



EXTRAORDINARY CABINET: 28
February 2018

COUNCIL: 28 February 2018

Report of: Director of Leisure and Environment

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor K Wilkie

**Contact for further information: Heidi McDougall (Ext 5191)
(E-mail: Heidi.mcdougall@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: RECYCLING/GARDEN WASTE BIN INITIATIVE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement for a capital scheme that involves changing the use of the current green garden waste bin, using it for paper/cardboard and introducing a new brown bin for garden waste to improve both the recycling and garden waste service for residents and improve the future efficiency of the service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 2.1 That from 4 June 2018 the current green bin be used for the collection of cardboard/paper and a new brown bin be introduced as set out in sections 6, 7 and 8 of the report, for use by those residents that sign up to the garden waste service.
- 2.2 That the new charge of £25 for a wheeled bin, agreed in the policy options report at Council in December 2017 be implemented earlier than 1 April 2018, on 12 March 2018 to coincide with the launch of the garden waste service for 2018/19.
- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Director of Leisure and Environment in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder to take all necessary steps to implement this scheme.
- 2.4 That this report is not appropriate for call in due to the timescales involved in the launch of the new scheme, in time for the new growing season.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- 3.1 That from 4th June 2018 the current green bin be used for the collection of cardboard/paper and a new brown bin be introduced as set out in section 6, 7

and 8 of the report, for use by those residents that sign up to the garden waste service.

- 3.2 That the new charge of £25 for a wheeled bin, agreed in the policy options report at Council in December 2017 be implemented earlier than 1 April 2018, on 12 March 2018 to coincide with the launch of the garden waste service for 2018/19.
- 3.3 That funding of £440,000 be provided from the capital programme to fund the introduction of a new brown bin and associated costs.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The current two stream recycling service is operated on an alternative weekly basis using a variety of containers. The paper/cardboard mix is collected in a 35 litre blue bag and the glass/cans/plastic mix is predominantly collected in a 240 litre blue bin. Still in use but no longer issued is a blue box that some residents use for either recycling mix.
- 4.2 The refuse and garden waste are collected in 240 litre bins except where the property has remained on a sack collection.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The current collection of glass/cans/plastic in the blue bin is relatively straight forward and problem free, however, the paper/cardboard collections are cumbersome. The current blue bag is not large enough and inadequate for the collection of cardboard and therefore many residents resort to their own method of presentation, this usually involves leaving large piles of cardboard at the side of the road increasing the time it takes to undertake the collections. This results in the need to increase the number of staff on each round from two to three to ensure that the round is completed on the scheduled day, and the loaders having to lift and bend multiple times to collect the waste, often making multiple trips between the vehicle and residential property increasing the time it takes to carry out the collections. It also causes litter issues during high winds and wet weather resulting in untidiness and the use of additional resources, e.g. street cleansing having to be sent to the area of collections to clean up.
- 5.2 The constant bending and lifting activity of the crews is likely to have contributed to 422 days being lost in 2016/17 through sickness caused by muscular skeletal issues e.g. bad backs, pulled muscles and increased the costs of the service by approximately £38,000 through the use of agency workers. Every time a member of staff is absent due to sickness they have to be replaced which results in the council paying twice to deliver the service.
- 5.3 A more suitable solution would be to collect paper/cardboard in a bin. The use of a bin would greatly improve the service for residents making it simpler, whilst maximising their opportunities to recycle more by providing greater capacity, increasing the rate of recycling towards the 50% target. Using a bin would also more effectively contain the waste, reducing the need to deploy additional

resources e.g. street cleansing service to collect the scattered litter and it would make the operation much quicker, creating efficiencies.

- 5.4 Introducing a new wheeled bin for the collection of paper/cardboard, to all households would require significant investment of over £780,000. A more cost effective way of introducing a new bin would be to change the use of the current green bin, to collect paper/cardboard and issue a new brown bin for those residents that sign up to the garden waste service in 2018. It is proposed that this switch take places to coincide with the start of the garden waste service in early June 2018.
- 5.5 Without the introduction of an additional bin the service will carry on operating as it currently does and not be able to make any efficiency savings.

6.0 INTRODUCTION OF NEW GARDEN WASTE BIN (BROWN BIN)

- 6.1 The introduction of a new brown garden waste bin would only take place at residential properties when they sign up to the garden waste service in 2018/19. If a resident signed up to the new chargeable garden waste service in 2017 and re-subscribes in 2018, between 12 March 2018 and before the start of the service on 4 June 2018, they will receive a free brown garden waste bin. Thereafter existing customers will have to pay £25 for a new brown bin and any additional or replacement bins.
- 6.2 If a resident subscribed to the garden waste service in 2017 and subscribed for more than one bin or purchased additional bins and they subscribe for the same number of bins in 2018, the number of green bins in use will be replaced free of charge with the same number of brown bins, leaving one green bin at the property for the paper and cardboard collection. Any surplus green bins will be removed and where possible, returned to stock. Any additional bins required from those purchased in 2017, will incur a charge. It is therefore recommended that the increase of £23 to £25, agreed at Council in December 2017 as part of the policy options report be implemented earlier than agreed, on 12 March to coincide with the launch of the garden waste service.
- 6.3 The new brown bins will only be offered free of charge for a limited period of time (12 March to 4 June), any residents subscribing to the service after this date will need to purchase a brown bin which may generate some income to off-set the capital investment made. It is difficult to quantify this because the launch of the new scheme may encourage residents to subscribe before the 4 June. Using last year's subscription figures 17,317 residents subscribed before the service started on 5th June and 4,804 residents subscribed after, total of 22,121 residents. These figures could give a guide of how much income maybe achieved, although it is likely that many residents will subscribe early to avoid having to pay the fee for the bin.
- 6.4 Residents who sign up to the garden waste service for the first time in 2018 will need to purchase a new brown bin. This is because of the recommendation proposed to change the colour of the garden bin to brown and allow the green bin to be used for cardboard/paper and is in line with existing policy to charge for bins.

- 6.5 Issuing brown bins to only those residents that have signed up to the garden waste service also reduces the risk of the service being abused. There are many residents who currently have a green bin who have not signed up to the chargeable garden waste service and may try and present their bin for collection. These bins are currently stickered with a warning label. The risk of this happening reduces significantly with the introduction of brown bins, issued to only those properties that have signed up to the service. The properties that have presented garden bins are also cross referenced with the in-cab software technology on board the vehicle to confirm that the property has signed up to the service.
- 6.6 Brown bins will no longer need to have a subscription sticker attached to them to notify the crews of a valid subscription. Only properties that have signed up to the service will receive a brown bin reducing the administration costs associated with the service by an anticipated £5,000. In future years, if a residents does not subscribe to the service, this information will be displayed on the in-cab software technology on board the vehicle to advise the crews, if the bin is presented not to empty the bin. These bins will be stickered with a warning label. The bin will remain at the property for future use or if requested by the owner removed from the property.

7.0 EXISTING GREEN BIN

- 7.1 When the chargeable garden waste scheme was launched in June 2017, 49% of households signed up. This means that there are a number of green bins across the Borough currently not being used and sat redundant in resident's gardens.
- 7.2 If a new brown bin is introduced for the collection of garden waste, the existing green bin will be used to collect paper and cardboard. This will make the service much simpler for residents and less troublesome and time consuming for the crews. The use of the green bin to collect paper/cardboard will generate efficiencies savings that will be considered in the context of the route optimisation project.
- 7.3 When the garden waste service was launched in 2017, a small number of residents decided that they no longer required the service and requested that their green bin be removed from their property. In total, 139 bins were returned to the Council and where possible, returned to stock. This current stock of bins along with those that are suitable when retrieved from properties with more than one green bin, will be used to issue to those residents (free of charge) who returned their green bin to the council. Properties that do not currently have a green bin will be able to request one, free of charge once the switch takes place until 4th June after which the standard charge will apply. It is envisaged that these requests will be made from those households that did not receive a bin when garden waste collection was introduced several years ago because they do not have a garden. In a situation where a householder cannot securely store a bin due to its design or access cannot be gained by a vehicle with a tail lift, these properties will continue to be allowed to present paper/cardboard in the blue bag or box. Additional cardboard left at the side of bins will be collected, providing it is identifiable, however it is envisaged that the quantity of loose cardboard will drastically reduce due to the increased capacity provided in a bin.

- 7.4 The use of green bins to collect paper/cardboard will reduce the need for replacement blue bags. Between 1 April 2016 and August 2017, 2,219 requests for blue bags were made which were handled by the Customer Service Centre and incurred postage at a cost of approximately £1,442. The last order placed for blue bags cost £1,701. These costs will reduce in subsequent years.
- 7.5 Using a bin to collect cardboard/paper should also improve the service for residents, with bins being much more visible than the bags or loose cardboard. It should result in fewer missed collections, a cleaner environment and improve overall satisfaction with the service.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 8.1 The introduction of a new brown bin and change of use of the green bin will require a targeted communications campaign to inform residents. A leaflet has been designed to promote the relaunch of the garden waste service for 2018 and introduction of a brown bin which, if agreed will be delivered in March with the council tax bills. Information outlining the changes can also be included in the garden waste subscription pack, on the website and via press releases. Email and text messages can be sent to those residents who subscribed to the garden waste service in 2017.
- 8.2 Once the council tax leaflets have been delivered and residents start to subscribe to the garden waste service for 2018, residents will be advised that the brown bin will be delivered prior to the new service starting. This is due to the timescales involved in procuring the bins, following approval of the funding at Council. To deliver the bins it will be necessary to hire three vehicles and have three teams of staff delivering bins during a 4-6 week period. If delivery of the bins to the Council is delayed for any reason, by the supplier the switch will take place at a later date and the existing service will continue to operate.
- 8.3 In addition to the leaflet promoting the launch of the garden waste service and introduction of a new brown bin, an additional leaflet will be produced and delivered to all households to explain the change to the green bin. This leaflet will be delivered by the crews, supported by agency workers. Stickers will also be placed on the green bins to remind residents only to place paper/cardboard in them after the changeover. The website will be updated and a number of press releases issued to ensure that residents are informed of the change.
- 8.4 Training will be provided to the Customer Services Team and Street Scene Staff through the use of scripts, verbal updates and frequently asked questions. Additional agency workers will be employed in Customer Services, to support the increase in calls during the first few months of the garden waste scheme being launched.
- 8.5 The administration of the garden waste service and the delivery of bins will be coordinated by the Street Scene Services admin team. Training will be provided to the crews to ensure that the content of bins are checked during the changeover.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

10.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are significant financial implications arising from this report in respect of the issues raised. The cost of purchasing and distributing the new bins, administering and communicating the changes amounts to £440,000.
- 10.2 The benefits of moving to a bin operated system will lead to efficiencies within the service in terms of time, and these efficiencies will be considered in-line with the route optimisation project to determine if any further savings to those already agreed through the policy options process can be achieved. A reduction in administrative costs and purchasing of consumables is anticipated to deliver a saving of £5,000.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 There are a number of risks associated with the proposed service changes. A delay with the delivery of bins by the supplier, to the council will result in the changes being made later than anticipated after the garden waste service has been launched for 2018. If a delay is experienced the service will continue to operate as is until such time that the switch can be implemented.
- 11.2 The initial results of the route optimisation project should be known in April 2018, and it will not be able to estimate the potential efficiency saving until this information is available.
- 11.3 A lack of communication with the public could result in an increase in calls to the Customer Services Centre. A range of publications will be used to help minimise this.
- 11.4 Should residents not subscribe to the garden waste service before 4 June, the number of subscriptions could reduce due to the additional cost of the brown bin. This would result in a loss of income to the garden waste service. The service will be publicised to encourage existing customers to sign up prior to the service starting in June to qualify for a free bin.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does have a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment