

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 18 JULY 2023** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2023.

Contact Officer: R Leighton - (01480) 388550

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169

3. TENANCY STRATEGY (Pages 13 - 26)

To consider a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford/S Ferguson

Contact Officer: P Scott – (01480) 388486

4. GARDEN WASTE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE (Pages 27 - 66)

To consider a report by the Waste Operations Manager on a proposed chargeable green waste collection service.

Executive Councillor: M Hassall

Contact Officer: A Rogan – (01480) 388082

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

6. SENIOR OFFICERS' COMMITTEE - CABINET NOTIFICATION

The Executive Leader to report on the outcome of the meeting of the Senior Officers' Committee held on 11th July 2023.

Executive Councillor: S Conboy.

10 day of July 2023

Oliver Morley

Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Please contact Democratic Services, Tel No: (01480) 388169 / e-mail: Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 20 June 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, M A Hassall, B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, S L Taylor and S Wakeford.

11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B M Pitt declared an other registerable interest under Minute No. 23/13 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council. He abstained from voting on the item.

13 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - SUMMER UPDATE

See Minute No. 23/12 – Members' Interests.

A report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on activity across the strands of the Market Towns Programme for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing reported upon progress with town centre improvements in St Neots with completion of the final designs and procurement of a contractor for work to commence early Autumn.

Having referred to comments raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) at their meeting on 7th June 2023 specifically in relation to the communications plan being developed to inform St Neots residents on the planned works to trees in the Market Square, the Executive Councillor explained that a wider explanation would be provided as to the rationale behind the removal and replacement of the trees as part of the re-development of the town centre.

Attention was also drawn to the appointment of AOC as architect and technical advisors for the refurbishment of the Priory Centre, St Neots and Members were also appraised with further detail on the re-allocation of expenditure from the CPCA for new project proposals and the rebranding of the Masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey as Vision documents.

Having had their attention drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) including the communications plan on the tree removal

and a further update on the Old Falcon property would be re-visited as part of the next quarterly report as a private session.

Arising from questions from Members on the timescale of availability to the public of the final design of the Market Square and High Street in St Neots, the Executive Councillor reported that final discussions were being held with St Neots Town Council as key stakeholders in the project to ensure they were aware before wider public communication to be delivered within a few weeks. Discussion also ensued on the tender process for the redevelopment of the Priory Centre and incorporation of the CPCA legacy funding projects with the town centre improvements and encouragement to re-establish the relationship for residents of St Neots and surrounding areas with the town centre.

Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to note progress of the projects as part of the Market Towns Programme for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

(Councillor B M Pitt abstained from voting on this item).

14 MID TERM REVIEW OF HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025

Consideration was given to a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on a mid-term review of the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025. The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing informed Members that following review it presented an opportunity to align the Strategy with the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Strategy and also to take account of the 2021 Census data that had not been reflected in the Strategy thus far.

In drawing attention to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) held on 7th June 2023, the Executive Councillor confirmed the scope to include agricultural workers with a revised definition of Essential Workers to be issued by Government, addressed the issue of under occupation of social housing and scope for working with social landlords to manage the situation whilst respecting the rights of tenants and the review of Disabled Facilities Grants was expected to take place during the course of 2023/24 to address the anticipated growth in this area of need.

Whereupon, the Cabinet has

RESOLVED

- (a) to note the contents of the report now submitted; and
- (b) agreed to the Mid Term Review of the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 and Action Plan.

15 FIRST HOMES POSITION STATEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the affordable housing product of First Homes and the Council's position statement in relation to development proposals that includes this form of affordable housing.

The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing acquainted Members with background to First Homes that fall within the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes.

Having been informed by discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) held on 7th June 2023, the Executive Councillor confirmed that the statement had been updated to reflect their concerns, specifically in relation to the inclusion of self-employed classified as meeting employment within the District and gave assurance that the family connections criteria would include reference to adult children living in the area and any joint custody arrangements as sufficient local connection. Whereupon, the Cabinet has

RESOLVED

(a) to note the contents of the report now submitted; and

(b) agreed the First Homes Position Statement.

16 INDOOR AND BUILT SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY AND PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

In conjunction with a PowerPoint presentation and report by the Sports Development Manager (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were presented with details of the new Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2022 – 2043. The report presented a comprehensive review and assessment of facilities and pitches.

Members were acquainted with the background to the study, the findings of the report including the coverage, the context locally and nationally and provided a summary of the outcomes of the Strategies to address future provision.

Arising from questions from Members on funding criteria for swimming pool provision, the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene explained that Government funding was facilitated through Sport England and the Head of Leisure and Health confirmed that they had been engaging with operators of Sawtry Swimming Pool in preparation of fact finding work to support an application for funding once the framework was released and was anticipated to take place in July – August 2023 with the outcome expected late August – September 2023.

Further discussion ensued on the encouragement of team sports, particularly with focus on the rural areas and behaviour change and the availability of existing provision that had been reflected in the Strategies. The Strategies would be published to help support the wider communities and clubs to support further funding in local areas to encourage wider participation.

In addressing the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) held on 8th June 2023, the Executive Councillor drew attention to the recognition of availability of gymnastic facilities for residents within a 30-minute drive within the Strategies and confirmed the Hinchingsbrooke Sports Hall facility provision as well as support for running groups and events acknowledged within the Strategies.

In expressing her support for the Strategies, the Executive Leader on behalf of the Council placed on record her recognition for the service of the Sports Development Manager who was leaving the authority after 18 years' service. Whereupon, the Cabinet has

RESOLVED

- (a) to approve the Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2022 – 2043; and
- (b) to recognise the strategic recommendations as set out within the Strategies as outlined in Appendices 2 and 4 of the report now submitted.

17 OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE PAN-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on proposals for a locally led partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge region following approval by Government. The formation of the Oxford to Cambridge Partnership (OCP) will assist in maximising opportunities for businesses unlocking an initial £0.5m of funding to assist the region in a more positive position globally, as well as developing the environmental programme that may assist Huntingdonshire, as well as opening up opportunities for further cross-boundary discussions across the region.

The Council has committed an initial £10k, with no long-term commitment, but it was noted the OCP was still emergent in terms of the governance and structures going forward. Reflecting on the comments of Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) held on 8th June 2023, the Interim Managing Director confirmed the reassurances that were made to the Panel that the OCP was not the Ox-Cam Arc and did not reflect the commitments under this scheme, particularly surrounding housing growth or other aspects previously covered.

Members expressed their support for participation, in raising the profile for the area and having a key role in cross border negotiations and membership of the OCP which outweighed the risk of not participating, whilst balancing this against the programme of activities and requirement for the development of new homes.

The Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment expressed concern with the proposal, particularly the potential effects on the local environment with growth in the economy, risks in the administration of the partnership, although balanced against a pan-regional public transport project that would have the effect of reducing carbon emissions.

In concluding, the Executive Leader supported the concerns raised but re-emphasised the difference between the OCP and the former Ox-Cam Arc project and believed that the Council should be participating with the ability to influence development of the OCP, whilst acknowledging the need for housing development, balanced against economic growth through a sustainable approach and reserved the right of the Council to re-consider their position of participation going forward.

Whereupon, the Cabinet has

RESOLVED

- (a) to approve the participation of Huntingdonshire District Council in the Oxford to Cambridge Partnership (OCP) as it becomes formally recognised and funded by Government as a Pan-Regional Partnership (PRP);
- (b) to appoint the Executive Leader as the Council's representative on the OCP; and
- (c) to authorise the Executive Leader, in conjunction with the Managing Director/Corporate Director (Place), to be provided with powers of appointment and delegation to the emerging governance model of the OCP.

18 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 4

With the aid of a report prepared by the Business Intelligence & Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were presented with an update on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022/23 and project delivery.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services summarised the progress made in delivering the Key Actions for 2022/23 over the reporting period where it was noted that improvements had been made in 13 out of 17 indicators where it had been possible to compare with the previous year and some areas that had not been improved had been affected by unavoidable external factors. In line with the corporate objectives, the Executive Councillor highlighted improvements in attendance at One Leisure, the outstanding performance in the delivery of new affordable homes, a higher percentage of major planning applications and household extension applications processed and lower percentage of missed bin collections which he attributed to the consistent hard work of the Officers involved.

The Executive Councillor further presented the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) held on 7th June 2023 that focussed on the measures and quality of some of the data and it was explained that all 27 indicators next year would have a target as well as an intervention level to provide further reasoning behind the RAG status.

Members commented upon the strength of the report despite some the external factors that had presented some challenges in achieving the targets and the Executive Leader echoed the sentiments of the Executive Councillor for

Customer Services in expressing her gratitude for the dedicated and hard-working staff and acknowledged their efforts in the delivery of the corporate performance and every aspect of Council services delivered on behalf of residents.

Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to note the progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B, C and D of the report now submitted.

19 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 4

The Cabinet has considered and commented upon the revenue financial performance for the financial year 2022/23 (as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted) and considered and commented upon the capital financial performance for the financial year 2022/23 (as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.3 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted).

A report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council's financial performance for the financial year 2022/23.

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to an explanation by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources on an explanation as to the draft accounts for 2021/22 which had been attributed to audit delays and there was no suggestion of any issue with the accounts, nor any impropriety and the delay was not unique to the Council.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services drew Members' attention to the financial performance highlights that included net expenditure for 2022/23 at £20.9m, with an underspend of £476k against a budget of £21.5m. The underspend was attributed to higher interest rates received on the Council's bank balances and higher prices received on recycling credits and assisted by the leasing out of excess office space, procurement savings and managing staffing costs. Pressures on the budget resulted from the cost-of-living crisis, with the significantly higher electricity costs impacting the leisure centres' swimming pools and temporary accommodation costs.

Addressing the capital expenditure budget, with expenditure low at £10m compared with the approved budget of £42m, this was attributed to delays due to COVID and had carried forward £18m to 2023/24 for identified expenditure or projects with agreed plans. A review of the remaining expenditure had resulted in previously approved projects not being carried forward as a result of approved spend already included in new projects approved as part of the 2023/24 budget or there was no longer a need for this expenditure.

Having welcomed the report and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) held at their meeting on 7th June

2023, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources provided an explanation as to the point raised by Councillor A Jennings at One Leisure St Neots presenting a saving on utilities which had been attributed to a saving presented against their forecasted budget that had been re-calculated in Quarter 3 of 2022/23.

In noting the timing around the publication of the final accounts and delay from the Auditors and they had been requested to provide an update on presentation of the final figures, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to note financial performance for the financial year 2022/23 (as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2 of the report now submitted); and
- b) to note the capital financial performance for the financial year 2022/23 (as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.3 of the report now submitted)

20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

With the aid of a report prepared by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were updated on the Council's treasury management activity for 2022/23, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

Attention was drawn by the Financial and Treasury Accountant to the investment activity that had taken place and the significant increase in interest rates compared to the start of 2022/23, as well as a reduction in long-term borrowing activity representing a reduction of £4m by year end and activity in investments. The Commercial Investment Strategy properties had attracted a yield of 7.5% compared to current interest rates and a yield of 3.98% on the Council's property fund.

Having had their attention drawn to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) at their meeting on 7th June 2023 particularly in relation to the change in rental value of the Rowley Centre, St Neots as opposed to the value of the asset and further confirmed that the borrowing was all fixed, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the treasury management performance for 2022/23 be noted and recommend the report to Council for consideration.

21 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP

The Cabinet received and noted the Minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group held on 21 April 2023.

Chair

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Tenancy Strategy 2023

Meeting/Date: Cabinet - 18 July 2023

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S. Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing

Report by: Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The aim of this strategy is to set out Huntingdonshire's vision for the way social housing providers in the district should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.

Even though Huntingdonshire is not a stock owning Council having transferred its affordable housing stock in 2000, to Huntingdon Housing Partnership (HHP) through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT), now part of the Places for People Group, the Council is still required under the Localism Act to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
- the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

The Tenancy Strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing. It does not cover lettings to hostels, transitional accommodation or other forms of supported housing and does not apply to low cost home ownership (generally Shared Ownership) residents.

All Registered Providers (RP's) with housing stock in Huntingdonshire are required to have regard to this strategy and ensure that, wherever possible, their policies work to complement, and do not contradict, our Tenancy Strategy.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is requested to:

- Note the contents of this report and;
- Agree to the Tenancy Strategy 2023.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To set out Huntingdonshire's vision for the way social housing providers in the district should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.2 Specifically, to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:
 - the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

BACKGROUND

- 1.3 HDC first Tenancy Strategy was published in September 2012, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 which placed a duty on local housing authorities to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed.
- 1.4 Registered Providers of Social Housing (RP's) is a term given to organisation that provide social housing that is registered and regulated by the Government. They can be public or private organisations that offer different types of tenancies and licences to their residents; they are often known as Housing Associations.
- 1.5 It is now necessary to refresh this document following the expiry of the first strategy.
- 1.6 The Council's Corporate Plan states that:

“we want everyone to live in a safe, high quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives, New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel”.
- 1.7 Social housing plays an important part in delivering this vision. Sufficient flexible and affordable homes that meet local needs contributes to strong and happy communities where people can prosper.
- 1.8 The principles that underpin this strategy are:

- A social home for those in need, whilst they remain in social need,
- Making best use of stock,
- A fairer system, that promotes social mobility and aspiration,
- Helping people to move up the social ladder.

1.9 When reviewing this strategy, the Council, has had regard to the Huntingdonshire Lettings Policy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

2.1 The Panel discussed the Tenancy Strategy at its meeting on 5th July 2023.

2.2 Following an observation from Councillor Pickering that lifetime tenancies did not motivate tenants to become self-sufficient in terms of their own housing, the Panel heard that whilst there was no easy answer to this, Housing Associations awarded tenancies based upon making best use of the existing housing stock.

2.3 In response to a question from Councillor Corney, the Panel heard that whilst it was difficult to anticipate how Housing Associations would deal with tenancy issues, a balance had been struck to ensure that they would meet their obligations to residents.

2.4 Councillor Gardener observed that it would have been helpful to see where changes had been made from the previous policy and queried the life expectancy of the policy. The Panel were advised that the anticipated review date of 10 years would be fluid to allow for earlier or later revision depending on external factors and best interests of residents. Following a further question from Councillor Gleadow on the anticipated review date of 10 years, the Panel were advised that this was a normal review date for this type of strategy.

2.5 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Gleadow, that analysis of active RPs had been undertaken to ensure that the policies being adopted were aligned.

2.6 The Panel were assured that all consultees mentioned within the document were active within the district following an enquiry from Councillor Blackwell.

2.7 The Panel were assured that despite the unknown of the future, the policy would provide flexibility and security.

2.8 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision on the recommendations.

KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an up to date Tenancy Strategy in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, failure to have a strategy will mean that the Council is unable to influence RP's on how they manage their tenancies in the District.
- 3.2 The RP's listed in the strategy have had an opportunity to comment on this draft document prior to its finalisation, we will continue to work with them as part of the Council's Enabling function and seek the most secure tenancies for our residents as part of the lettings process.

LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The completion of the Tenancy Strategy aligns to Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan under the Priority – "In creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations", under the outcome of Improving Housing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Senior Officers across the Council have reviewed the Tenancy Strategy and their comments have been included in the document.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be no additional resource implications, in implementing this Strategy, activities relating directly to HDC will be undertaken by existing teams and partnerships are already established with RP's.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Within the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy, there is a priority of, "*Reducing poverty through better housing, employment and skills*" This strategy aligns with this priority by providing residents with stable, secure affordable housing.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In February 2023 the Council formally approved the Council's Climate Strategy this recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In passing this motion, the council committed to not only the delivery of a Climate Strategy but also that in making decisions it will wherever possible seek to contribute to positive environmental and social benefits. The delivery of good quality, affordable and secure accommodation for residents supports this ambition.

EQUALITIES

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 9.2 A Tenancy Strategy will enable the Council to set out guidelines on how tenancies should be managed by RP's in Huntingdonshire which will aim to prevent discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing.

Appendix 1

Tenancy Strategy 2023

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Pam Scott, Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager
Email: pamela.scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Tenancy Strategy 2023

Directorate:	Place		
Division & Service:	Housing Strategy		
Author:	Pamela Scott		
Owner	Pamela Scott		
Approved By:	Cabinet	Approved Date:	
Effective From:		Version No.	1.0
Next Review:	07/2033		

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of this strategy is to set out Huntingdonshire’s vision for the way social housing providers in the local authority area should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.2. Huntingdonshire transferred its affordable housing stock in 2000, to Huntingdon Housing Partnership (HHP) through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT), HHP then became Luminus who more recently became Chorus (now Places for People). It is therefore important for us to hold a Tenancy Strategy that is up to date to inform Registered Provider (RP) practices in the area
- 1.3. The Tenancy Strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing. It does not cover lettings to hostels, transitional accommodation or other forms of supported housing and does not apply to low cost home ownership residents.
- 1.4. All RP’s with housing stock in Huntingdonshire are required to have regard to this Tenancy Strategy. We ask that RPs in Huntingdonshire review their own Tenancy Policies in light of this strategy to ensure that, wherever possible, their policies work to complement, and do not contradict, our Tenancy Strategy.

Huntingdonshire Social Housing

- 1.5. The Council’s Corporate Plan states that:

“we want everyone to live in a safe, high quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives, New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel”.
- 1.6. Social housing plays an important part in delivering this vision. Sufficient flexible and affordable homes that meet local needs contributes to strong and happy communities where people can prosper.
- 1.7. The principles that underpin this strategy are:
 - A social home for those in housing need,

- Making best use of stock,
- A fairer system, that promotes social mobility and aspiration,
- Helping people to have a choice to move to other housing options.

Background

- 1.8. Our first Tenancy Strategy, published in September 2012, introduced a new housing offer for local people through the use of flexible, fixed term tenancies. The aim of introducing five year fixed term tenancies was to make more efficient use of housing stock, more effectively focus provision on those in most need and to promote social mobility.
- 1.9. Fixed term tenancies were introduced through changes to legislation, however, they did not deliver the intended benefit due to the limitations of legal processes and the time and resources spent on maintaining the tenancy review process.

Legal and regulatory context

- 1.10. The Localism Act 2011 placed a duty on local housing authorities to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:
- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.
- 1.11. RPs, must have due regard to this Tenancy Strategy when developing tenancy policies.
- 1.12. The Council, when reviewing this strategy, has had regard to the Huntingdonshire Lettings Policy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.
- 1.13. The relevant legislation and codes of guidance have also been considered, these include:
- Housing Act 1985 (as amended)
 - The Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
 - Homelessness Act 2002
 - Housing Act 2004
 - Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
 - Localism Act 2011 (as amended)
 - The Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
 - The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument: 2006 No. 3190)
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998

- Housing & Regeneration Act 2008
 - Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018
- 1.14. The Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard requires that RPs let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. 'RPs shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock'.
- 1.15. RPs should develop their tenancy policies in line with the relevant legislation and regulator's expectations as set out in the Tenancy Standard.

2. Tenancy Types

- 2.1. Tenancy types will vary depending on whether the landlord is a RP or a landlord within the private rented sector. Tenancy types include:
- Introductory/probationary/starter tenancies
 - Secure/Assured tenancies (Lifetime Tenancies)
 - Secure/Assured Flexible tenancies (fixed term tenancies)
 - Non-secure tenancies (periodic tenancies for temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation (part 7 of the Housing Act 1996))
 - Assured Shorthold tenancies
 - Shared ownership tenancies
 - Other tenancy types as allowed by law.
- 2.2. The Council will support the use of introductory tenancies for new tenants moving into social housing for the first time. Following this, it is expected that the vast majority of tenants will become secure lifetime tenants. Where a tenancy is not managed properly by the tenant during the introductory period the RP may seek to end it during that term or to extend the period of the introductory tenancy.
- 2.3. Where an introductory tenancy isn't used there is an expectation that RPs offer appropriate support to assist with establishing and sustaining the tenancy.
- 2.4. The Council considers that secure, lifetime tenancies will provide the best environment for families to thrive and become part of a sustainable community. We encourage RPs to use the most secure form of tenancy available to them wherever possible in order to create settled homes for families to live in. However, we do recognise that in some special circumstances the use of fixed term (flexible) tenancies might be appropriate for a RP to make best use of stock and meet the individual needs of residents.
- 2.5. The Council would expect RP's in the establishment of all new tenancies to support tenants for the first twelve months of occupation in the sustainment of their tenancy.
- 2.6. The Council would expect RP's to ensure that residents live in high quality, well maintained and safe homes and that tenants are empowered and listened to in relation to their tenancies and services provided to them.

3. Circumstances to consider when granting a tenancy

Fixed term tenancies

- 3.1. Where fixed term tenancies are used by RPs, the tenancy must be granted for a minimum fixed term of five years, or exceptionally, a tenancy for a minimum fixed term of no less than two years, in addition to any probationary tenancy period.
- 3.2. The choice of tenancy term should be based on both individual needs and the characteristics of particular housing schemes. We would expect RPs to take into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children. Factors such as schooling, training, employment, regeneration, family stability and community sustainability should also be considered.
- 3.3. Towards the end of the tenancy term, we expect RPs to provide or signpost tenants to information and advice about housing options and help tenants secure alternative housing should their tenancy end following the review.
- 3.4. We expect that the majority of fixed term tenancies will be renewed by RPs at the review stage/end of the initial agreement period. Where fixed term tenancies are used, RPs are encouraged to consider housing need when deciding whether to review a tenancy. Similarly, we would expect them to consider using criteria intended to increase their ability to make best use of stock.

Transfers

- 3.5. RPs should act in line with legislation to ensure that eligible social housing tenants choosing to move to another social rented home with the same or another landlord are granted a tenancy with no less security.
- 3.6. RPs should also protect the tenure rights of victims of domestic abuse when social housing tenants are relocated to another social rented home as set out in 3.9.

Local lettings policies

- 3.7. The use of local lettings policies are a key feature of the council's Housing Allocation Scheme and are a useful tool when dealing with large development sites, in delivering successful mixed new communities, tackling anti-social behaviour and where local connections are required in rural exception sites. These local lettings policies apply a set of specific objectives or intents to a specific property, properties or to a specific type of development, where the qualification and priority criteria may be varied.
- 3.8. If a Local Lettings policy is being used this will be noted on the advert on Home-Link scheme to show that there are additional restrictions as to who can be offered these properties. Sensitive lets differ from a local lettings policy as the sensitive let criteria may be applied to a single property rather than a group of properties in an area.

Victims/survivors of domestic abuse

- 3.9. It is important to protect the tenure rights of victims of domestic abuse. RPs should act in line with current legislation¹ in relation to accommodating victims of domestic abuse and ensure that, when re-housing a tenant with an existing secure tenure who needs to move or has recently moved from their social home to escape domestic abuse, an equivalent tenancy is granted for their new home. This will ensure that victims will not

¹ Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies and rights of secure tenants) as amended by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018.

fear losing security of tenure and will provide stability and security in their new home. RPs are encouraged to review and amend their existing policies and procedures to incorporate this requirement if they have not already done so.

Succession rights

- 3.10. The Localism Act limited succession to spouses or civil partners of the deceased tenant. The need to make best use of existing social housing stock was the driver for this. However, landlords are able to grant additional succession rights under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. We expect RPs to make their policy on succession for all tenancy types and the granting of any additional rights clear and take account of the needs of vulnerable household members.
- 3.11. RPs should include in their tenancy policy, a position on managing successions and assignments that has due regard to legal requirements and which focuses on securing an outcome that secures the best use of accommodation and prevents homelessness.

Affordable Rent and other affordable housing options

- 3.12. The council encourages RPs and developers to consider a range of affordable housing options including Affordable Rent and shared ownership. Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
- 3.13. Affordable housing should:
 - Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
 - Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
- 3.14. Affordable Housing includes properties let under the 'Affordable Rent' model, at up to 80% of market rent. The council will ensure that Homes England processes are complied with when building new affordable homes and will expect any RP offering Affordable Rent properties in the area to comply with relevant guidance and legislation.
- 3.15. The council encourages Social Rent as a default position but will also expect RP's to make use of Affordable Rent and other Affordable Housing options including Shared Ownership to ensure that housing applicants and existing social housing tenants have access to a wider range of models and tenures to meet a range of needs.
- 3.16. The council will expect RPs developing new housing schemes that are using Affordable Rent to demonstrate consideration of the affordability of the homes in the scheme for local residents and use Local Housing Allowance rates and affordability.
- 3.17. The use and numbers of Affordable Rent and shared ownership properties should be made in alignment with the council's Local Plan.

4. Governance

- 4.1. Each RP is responsible for its own individual tenancy policies, as well as arrangements for Review and Appeals.

5. Review

- 5.1. This document will be reviewed after ten years, or earlier if required by changes to local need and/ or national legislation.

6. Consultation

Registered Providers Consulted on the Strategy

- Accent
- BPHA
- Catalyst
- CHS
- CKH
- Clarion
- Guinness
- Hastoe
- Havebury
- Home Group
- Housing 21
- HHS
- Hyde Housing
- Longhurst
- MTV
- Muir
- Orbit
- Places for People (Chorus)
- Sage
- Sanctuary
- Stonewater

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Household Garden Waste Subscription Service

Meeting/Date: Joint Overview & Scrutiny Panel – 6th July 2023
Cabinet – 18th July 2023

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Martin Hassall – Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services

Report by: Andrew Rogan, General Manager for Operations

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Like many councils across the country, we are facing financial challenges. Over the next four years we need to find ways to save money or generate income to combat rising costs, inflation and cuts in government grants. These challenges create a threat to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) against a non-chargeable garden waste service. In jeopardy is £14.3m, resulting in a worse case MTFS scenario of £9.7m deficit.

At Council in February 2023, budget savings and income generating schemes were approved, including proposals for a chargeable subscription household garden waste service. Delivery of this work was included as part of the overall MTFS saving and income proposals and is in line with the Budget Principles agreed by Council in December 2022.

Around 65% of authorities across England and half of the waste collection authorities in the Eastern Region have already opted to charge for household garden waste collections. Rather than ceasing our non-statutory free service, this proposal retains the service for subscribers and brings Huntingdonshire in line with Fenland District Council within Cambridgeshire and the majority of waste collection authorities nationally and regionally.

Not all properties in Huntingdonshire require the service and the current garden waste collection service costs the Council at least £800,000 per annum, in the directly attributable variable service costs alone. As the District's population grows, these costs will rise to meet demand, so introducing a chargeable, subscription-based service will ensure that the service remains sustainable.

This report proposes the introduction of a household garden waste subscription service, which would replace the current non-chargeable collection service from April 2024. It sets out the potential risks associated with the proposal (both nationally and locally) and the likely costs that could be incurred by

Cambridgeshire County Council as a result of this change, particularly when considered across the waste system approach. This proposal aims to ensure that the garden waste service in Huntingdonshire is self-funding and sustainable in line with the Council's carbon reduction targets of net zero by 2040.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is:

RECOMMENDED

- a) to note the risks associated with the proposal, both financially and reputationally, that have been highlighted within the report that may arise through emerging national waste policies and guidance, and changes to Cambridgeshire County Council's Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Contract which require approval from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- b) to agree to the introduction of a household garden waste subscription service from 1st April 2024, as set out within the service terms and conditions attached as Appendix 2 of this report;
- c) to agree to changes to the Waste Collection Policies, relating to the introduction of the chargeable subscription household garden waste service as set out in Appendix 2 of this report;
- d) to agree that for 2024/25 the annual collection charge be set at £57.50 per first bin and authorise the Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services in consultation with the Managing Director to review and confirm the currently proposed £30 for each additional bin to the maximum of 4 bins;
- e) to agree to use the revenue generated by the chargeable subscription household garden waste service to fund the start-up project costs including service redesign, temporary staff resource, website redesign and implementation of associated IT systems (as set out in the financial model Table 3);
- f) to agree that the existing non-chargeable household garden waste collection service will cease from 31 March 2024. Arrangements will be made during Q2 FY 2024/25 to collect any bins from households that do not wish to subscribe and wish to return them; and
- g) to agree to implement a robust communications campaign and incentivisation scheme to encourage subscription sign-ups and promote behaviour change for our residents in waste minimisation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Cabinet to replace the current non-chargeable household garden waste collection service and provide a Garden Waste Subscription Service that protects garden waste services for those residents who wish to use it, whilst noting the potential risks associated with it set out in Section 8 below. The proposed service would start from April 2024.
- 1.2 Currently the cost of garden waste collection is distributed among all taxpayers, through funding diverted from other services, regardless of their usage or benefit.
- 1.3 By directly charging for this service, we establish a system where those who actively utilise the service contribute to its funding.
- 1.4 Completely removing the service would result in residents having to travel to local recycling centres at greater financial and environmental cost, which some residents may prefer to do rather than subscribing to the Garden Waste Subscription Service.
- 1.5 The proposal for charging a subscription for the service is driven by the financial requirement to maintain a balanced budget and to set a sustainable Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.6 Huntingdonshire District Council already operates a chargeable garden waste subscription collection service that facilitates households paying for up to three additional garden waste bins.

2. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION AND ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council collects Council Tax from residents within the District on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as well as Town and Parish councils across the District.
- 2.2 The District Council keep just 7p of every £1 of Council Tax collected as the other elements are determined by the other organisations. The Council Tax we retain is significantly lower than the majority of our neighbours, and the national average for Shire Districts.
- 2.3 In 2023/24 Huntingdonshire District Council had the 17th lowest Council Tax of all Shire Districts.

Table 1 – Comparison of Band D Council Tax across neighbouring authorities

	Band D, 2023/24
Fenland District Council	£ 255.24
North Herts District Council	£ 252.46
Cambridge City	£ 218.85
South Cambs District Council	£ 165.31
Huntingdonshire District Council	£ 155.86
East Cambs District Council	£ 142.14
National average for Shire Districts	£ 204.00

2.4 The following table outlines how the Council's proportion of its total Council Tax has decreased over the past few years.

Table 2 – Comparison of Band D Council Tax over 10 years

Year	Band D CT	HDC CT	HDC share %
2014-15	£1,557.92	£133.18	8.50%
2015-16	£1,584.76	£133.18	8.40%
2016-17	£1,609.29	£133.18	8.30%
2017-18	£1,641.12	£135.84	8.30%
2018-19	£1,675.14	£138.56	8.30%
2019-20	£1,753.39	£142.16	8.10%
2020-21	£1,855.39	£145.86	7.90%
2021-22	£1,925.18	£145.86	7.60%
2022-23	£1,985.81	£150.86	7.60%
2023-24	£2,075.41	£155.86	7.50%

2.5 Huntingdonshire District Council approved its budget in February 2023: *“We will protect front-line services to our most vulnerable people to avoid individuals or families falling into crisis through our continued approaches built on prevention and early intervention.*

We will balance the need for fees, charges and commercial revenues with the demands on our services, our community’s ability to pay and the uncertainty over central government funding.”

2.6 The Council is required to set a balanced budget and a Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

2.7 The MTFS for 2022/23 identified a budget deficit of £8.1m. In the 2023/24 MTFS, the deficit for 2023/24 was addressed through a combination of efficiency savings and the single year Local Government Finance Settlement. However, this still left deficits in some of the remaining years which the Council needed to balance, combined with a lack of certainty around (NNDR) re-baselining. To do this, the Council needs to find ways to save money or generate income in a landscape of rising costs and inflation, combined with cuts in government grants, which is also being experienced by other Councils. In a worst-case scenario, the Council

would have a budget deficit of £9.7m across the remaining four years of the MTFS.

- 2.8 The Joint Administration has already identified the need for a sustainable plan that seeks opportunities to transform our services to live within a balanced budget, be greener and use technology better. Considerable analysis, including a service-by-service review of all Council spend concluded that charging for garden waste collection is the only practical proposition that both closes the gap and protects our much-valued non-statutory services.
- 2.9 Waste and recycling are the single most significant expenditure for the Council. It costs the Council at least £800,000 per year in directly attributable variable costs to provide the garden waste collection service to all Huntingdonshire properties. With reductions in Government funding creating ever-increasing pressure to find further savings, considerations such as charging for non-statutory services previously offered for free have become necessary.
- 2.10 In the last 18 years, the garden waste collection service, which is a non-statutory service, has been fully funded and supported by the Council.
- 2.11 In the coming year, the Council will see increased costs as we introduce additional collection rounds with associated costs to meet the ever-growing demand associated with housing growth.
- 2.12 The planning trajectory has forecast an additional 12,000 properties will be built in Huntingdonshire by 2025. As well as increasing statutory operational costs across the District, it will mean increased unfunded Garden Waste collection costs if a subscription scheme is not implemented.
- 2.13 Moving to a garden waste subscription service will impact on the contractual clauses and incentives that Cambridgeshire County Council as the waste disposal authority has with the Government and with their waste disposal contractor. As such the Council has been in discussion with Cambridgeshire County Council since 2022, noting that Fenland District Council historically moved to a subscription garden collection authority with no financial penalty.
- 2.14 The County has confirmed that the increase in waste disposal costs on the basis of the changes that the Council are proposing to make is forecast to be between £138k and £276k per annum. The loss of waste infrastructure grant payments for Cambridgeshire County Council is forecast to be £60,320 for the predicted reduction in recycling levels. Providing a combined view by Cambridgeshire County Council: **“our estimate of the impacts would be additional costs between £198K and £336K a year”**. The County Council are committed to working with the Council to deliver agreed figures, once the decision has been taken to move to charged waste, noting that the final decision will ultimately be subject to DEFRA agreeing to the change being made to the Waste PFI Contract and the County Council’s contractor agreeing to the change having no impact on its cost. Furthermore, agreement to what proportion of the figure above the Council will be asked to pay also needs to be confirmed, noting that Fenland District Council made the change without any contractual penalty.

2.15 Currently the cost of garden waste collection is distributed among all taxpayers, through funding diverted from other services, regardless of their usage or benefit.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS WHAT OTHER AUTHORITIES ARE DOING

3.1 65% of English Waste Collection Authorities have introduced a charge for collecting garden waste. In the Eastern Region, 50% have already taken up the statutory option to charge for Household Garden Waste, with Fenland District Council being the only charged for service in Cambridgeshire. The provision of this type of charged service is therefore tried and tested. The Council has looked to those authorities already operating such services to inform the proposed service for Huntingdonshire.

3.2 New DEFRA guidelines on waste collections are expected imminently. No advance details have been published about expectations of collection methodology. However, it is likely that Councils that do not currently charge a subscription for garden waste collection will be unable to do so in the future once the new DEFRA guidance has been issued.

3.3 Colchester City Council, Braintree District Council and North Northamptonshire Council are introducing new subscription services this year.

3.4 In East Anglia, the average price charged is £59.33 per garden waste bin

3.5 The Council are proposing a rate of £57.50 per annum for the first bin. This is the equivalent of £1.10 per week for a single bin.

4. RATIONALE AND PROJECTED REVENUE

4.1 The current free non-statutory service costs the Council at least £800k annually in directly attributable variable costs. Table 3 shows the potential income levels for a chargeable garden waste service. This is based on research from other authorities who have implemented a similar system and have delivered average subscription rates of around 40% across their districts. These figures are an illustration of the potential income but are not guaranteed.

4.2 Based on high-level financial modelling and data taken from authorities who have delivered similar schemes, a self-funded service is forecast from 2024/25 onwards.

4.3 Costs in the first year will be higher as a result of set-up costs, including service redesign, temporary staff resources, website redesign, legal costs, back-office systems etc. and resources required to recover and recycle any returned unused wheeled bins. These are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Financial projection of the chargeable garden service, including potential contribution to County.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Change Implementation					
Billing system changes		100,000			
Removal and redelivery of green bins		250,000			
Amendments to rota		0			
Staff consultation - support services		22,500			
Restructure costs		126,564			
Call centre resource		63,037			
Change management costs - PM etc		162,500			
Communication to residents		125,000			
Total Change Implementation costs	0	849,601	0	0	0
Ongoing Revenue Account Impacts					
Income:					
<i>1st Green bin, % expected take up</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>1st Green bin, chargeable volume collected</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>24,000</i>	<i>32,000</i>	<i>40,000</i>	<i>40,000</i>
1st Green bin, income generated	0	(1,380,000)	(1,840,000)	(2,300,000)	(2,300,000)
<i>2nd Green bin, % expected take up</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>2nd Green bin, chargeable volume collected</i>	<i>4,800</i>	<i>2,880</i>	<i>2,880</i>	<i>2,880</i>	<i>2,880</i>
2nd Green bin, income generated	(172,040)	(86,400)	(86,400)	(86,400)	(86,400)
Remove 2nd green bin revenue - prev MTFS	172,040	205,000	205,000	205,000	205,000
Total additional Income Generation	0	(1,261,400)	(1,721,400)	(2,181,400)	(2,181,400)
Expenditure impacts:					
Staff cost savings	0	(318,580)	(238,935)	(159,290)	(159,290)
Fuel cost savings	0	(81,089)	(60,816)	(40,544)	(40,544)
Call centre staff	0	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Annual billing	0	20,000	30,000	40,000	40,000
Transaction fees, card payment	0	27,600	36,800	46,000	46,000
Administration - staff	0	31,519	31,519	31,519	31,519
Annual renewals	0	28,320	37,760	47,200	47,200
Recycling incentives for residents	0	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Potential contribution for losses to CCC	0	198,000	264,000	330,000	330,000
Total additional Expenditure	0	140,770	335,328	529,885	529,885
Net (Surplus)/deficit - Operational Impact	0	(1,120,630)	(1,386,072)	(1,651,515)	(1,651,515)
Costs of implementation	0	849,601	0	0	0
Net (Surplus)/deficit - MTFS	0	(271,029)	(1,386,072)	(1,651,515)	(1,651,515)

4.4 A one-off cost for restructuring is included as a contingency to ensure all possible costs are captured in the financial model. It is planned to redeploy staff currently working on garden waste collections to work on other waste streams and reduce our dependency on agency staff, should we need to.

- 4.5 As the service will be funded directly by those subscribing, it is proposed that the charge per bin is reviewed each year as part of our standard fees and charges review process.
- 4.6 As this is a new service, the take up in the first year is an estimated value. There is a risk that the service will not meet its financial objectives if take-up is lower than anticipated in year one, as that year also incurs set-up costs. To reduce this risk, a number of incentive schemes will be considered if the proposal to charge for garden waste collection is approved. (see Section 8 Key impacts and Risks)
- 4.7 A robust web payment, in-cab and back-office systems will be in place, along with additional Customer Services staff at busy times of the year.

5. SERVICE DESIGN

- 5.1 The Council already has a garden waste subscription service. Under the new scheme, the subscriptions are expected to rise from circa 4k households to forecast numbers of 20k+ households once the scheme is operational. To scale the service, the Council will implement automated processes.
- 5.2 In drawing up this proposal, the Council has included elements of best practice from other local authorities who have introduced similar schemes.
- 5.3 The design principles of the new service are to encourage the maximum number of subscriptions in the first year of operations through payment and services that meet customers' expectations e.g.: payments through a range of methods, available 24/7, secure and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant.
- 5.4 The details of the proposed garden waste service are set out in Appendices 2-3 of this report, and the key features are summarised as follows:
- 5.4.1 The Service is proposed to commence from 1st April 2024 (the existing garden waste collection service would cease on 31st March 2024).
- 5.4.2 Residents will be invited to subscribe to the new service from Q4 FY 23/24. This will allow time for payments to be made and routes, schedules and crews to be planned for the years' collections.
- 5.4.3 To subscribe residents will be required to make an initial annual payment by card with an option to also set up a direct debit subscription, set to take payment from 1st April each year.
- 5.4.4 Existing Direct Debit subscribers (households who currently subscribe for additional garden waste collections) will be notified of the change to the service in Q4 FY23/24 and invited to subscribe to the new service.
- 5.4.5 The preferred payment option will be an annual direct debit payment, which will ensure a more convenient and smoother customer experience, along with creating a level of financial sustainability for

the delivery of the service. Residents will also have the option to pay online annually via credit or debit card.

- 5.4.6 Subscribed service garden waste bins will be clearly identified as paid for via a subscription sticker. The sticker will last for the year and display the property's address. Additionally, the Council's in-cab and back-office systems will record the valid subscriptions.
- 5.4.7 Properties will be able to subscribe for up to four, wheeled garden waste bins, providing an annual subscription fee is received for the primary bin and each additional bin. There also needs to be a suitable location for collection.
- 5.4.8 Customers who do not subscribe may wish to return their garden bin. It is proposed that the re-collection of bins is not introduced until six months after the implementation date. This would allow residents who did not subscribe initially, time to consider taking up the service. Other local authorities who have implemented garden waste subscription services record on average 50% subscriptions prior to launch date and 50% subscription up to 6 months after launch.
- 5.4.9 Any unwanted bins, or bins left out and not showing a paid subscription sticker, will be collected and either recycled or prepared for re-use.
- 5.4.10 Customers who join the service mid-year will pay the full annual price. This is in line with our current additional bin charging. This is due to the cost of administration.
- 5.4.11 Options to automate the process and offer in-year payments in the future will be considered once the service has matured and robust data with which to inform the benefit this could deliver, can be assessed.
- 5.4.12 Customers will be welcome to share bins under their own informal arrangements but only one household will be responsible for the subscription and adherence to the Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) of the scheme (Appendix 2).
- 5.4.13 The chargeable garden waste service will run independently from refuse and recycling services.
- 5.4.14 To support customers in adjusting to the new service and meet increased expectations that might accompany a chargeable service, we will provide new website content, including Frequently Asked Questions. Additional call centre staff have been included in the financial modelling for 3-6 months of year 1 of operation.
- 5.4.15 We will develop a set of management indicators to determine the performance of this new service, including operational, financial and customer satisfaction metrics.
- 5.4.16 From the experience of other local authorities, there is the potential for some of the garden and other compostable waste currently collected in garden bins to move to other waste streams, such as grey bins. Organic waste can then potentially be reclaimed by Mechanical

Biological Treatment - a composting process which reduces the weight of the grey bin material and produces a material with a reduced biological content.

- 5.4.17 Garden waste collected through the new subscription service would continue to be composted under the current County Council's Waste Disposal arrangements. We are working with the County Council to understand how our proposed changes will impact on their contractual arrangements with no additional charges to HDC. The precedent for this has already been set by Fenland District Council who introduced garden waste charging in FY 2017/18.
- 5.4.18 Food waste will not be permitted in the new subscription garden waste bins, as per the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, which mandates that food waste is collected free of charge. A charge can be levied for garden waste collections but does not include food waste.
- 5.4.19 For those not wishing to pay for a garden waste subscription service, their green waste should be taken to the nearest Household Recycling Centre (HRC). However, there is a likelihood that this could be displaced into the grey bin which has implications for the County's Waste PFI Contract. This would also be the case for any food waste placed into the grey bin.
- 5.4.20 It is anticipated that under the current Government's Waste and Resources Strategy, and as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 2021, it will be the duty of all waste collection authorities to provide a separate weekly food waste collection from all domestic and commercial properties in the near future.

6. OTHER BENEFITS

- 6.1 The Strategic Waste Systems Review of 2020 undertaken by Local Partnerships, suggests that 31% of garden waste will disappear from the waste stream through resident behaviour change.
- 6.2 Evidence from other authorities demonstrates that residents will explore a range of options for their garden waste, with the majority making exclusive use of garden waste wheeled bins and a proportion making use of a combination of the service and other means, such as chipping and composting or driving to the nearest Household Recycling Centre (HRC).
- 6.3 Currently, Government and local policy is predicated on the volume of waste we collect and recycle with the principle being that more (volume and weight) is positive. The financial remuneration follows this. However, in principle, and in line with our environmental policy, we want to produce less total waste but recycle as much of it as possible. Work is also in progress to maximise the recycling generated through the Blue Bin service.
- 6.4 Reducing the volume of organic waste will impact the recycling rate measures. A 7% or more reduction is anticipated as the recycling rate is calculated as a combination of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) and organic waste, with organic waste having a significantly higher weight and density than DMR.

- 6.5 Reducing the volume of organic waste could improve the overall carbon footprint of the waste with fewer resources required for collection.
- 6.6 The waste hierarchy starts with Reduce, Reuse and then Recycle. This will be a positive contribution to our climate change ambitions.

7. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 7.1 The Panel discussed the Household Garden Waste Subscription Service at its meeting on 6th July 2023.
- 7.2 Councillor Criswell expressed his anger over the report and proposed subscription, giving his reasons as due to;
- the way that the proposal had been received by members of the public;
 - failure to use Overview and Scrutiny to help develop the proposal;
 - introduction of a charge on an existing service;
 - charging residents who are trying to do the right thing by recycling green waste;
 - disproportionately affecting elderly residents who enjoy gardening but may be on a low income;
 - no consultation with residents on the proposed subscription charge;
 - concern that the make up of the joint administration politically is not one that residents had voted for; and
 - that Executive Councillors are not owning the proposed subscription introduction and suggesting that the decision to introduce had been made by Officers.
- 7.3 The Panel were assured that whilst the proposed fee of £57.50 had been modelled by Officers, the proposed subscription had been proposed by the Joint Administration.
- 7.4 Councillor Gardener observed that the report and Executive Councillors had highlighted that the fee was being introduced for those who used the service and enquired if that meant that residents could request refunds for those services which their Council Tax pays for but that they do not use. The Panel heard that the Joint Administration were aware that this would not be a popular decision but that it was necessary to protect the service for those residents who wished to continue to use it. The Panel heard that garden waste collection is a non-statutory collection and that the Council is no longer able to deliver this service free of charge. The proposed changes would also allow local business opportunity and innovation in opening up opportunities for alternative waste collections.
- 7.5 Concern was expressed by Councillor Cawley that the figures within the report were scare tactics and may be working to fund a shortfall that may not happen. He also queried the quoted reduction in CO2 emissions given that many residents may choose to dispose of their garden waste at local recycling centres by private car instead of subscribing to the service.
- 7.6 In response to these questions, the Panel heard that;
- the shortfall figure of £8.3 million was a worst case scenario but that without action there would be a shortfall which would accumulate year on year; and

- that the predicted CO2 emissions reduction was due to a reduction of refuse vehicles on the road, due to reduced collections and also reduced waste to be reprocessed.
- 7.7 Councillors Cawley and Lowe enquired how it was anticipated that residents would create less green waste should they not have a green bin. The Panel were advised that analysis of other Councils who have undergone the same process, showed that those without a garden waste receptacle generated less green waste. It was further advised that residents also had the option to compost, to use their garden waste as mulch or alternatively to dispose of it at their local recycling centre.
- 7.8 Following an observation from Councillor Cawley that home composting of food waste would generate more methane emissions, the Panel heard that current analysis of waste within each of the three bins currently provided by the Council showed that more food waste was disposed of between the grey and blue bins than the green bin, therefore a change in this behaviour was not anticipated.
- 7.9 Councillor Shaw observed that whilst he believed all Councillors were unhappy with the decision to introduce the subscription service, the reality was that it would be a viable way to address the gap in the finances. Furthermore, the Panel heard that the Section 151 Officer would be unable to sign off the accounts without the introduction of the subscription and the continuation of the service.
- 7.10 The lack of public consultation on the proposed subscription service was queried by Councillors Alban and Lowe who observed that an ongoing consultation on Electrical Vehicle Charging had already been met with a good response from the public. The Panel heard that there is no option to continue the service free of charge therefore a consultation would be immaterial and unreasonable, however it was stressed that public consultation would be held following approval of the recommendations to gauge public opinion on other aspects of the proposed changes. Councillor Alban expressed pride over the good recycling rates achieved by residents in the district to date and shared his concerns that the poorest residents would be disproportionately affected which he claimed was at odds with the ethos of the Joint Administration. The Panel heard that by introducing the proposed subscription service on a non-statutory service, the Council would be able to refocus spending on statutory services. The Panel were further appraised that the report had been brought through the democratic cycle of meetings followings concerns expressed at the Council meeting in February 2023.
- 7.11 Following a further enquiry from Councillor Alban regarding the Saturday working detailed within the report, the Panel were advised that this had been budgeted for as overtime and that this work would assist those residents not subscribed to the scheme. The alternative options available under this part of the scheme would form part of the proposed consultation to residents.
- 7.12 It was observed by Councillor Pickering that this was not an easy decision to make and he empathised with those who had had to make the

decision, and enquired whether there was potential to offer assistance for those who are in receipt of Council Tax Support.

7.13 Councillors Harvey and Hunt expressed concerns over the impact of the proposed subscription to poorer residents and enquired around alternative payment options aside from annual payments. The Panel heard that the proposal would be to collect the annual fee during the annual break in Council Tax payment collections but that further work would be undertaken to investigate alternative payment options. Councillor Hunt also observed that he had seen press reports stating that the Council was in a good financial position, however the Panel heard that there were not sufficient reserves to cover the projected deficit without cuts to statutory services if this service were to continue without a subscription charge.

7.14 Councillor Hunt proposed to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this recommendation was seconded by Councillor Harvey and the Panel voted in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to Cabinet.

g) to agree to complete a review of the impact of the introduction of a household waste subscription service on lower income residents.

7.15 Councillor Bywater stated that he could not support the proposal and shared his comments and concerns on the proposals within the report including;

- observation that the budget deficit had been present for the past 12 years therefore was not a new issue;
- residents are struggling financially at this time, therefore unreasonable to put further strain on household budgets;
- proposed subscription service undermines the Council's commitment to protect it's residents and to support them in combating Climate Change;
- affecting residents without transport;
- encouraging fly tipping or burning of garden waste;
- encouraging vermin through food waste in garden compost;
- lack of environmental impact assessment;
- opposition from residents; and
- affecting the ability to form a sustainable and inclusive community across the District.

7.16 Councillor Bywater further stated that he would not support the proposal as there was no financial data to support the cost of this proposal and how this would affect the projected financials within the report, he also queried how Cabinet could make an informed decision on the recommendations without the full data to support them. The Panel were assured that a quality impact assessment had been developed and analysed alongside available census data to give best estimates but that until the approval of the recommendations within the report, the team were not in a position to progress, however this impact assessment would be added as a further Appendix to the report when it progressed to Cabinet. The Panel were advised that research showed few authorities offering financial support with garden waste subscriptions but that this would be fully investigated in order to prove due diligence. It was also

advised that residents could share bins with their neighbours thereby sharing costs.

- 7.17 The Panel heard that the Council were still waiting on information and clarification from DEFRA surrounding the introduction of food waste collections. It was also stated that the Joint Administration had inherited good services from the previous administration and wanted to improve upon them, which the introduction of a garden waste subscription would support.
- 7.18 Following a question from Councillor Gleadow, the Panel were assured that the team were happy to update on progress of projects and had an open door policy to discuss this.
- 7.19 Councillor Corney observed that the Panel had heard a lot about what other Councils were doing but that it would be advisable to focus on Huntingdonshire. He further observed that recent flooding in Ramsey had been caused by the fly tipping of garden waste and expressed concern that the removal of the free collection service would exasperate this problem. In response to Councillor Corney's concerns around fly tipping, the Panel heard that the team worked hard to manage this issue across the district with increased intelligence. It was also advised that data obtained from Fenland District Council, showed a recent reduction in fly tipping despite having a chargeable garden waste service. Councillor McAdam expressed concern that fines for fly tipping were not prohibitive and that garden waste tipping would be harder to trace back to its origin than household waste.
- 7.20 In response to a question from Councillor Blackwell, the Panel were advised that an alternative option of a three month suspension of the service had been considered over other time period suspensions as current data showed that due to the seasonal nature of the demand, there were three quiet months over the winter where demand for collections is low.
- 7.21 Following a further comment from Councillor Corney on what alternative options had been considered, the Panel heard that the alternatives considered had not made the necessary financial impacts required, therefore the proposal within the report had been put forward. The Panel were further advised that despite this being an unpopular proposal, no viable alternatives had been proposed.
- 7.22 Councillor Jennings stated his concerns about the proposal, including that;
- although Council Tax may be seen as regressive, nothing is more aggressive than a flat rate fee applied across the district;
 - he felt the member briefing had been more to gauge reaction and how Councillors would support the proposal to their residents despite being prior to the report being available;
 - the language of the report gave conflicting implications – namely that the assumed subscription fees generated would be more than the cost to run the service, therefore it was suggested that they would be subsidising other services;

- the Council Tax comparison table would benefit from the addition of which Councils current charge for their Garden Waste service;
- it is common to have a budget gap within the MTFs and that the immediate financial pressures had already been addressed, therefore a proposed delay in implementation would not affect this;
- the assumptions in Table 3 do not stand up to scrutiny due to conflicting detail;
- there was not enough rigour in the financial modelling;
- there was a query whether the impact on the grey bin collections had been considered; and
- there was worry that people would resort to hard landscaping their gardens to avoid production of garden waste.

7.23 Following which, the Panel were advised that;

- the costs to run the service within the report did not include service wide factors such as vehicle acquisition and insurance;
- the MTFs only has certainty for year 1 and that following that it would be in jeopardy;
- Table 3 has been worked from the bottom up, but that the proposed development of 12,000 new homes within the district by 2025 has not been included as they have not yet been constructed;
- the finances had been robustly tested; and
- the issue of how to protect vulnerable residents had been considered, however it was unfair to assume that those in lower Council Tax Bands used the garden waste service less than those in a higher band.

7.24 Councillors Cawley, Jennings, Martin and Lowe all expressed concern over the timing of the proposal and suggested that it be postponed to 2025 when it was hoped that the current economic crisis may be alleviated. Councillor McAdam observed that whilst the timing was of concern, postponing implementation could result in higher charges to households to compensate for the delay. Councillor Jennings proposed an additional recommendation be added to the Cabinet report;
h) to pause progress for 12 months to take time to take advantage of detailed reports and financial implications before bringing the scheme back into the democratic cycle.
However, this motion was not supported by the Panel.

7.25 Assurance was sought from Councillor Gardener that should the scheme go ahead, there would be no redundancies or cuts to staff. The Panel heard that whilst it was difficult to make assurances with the unknown variables of take up, it was anticipated that a reduction in the use of agency staff and natural turnover would ensure the proposed staffing finances within the report would be met.

7.26 Councillor Martin expressed his opinion that there were compelling reasons why the report should be looked at again and again questioned whether the local recycling centres would be able to cope with the demand. He felt that the report had a lot of detail missing and that it was hard to scrutinise the detail due to its absence.

7.27 The Panel heard, in response to further questions from Councillors Gardener and Pickering, that an impact assessment had been done to

cover the anticipated impact on the local recycling centres and that this would be monitored and assessed as the proposals moved forward.

- 7.28 Following a question from Councillor Shaw, the Panel were advised that residents would be able to keep their current green bins, however only those who subscribed to the service would have them collected.
- 7.29 Councillor Lowe stated that she was aware of residents who were maintaining verges and disposing of that waste in their green bins, the Panel heard that all Council mowing schedules were on time at present and that Councillors could submit details of such occurrences to the Operations team for further investigation.
- 7.30 The Panel were assured that a robust contract was in place to ensure the current recycling of the waste into compost by Amey would be maintained.
- 7.31 Concern was expressed by Councillor Alban that there may be teething problems should the scheme go ahead and enquired about a Plan B. The Panel were assured that the team would work to optimise the route to ensure best value for money as well as the expected reduction in CO2 emissions, this would be constantly under review to ensure it best fits the needs of residents and the Council.
- 7.32 The Panel were further assured of the capability of the Officers in devising and delivering a scheme which would fit the needs of the Council whilst still delivering for residents and that the report contained all the information needed for Cabinet to make an informed decision.
- 7.33 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;
- g) to agree to complete a review of the impact of the introduction of a household waste subscription service on lower income residents.

8. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

- 8.1 **There is a risk that subscription uptake may be lower than anticipated** impacting the potential to provide a self-funding and sustainable service. We took a sample of 60 authorities across England with a chargeable garden waste services and average subscription take up rates were around 40-50%. However, these are indicative figures and do not guarantee subscription uptake in our district. Also, to be noted, should the subscription levels be low, the cost of running a garden waste service would be low due to fewer resource requirements.
- 8.2 **Reduced Recycling Rates** - The implementation of this scheme will reduce the overall tonnage of compostable material sent for processing and will therefore potentially reduce the Council's overall combined recycling and composting rate by around 7%, to approximately 51%. Work is in progress to maximise the recycling generated through the Blue Bin

service, and key messages will be planned on materials such as cardboard, shredded paper, food waste and garden waste. For households not wishing to subscribe, and to mitigate the environmental impact, a number of additional incentive schemes are to be considered and made available from 1 April 2024. We are actively seeking input from District, Town and Parish Councils about the desirability and feasibility of these incentives to identify those that offer the most value. Options could include:

- 8.2.1 Subsidised price home composters** - promoted along with information on home composting. In order to reduce the volume of waste generated, and to minimise food waste entering the residual waste stream.
 - 8.2.2 Saturday Freighters** – deployment of vehicles every Saturday between the months of April and September in prearranged locations across the district.
 - 8.2.1 Free loose compost** – working with Town and Parish Councils, along with Allotment Associations, to get residents engaged with composting in their community.
 - 8.2.2 Community compost schemes** – working with Town and Parish Councils, along with Allotment Associations to enable and influence community led composting schemes.
- 8.3 Waste rounds** - The modelling of new separate garden waste rounds for customers may result in some changes to collection days. It is acknowledged that this may create some confusion for residents in the early phase of the delivery. To help mitigate this we will be using a specialist company to create the rounds with as little changes as possible to current collection days, in addition we will develop an extensive communications plan to ensure residents and internal/external stakeholders are fully aware of any potential changes. It is unknown at present how many households will be affected by a change in service and this would need to be considered alongside the emerging separate food waste collections.
- 8.4 Potential fly tipping** - Officers have been investigating the likelihood of increased fly-tipping based on data from authorities that already charge for garden waste collections. This data shows that the majority have not seen any increase in instances of garden waste fly-tipping, with only a handful reporting a marginal increase in the first year of implementation, as in reality it is more likely that waste is displaced into the grey bin. Huntingdonshire and similar areas do have existing effective methods for clearing waste and prosecuting offenders.
- 8.5** Huntingdonshire monitors both the materials picked up as fly-tipping using a reporting mechanism called "WasteDataFlow" to inform government of the levels and nature of waste along with enforcement actions taken therefore close monitoring will be undertaken to determine any changes to fly-tipping patterns.
- 8.6 Automation and IT Systems** - There is a need for significant automation and review of IT systems to scale the current subscription method to the

numbers anticipated. Incentives such as Early Bird discounts will be investigated in order to allow customers to join the scheme over a longer period of time and reduce the risk of processes being unable to meet demand. The feasibility of these schemes will be evaluated against the resources and time required to implement new technologies, before confirmed dates, processes and payment options can be agreed.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 **Stage 1 (April/August 2023)** – Project Manager to be appointed to lead on the implementation of a chargeable garden waste service in Huntingdonshire. They will bring together key stakeholders (3CICT Development Team, Call Centre, Waste Team and Communication Team) to deliver a project plan.

9.2 Project team in place to deliver:

- Payment system for cards and direct debit process in place
- Integrations between payment system and route/schedule system
- Contract is in place for subscription stickers
- Feasibility of incentives will be consulted with Town and Parish Councils
- Modelling of new collection rounds completed
- Communications timetable (Website, letters, media etc...) to include: info about the new service, new instructions on what to do with food waste, tips on reducing food waste, and guidance on how to dispose of garden waste if you are not subscribed.

9.3 **Stage 2 (September/December 2023)** – Campaign Launch (bin tags to all properties, website/social promotions):

- Potential for Early bird subscription form available online TBC
- Subscriptions available by debit or credit card

9.4 **Stage 3 (January/February 2024)** – Campaign mailout with letter to all residents with Council Tax Bills

9.5 **Stage 4 (February/March 2024)** Campaign Launch letters to all those who have signed up advising of new collection dates along with systems updates and bin calendars live

9.6 **Stage 5 (Monday 1st April 2024)** – chargeable garden waste subscription service Go Live. Crews to leave a tag on bins which haven't been paid for.

9.7 **Stage 6 (April 2025)** - Performance to be reported back through the political cycle

10. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 If DEFRA mandate that garden waste collection should be collected free of charge from all domestic properties and is written in legislation, we would need to legally comply.

12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Costs in the first year will be higher as a result of set up costs including service redesign, temporary staff resources, website redesign, legal costs, back-office systems and also resources required to recover and recycle any returned unused wheeled bins. These one-off costs are estimated to be up to £850k.
- 12.2 Costs to the County's Waste PFI Contract have also been highlighted as an impact to the Cambridgeshire taxpayers and also implications to this Council as a direct result of this proposal.

13. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 In February 2023, the Council formally recognised the Climate Crisis and set ambitious targets for reduction of our carbon emissions.
- 13.2 The implementation of this scheme will reduce the overall tonnage of compostable material sent for processing and will therefore potentially reduce the Councils' overall combined recycling and composting rate by around 7%, to approximately 51%. However, work is also in progress to maximise the recycling generated through the Blue Bin service, and clear communications on materials such as cardboard, shredded paper, food waste and garden waste are planned.
- 13.3 Not all properties in Huntingdonshire require the service and only those residents who have a need for the service will subscribe. This approach may reduce vehicle movement numbers and positively reduce the CO₂ emissions of the waste collection service. However, this will be dependent on take up of the service and also the potential implications of separate food waste collections.
- 13.4 Table 4 shows an analysis of the environmental implications in relations to CO₂e emissions moving from our current garden waste collection arrangements to a chargeable garden waste collection service, excluding any implications that the separate food waste collections may incur.
- 13.5 The Strategic Waste Systems Review 2020 undertaken by Local Partnerships identifies once a chargeable garden waste service is implemented 31% of garden waste disappears due to behaviour change.
- 13.6 The forecasted CO₂e emissions for a chargeable garden waste service in Huntingdonshire is 802.79 tonnes. This is a 369.17 tonne reduction from our current garden waste service. These are based on the Carbon Warm factors calculations from DEFRA, excluding any implications that the separate food waste collections may incur.

Table 4 – shows the total Carbon Dioxide Emissions Equivalent (t.CO₂e)

	Landfilled	Current Situation	Anticipated Impact - for a Chargeable Garden Waste Service			Positive Outcome
	If Organic waste was Landfilled	Baseline tonnage - composting (average for past 3 years)	Total t.CO ₂ e impact for a chargeable garden waste service	Impact from Chargeable Garden Waste - (45% Participation rate with 65% tonnage captured)	10% of tonnage diverted to residual (Captured through MBT)	Home composted or behaviour change
Tonnes collected	21703	21703	14866.59	14106.95	759.64	6836.76t disappears
t.CO ₂ e *	12848	1171.96	802.79	761.77	41.02	369.18 t.CO ₂ e * saved
Recycling Rate (waste diverted from landfill)		58%	50% (this includes Saturday Freighters)			

14. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 14.1 This is a financial decision which is being made due to an inherited budget shortfall and the need to protect valued services.
- 14.2 This combined with the ongoing decline in funding from Central Government, the expected significant reduction in business rates, rising costs and high inflation, has resulted in a substantial budget gap in the coming years. Therefore, the Council must make difficult decisions, including charging for this fly service. Delivery of this work has been included as part of the overall medium term financial strategy (MTFS) saving and income proposals.
- 14.3 The current garden waste collection costs the Council at least £800,000 per year in directly attributable variable costs, and as the District expands, these costs will rise. Meeting the demand will require additional vehicles and staff. By introducing a garden waste subscription service, we can ensure that the service remains available to those residents who wish to subscribe, and the council can allocate funds to other essential services. This decision is being recommended by officers, whilst acknowledging the potential implications to the County Council's Waste PFI Contract, recycling rates, the future changes that would be required as a result of separate food waste collections, and the additional financial charges that may be passed to this Council as a result.

15. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Appendix 1 - Garden waste collection options considered (*initial analysis*)
- Appendix 2 - Chargeable Garden Waste Service Terms and Conditions
- Appendix 3 - Huntingdonshire Garden Waste Service Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

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Appendix 1 – Garden waste collection options considered (*initial analysis*)

Option	Proposed change description	Savings	Impact on staffing	Transition costs (one off charges to move to new system)	Waste and Resource strategy (WRS) alignment	Impact on recycling rates and collection tonnages	RECAP partnership alignment	PFI contract and other potential impacts
Do Nothing	Continue with fortnightly free co-mingled Garden and food waste collections, cutting other essential council services to remain financially prudent	No savings-service costs HDC more than £800k annually this will increase every 3-4yrs as the district gets bigger and additional rounds are required to meet the demand.	No impact on current staffing levels	None required	Some alignment- Although no details available as yet, government has suggested free garden waste collections, although it had mandated separate food waste collection in the environment bill, again no details have yet been released on when this will be implemented or funding available for rollout	Neutral-there would be no impact on current collection tonnages or recycling rate Current recycling rate 58%	Partly, Fenland and Peterborough both have fully chargeable garden collection services. Rest are on fortnightly free collection with opt in subscription service for additional bins	No request of contract change required, no DEFRA approval required and no potential cost of this to HDC
Stop collecting garden waste altogether	Co-mingled Garden and food waste is non statutory, HDC could stop doing this	Indicative figures of revenue saving of £800k annually £200k annual capital savings on vehicle replacement costs	Indicative figures of 21 staff would be at risk	Indicative figures of £200k staff restructure costs, £250k for collection of green bins from residents, £60k comms, £100k additional temporary staff for customer services to cope with increased traffic through call centre due to changes.	Food waste and garden waste collections are an integral part of WRS Government have intimated they would like LA's to provide free garden waste collections to all properties along with a separate free weekly food waste collection. No further information is yet unavailable from Government on timescales or whether chargeable would still be permitted.	Large negative impact- we would reduce collection tonnages of compostable material to zero from current 23,000 tonnes Recycling rate will sit around 39%-	Does not align with any of our partners.	Contract change request would have to be submitted, potential multi-million-pound compensation event for HDC Additional costs for CCC as footfall increase through Household Recycling Centres (HRC) potential increase in fly tipping. Increased refuse due to food waste being diverted to grey bin from green.

Fully chargeable collections	Charge for garden waste collections only (fee to be agreed) Fenland charge £45 pa and Peterborough charge £50 for first bin and £75 for two bins. HDC could charge average of £47.50 In UK approx. 160 LA's charge for garden collections and is estimated to provide £74m in additional income pa	Indicative figures further to full financial modelling: Depending on participation rate, you could look at generating after deducting operating costs of Approx£450,000 Income 30%- £700k pa 40%-£1.1m pa 50%£1.4m pa This service would only cover garden waste and food waste would need to be diverted into the grey bin	Indicative figures further to full financial modelling: Reducing staff by 11 crew members. Potential further staff reductions depending on how the routes evolve, driver+1 instead of driver +2 currently	Indicative figures further to full financial modelling: £100k restructuring costs. £250k bin removals and redeliveries etc. £100k comms £70k call centre staff to handle volume of queries due to changes	Food waste and garden waste collections are an integral part of WRS Government have intimated they would like LA's to provide free garden waste collections to all properties along with a separate free weekly food waste collection. No further information is yet unavailable from Government on timescales or whether chargeable would still be permitted.	Large negative impact on recycling rates but hugely dependant on participation rates. Using Fenland and Peterborough's current recycling rates as a benchmark we could be looking anywhere between 40%-50% recycling rate	Partly, Fenland and Peterborough both have fully chargeable garden collection services.	PFI contract change request would need approval from Thalia, DEFRA and CCC. Additional costs may be incurred by HDC for the changes. Unknown until form submitted and reviewed. Residents may disengage from recycling altogether, which could increase contamination and further reductions in recycling rates.
Suspend Garden waste collections during winter	Suspend garden waste collections between 1 st Dec-1 st March (3 full months of lowest collection tonnages)	Indicative figures of fuel saving of approx. -£34k Agency staff savings £12k as garden crews are redeployed into other areas.	No impact on staff numbers as they would be redeployed into other areas.	Indicative figures of comms £15k annually this would include bin hangers and stickers	There is no clear details as yet from Government regarding WRS and collection consistency and garden collections.	Low impact on recycling figures 2,700 tonnes were collected during the same period in 2021 Recycling rates is estimated to reduce to around 54%	S/Cambs reduce their garden collections to monthly during the winter period.	PFI contract change form would need to be submitted and agreed by Thalia, DEFRA and CCC. Food waste would be diverted into the grey bin, it may be difficult to get residents to revert back during the summer months. We could be challenged for refunds from residents using our garden waste

								subscription service as they will be losing 3 months of paid service from HDC. Current subscription service costs £55 for additional garden bin income is around £200k pa
3 weekly garden collections	Reduce collection frequency from current fortnightly to 3 weekly	Indicative figures of savings £150k staff reduction of 6 £42k fuel, servicing, tyres etc. Capital saving of £400k on vehicle replacement as would require 2 less rounds	Indicative figures of staffing would be reduced by 2 drivers and 4 loaders	Indicative figures of £40k restructure of staff £60k comms. £30k call centre staff. Rerouting software, round data etc. £40k	WRS seeks to gain consistency in collections across the country, currently no details are available on what that looks like as government have yet to release details it could mean however, that we are mandated to provide free fortnightly collections for garden waste.	Low impact on recycling rates as numbers of household serviced annually is decreased. Estimated recycling rate to be around 52%	Would not align with any of the RECAP partners	PFI contract request form would need to be submitted and approved by Thalia, DEFRA and CCC before changes commence, could have financial implications for HDC to make contract changes. Increased costs for CCC as footfall increases at HRC's and potential increase in fly tipping Subscription garden service fees would be challenged as frequency of collections reduced for a chargeable service

Appendix 2 – Chargeable Garden Waste Service Terms and Conditions

Costs of service for current and new customers for the period of July 2023-March 2024

2nd green bin customers (current) renewing in July 2023 will be charged **£41.25**

Service will run from 1 July 2023-31 March 2024 current charge of **£55** for 12 months will be pro rata for 9 months (**£41.25**) to align with new service implementation, as original 2nd green bin system was set up to run from July -June

New customer subscriptions for the period of July 2023-March 2024 will also pay **£41.25** irrespective of when during that time period they subscribe in line with the current terms and conditions. Additional bins up to a max of 4 will cost **£41.25** each

Customers will be contacted as usual to remind of renewal and changes to service in May 2023.

These customers will be contacted again in September-December 2023 along with all residents to inform of changes to the service as a whole.

Costs of service for current and new customers for the period of April 2024-March 2025

The cost of the full subscription service from April 2024 will be **£57.50** (£1.10 per week)

An early bird offer will be included in year 1 of the scheme, for customers purchasing subscriptions between 1st December 2023 and 31 January 2024 and will cost **£50** (less than £1 per week) This is to incentivise residents to subscribe to the new garden waste service early, ensuring the new arrangements are communicated to residents and that subscription packs are available for the 1st April.

Outside of these dates the cost of the service will be **£57.50** for service from the joining date until March 2025. There will be no pro-rata discount for those joining the scheme mid-year.

Additional garden bins up to a max of 4 will cost **£30** each, with a maximum total of subscription bins of 5 per household

All future fees will be set in line with the current fees and charging process of the Council. Considerations were made around providing a discounted scheme for those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits. However, this would be extremely complex to manage, expensive to administer and hugely resource intensive. An alternative scheme could be explored to allow town and parish councils to award a limited number of free garden waste subscriptions to residents most in need.

Proposed payment methods

Working in collaboration with our finance team, the preferred payment method is Direct Debit (DD) with a card payment option as an alternative method.

Terms & Conditions

The green wheeled bin remains the property of Huntingdonshire District Council. It could be reclaimed if you no longer pay for the garden waste collection service.

Not all properties are suitable for this service. This may be due to access restrictions for our collection vehicles or lack of space to either store the bin or place it out for collection.

You are responsible for the security of the wheeled bin. A delivery fee will apply to replace lost, stolen or damaged bins. (Fee **£15** in line with current bin delivery charge)

If the collection crew are responsible for damaging a bin or if it falls into the rear of the collection vehicle, we will replace it free of charge.

We will not empty the bin if it is moved to another property. However, subscriptions can be transferred to new properties within Huntingdonshire if customers move home.

If the wheeled bin cannot be safely manoeuvred and positioned onto the vehicle, or the vehicle cannot lift the bin due to the weight of the bin, then it will be left unemptied, and a rejection hanger left where possible. If the bin is found to be too heavy, the householder will be required to remove sufficient material from the bin and dispose of it in a responsible manner. Once sufficient weight has been removed from the bin, we will collect it on the next scheduled collection day. This is in line with current processes.

Subscribe online at www.Huntingdonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste

We will not provide refunds if customers move out of Huntingdonshire or when subscriptions are cancelled. This is in line with current processes. The cost of managing such a process is disproportionate to the low cost of the service.

Operational issues or poor weather could cause the service to be cancelled without return or refund. Details will be posted on the Council's website.

Appendix 3 – Huntingdonshire Garden Waste Service Frequently Asked Questions

The following information also forms part of the terms and conditions for the garden waste collection service.

Q. What can I put into my green bin?

If you subscribe to the service, the following garden waste can go in the green bin:

Yes please

- ✓ Weeds
- ✓ Hedge trimmings
- ✓ Small twigs and branches (less than 2.5cm (1") in diameter)
- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Flowers, plants, and wind fall fruit
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Shredded paper
- ✓ Small animal bedding (vegetarian only)

No thank you

- ✗ Plastic bags or bin bags
- ✗ Flowerpots and trays
- ✗ Soil
- ✗ Stones or rubble
- ✗ Branches or logs (larger than 2.5cm (1") in diameter)
- ✗ Any other household rubbish
- ✗ Textiles
- ✗ Food waste

Remember

Garden waste must be put into the bin loose - do not use bags.

On collection day you will need to place the bin out for collection before 6:30am. Please make sure the handle faces the road and the subscription sticker is clearly visible.

Important:

Any bin containing plastics, textiles, soil, general waste, food waste, or rubble will not be emptied. Any bins which are considered by the collection team to be too heavy for safe handling will also not be emptied.

Please check your collection days at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins

All garden waste must be in the bin and the lid closed. Do not leave any waste outside your bin - it will not be collected, with the exception of real Christmas trees in season.

The wheeled bin remains the property of Huntingdonshire District Council. If you have not paid for the garden waste collection service, we reserve the right to not collect the bin.

Q. How often will my green bin be emptied?

A. Your garden waste will be collected once every two weeks throughout the year. Changes to collection days will occur as a result of Christmas and New Year.

Q. Can I have more than one green bin?

A. Yes, you can have up to a max of 4 garden bins per property. However, please be aware that you will need to pay an annual subscription for each bin to be collected.

Q. What should I do if my garden waste collection is missed?

- A. We will only return for missed collections in the following circumstances
- The bin was placed out before 6.30am on the day of collection
 - The right collection point was used
 - In the case of assisted collections there was access to get the bin e.g. gate unlocked
 - The sticker indicating the bin has been paid for is clearly displayed on the rear of the bin under the handle
 - A rejected hanger has not been put on the bin
 - A crew report has not been received regarding the bin e.g. heavy, excessive waste
 - The missed bin has been reported within 3 days of your normal day of collection. Refunds will not be given for missed collections, they should be reported to the Council and we will arrange recollection if the circumstances above have been complied with.

To report the missed collection, go to www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/missedbin

Q. How will your collection crews know I have paid for a collection each year?

A. When we receive your payment, we will send you a unique addressed sticker to put on the rear of your green bin. A new sticker will be issued each year upon payment of the subscription. If you subscribe to more than one bin, you will receive a sticker for each bin.

Q. How quickly after I pay can I expect the service to start?

A. Once payment has been received the council will arrange for a letter of confirmation and subscription sticker to the relevant property. All subscriptions purchased in advance will be posted in bulk during early March each year.

Q. Can I pay by direct debit?

A. Yes, there will be the option for an annual DD to be set up.

Q. I don't currently have a bin. Can I still sign up for the service?

A. Yes, you can sign up and pay for the service at any time. Once you have paid for the service, the council will arrange for the delivery of a green bin. You will also receive a subscription sticker in the post.

Q. Can I share a green bin with a neighbour?

A. Yes – you can make a personal arrangement with a neighbour to share the cost of the additional garden bin service. We will allocate the bin to the property that pays for it and will withdraw it if payment is not received.

If you are sharing your garden waste bin with a neighbour, the householder which pays the annual charge will have overall responsibility for the bin as a bin can only be allocated to one address. It is the responsibility of the named householder if the bin is contaminated, misused, or needs replacing.

Q. What can I do with my excess garden waste or if I don't join the scheme?

A. We can only collect garden waste contained within the green bin.

Home composting is the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with garden waste. To purchase a subsidised compost bin, visit www.getcomposting.com or call 0800 316 4454.

Cambridgeshire County Council Household Recycling Centres in Bluntisham, Alconbury and St Neots take household garden waste materials. See their website for details and opening times

Q. What if I decide not to use the service for a period? Will I get a refund?

A. No, we are unable to refund any payments for this service.

Q. Will the Council replace lost or stolen green bins?

A. You are responsible for the security of the wheeled bin. You can request a replacement bin and a delivery fee will apply to replace lost, stolen, or damaged bins.

If the collection crew are responsible for damaging a bin or if it falls into the rear of the collection vehicle, we will replace it free of charge

Q. What happens if my green bin is damaged?

A. If our collection crew record that they have been responsible for damaging your bin or it falls into the rear of the vehicle, we will replace it free of charge; otherwise, the usual delivery charge will apply.

Q. Can I buy my own green bin instead of the Huntingdonshire District Council ones?

A. No, we will not empty green bins that do not meet our specification (including make, model and logos), so cannot offer the service using other bins.

Q. Are all properties suitable for this service?

A. We will do our best to help customers access the service. However, some properties may not be suitable for this service due to lack of space to store the bin, or to put it out for collection. We reserve the right to decide whether or not we can provide the garden waste collection service via the green bin.

Q. Why does the Council charge for garden waste bin collections?

A. The Council has no statutory duty to collect garden waste but can make a reasonable charge where the service is offered. Some customers in Huntingdonshire do not have gardens and many householders compost at home. Therefore, with the pressure on funding and services, the decision was made that those customers who use the service should contribute to funding the service. We plan to reinvest funding into reducing the environmental impact of the services we deliver.

Q. Can I pay by instalments?

A. There is not an option to pay by instalments

Q. Can I put food waste in the green bin?

A. Legislation sets out that only garden waste can be charged for. That means we can no longer ask residents to put their food waste in their green bin.

Q. Will I still pay the full subscription if I sign up part way through the year?

A. Yes, you can sign up to receive the service at any point during the year. The annual subscription runs from 1 April until 31 March each year. If you sign up part way through the year you will be charged for the full year. The subscription will need renewing before the next April for the service to continue.

Subscribe online at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Service area	Operations
Date of assessment	10/07/2023
Name of policy/service to be assessed	Garden Waste Subscription Service
Is this a new or existing policy/service?	New service offering for a household garden waste subscription service where collection of all garden waste will be a chargeable service. This is a change from the existing service for households where the first garden bin is provided at no cost and additional garden bins can be requested at a charge of £55 per annum.
Name of manager responsible for new or amended policy/service	Andy Rogan, Heidi Field
Names of people conducting the assessment	Oana Hughineata, Liz Smith
Step 1 – Description of new or amended policy/service	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the new or amended policy/service (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	<p>The change in policy is to propose the introduction of a household garden waste subscription service, which would replace the current non-chargeable collection service from April 2024. The proposal aims to ensure that the garden waste service in Huntingdonshire is self-funding and sustainable in line with the council's carbon reduction targets of net zero by 2040.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Assess the potential impact of the service on different equality groups. . Identify any potential barriers or disadvantages faced by specific groups. . Ensure that the service is designed and delivered in a manner that promotes equality, inclusivity and accessibility for all residents. <p>The EIA supports the strategic objective of delivering the garden waste subscription service in an equitable manner. It aims to eliminate any unjustified or disproportionate barriers that may hinder certain groups from accessing the service, ensuring equal opportunities for all residents.</p>
The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its	

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

decisions and activities impact on different people. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services.

The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services.

Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or Policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional.

Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the new/amended policy/service

To ensure that the household garden waste subscription service policy objectives are designed to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within the implementation process and does not disproportionately impact any equality group.

Who is intended to benefit from the new/amended policy/service and in what way?

All residents with a private garden

What are the intended outcomes of this new/amended policy/service?

Garden Waste Subscription Service policy outcome is to address the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) imperative by offering residents who use the service to fund it through an annual subscription. Therefore, we can ensure that the service remains available to those residents who wish to subscribe and promote behaviour change for our residents in waste minimisation.

Step 2 – Data

What baseline **quantitative data (statistics)** do you have about the function relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?

[Huntingdonshire Statistics](#)

Office for National Statistics Key Findings:

According to ONS report 2022, Huntingdonshire is the 14th least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas as of 2021. The 2021 Census estimates that there were 180,800 usual residents living in Huntingdonshire in March 2021. The first release of data provides a breakdown of this into 5-year age groups. The number of people aged 15-64 also increased by 2% to 113,700 and the number of people aged 65 or over increased by 33% to 36,500 at March 2021. The proportion for 2021 estimates of Huntingdonshire's population in each age band, by sex, against the 2011 shows a decline in age ranges numbers (e.g 15-24, 40-49) but increases in others (e.g., 5-9, 25-39). All age groups over fifty have seen an

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increase in both males and females over the ten years from the previous Census.

The proportion of residents who live in a house or bungalow is 88%, with 11.2% living in a flat, maisonette or apartment and less than 1% in a caravan or boat. Those not living in a house or bungalow may not have a garden.

The proportion of residents who live in the social housing rented accommodation sector is 13%.

According to the latest available data, as of 2023, the number of households utilising the garden waste collection service in Huntingdonshire stood at 78,000 properties an estimation of 91% who actively participate.

Cambridgeshire Insights:

- Huntingdonshire is ranked as the 3rd most deprived of the five districts across Cambridgeshire for overall Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD Score)
- The Barrier to Housing and Services is domain ranks the lowest (most deprived) out of the domains in Huntingdonshire when ranked against all other local authorities nationally (117/317).
- The Income domain is ranked as the highest (least deprived) in the Local Authority rankings (250/317), closely followed by the Employment (245/317) and Health & Disability domain (242/317).
- Huntingdonshire has 2 LSOAs in the 20% most relatively deprived nationally (H 008A in Huntingdon West and H 008B in Huntingdon North). These were the same two LSOAs that were also in the 20% most relatively deprived nationally in 2015
- There is very little difference between the deprivation domain scores when comparing the urban and rural classified LSOAs in Huntingdonshire.
- Within Huntingdonshire, income deprivation affecting older people (IDAOP) is more prevalent than that with children (IDACI), but only by one decile rank (IDAOP = 8, IDACI = 7 where 1 is the most deprived).
- 25 LSOAs have become more relatively deprived by 1 decile since 2015, whilst 9 LSOAs in Huntingdonshire have become less relatively deprived by 1 decile nationally.

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What **qualitative data (opinions etc)** do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?

The analysis focuses on gathering insights from different councils such as Winchester, Watford, North Herts, East Herts, Hartford, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Three Rivers who have experienced the introduction of fees for garden waste disposal. The qualitative data provides valuable perspectives on the impact of this policy change on resident's behaviour, attitudes, and overall satisfaction with the service.

Themes and Findings:

Awareness and understanding; From the data received, many participants expressed a lack of awareness regarding the introduction of charges for garden waste collection, indicating inadequate communication from local authorities. Additionally, confusion has been found within the residents regarding collection schedule, payment methods, and acceptable types of garden waste.

Changes in Behaviour: A considerable number of residents reported reducing their waste production or finding separate ways to dispose it such as composting or communal composting facilities. On the other hand, several residents expressed frustration about having to pay for a service they previously received for free.

Financial impact: Residents expressed concerns about financial burden of the new chargeable service.

The findings suggest a need for improved communication strategies to ensure residents are well-informed about policy changes. Furthermore, addressing concerns related to service quality, efficiency, and customer support is crucial for maintaining resident satisfaction. The data also highlights the importance of considering the environmental implications and exploring community-driven initiatives to promote sustainable garden waste management.

Regarding discounts scheme offered by different councils those mentioned above responded with some information provided by email.

- Fewer than 10% of Local Authorities who charge for garden waste collection services also offer a discount/exemption scheme for low-income households

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- Discounts were wildly different and ranging from £5 to 50%
- Generally, discount was made for those residents on Council Tax or housing Benefit.
 - With few exceptions, the Local Authorities did not perform any authentication / validation with regards to discount expect format validation within the form.
 - Local Authorities in this situation had not considered re-validation at the point of renewal
 - Where Local Authorities did perform validation, it completely broke the digital process turning the automation into manual laborious administration and / or contact that was not scalable.
 - No Local Authorities had the capacity to react if a bin was no longer paid for due to the administrative and operational costs associated with removing stickers or bins from routes. It was deemed as simply not worth the effort.
 - DD take up where there was no incentive hit around 50% but this was a gradual increase over years 1-3.
 - DD where there was an incentive rapidly increased DD take up and increased the percentage of DD payments to 70-80%
 - Lead time was at least two weeks (the time between a resident paying for the scheme and the service being in place)
 - Uptake across the Local Authorities providing information showed that the distribution of resident sign up was approximately 50/50 across sign up prior to the service offer commencing (i.e. those residents paying for the service prior to the start of the scheme) and those residents who did not sign up to the scheme upfront, but then did sign up to the service during the course of the year.
 - All but one council charged the full amount to a resident signing up part way through a scheme year.
 - Uptake was consistent. i.e. numbers of resident sign up did not increase (generally) year on year except in small numbers. Generally, within 6 months of scheme launch resident sign up had peaked.

- All Councils offering a Direct Debit renewal payment did so via a digital offering.

Over the summer of 2019, the Watford council undertook two engagement exercises to gauge people's current perceptions of waste and recycling services. The engagement channels were an online survey (a more traditional approach) and a chatbot survey, through Facebook messenger. This was borne out by the demographics collected through both engagement exercises.

1. ONLINE SURVEY

IN FIELD: 30 July – 10 September 2019
RESPONSES: 398

2. CHATBOT SURVEY (DEPLOYED THROUGH FACEBOOK MESSENGER)

IN FIELD: 27 August – 6 September 2019
RESPONSES: 547

Age profile of respondents

The online survey received the most responses from those in the 35-44 age range (26%), followed by 45 -54 years at 24% whilst the chatbot survey was in the age group 18-30 years.

Sex of respondents

Unexpectedly, there was a very significant difference in the profile of those answering the online survey – with 75% of respondents coming from women. In contrast, the chatbot survey was much more in line with the profile of the Watford population – with 52% male (slightly high) and 48% female (slightly low).

Ethnicity of respondents

Only the online survey asked regarding people's ethnicity. 79% of respondents were White British, which is a higher percentage than in the population with the next highest category being 'White Other'. The EIA, therefore, needs to take into account what is known of the Watford population (see below) in considering ethnicity impacts as these will not necessarily be picked up through the views shared in the survey.

Health of respondents

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15% of respondents declared their day-to-day activities are limited by disability / health related issues. Again, this EIA needs to consider what is known of the Watford population (see below) in considering disability related impacts as these will not necessarily be picked up through the views shared in the survey.

Overall, the council believes that the changes will support an increase in recycling across the borough, which is of benefit to everyone given the acknowledged impact on the environment of items such as single use plastics. The introduction of garden waste subscription is a direct response to the financial challenges the council faces and, by charging those who receive the service, protects it for those who want it but also other service areas which the council is responsible for delivering.

The [Consultation and Engagement Strategy Accessibility Guidance](#) may be helpful when thinking about the potential impact of a policy/service on people with different protected characteristics.

Age – this refers to the protected characteristic of age. A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year olds).

Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?

Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?

For some services this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people.

What evidence do you have for your answer?

Yes

Where people are unable to access the information, via the website or internet due to technological barriers we will support the residents through paper-based communication sent to every household, local media and customer service to provide clear explanations and guidance. Additionally, we will direct them to places such as community groups, libraires or Town and Parish Councils where they can access the information and support. We will consider providing information in various formats such as leaflets, media release to Town and Parish Councils Parish and engaging in outreach activities to reach all age groups effectively

Disability – this refers the protected characteristic of disability. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Yes

Key considerations when considering the potential impact on individuals with disabilities are:

Accessibility of the Service: Assisted collections are available to people who cannot take their bins out themselves and there is no other person living

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<p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>at the household who is able to help. We help to take the bin out for elderly, disabled, infirm or visually impaired persons. To apply for assisted bin collections, residents can visit the HDC website and fill in the application form where possible or contact the operation team to receive the guidance for the process. Additionally, if residents do not require assistance for collection can opt for a smaller wheeled bin.</p> <p>Accessible Communication: Ensure that all information related to the change is communicated in accessible formats such as large print or easy-read formats. Accessible online resources and communication channels will be available, considering the needs of individuals with visual impairments or cognitive disabilities.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment – gender reassignment discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because they are trans*.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p>*although the term gender reassignment and transsexual is in the Equality Act 2010, it is accepted that the preferred term is trans.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership in the workplace; this refers the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership which is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex. Discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because a person is married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>No</p>

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<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity in the workplace (e.g. pregnant or breast-feeding women). Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Race – this refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Communication and Information: We ensure that information about the chargeable green bin collection service is communicated in a culturally sensitive and inclusive manner, addressing potential language barriers and catering to the needs of diverse racial communities. The focus is on promoting equity, fairness, and inclusive service provision for all members of community.</p> <p>Where people are unable to access the application form, via the website or internet, we direct them to places such as community groups or libraires where they can access the internet if applicable. Additionally, customer service can support the residents completing the form and making a secure and payment for the annual fee. (A project to ensure the Council are PCI compliance is currently being scoped)</p>

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<p>Religion and Belief in the workplace - refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Sex - this refers to the protected characteristic of sex which can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Sexual orientation – this relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact on part time/full time employees?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The implementation of a subscription garden waste collection service will reduce our current reliance on short-term agency personnel (which is essential to be able to deliver a non-chargeable service to every household in the district). The normal and expected staff attrition rate, alongside a reduction in agency staff is expected to manage the staffing level to levels required for a subscription service, where only residents who pay for the service receive it.</p> <p>In response to unexpectedly low demand for the subscription garden waste collection service the relocation of both part time/full time HDC employees to other areas of the Operations service that require additional support, would be investigated.</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. Rural isolation</p>	<p>No</p>

Findings

Where potential for adverse impact has been identified (age, disability, race,), additional support has been put in place to address these potential impacts, to reduce any barriers to accessing the resident advice service e.g., working with partners, assisted collection and information available in different formats.

Recommendations

1. For households on lower incomes, the Council will support residents through the Council Tax Support Scheme, that calculates the contribution required based on the benefits they are in receipt of. A review of this scheme in 2023 will ensure the most financial vulnerable residents are offered the greatest level of Council Tax Support award.
2. Residents in our district who need additional information, advice and guidance can contact the Residents Advice and Information team, who take time to assess the person's personal circumstances and work with them to suggest suitable and sustainable changes and routes to small funding pots that can help to achieve their goals. We will continue to encourage residents on lower incomes to contact the Residents Advice and Information team to explore the ways they may be able to reduce their household expenditure and/or apply for funding if the retention of a garden waste collection service is important in their household to maintain positive physical and mental health.
3. In addition, households on lower incomes will be welcome to share bins under their own informal arrangements but only one household will be responsible for the subscription and adherence to the T&Cs of the scheme.
4. The Council will work directly with District Councillors, Town and Parish Councils to co-design the offer of support for low-income households and local communities through incentives as a way to minimise any negative impact of the change on residents.

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5. The implementation of a robust communication strategy to inform residents about the change, utilising various channels such as social media, websites, leaflets, letters will provide clear and concise information about the service, associated costs and secure payment methods.
6. Provide information, advice and guidance through our Customer Services advisers to support residents in understanding the chargeable service (registration process, payment options) and addressing concerns or questions they may have.
7. Continuously monitor the service, collect and analyse the data to assess the effectiveness of the service and identify any necessary adjustments or improvements.