

Somerset Waste Board meeting  
 28<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
 Report for decision



**Fees and Charges**

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<b>Forward Plan Reference:</b>	
<b>Summary:</b>	The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for fees and charges applied to waste services for which a charge may be made, for the financial year 2019/2020.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>That the Somerset Waste Board agrees to recommend the proposed charges as set out in Table 1 for introduction in April 2019</b>
<b>Reasons for recommendations:</b>	To continue to align more of the cost of the service to the service user and reduce the burden on the general Council Tax payer.
<b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Annual Business Plan:</b>	This is an annual exercise carried out in the Autumn to enable partners to feed fees and charges into the budgeting process for the following financial year.
<b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b>	The increase in charges will continue to reduce the burden on the general Council Tax payer but continues to provide good value for money to the service user.
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix A to the report.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	There is a risk that price increases in garden waste charges will result in a drop in customers taking up or renewing the service, leading to an income shortfall.

## 1. Background

- 1.1. Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) are empowered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and by regulations to charge for the collection of certain types of household wastes. These include bulky items and household garden wastes. The authorities are also empowered to charge for the provision of waste containers. Waste Disposal Authorities (WDA) are empowered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and by regulation to charge for the disposal of certain wastes. These powers have been delegated to the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) through the Appendix 1 of the Constitution.
- 1.2. In 2016 the board voted to harmonise charges across the County for all the chargeable services included in this report. It is recommended this continues and the proposed charges are again adopted across the County
- 1.3. It is recommended the charge for a replacement bin and of garden and bulky waste collections is increased by 3.5% rounded to the nearest 10p as set out in Table 1 to mitigate against inflationary pressures and to continue to cover the contractual cost of providing the service. It should be noted there is no limit or charge for recycling or food waste containers for household waste in Somerset
- 1.4. Local authorities currently charging their residents to use household waste recycling centres have until 1 April 2020 to make alternative arrangements for such sites. It is recommended that the entry charge for the two such sites in Somerset (Dulverton and Crewkerne Community Recycling Sites) remains at £2 until such time as the board makes a decision on the potential contract extension with Viridor and hence any changes to recycling Sites.
- 1.5. The commodity charges for some materials received at the Recycling Centres have been a relatively recent introduction, commencing in April 2011 for gas bottles, hardcore & tyres and in April 2016 for asbestos & plasterboard. The inflation rate for the Core Services contract is applied annually in arrears and is 3.61% for the purposes of this price review. It is recommended these charges continue to be raised in line with inflation, as set out in Table 1 rounded to the nearest 10p. The fly tipping impact of charging for non-household items at the recycling sites remains low, despite the year on year increase in these fees, we saw a decrease in the construction, demolition & excavation fly tipping category in 2017/18, down 6% on the previous year. The proposed charge increase for 2019/20 is not expected to alter this trend.
- 1.6. The 2018/19 Business Plan set out that a review of fees and charges should be undertaken and brought back to the board. Work is underway on this, but this work cannot be concluded until:
  - a) we have concluded the collection contract procurement that is currently underway – as the proposals from bidders may change the costs and principles underpinning a number of charged items. For example we may wish to move to pro-rata garden waste charging (i.e. you only pay for the part of the year you join for), we may need to review the garden sack service, and the approach to bulky waste collections may change.Although no decision has yet been made by Central Government there is the prospect that our current charging regime at Recycling Centres will be altered to change what materials can be charged for (so called 'DIY waste' e.g. soil and

hardcore). This has been noted and highlighted in our risk register. Clarity is expected from Central Government in the Resources and Waste Strategy due to be published this Autumn.

## **2. Options Considered and reasons for rejecting them**

- 2.1. The option to keep prices the same was considered but this was rejected to allow for inflationary increase in contract costs and to continue to allocate the majority of the cost to the service user.

## **3. Consultations undertaken**

- 3.1. Strategic Management Group (15 August 2018 and 11 September 2018)

## **4. Implications**

- 4.1. If the charges for these services are not increased the costs may require subsidy from other areas of partner expenditure.
- 4.2. The level at which charges are set provides incentives to encourage customers to reduce waste or use alternative options that are environmentally or socially beneficial (for example, by home composting garden waste or by using furniture reuse services for some bulky items).

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 That the Somerset Waste Board agrees to recommend the proposed charges as set out in Table 1 for introduction in April 2019

## Appendix A

<b>Impact Assessment Form and Action Table</b>			
(Expand the boxes as appropriate, please see guidance to assist with completion)			
<b>Why are you completing the Impact Assessment?</b>			
Proposed New Policy or Service	Change to Policy or Service	MTFP or Paper	Service Review or SCC Change Programme
	X		
What are you completing the Impact Assessment on (which policy, service, MTFP reference, cluster etc)?		Somerset Waste Partnership Fees and Charges 2018/19	
<b>Section 1 – Description</b> of what is being impact assessed			
Proposed changes to fees and charges as shown in table 1 for 2019 – 2020.			
<b>Section 2A – People or communities that are targeted or could be affected</b> (for Equalities - taking particular note of the Protected Characteristic listed in action table)			
Residential population of Somerset			
<b>Section 2B – People that the policy or service is delivered by</b>			
Somerset Waste Partnership, Kier (MG) and Viridor			
<b>Section 3 – Evidence and data</b> used for the assessment (Attach documents where appropriate)			
Somerset Waste Partnership “Proposed Scale of Fees and Charges 2018/19” paper.			
<b>Section 4 – Conclusions</b> drawn about the impact of the proposed change or new service/policy (Please use prompt sheet for help with what to consider):			
<b>Key issues to be fed into relevant Action Table</b>			
<b>Equality</b>			
<p>The impact of the recommended schedule of charges in the 2019/20 period will be limited.</p> <p>Garden Waste: SWP recommend Garden Waste charges are set at £56.93 per annum and £106.81 for two year subscription for a wheeled bin service and £28.36 for 10 sacks. There remain a number of options for dealing with garden waste including home composting or taking to one of the recycling centres for processing. No impacts have been identified as a result of adoption of these charges.</p> <p>Bulky Waste: SWP recommend Bulky Waste charges are set at £44.30 for up to 3 items and £12.32 for each subsequent item up to a maximum of five. There remain a number of options for Somerset residents to dispose of bulky items which include using Recycling Centres. No impacts have been identified as a result of adoption of these charges.</p> <p>Charges at Recycling Sites are for material which is not classed as household waste and as such is a purely commercial transaction however we currently have an</p>			

arrangement in place to restrict any unexpected or gratuitous price rises by tying these to annual inflation applied one year in arrears (RPI).

In general increases in charges may have a disproportionate impact on the post retirement age group; those on low incomes; people with mobility impairments, or people with sensory impairments that may impact on their mobility. We recommend we continue to promote free and sustainable alternative disposal routes; home composting etc. and, as an alternative to purchasing a replacement refuse bin, allowing use of refuse sacks in appropriate circumstances.

People living in rural areas may be disproportionately impacted by the increase in charges, as might people with limited mobility and low income who would find carrying sacks difficult and paying for a replacement bin an unreasonable cost.

SWP focus on minimising the waste produced in Somerset and although in general we would expect all service rules and guidelines to be followed we realise over such a diverse and large area a one size fits all system may not be appropriate in all circumstances. We have a small team of experienced officers who will provide further guidance and are empowered to seek and provide practical solutions to customers with exceptional circumstances.

### **Health and Safety**

Should residents decline replacement wheeled bins as a result of a charge or the property they live in is not suitable for a bin they will have the option to place refuse out in sacks instead. The vast majority of bins are provided free of charge and in general most properties can accommodate a bin and sack collections account for a minority of the overall collections. Although this minority creates a greater requirement for manual lifting by collection crews. Kier (MG) advice this increased requirement is acceptable and the increased risk is marginal but requires ongoing monitoring.

### **Sustainability**

The fly tipping impact of charging for non-household items at the recycling sites remains low, despite the year on year increase in these fees, we saw a decrease in the construction, demolition & excavation fly tipping category in 2017/18, down 6% on the previous year. The proposed charge increase for 2019/20 is not expected to alter this trend. Based on experience we do not anticipate a significant change to take up of services. Therefore there are no identified sustainability issues.

### **Community Safety**

No identified impact on public safety as a result of these changes.

### **Privacy**

Personal data relating to uptake of these services will continue to be held on secure systems.

### **Business Risk**

Status: Green.

- There is a slight risk that increased charges will lead to a lower take up rate, but experience to date does not suggest this will be the case.
- There is a risk that the overall cost of the collection services to the general taxpayer will rise if the price to the customer does not keep pace with the inflationary increase in the contractual cost.

**Section 5** – After consideration please state your final recommendations based on the findings from the impact assessment. Also include any examples of good practice and positive steps taken.

The Equalities Impact Assessment process shows that there are some sections of the population who may be impacted by the changes more than others. However there are strong mitigating factors in each case and therefore the impact is marginal and is unlikely to be prejudicial to their access to waste services in Somerset.

**Section 6** – How will the assessment, consultation and outcomes be published and communicated? E.g. reflected in final strategy, published.

This assessment will be briefed to the Somerset Waste Board meeting of 28th Sept 2018. It will then be reviewed following any amendments to the proposal required by the Board. It will then be published on the Somerset County Council web site.

<b>Completed by:</b>	Colin Mercer
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed off by:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Compliance sign off</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by: (officer name)</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	