

7 June 2023

Report of

**Portfolio Holder for
Neighbourhoods and Waste**

Author

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Title

Garden Waste Collection Service

Wards affected

All Wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At Full Council in February 2023, important budget savings and income generating schemes to be implemented in this financial year were approved to meet an unprecedented budget gap, limited Government support and £10m of extra costs. One such approved scheme was the introduction of a new paid for Garden Waste Collection Service.
- 1.2 This report provides proposed details of the new paid for Garden Waste Collection Service which will be launched across Colchester City Council in mid-January 2024. This new service will reflect wider good practice, bringing environmental and other benefits, include the health of staff, at a cost similar to that of other local authorities.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the arrangements for the opt-in paid for Garden Waste service which will replace the existing service with effect from January 2024.
- 2.2 To approve the capital funding and procurement of replacement vehicles as detailed in the report.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Waste to adjust the scheme as may be needed, taking account of early take up and experience, to include discounts and promotions.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To deliver the budget income previously approved by Full Council and in doing so ensure a balanced budget for 2023/2024.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Several alternative budget savings were considered through the formation of the budget in 2022/2023. To deliver this scale of saving, alternative options such as closing leisure centres would be required. Any alternative option would need to deliver an equivalent budget saving of £600K. One related alternative would be to cease the existing free garden waste collection service, dispose of vehicles and redeploy or make staff redundancies.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Like all local authorities, Colchester City Council is facing significant financial challenges. Faced with a significant budget deficit, and £10m of extra costs, the council has agreed to a raft of savings and income generation measures to balance its books.
- 5.2 In this context a range of budget options for saving and income generation were approved by Full Council in February 2023. One of these decisions was to introduce a charge for garden waste collections. Garden waste collection is a discretionary service and current legislation enables councils to apply a charge. In doing so, the council can protect essential services. This will also ensure only those who use the service pay for it.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Council provides an 'opt in' paid for subscription service for the collection of garden waste, similar to those provided by most (reportedly 65%) UK local authorities (see Appendix A).

Options for households

- 5.4 With the implementation of the new service householders will have the following choices:
- Opt into the new garden waste collection service.
 - Opt into the new garden waste collection service with a Neighbour(s).
 - Compost at home with a subsidised composter.
 - Set up a community composting scheme.
 - Take waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
 - Pay to dispose of the garden waste privately, through a licensed waste carrier.
- 5.5 *Home composting* is the most desirable option from both an environmental and a financial point of view as the material is in effect recycled where it is produced thereby avoiding any collection and disposal costs. The Council has joined with Love Essex and getcomposting.com to be able to offer Colchester residents access to specially priced environmental products, where [a garden composter is less than half-price](#). The products are made from 100% recycled plastic, including plastics collected by Councils, as well as industrial waste such as old gas pipes, old wheeled bins and car bumpers.
- 5.6 *Setting up a community composting scheme.* There are currently no known community composting schemes in Colchester, however it is proposed that a grant fund could be developed, to create opportunities for groups to set up a community composting scheme. There are national networks that could be contacted to support those interested in setting up a local community compost site.
- 5.7 Essex County Council (ECC) have conducted composting workshops in the past, delivering them face to face in Colchester. Officers are working with ECC to see if this can continue and will be jointly promoted.
- 5.8 ECC already offer a [free online compost training course](#) provided by Garden Organic. The course has five modules that can be selected, from basics to in depth knowledge, including videos and quizzes. ECC also have a series of [videos](#) online too.
- 5.9 Garden waste can be taken free of charge to the *Recycling Centres for Household Waste* operated by ECC.

Proposal – Paid for Garden Waste service

5.10 The following outlines the current proposal:

- A wheeled bin only service will be provided, where assisted collections will continue to be provided.
- Fortnightly collections will continue, with a pause of two weeks (i.e., one collection cycle) each Christmas to enable staff and vehicles to be redeployed on higher priority and volume routes.
- It will launch mid-January 2024 after the Christmas 2023 pause.
- Households will be issued with a sticker each year to place on their bins, to provide visible back up to the on-board systems for the crews.

Proposed Charges and Customer Process

5.11 The basic Garden Waste proposition consists of up to 3 charges:

£ set-up + £ Bin (if needed) + £ Service

- 5.12 There will be a *one-off set up charge of £10* (This would apply to all new accounts and in addition some later changes such as a 'Move house within Colchester')
- 5.13 Where a customer requires a *wheeled bin* there would be a charge of £30 to cover supply of a wheeled bin and delivery to the address. This cost may change during the year if the cost to the council increases or decreases (i.e., if the cost to the council decreases, the cost to the customer will decrease). If a household already has a wheeled bin, there would be no charge for a wheeled bin.
- 5.14 There will be an ongoing *service charge initially £55/year per bin*.
- 5.15 As a minimum, charges will be reviewed annually as part of the budget and service planning process.
- 5.16 Households can have more than one bin; there will be one set up cost if they request the additional bins at sign up (i.e., if they request two bins when they sign up to the new service, there will be one set up cost. However, if they request an additional bin later in the year, the customer will pay another set up cost)
- 5.17 Details of the customer process are set out in Appendix B.

Residents and households who do not want to subscribe

Household with garden sacks

- 5.18 It is proposed to include some information to residents to promote continued use of garden sacks around the garden and home. Our current plastics recycling contractor has confirmed they can accept Garden Sacks for recycling if they are empty of garden waste and separated from other plastics. This is subject to the 2023 tender exercise for the processing of recycling material, subject to a Portfolio Holder decision imminently.

Household with wheeled bins

- 5.19 We will include an option for residents who do not wish to subscribe to the Paid for Garden Waste service but who already have a wheeled bin, to enable them to have their bins collected for free:
- assuming the bin is empty

- it is placed on the boundary on a specific day, and
- on the understanding that they will need to fund any new bin if they subsequently subscribe to the service in the future.

Timeline, Seasons, Proposition and Promotions

5.20 'Paid for Garden Waste' is best considered as a series of seasons related to when customers sign up and when the service ends:

Season	Start Selling	Stop Selling	Start Service	Half Price Service Offer	Membership Expires
Season 1	Autumn 2023	29th February 2024	16 th January 2024	n/a	31 st March 2025
Season 2	1 st March 2024	28 th February 2025	Once they have sticker and bin (if needed)	1 st October 2024	31 st March 2025
Season 3	1 st March 2025	28 th February 2026	Once they have sticker and bin (if needed)	1 st October 2025	31 st March 2026

5.21 Public marketing and communications will commence in summer 2023. See paragraph 5.23 for details of proposed promotions including a special launch offer.

5.22 Households will be asked to sign up from autumn 2023. The collection service will launch 16th January 2024

5.23 Promotions considered to drive volume include:

SPECIAL LAUNCH OFFER – for 2023/24 only

Sign up to the service from Autumn 2023 to start your service from January 2024 and receive up to 14 ½ month for the price of 12 months (£55). *(other charges may still apply)*

EARLY SEASON OFFER

Sign up to the service in March and April with no set up fee (usually £10) and receive up to 13 months for the price of 12. *(other charges may still apply)*

MID SEASON OFFER

Sign up to the service between October and February to receive ½ price service charge at £27.50, usually £55 *(other charges may still apply)*

Fleet and Operations

Background

5.24 To service kerbside garden waste collections, we currently run a fleet of:

- 1 x Bin Lift Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV) (serving households who already have wheeled bins)
- 4 x Open Back RCV's (cannot service wheeled bins)
- Additionally, to address capacity needs, on a Friday a second Bin Lift RCV is used.

- 5.25 Analysis of garden waste collection routes suggests a minimum of three Bin Lift RCVs will be required for start of service and we will need one extra Bin Lift RCV before the start of Season 3 dependent on velocity of sign-up.
- 5.26 The existing garden waste fleet, set out above, will be 5 years old (against a 7-year life expectancy) at the start of the new Paid for Garden Waste service and hence it is more cost effective in the longer term to replace any RCVs needing bin lift adaption, rather than upgrading them at a cost of £35k-£40k each.

Proposal

- 5.27 The scheme will require the purchase or lease of two new Bin lift RCVs for start of service December 2023 (or spot hire until delivery) and a further two new Bin lift RCVs, one in September 2024 and the second in September 2025 (one for servicing the growing customer base and one to replace a now end of life Bin lift from the current fleet).
- 5.28 In Season 1 and start of Season 2 the fleet will be reducing by two vehicles from our core fleet and then will increase by one ahead of Season 3, subject to speed of uptake and geography of growth which will be continuously monitored. Spot hire and resource may be needed if growth exceeds capacity.
- 5.29 In addition, we will need to account for a hire Bin Lift RCV for the four key growth months on an ongoing basis to ensure collections are completed to plan.
- 5.30 It is proposed that the existing garden waste fleet (with 2 years serviceable life) will be redeployed to replace other vehicles elsewhere in the fleet which are either end of life or older and which will be de-commissioned, or else sold.

Fleet transition plan and low emission options

- 5.31 In consideration of the [Fleet Transition Plan](#) agreed at the Environment & Sustainability Panel in December 2020, the purchase/lease of new vehicles will still enable the Council to work within the commitments set out in the plan, regardless if the vehicles selected were not low emission alternatives.
- 5.32 Currently the cost to procure a fully electric refuse vehicle is more than double the price of a conventional diesel. This does not include adding the necessary infrastructure to charge these vehicles overnight.
- 5.33 Our Shrub End depot as it stands could facilitate charging one fully electric RCV however any more than one would require significant capital investment in the form of a substation of at least £250k for the substation alone (further costs would be required for infrastructure and connections).
- 5.34 Due to lack of charging infrastructure and financial pressures we are suggesting we procure diesel powered vehicles, that can also be fuelled on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing tailpipe emissions by 90% using revenue from the paid for garden waste service to cover the additional costs of HVO over standard diesel. HVO pricing fluctuates like diesel and currently [May 2023], HVO is approximately £0.60 per litre more.

6. Financial implications

Revenue implications

- 6.1 The current assumptions are that the majority of the revenue costs will be met by the approved revenue budget. The following table sets out the estimated revenue implications of the proposals contained within this report.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Revenue implications	£000s	£000s	£000s
Recurring Expenditure			
Financial reconciliation and stage payment processing	12	12	13
Operational costs	1	1	1
Seasonal vehicle hire	-	24	25
Community grant offer	2	5	5
Print, media and comms	53	34	36
Saving on garden sacks	(45)	(45)	(45)
Borrowing costs - MRP	-	83	163
Borrowing costs - Interest	25	45	59
Total expenditure	48	159	257
Income			
Income Season 1	(99)	(596)	
Income Season 2		(1,075)	
Income Season 3 (inc, renewals)			(2,066)
Recycling credit income (reduced from non-take up)	36	191	151
Total income	(63)	(1,480)	(1,915)
Overall Net Revenue Impact	(15)	(1,321)	(1,658)

- 6.2 Seasons 1 and 2 (i.e., 2023/24 and 2024/25) income is all from new subscriptions only and assumes a 11% and 17% uptake of eligible households, respectively. It is in Season 3 (2025/26) and subsequent seasons/years that the Council will also achieve renewal revenues.
- 6.3 Due to accounting rules, we are required to show the income in the financial year which matches the year of delivery of the service. Therefore, for those new customers subscribing in 2023/24 (estimated to be £695k of income), it is shown in the table above that we will account for circa £99k of income in that year, and £596k in 2024/25. Income from new customers subscribing in 2024/25 will be accounted for in that financial year.
- 6.4 This means that it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall against the budget saving in 2023/24, but this is expected to catch-up in 2024/25. This shortfall will be monitored and managed as part of the overall in-year financial position.
- 6.5 The Medium-Term Financial Forecast sets out an overall net revenue increase of £600k in 2023/24 and £725k in 2024/25.

Capital Funding

- 6.6 In order to deliver the project as outlined, capital funding is required as follows:

Project Description	2023/24 (£,000)	2024/25 (£,000)	2025/26 (£,000)	Total (£,000)
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2023/24 2 Vehicles (£460k) plus Wheeled Bins (£123k) ⁺				
2024/25 1 Vehicle (£250k) [#] plus Wheeled Bins (£306.8K) ⁺	583	557	515	1,655
2025/26* 1 vehicle (£270k) [#] plus Wheeled Bins (£245k) ⁺				

* The 25/26 costs may be revised due to take up in earlier years or changes in cost and performance of electric vehicles

[#] Estimates account for potential inflation

⁺ Dependent on actual volumes. The estimated quantity and costs may vary depending on uptake.

- 6.7 Capital investment for the four new Bin Lift HGVs is part of our Capital Fleet Transition Programme; in this instance we are bringing the replacements forward rather than upgrading older vehicles with short remaining lives.
- 6.8 It is currently assumed that the capital investment shown in paragraph 6.6 will be funded by new Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) borrowing. The estimated impact of this has been included in the revenue implications table at paragraph 6.1

7. Health and Safety Implications

- 7.1 81% of properties in Colchester are using reusable bags for garden waste collections. Over recent years of delivering the revised Waste Strategy, the following issues can be evidenced and summarised:

Issue	Impact
Staff sickness levels	Crews that work on black sacks/garden waste bags have higher level of sickness (11 days per FTE) because of Musculoskeletal Injury than those working on wheel bin rounds (8 days per FTE)
Missed bins	Analysis of the levels of missed bins from both forms of collection identify that it is higher on sack rounds than on wheeled bins (e.g., wheeled bin produced 8.21% of reported missed bins but represent 18.35% of the population.)
Health and safety issues	Research has consistently proven that the level of musculoskeletal injuries associated with using wheeled bins are lower.

- 7.2 The previous introduction of wheeled bins to certain areas of Colchester has provided valuable data to help develop the proposals. Implementing wheeled bin collections for garden waste through this project will help improve staff wellbeing and performance.
- 7.3 Households who currently have an assisted collection in place, as they are unable to place their recycling and rubbish out for collection, will continue to have this service in place for the Paid for Garden Waste service.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 A full communications plan with clear, concise key messages, with a strong call to action to drive for information/subscription will be developed. A range of media will be used, including messaging on residents' bins and using the best media for engagement (and therefore reach of message) for particular key messages on our social media channels throughout the campaign. A webpage has already been set up sharing some information, and this will continue to be populated as the scheme develops:
www.colchester.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/2024-garden-waste-collection/

9. Consultation

- 9.1 A consultation was commissioned in September 2022 to engage residents, councillors, and other local stakeholders (local business owners and workers), to hear their views on the future of Colchester and how the Council should address the key challenges facing Colchester which will be outlined in the councils Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026. The Strategic Plan sets out how Colchester City Council will play a part in making Colchester a place where people want to live, learn, work and visit.
- 9.2 Residents were asked to rank the budgetary areas (that cost the council the most to run) in order of importance to them. 85% of respondents ranked 'Environment' either first or second (out of 9) in order of importance to them in terms of budget spend.
- 9.3 At the discussion groups, ideas were discussed with residents that could potentially save money for Colchester City Council. These ideas included changes to waste and recycling collection. It was unanimous in the room that the participants would do whatever would be more cost effective for the council when it came to recycling. If sorting recycling (or putting all on one bag) would save money for the council, they would do it – in the hope it opened up more recycling opportunities.
- 9.4 The outline proposals for cost savings was set out and agreed at the Cabinet meeting of January 2023, including the outlined proposal set out in this report.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 As this proposal is a major change to a policy an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed: www.colchester.gov.uk/chargeable-garden-waste-service/. This identifies that some protected characteristics may find it difficult to manoeuvre wheeled bins and some may find it difficult to access the service. To address these difficulties, the Assisted Collection Service will continue to help customers who have particular difficulty in presenting their waste on the boundary of their property. This will extend to assisting with wheeled bins where appropriate. Additionally, website information can be translated via online translation websites/tools. Customers whose first language is not English can request that letters or leaflets are provided in a preferred language. Officers have access to a range of translation tools including text translation, instant telephone translation and face-to-face translation services.
- 10.2 It is considered that the proposals do not breach human rights as a service will continue to be offered.

11. Strategic Plan References

- 11.1 The proposal directly links to the vision, themes and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2023-26 – A City Fit for the Future: Respond to the climate emergency – Continuing to be a leader in waste and recycling collections through the review of waste and recycling

services and collection arrangements simplified and revised to support the government recycling collection targets of 70%.

12. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 This decision and proposal does not have any potential impacts to health and wellbeing outcomes for the public. As set out within the report, those residents who have difficulties manoeuvring wheeled bins will continue to receive support through assisted collections.
- 12.2 It is not considered that community safety or crime and disorder will be impacted.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Garden waste charging is normal for [65% of councils](#) and not charging would mean additional funding would need to be found from other services, if possible, with potentially more difficult consequences.
- 13.2 The costs set out in the report are based on estimates and current costs. A variety of tender exercises will need to be undertaken for certain aspects of the programme, such as wheeled bins and fleet.
- 13.3 The Environment Act (2021) and more specifically the outcome of the consultation on the 'consistency in household and business recycling collections in England' has not been published. It had consulted on free garden waste collections with charges for additional bins. There is a risk the new legislation could change the mechanisms for charging for garden waste collections.
- 13.4 The Council currently receives payment from Essex County Council that support the operation of garden waste services in Colchester, and these are known as credit claim payments and are paid on each tonne of household garden waste the Council collects for composting, so there is a risk to the budget if the compost payments were to change in the future.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The consideration of environmental and sustainability implications of the decision being taken is set out in the table below:

Sustainability theme	Positive environmental impact	Neutral impact/ Not applicable	Negative environmental impact	What are the positive and negative impacts on carbon reduction / environment?	How will positive impacts be enhanced/ encouraged? And negative impacts minimized or eliminated
Energy		✓		n/a	n/a
Waste	✓			Encouraging residents to consider other means of dealing with green waste, other than through kerbside collections.	A media campaign will be launched. Composting videos and training will be offered, as

					outlined in the report
Procurement	✓			Procurement will follow the council rules. However, the move to wheeled bins will reduce the ongoing demand for garden sacks. Wheeled bins can also be refurbished and reused	As the programme is carried out, the council will offer the ability to collect wheeled bins if they are not needed. Promotion of the alternative uses of garden sacks that are no longer needed will be made. Garden sacks can also be taken by our current recycling contractor.
Biodiversity and green spaces		✓		<p>The proposal aims to support home composting which can be used as an environmentally friendly way to fertilise soil and support garden wildlife.</p> <p>There is a possibility that charging for garden waste could lead to fly tipping and bonfires which could harm biodiversity and green spaces.</p>	<p>Communications will take place to promote composting and access to subsidised compost bins and tips for composting.</p> <p>Potential for comms to be used to support campaigns like No Mow May etc. in line with reducing garden waste and creating gardens that support wildlife, in line with Council's approach to management of many of its green spaces</p>
Transport	✓			Less vehicles will be required to deliver the service. Reducing the need for a vehicle to travel to all properties and going forward, only travelling to those properties requiring collections.	n/a

				<p>New vehicles will be purchased with the latest engines and propose to be fueled on HVO.</p> <p>There is potential for an increase in residents driving to the HWRC to drop of their garden waste, contributing to congestion and pollution at this site</p>	
Adaption		✓		n/a	n/a
Water		✓		n/a	n/a
Digital		✓		The service will be accessible online, albeit for those that are unable to access the service, support will be provided by the Customer and Support team.	n/a
Community	✓			Promotion and support of community composting will be incorporated into the project.	This will be encouraged through the Community Enabling team and online.
Housing/ Development		✓		n/a	n/a
Carbon Emissions saving		✓		<p>The proposal will lead to a reduction in fleet vehicles used to collect garden waste. There is the potential for mileage completed by the vehicles to reduce as well as a result of the changes to garden waste collections with less households to pick up from.</p> <p>There is an intention to use HVO in the vehicles which would also reduce emissions.</p> <p>Increased journeys to the HWRC could lead to more emissions, but it is difficult to</p>	n/a

				determine the impact of this currently.	
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Appendix A - Local Authority comparators

Research carried out by the Press Association in 2019 shows that 65% of local authorities in England charge for a garden waste service, at an average cost of around £46 per year. Prices range from £22 per year in Richmondshire, North Yorkshire to £96 per year in Harlow, Essex. The Association for Public Service Excellence (ASPE) report [“State of the Market Survey 2022 – Local Authority Refuse Service”](#) indicate that 54% of authorities charge for garden waste collections, up from 42% in 2021, with a further 5% of authorities considering the introduction of a charge in the next 1-2 years.

Benchmarking across other local authorities has been carried out and the results are provided in Appendix A. It should be noted that these costs are for the current year, and it is likely that all Councils will be reviewing and increasing their charges for 2023/24 and beyond.

Officers are aware that Braintree District Council are presenting proposals shortly, to introduce a chargeable service starting December 2023. Public communications will start in September 2023. Similar to this proposal, they are encouraging early sign up with 16 months for the price of 12; they too will pause for 2 weeks over the Christmas period. They are proposing a setup fee of £25, a £30 charge for new wheeled bins and considering an annual fee between £45 and £55.

Officers are also aware that Basildon District Council are also presenting proposals to start a charge for garden waste collection as part of their new waste collection strategy, which has seen the introduction of wheeled bins and the separation garden and food waste collections.

LA	2023/24	
	Garden Waste Charge	Method of collection
Basildon	23/24 £25 first container, £15 others (Part Year) 24/25 £50 first container, £25 other containers (each)	Fortnightly 240L standard or 180L available 37 collections 23/24 46 collections 24/25
Babergh / Mid Suffolk	£10 set up cost. Babergh - £59.00 Mid Suffolk - £59.00 per year	Fortnightly Wheeled bins only Two week seasonal pause
Braintree	£0 <i>Proposals are being presented imminently (see earlier in report)</i> Additional bins – 180L £35.60	Choice of Small 140L, Standard 180L, Large 240L at no extra cost.
Brentwood	£60 per year for hire of garden bin £4.00 for a roll of 10 garden sacks	Fortnightly
Castle Point	£7 for 20 sacks or £37 for a 240L bin Half price from October	Weekly collection with no winter break - bin or sacks
Chelmsford	£0	Fortnightly collection 240L standard
Harlow	£44 per annum. £33 one-off set up fee for all new customers. After April sign up cost reduces each month.	Fortnightly Bin or sacks

	<p>Re-joining fee £10 if service cancelled in the year.</p> <p>Ad-hoc now only accepting compostable sacks purchased @ £20.00 for roll of 20.</p>	
Ipswich	<p>£0</p> <p>Charge for additional bin £59.19 per year for 240L bin</p>	<p>Fortnightly</p> <p>140L or 240L bin.</p>
Maldon	<p>£56.00 full year £28 from 1st Oct - 31st March.</p> <p>Additional bins – charged at the same rate as a new subscriber. Bin Provision £31</p>	<p>Weekly collection: March – November</p> <p>Fortnightly collection: December – February</p> <p>240L</p>
Southend	<p>Veolia provide the service.</p> <p>Garden waste sacks (roll of 10) £11.00 240L bin - £33.00 Subscription buy DD - £69.50 Subscription by non-DD - £82.00 New customers need to buy a bin and subscription.</p>	<p>240L or sacks</p> <p>Weekly collection</p>
Tendring	<p>£90 for the first year (includes £35 set up fee) £55 per year thereafter</p>	<p>Fortnightly with 2-week Christmas break</p> <p>240L</p>
Thurrock	<p>£0; but charge for wheelie bin replacements: £39.50 for a new wheeled bin £20 for a new wheeled bin if you are aged 60 or over. £20 for a new wheeled bin if you receive certain benefits – proof of entitlement will be needed.</p> <p>Service Suspended</p>	<p>Fortnightly</p>
Uttlesford	<p>£50 for online and cash/cheque payments,</p> <p>25% reduction if in receipt of LCTS which is £37.50.</p> <p>New customers also required to pay £25.50 for a garden waste bin.</p> <p>Additional bins £23.63</p>	<p>Fortnightly</p>

West Suffolk	£47 per year per bin.	Fortnightly Wheeled bins only Max 4 bin subscriptions
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Appendix B - Customer processes

How can a household/resident sign up?

In line with other services such as Council Tax, the Paid for Garden Waste service will be 'digital by default' with online subscription and service. Where customers do not have access to internet services, they will be able to transact via the Contact & Support service to subscribe or manage their service such as reporting missed bins.

How will payments be taken?

A Direct Debit payment will be taken at point of subscription and then annually starting on 1st April 2025 whilst the subscription remains in place. If a customer increases the number of bins or moves house within the City boundary, then the new charges will again be taken at point of change. No payment plan option is available. Telephone subscriptions will be by Card Payment.

How long will the service be in place?

The service will be on an opt-in basis; once subscribed, a customer will need to opt-out before a cut-off date due to the timing of the new year's direct debit for the subscription. Telephone customers will need to phone in to renew their subscription.

What about if a householder/resident moves home?

Customers moving within Colchester to an address eligible for Paid for Garden Waste will be able to pay an administration charge to cease the service at the current address and receive the service at a different address and will move their wheeled bins with them.

Customers moving out of Colchester will be able to stop the service but there will be no refund offered in line with other Authorities.

What happens when a householder/resident stops their service?

There will be no charges to stop or reduce (from 2 bins to 1 bin) the service. However, customers will need to stop/reduce the service via a simple online transaction prior to the start of a new financial year or else they will remain opted-in.

Where a customer wants to stop the service, we will continue to deliver the subscribed service until the end of the financial year and then stop. The bin will remain at the property unless the customer asks us to collect it.

What if a resident passes away?

Where a customer passes away during the financial year there will be no more charges from the point we are notified.

How will the crews know who to collect from?

To ensure our crew only service paid for subscriptions in line with other Councils we will issue a different brightly coloured sticker each season to current subscribers. This will prevent non-subscribers leaving their bins out on the kerbside for collection, prevent confusion for our crews and allow crews to notify the service centre specific bins as 'wrong sticker' where for instance a customer has two bins but only one subscription. In conjunction with our in-cab system this should optimise performance.

How will the Council know if a wheeled bin is needed by the household?

When households subscribe to the Paid for Garden Waste service, we will use the data on properties on existing Wheeled Bin routes to identify whether the property has already got a wheeled bin and determine whether the customer needs to fund a bin to join the Paid for Garden Waste service. We may ask customers to confirm our data at point of sale to deliver the best possible customer experience.

Will the Council collect garden waste from any wheeled bin?

Paid for Garden Service will only service Colchester City Council branded Wheeled bins, this policy will reduce confusion for our crews and ensure the best possible collection rates.

Who owns the wheeled bins?

The Council will continue to 'own' the bins. Households will only make one payment for the bins - at set up. Households who already have wheeled bins will not be charged, unless they require more bins.

What size wheeled bins will households get?

To help make the service suitable for as many properties as possible it is proposed that households will be able to choose the size of wheeled bin they can accommodate. Currently we provide 240l which will remain the standard bin, householders could also select a 140l smaller bin. The service charges will remain the same as outlined earlier in this report. There is no intention of offering different service costs for different bin sizes because a smaller bin will cost the same to service and due to size will deliver a lower Credit Claim income. However, if the cost of the 140l bin is significantly cheaper than the 240l this lower one-off cost will be passed to the household.

Can households have more than one bin?

Households can have more than one bin up to a limit of 4 bins per property. If a new customer orders multiple bins there will be one set-up charge. If a customer wishes to add a bin at a later date, there will be a set-up charge.

Can the Council provide refurbished/pre-loved/second-hand wheeled bins?

We will also investigate how we could provide a recycled wheeled bin to the household using any stock recovered from those requesting we collect their wheeled bin. This option may not be available at launch.