

## Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	31 August 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Environment and Facilities
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## Review of Charges for Wheeled Bins

### Executive Summary

1. Charges for all new and replacement wheeled bins were introduced in November 2020 following approval at cabinet. The charge is currently £20 for all new and replacement wheeled bins with certain exemptions. The charge has seen a reduction in requests for wheeled bins of 42% compared to the same period before charges were introduced. However the projected income target has not been met. Members have expressed concern about the equity of charging for bins and asked for a report seeking to remove the charges.

The report also contains recommendations for the provision of wheeled bins to new build properties as increasingly developers are unwilling to pay for these.

### Recommendation

2.
  - a) That the charge to residents for new and replacement wheeled bins 240 litres or less, is stopped following the end of call in for this report, usually five days after this meeting.
  - b) If a property repeatedly requests replacement bins without good reason the council reserves the right to charge for replacement bins or refuse to supply them.
  - c) Developers will still be required to pay for the first set of wheeled bins at any new development. The charge for 140 litre or 240 litre bins will be £25 per bin, current charges for larger bins will remain.
  - d) £165k is requested from the budget pressure fund to mitigate the removal of bin charges in 2021/22.

### Reason for Recommendation

3. The recommendation in the report taken to the 25 August 2020 cabinet was for bin charges to be reviewed 12 months after implementation. Following a review of the income received to date and feedback from members the recommendation is for the charges to cease.

### Key Points for Consideration

4. Following approval at cabinet 25 August 2020 charges for new or replacement wheeled bins went live on 23 November 2020. The charge was set at £20 per bin with a number of exemptions from the charge such as if the bin was genuinely stolen or the resident receives an assisted collection. Residents can appeal against the charge and it will be waived if there are extenuating circumstances. It was estimated in the August 2020 report to cabinet there would be a 40% reduction in requests for bins and if those requested were all paid for (9,471) an annual income of £189,420 would be achieved.

Table comparing number of requests for bins;

	<b>23 November 19 to 31 May 2020</b>	<b>23 November 20 to 31 May 2021</b>
Number of bins requested and supplied FOC	5,956	2,413
Number of bins requested and paid for	n/a	1,057
Total number of bins requested	5,956	3,470
Number of appeals where charge waived	n/a	175

The number of requests for bins reduced by 42% over this period. The income received from bin sales between 23 November 20 and 31 May 21 was £27,274. For a full 12 months the projected income would be £54k. The projected level of income has not been met due in part to the exemptions and appeals process. 190 appeals were received since charges were introduced and only fifteen appeals were rejected i.e. residents were required to pay for bins.

The service believes that this reduction in actual requests since the charges were introduced had a positive effect due to many residents no longer

automatically contacting the council if their bin was misplaced, dirty or contaminated with the wrong type of waste i.e. non-recyclable materials.

It is evident that the charges encouraged more residents to take responsibility for looking after their bins by taking them back to their property after collection, removing contamination when requested to do so from bins that were rejected and also taking time to look for their bin. It is not uncommon for the bin to have been moved to another location not immediately outside their property or even taken in by a neighbouring property.

#### Alternatives Considered

The council could continue to charge for bins but the income target would not be met and would be contrary to the wishes of the current administration.

The council could charge residents of new build properties for their first set of bins if the developer refuses to pay.

### Costs and Budget Summary

5. If charges for bins are removed demand will likely revert to original levels (15,750 bins a year) and the capital budget required to purchase bins would be £289.8k based on current pricing. The budget is £288k for 2021/22 with a proposed increase to £293k in 2022/23 to reflect the projected growth in the number of households.

A budget pressure of £165k has been identified in 2021/22 due to the income target not being achieved. This figure assumes that charges for bins will cease following the end of the call in period for this report. The income target of £189k which is included in the revenue budget from 2022/23 onwards and will also need to be removed from service budgets.

It should be noted that there is a global shortage of polymers due to the pandemic and economic slowdown which has led to the increased cost of bins and there are warnings of significant delays in delivery times. This will be monitored and any significant changes reported.

## Risk and Policy Implications

6. The council may receive requests for refunds from those charged for bins. As residents were charged correctly whilst this policy was in force no refunds will be provided.

More developers are refusing to purchase bins for residents in new build properties and there is no mechanism through the planning process to make them provide or purchase bins. Some developers Gleeson, Russell Homes, Wainhomes tell buyers when they purchase a property that they the buyer will be responsible for buying bins. Property growth is around 600 homes a year with a set of four bins costing around £100. An income target of £21k is included in the revenue budget for sale of bins to developers. If all developers refused to purchase bins and they are supplied free of charge to new homes this will be an additional budget pressure and as such will be closely monitored and reported at year end with a view to income targets being reduced or removed from 2022/23 onwards.

## Consultation

7. Consultation on charging for wheeled bins took place in January 2020. 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. There are no plans to consult again on this change in policy.

### Background Papers

### Place of Inspection

8. Proposed Changes to Environmental Management Services cabinet report 25 August 2020

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