

# **BRIEFING REPORT**

Changes to the Bulky Waste Collection Service



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper focuses on the opportunity to review the charge structure of the Bulky Waste Collection Service whilst still ensuring proposals are aligned with the Council's Transformation vision and ensuring the best possible services for our communities. This paper is based on delivering a package of changes to enhance the service that is offered to our communities. The charging structure has been altered along with a reduction of the concessions, in line with benchmarking of other authorities. We have also provided additional investment into this service by the upgrading and implementation a new booking system and also integrating with scheduling technology to improve our operation and improve the customer experience.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

Bulky Waste has been suspended since March 2020 to allow for priority resources to be covered during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time it has also allowed for a full review of the current bulky waste offering alongside a project to replace the existing booking system which was labour intensive.

Our existing charges are currently £20 for up to 3 items and £40 for up to 6 items. We also allow 2 free collections for recipients of Council Tax, Housing, Income Support or Pension Credit benefits. Previously there has been no way of validating the information supplied by residents.

Benchmarking of the service has been carried out with both APSE family members group as well as our nearest neighbours and also other Unitary Authorities. A total of 40 local authorities were used. Out of these 40, Plymouth were the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest charge at £20 for up to 3 items (highest charge £72). Also out of the 40 local authorities only one offered one free collection a year to Council Tax Support recipients. 9 Local Authorities offered residents a discount ranging from specific discounts such as £9 reduction for a fridge freezer to 15-50% discounts for benefit recipients. The other 30 Local Authorities did not operate any sort of concession scheme.

## **3. PROPOSED CHANGES**

- Reduce the concession from a free concession to a 50% discount for Council Tax support recipients only. An automated validation system has been configured to allow this check to be completed on booking.
- Alter the charging structure from £20 for up to 3 items to £25 for up to 4 items and £10 per item thereafter. 90% of all collections that were carried out in 2019/20 were for between 1 and 4 items.

## **4. FINANCIAL**

The cost of operating this service is £128k per year with a forecasted revenue with the proposed changes of £95k. The proposed changes are estimated to increase revenue by £50k for this service, mainly from the reduced concession. It will however still run at a loss as the cost of operating the service will still outweigh the revenue that is paid by residents as the disposal charges for this waste must be met by the Local Authority and therefore this additional revenue will seek to balance the transport cost only of the service.

## **5. DECISION SUMMARY**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Street Scene, Maddi Bridgeman, is to approve the following:

- Change in pricing structure to £25 for up to 4 items and £10 per item thereafter.

- Reduction from free collection for benefit recipients to 50% discount for Council Tax Support benefit recipients only.