

**Agenda Item No:** 14  
**Report To:** Cabinet  
**Date of Meeting:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020



**Report Title:** Fees for replacement bins and increases to garden waste service fees.  
**Report Author & Job Title:** Mark Goodman, Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager  
**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Andrew Buchanan  
**Portfolio Holder for:** Environment and Land Management

**Summary:**

This report provides information and options with respect to provision of fees being applied for replacement of waste and recycle containers (bins). It provides information with respect to garden waste service fees and proposed increases.

Currently only new developments pay for bins. The fees and charges provide for separate purchase of bin types, but a full set is available to new homes at £77. A fee is also applied for multiple unit dwellings for 1100L bulk bins. There is no fee applied for replacement of bins. The annual cost for provision of bins for 2019 – 2020 financial year was £173,372 with cost recovered for new developments at £53,391. Annual budget for provision of bins is currently £145,000. The introduction of the fee is seen as aligning with the need for a commercialised approach in conducting business. It is also seen as a means to reduce false requests from residents who want to obtain additional bins.

We consider that we need to apply fees for all replacement containers with the exception of the garden bin service, and food waste containers. The garden bin service has systems in place that identify a valid customer, so risk of false replacement requesting is low. On the grounds of risk and the issue that this is an optional service, the cost of replacement should be covered within the fees recovered from revenues. If garden customers buy the bin sign up or replacement it becomes their property and we cannot remove it when service is not renewed. We intend recovering bins from residents who do not continue their garden service.

Currently the garden waste service is £37.50 per annum and has an approved increase to £40 per annum next financial year. The cabinet report identifies benchmarking of that service in comparison to authorities in Kent, and the commercial approach of improving and marketing the service with cost options for Members to consider. Our service objective is to significantly increase the number of customers whilst providing value for money service.

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Significantly Affected Wards:** All wards in the Ashford Borough

**Recommendations:** **Cabinet is asked to recommend:-**

- I. **That a fee be applied for supply of any replacement of collection containers excluding garden waste and food waste containers.**
- II. **That incremental increase be applied over three successive financial years for the garden waste collection service.**

**Policy Overview:** The Recycling and Waste Collection Policy and Procedure Statement sets out collection service operations including provision of containers (bins).

**Financial Implications:** Currently the replacement of bins is a budgetary pressure that is increasing. This report seeks to recover the cost of provision of replacement bins outside of the current cross subsidising. This will release finances for other use.

**Legal Implications:** None identified

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

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## Report Title: Fees for replacement bins and increases to garden waste service fees

### Introduction and Background

#### Fees for Replacement Bins

1. Currently only new developments pay for a set of bins with a full set being provided at £77 per set. This includes a grey refuse bin, a green recycle bin, an orange and black food caddy and a silver food caddy for use in the kitchen.
2. New developments or multiple units that require bulk 1100L bins are provided bins according to the number of units and pay for provision of those bins in accordance with the fees set in fees and charges.
3. If a resident reports a missing or damaged bin we provide a new bin without direct cost to the resident.
4. If an owner or management of a multiple unit dwelling requires replacement of a bulk bin, cost of replacement is recovered.
5. Annual budget for provision of bins is currently £145,000. The annual cost for provision of bins for 2019 – 2020 financial year was £173,372. Cost recovered for provision to new developments was £53,391. Total cost of replacement bins was £119,981.
6. The Council only provides additional waste bins to residents in certain circumstances. The requests are evaluated and in accordance with policy are either supported or rejected. Residents can and are likely to be avoiding this check by requesting replacement bins. The collection crews often identify where residents present more than one bin that does not appear on their system, and the bin is retrieved. Staff have attended premises and identified false reports of missing bins. A fee being applied is likely to deter this activity and associated cost impact towards honest ratepayers.
7. Four out of twelve Kent districts are currently applying fees for replacement of bins. The fees applied range between £38 and £50. Table 1 provides comparison for viewing.

Authority	Comment	Residual	Recycle
Dover DC	Charged for all bins with the exception of any bin lost or damaged on collection day.	£50.00	£50.00
Folkestone & Hythe	Charged for all bins with the exception of any bin lost or damaged on collection day.	£50.00	£50.00
Canterbury CC	Charged for all bins with the exception of any bin lost or damaged on collection day.	£46.60	£51.95
Thanet DC	Charged for all bins with the exception of any bin lost or damaged on collection day.	£38.00	£48.00

## Garden waste service fees

8. Currently the garden waste service is £37.50 per annum and has an approved increase to £40 per annum next financial year.
9. The current service provides efficient value for money that provides easy disposal for residents. It saves time in attending the Kent County Council Household Waste and Recycle Centre. It also lowers the carbon footprint of the district by servicing residents in a single pass rather than them attend to disposal individually. The material collected is composted and re-used which is a great outcome for the environment.
10. The following table provides comparison for garden service fees across Kent districts. The average is £44.77. Three boroughs charge £40 including Mid-Kent Partners. The lowest fee at present is Ashford and the Highest at £54 per annum is Canterbury.

Authority	Fees	Other charges
Ashford	£37.50	
Canterbury	£27 for six months	Additional bin £21
Dartford	£38	£47.50 delivery
Dover	£46	£4 per sack
Folkestone & Hythe	£47	£29.95 delivery
Maidstone	£40	
Sevenoaks	£47	£32 additional bins
Swale	£40	
Thanet	£51	£35 delivery
Tonbridge & Malling	£40	£25 additional bins
Tunbridge Wells	£52 per bin	

## Proposal/Current Position

### Fees for replacement bins

11. Currently Ashford Borough Council does not apply a fee for replacement of waste or recycle bins to households.
12. First proposal is that a fee be applied for replacement of bins for households. Options for consideration are;
  - a) Apply £40 replacement fee commencing FY 2021-2022
  - b) A lower fee of £25 for replacement bins to commence October 2020 which recovers the cost of the bin only.
  - c) Continue to cross subsidize the replacement of bins from Council Tax
13. A fee will not apply for bins damaged by the contractor or if the bin falls into the rear of the collection vehicle or is stolen.
14. A Police Report Number will be required for any stolen bin request to be processed further.
15. A fee will not apply towards garden bins.

16. That the fee for supply of a new 1100L bin for multiple unit dwellings also applies should replacement be needed.
17. A fee will not apply for replacement of food waste caddies (Black and Orange containers).

### **Garden waste collection fees**

18. Currently Ashford Borough Council fees for the current financial year for garden waste collection is £37.50. This is set to increase to £40 in the 2021 – 2022 financial year.
19. Second proposal is that garden service fees be increased incrementally in consideration with market expectations and the drive to increase the number of participants.
20. The proposal is that the garden service fee increase by £2.50 a year over the next three financial years to £40 as approved for FY 2021-2022 and to £42.50 for FY 2022-2023, then £45 FY 2023-2024.
21. There is concern that increasing fees at present will impact on the goal to grow the service by an additional 10,000 customers in two years.
22. The next increase to £40 per annum aligns us with our partner authorities in the Mid-Kent Joint Waste Management Contract.

### **Implications and Risk Assessment**

23. The introduction of a replacement bin fee;
  - a) Residents not replace and create more waste or contaminate the recycle stream.
  - b) Residents buy their own which will not “hook up” to the lift on the RCV – only our bins are to be presented.
  - c) That they not replace a bin and place sacks for collection instead (which will not be acceptable).
  - d) May even choose to fly tip the material.
24. All of the above can be managed. We empower crews to follow the practices of rejecting contaminated recycle bins and not collecting side waste. Those actions will push residents to purchase a bin. Fly tipping may be a risk but by experience from other LAs that charge for bins, not an issue. No charge will apply if a bin falls into the collection vehicle. There is likely to be a reduction in false claims of missing bins, therefore relieving pressure on resources and the budget.
25. The incremental rise of the cost for provision of garden waste collection services;
  - a) Our objective is to increase the customer base and increasing the fee may dissuade new customers and those renewing.
  - b) The negative impact on continuing growth of the service if the price is not comparable to other districts.
  - c) The incremental increase will see increase in income generated whilst meeting public expectation of value for money.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

26. The implementation of fees does not impact on any particular equality group in our borough as it applies to all community members that are considered a householder under the Act.

## **Consultation Planned or Undertaken**

27. Consultation with Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder.
28. Marketing Plan to be developed for Garden Waste Collection Services.

## **Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended**

29. Introduction of a fee for replacement containers will reduce pressure on the budget.
30. Introduction of a fee for replacement containers will have a deterrent effect on those falsely obtaining an extra bin.
31. Increasing the fees for garden waste service will likely impact on new sign-up and those choosing to renew.
32. Multiple increases within a financial year will add complexity to the renewal process.
33. The garden service fees need to closely align with our Mid-Kent Joint Waste Partners.

## **Next Steps in Process**

34. Communicate any application of fee changes to Customer Services.
35. Ensure public facing information is clear and available to view online.
36. Ensure increases in fees for garden waste collection service is applied to system.

## **Conclusion**

37. The Cabinet is asked to agree as recommended that a fee be applied for replacement of bins.
  - a) That a fee of £25 be applied from September 2020 onwards.
38. The Cabinet is asked to agree that increases to the garden waste collection service be increased by £2.50 per annum for three successive years.
  - a) FY 2021-2022 - £40.00
  - b) FY 2022 – 2023 - £42.50
  - c) FY 2023 – 2024 - £45.00

## **Portfolio Holder's Views**

39. The introduction of the proposed fee for the replacement of a container is seen as a modest fee. It does take into consideration that collection activities may impact on what happens to a bin. Not introducing a fee for food waste containers is based on the level of wear and tear that occurs towards the caddies and our drive to encourage more participation in food waste recycling. The proposed progressive increases for the garden service fees are also in line with the current benchmarks across Kent. Ashford sees continued growth in this service. We will continue to drive service delivery in what is a good environmental outcome for the community, and is value for money.

## **Contact and Email**

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