

# CABINET MEMBER DECISION MEETING FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

## 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
Cllr. Edward Thomas	Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

### GARDEN WASTE CHARGES FOR 2024/2025 SEASON

**Purpose:**

This report is to sanction the proposed garden waste charges for the 2024/2025 garden waste collection season.

**Recommendations / key decisions required:**

**For the reasons set out and contained within this report, the service seeks approval to proceed with the proposed garden waste service charges for 2024/2025 season ahead of the final budget consultation and full council meeting in early 2024 which will sanction the budget setting for the Authority for 2024/2025 fiscal year.**

**Reasons:**

The garden waste collection service is carried out between the months of March and November each year. In preparation for the next garden waste season i.e. March 2024 - November 2024 the price for the service is set in accordance with the financial process and in line with the yearly charging digest procedure which feeds into the overall financial position of the local authority for the upcoming financial year, scrutinised through consultation and the political process.

However, the timing of the garden waste service does not lend itself to the financial timeline for budget setting regarding the final sign off timeline. As the garden waste service opens to customers in January every year to prepare for service demand, delivery and collection of bins, invoice payments etc. and consequently the charge for the upcoming season needs to be sanctioned sooner and ahead of January 2024.

Directorate Name of Head of Service: Daniel W John	Designation Head of Environmental Infrastructure	Tel No. 01267 224565
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**Declaration of Personal Interest (if any):**

**Dispensation Granted to Make Decision (if any):**

**DECISION MADE:**

**Signed:**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
CABINET MEMBER

**The following section will be completed by the Democratic Services Officer in attendance at the meeting**

Recommendation of Officer adopted	<b>YES / NO</b>
Recommendation of the Officer was adopted <b>subject to the amendment(s) and reason(s) specified:</b>	
Reason(s) why the Officer's recommendation was <b>not adopted:</b>	

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CABINET MEMBER DECISION MEETING FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

### GARDEN WASTE CHARGES FOR 2024/2025 SEASON

The local authority operates a fortnightly payable, subscription service for kerbside garden waste collections. The service is operated in house, via four collection vehicles operated by a driver and loader for each. A 140L or 240L wheeled bin is provided to each paying customer or an alternative in the form of a hessian sack can also be provided if there are issues such as restricted access or assisted collections. The service operates from early March to late November each year averaging at 19 weeks' worth of collection per season. A customers can keep the bins at their property for the following year and the existing customers are sent an invoice in January each year to pay for the upcoming garden waste season ahead of the March commencement date.

For this process to take place in a timely manner a decision on the charges for the next fiscal year is required in December. Thus, allowing the Debtor section to process the charges via their systems and prepare for the issuing of the electronic and hard copy invoicing to customers in a timely manner so that the payments are made by customers ahead of collections commencing and the garden waste team can process any cancellations, bin exchanges and set the collection rounds for March collections to begin. Once existing customers receive their invoice the service is then opened to new customers in February, this allows the garden waste team enough time to process the new customer and operations to deliver a bin ahead of service start date.

Upon reviewing the data for 2023/2024 garden waste service it is apparent that there has been some stagnation in the trend for the customer numbers to increase from previous years. The customer base at the end of 2023/2024 stands at; 12,095. Of those customers there are 1330 new customers. We have however had 223 cancellations during the year. We only have three unpaid accounts which debtors are chasing customers for payment for 2023/2024 season, which provides a clear indication that at the current rate the charges are relatively affordable to those that have subscribed for the service once more but a loss of over two hundred customers is concerning in terms of a decline in numbers for kerbside garden waste collections.

In 2023/2024 we took the cautious approach of not implementing the full 10% validation and reduced the increase to 5% onto 2022/2023 costs for 2023/2024 season, as a reduction in customer base was deemed likely as higher service charges combined with other cost of living expenses may have resulted in even further decreases in customer base.

It is proven that the organic material is present and is being produced in the domestic settings and so there is a strong possibility that the organic material may be lost from this recycling collection method, albeit some may travel themselves to the recycling centres or try home composting, others may resort to disposing of the garden waste back into the black bag if they are below the three black bag every three week, threshold. The likelihood of this practice increasing will follow if higher garden waste charges are applied.

Losing customer base will be at detriment to our overall annual recycling tonnage figures and this may have a detrimental impact on the annual recycling rate for Carmarthenshire. The next statutory recycling target is upcoming and is for the next financial year of 2024/2025.

Ensuring that as much recycled material is captured within the kerbside services offered for domestic settings is paramount for the authority to meet the next statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/2025.

Validation of 4% is proposed on chargeable services for 2024/2025, the service is seeking authorisation to retain the current charge for the service into next season and charge the same amount for 2024/2025, as demonstrated in the below table;

Service	2023/2024 Direct Debit Charge	2023/2024 10% (Early payment cost)
Garden Waste	£56.15	£50.00

Service	2024/2025 Direct Debit Charge	2024/2025 10% (Early payment cost)
Garden Waste	£56.15	£50.00

We have considered the implication that this may put upon the service and increased costs, will impact the service. However, our routing has been created to high efficiency levels and with careful marketing of populated areas to increase client base we should be able to gain additional customers as we have done year on year in areas where we can increase efficiency by collecting large numbers of property within a small radius to maximise resources. Increased client base and income would not leave the service at a detriment and the rounds with four vehicles have already been routed to allow maximised customer base before requiring additional vehicle resource. We are currently operating on a cost neutral basis in terms of collections as the annual charge on the customer numbers we currently have is accommodating the collection costs of the service.

Only 1% of the current garden waste customers pay by direct debit and implementing the 4% validation figure will impact most customers rather than the minority as they will experience a higher service cost than in previous years, which could potentially lose current customers due to the high price hike given other increases to the cost of living. There is a risk of the waste being redirected to the kerbside residual waste stream if residents decide to cancel. Keeping to the current charges, should reduce the likelihood of this occurring.

Therefore, as a result the service has taken a view to retain current customer base, expand and gain new customers and to ensure that garden waste is recycled in the correct manner and contribution via the separate collection service remains high, supporting the overall recycling figure the proposal to maintain 2023/2024 charges for garden waste in 2024/2025, is put forward for sanctioning.

As a result of the proposal, we seek authorisation to keep the current charges of 2023/2024, the same for 2024/2025 collection season, due to the rational set out in this report.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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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: D W John

Head of Environmental Infrastructure

Policy and Crime & Disorder	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Organisational Development	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

### 1. Finance

The service is a chargeable subscription service which receives an income for the collection of Garden Waste. The Collection season commences in March 2024 and the charges are required to be set prior to commencement of communication with customers which takes place in February.

## CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: D W John

Head of Environmental Infrastructure.

1. Scrutiny Committee – Not applicable
2. Local Member(s) – Not applicable
3. Community / Town Council – Not applicable
4. Relevant Partners – Not applicable
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Not applicable

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE