

CABINET - 19TH JANUARY 2017

**Report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Lead Member: Councillor Hilary Fryer**

Part A

ITEM GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS – SECURE STICKER
SYSTEM

Purpose of Report

To secure the budget and delegated authority required to set up an improved system for the delivery and monitoring of the garden waste service.

Recommendations

1. That £20,000 from the Reinvestment Reserve Fund is utilised to cover the start-up costs required to roll out the introduction of a pre-paid sticker system to identify those households that have a valid subscription for the garden waste service.
2. That the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces be given delegated authority to revise the terms and conditions of the garden waste service to incorporate the introduction of the pre-paid sticker system.

Reasons

1. To introduce a system to ensure that the monitoring of eligibility for the garden waste services is more effective and facilitate the production and distribution of the necessary material to residents.
2. To ensure that the new terms and conditions cover the changes made to the current arrangements.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

One of the key themes of Charnwood Borough Council's Corporate Plan is to *Deliver Excellent Services*. This project is in line with this theme, especially in terms of *"providing high quality, affordable and responsive services ... always seeking to improve the services that we deliver ... We will maintain the financial stability of the Council whilst continuing to seek ways to deliver better services as efficiently as possible"*.

The garden waste service was introduced in Charnwood Borough Council in 2004. Cleansing and Open Spaces are constantly seeking for ways to improve the efficiency of the services offered, and the suggested measures will help towards this direction.

This function falls under the Environmental Services Contract and the active involvement of the service provider will be required to ensure its efficient implementation and success. The collection crews will be responsible for checking the bins for eligibility before emptying. Customers without valid

accounts will be informed on how to renew their subscription or how to opt out of the scheme by a bin hanger left behind.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

Once the necessary approvals are received, the implementation phase of the project will start. The key phases of the project are outlined in the table below:

Key Stage	Proposed timeframe
Cabinet approval to secure necessary funds to set up changes to the scheme	Jan 2017
Development of communications plan to ensure residents are made aware of the changes	Jan – Feb 2017
Decide the style and format of the sticker to be used by residents to identify active accounts	Feb 2017
Briefing with internal and external stakeholders to understand project requirements	Feb 2017
Stickers sent to all active subscribers	Feb – Mar 2017
Collection contractor is instructed only to empty bins from properties with stickered bins	May 2017
Follow up report to Lead Member to review the intervention	May 2018

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

The initial cost for the implementation of the project has been estimated to be in the area of £20,000 which is to be funded from the Reinvestment Reserve Fund. The breakdown of the cost is:

Type of cost	Cost	Based on
Production of sticker	£4,000	Figure formed as part of early market engagement
Postage costs	£ 11,000	Price acquired from Post Office
Communication and implementation costs	£ 5,000	Based on previous experience on similar activities
TOTAL	£ 20,000	

Future costs are expected to be met from the growth in garden waste subscriptions.

Risk Management

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Capacity of internal resources	Unlikely	Minor	Discussions between the related Head of Services and Directors have already started

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Changes do not generate the anticipated levels of income	Unlikely	Minor	Officers from Cleansing and Open Spaces have liaised with other authorities to ensure the success of the project

Equality and Diversity

Extra consideration will be given to any residents in the Assisted Collection list to ensure they get all the support required to equally participate in the scheme

Sustainability

The proposed measures aim to ensure the integrity and fairness of the service while at the same time generate additional income for the authority. This will enable subscribers to carry on receiving a high quality service.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None

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Part B

Background

1. Charnwood Borough Council operates a chargeable Garden Waste Service since 2004. Currently (2016/17) 42% of the residents of Charnwood Borough Council have subscribed to the scheme. 80% of participants pay by direct debit, and the remaining 20% pay by alternative means.
2. It has been identified over the years that the monitoring of residents with active accounts has been challenging. There have been cases where residents have presented their bins for collection without having a valid account. Last year (2015/16), £10,400 was written off for unpaid invoices which accounts for almost 1.9% of the overall income generated.
3. Introducing a scheme where eligible residents put a pre-paid sticker on their bin will assist the collection crews to identify the valid accounts in a quick and efficient manner. This system will also enable subscribers to receive a fair service and enhance their confidence in its integrity.
4. It is expected that after the first year, the cost of these changes will be offset by the income generated from the additional customers that were previously not paying for the service.
5. The existing terms and conditions for new and existing participants will need to be revised to reflect the proposed changes. Updating the terms and conditions is an imperative part of the project as subscribers will be asked to put the stickers on the bins themselves. Revised terms and conditions will ensure that all customers are equally treated and well informed. The updated terms and conditions will also advise residents on who to contact in case they want any further information or clarification.

Alternative proposals

6. By doing nothing, the Council misses an opportunity to recover the lost income from non-payers while at the same time jeopardising the integrity of the service.
7. Another option would be to roll out the stickers throughout the year once payment for the service is received. This option practically means that no active monitoring will be available for the first 12 months until all subscribers have received their stickers. The implementation cost would be the same.

Consultation and Communication

8. Officers have been in contact with other neighbouring authorities (Harborough District Council) that have adopted similar measures and are prepared for immediate implementation.

9. Once the proposals have been approved, a communication plan will be developed to ensure all subscribers are informed of the changes in advance of any implementation. This will help increase their engagement and active participation in the provision of the service.