

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY
5 MARCH 2013

EXECUTIVE
19 MARCH 2013

CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR WASTE RECEPTACLES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a review of chargeable services a set of fees and charges were agreed by Council on 26 February 2013 to cover the provision of refuse containers to domestic premises from April 1st 2013 (see Appendix 1). This report gives options in which to apply a charge and dependent upon the option taken seeks agreement to the adoption of a charging protocol in response to circumstances where it may be in the public interest to waive or reduce some of these charges.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council currently spends around £100,000 per annum in providing new and replacement bins for both recyclables and rubbish for landfill.
- 2.2 The new charges for bins or a charge for the delivery of bins, could apply to one or more of the following situations where bins are requested:
- containers being provided in the case of newly built or converted dwellings;
 - to new occupiers in an existing dwelling where the provision is missing; and
 - to existing occupiers who request a replacement bin.
- 2.3 In relation to newly built dwellings or those provided from conversion of an existing building, it will be relatively straight-forward to plot these as they become available for occupation, and administer a charge for provision and delivery of waste bins.
- 2.4 In relation to an existing dwelling when a new occupier finds that provision is missing, or when an existing occupier wishes to replace a bin for a variety of reasons, it becomes more complicated to administer a charge. From experience in other local authorities that have introduced a charge it is evident that practical difficulties may arise in taking a rigid approach, particularly in circumstances where it is difficult to justify charges being levied. This situation would require customer contact staff to take ad-hoc decisions on these matters and so in order to attain a consistent approach, there is benefit in adopting a clear protocol for charging for bin provision.
- 2.5 An alternative option for existing householders, and one which is relatively easy to administer, is to apply a nominal delivery charge across the board to occupiers wishing to change their black bin provision. This nominal charge should be affordable, (a charge of £6 is recommended), but the option of collecting a bin free of charge will be offered (as we currently do for compost bins). By applying a nominal value to the bin, it is likely that householders will be encouraged to take more care of their bins, that private landlords will take more care of the waste management arrangements at their lettings, and consequently there may be a gradual reduction in bins being left out on pavements, lost bins, and bin replacement frequency.

- 2.4 The options considered in this report are therefore:
- A. to apply the charges for bin provision set out in Appendix 1 to newly built or newly converted dwellings only;
 - B. to apply a delivery charge in all cases when there is a request for a change in existing bin provision and a wish for the bin to be delivered;
 - C. to apply the charges for bin provision set out in Appendix 1 to both newly built or newly converted dwellings and existing dwellings.

3. IDENTIFICATION & EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

3.1 Charging for bin provision in new dwellings – Option A

The advantage of limiting a charge to newly built or converted dwellings is that the Council can differentiate these dwellings from others as they come on stream and can facilitate the administration of a charge via its web-based tool for requesting bins. The potential to use the planning system in order to require developers to fund bin provision in new build dwellings was examined but deemed limited as consent has already been granted for approximately 50% of projected build over the next 7 years, and requirement could not be retrospectively applied. Therefore, in the absence of any informal arrangements made with developers, it will fall upon the house purchaser to make arrangements and pay the charge.

- 3.2 The projected number of new dwellings for 2013/14 is 600, which when based on the previous year's profile of bin provision would yield an estimated income of £26,500.

3.3 Charging for delivery for bin changes – Option B

Requests from existing occupiers make up approximately 65% of all bin provision (2600 bins p.a.). Currently these are provided and delivered free of charge. By introducing a delivery charge of £6 with the option of collection from Oakwood House free of charge, an estimated income of £16,900 (delivery charge for green and black bins) or £8,450 (delivery charge for black bins only), will be derived. The only exemption to the charge would be where the bin has been damaged beyond use by the collection and emptying process and no fault of the householder. Due to the need to encourage recycling over waste production, the option to only charge for delivery of black bins is advisable (Appendix 2); this also reflects the charging structure in Appendix 1.

- 3.4 A further option to consider is to apply only a delivery charge, but for all bin provision, with the option of collection at no charge. Based upon the profile for bin provision in 2012/13 this would yield an annual income of £26,000. This would be relatively easy to apply, but it would have the disadvantage of applying to green bins, thereby potentially discouraging any move by households to increased recycling. This option is not the preferred option for this reason.

3.4 Charging for all bin provision – Option C

Extending charges to all requests for bins has the potential to yield more income; based upon the profile of residual bins provided in 2012/13 an estimated income of £89,300 is derived. Difficulties could arise with such charging when householders are unwilling or unable to pay the requisite charge at the time of request, leading to waste being improperly presented and the need for the Council to respond by taking remedial action. A further disadvantage with this is that it will be very difficult to administer via any web-based tool unless a rigid approach is taken in all circumstances. However, a rigid application of the charges may lead to an unfair approach where householders have genuine and persuasive reasons to justify a waiver or reduction of the charge, and this inevitably will mean many more customer

calls to deal with, which in turn will increase the cost of administration. Therefore this option is likely to be the least acceptable of all the options.

- 3.5 Should Members wish to introduce charges across the board for black bin provision, the adoption of a charging protocol as set out in Appendix 3 will allow for both a consistent application of the charges and any waiving of such. It will also reduce any pressure on staff receiving calls to make ad-hoc decisions, which in turn may have led to an inconsistent application of the charges.

3.6 **Preferred option**

The option of charging only in respect of new development or conversion, will be far easier to administer, and will yield the target income of £25,000. In addition, the introduction of a modest delivery charge for black bins will place a nominal value on bins, which is considered beneficial, and assist in meeting the cost of this service. Introducing both of these sets of charges in combination is therefore the preferred option (i.e. Options A and B combined).

- 3.7 If, however, Members wish to move towards a cost neutral position in respect of bin provision, then charges would need to be applied across the board as in Option C. In this case it is recommended that the charging protocol in Appendix 3 is adopted to ensure a consistent approach.

4. **LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER POLICY MATTERS**

- 4.1 Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes a statutory duty upon the council to collect household waste. The council can make a charge for providing the containers used for the collection and waste and recycling, and can specify the dimensions and construction of a bin in which waste is to be presented. By adopting a framework for applying charges, and for the waiving or reducing charges in certain circumstances, a more consistent approach will be made by the Council.

4.2 **Financial considerations**

As part of the council's budget strategy which was agreed by Council at its meeting of 26 February 2013, a reduction of £25,000 was made to the Waste Collection Services budget for 2013/14, which will need to be made up from additional income. The number of newly built or converted dwellings in 2013/14 is projected to be 600, yielding an estimated income of £26,500, although the profile of new development in 2014/15 will differ with a greater amount of block accommodation. Introducing a charge for delivery of black bins requested by existing customers will derive an additional income of £8,450, to give a combined total of £34,950, thereby satisfying budget requirements, and allowing for any potential increase in administration costs.

The projected number of bins issued in 2012/13 totals 4032; of these approximately half (2016) will be black bins. Based upon the profile of bins provided in 2013/14 the potential income from charging for all requests of black bins is £89,300 but this takes no account of reduced income from waivers or reductions, nor any increase in administration costs.

4.3 **Diversity and Equality Implications**

The introduction of the proposed charges are relatively modest and are deemed not have any adverse impact on any particular target equality group. The additional income derived will allow the service to maintain the current level of service including the collect and return service for householders with mobility issues.

5 RECOMMENDED that:-

Scrutiny Community support the report and request Executive to:-

- (1) to introduce charges as set out in Appendix 1, in respect of newly developed or converted dwellings only (Option A) in combination with applying a delivery charge set out in Appendix 2 for all other requests for black bins (Option B);
or
- (2) to apply charges as set out in Appendix 1 to all householders making a request for bins under the framework of the proposed Charging Protocol for recycling and waste containers in Appendix 3 (Option C).

**ROBERT NORLEY
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT**

S:PA/LP/ Committee/113EXEC1
3.1.13

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None

APPENDIX 1: CHARGES FOR WASTE RECEPTACLES (OPTION A & C)

The following charges will be applied for the supply and delivery of domestic refuse bins.

Domestic Refuse Containers	Fee	VAT	Total
140 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	25.00	-	25.00
180 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	35.00	-	35.00
240 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	45.00	-	45.00
360 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	70.00	-	70.00
660 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	235.00	-	235.00
1100 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	250.00	-	250.00
80 litre static grey (residual) bin	15.00	-	15.00
Seagull-proof sack	3.00	-	3.00
Where applicable, an authorisation fee will be charged:			
2 wheeled bin	5.00	-	5.00
4 wheeled bin	10.00	-	10.00
Supply and delivery of a roll of 200 sacks for residual waste	15.00	-	15.00

**APPENDIX 2 CHARGING FOR DELIVERY OF BIN WHEN DELIVERY REQUESTED
(OPTION B)**

Domestic Refuse Container	Delivery Charge for Residual Containers
1100 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	£25.00
140 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
180 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
240 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
360 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00

APPENDIX 3: CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR WASTE CONTAINER PROVISION WITH RESPECT TO OPTION C

No charge will be levied when:

- 1) The container has been damaged beyond repair by the collection and emptying process, so that it is no longer usable.
- 2) The container has been stolen, and this has been verified by the occupier.
- 3) Down-sizing from a larger to a smaller bin.
- 4) Where the container has apparently prematurely failed owing to age or poor manufacture.
- 5) Where a different size container is required to suit large families or for medical reasons.
- 6) Where the property had been provided with alternative container arrangements and the new householder wishes to be supplied with the standard arrangements suited to that property type.
- 7) In other circumstances where the Cleansing & Fleet Manager deems it appropriate to waive the charge.

A reduction of 50% will be applied to charges where:

- 1) A reconditioned bin is provided.
- 2) In other circumstances where the Cleansing & Fleet Manager deems it appropriate to reduce the charge.