KERBSIDE COLLECTION OF GARDEN WASTE

WARDS AFFECTED

All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

No

1. PROPOSED DECISION

To approve the introduction of a charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

The Council currently undertakes a garden waste collection service to 68,000 households (83% of properties in the Borough). The service is undertaken by 5 dedicated waste collection teams on a seasonal basis with, on average, 20 fortnightly collections undertaken over 40 weeks per year, March to November, at an operational cost of approximately £931k per annum.

The garden waste collection service is non-statutory and can justifiably be charged for in order to prioritise and protect statutory services,

The Council faces significant budget pressures and the income from charging for the service would make a major contribution towards easing those pressures and help maintain services that may otherwise be reduced or ceased.

Not all properties in St Helens are suitable for a garden waste collection service. For this reason, it is felt that it is fairer to only charge those properties that require a collection service. (In the same way, for example, that those households who request a bulky items collection are required to pay for the service)
The Council is legally entitled to make a charge for the separate collection of garden waste.

The experience of other local authorities suggests that a charged garden waste service is likely to deliver a participation rate of 25% to 50% overtime. It is anticipated that the final outturn participation rate in St Helens may reach 25% in the first year and based on research this should increase in subsequent years.

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between the level of charge for the service and the subsequent take up, with lower charges attracting higher subscription rates. Therefore, the proposed charge is;

£35 (£1.75 per collection) or £30 if paid online (£1.50 per collection)

This should realise income in the region of £510,000 (based on 25% take-up at £30), but this will depend on participation rates.

The subscription period will run from 5 June 2017 until the end of May 2018 with a winter break December, January and February when no collections will take place. Residents will be required to renew their subscription annually. Residents who subscribe to the chargeable service will be provided with a licence (sticker) which they can attach to their bin to identify that they have paid for the service.

It is proposed that there will be no reduction if a household joins part-way through subscription period. The subscription fee is for a complete year regardless of how many times a household presents their bin for collection. Therefore, there is no reduction should a household not present their bin on all scheduled collection days. There will also be no refunds made for those who wish to cancel their subscription part way through the year (other than the statutory ‘cooling off’ period).

There are no plans to allow concessions and the charges will apply to all households, regardless of personal circumstances.

Households with large gardens will be allowed more than one garden waste bin, however, there is no planned discount for the collection of additional garden waste bins, which will be emptied at a further charge of £35 each (or £30 if paid on-line).

All households will receive a leaflet with full details about the introduction of the charge, why the Council is introducing it, how they can subscribe to the chargeable service, the terms and conditions and frequently asked questions. It is proposed that these will be delivered in late April 2017 to
allow sufficient time for residents to subscribe ready for the start of collections in June.

If households choose not to subscribe to the scheme, their garden waste will not be collected and they will need to make their own alternative arrangements to deal with it. Residents could choose to deposit their garden waste at any of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC’s), free of charge or they could consider home composting.

Households who do not wish to subscribe to the service will be advised to keep the green bin at the property for possible use as storage for garden tools etc. or as a water butt. Collection of the green bin will be arranged for those residents that request it but they will be advised that if the bin is removed from the property and they wish to subscribe to the service in the future then they will be required to pay for the delivery of another green bin.

The Council will provide full details to residents within the information leaflet to be delivered to households.

3. FACTS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED DECISION

National context

WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) are world leaders in helping organisations achieve greater resource efficiency through their work with governments, businesses and communities. Research conducted by WRAP in 2013/14 shows that increasing numbers of local authorities are introducing a charge for the collection of garden waste from residential properties:
The majority of the Councils that charged provided either a sack or a wheeled bin and charged residents annually for a fortnightly collection. Research shows that the median charge for a wheeled bin garden waste collection service equated to a payment of £35 per year.

Local context

Wirral Council introduced a chargeable garden waste collection service in June 2013. Their charge for 2016/17 was £40 (£35 if paid online). Participation is currently 36% of eligible households.

Halton Borough Council introduced a chargeable garden waste collection service on 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2015. Current charge is £30 (£25 if paid online). Officers from St Helens have visited Halton and feedback from Halton has shown that there was a very positive response to the introduction of the charge and in 2015 15,215 households subscribed to the service; which represents a take-up rate of over 36% of eligible households.

Warrington Council has introduced a chargeable service in March 2017 and charge £33 with a discount of £3 if paid for online.

West Lancashire Borough Council is planning to introduce a charge from 5\textsuperscript{th} June 2017 for the collection of garden waste. The proposed charge is £30 per year for one green bin to be emptied.
4. **IMPLICATIONS/RELEVANCE TO MEETING SAVINGS TARGETS/ PLANNING FOR 2020**

   It is anticipated that the charge will generate income in the region of £510,000 (based on 25% take-up at £30), but this will depend on participation rates.

5. **RISKS**

   5.1 **Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

      The main risk in respect of charging for garden waste collections is public reaction as residents won’t want to pay for a service that has previously been delivered free. The impact of this behaviour could see an increase in fly tipped waste and or garden waste being included within the black bin.

      Experience elsewhere has shown that Local Authorities do not experience significant increases in fly tipping after introducing charges. Nonetheless, Officers will monitor fly tipping incidents on a regular basis and if there is a rise in any areas increased monitoring could take place to deal with the situation.

      It is recommended that a policy prohibiting the placing of garden waste into the brown residual bin should be introduced alongside any charge for separate garden waste collections.

   5.2 **Should this Risk be added to the Corporate Risk Register?**

      No

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

   **Legal**

   In summary, there is no legal duty on the Council to make a separate collection of garden waste. However, if a resident requests the separate collection of garden waste the Council must provide a service, but it can make a charge for doing so. Legislative details are set out below:

   There is a duty to collect household waste under section 45(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

   Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, garden waste is classified under SI 811, Section 4, household waste for which a charge may be
made. However, the Council can only make a charge for collection and not disposal of garden waste

Financial

It is anticipated that the charge will generate income in the region of £510,000 (based on 25% take-up at £30), but this will depend on participation rates.

Human Resources

The resource requirement for the new charged for service will reduce dependent on take up and will be calculated and included in the overall review of the Recycling and Waste Collection service currently underway and planned to be included in a future Cabinet report.

Land and Property (Asset) – None

Anti-Poverty- None

Effects on existing Council Policy – None

Effects on other Council Activities – None

Human Rights – None

Equalities –

An Equality Impact Assessment is attached to this report.

The assessment has raised the following positive or negative impact for staff or service users as outlined below:

- Race (Ethnicity)
- Disability and Carers
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religion

None
Asset Management – None
Health – None

7. PREVIOUS APPROVAL/CONSULTATION
None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS THEREOF
None

9. APPENDICES
None

Paul Sanderson - Strategic Director of Environmental & Trading Services

The Contact Officer for this report is Tim Jones – Senior Assistant Director – Trading Services

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following list of documents was used to complete this report and they are available for public inspection for four years from the date of the meeting, from the Contact Officer named above:
None