

GARDEN WASTE – INCREASE TO STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT

1 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The council operates a subscription-based collection service for garden waste on a fortnightly basis, using reusable sacks which are manually lifted into the vehicle by operatives.
- 1.2 In March 2022, after a period of service disruption due to staff shortages, the fortnightly service was reinstated, and existing customers were permitted to subscribe again for 22-23. On 9th June, the service was re-opened to new customers, and existing customers were also permitted to request additional sacks. As at 17th June, there are 19,664 customers, requiring the collection of 30,440 sacks per fortnight. Customer and sack numbers have been on an upwards trajectory for a number of years (by way of illustration, in 2017/18 there were 14,500 customers) and the forecast is that numbers will reach over 21,000 customers this year. To cope with these increasing customer numbers, an additional collection crew was introduced in 2021.
- 1.3 Collections are now carried out by 4 crews (1 crew consists of a driver and 1 loader). The loader is responsible for lifting and emptying most of the bags into the vehicle, with some assistance provided by the driver. With increasing numbers of sacks for collection, this workload is becoming increasingly difficult. The industry standard for garden waste collections is that two loaders would be included on a garden waste crew.
- 1.4 After a period of service disruption in 21/22, it was not clear how many existing or new customers would subscribe for 22-23. It is now clear that subscriptions are likely to increase again on last year's numbers, and this is putting an increasing strain on the teams. In addition, in April, May and June, the wider service has begun to suffer staff shortages with increased levels of absence and vacancy. Supporting the garden waste teams is important to ensure the service is not at risk of suspension again.
- 1.5 It is therefore proposed that the garden waste crews are each expanded to include an additional loader on each.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The cost for 4 additional loaders is £100k pa or c£75k in 2022-23. The forecast for income from the garden waste service in 22-23 is £1,020k against a budget of £920k. The additional staffing cost will therefore be covered by additional income in 2022/23.
- 2.2 The increased staffing cost and contra income will be added to the base budget going forward, resulting in no reduction in net surplus generated by the service as a result of this decision.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Our ability to continue to provide garden waste collections ensures that the maximum amount of garden waste is recycled, having a positive effect on the council's recycling rate and climate impact.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That an additional 4 loaders posts are added to the establishment to work on the garden waste service.

6 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Steve Davies

Date: 22 June 2022

For further information contact:

Chris Noble
Service Manager – Waste and Transport
023 8028 5389
Chris.noble@nfdc.gov.uk

Manjit Sandhu
Executive Head – Partnership and Operations
023 8028 5479
Manjit.sandhu@hfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

Date on which notice given on this decision: 22 June 2022

Late date for call in: 29 June 2022