

CHARGING FOR A SECOND GREEN BIN – CALL IN
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report summarises the Environmental Well-Being Scrutiny Panel's deliberations and recommendation following its decision to call in the Cabinet's decision on charging for collecting second green bins.

2. CABINET DECISION

- 2.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 22nd November 2012, approved in principle the introduction of a charge for a second green bin and delegated the timing of the implementation to the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) after consultation with the Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Environment in association with a package of other savings measures to be decided no later than April 2013.

3. CALL IN

- 3.1 Following publication of the Cabinet's decision, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) called it in. This was discussed by the Panel at its meeting on 11th December 2012, which Councillors J D Ablewhite and D M Tysoe as Executive Leader and appropriate Executive Councillor respectively attended.
- 3.2 The reasons given for calling in the decision were that it is "ambiguous" and "unclear" and that a formal assessment should be made of the environmental impacts of the proposal. Furthermore, a list of all the possible savings the Council is proposing to make and how this will be prioritised has been requested.
- 3.3 The Panel has been advised that it is intended to review all the Council's options for making savings and increasing income including the proposal to charge for collecting second green bins later in the year. If no alternatives are identified, the scheme will proceed. However, the Panel is of the view that if a comprehensive exercise is to be undertaken to review the Council's finances, it is premature to make an "in principle" decision on one item.
- 3.4 In response to a question on what other options for savings have been considered, the Panel has been advised that approximately £1m has already been saved and others are being considered. The Council has adopted the Leadership Direction, one of the targets of which is to achieve a balanced budget. To do this, savings in the order of £3.2m will be required by 2017/18. All options, therefore, are being examined. The Executive Leader has given an undertaking that he will keep Members informed of progress in this respect.
- 3.5 The Panel understands the need for savings and accept that the current proposal may need to be implemented. Members are, however, of the view that a judgement cannot be made on charging for collecting second green bins unless they have a comprehensive assessment of all the Council's

options. They have asked the Cabinet to produce a list of all possible savings and to prioritise them. Councillor T V Rogers has indicated that the Economic Well-Being Panel also advocates this approach. In addition, it has been suggested that a list of savings already made is produced to assist the decision making process.

- 3.6 Members have received clarification of a number of operational matters connected with the proposal, including whether churches and villages halls will be charged, if any operational savings will be achieved and when particular bins will be collected. They have suggested a price analysis is required.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Having discussed the decision fully, the Panel has decided to refer it back to Cabinet for further consideration. The Cabinet is recommended to note the report by the Head of Operations attached hereto and to consider the proposal to charge for collecting second green bins during its deliberations on all the Council's options for improving its financial position.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Reports and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th October and 11th December 2012.

Reports and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 8th November 2012.

Reports and Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th October and 22nd November 2012.