

GREEN WASTE COLLECTION

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Introducing charging for fortnightly Green Waste collection with effect from the 2015 season (March – October 2015)*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public – 78 Responses received**

- 16% (17) suggested that recycling will reduce
- 30% (31) stated that fly tipping will increase
- 50% (52) stated that they will return their waste bins, put their garden waste in their black bins, burn or compost their green waste to avoid the charge.
- Residents have suggested that we should be encouraging recycling and that such a proposal will have the opposite effect.
- Money must be being made from all this re cycling. There should be a reduction not increase.
- How will you collect the green bins if I do not pay the charge?
- People are already paying for this service through their council tax and the Bin Tax needs revisiting with ALL local councillors involved in the decision and not just Cabinet. A tax for being 'green' is just wrong. Do not introduce this charge. Charging people to recycle green waste is CLEARLY a step back. I urge you to reconsider this decision.
- A more sophisticated pricing strategy could deliver greater acceptance and adoption of new charges.

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- The success or failure of changes in Waste Services remains to be seen. Presumably they have been tried successfully at other Councils.

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- Mike Brown (UNISON Regional Representative) went on to explain that he felt the Green Waste scheme would fail as nobody would sign up in year two.

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- Councillor A C Saffell raised concerns regarding charging for the collection of green waste, he felt that it would encourage people to stop using the service and therefore stop recycling. He questioned whether the Authority could make money and continue to maintain recycling rates. The Head of Community Services reported that Melton Borough Council had been consulted as they had introduced a charge and they still had a 40 percent take up rate. He explained he was aware that some green waste would be placed in the general waste but

the Authority would encourage home composting and disposal at the Recycling and Household Waste sites.

- For clarification, the Head of Community Services explained the proposed charges for the collection of green waste. Councillor D Howe suggested a charge of £20 per year as that was the fee Charnwood Borough Council was charging.
- Councillor J Geary stated that it was 'a sorry state of affairs we are in' and made the following comments:
  - 1) The Leader of the Council made a statement in Vision Magazine making it clear there would not be cuts to services as a result of freezing the Council Tax rate. Councillor J Geary felt that it was sad that the first cut proposed was to discontinue producing Vision Magazine, he believed this decision would 'come back to haunt' the Leader of the Council.
  - 2) Residents were not happy about being charged for the collection of green waste but he believed it was sensible to pay as it was cheaper than disposing it at the Recycling and Household Waste Sites. He stated he would be encouraging people to burn their green waste as he would be doing himself.
- Councillor J Geary asked what the cost would be to collect the unwanted bins. The Head of Community Services explained that plans were currently being worked on as the bins would be collected in stages to make it as cost efficient as possible.
- Councillor J Geary asked if there was currently any income for the recycling of green waste and also why was the implementation of the charge not being introduced until 2015. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the Authority received recycling credit income for green waste collection but did not receive any sales income. He reported that the timeframe for introducing the charge was necessary to provide sufficient time to install waste management software into the waste collection vehicles and to prepare for the administration of the charge, for example setting up direct debits. The timeframe was a sensible one.
- Councillor S Sheahan strongly objected to the introduction of charges for the collection of green waste and believed it was a poor policy on the grounds of the time consuming and costly set up, the additional work involved in processing invoices and direct debits, and it encouraged people to not recycle. He believed this policy would result in many complaints.
- Councillor D Everitt concurred with Councillor S Sheahan and he felt that all of the work carried out with recycling rates would be undone with the introduction of the charges for the collection of green waste. He added it was a shame to destroy a wonderful service.
- Councillor J Geary questioned the high cost of the refuse vehicle software and whether it had been planned for in the budget proposals. The Head of Community Services explained that there was money available in reserves which had been ring fenced for the investment.

### **Officer Comments**

Further to the responses received through the consultation, Officers make the following comments

- For residents who do not wish to take up this service we will be promoting home composting and the use of the local household waste refuse sites.
- The Green Waste charge will be an "Opt in" process. The experience reported from other authorities who have implemented this charge is that there is no discernible increase in fly tipping and we sincerely hope that will be the case in North West Leicestershire.
- The Council does make money from selling its recycling material, however, that money is already within the Council's finances and any reduction to that will only increase the savings targets required. With regards to returning bins, if the proposal is approved by Cabinet, we will provide a service for collection of unwanted bins, however, the details have not yet been finalised.

- All consultees are thanked for their comments and suggestions.
- In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the payment for the collection of green waste would not be included as part of the Council Tax payment.

### **Recommendations**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendations are now proposed to Cabinet:

1 – To introduce a fee of £30 (reduced to £25 if paid by Direct Debit) for the fortnightly collection of 240l garden waste bins

2 – To introduce a fee of £25 (reduced to £20 if paid by Direct Debit) for residents who currently have or wish to change to the smaller 140l garden waste bin .

This would reduce the annual forecast of £150,000 in savings down to £126,000. However, this proposal may increase demand for the service which has not been factored in at this stage.

3 – To operate the garden waste collection service from the beginning of March until the end of November annually, commencing March 2015.

This recommendation is giving residents an extra two collections from the original proposal at no extra cost. This would cost approximately £12,000 but based on historic tonnages of garden waste collected through November it would result in an extra £12,000 worth of income through recycling credits. Therefore, this proposal would be cost neutral.

4 – To investigate extending the £5 direct debit discount to include all forms of payment made on-line via the Councils web-site.