

# Cabinet



Date of meeting:	10 November 2022
Title of Report:	<b>Garden Waste Subscription Charge</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Bill Wakeham (Cabinet Member for Environment & Street Scene)
Lead Strategic Director:	Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)
Author:	Andy Sharp Interim Head of Environmental Operations
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Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

The report and associated business case sets out the case for introducing a subscription charge for the collection of household garden waste.

## Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Council's Cabinet:

- Approves the Business Case
- Approves the introduction of a subscription charge for the garden waste collection service of £49 per garden waste receptacle with an early bird reduction to £39 for those who sign up within the publicised offer period.
- Approves an inflationary increase to be applied to the charge for garden waste collection to take effect for each calendar year from 2024 onwards.
- Approves the introduction of a charge of £10 for residents who request that the Council collect Garden Waste containers that are no longer required, as opposed to retaining it or taking it themselves to Chelson Meadow Recycling Centre.

The introduction of the subscription charge would deliver against a range of drivers including: helping to mitigate the Council's unprecedented budget pressures; improve service reliability; provide the right level of resource on our toughest waste collection rounds to reduce the risk of musculo-skeletal injuries for our crews; and provide resource to help educate residents to recycle more. It is also a fairer approach for those residents who do not currently receive the service as it will ensure Council budgets are prioritised for essential services. The introduction of a container collection charge is necessary to help reduce the volume of requests and contribute towards the cost of collection. Lower volumes will mean that the Council can collect the bins within shorter timescales.

### **Alternative options considered and rejected**

1. Continue to offer a free service – this would not generate the forecast savings which will help the Council deliver a balanced budget.
2. Cease garden waste collection – this is a popular service used by approximately half of Plymouth's households. It also counts towards the Council's overall Recycling rate. It is therefore deemed more appropriate to give residents who value the service the opportunity to pay for it and in doing so help to cover the operating costs.
3. Introduce charging at a lower rate – the rate is reasonable based upon comparative benchmarking and has been selected to appropriately help deliver a balance of subscription rates which is the main driver of cost and income. Any reduction in the rate will likely reduce the overall forecast contribution to the Council's budget.

### **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan**

The decision demonstrates the values set out in the Corporate Plan. It is fair and responsible to ensure as much cost recovery as possible for the provision of discretionary and non-statutory services.

The Plymouth Plan sets a 65% recycling rate target set for 2025. The combination of a number of measures will help reduce the risk of any negative impact on the Council's overall Recycling Rate. These measures include: the ability for residents to bring garden waste to the Recycling Centres; the addition of new Recycling Officer roles to increase recycling participation and reduce instances of recycling contamination; and wider targeted communications campaigns designed to inform and encourage residents to recycle more and recycle correctly.

### **Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

The proposals, based on a 23.5% household participation rate, are modelled to produce a net cost of £0.360m in 2023-24, and £0.227m in 2024-25.

When these proposals are compared to the 2022-23 £0.890m net cost budget, then the proposals generate a net £0.530m saving to the current budget in 2023/24, and a £0.663m saving against current budget in 2024-25. If the participation rate is lower or higher then the figures will vary.

### **Financial Risks**

If the household participation rate is lower than forecast then the income levels will be lower. As the participation levels will be unknown until after the 2023/24 budget is set there is a risk of a budget deficit.

The Government may legislate for free of charge household garden waste collections. If this is implemented and additional burdens funding is not provided then the Council could face a budget deficit.

### **Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

The crew vehicle mileage, idling times and disposal trips are likely to reduce thus reducing associated vehicle carbon emissions. However, resident trips to the Recycling Centres are likely to increase.

Additional measures such as re-introducing Recycling Officers and targeted recycling information campaigns to help residents recycle correctly, and the provision of a subsidised rate for the purchase of home composters will be beneficial to environment.

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

As detailed in the Business Case this decision will help mitigate the musculo-skeletal risk that certain waste collection rounds pose our crews. The increased funding will enable an increase in waste crew members to bolster collection rounds with known manual handling challenges.

**Appendices**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Garden waste subscription briefing paper							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							
C	Garden waste subscription business case							

**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 04/11/2022											

Cabinet Member approval: *Councillor Bill Wakeham, via email.*

Date approved: 05/11/2022