

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET15 April 2021Report by Director of EnvironmentGARDEN WASTE CHARGING PROPOSAL UPDATE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise Cabinet on details of the proposed commencement of the scheme for charging for the collection of Garden Waste from Monday 7th June 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet;
- a) Notes the further detailed information provided as to the background to the proposed scheme; and
 - b) Approves the commencement of the Charging for Garden Waste Scheme for East Renfrewshire Council from 7th June 2021 as proposed in this report.

BACKGROUND

3. The Cabinet on 26 November 2020 considered a report outlining proposals to introduce a Charging for Garden Waste Scheme for 2021/22.
4. The Cabinet
- Agreed that the Director of Environment be authorised to progress further work on the implementation of the operational arrangements for the proposed garden waste charging scheme; and
 - noted that the decision on whether or not to implement the scheme would be taken at a future meeting when the Council's financial position was clearer.
5. The budget for 2021/22 was approved at the Council meeting on 15th March 2021. This included income of £800,000 derived from the proposed Charging for Garden Waste Scheme.

REPORT

6. The Council's current arrangements for the collection of garden waste provide a high number of weekly collections per annum compared with many other councils.
7. However, the service comes under pressure during the summer months to maintain this level of service due to the sheer volume of garden waste produced.

8. The proposal to implement the charging for garden waste scheme will generate income for the Council but at the same time allow through additional staffing and the addition of a further refuse collection vehicle for the scheme to be improved in terms of reliability. It should be noted that three new operational posts and one administrative post will be created within Neighbourhood Services.

9. Several concerns have been expressed regarding the potential abuse of the scheme and also the potential for an increase in fly tipping. Other councils who have implemented charging for garden waste have been contacted. They too experienced such concerns which did not materialise upon implementation of the scheme.

10. The Charging for Garden Waste scheme is proposed to function as follows (these are key points and further explained within the attached frequently asked questions):-

Nature of scheme:

The scheme is voluntary. There is no requirement for residents to participate.

See attached frequently asked questions for further details.

Commencement Date:

The implementation date this year will be Monday 7th June 2021 up to which point residents will continue to receive a free uplift of their garden / food waste container.

Charge:

A charge of £40 for the 2021/22 season will be levied to all households participating in the garden waste scheme which will be payable in advance of the scheme in one lump sum. Payments can be made online or through Customer First.

Exemptions:

There are no exemptions to the scheme. However, in exceptional circumstances we may be able to consider payments over four instalments through direct debit.

Annual Review of Charging:

The participation fee for the Charging for Garden Waste Scheme will be reviewed annually in line with the Charging for Services process.

Permits:

Participating households will be supplied with a bin sticker which will clearly identify their participation in the scheme.

Permits will be sent out annually prior to the commencement of the scheme.

Garden Waste in Brown Bins without a permit

All brown bins without a garden waste permit will be checked for compliance with the charging scheme. Whilst food waste will still be allowed to be placed in the bin and collected weekly any evidence of garden waste within the bin will lead to the bin not being

emptied. The householder will be responsible for the removal of garden waste from their bin before food waste collections are re-commenced.

Non-compliant brown bins (i.e. with garden waste in them but not having a permit) will be collected by the Council, if requested by the customer, for a fee of £35 per collection.

Frequency of Collections:

Permitted (green waste allowed) and Non-Permitted (should contain only food waste) brown bins will continue to be collected on a weekly basis for 50 weeks of the year. There will be no collections over the two weeks of the festive period. The scheme will run 1 April to 31 March each year.

Christmas Trees:

Residents participating in the garden waste scheme will be entitled to a free collection of a single biodegradable Christmas tree. Non scheme members will be charged £15 per Christmas tree for collection if they request the service. The fee will be reviewed annually.

As an alternative, the Council aims to provide a chipping service at two locations within the Council area. Residents will be able to dispose of their Christmas tree free of charge and the resultant chippings will be used within parks and open space areas.

Household Waste Recycling Centres:

Greenhags and Carlibar Road HWRC's will continue to accept garden waste from residents all year round.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

11. The proposed charging scheme could generate net income of £800,000 per annum based on an estimate of 25,000 households participating in the scheme after allowing for additional operating costs in terms of additional staffing and a vehicle.

CONSULTATION

- 12. The scheme was approved in principle at the Cabinet meeting on 26th November 2020.
- 13. Financial analysis has been undertaken in full consultation with the Department's Finance Business Partner (Environment).

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

14. Corporate Communications have been fully involved in developing a communications plan to accompany the launch of the scheme.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

15. The proposal will end the free collection of garden waste which is a non-statutory function and introduce a charge of £40 per annum. The proposal will also result in the creation of around four additional jobs.

16. A Frequently Asked Questions document is appended to this report. This outlines further details on the proposed Scheme and its impact on residents. It is simply work in progress and will be developed further to support the launch of the scheme.

CONCLUSIONS.

17. The majority of Councils in Scotland are now charging for garden waste collections, considering implementing charging for garden waste or not collecting this waste at all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. It is recommended that the Cabinet;

- a) Notes the further detailed information provided as to the background to the proposed scheme; and
- b) Approves the commencement of the Charging for Garden Waste Scheme for East Renfrewshire Council from 7th June 2021 as proposed in this report.

Director of Environment

Further information and background papers can be obtained from Andrew Corry, Head of Service, email: andrew.corry@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Convener contact details

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March 2021

Background Papers:

Garden Waste Charging Proposal, Report to Cabinet, 26 November 2020

**East Renfrewshire Council
Environment Department
Chargeable Garden Waste Scheme – Frequently Asked Questions V5**

What are the proposed changes to the collection of garden waste? Why is it changing?

The Council currently collects garden waste along with food waste in the brown bin. Brown bins are issued to each household/flatted property in the Council area.

The Council has a legal obligation to collect food waste but does not have a legal obligation to collect garden waste. The Council along with many other Councils are facing significant budget challenges.

To allow the Council to focus on and protect priority services the Council is proposing to continue to collect garden waste but apply a small charge to residents to allow this service to continue (and also to improve it regarding reliability and effectiveness).

What is the Charge?

It is proposed that the charge for the financial year 2021/22, will be £40 per annum. Over a 12 month period this equates to less than £1 per week per household to continue the provision of this service and also to improve it.

Does payment of Council Tax not pay for Garden Waste Collection?

No. Council Tax only meets 20% of the Council's expenditure.

What level of income will this give to the Council?

It is estimated that around 50-70% of households will participate in the Scheme. With the current charge proposed based on this percentage level of uptake, approximately £800,000 will be generated towards offsetting required savings. This will not only assist in the ongoing delivery of this non-statutory service but will also help protect other priority services.

How many collections will residents receive for the charge?

50 collections of garden waste for each full year will be made.

At present food and garden waste is collected in the brown bin. How will this be collected under the new scheme?

Food Waste can continue to be put into the brown bin and this will be collected from each household at the same frequency as it is currently. If a resident only wishes a food waste collection they do not have to purchase a permit.

The Garden Waste Scheme will operate on a permit based system and only those who have purchased a permit will be entitled to place garden waste into their Brown Bin.

How will you know if someone has paid for a permit?

For residents who choose to purchase a permit a permit sticker will be issued and must be affixed to their brown bin. When brown bins are being collected the Council's teams will be able to

quickly identify who has a permit and they will collect that bin disposing of both the food and garden waste contained within.

What happens if residents don't purchase a permit?

The Council's teams will undertake checks to ensure that there is no garden waste in the brown bin if a permit sticker is not affixed. If it is found that garden waste has been put into the bin and the resident has not paid for this service the bin will not be emptied. The resident will then need to dispose of the garden waste themselves for example by composting it or taking it to local Household Waste Recycling Centres either at Greenhags or Barrhead.

Alternatively, any resident can contact the Council and pay a fee of £35 (2021/22) for a single uplift of their bin.

Residents can choose to put their garden waste into their household (grey) bin. However, this will be discouraged as poor recycling practice. The Council will not uplift any additional waste caused by overfilled grey bins.

If a resident employs the services of a gardener the waste is then classified as commercial waste and the gardener should take this away with them after finishing their work and dispose of this as commercially generated waste.

What happens if residents are in receipt of Universal Credit or other benefits?

There are no plans to apply any form of discount or exemption to those on any form of benefits. The small charge being proposed applies to the whole household in receipt of the service and not to individuals personally. In exceptional circumstances those finding difficulty in paying will be able to request to make payment through Direct Debit in the form of four separate instalments.

What happens if residents are on an Assisted Pull-Out? Will this still continue?

The normal Assisted Collection Service will continue for food waste collections. If residents in receipt of the Assisted Collection Service still wish their garden waste to be collected they must purchase a permit.

Will residents be able to purchase more than one permit and have more than one brown bin for garden waste?

At present the scheme will be limited to one brown bin per household. Any expansion of the service would need to be fully considered by the Council as it may involve additional investment in vehicles and staff which would come at a cost so the business case for expansion would need to be properly assessed.

If residents stay in a flatted property how will the scheme work?

Residents who currently share a bin for their food/garden waste (i.e. flatted properties), can continue to do this for garden waste as long as one of the residents applies and pays for the permit. The Council would not become involved in any neighbour dispute over payment to another neighbour.

What would happen if someone doesn't pay for a permit and uses another neighbour's bin to dispose of their garden waste without their permission?

If this occurs this would be classified as fly tipping and the individual concerned could be fined if caught.

What happens if I do not initially sign-up to the new scheme and I want to join at a later date?

The charge of £40 will be a year round charge for the current financial year. If existing residents or new residents to East Renfrewshire Council choose to join the scheme part way through the year the charge level will still be £40.

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