
GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the introduction of an 'opt in' pay for use Garden Waste Collection Service for residents of the Borough.

Summary

2. Garden waste collection services are now commonplace across the country and all of the other north-east authorities provide a fortnightly service, either using a wheeled bin or sack, with six of them charging and five of them not. Darlington do not have a regular Garden Waste Collection Service with residents disposing of garden waste either through home composting, at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) or within the residual waste stream.
3. As charging is now commonplace it would be possible to introduce an 'opt in' charged for Garden Waste Collection Service for residents within the Borough as requests for this service are regularly received.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members approve a consultation exercise to gauge resident interest for the introduction of a Garden Waste Collection Service.
 - (b) Subject to enough residents wanting to participate in a Garden Waste Collection Service, the new service is introduced from April 2019. A final decision to implement the service to be delegated to the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with Cabinet Member for Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio.

Reasons

5. The recommendations are supported subject to enough interest from residents, to enable a Garden Waste Collection Service to be introduced.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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| S17 Crime and Disorder | There is no impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report. |
| Health and Well Being | There is no impact on health and well being as a result of this report. |
| Carbon Impact | Garden waste collected will be processed through an in vessel system, returning PAS 100 compliant compost that can be used for agricultural use. |
| Diversity | There is no impact on diversity as a result of this report. |
| Wards Affected | The service will be offered to all residents. |
| Groups Affected | There is no impact on any individual group as a result of this report. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | There is no impact on the Council's Budget or Policy Framework as a result of this report. |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision. |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | A Garden Waste Collection Service would impact on the Place agenda and will have a positive impact on recycling and composting rates. |
| Efficiency | No impact on the efficiency agenda. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers |

MAIN REPORT

Background

6. Residents in the Borough currently have three options for the disposal/treatment of garden waste produced from their household:

(a) **Home Composting**

It is difficult to estimate the amount of waste that is home composted, however it is likely that there is a reasonable tonnage that is dealt with by the resident at their home.

(b) **Take to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)**

From here the waste is then composted at Stonegrave Aggregates via an in vessel system to produce PAS 100 compliant compost, which can be used for agricultural use.

There is significant tonnage of garden waste that residents take to the HWRC; in the previous two years:

- (i) 2016/17 – 3,420 tonnes
- (ii) 2017/18 – 3,368 tonnes

This represents approximately 28% of the total waste going through the HWRC.

(c) **Use the Council's existing Garden Waste Collection Service**

For the Council's existing garden waste service, which residents can pay for 10 sacks at a cost of £8.53, the waste is then collected and taken to Stonegrave Aggregates for further processing. The number of residents taking up this service in the past two years is:

- (i) 2016/17 – 647
- (ii) 2017/18 – 656

7. Garden waste collection services are common practice with all authorities across the north-east, except Darlington, offering a fortnightly collection, either wheeled bin or sack with six charging and five not. For our closest neighbours, none of the Tees Valley Authorities charge and Durham currently charge £30, which will increase in 2019/20 to £35.
8. The majority collect garden waste from April through until November, approximately 30 weeks.
9. Resources have never been available in Darlington to introduce a free garden waste collection service, however as charging for a fortnightly collection service is now common practice across the north-east and nationally, Members may want to consider introducing a new service.

Proposed Garden Waste Collection Service

10. It is proposed to introduce a fortnightly charged garden waste collection service for a 30 week period from April through to November, using a 240 litre bin. This will be an opt-in service for residents at a proposed cost of £35 per year. The waste collected would then be taken to Stonegrave Aggregates where it would be further processed via an in vessel system, producing PAS 100 compliant compost, which can be used for agricultural use.
11. There are a number of assumptions used to pull together the anticipated take up of the service, which are based on national experience of other schemes. It is also assumed that 25% of the garden waste tonnage that was not previously collected was diverted from the residual waste stream, another 25% will be diverted from the HWRC and the remaining 50% will be diverted from home composting.

Table 1 below gives the further assumptions made.

Table 1

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Number of properties with gardens across the Borough | 39,410 |
| Resident take up of the scheme | 20% = 7,882 properties |
| Set out rate amongst subscribers | 95% |
| Participation amongst subscribers | 100% |
| Garden waste tonnage collected | 1,841 tonnes |

12. The Council in 2016/17 recycled, composted and re-used 37.4% of household waste. Of this, 21% is from kerbside recycling performance. The introduction of a Garden Waste Collection Service has the potential to increase this by 5%, taking it to 26%, and overall recycling, composting and re-use to 43%.

Financial Implications

13. Based on the assumptions and the anticipated number of properties taking part in the scheme, there will be a requirement for an additional vehicle and crew of three; driver plus two operatives. The costings below are annual, however the service will only be operated for 30 weeks of the year. The staff during the remaining 22 weeks would be utilised on other refuse collection duties, reducing the need for agency staff. The estimated cost of the service will be:

Table 2

| | £ |
|---|----------------|
| Refuse collection vehicle, annual cost | 50,000 |
| Crew, driver plus 2 operatives | 75,000 |
| Marketing/communications | 30,000 |
| Administration/enforcement | 25,000 |
| Borrowing cost for 10,000 wheeled bins spread over 10 years | 22,000 |
| Equipment/uniform/consumables/replacement bins | 5,000 |
| Total cost for the service | 207,000 |

14. Based on the assumption of 7,882 subscribers at the higher end of the estimate paying £35 there would be an income of £275,870 covering the cost of the service, returning a surplus of £68,870.
15. Applying sensitivity analysis to the assumptions and reducing potential take up of the scheme to 15%, this would mean that 5,912 properties take part in the scheme, generating an income of £206,920. This returns a small deficit of £80.
16. Depending on the take up of the scheme which is expected to be between the high and low point there is a financial risk, however this is believed to be low and introducing the service will be dependent on potential take up from the initial proposed consultation with residents.
17. As a minimum the scheme is expected to be self-funding and should not give rise to any additional costs to the Council.
18. The maximum number of properties that one collection round can service over a two-week period is 9,000; the equivalent of 1,125 per day. If there were more than 9,000 subscribers, additional collection services would need to be introduced.
19. It is difficult to estimate the impact on the treatment cost but it is anticipated that it will be neutral as some waste will be diverted from the more expensive residual waste stream, creating savings that would cover the anticipated overall cost of treating the additional garden waste.

Legal Implications

20. By Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council has the power to charge for discretionary services as long as the service user agrees to pay for the service. The charges must not exceed the cost of provision over relevant financial years, and this will need to be factored to the level at which charges set.

Timeline

21. Subject to Cabinet approval, consultation would take place with residents over the summer to gain interest in the scheme. If enough residents come forward then they would be asked to sign up by the end of November 2018. Subject to enough signing up, the new Garden Waste Collection Service would be introduced from April 2019.

Consultation

22. Subject to Member approval, the consultation will take place with residents to gauge interest in the Garden Waste Collection Service.