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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| <b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>        | DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY      |  |                           |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>               | CHARGING FOR GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS |  |                           |
| <b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>      | 19 FEBRUARY 2013                      |  |                           |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>             | DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER   |  |                           |
| <b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b> |                                       |  |                           |
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#### **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

None

#### **BRIEF SUMMARY**

The purpose of this paper is to set out the reasons for introducing a charge for the collection of garden waste, set out the prices to be charged for garden waste collections and to request delegated powers for the Senior Manager City Services to implement this new service from April 2013. The current free service would cease 29 March 2013.

The new service will be primarily a wheeled bin service and only residents that request the service pay for the service. All residents can take their garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre and dispose of it there for free.

Introducing a chargeable garden waste collection service is part of budget savings proposals for 2013/14 for Environment & Economy (E&T 22).

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Having complied with the requirements of paragraph 15 (General Exception) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, it is recommended:

- (i) To charge for garden waste collections from 1/4/13.
- (ii) To offer an early bird discount of £5 for residents requesting the service by 31 March 2013.
- (iii) To offer a subsidised home composter for 450 residents who request service by 31 March 2013. This will cost £5 and will be offered on a first come first served basis.
- (iv) To charge £35 for a 240 litre bin, £55 for a 360 litre bin and £37.50 for disposable bags (only for properties without frontages)

#### **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. This report is submitted for consideration as a general exception under paragraph 15 of the Access to Information procedure Rules in Part 4 of the

Council's Constitution, notice having been given to the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee and the public. The matter requires a decision in view of the recommendation to be considered at full council on the 13<sup>th</sup> February to remove the free garden waste collection arrangements and introduce a chargeable service as described above. The urgency is linked to the seasonal nature of the service and the fact that if the chargeable service is agreed it will need to be operational for the Easter holiday period which is traditionally a busy time for generating garden waste. This would provide an alternative to withdrawing the previously free service and for these reasons the decision cannot be deferred for inclusion in the next Forward Plan for decision following 28 clear days notice.

2. The proposals to introduce a chargeable service will save £542k and were included as part of budget savings proposals for 2013/14.
3. The Council has the power to charge for the collection of certain categories of waste, including garden waste. Only residents that opt into the scheme pay for collections.
4. The new service will be primarily a wheeled bin service, which is a more convenient way for residents to recycle more garden waste.
5. The majority of authorities in Hampshire charge for garden waste collections.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

6. The alternative option is to continue to provide the service for free or a cheaper price. Due to the increased financial pressures facing the Council and the need to prioritise key services, charging for garden waste collections is an important way to reduce costs and prioritise essential Council services.
7. Reducing the intended charge for garden waste collections has been rejected as it is important the service covers its costs and the service generates a saving of £542k. Prices have been benchmarked with other authorities across Hampshire and are value for money.

#### **DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)**

8. The current garden waste service is a free, uses green reusable bags and is provided fortnightly. Four crews/vehicles provide the service March – November and this reduces down to two crews/vehicles in the winter months. No service is provided over Christmas / New Year. The service is used by approximately 30,000 residents on a regular basis in the peak summer period and reduces to around 4-5,000 customers in the winter period. Whilst more residents are registered for the service they only put their bags out occasionally or not at all. The current service experiences high levels of failure demand due to the use of reusable bags which get lost, wear out or are used inappropriately. If the proposals in this report are approved, the current service would cease 29 March 2013. It costs £542k to provide a free service.
9. With financial pressures facing the Council and the need to save money, the new service will be a chargeable service, like most authorities in Hampshire and across the UK. This means only those that use the service pay for it.
10. The new service will be a wheeled bin service with the option to purchase a 240 litre bin service (the current size of most household wheeled bins) or a

larger 360 litre wheeled bin service. Residents must have space to store a wheeled bin on the property. Disposable bags will be offered to a limited number of properties without frontages. This is limited due to disposal constraints with bags. The pricing structure is below.

|                          | Sign up before<br>31 March<br>2013* | After 31<br>March 2013<br>(1 year) | After 15<br>August 2013<br>(6 mths) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 240 litre<br>wheeled bin | £30                                 | £35                                | £17.50                              |
| 360 litre wheeled<br>bin | £50                                 | £55                                | £27.50                              |
| Disposable bags**        | £32.50                              | £37.50                             | £18.75                              |

The service will remain fortnightly and will be provided for 48 weeks of the year (not Christmas / New Year period).

11. 4 – 6,000 residents are expected to sign up for the service over the course of the year. One crew/vehicle will provide the service and in the initial start up, will undertake a range of other work until numbers build up.
12. In order to attract customers an early bird discount of £5 will be offered if residents sign up before 31 March 2013. An additional incentive of a subsidised home composter will be offered if residents sign up before 31 March 2013. The composters are being funded from the Weekly Collection Support Scheme grant. Home composters will enable residents to produce their own nutrient rich compost.
13. Residents will be able to pay by telephone or via the website using a credit/ direct debit card. Future developments of payments include moving towards a direct debit system for 2014/15.
14. All residents are able to dispose of their garden waste free of charge at the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Southampton or use the Netley or Marchwood centres.
15. The move from a free green garden waste collection service to a chargeable service will reduce the tonnage of garden waste collected by some 3,000 tonnes per annum, which will reduce the councils recycling performance by initially around 3%. Over time as more residents join the scheme this is likely to reduce to around 2.5%. There will be an increase in the amount of garden waste that is being taken to the household waste recycling centre (HWRC) and this will provide a positive impact of about 0.5% on recycling performance. To assist residents the council will be leaving the current re-usable bags with residents to enable them to take garden waste to the HWRC. With financial support from the weekly collection support scheme (WCSS) the council is also able to increase the level of subsidy that it provides on home composters provided to residents. WCSS funding will also be used to provide a future glass collection scheme to council residents which when fully established will increase recycling performance by over 4%. Although a move to a chargeable garden waste collection service will reduce recycling performance the introduction of glass collections will provide a net increase of around 2% in recycling performance.

16. Consultation and pre-commencement communications activity is being undertaken as part of the Council's responsibility to consult on budget proposals.
17. The cost of funding the service is estimated to be £160K per annum with these costs being met from customer subscriptions. The service will comprise one collection vehicle and crew who will undertake other waste related work should customer numbers not initially reach the 5,000 customer level required for the service to break even.
18. The key findings in the Equalities Assessment detail potential impacts for low income families with large gardens could be the most affected by the introduction of the scheme, however the use of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres and subsidised home composters would assist in mitigating the service change. Older people or residents with disabilities may experience some difficulty in changing from a bag to bin service however, assisted collections would be provided in the same way that they are for domestic waste collections.
19. Information will be provided to every household on alternative ways to dispose of garden waste if residents do not wish to participate in the new scheme including promoting the use of the Household Waste and Recycling Centres and subsidised composter bins. In addition, residents will be reminded of the enforcement measures the council can take if garden waste is placed in domestic refuse bins or fly-tipped in public open spaces.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Capital/Revenue**

20. See point 16.

### **Property/Other**

21. None

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

22. S.45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes a duty on local Authorities to arrange for the collection and disposal of household waste in their area. S.45(3) provides that no charge may be made for the collection of household waste unless prescribed by Regulations made by the Secretary of State. Where the Secretary of State makes Regulations permitting charging for the collection and / or disposal of certain types of waste, the duty to collect that waste does not arise until the charge has been paid.
23. The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012, made under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as referred to above, designate garden waste as household waste for which a charge for collection may be levied (Schedule 1, paragraph 4(8))

**Other Legal Implications:**

- 24. In proposing revised arrangements for the collection of garden waste the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and s.17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. Nothing within the proposals to charge for the collection of waste contravenes the provisions of these Acts.

**POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

- 25. All wards in the City will be affected by the implementation of a chargeable garden waste service. The recommendations contained in this report are in line with the Council's Policy Framework.
- 26. All wards in the City are able to use the household waste recycling centres to dispose of their garden waste for free.

**KEY DECISION?** Yes

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b> | All |
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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices**

|    |      |
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| 1. | None |
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**Documents In Members' Rooms**

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| 1. | None |
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out. | Yes |
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**Other Background Documents**

**Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at None**

| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
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| 1. | None |  |
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