



PRCC.08 11/12

Prosperous Communities  
Committee

20 July 2011

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**Subject: The review of options for the collection of green garden waste.**

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

In an endeavour to reduce expenditure Members are being asked to consider reducing the green garden waste collection service offered to residents by ceasing the collection of waste during the four winter months November to February, In addition further savings can be generated by reviewing the collection rounds and introducing the collection of garden waste to approximately 5000 properties on Saturdays. Members are being asked to approve the recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**It is recommended that:-**

1. the proposal to cease the collection of green garden waste for the four winter months of November to February inclusive and approve the collection of green garden waste on Saturdays from approximately 5000 properties be adopted.
2. Members consider the option on whether to provide a service of collecting Christmas trees following Christmas.

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The Environmental Protection Act places responsibilities on Councils in relation to waste collection.

### **Financial:**

There are significant savings to be achieved by reviewing the waste collection rounds and these savings can be increased by changing the day that some properties have their garden waste collection service and also by reducing the service over the winter period. The recommended option could achieve a gross saving of £168,000 per full year. There will be some loss of income that may arise from the sale of second green bins which would offset some of the savings. There would be some set up costs which would offset the year one savings.

### **Staffing:**

Reducing the numbers of green waste collections in a year will mean that less staffing resources will need to be deployed on this work during the winter months. Consultation will take place with staff on this, however there will be no redundancies as a result of the proposals.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

An equalities impact assessment is attached to the report as appendix 1. This impact assessment is to be reviewed by a team of Service Managers on 18 July and any amendments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

**Risk Assessment:**

There are risks with reducing the green waste service as there may be some adverse reaction from the community that value the winter collection service. There will also be a reduction in the amount of green waste that is recycled. Changing the day for green waste collection to a different collection day to other collections for approximately 5000 properties will require publicity and information to reduce the risk of customers presenting bins on the “wrong” day. The risks related to the service options are referred to in the options section in the report.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

Reducing the numbers of collections will reduce the CO2 emissions from the fleet. There is a risk that some people may choose to take green waste to a household waste centre in their own vehicle which may offset the CO2 reductions. If more garden waste were included in the landfill waste then this may increase Methane emissions.

**Background**

1. In 2009 the refuse and recycling service was amended and the triple bin scheme was introduced. The collection of household waste and dry recyclables on alternate weeks was introduced and a free collection of green garden waste was also introduced on the same day as the mixed dry recyclables.
2. The free green waste collection service replaced a two weekly charged service and a free garden waste for residents over 65. For four months during the winter the service level reduces to monthly. Residents still have the option to pay for additional bins if they wish.
3. At the time of the scheme introduction a decision was made to not significantly alter the rounds to minimise the impact on residents who needed to get used to the revised collection service.
4. The scheme was well accepted by residents, satisfaction with the service remains high. In the last Citizens Panel Survey (May 2011) 91% of those who responded said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the refuse and recycling service. Overall, the scheme has met the objective of the Lincolnshire Waste Strategy target of recycling 55% of all household waste by 2015. The outturn for 2010/11 was 56%.
5. Evaluations have taken place of the waste rounds to determine if there is scope to reduce the use of larger vehicles on rural rounds. The study showed that a more economic service can be provided by introducing

some smaller four wheel vehicles to the fleet and staff them with two person crews. This round efficiency could lead in itself to annual savings of around £78k. There is also scope to make further efficiency savings of £26K by changing the green waste collection day to a different day to other bin collections for approximately 5000 properties on the rural rounds. Detailed rounds are now being developed and the collection crews will be fully consulted.

6. Whilst reviewing the rounds and following two winters of the garden waste service since the triple bin scheme was introduced in Sept 2009, it is considered opportune to review the green garden waste service and consider alternative options especially in light of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Over the period November through to March the tonnage of garden waste collected reduces as this is not the plant growth season. The tonnages collected are especially low in December, January and February, as shown in the table below.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2009/10						1296	917	766	251	113	221	497
2010/11	1259	1382	1551	1102	1100	1252	1,141	747	0	300	326	621

### Customer Consultation

7. In a Citizens Panel survey in the Autumn of 2010, 78% of respondents supported the idea of reduction of green waste collections in the winter.
8. As part of the budget challenge exercise in December 2010 residents attending the workshops were asked to consider options on reducing the level of the green garden waste collection service, 54% supported the option to cease collecting for the winter months whilst 42% supported the option of moving to three weekly collections
9. At the beginning of May 2011 a further survey was sent to the citizen's panel. They were asked to consider a number of options. The survey shows that slightly over 54% supported a 4 month close down and even more - 60% - a 3 month close down. A significant majority 83% were in agreement with a different day for green waste collections to other waste collections to deliver a saving of £26K. There was very limited support for the option of collecting green garden waste every three weeks all year round.
10. Overall, 55.1% of those consulted said they would prefer a shut down period of December to March whilst 53.4% said they would prefer November to February.

## Options

11. A number of options have been developed which are set out in the table below:

Option	Collection day change different day for green waste to other  Value £26k pa	4 month shut down over winter Value £64k pa ( 3 month shut down only would save £29K)	3 weekly collection  Value £94K pa	Annual saving £ including the £78 pa round efficiency ( figures in brackets are for a 3month winter close down)	Ranking of options based on -Loss of service, -disruption to customers -Impact on landfill
1	no	Yes	no	142 ( or 107)	2
2	yes	No	no	104	1
3	yes	Yes	no	168 (or 133)	3
4	no	No	yes	172	4
5	no	Yes	yes	260 (or 225)	6
6	yes	No	yes	230	5
7	yes	Yes	yes	301 (266)	7

There is a further option of reverting back to the service that was originally provided i.e. a fully charged garden waste collection service. It is felt that at the moment this should not be pursued as the alternate weekly black bin collection service was introduced in the last couple of years on the basis of the provision of a free garden waste collection service. A fully charged service would lead to some reduction in recycling performance due to some households not being willing to pay, it is expected that there would be opposition from the community to this and consultation has not been done on this option.

There are set up costs associated with each of the service options. These set up costs would reduce the year 1 (current year) savings.

The risks relating to each of the options are detailed below:-

	Risks
1	Residents collection days may change. Loss of income from second green bins as a result of fewer collections in the year. Reduction in recycling rate by approximately 3%. Reduction in satisfaction rate as some residents over none collection in winter Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.

2	<p>More confusing for residents with differing collection days. This would be limited to approximately 5000 properties. Likely to have greater numbers of missed collections with residents failing to put bins out on correct days.</p>
3	<p>Residents collection days may change. Loss of income from second greens as a result of fewer collections in the year. Reduction in recycling rate by approximately 3%. Reduction in satisfaction rate as some residents over non collection in winter. More confusing for residents with differing collection days. Likely increase in number of missed collections with residents putting out bins on wrong day. Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.</p>
4	<p>Residents collection days may change. Recycling rates likely to reduce as residents find alternative methods to dispose of garden waste. Significant risk of residents not having sufficient bin capacity during peak growing season. Increased risk of smell from bins in warm weather. Risk of increased smells at the green waste composting sites. Loss of income from second green bins although this may well be compensated by further residents paying for a second bin. Reduction in satisfaction rates from residents. Some criticism from residents as a result of increasing the collections during the winter months when the service is least required. Potential increase in fly tipping. Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.</p>
5	<p>Residents collection days may change. Recycling rates likely to reduce as residents find alternative methods to dispose of garden waste. Significant risk of residents not having sufficient bin capacity during peak growing season. Increased risk of smell from bins in warm weather. Risk of increased smells at the green waste composting sites. Loss of income from second green bins although this may well be compensated by further residents paying for a second bin. Reduction in satisfaction rates from residents. Potential increase in fly tipping. Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.</p>
6	<p>Residents collection days may change. Significant confusion by residents in keeping a check of collection days. Potential increase in number of missed bins. Recycling rates likely to reduce as residents find alternative methods to</p>

	<p>dispose of garden waste.  Significant risk of residents not having sufficient bin capacity during peak growing season.  Increased risk of smell from bins in warm weather.  Risk of increased smells at the green waste composting sites.  Loss of income from second green bins although this may well be compensated by further residents paying for a second bin.  Reduction in satisfaction rates from residents.  Some criticism from residents as a result of increasing the collections during the winter months when the service is least required.  Potential increase in fly tipping.  Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.</p>
7	<p>Residents collection days may change.  Significant confusion by residents in keeping a check of collection days.  Potential increase in number of missed bins.  Recycling rates likely to reduce as residents find alternative methods to dispose of garden waste.  Significant risk of residents not having sufficient bin capacity during peak growing season.  Increased risk of smell from bins in warm weather.  Risk of increased smells at the green waste composting sites.  Loss of income from second green bins although this may well be compensated by further residents paying for a second bin.  Reduction in satisfaction rates from residents.  Potential increase in fly tipping  Potential for an increased weight of waste being taken to landfill as a result of residents putting green garden waste into the household waste bin.</p>

12. It should be noted that Lincolnshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority have stated that if any changes seriously affect the tonnage of waste going to landfill and as a result their landfill costs increase, they would want the District Council to recompense the additional charge.

13. One risk that affects all options and potentially could lead to dissatisfaction is as a result of not collecting green waste during winter residents would not have the ability to dispose of their Christmas trees. It is therefore proposed that on the first weekend following the 6th January, that in conjunction with Parish Councils, suitable collection points be established and that the Council undertakes to collect the trees for recycling. The cost of providing such a service would be £700

**Recommended Option**

14. The recommended option is to cease collection for the four month period of November to February inclusive with green garden waste

being collected on Saturdays for a small number of properties. It is felt that this option provides the right balance between the need to continue to provide customer service whilst generating a significant saving to the revenue budget.

15. It is proposed that the winter shutdown should be carried out at the beginning of November and that to minimise implementation costs the round changes would be introduced two weeks after the shut down of the green garden waste collection.
16. Whilst a slightly greater percentage of the Citizens Panel showed a preference for a shut down in December to March it was felt that this small percentage would not override the additional difficulties of trying to implement the changes around Christmas time and in the potentially worse weather of December and January.
17. A further operational proposal is to rearrange the collection rounds so that all the crews are working on adjacent blocks of work, collecting the same materials, so that they can provide mutual support to each other in the event of breakdown, traffic flow problems or excess weight requiring unanticipated runs to disposal points. To achieve this it is likely that some collections will have to change so that green and black bins are collected on the same day whilst others will continue with green and blue bins collected on the same day. Collection details will be provided to each household to make this clear. This proposal is still under consideration and Lincolnshire County Council, the waste disposal authority are being consulted.

### **Communications**

18. A detailed communications plan has been prepared however the main elements include.
  - “Your refuse day is changing” leaflet to all affected residents.
  - A leaflet advising of the winter shutdown and the restart date.
  - Advertising panels on four refuse vehicles advising residents of the changes.
  - Twitter, Facebook and email alert messages to all residents who subscribe,
  - Information on the Councils web site
  - Press and radio coverage
  - Newsletters to Parish Councils and in articles in Parish Magazines.
  - Additional advisors working within Customer Services during the change over period.
  - Advisors working in the community

### **Vehicles**

19. One of the main aspects of the round review is that two smaller, four wheeled refuse vehicles will replace two larger six wheel vehicles so



that they can more readily access the more rural properties. These vehicles will be staffed by a driver and one loader rather than the usual driver and two loaders.

20. This change will require the early termination of leases on two 26 tonne freighters and the leasing of two 18 tonne vehicles.

### **Staffing**

21. It is proposed that during the eight summer months the workforce will be enhanced by staff employed on temporary contracts. Over the last 12 months, rather than fill vacancies as they have arisen agency staff have been used to provide cover. This means that as a result of the proposed changes there will be no redundancies.
22. Consultation with the staff involved is being carried out. The collection crews will be very much involved in the fine tuning of the rounds. They will also be used in distributing communications to the residents as this will aid their round familiarisation.

### **Second Green Bins**

23. There are currently 950 household who subscribe to a second green bin. The current charge is £27.90, this will be for 22 collections in this financial year. A sixteen week shutdown would mean collections would reduce to 18 per year.
24. The pro-rata charge for the 18 week service will be £22.83 for any new invoices and in addition where the invoice renewal date is after 1<sup>st</sup> November that customers are credited with the months they do not receive the service up to £5.07 against their next invoice. These points will be raised in a report to the Policy and Resources Committee.
25. In establishing fees and charges for 2012/13 financial year it is suggested that the on-going charge reflects the reduction in service level.
26. There will be a loss of income as a result of the proposed changes. There are currently approximately 950 residents paying for additional bins. If this reduces by 10% due to dissatisfaction the loss would be £2,700 pa. Additionally the other 90% will pay 18% less due to reduced collections meaning £4,300 less income, total reduction of income £7,000.

### **Budget Implications**

27. As a result of these proposals there will be ongoing revenue savings of £168k per annum less the estimated impact from reduced second green bin charges of £7k resulting in a net saving of £161k

28. Should the option of providing for the collection of Christmas trees the saving would reduce to £160k

29. This would reduce to £156k in 2012/13 as a result of credits on second green bin charges.

30. There are one off implementation costs as set out in the table below which be incurred in the current financial year which will off-set the current year savings as follows:-

	<b>Saving</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
<b>The saving from budget as a result of introducing the revised scheme in November 2011.</b>	<b>£107,000</b>	
Communications		£16k
Additional resources in re-organising the rounds and changing collection days where required.		£8k
Additional staffing in customer services and resident advisors during the implementation period.		£12k
Additional staff and vehicle resources dealing with missed bins post implementation.		£8k
Lease termination costs on refuse vehicles.		£18k plus £18k hire of small freighters during lead time for delivery of new vehicles
Collection of Christmas trees		£1k
Estimated loss of income from second green bins		£4k
IT support and Computer software		£13k
<b>Total one off implementation costs.</b>		<b>£98k</b>
<b>Overall net saving in 2011/12</b>	<b>£9K</b>	

### **Recommendation**

31. Members are asked to approve the proposal to cease the collection of green garden waste for the four winter months of November to February inclusive and approve the collection of green garden waste on Saturdays from approximately 5000 properties.

32. Members are also asked to consider whether they wish to provide a collection of Christmas trees from collection points identified by Parish Councils.