

Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting	25 th March 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Environment
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Public/Private Document	Public

Update on the Introduction of Charges for New and Replacement Wheeled Bins

Executive Summary

1. This report gives an update on the introduction of charges for new and replacement wheeled bins which went live on Monday 23rd November 2020. The report is for information only following a request from the committee that an update is provided.

Recommendation

2. A report is brought to this committee in January 2022 when a full twelve months of data is available with a further update on number of requests, appeals and income received since the start of charges for wheeled bins.

Reason for Recommendation

3. Charging for new and replacement wheeled bins was approved at the cabinet meeting on 25th August 2020 and introduced on 23rd November 2020. There is a requirement for the council to identify savings and potential income streams as well as reducing costs against the current financial backdrop. There was evidence that the supply of free wheeled bins on request was being abused by a minority (but still a significant number) of residents. The impact of the charges will be evaluated following 12 months of implementation.

Key Points for Consideration

4. Following a report to cabinet on 1 October 2019 on the proposed charges for the supply of waste and recycling bins a public consultation was undertaken in early 2020. As the introduction of the charge was contentious the final decision on implementing the charges was taken to cabinet rather than as a delegated decision.

A report was taken to cabinet on 25 August 2020 recommending the reintroduction of a charge for new and replacement wheeled bins, both waste and recycling bins. The recommendation was approved and it was agreed the charge would be £20 per bin. The charge went live on 23 November 2020, a briefing note on the charges was sent to members at that time. All councils across GM charge for new and replacement refuse (green) bins, the charges vary from £15 to £35. Four authorities in GM currently charge for recycling bins, from £10 to £30.

- 4.1 There are a number of exemptions for the charge such as if the bin was genuinely stolen or vandalised or the resident receives an assisted collection. A resident can appeal against the charge and it will be waived if there are extenuating circumstances. In some cases a reused clean bin is provided. It is important the appeals process is straightforward as the administration of a complex process would incur additional costs.

The impact of the charges has reduced demand for bins by 56% compared to the same time period in the previous twelve months. The income received to date from bin sales is £13K.

	23 Nov 19 to 21 Feb 20	23 Nov 20 to 21 Feb 21
No of bins requested and supplied FOC	2126	606
No of bins requested and paid for	N/A	483
Total	2126	1089

The appeals process is working well, to date 110 appeals have been made. The majority of appeals relate to lost or stolen bins and bins residents believe to have been damaged by collection crews. The recycling officers visit the area to see if they can locate the missing bin and check camera footage on the waste vehicles for evidence of damage by crews. They then update the resident on the outcome.

Alternatives Considered

To continue to supply all new and replacement wheeled bins free of charge on request with the exception of those purchased by developers.

Costs and Budget Summary

5. In 2018/19 15,785 requests for wheeled bins were made. The cost to the council of purchasing each bin is £18 currently. This led to a total annual cost to the council for purchasing replacement bins of £284k.

Based on current data a 50% reduction in the number of requests for replacement bins would reduce this capital budget requirement by approximately £142k per annum in a full year. An annual income from bin sales of £50k could be expected based on current sales figures.

The income from bin sales to householders, together with income from bin sales to developers, will contribute towards achievement of the £189k bin sales savings target set during the 2020-21 estimates process. Achievement of this target will be kept under review, with alternative savings potentially being required to offset any shortfall.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. The introduction of a charge for new and replacement bins has generated minimal publicity. It is too early to report if it has discouraged recycling and increased contamination.

Consultation

7. Consultation on charging for wheeled bins took place in January 2020 and 546 responses were received. 63% strongly disagreed with the proposal. The reasons most commonly sighted for disagreeing with the proposed charge were it was felt unfair, that the cost of bins should be covered by council tax and efforts should be concentrated on those who currently abuse the system by repeatedly ordering replacement bins.

Pensioners and disabled households were most commonly cited as those who should be exempt from paying the charge. Those in receipt of an assisted collection are not subject to the charge for replacement bins. Residents with extenuating circumstances such as low income can appeal against the charge and in these cases the charge is waived.

Background Papers

Place of Inspection

8. Report to Cabinet on Proposed Changes to Environmental Management Services, 25 August 2020

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