

Agenda Item No: 9.2

Report No: 48/15

Report Title: Green Waste Collection Service

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 19 March 2015

Cabinet Member: Cllr Paul Franklin

Ward(s) Affected: Seaford North and Seaford South

Report By: Gillian Marston, Director of Service Delivery

Contact Officer(s)-

Name(s): Scot Reid
Post Title(s): Head of Customer Services
E-mail(s): Scot.reid@lewes.gov.uk
Tel No(s):

Purpose of Report:

This report sets out proposals for a trial green waste collection service, for consideration by Cabinet.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1** To agree a green waste collection service pilot to be run in Seaford for a 12 month period, with a 6 month review within that time.
- 2** To agree a charge, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery, which will ensure the service is cost neutral and reflect the volume of customers using the service as well as the operational costs

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3** A fortnightly green waste collection service pilot in Seaford would enable the demand for, and financial viability of, the scheme to be assessed, which would then inform any future decision about such a service being rolled-out district wide. The service will operate for 9 months of the year (no service in December, January and February) and will include the cost of a wheelie bin.

Background

- 4** This Council currently collects a range of materials for recycling. On a weekly basis food waste is collected for recycling. Glass, paper, cardboard and recyclable metals and plastics are collected on a fortnightly basis. This report considers whether a household collection service for green waste should be developed.

- 5 Green waste is plant-based, biodegradable material. It is generally comprised of garden waste, such as grass cuttings, weeds, hedge and shrub trimmings.
- 6 An increasing proportion of Councils across the country provide a green waste collection service to individual households as part of their waste and recycling activities. In most instances this is an optional service for which residents are charged. Green waste collected this way can be counted as 'recycled material' and therefore adds to the overall amount that can be counted towards recycling performance targets.
- 7 Councils are under pressure, nationally, to increase the amount of recycling undertaken in their districts, whilst reducing the amount of material going to landfill. A green waste service is one way that recycling levels can be increased.
- 8 There are environmental benefits to be achieved by having a green waste service, most notably that material collected will get recycled, locally, in Newhaven, into compost for re-use. Compost brings ecological benefits because it can be used as a substitute for products such as peat or fertilisers. In addition, green waste collection would reduce the number of car journeys made to Household Waste Recycling sites by individual households disposing of their own green waste.
- 9 However there are also some arguments against councils collecting green waste. These include a potential reduction in home composting, which is considered to be the best, low carbon solution for green waste. Also, despite reducing individual car journeys, a collection service would still have a negative environmental impact because of the need to use diesel vehicles to undertake the collections and then transport the collected materials for processing.
- 10 Green waste can currently be disposed of by residents through Household Waste Recycling Sites, of which there are currently three in the Lewes District. In addition, residents can request a one-off bulky waste collection to remove garden waste. The Council currently charges £22 for up to 10 bags of green waste. These collections are counted as part of the Councils' recycling totals.
- 11 There are also private companies operating in the area which will also collect and dispose of green waste from residential properties. Many residents, where space permits, choose to compost much of their own green waste, minimising the need for other disposal routes.
- 12 A green waste pilot, in a limited area of the district, would enable the Council to assess the demand for the service and its financial viability. Seaford is an urban area which would be sufficiently large to run a viable pilot, using one collection vehicle to undertake the collection, on one day per fortnight.

The Proposed Pilot

- 13 It is proposed that, for a period of one year, a pilot service be run in Seaford. This would offer a fortnightly green waste collection to households in the town, who wished to pay for the service. This service would operate for nine months of the year (excluding December, January and February).

- 14** A charge of £60 - £75 would be made for this service, which would include the provision of a 240 litre capacity bin for the householder to place their green waste in. Only one bin would be provided per household and if any replacement bins were required, these would be charged at £46 each. Payment in full will be required, or a commitment to pay by instalments by direct debit, on joining the scheme. A customer would not be offered a refund if he/she decided to withdraw from the scheme mid-year.
- 15** One refuse vehicle would be required to undertake the collections. There is capacity within the existing LDC refuse fleet to provide this without having to acquire an additional vehicle.
- 16** The pilot has been designed to operate at no net cost to the Council. The operational costs therefore have to be covered by those buying into the scheme.
- An uptake of at least 500 people (6% of households in Seaford, occupying houses or bungalows) would be required for the scheme to be financially viable, with the charge for the service at £70.
 - A £60 charge including bin, would require an uptake of at least 700 people for the scheme to be financially viable.
 - A £50 charge including bin, would require an uptake of at least 1200 people for the scheme to be financially viable.

Comparable Schemes

- 17** There are a number of other similar services operating locally. One is private and others are run by neighbouring councils. The table below provides details of their different charging rates. Those which offer low, or no, annual subscription are likely to be subsidising their service.

Provider	Annual Subscription (including bin)
Greentopia (operates within the Lewes District)	£78
Mid Sussex District Council	£60
Horsham District Council	£29
Adur & Worthing Councils	£60
Chichester Borough Council	£47.60
Crawley Borough Council	£48
Hastings Borough Council	£45
Wealden District Council	There is no additional

Provider	Annual Subscription (including bin)
	charge made as the costs are included in the council tax borne by all tax payers regardless of if they use the service or not
Eastbourne Borough Council	As above

Recycling credits

- 18 The Council receives, from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) payments each year called recycling credits. The amount received is dependent upon the volume, and potential value, of the recyclable material that the Council has collected. ESCC have indicated that, should LDC decide to go ahead with its green waste pilot, an additional recycling credit would be unlikely.

Pre pilot survey

- 19 In order to ascertain the level of potential demand for a green waste collection service, a consultation exercise has been undertaken with residents across Seaford. A short questionnaire (see appendix 1) has been distributed to the 11,000 households of the town, requesting their potential interest in the service and their views on pricing.
- 20 The closing date for the survey is 13 March so a verbal update will be provided to Members regarding the findings of the survey.

Evaluation of pilot

- 21 Should Members agree to the pilot being undertaken, it will run for a 12 month period. At the end of that time, it will be evaluated on the basis of:-
- Service uptake and, if demand exceeds capacity, the size of 'waiting list' for the service
 - Volume of material collected and contribution to recycling levels

Financial Appraisal

- 22 The total cost of operating a green waste collection service in Seaford as a pilot project for a year is projected to be £18,000. This includes the cost of a vehicle and crew, disposal charges, and associated management and overhead costs.

The £18,000 does not include the disposal costs. Currently green waste is tipped at the Tamar Organics Windrow composting site at Beddingham. The disposal cost is currently £35 per tonne but this could go down to £25 per tonne if larger volumes were tipped - 5,000 tonnes was the suggested level to achieve

this discount. The costs of disposal would be assessed once the volume of customers is known and the price of the adjusted accordingly.

- 23** By using an existing vehicle, the set-up costs of the pilot will be limited to the purchase of bins and registering customers for the service. The cost of bins will be charged to the customers as part of the subscription.
- 24** The cost of operating the pilot scheme will be matched by fees paid by just over 500 households (see point 14). This represents 6% of total households in Seaford (excluding flats) and is well within a participation rate of 20% anticipated for a permanent, District-wide scheme. However, there is a risk that uptake is below this level, resulting in a net cost to the Council. If a shortfall did arise, it would be funded from the Council's Recycling Reserve for the remaining 12 months of the pilot only and would have no impact on the Council's base budget or savings target.

Legal Implications

- 25** None arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

- 26** I have completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire and found the following significant effects which I propose to mitigate/enhance in the following ways:
- The service could result in a reduction in car usage as householders may make fewer trips to household waste recycling sites. This is a positive impact and therefore would not require mitigation.
 - The service could result in a reduction in air pollution as householders may choose to recycle green waste where previously they may have burned some of this material. This is a positive impact and therefore would not require mitigation.

Risk Management Implications

- 27** I have completed a risk assessment. No new risks will arise if the recommendations are not implemented. The following risks will arise if the recommendations are implemented, and I propose to mitigate these risks in the following ways:-
- Low service uptake resulting in pilot running at a loss – pre pilot survey will ascertain what service uptake levels are likely to be.
 - Householders outside Seaford express negative views about not having access to the service – clear communication about the pilot will manage expectations for residents across the district.

Equality Screening

- 28** An equalities screening was undertaken on 26 January 2015. This identified that assisted collections would be beneficial as part of this service, as is

currently the case with waste and recycling services. A full equalities analysis is not required.

Background Papers

29 None

Appendix 1