly collections.
North West Leicestershire BC	£0.00	
Oadby and Wigston BC	£50.00 for either 240ltr or 140 liter bin	Allowed only 1 x 240ltr bin or up to 2 x 140ltr bins for an additional £25.00 for 2nd bin. Collected fortnightly throughout the year.

7. Alternatives to increasing the charges are as follows:

- a. Stop providing the service altogether. This is not considered to be a viable option as many residents value the service that is provided. There are currently approximately 34,000 subscribers.
- b. Absorb the additional cost of providing the service. This is not viable due to general cost pressures on the Council.
- c. Make savings in other areas of the service. This is not viable due to other cost pressures on the service and the need to make additional savings/income other than those proposed within this report.

8. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to inform this decision.

Financial Implications

The increase in charges will result in the additional income required to meet the projected income in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the additional income required to meet the 2021/22 budgeted figure of £1,436K.

Risk Management

Please see the table below:

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Price increase leads to loss of subscribers	Possible	Moderate	Communications plan to include background on reasons for increases. Marketing exercise to be conducted during 2021/22 to maximise take up of the service
Increase lead to some negative local press coverage	Possible	Moderate	Press Release to include value for money information. e.g 79p per week for DD payers after increase. Service still provides good value for money and is comparable to amounts charged by other authorities.

Key Decision:

Yes

Background Papers:

Equality Impact Assessment