



To: Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services: Councillor Jean Swanson
Report by: Jen Robertson – Waste Strategy Manager
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment 14/1/2014 Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington West Chesterton

CHARGING FOR 2ND GREEN BINS

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Cambridge City Council needs to make savings of £6.3M over the next four years and has been looking at a whole range of options to reduce expenditure and increase income in order to meet this target.
- 1.2. The green bin service is used for the collection of garden waste and food waste from households in the city. Some flats do not have this service as a result of lack of space to store a bin or lack of material generated.
- 1.3. Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992, garden waste is classed as household waste for which a charge for collection may be made. This is not the case for other waste streams such as food waste. The collection of garden waste is not a statutory service, but is at the discretion of the Waste Collection Authority (WCA). The Council is intending to continue to offer a free garden and food waste service to residents but proposing to introduce a charge of £30 p.a. to be applied for the emptying of any 2nd green bins containing garden waste only. Historical information obtained from collection crews has highlighted that two thousand households have 2nd green bins so that they can have extra garden waste collected.
- 1.4. Various options detailed below will be offered to residents who do not want to take part in this paid for service for a 2nd green bin.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the introduction from 1 October 2014 :

- 2.1. a charge of £30 per annum for the emptying of a 2nd 240 litre domestic green bin that a resident would like to either retain for extra garden waste or for a new resident who would like to join the 2nd green bin scheme.
- 2.2. a charge of £25 for the emptying of a 2nd 140 litre domestic green bin that a resident would like to either retain for extra garden waste or for a new resident who would like to join the 2nd green bin scheme.

3. Background

- 3.1. The green bin service has been operating since 1995, although it was introduced on a phased basis. All green bins have been issued free of charge and remain the property of Cambridge City Council. A small proportion of properties are issued with brown sacks as they do not have sufficient space to store a wheelie bin.
- 3.2. Over the years approximately 2,000 households have been issued with a 2nd green bin to deal with extra garden waste. The discretionary green bin service costs £556,140 p.a.
- 3.3. Nationally over one hundred authorities charge for garden waste collections, with a proportion of these also charging for emptying any extra receptacles.
- 3.4. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) introduced a charge for 2nd garden waste bins in April 2013. Initially they had 8,500 household with 2nd green bins and since the introduction of charging, they now have 3,400 households with 2nd green bins. They charge £40 for emptying a 2nd green bin.
- 3.5. The intention is that residents will be able to pay for the 2nd green bin service either via the website, at the Customer Service Centre or over the telephone. Should residents not wish to continue with their 2nd green bin, there are other options in terms of disposing of any extra garden waste.
 - 3.5.1. Home compost bins can be purchased through the Council website <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/home-composting> at a cost of £22.47. Home composting is convenient, easy and provides good compost that can then be used on gardens. Certain uncooked food waste can also be home composted.
 - 3.5.2. The Household Recycling Centres can take this material and although it is not environmentally sound to make extra trips in cars, often these visits can be combined with other necessary trips.

- 3.6. All residents should continue to use their 1st green bin for food waste, particularly any food waste unsuitable for home composting along with any garden waste.
- 3.7. Communication with residents will be very important and the intention is that residents will receive letters about the change or will be able to contact the Customer Service Centre for further information. Residents will be given details on how to pay for the service or how to surrender their bin if they do not wish to continue with the collection of the extra bin. There would also be an opportunity to promote the use of green bins for food waste in any communications informing residents of the service changes. Please see Section 4(f) for further details.
- 3.8. Experience from other authorities indicates that enabling residents to pay by Direct Debit reduces the cost of administering the service.
- 3.9. Based on Huntingdonshire DC's experience just over one third of residents are likely to want to pay to participate in the 2nd green bin service, while one third will surrender their bin. However, there is evidence that a significant proportion of these households will drift back and will eventually pay for a 2nd green bin if they need one, after trialling alternative options. If one third sign up this will equate to approximately 650 households.
- 3.10. The waste implications of introducing charging for 2nd green bins are as follows:-
 - 3.10.1. There is likely to be a decrease in tonnage collected through the green bin scheme and this will have an impact on the composting recycling rate and our overall recycling rate. The overall rate which includes the dry recycling in the blue bin is quite widely reported and was 43.6% last year of which 20.8% was attributable to the material collected from green bins.
 - 3.10.2. There will be queries from residents about the proposed charge and detailed answers and advice will be given through publicity, the website and the customer service centre. It is important to note that residents will continue to receive the green bin for no extra cost and it is only the extra collection of a 2nd green bin that will be charged for.
 - 3.10.3. There may be a limited increase in flytipping of garden waste. Flytipping is an offence and our enforcement team will continue to monitor and prosecute offenders where a case can be made.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

- Based on one third of residents wishing to retain their 2nd green bin and pay the charge of £30 an approximate income of £19,500 will be

generated. This may increase in subsequent years as the charge becomes accepted.

- There may be some extra cost associated with adding the web based payment mechanism through Capita. This is a one off cost in the first year only.

(b) **Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

- The intention is to make the charging and administering of the scheme as simple as possible both for residents and for the council so that no significant extra administrative burden is added.
- There is likely to be an increase in customer contact to the Customer Service Centre and this will need to be planned in introducing the service.
- Communication with the crews on how to identify bins that are included in the scheme will be important. Information will be included on the 'In Cab' system which is linked to the waste database system.

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

- An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and has identified that there may be some negative impact on people who are economically disadvantaged.
- This could be addressed by providing a reduced charge for existing second bin users who are in receipt of Council Tax and/or Housing Benefits. All new requests for second green bins will be charged the full rate. This needs to be investigated further, but it is felt that the number of residents affected is likely to be small.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

- Nil - There will not be any climate change impact for the council.
- However, there may be a small negative impact if residents were to make extra trips to a Household Recycling Centre (Milton or Thriplow).
- It is much better for green waste to go into green bins as it is then composted and used as a soil improver.

(e) **Procurement**

- There are no procurement implications.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

- The Waste Team will communicate this change to the service by using various methods including the Council's website, Twitter, Facebook, targeted letters, press releases and Cambridge Matters.

(g) **Community Safety**

- There are no community safety implications

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Huntingdonshire District Council - Overview and Scrutiny Report – Agenda Item 4 – Charging for 2nd Green Bin.

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/g13418/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2009-Oct-2012%2019.00%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Panel%20Environmental%20Well-Bei.pdf?T=10>

WIN Focus 7 report August 2010 – Subscription based services: Garden Waste.

WIN case study September 2010: Countywide review results in harmonising garden waste subscription across Northumberland.

6. Appendices

None

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name: Jen Robertson

Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 458225

Author's Email: jen.robertson@cambridge.gov.uk