

Garden waste charging: implementation and impact mitigation measures **Ricky Moffat, Head of Commercial Operations**

1 Purpose of Report

This paper details the plan for the introduction of a charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste and proposes measures to off-set the impact of garden waste diversion to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

2 Background

2.1 At its meeting of 13 February 2018, Council agreed to:-

“Introduce a charge of £35 and to retain the seasonal garden waste collections.”

There are approximately 38,000 households in Midlothian who currently receive a kerbside garden waste service in a brown wheeled bin. Only those households without a garden (i.e. flats) and a few rural properties unsuitable to accommodate a wheeled bin do not receive the service.

Residents receive a fortnightly collection between mid-March and mid-November, resulting in 18 collections per year.

Midlothian’s two Household Waste Recycling Centres offer facilities for the free disposal of large or additional items of garden waste.

The £35 charge covers the cost of collecting one brown bin per household. No concessions are available.

2.2 Implementation Plan

The last uplifts of garden waste in 2018 will take place between Monday 12 and Friday 23 November. The service restarts on 18 March 2019.

A letter will be sent to all residents in January 2019 giving details of the new charge and advising residents that if they do not wish to pay the charge they can return their brown bin. A draft version of this letter is attached as Appendix 1.

In line with the Council’s ‘Digital by Default’ vision, residents will be directed to pay online. The payment portal will be available early January 2019.

For those who do not have access to the internet, assistance and advice will be available at all council libraries through the provision of an 'Assisted Online' service. As part of this, we will run sessions in our libraries to introduce citizens to our online transactions and support online payments.

Marketing and promotional activities will take place to promote subscription. Activities include lamp-post poster advertising, collection vehicle banners and social media activities.

Details of the addresses who have paid will be collated and passed to an external sticker production company who will print the stickers and mail these directly to residents. The stickers will include instructions as to where they are to be placed on the bin. A sample sticker is attached as Appendix 2.

In order to receive a bin sticker before the first garden waste uplift, payment must be made by 01 March 2019.

Terms and Conditions of the service will be made available to residents at the time of payment.

Empty, unwanted brown bins will be collected by Waste Services. Returned bins will be returned to stock for reuse, with damaged bins sent for recycling.

2.3 Additional bins

The initial £35 charge applies to all properties and covers the cost of uplifting one brown bin. There is a limit of 6 brown bins per household and the annual charge of £35 will apply per bin.

2.4 Collection Routes

From 18 March 2019, collection crews will only empty brown bins which are correctly displaying a sticker.

Informational bin tags will be left on bins not displaying a sticker advising residents that they need to pay for the service.

Initially collection routes will mirror the existing situation. These will then be reviewed and redesigned as participation in the new service becomes clear.

Any vehicle/staffing savings identified as part of this route review will potentially be redeployed to service the increasing number of residual waste and recycling collections necessary as a result of Midlothian being the fastest growing local authority area in the Country.

Work is currently underway to model alternative collection arrangements for all waste streams and this will form part of the waste strategy being developed for Council's consideration in due course.

2.5 Sharing a bin

Residents can share a bin with a neighbour/s, but one person must pay for the service and the bin will be collected from one address. Any sharing agreement is a private matter and does not involve the Council.

2.6 Part year charges

There are no part year reductions for residents subscribing to the service after kerbside garden waste collections start each year. The initial charge will be applied each March. For residents paying after this date the full collection charge will be levied.

Details of new properties joining the service will be passed to Waste Services who will arrange for stickers to be printed and sent, brown bins to be delivered if required, and properties to be added to collection routes.

2.7 Brown bin replacement

Due to the introduction of a charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste, there will be a temptation for householders to overfill their brown bins. This creates Health and Safety implications for collection crews due to the increased weight. Overfilled and overweight bins are the most common cause of 'bin failure' or split bins.

There are no proposals currently to charge residents for replacement bins due to loss or damage, although this will be reviewed as necessary after a period of operation.

As part of the wider communications programme around the subscription service, householders will be reminded of the items that can/cannot be placed in their bin, as well as the importance of not over-filling bins.

As a chargeable service, where bins are lost or damaged, customers will expect rapid delivery of a replacement bin. To guarantee the timely delivery of replacement bins, it is proposed to recruit a dedicated Delivery Driver with responsibility for bin delivery and bin repair. Their role will not be devoted to brown bins only, but will deliver, repair or replace all waste and recycling containers. This is a Grade 2 post which will be initially appointed for a 12 month fixed term to deal with the demands of the new service, and reviewed after this time.

Replacement bin stickers will be mailed directly to residents by the external printing company.

2.8 Garden Waste Diversion

Charging for the kerbside collection of garden waste is fairly new in Scotland but widespread in England. Scottish Local Authorities who have recently introduced a charge are Perth and Kinross Council, City of Edinburgh Council and Highland Council.

Angus Council has a more established chargeable garden waste service. Their experience is that there is no significant increase in waste diverted to the residual waste stream, although they have smaller residual bins (140 litres versus the 240 litres provided in

Midlothian) which reduces available capacity for green waste to be disposed of in this way. In addition, they have not experienced a noticeable increase in fly tipping.

Some diversion to home composting activities is also to be expected.

Residents who choose not to subscribe to the kerbside garden waste collection service may take their waste to the Recycling Centres instead. This is expected to impact on the operation of these facilities and is addressed in Section 2.10 below.

2.9 Financial implications

For households

The £35 charge covers the cost of collection of one brown bin per household. No concessions are available. A one-off payment of the full amount must be made upfront. There are no reductions for paying part-way through the collection period.

Retaining seasonal collections means each household receives 18 garden waste uplifts between mid-March and mid-November each year.

The cost to the householder is therefore less than £2 per collection (Annual cost of £35 / 18 collections = £1.95 per collection).

In the Scottish Borders Council area, where the Council do not offer a kerbside garden waste collection service, private collection companies charge £10 per month / £5 per uplift.

For Council

Income:

Uptake of the service has been forecast at 50% based on the experience of Angus Council who, in the first year, had 49% of households subscribing. City of Edinburgh Council are also reporting 50-55% of eligible households have paid for their service.

With higher, or lower, levels of registration, income levels will adjust accordingly. The income expected, based on a charge of £35 against various potential participation levels is shown in the Table below.

Table 1: Income received per level of participation

Level of participation	Income
40%	£532,000
45%	£598,500
50%	£665,000
55%	£731,500
60%	£798,000

End of life bins

An income is expected to be realised from the recycling of end-of-life unwanted brown bins.

The one-off income is expected to be £25,080.

This is based on an expected rate of return of 40% (10% of households are expected to keep their bins for storage etc) with 15,200 bins returned, a weight of 1kg scrap metal in each bin axel at a sale price of £50/tonne and a weight of 8kg plastic in each bin at a sale price of £200/tonne.

Cost:

Systems Development Work

In order to ensure that the Council's internal systems are able to cope with the large number of transactions associated with this proposal, significant development is required. It is estimated that this will cost approximately £27,035 in the 2018/19, with recurring systems maintenance costs of £10,500 thereafter.

End-of-life bins

The income from the recycling of end-of-life bins is to be off-set against the cost of collecting the unwanted bins. The year-one one off costs of vehicle hire for 6-months are expected to be £6,000. Six-month temporary staff costs of a Driver (Grade 5) and Loader (Grade 2) are £16,079 and £12,630.

Marketing

The cost the initial mailing is £3,000.

The annual cost of the bin stickers, which includes printing and distribution to residents is estimated to be (£1.00 x 19,000 properties) £19,000. Informational bin tags will cost £910 for 10,000. Additional promotional activities such as posters, lamp-post advertising boards, RCV advertising panels and social media advertising will cost £6,050 including the cost of graphic design.

Disposal via residual waste

A total of 6,280 tonnes of garden waste was collected at the kerbside in 2017/18. Assuming a 10% diversion of garden waste to the grey bin, an additional 628 tonnes will be disposed of at a higher gate fee. The additional cost is estimated to be £44,600 (£100/tonne - £29/tonne x 628 tonnes) per year.

Staff resources

The total annual cost of the Grade 2 Delivery Driver detailed in Section 2.7 is £25,260.

The proposed income over the first year of the service is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Financial projections

Item	Upfront costs (2018/19)	2019/20 Costs/Income	2020/21+ Costs/Income
Income Based on 50% Uptake	-£36,944	-£665,000	-£665,000
Systems Integration and Maintenance	£27,035	£10,500	£10,500
Mailing to residents	£3,000	£0	£0
Sticker cost	£19,000	£19,000	£19,000
Informational bin tags	£910	£910	£0
Promotional materials	£6,050	£0	£0
Income from end-of-life bins	-£4,180	-£20,900	£0
Cost of collecting end-of-life bins	£5,784	£28,925	£0
Garden waste disposal to grey bin	£2,478	£44,600	£44,600
Saving From Reduced Tonnage to Green Waste	-£1,392	-£25,060	-£25,060
Delivery Driver (Gr2)*		£25,260	£25,260
TOTAL	£21,741	-£582,675	
		-£560,934	-£590,700

* The post of Delivery Driver will initially be appointed for a 12 month fixed term. This position will be reviewed depending on the uptake of the service. No allowance has been made for inflation.

A full financial sensitivity analysis can be found in Section 3.2.

2.10 Diversion of garden waste to Household Waste Recycling Centres

Residents will continue to be able to dispose of garden waste free-of-charge at the two Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Following the introduction of a chargeable garden waste service, Angus Council reported a 25% increase in the tonnages of garden waste collected via their Recycling Centres.

Additional visits to dispose of garden waste are likely to impact on traffic management at peak periods, and a range of measures are proposed to mitigate against this.

If approved, it is proposed that these measures would apply from 1st January 2019, and would be supported by communication and awareness raising activities in advance of the changes.

2.10.1 Opening hours

At the present time, Stobhill Recycling Centre is open 7 days a week from 9:30am to 4:15pm. Due to site licensing conditions, Penicuik Recycling Centre is open from 10:00am to 4:15pm.

As these opening hours do not allow residents working a regular 9-5 pattern to visit the site to dispose of garden waste during the working week, it is proposed that the opening times of the two sites are amended to a later closing time once a week.

A corresponding later opening time will mean no adjustments are required to the Site Attendant's current working rota and no additional staffing costs will be occurred. For example, on a Thursday, the two sites would close three hours later in the evening - at 7:15pm - but open three hours later in the morning.

This is subject to staff consultation and agreement of terms, including with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) for licensing purposes.

2.10.2 Van and trailer bookings

There are no restrictions on the number of times a resident can take household waste, including garden waste, into a Recycling Centre in a private car. Householders transporting waste in a van or a large trailer are currently limited to 12 visits per year.

To reduce the likelihood of local 'man with a van' services charging residents for a collection of garden waste, and then disposing of this at the Recycling Centres free-of-charge, it is proposed that the number of bookings a resident can make to bring waste to the Recycling Centre in a van or trailer is reduced from 12 to 6 per year.

A £35,000 saving proposal was agreed by Council for 2018/19 by charging local businesses to dispose of waste at Stobhill Recycling Centre. This rises to £50,000 in 2019/20 and future years.

From 1st October 2018, local businesses have been able to dispose of trade waste at Stobhill Recycling Centre. An upfront payment of £100 per van, of up to a gross vehicle weight of 3,500kg, is made to cover disposal costs.

Reducing the number of times household waste can be brought to the Recycling Centre in a van is expected to help maximise the income received from this service. A saving in the region of £20,000 is estimated to be realised in 2018/19.

At the present time only trailers over size 4ft x 6ft are restricted. To remove the risk that van users start to use small trailers to transport their garden waste instead, as well as to improve traffic flow at peak times, it is also proposed to require residents to book in trailers of all sizes.

To ensure van drivers / trailer users have adequate time to empty their vehicles, it is proposed to make the last entry for vans and trailers, 30 minutes before the site's closing time.

2.10.3 Garden waste container at Penicuik Recycling Centre

Due to the small size of Penicuik Recycling Centre, it may be necessary to replace the residual waste container with a container for the collection of garden waste. This is to prevent frequent, short-notice closures of the site to facilitate the emptying of a single garden waste container and/or due to the container being full, frequent periods of the site being unable to accept garden waste.

This decision will be subject to ongoing review and an operational decision made if and when it is required. Public awareness activities will be undertaken in the lead up to any change.

The split-level design of Stobhill Household Waste Recycling Centre means full garden waste skips can easily be moved by site staff.

To further improve traffic management at Penicuik Recycling Centre at peak times, it is proposed that all van drivers and residents using a trailer are required to use Stobhill Recycling Centre only.

2.11 Trade Garden Waste

Alongside the introduction of a chargeable garden waste collection service for local residents, a chargeable garden waste collection service will also be offered to local businesses. Between 20 and 30 local businesses producing garden waste (florists, bowling clubs etc) are expected to subscribe.

This service will not be offered in isolation and will only be offered to local businesses using Midlothian Council for the collection of both their residual waste and recycling.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There will be a net cost of £21,741 in 2018/19 which will be met from the existing 2018/19 Waste Services budget.

The approved budget saving for 2019/20 agreed at Council on 13 February 2018 was £510,000. Based on a 50% uptake with a 10% deviation to residual waste, the proposal will generate a net saving of £560,934 in 2019/20 and £590,700 per annum in later years.

3.2 Risk

Risk Causes: Midlothian Council are introducing a new charge for the service of collecting and disposing of garden waste.

Risk Event: There is a risk that residents who choose not to subscribe to the chargeable service will place their garden waste in their residual waste bin, or blue recycling bin, instead. There is a risk that some

residents are unable to pay the full £35 charge in a one off payment, thus reducing uptake of the service.

Risk Impact: There is high risk that the Council's recycling performance will fall.

The impact of a projected 10% deviation of waste going into the residual waste stream would cost £44,600, this is a best estimate based on the local authorities experience referred to in this report. Should the deviation of waste increase to 20% this would reduce the income benefit by £89,200. The worst case scenario would be the 50% deviation resulting in an additional disposal cost of £222,940.

	% Uptake of Garden Scheme				
	0.50	0.40	0.45	0.55	0.60
	£	£	£	£	£
Income from Garden Scheme	-665,000	-532,000	-598,500	-731,500	-798,000
Cost of bin stickers	19,000	15,200	17,100	20,900	22,800
Annual Support Charges	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Disposal to grey bin	44,600	62,600	57,400	36,500	31,290
Saving From Reduced Tonnage to Green Waste via composting etc	-25,060	-25,060	-25,060	-25,060	-25,060
Delivery Driver (Gr2)	25,260	25,260	25,260	25,260	25,260
Net Income	-590,700	-443,500	-513,300	-663,400	-733,210

If the estimated 12% diversion to composting is placed in residual waste bin

Tonnage goes to landfill instead of composted etc	61,355	61,355	61,355	61,355	61,355
No saving from garden waste disposal	25,060	25,060	25,060	25,060	25,060
Adjusted Net Income	-504,285	-357,085	-426,885	-576,985	-646,795

Actions to mitigate risk:

A wide communications and marketing campaign to raise awareness of the charge and encourage registration.

Moving to smaller (140L) residual waste bins or reducing the frequency of residual waste collections would reduce the opportunity for residents to dispose of garden waste alongside their general refuse. These options are being addressed as part of the wider Waste Strategy which is currently being prepared for Council's consideration.

There are wider reputational risks associated with system or payment failure, non-delivery of bins stickers, uplift of end-of-life bins or late replacement or damaged or broken bins.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The budget projections indicate that in 2019/20, the introduction of this charge means Council will have in the region of £554,000 available for the provision of services and the pursuit of key outcomes as set out in the Single Midlothian Plan.

3.4.1 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Diversion of garden waste to the Recycling Centres is to be expected but loss of tonnage due to uptake of home composting or diversion to residual waste will affect Midlothian Council's recycling performance. Once participation levels are clearer, Waste Services will undertake a route review to determine if routes are operating efficiently with a view to improving performance.

The introduction of this service also impacts on the performance and outcomes of other services eg; Contact Centre, Library Services, Corporate Communications and the Business Applications team due to queries, requests for assistance and processing payments.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The measures being proposed alongside the new charge are intended to ensure that so far as reasonably practicable the recycling of garden waste will be maintained.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Members of the public were invited to respond to a public consultation on Midlothian Council's savings proposals. The findings were presented to Council in February 2018.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposal to charge for garden waste collections was presented to Council in February 2018. This is attached as Appendix 3. An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no Sustainable Development issues as a consequence of this report.

3.10 IT Issues

Significant development work is being undertaken by the Digital Services team along with Business Applications and the Web team for payment set up and the integration with both the Customer Relationship Management system and the Council's payment system as depicted in Appendix 3

4 Recommendations

Council is recommended to: -

- a) Note the expected income from a successful garden waste charging scheme.
- b) Approve the plan as outlined in this report.
- c) Approve proposals to mitigate against the impact of garden waste diversion to the Recycling Centres
- d) Approve proposals to recruit an additional dedicated Delivery Driver

Date 13th November 2018

Report Contact:

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Background Papers:

None

Appendices:-

Appendix 1 – Proposed letter to all residents detailing the charge

Appendix 2 – Sample of bin sticker

Appendix 3 – Implementation process map

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposal to charge for garden waste

Appendix 1:

Proposed letter to all residents detailing the charge and advising on the steps to take to 'opt out' or pay for the service

Waste Management
Midlothian Council
Stobhill Depot
40 Stobhill Road
Newtongrange
EH22 4NU

Resources

Acting Director
Kevin Anderson

Midlothian



The Occupier

Address 1

Address 2

Town

Postcode

Dear householder,

New charge for kerbside garden waste collection services

You may be aware that Midlothian Council is facing significant financial pressures in balancing our budget, whilst delivering vital services is becoming harder. This is a position we share with councils across the country.

We are aware that difficult choices about where we spend money and where to make savings will really affect people's lives and we want to minimise the impact of those choices on vulnerable people who truly rely on us.

One of the ways Midlothian Council has agreed to save money is to introduce a charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste. Although a popular service among the residents who use it, as it is a non-essential service we need to make it more self-financing to avoid losing it altogether.

This means, from March 2019, you will need to pay to have your brown bin emptied.

In 2019, the cost will be £35.00 per bin. This charge allows us to maintain fortnightly kerbside collections from mid-March to mid-November and works out at under £2.00 per collection.

- **Register and pay online**
Online payment for this service is **now open** at www.midlothian.gov.uk/xxxx

To ensure you receive a bin sticker in time for your first collection, you must subscribe by Friday 1st March 2019.

You can have up to six bins per household, each charged at £35.00. Once you have paid you will be sent a sticker to display on your bin(s).

If you need help to manage to pay online, ask a friend or family member, or you can call into any of our libraries where our staff will be happy to help you. It only takes a few minutes to get online and order this service.

You are welcome to share a bin with a neighbour, but one person must pay for this service and the bin will be collected at one address. Any sharing agreement

is a private matter and does not involve the Council.

Assisted collections of brown bins will continue as normal for those who pay the £35.00 collection charge.

- **If you DO NOT wish to subscribe to the new service** we can collect your unwanted brown bin. Please visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/bins-and-boxes to arrange collection. Please note that the bin must be emptied prior to collection.

If you choose not to subscribe to the scheme, your garden waste will not be collected and you will need to make your own alternative disposal arrangements.

Garden waste can be taken to any of our recycling centres at no charge or you may wish to consider home composting.

More information

More information is available at www.midlothian.gov.uk/brown-bin-charges

We hope you will appreciate the value of the service and register for the garden waste collections.

Yours sincerely,

Ricky Moffat
Head of Commercial Operations

Appendix 2:

Sample of bin sticker

www.fenland.gov.uk/gardenwaste
This brown bin is subscribed to the garden waste service in Fenland for the year below subject to our terms and conditions

Subscription Number
EUR 12345697

Subscription Address
23 Alphabet Mews
Vincents Yard
Stockwell
London
SW9 0FN

Brown Bin Collection Day TUESDAY

Garden Waste Subscription
2017/18 Valid until
31st March 2018
23 Alphabet Mews

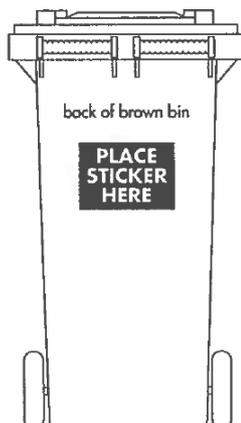
Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council

Dear Householder

Thank you for subscribing to the garden waste collection service.

This sticker shows that you have paid for one brown garden bin to be emptied during the period stated on the sticker. No additional bags of garden waste will be taken and the lid must be closed.

This sticker should be attached to your brown bin as soon as possible on the back of your bin (handle side) as shown in the picture below. The surface of the bin must be clean and dry before applying the sticker.



If the sticker is not visible to our collection crew on your collection day your bin will not be emptied and we will not return.

If you subscribe to more than one brown bin you will receive a sticker for each bin. These extra stickers will be sent separately.

The time of collection may change, so please place your bin out for collection before 07:00hrs. Brown bin collection days may be different from your general waste and recycling collection days. Please visit our website at: www.fenland.gov.uk/bins or call 01354 654321 if you do not know your collection day.

This service is provided subject to our terms and conditions and these are available to read at: www.fenland.gov.uk/gardenwaste, where you can also find more useful information regarding the garden waste collection service, including how to renew your annual subscription.

Appendix 3:

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposal for Charge for garden waste collections



Midlothian Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of Budget Proposals

2017 - 2022

Name of Budget Saving	Charge for garden waste collections (4)
Department and service area	Waste Services
Completion Date	17 January 2018
Lead officer	Ricky Moffat

Aims and Objectives

The garden waste collection service is the only collection provided by the Council which is non statutory. The proposal is to introduce a £35 annual charge for each brown bin provided.

1. Does the proposed budget saving affect people? Yes

2. What is/are the reason(s) for your proposed budget saving?

The budget proposal is put forward to meet the Council's overall budget deficit.

3. Impact			
Which of the protected characteristics* will the proposed budget saving have an impact upon?			
Equality Target Group*	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Relevant evidence/ information
Age	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Disability	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	There will be no change to the pull out service for those residents who chose to pay for the garden waste service.
Gender Reassignment	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Pregnancy and maternity	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Race	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Religion or Belief	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
Sex	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.

Sexual Orientation	No	The charge would be levied against all groups.	The charge would be levied for a full or part year with no concessions.
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4. How will the implementation of the proposed budget saving be communicated to those affected by any changes?

A final decision will be taken by Council and this information be made available thereafter in formats as required. Wider communication will be undertaken.

Information published by Midlothian Council can be provided on request in many of the community languages and also in large print, Braille, audio tape or BSL. For more information, please contact the Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Officer on 0131 271 3658 or equalities@midlothian.gov.uk

5. How will you monitor the impact of the changes proposed? When is the budget due to be reviewed?

The number of complaints, take up of the service, tonnage increase at recycling facilities, fly-tipping etc will be monitored and reported to Council in due course.

6. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process.

The charge will be on an annual basis with users of the service having a sticker applied to their bin. There will be no concessions and the full charge will be applied regardless of the period of the service.

Angus Council have implemented a charge of £25 and feedback has been given prior to this proposal coming forward. The charge will impact those on low income.

This charge is being considered as part of the overall delivery of waste services.