

Body: Cabinet

Date: 13 December 2017

Subject: Options for the recycling service for Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) Part 2

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Director of Service Delivery

Cabinet member: Portfolio Holder for Place Services, Councillor Dow

Ward(s): All

Purpose of the report: To introduce a charge for the collection of garden waste

Decision type: Key decision

Recommendation: Cabinet is recommended to

1. Approve the introduction of an annual charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste from April 2018
2. Approve the offer of a free compost bin as an alternative option to those householders who require one, the offer to be for a period of six months from April 2018

Reasons for recommendations:

- Current financial context
- Timely consideration of future shape of service

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet 12 July 2017 made the decision to bring waste and recycling services in-house from June 2019, following a mutual exit agreed with Kier Services to terminate the current contract.
- 1.2 A key area of work in the programme to bring waste services in-house is reconfiguring Eastbourne's recycling service, ensuring it is fit for purpose in the current context. This includes consideration of a charge for garden waste kerbside collections to help meet current financial challenges.
- 1.3 The council currently collects garden waste from 26,000 households (29,660

bins) in Eastbourne (about 60% of households) at no charge.

- 1.4 Not all properties in Eastbourne are suitable for or benefit from a garden waste collection service.
- 1.5 For those householders who would prefer to compost at home rather than participate in a charged-for garden waste collection service, a free compost bin will be offered as an alternative. This offer will be available for a limited period of six months from April 2018, with a maximum of one bin per household.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 To make an annual charge of £52 for garden waste collections from April 2018, to be paid in one instalment.
- 2.2 To serve notice on Kier of the change to the contract for garden waste collections, allowing sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for charging to start in April 2018.
- 2.3 To offer a free compost bin as an alternative option. This offer will be available for a limited period of six months from April 2018, with a maximum of one bin per household.

3.0 Background - service change proposals

- 3.1 Indications from the Ricardo and Local Partnerships' appraisals for ESJWP (included Eastbourne BC) are that the best option for all parties in the partnership is fully co-mingled recycling (including glass) with key decisions to be made about charging for garden waste (where currently free at Eastbourne and Wealden). Wealden has since proposed introducing a charge of £50 per year for garden waste from the start of its new collection contract.
- 3.2 Kier requires three months' notice of the change to the contract for garden waste collections, thus the decision has to be taken at December Cabinet for an April 2018 start.
- 3.3 EBC is facing significant financial challenges and levying a charge for garden waste could bring new income in the order of £300,000 per year.
- 3.4 It is contractually and legally possible to charge for this service, see section 9, 'legal implications'.
- 3.5 It is very common for local authorities to charge for a garden waste service. A survey of 20 waste collection authorities has been carried out in preparation for this report, a mixture of geographically local and demographically similar authorities, and the average fee for 2017/18 was £48.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 With due regard to the Local Government Act 1999 and the need for appropriate consultation, the principle of charging for garden waste was included in the

package of revenue reductions as part of the consultations on the Downland Farms in Spring 2017:
http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/_resources/assets/inline/full/0/259671.pdf

5.0 Corporate plan and council policies

- 5.1 Waste, recycling and street and beach cleaning services play a vital role in maintaining a quality environment within the town.
- 5.2 Key objectives are to reduce waste, increase recycling and maintain street cleanliness while delivering an efficient and cost effective service.

6.0 Business case and alternative option(s) considered

- 6.1 The Ricardo and Local Partnerships' reports for ESJWP detailed a thorough appraisal of options for waste and recycling services, including for Eastbourne, and indicated that charging for garden waste kerbside collections would be viable and cost effective.
- 6.2 A modelling exercise has been undertaken of likely participation rates against a range of possible charges to meet current budget shortfalls and £52 per year was the optimum fee.
- 6.3 The option to assist residents with composting alternatives has been proposed as part of this report.

7.0 Outcome expected and performance management

- 7.1 Charging for garden waste may lead some residents to leave the scheme and garden waste tonnages to reduce, which will affect Eastbourne's recycling rate. Overall recycling performance is anticipated to drop between 3-5% based on the experience of other local authorities. However, this is difficult to predict. An increase in home composting, for example, will just as effectively divert material from the waste stream.
- 7.2 This change may result in an increase in the fly tipping of garden waste. Under the current Kier contract this costs £30 per tip. Any issues of this nature will be investigated and robustly enforced by Neighbourhood First.

8.0 Financial appraisal

- 8.1 The council faces significant budget pressures and the likely income from charging for the service would make a contribution towards easing financial pressures and help maintain services that may otherwise be reduced or ceased.
- 8.2 With the introduction of a charge for garden waste, it is anticipated that 30-40% of the current customer base will continue to participate.
- 8.3 The current service for garden waste collections costs EBC in the region of £420,000 per year.

- 8.4 At £52 per year, income is projected to be circa £300,000 net of set up costs.
- 8.5 Within that income projection it is anticipated there will be funds available to cover the cost of providing compost bins to householders who request them. This offer will be available for a limited period of six months from April 2018, with a maximum of one bin per household.

9.0 Legal implications

- 9.1 The council is legally entitled to make a charge for the separate collection of garden waste, see 9.2 and 9.3 below.
- 9.2 Under section 45(3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, no charge can be made for the collection of household waste except in cases prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State; and in any of those cases —
- (a) the duty to arrange for the collection of the waste shall not arise until a person who controls the waste requests the authority to collect it; and
- (b) the authority may recover a reasonable charge for the collection of the waste from the person who made the request.
- 9.3 The council has the power to charge for the collection of green waste from households under the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012.

10.0 Equality analysis

- 10.1 An equality analysis has been undertaken and mitigating steps are described above in the second recommendation, that is to offer an alternative option of a home compost bin.
- 10.2 The waste and recycling service will continue to offer assisted collections as appropriate, where required.
- 10.3 To mitigate the cost burden on residents, communications on the new charge will carry the suggestion that neighbours share the cost of a bin where that is practicable.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 Charging for garden waste presents the opportunity to offset the bulk of the cost incurred from carrying out the service, which in turn reduces the financial burden experienced by EBC. Operating the service this way is typical of most local authorities. Taking into consideration the legal, financial and operational factors, it is recommended that a £52 annual charge be introduced from April 2018.

Appendices

None

Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Ricardo report to ESJWP
- Equalities and fairness analysis

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.