

**ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15TH JANUARY 2018**

GARDEN WASTE SCHEME

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to summarise the position and outcomes from the first year of the separate chargeable Garden Waste service and set out the arrangements and operational delivery for the scheme for 2018-19.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- It is proposed that the scheme continues for 2018-19.
- To confirm arrangements and operational delivery for the scheme for 2018-19 as follows:
 - Subscribers will pay £49.42 per bin for the 2018/19 season with a 15% discount for immediate full payment via card or cash reducing payment to £42 per bin Sign up for the new season scheme will be live from **12th February 2018**.
 - All current customers will be contacted by letter or email at the start of January 2018, reminding them of the scheme for next year and the sign up facility live date. A further reminder will be sent to all customers who have not signed up in late February.
 - Bins/containers will be recovered upon notification by the customer that they no longer require the service, or in the event of non-payment.
 - Delivery of containers for new customers will start in February in preparation for the new season commencement date of **12th March 2018**.
 - The scheme will run until **30th November 2018**.

Reasons:

The garden waste collection service has been well received with approximately 2500 bins requested with 2400 customers signing up in the first year of operation.
The majority of customers signed up online and benefited from the reduction of 15%.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: YES

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr. H.A.L Evans (Environment Portfolio Holder)

<p>Directorate Environment</p> <p>Name of Head of Service: Ainsley Williams</p> <p>Report Author: Daniel John</p>	<p>Designations:</p> <p>Head of Waste and Environmental Services</p> <p>Waste Services Manager</p>	<p>Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses:</p> <p>(01267) 224500 AiWilliams@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> <p>01267 228131 djohn@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p>
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15TH JANUARY 2018

GARDEN WASTE SCHEME

The Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise the position and outcomes from the first year of operation of the separate chargeable Garden Waste service and set out the arrangements and operational delivery for the scheme for next year (2018-19).

The Background

Following a meeting of the Executive Board of Carmarthenshire County Council held on 17th October 2016, the Board sanctioned the introduction of a new chargeable by subscription fortnightly collection system for garden waste, based on the provision of 240 litre wheeled plastic bins, thereby replacing the then existing chargeable collection service based on the provision of compostable bags.

It was agreed that there would be a standard charge of £48 per annum made on the basis of a direct debit payment option spread over a period of 6 months (April to September). For those customers paying as a single payment, a 15% discount was offered, reducing the charge from the standard charge of £48 to £40.80 for the 2017/18 season.

Service Delivery

On 16th March, 2017 sign up for the new scheme went live, customers were able to sign up online, on the telephone via the contact centre, or in person at customer service centres. Collections were made from 3rd April 2017 through to 24th November 2017.

On sign up householders were provided with wheeled plastic bins of 240 litres capacity with the option of a 140 litres capacity bin for those who thought that the smaller bins were easier to manage. The delivery of the bins was undertaken by our contractor CWM Environmental. The only exception to wheeled bin provision was when access difficulties were identified by service supervisors and collection crews which would exclude their use. In such cases, hessian sacks were provided from a health and safety perspective. The use of hessian sacks is therefore kept to an absolute minimum and is not an option offered to customers.

The service was operated by two dedicated 15t open back refuse collection vehicles fitted with cone type bin lifts, crewed by 1 driver and 1 loader.

Service Facts:

The first year service at close on 24th November 2017, had the following customers:

Type of Customer	Number		Income
Total Accepted Customers	2,437		£102,140.42
Total Number of Containers	2,501		
Direct Debit Approved	49	2%	
Assisted Lift Requests	73	3%	
TOTAL			£102,140.42

The most popular sign up and payment method was:

Subscription Method	Card/Cash		Direct Debit	
Online Transactions	1,555	63.8%	49	2.0%
Telephone/Face-to-Face	833	34.2%	-	-
	2,388	98.0%	49	2.0%

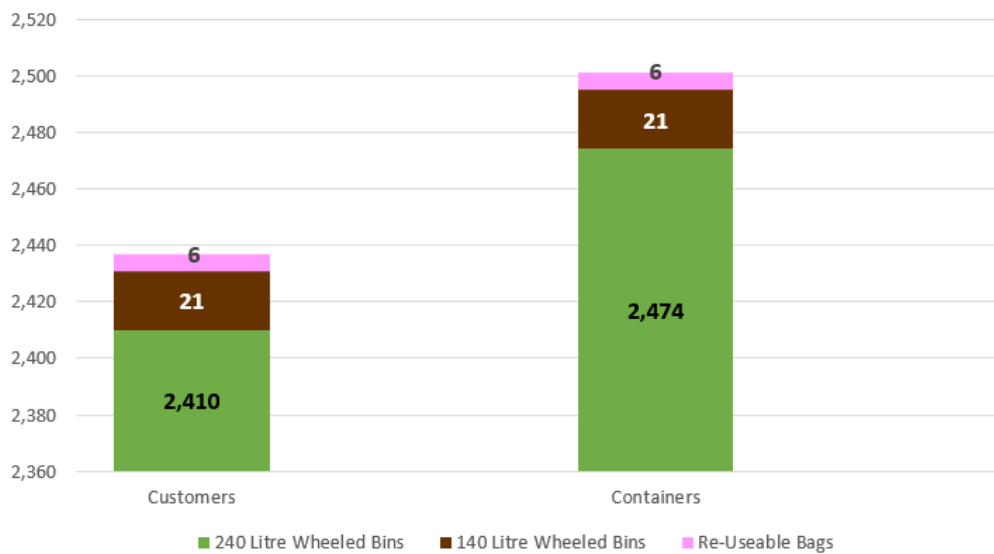
Subscription Method	Welsh	English
Online Transactions	21	1,583
Telephone/Face-to-Face (With Email Address)	343	
Telephone/Face-to-Face (Without Email Address)	490	

Sign up by month:

Month	Customers	%
March 2017	764	31.4%
April 2017	972	39.9%
May 2017	323	13.2%
June 2017	173	7.1%
July 2017	147	6.0%
August 2017	47	1.9%
September 2017	7	0.3%
October 2017	4	0.2%

The type of containers requested:

Type of Customer	Customers	Containers
240 Litre Wheeled Bins	2,410	2,474
140 Litre Wheeled Bins	21	21
Re-Useable Bags	6	6



Service Review:

The service was designed as a 'Digital by Default' service with the view of encouraging the majority of contact to be performed by the customer online, including making payment using Credit/Debit Card or setting up a Direct Debit mandate. This was a deliberate approach to align the service with the wider aspirations of the Council in terms of the channel shift project. The launch was aided by input from the TIC team, IT, Debtors, Legal and the waste team.

There were three methods for income collection:

- Credit/Debit Card - Customers who have ordered online, over the telephone or face-to-face at the Authority's Customer Service Centres or Cash Desks.
- Direct Debit - Customers could opt to pay by Direct Debit and have the Direct Debit mandate posted to them or able to print the mandate themselves. Direct debits were to be completed and return by post
- Physical Payment - Customers who have opted to order/subscribe to the Garden Waste service through Customer Services, are able to hold the order and make payment by cash and/or cheque at the Authority's cash desks.

Where similar schemes have operated in other local authority areas, their experience suggests that about 8.5% of all households have taken up a garden waste chargeable service, although this does vary and has taken a few years to reach such a stable customer base. For Carmarthenshire, this would equate to about 7,400 households, but this level would not be expected in the first few years of operation.

The number of customers in the first year has been manageable and ensured that service demand did not outstrip our operational capability and the number of customers that have subscribed in the first season is seen as a positive. To encourage further customer subscriptions for the next season, it is proposed that an increased focus will be placed on the promotion of the scheme in year two. This will be done through working with the press and media section to review materials and assess the most effective promotional approach.

The scheduled collections rounds for the scheme were initially difficult to predict, due to the nature of a subscription service. Initially demand was estimated by the waste services team, and the assumptions made built the potential collection rounds. Due to the increasing customer numbers and the daily changing of collection lists the service was presented with logistical and communication challenges. To ensure the efficiency of routes and up to date lists were maintained, routing and collection software was installed in the vehicles so that an up to date accurate collection list could be provided to crews in real time. The management and administration of sign ups, collection lists and efficient routing will continue to require dedicated resources to ensure customer satisfaction and service efficiency is maintained.

The decision was taken to contract out the deliveries of the Garden Waste wheeled bins to ensure that any peaks in demand could be catered for on ad-hoc basis by the contractor. The contract for deliveries was for a period of four months, subject to ongoing demand, the availability of budget, performance and by agreement of both parties. The contract was in place from 1st March 2017 and the arrangement expired on 30th June 2017.

Due to the high numbers of request during the initial months there were some examples of properties not receiving the wheeled bin within the 10 working days target period. Some of the delays incurred were due to the unfamiliarity of the contractor with the household locations and geographical spread in Carmarthenshire. The contractor used has a good knowledge of commercial premises within the county, however the due to the rural nature of large areas of the county and with many houses having no number/names displayed with unnamed roads, servicing demand proved problematic at times, which resulted in late deliveries- Since expiry of the initial phase delivery contract, further ad-hoc deliveries have been undertaken in-house.

It was predicted that the scheme would see take up of between 2,500-3,000 customers in the first year. The scheme was designed with accepted losses in the first three years of operation. It was estimated that the first year loss would be in the region of £136,000. The actual loss of the scheme was in the region of £70,000. The reasons for the reduction in loss were:

- Lower than predicted vehicle costs
- Lower than predicted receptacle purchase cost
- The re-allocation of resources in off season to other parts of the service difference
- Administrative posts were not filled due to uncertainty of the success of the scheme in the first year of operations

Year Two Proposal (2018/19):

The following is proposed for year two:

- As the majority of customers signed up online and benefitted from the reduction it is proposed that a discount for upfront payment for next year will continue. Subscribers will pay £49.42 per bin for the 2018/19 season with a 15% discount for immediate full payment via card or cash reducing payment to £42 per bin. Charges will be reviewed annually.
- Sign up for the scheme will be live from **12th February 2018**.
- All current customers will be contacted by letter or email at the start of January 2018, reminding them of the scheme for next year and the sign up facility live date. A further reminder will be sent to all customers who have not signed up in late February.
- Bins/containers will be recovered upon notification by the customer that they no longer require the service, or in the event of non-payment.
- Delivery of containers for new customers will commence in February in preparation for the new season commencement date of **12th March 2018**
- The Scheme will run until **30th November 2018**.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	NO
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Ruth Mullen.....Director of Environment

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

Finance

Scheme costs will be kept under review to monitor costs to the Council. In the first year, the scheme net cost to the Council excluding treatment was £70,000.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Ruth Mullen.....Director of Environment

- 1. Local Member(s) – No**
- 2. Community / Town Council – No**
- 3. Relevant Partners – No**
- 4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - No**

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

No Other papers used.