



Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee – 30th September 2024

Questions received from a member of the public and Response by the Cabinet member for Climate Change and Environment.

1) How has the mandate for this charge been obtained?

National legislation places a statutory duty on the Council to collect garden waste from households. The legislation also allows the Council to charge for this service and a significant majority of Councils have already done this.

On a local level, Cabinet has considered this against a reduction in central Government funding of £6.4 million since 2011/12. This, combined with the annual cost of the service (£1.1 million), advice from our external auditors and the need to explore options for further savings led to the principle of charging being approved for those that wish to opt-in to the service.

2) How has this proposed charge been made known to the residents of East Staffordshire, as I only became aware of it through a general election campaign leaflet?

The principle of introducing a subscription based service was considered at a public meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 20 May 2024. You may find the relevant report (Item 7) at the following link [Cabinet 20th May 2024 | East Staffordshire Borough Council \(eaststaffsbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/cabinet/20th-May-2024) . The pre-election period, running up to July 4, 2024, places certain restrictions on what can and can't be promoted to the public. However, following the general election, the Council commenced a public consultation on the charging rates and any concessions will be set out and put into the public domain.

3) How are the costs for collection currently funded?

The cost of collection is funded through the Councils revenue budget but at a cost of £1.1m each year to the council.

4) If the answer to 2 is through the council tax, does that mean there will be a corresponding reduction in the council tax?

It is important to share some context around the Councils finances here. The council has seen unprecedented reductions of £6.4m or 78% in its core funding from central government since austerity measures were introduced in 2011/12. Council tax income accounts for approximately half of the income the Council generates and it therefore can't be considered to cover all the costs the Council incurs in delivering services. It should also be confirmed that nearly 70% of local authorities in England have already implemented a subscription based service, with annual charges ranging from £25 to over £90 per bin.

5) What are we supposed to do with the green waste in the winter period when it is intended not to collect from the households?

We are proposing a short break in collections in December/January when the demand for the service is extremely low. During these weeks, our collection tonnages fall to approximately 10% of those in the peak growing season. Furthermore, the recent public consultation highlighted only 42% of respondents use the service each collection week, and 45% use it during the growing season only. Should households produce garden waste, we would recommend the use of home composting or the HWRC.