

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision

Waste and Recycling Manager

### Officer Making the Decision

Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces

### Recommendation

To increase the price of the Garden Waste Service from £15 to £17 for customers who are paying by Direct Debit with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

### Reason

To uprate the fee, which has been unchanged for almost four years, following a review of the objectives of the scheme and fees set by other councils and achieve £50,000 of additional revenue income for Charnwood Borough Council, which has been identified in the 2013/2014 budget as a service saving.

### Authority for Decision

The scheme of delegation in Part 3 of the Constitution includes a delegation to Heads of Service to undertake the periodic review of fees and charges raised within his or her service area and falling within the scope of the Council's Income and Charging Policy Framework (item 1 on page 3-35).

### Decision and Date

*New Clerk* 03/01/13

### Background

Charnwood Borough Council has been providing a chargeable garden waste collection service since May 2004. Users of the scheme are issued with a brown wheelie bin of 240 litre capacity at an annual charge of £26 or £15 on Direct Debit per bin. Kerbside collections are made every two weeks under the Environmental Services contract to Serco, and operate throughout the year, with the exception of two weeks over the Christmas period. Additional brown bins can be issued to householders with larger gardens at an additional charge of £26 or £15 per bin.

The Borough wide introduction of the Garden Waste Service to go onto Direct Debit was introduced in 2009. We currently have almost 27,000 customers subscribed to the service, 20,300 paying £15 by Direct Debit and 6,500 paying £26, by cash or cheque.

In considering a price increase for customers paying by Direct Debit consultation has taken place with the Strategic Director and The Lead Member for Cleansing and Open Spaces. The proposed increase in charge takes account of the councils Income and Charging Policy Framework. In particular it reflects the fact that the charge has remained constant for almost four years and at £17 per annum remains a

competitive charge. The proposed increase of £2 per annum represents the equivalent of approximately 3.5% annual increase since 2009. The charge for non-direct debit customers is not affected as it was felt that whilst this charge is a competitive price, any increase to this charge would render it uncompetitive and comparatively expensive. In considering the proposal therefore the price increase is not deemed to be prohibitive to specific vulnerable groups.

Our charging proposals for garden waste overall are amongst the cheapest in the East Midlands and still represent good value for money at 68 pence per collection for direct debit customers and £1.04 for non direct debit customers (based on 25 collections per year). Where some Authorities in Leicestershire charge it is between £20 - £32 for a 240 ltr bin.

### **Financial Implications**

Whilst we recognise there may be some customers who cancel the service the overall increase in income is approximately £50,000 pa.

### **Risk Management**

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Loss of customers due to price increase	Low	Medium	Close monitoring of the service and billing.

Key Decision: No

Environmental Services December 2012