

**SUBJECT: GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION REPORT**

**MEETING: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To gain approval to implement the most viable garden waste collection service based on customer responses on consultation to meet the full cost recovery for the service. Service will be £50 per bin for 20 collections March through November.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Place Scrutiny Committee conducts pre-decision scrutiny on the options contained within the report, noting the preferred option below. The preferred option based on number of responses indicates that we can deliver a viable service to those residents at the required level.
- 2.2 That the committee endorses the proposed annual uplift in service charges of RPIx at November 1<sup>st</sup> of preceding year.
- 2.3 That the committee supports the implementation of the preferred option for the 2023/24 season.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

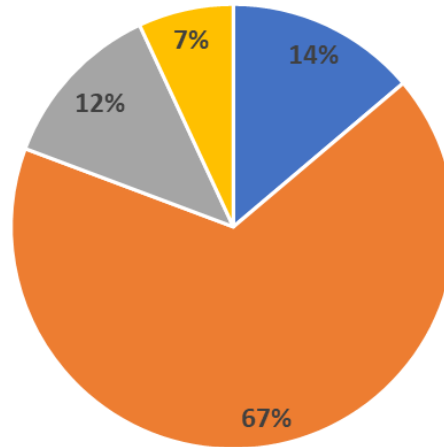
- 3.1 Garden waste collections are a non-statutory chargeable waste collection service. The service can recover full costs of recovery but should not charge for the disposal element.
- 3.2 Monmouthshire moved from a chargeable weekly sack collection to a chargeable fortnightly wheeled bin collection in 2020/21. This was to improve the service for residents, improve health and safety for collectors and reduce the MCC financial contribution following annual reductions of grant funding from Welsh Government.
- 3.3 The original proposal was to charge £35 for the service running March 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>. This was consulted on widely and the report was taken through Select Committee and through a Member Workshop where a revised fee of £28 was agreed and taken through Council for approval.

- 3.4 As part of the recommendations from the previous Strong Communities Select Committee and the Member workshop, we also introduced “cost price” compost bins and water butts through the Reuse shops.
- 3.5 Home composting remains the most environmentally friendly and financially prudent ways of dealing with grass cuttings. It adheres to the waste hierarchy and proximity principles, offsets carbon of collection and provides a peat free soil improver. The introduction of a garden shredder to our Benthylg Library of Things makes home composting a viable option for hedge and tree prunings to be included in home composting. Food waste is collected weekly so there is no need to include food matter in home composting and this should reduce concerns over pests and smells.
- 3.6 The £28 substantially reduced the council contribution to the scheme in 2021/22 but did not provide a full cost recovery model as proposed. There was no increase in costs in 2022/23. At £28, the scheme provided excellent value for residents and despite initial concerns about customer loss this resulted in an additional 2000 customers registering. This has increased the number of vehicles and staff delivering the service and with increased costs of vehicles, fuel, wages, receptacles etc the service required a MCC contribution of £240,000 in 2022/23.
- 3.7 The Council is facing significant budget pressures moving forward. The renewal of garden waste service charges does not align with the annual Budget Plan and Fees and Charges Review and a decision on increasing charges needs to be taken pre-budget review.
- 3.8 To redress this imbalance and implement a full cost recovery model a consultation with existing customers was carried out in November/December 2022 in readiness of the service delivery for 2023/24. See 2A, Appendix 1.
- 3.9 The service is currently provided to 14,361 customers with 17,000 bins (approximately 1/3 of households). The subsidy is borne by all households at £6 per household.
- 3.10 The diagram below shows the current customer base:

Row Labels	Count of Address
Bulwark and Thornwell	831
Caerwent	299
Caldicot Castle	402
Caldicot Cross	430
Cantref	365
Chepstow Castle and Larkfield	530
Croesonen	224
Crucorney	173
Devauden	145
Dewstow	359
Drybridge	409
Gobion Fawr	156
Goetre Fawr	341
Grofield	149
Lansdown	226
Llanbadoc and Usk	634
Llanelly	579
Llanfoist Fawr and Govilon	488
Llangybi Fawr	201
Llantilio Crossenny	114
Magor East with Undy	869
Magor West	417
Mardy	263
Mitchel Troy and Trellech	
United	336
Mount Pleasant	482
Osbaston	506
Overmonnow	244
Park	303
Pen Y Fal	321
Portskewett	495
Raglan	374
Rogiet	322
Severn	334
Shirenewton	400
St Arvans	312
St Kingsmark	481
Town	225
West End	267
Wyesham	355
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14361</b>

3.11 The consultation results showed an overwhelming 67% of respondents supporting a continuation of the service at £50. The results of the consultation and small selection of qualitative data are set out below. Full results and responses are included as Appendix 1 and 1A.

**Q2. The options below seek to reduce the current subsidy and deliver a viable service for our customers and residents. Please select your preferred option:**



- Cease collections - I would not use the service as laid out in any of the options above.
- Keep the service frequency as it is (fortnightly wheeled bin collection) for £50 per bin per year (20 collections).
- Reduce the frequency of the collections to four weekly for £42.50 per bin per year (10 collections).
- Reduce the frequency of the collections to six weekly for £35 per bin per year (6 collections).

“Couldn’t afford any more than £28! Rather have green bags provided and take to Five Lanes myself”

“Please do not change the frequency. As it stands even being collected every two weeks the bins smell. If the frequency is extended the green material will break down further and will stick in the bins and will not be possible to empty. In addition, I subscribe to the number of bins I need (two), so if the frequency is extended then I will need more bins which I do not have room for nor the finances. It's an important service which we need to keep and encourage people to have gardens for the environment and wildlife.”

"This is truly outrageous, we pay enough for council tax as it is and mainly for services that I don't use, why don't you charge for council tax in the same way as garden waste collection? If you use it you pay for it....I don't use schools, libraries etc so why should I fund people that do.  
Get a grip!"

“£50 per bin per fortnight is still of value if the alternative is to drive to Five Lanes with waste bags.“

“Get your issues of course but £50 is too much given that some councils do not charge at all?”

“It's a very useful service if you have a large garden and live a long way from with recycling centre. Both those things apply to us. Happy to pay extra for it. Would rather this than see other services cut back.”

#### **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

4.1 Garden waste collections is a non-statutory chargeable service where residents opt-in. There are a number of options open to residents to treat garden waste that do not opt-in, including, home composting (MCC provide cost price home composters through the reuse shop), delivery of material to one of the Household Waste Recycling Centres, community composting at participating allotments etc.

4.2 The impact of increasing the charges will be felt by those on low incomes but at present the 14,361 customers are subsidised by all residents who may also be on low income without using the service.

4.3 We will continue to provide home composting bins at cost price. Home composting is environmentally friendly, meets waste proximity principles and provides a soil improver at source.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

5.1 Options appraised included “do nothing” “Uplift to £50 for existing service” “full cost recovery with service options”.

5.2 We know that the garden waste collection service is currently being subsidised by £240,000 and “do nothing” would increase the subsidy year on year. Given current increases in demand for service at £28 by 2023/24 we would need an additional vehicle plus crew. An additional 2000 customers would increase service costs by £200,000 and increase income by £56,000 leaving a total subsidy requirement of £384,000.

5.3 An “uplift to £50” is included as part of the consultation and this gives customers the option of service provision.

5.4 “Full cost recovery with frequency options” provides customers with options and each option provides a viable model to reduce subsidy.

5.5 Consultation results, as per Appendix 1.

#### **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

6.1 Customer retention

6.2 Reduction in subsidy

6.3 Sales of home composting bins

**7. REASONS:**

- 7.1 Reduce the subsidy on a non-statutory service.
- 7.2 Ensure the waste hierarchy and proximity principles for waste treatment are maximised.
- 7.3 Protect the environment and resources for future generations.

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Any reductions in service may result in redundancy situation will be addressed through capitalisation and all efforts will be made to redeploy individuals.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet Member  
Customers  
Communities and Place Directorate Management Team

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None.

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