

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND  
CULTURAL SERVICES)

**GARDEN WASTE SERVICE UPDATE**

**1 Executive Summary**

1.1 This report provides an overview of the garden waste service to date and an outline plan for year 2 subscriptions. In addition, it provides an update to the food waste collection.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note:

2.1.1 The outline plan for year two subscriptions; and

2.1.2 The clarification of policy to allow residents subscribed to the garden waste service to put food waste in their brown bin, if they choose to do so as outlined in paragraphs 3.8 – 3.12.

**3 Explanation**

**Overview**

3.1 In April 2017, the Council introduced a chargeable garden waste service. The service costs £35 for one bin and an additional £60 for another bin (£95 in total). The subscription period runs from April to March each year.

3.2 So far, just under 23,000 residents have signed up to the garden waste service in the first year.

**Year Two (i.e. 2018/19) Subscriptions**

3.3 Cabinet will be considering a report on 7<sup>th</sup> November to appoint Capita Business Services Limited to provide a direct debit (DD) management service for the garden waste service. This will enable the Council to launch a paperless DD for garden waste in time for 2018/19.

3.4 If the report is agreed by Cabinet, it is anticipated that in the new calendar year, residents already subscribed to the service will be written to, and invited to set up a DD account for Year 2. It should be noted that payments can also still be made online or via the Contact Centre.

3.5 Following feedback from residents, leaflets will also be delivered to flats with communal gardens to advise them of the different payment arrangements that are available to them.

- 3.6 Once a payment has been cleared, a new subscription letter and sticker will be issued in time for the new subscription year of the garden waste service to commence in April 2018.
- 3.7 There will be no changes to the existing terms and conditions of the service, which will remain in place.

### **Food Waste**

- 3.8 Following feedback from residents since the introduction of charging for garden waste in April 2017 we have reviewed the position in relation to what residents can put in the garden waste bin, and want to do all we can to help them in their aim of keeping food waste diverted from landfill. It is therefore necessary to clarify our policy on food waste collection as follows:
  - 3.8.1 Residents who subscribe to the garden waste service pay an advance charge for garden waste to be taken away. This is done by the collection of such waste in the brown bins.
  - 3.8.2 The Council will continue to remove household waste for free, including food waste, whether residents have a brown bin or not. No charge is payable for that. Food waste can be placed with any other household waste in the black bin and is removed free of charge.
  - 3.8.3 However, residents who have paid for the removal of garden waste in a brown bin, will be pleased to note, that if they put compostable food waste in it together with their garden waste, the council will still empty the bin and take all the contents away for composting (so long as it does not contain anything other than compostable garden and food waste).
  - 3.8.4 Obviously, putting food waste in the brown bin will reduce the amount of garden waste that can be put in there for removal, for which residents have paid, but the bin will still be emptied.
- 3.9 Delegated authority has already been given to the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services), in consultation with the Executive Member (Environment), to make any consequential amendments to the Waste Management Plan and any other Council policies necessary to implement the garden waste collection system, it is recommended that this update is implemented with immediate effect.
- 3.10 It is anticipated that a statement will be issued, with notifications posted on the Council's social media pages to update residents of the change.
- 3.11 Residents who are currently subscribed to the garden waste service, will be reminded about this change when they are contacted in the new calendar year, about registering and paying by direct debit for Year 2.
- 3.12 This update would reflect an improved position in the reduction of the amount of food waste sent for treatment and/or disposal (such as in landfill) than when the chargeable garden waste service was first introduced and it is acknowledged by Hertfordshire County Council and Defra as an improvement on the current position.

## **Implications**

### **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 Independent legal advice has been sought regarding the placing of food waste into the brown bins and whilst it is possible for the Council to collect brown bins containing a mixture of garden and food waste, the Council will need to make it clear that the charge is for the collection of garden waste only and that we will continue to collect the food waste for free.

### **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The cost of the year two subscription process, along with the marketing required to inform residents on the available payments methods and food waste will be met from existing budgets for the service.

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The risk of a challenge brought to the Council against the recommendation to allow residents subscribed to the garden waste service to put food waste in their brown bin is considered to be of low likelihood with medium impact.

### **7 Security and Terrorism Implications**

- 7.1 There are no known security and terrorism implications associated with this recommendation.

### **8 Procurement Implications**

- 8.1 There are no known procurement implications associated with this recommendation.

### **9 Climate Change Implications**

- 9.1 The introduction of allowing food waste into the brown bin for residents subscribed to the garden waste service will continue to divert waste from treatment and/or disposal (such as in landfill).

### **10 Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report as the recommendation does not require a policy or service change.

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