



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

*A Borough to be proud of*

## FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Scrutiny Commission	6 October 2016
Executive	19 October 2016

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

## GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE UPDATE

### Report of Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction)

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny Commission on the introduction of charging for the garden waste service and fly tipping.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Commission notes the report detailing the successful implementation of the charged garden waste service, and the work in progress for the collection of the 2017 charge.

#### 3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 A £24 per wheeled bin charge for the collection of garden waste was introduced from April 1 2016 for the period 1 April – 31 March inclusive. The charge was agreed at Council on 18 February, collection of payments commenced 2 weeks later, and the new service implemented 6 weeks later.

#### **Participation**

- 3.2 As at 31/8/16 the service has :-
- 29,288 users (which is 60% of all properties in HBBC, and an estimated 74% of all of those who previously had the free service)
  - 30,319 bins (some residents have more than one bin)
  - generated £727,667 Income (NB This is total project income)
- 3.3 The table below compares the current position to that which was budgeted:-

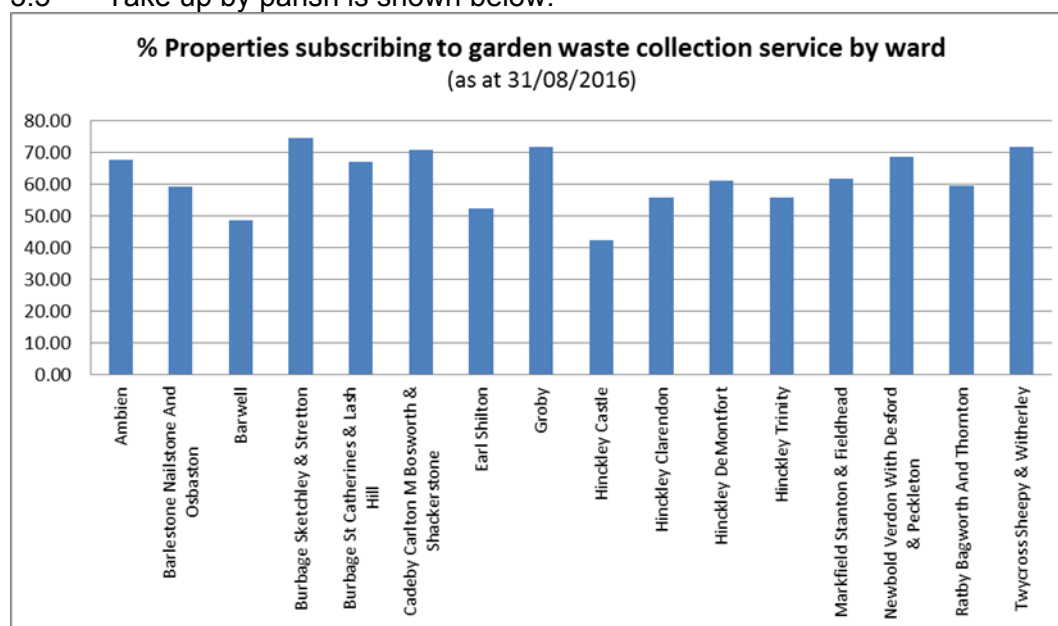
	2016/17 Budget	Actual YTD (as at 31/8/16)	Forecast to 31/3/17
Number of bins	20,156	30,319	30,852
Income	£483,753	£727,656	£740,448
Expenditure	£203,603	£31,759	£200,154

Net income	£280,150	£695,897	£540,294
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The income forecast for the year assumes a further 533 bins will be paid for during September, before take up tails off for the year as we approach the winter months.

3.4 1,216 additional bins were rented in 2015/16 at £15 per bin (where residents have more than 1 bin at a property). There are currently 869 additional bins rented, which is 347 (29%) less than last year.

3.5 Take up by parish is shown below.

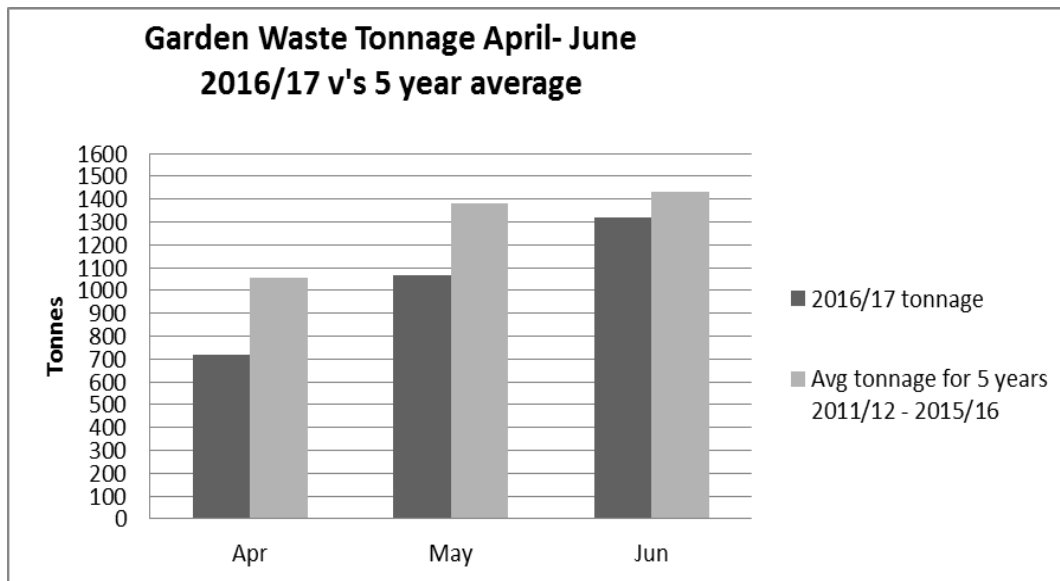


This shows higher than anticipated take up across the whole of the Borough. Where take up is lower, this correlates to the consultation results from November 2015. These areas have a higher proportion of terraced housing with smaller gardens (Hinckley Castle) and are closer to the Household waste and recycling centre at Barwell (Barwell and Earl Shilton).

3.6 Hinckley and Bosworth now has the highest participation in a chargeable garden waste service in Leicestershire. For comparison Harborough introduced a £40 charge at the same time as HBBC and 50% of all households have joined their scheme.

### Recycling performance

3.7 The amount of garden waste collected is weather dependent and therefore variable. For example a warm wet spring / summer will generate a lot of grass growth, which will result in higher tonnages being collected. It is therefore impossible to attribute any reduction in the recycling rate fully to the introduction of a charge. This year April was very cold and tonnage is down across the whole of Leicestershire for the first quarter. The impact of the change on tonnage therefore remains difficult to accurately assess but there is an overall reduction in tonnage for the first quarter when compared to the average tonnage for the same period in previous years. The table below compares the tonnages collected for the period April to June 2016/17 to the average for the last 5 years.



It can be noted as more customers have subscribed since commencement of the service (1 April 2016) that tonnage collected has increased nearer to the average expected for the month. Indicative figures for July show this trend has continued with the same tonnage collected as for 2015/16. In view of the overall reduced tonnage for the first quarter, the impact on the overall recycling rate is currently forecast to reduce by circa 3% to 49.1% for 2016/17.

- 3.8 LCC waste management officers have advised there has been no significant impact on the household waste and recycling site at Barwell. Total green waste tonnage for the period April to June has increased by 6.9% (39.7t)
- 3.9 Composting was promoted as an alternative on all HBBC literature, and Leicestershire County Council ran adverts promoting their reduced cost compost bins on bus stops in the Borough. For the period March to May compost bins sales by LCC were 117 compared to 79 for the same period the previous year. This represents a 48% increase although the numbers are relatively small.

#### **Payment methods**

- 3.10 66% of all payments were made on line via the Councils website. This indicates customers shift to on line interactions with the council and the councils investment in its channel shift programme.
- 3.11 Approximately 5800 people have signed up to pay by direct debit. This is the lowest cost method for the Council to collect payments, and also the easiest for residents. Executive have agreed to fix the direct debit price for 2 years, and to reward 50 customers who sign up to direct debit by the 31 January 2017 with free collection for 2017/18. The council is currently investing in software so that customers can set up a direct debit online replacing a labour intensive manual process. The new system will be available from early 2017. Further promotions will be run through the Borough Bulletin and supporting literature.
- 3.12 A new on line payment system is has now been implemented by the channel shift team. This is ready for payments for 2017/18. The new system is more user friendly, and has greater back office integration.

### Complaints

- 3.12 A total of 115 written complaints were received about garden waste charge. 15 of these were official complaints. Of the official complaints 8 of these were about the introduction of the charge, 3 about the extended time customers had to pay, 2 about the on line payment system and 2 about call waiting times.
- 3.13 62 written complaints were received about the on line payment system, call waiting times and the credit card surcharge. The capacity of the telephone system was quickly increased to resolve this issue, and an increase in customers paying by direct debit in 2017 should reduce the call volumes to customer services. The new on line payment system and greater clarity on the credit card surcharge should rectify the majority of these complaints.
- 3.14 38 written complaints were received about the implementation of the charge.

Issues noted in written complaints from 38 residents	No. of references to issue
Charge is a Stealth tax/I already pay my Council Tax for this service	19
Concessions should be made for low income families	7
The period of grace for non-payers after 1 April 2016 is unfair	5
Resident not prepared to wait until Autumn for garden bin to be collected	4
Residents will put green waste in their refuse bin	3
Charge will result in increased fly-tipping	3
Residents should not have to pay for 2+ bins	2
Nuisance trees not on resident's land cause debris	2
Why has a charge been implemented when consultaion did not support this	2
Resident has to cut grass verges by property so need a garden bin	2
No discounts are given for part year	1
New occupant not happy with 1 November 2015 - 31 March 2016 as period whereby new occupants purchasing garden bins also receive their 2016/17 sticker for free	1

The current system of one charge per bin is simple to understand and the lowest cost to collect. Therefore no changes to the charging structure are proposed. In 2017 bins will be rejected from 1 April where no payment sticker is displayed to resolve these complaints. New occupants purchasing a bin after 31/12/16 will receive the following year's service free of charge to encourage new residents to recycle.

#### **Collection of unwanted bins**

- 3.15 The collection of unwanted bins commenced 19th September. This is being done in house by HBBC street scene services. The numbers collected to date will be given verbally to Scrutiny commission as they are not available at the time of writing this report.
- 3.16 The cost of collecting the unwanted bins is estimated at £45,000. The collections have been arranged flexibly so the staffing levels and thus cost can be quickly reduced if the numbers of bins collected reduces. Bins collected will be re-used where possible otherwise recycled. Income will be received for any bins recycled which dependant on numbers will range from £15,000 to £30,000.
- 3.17 There are no storage costs being incurred as the bins are being taken straight for recycling.

#### **2017 service**

- 3.18 In addition to the changes mentioned above Officers continue to seek efficiencies and improvements to the system. For example we are currently exploring having the addresses printed on the stickers to reduce sun bleaching.
- 3.19 The collection of payments will start on 1 February 2017. Information will be distributed by the same means as 2016 (in the annual council tax bill, by bin hangers, press releases, Borough bulletin etc.). Customers will therefore be able to pay 4 weeks earlier than this year.

#### **Fly tipping**

- 3.20 There were 26 green waste fly tips for the period April to July 2016 compared to 11 for the same period in 2015. However, the total amount of fly tipping incidents has increased during this period from 568 (2015) to 665 (2016). The proportion of fly tips which are garden waste has therefore increased from 1.9% to 3.9%. Should this increase continue for the rest of the year then the council would have to pick up an additional 45 garden waste fly tips compared to 2015.
- 3.21 Leicestershire County Council closed their waste sites for 2 days a week starting April 2016. It is therefore impossible to know what proportion of the garden waste fly tipping is attributable to the garden waste charge, and what is due to reduced access to the household waste and recycling centres or other reasons.

#### **4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES**

- 4.1 This report is to be taken in open session.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [CS]**

- 5.1 As per table 3.3 above, the forecast net income for the year of £540,294 is £260,144 more than the budgeted net income of £280,150.

5.2 The budget for 2017/18 will be set based on the latest collection rates and changes will be reflected in the next MTFs refresh.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

6.1 The Council has a statutory authority whereby it is able to charge for the collection of garden waste. This is set out within Schedule 1, Paragraph 4 (8) of The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012, made under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

6.2 The Council is also required to have due regard to the provisions of Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 and the proposals set out within this report do not contravene the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The recycling service contributes to our corporate plan aims of clean neighbourhoods and reducing our impact on the environment. The revenue generated from this charge contributes to value for money services.

## 8. CONSULTATION

8.1 A Borough wide consultation was undertaken in November / December 2015 to inform the budget setting process for 2016. 40% of respondents said they would pay £40 per year for garden waste collections.

## 9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Payment system failure / under performance / lack of back office integration.	System available early and tested	Ilyas Bham
Reduced demand for service	Price fixed for 2017, strong positive communications	Caroline Roffey
Call volumes exceeding contact centre capacity	Telephone system capacity increased. Earlier payment date, higher direct debit uptake.	Julie Stay / Caroline Roffey

## 10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This service is available throughout the Borough and on the same terms for all residents.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

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Background papers: None

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