

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	16 January 2023
Title of Report	Neighbourhood Services Operational Changes This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Nigel Grundy - Neighbourhood Services & Assets
Report Author	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager
Corporate Priority	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to reduce the frequency of garden waste collections from the start of the 2023/24 season; reducing from 23 to 20 collections per season.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 To approve the proposal to reduce the frequency of garden waste collections from 23 to 20 per season by stopping monthly collections in December, January, and February from 2023/24 onwards.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To maintain a price freeze for the 2023/24 season at a time when customers are facing rising prices with the cost of living. The resulting service will continue to recover the costs of service; reflect the seasonal usage of the majority of customers; reduce fuel consumption and so contribute positively to reduce carbon emissions; as well as improving overall operational efficiency of the waste collection service.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Currently the garden waste collection service is a subscription based 'opt in' service offered to all residents of the district. It is chargeable and the costs of the service are agreed annually. The service currently provides 23 collections per season. The frequency of collections is fortnightly in peak months between March and November whereas the three collections that take place in the winter months of December, January, and February are monthly.

In the winter period five times less garden waste is collected than in the peak growing season. Presentation of bins in winter months ranges typically between 30% and 60%) however the contents of the bins is low.

The comparatively lower presentation of bins and lower volumes of garden waste collected results in operational inefficiencies as the rounds still need to be completed regardless of how many bins are presented or how little waste is collected.

The proposed cessation of monthly garden waste collections in winter months allows for the continuation of the garden bin service to be delivered without the need to increase the garden bin charges for 2023/24.

It is expected that the service will benefit from the following efficiencies as part of this initiative:

- Is expected to take two vehicles and crew off the road for 6 weeks per year during the Winter months.
- Reduction in fuel usage and carbon emissions is expected amounting to approximately £6,000 per year in fuel savings.
- Provides greater resilience in times of disruption caused by wintry weather.
- Reduce vehicle wear and tear and provides the workshop with more flexibility with regards servicing and maintenance.
- Reduce complaints from garden waste being frozen to the inside of bins on wintry mornings.
- Provides opportunity for more scheduled crew training without requiring additional agency cover.

4.2 Proposal(s)

It is proposed to reduce the frequency of garden waste collection subscription-based service from 23 collections per season to 20 collections by stopping monthly collections in December 2023, January, and February 2024 for all customers from 2023/24 to:

- Allow a price freeze for those subscribing to the 2023/24 season only
- Reduce fuel consumption and so contribute to reducing the Council's Carbon emissions.
- Enable a wiser use of resource to improve operational efficiencies as set out in 4.1.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

- Portfolio Holder
- Senior Leadership Team
- Waste Operations Manager (Interim)
- Neighbourhood Services Team (Garden waste collection team)
- Finance Group Manager

4.4 Significant Issues

No significant issues relating to Human Rights, Legal Implications, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and Climate Local have been identified. Environmental impacts are dealt with at 8.1 of this report.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 There are a number of efficiency benefits arising from this change of frequency of collection, these are less tangible savings that have not been included in the table below that will directly benefit the service including reduced vehicle wear and tear, reduced use of supplemental staff during periods of training and cover for staff absence. These are outlined in 4.1

Easily quantifiable savings of £6,000 per year in fuel costs based on current fuel prices and rates of fuel consumption are expected.

	Current year	2023/24
Revenue savings	£0	£6,000

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Risk of fly tipping of garden waste increases in winter months	Increase publicity around managing waste responsibly and advertising alternative locations where garden waste can be disposed of by the resident such as the recycling and household waste sites operated by the waste disposal authority.
Existing subscribers may choose not to renew their subscription resulting in loss of income	Maintain a price freeze for 2023/24 for new and existing customers; and continue to monitor the impact on subscription levels throughout the year.
Subscribers are inconvenienced by having to store compostable garden waste for longer over winter months; or dispose of in the refuse bin.	All residents are advised on the website that no garden waste is accepted in the refuse bin. Website advises of alternate public waste disposal locations where garden waste can be dropped off.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 Maintain the status quo however, this will not deliver the savings as set out in 5.1 nor the efficiencies outlined in section 4.1 of the report.

- 7.2 Increase price of subscription – due to cost-of-living crisis this option has been discounted for 2023/24 and instead a prize freeze is proposed. A price increase of £3.30 per year per bin would be proposed as an alternative to this option of reducing the frequency in the Winter months.

8. Environmental impact

- 8.1 There are no negative environmental impacts. There are positive environmental impacts as a result of expected reduced vehicle wear and tear particularly regarding tyres. The existing vehicles are fuelled by hydro-treated vegetable oil which produces up to 90% less CO2 emissions than the diesel fuel so there are also nominal reductions in CO2 as a result of less fuel consumption.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 None

11. Background paper(s)

- 11.1 None

12. Report author's contact details

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