

29th August 2024

**Report of the Chair of the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny
Committee**

**Matters referred to Cabinet in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny
Procedure Rules**

Scrutiny Committee	Title of Matter referred	Date of Scrutiny meeting
Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny (IS&G)	Annual Garden Waste Subscription Charge	22 nd August 2024

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To notify Cabinet of the report and recommendations from the Annual Garden Waste Subscription charge item that were discussed at the meeting of the IS&G Scrutiny Committee on the 13th August 2024.

Recommendations

Following consideration of the item the Committee supported the following recommendations for Cabinet to agree:

1. Approve the increase of the annual subscription fee to £41 effective 1st January 2025, with the sign-up window open in October.

*(moved by Councillor M Couchman and seconded by
Councillor N Statham)*

Back Ground Information

At the meeting of IS&G Scrutiny on the 7th August 2024 the committee received the report of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Sustainability, Recycling and Waste to seek ISAG consideration and support of the approval to Cabinet to increase the garden waste subscription fees for 2024/25

The report included the recommendations for the Committee to

- 1. Approve the increase of the annual subscription fee to £41 effective 1st October 2024.**
- 2. Agree that each year, under delegated powers, the Cabinet Member responsible for waste services will approve the price increase in consultation**

with the Executive Director Organisation and the council's Section 151 officer. Furthermore, that variations in pricing can be agreed through the same delegation to support promotions (for example to encourage take-up of direct debits), provided these can be funded from within the service without placing additional pressure on the MTFs.

3. Approve the amendments set out in the report which include basing the coming year's annual price increase on June's CPI figures that are released by the Office for National Statistics in July, and that the final subscription price will be rounded up or down to the nearest 50 pence

At the meeting the Committee asked questions around; whether they had looked at reducing the number of collections; the risk if there was a drop in service users; clarification on CPI and direct debit payments.

The Committee asked for a more detailed breakdown of costs in order to consider this matter and moved the following recommendations to Cabinet –

1. Ask Cabinet to defer the increase until a full breakdown of costs has been provided and discussed at the next Infrastructure, Safety & Growth Committee at its 22nd August meeting and then make a decision at the next Cabinet meeting; and

2. Agreed that each year, under delegated powers, the Cabinet member responsible for waste services will approve the price increase in consultation with the Executive Director Organisation and the Council's S151 Officer before being ratified by Cabinet. Furthermore, that the variations in pricing can be agreed through the same delegation to support promotions (for example to encourage take-up of direct debits), provided these can be funded from within the service without placing additional pressure on the MTFs

(Moved by Councillor B Price and seconded by Councillor L Clarke)

The Chair of the Committee attended Cabinet on the 8th August and presented these recommendations where they were agreed.

Executive Summary

At the meeting of the Committee the Executive Director Organisation attended to present the report of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Sustainability, Recycling and Waste to provide IS&G Scrutiny with the updated information regarding the rationale to substantiate the increase in garden waste subscription. The original report presented to Scrutiny on the 7th August had been updated and is contained herewith. This report would be subject to IS&G scrutiny approval be presented to Cabinet on the 29th August. The Operations Manager for the Joint Waste Service was also in attendance.

The Executive Director highlighted the information in the report that address the Committee's concerns from the previous meeting.

The Committee asked for further clarifications around the following –

1. On appendix 5 (Pg 85) were the figures for 2018/19 actual or budget, and why were there only figures for this period and 24/25?
It was confirmed that these were budget, and that Officers had been asked to show the variance between when the service started and now.
2. Does the £20,000 figure for a 30% downturn consider reduction in costs such as transport or is this just the subscriptions?
Officers confirmed that if the Council lost £20,000 due to a reduction in subscriptions, whilst the cost depletion would go down it would not go down by £20,000.
The Operations Manager (Joint Waste Service) added that from experience, they have never known a loss of 30% from introducing a chargeable service and gave the example of when Lichfield put the price up by £4.00 in one year they only lost a minute amount of subscribers.
3. Clarification around why there are no bank charges showing for 18/19 and this increased to £10,000 for 24/25?
Tamworth's accountant has confirmed that these figures have been submitted by the Lichfield accountant and they were reported at 0, they are unsure if at these times the fees were directly attributed to the service, but the figures are correct now.

Following the Officers responses the recommendation to Cabinet from within the report was carried. There were five votes in favour, one against and two abstentions.

Options Considered

None.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, and the Executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. The agenda for Executive meetings shall include a standing item entitled 'Matters Referred to the Cabinet In Accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules'. The reports of overview and scrutiny committees and sub-committees referred to the Executive shall be included at this point in the agenda (unless they have been considered in the context of the Executive's deliberations on a substantive item on the agenda) within one calendar month of the overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee completing its report/recommendations.
3. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main Executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
4. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months from receiving the report or recommendations.

5. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
6. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the Executive Response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising

Appendix

1. Report pack for IS&G Scrutiny on the 7th August 2024
2. Minutes of the Meeting of the 7th August
3. Report pack for IS&G Scrutiny on the 22nd August 2024

Report Author

Councillor Marion Couchman
Chair of Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny