

<i>REPORT TO:</i>	Scrutiny Commission
<i>SUBJECT:</i>	Review of the Introduction of Charges for Bulky Waste Collections
<i>LEAD OFFICER:</i>	Matthew Bradford – Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
<i>CABINET LEAD MEMBER:</i>	Cllr Leigh Harper-Davies - Cabinet Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities
<i>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</i>	Request from the Scrutiny Commission
<i>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE</i>	To consider the matters contained within the report.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Charges for bulky waste collections were introduced in October 2019 (Cabinet approval – July 2019).

1.2. A Cabinet paper in June 2020 reviewed the implementation phase of these charges during the first 5 months.

1.3. The charge for a bulky waste collection is £20 for up to 3 items.

## 2. PURPOSE

2.1. To further review the risks and benefits from the introduction of Bulky Waste collection charges 12 months after their implementation.

2.2. To discuss the impact COVID 19 had in this service, along with the mitigation measures.

## 3. Risk management and mitigation measures

In the original report there were three identified areas of risk. This section will provide information on how each of them was mitigated.

### 3.1. Potential increase in fly-tipping:

A comparison of the same 12 months (October-September) in the immediate years before and after the introduction of the charges showed an overall increase (10%) in the number of incidents (900 compared to 988). However, this increase was mainly identified in items not collected as part of the bulky waste service, such as garden waste and black bags of household waste.

In categories included in the bulky waste collections, like white goods and electrical items, a small decline was found in the number of reported incidents in 2019/20 (82 compared to 79).

### *3.2. Managing increased demand leading up to the introduction of charges:*

This risk was adequately managed in cooperation with the Council's collections contractor. Additional resources were deployed where necessary. No issues or complaints were received as a result.

### *3.3. Customer satisfaction:*

Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out by an independent body as part of the Environmental Services Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). One of the questions is focused to satisfaction from bulky waste collections. It was found that the annual average score in the surveys carried out the year before the introduction of the charges was 92.9% compared to the one carried out in November 2020 that was 84.4%. This is an area that we will keep looking into. It is worth clarifying that any dissatisfaction was associated with the introduction of charges and not the service standard.

### *3.4. Equality and Diversity*

The Council continues to assess requests for exceptional hardship on a case by case basis. Since the introduction of the charges 70 applications for the charges to be waived have been received and in 22 cases this has been granted.

## 4. Benefit realisation

### *4.1. Less waste sent to landfill*

After analysing the collected tonnages for the same period (October – September) for the year before and after the introduction of the charges, it was found that there was an overall increase of approximately 7%. This is in line with the 10% increase in volume that has been identified as a result of COVID 19 and is related with people spending more time at home and thus generating more household waste. This is an area that can be revisited once the numbers normalise and there is a like for like comparison.

### *4.2. Contract compliance:*

As stated in the original report, the existing Environmental Services contract is based on 12,000 collections per year. The reduction in the number of requests ensures that the Council complies with this figure and diminishes the risk of incurring any extra charges in the form of contract variation.

#### 4.3. Income generation:

The income generated from the introduction of these charges will allow the Council to offset part of the costs for subsidising this service as part of the Environmental Services contract. The first full year generated more than £135,000. This figure cannot be used for any future forecasting purposes as it was heavily skewed by the prolonged closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) during the spring and part of the summer of 2020. The Council also had to suspend this service for a few weeks during March to ensure resources were prioritised towards the most critical collection of refuse and recycling across the Borough.

#### 5. The COVID 19 factor

5.1. As already mentioned, the pandemic has had an impact on this service. The closure of the HWRCs for 3 months might have generated some additional interest as residents did not have the option to dispose these items by themselves. At the same time the suspension of the service by the Council might have had a negative impact over a short period of time.

5.2. Continuous monitoring of the aforementioned, as well as any emerging, factors would allow the Council to amend the service in order to meet residents' requirements.

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Officer(s) to contact: Matthew Bradford  
Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces  
01509 634 695  
[Matthew.Bradford@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.Bradford@charnwood.gov.uk)