

Item No	Referred from:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
6D	Date:	7 January 2025
	Title of item:	Garden Waste Charge 2025-26
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Agenda Item 20

The report considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 7 January 2025 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 7th January, 2025, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet approve the garden waste subscription charge for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, at £55.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: To ensure the Council's garden waste service is financially sustainable, in line with the priorities of the Council and of the Shared waste service.

Audio recording – 2 hours 36 minutes 40 seconds

Councillor Amy Allen, as Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management, presented the report entitled 'Garden Waste Charge 2025-26' and advised that:

- The new garden waste charge would be effective from 1 April 2025.
- The recommendation to Cabinet was to increase the charge to £55 per year. The 50% discount for households eligible for Council Tax reduction would continue.
- It was not a legal requirement to collect garden waste and not all households required this service. Therefore, only households who choose to use the service would pay the fee.
- The charge would be effective from April, rather than October, as the previous charge had been for 18 months. This would align the service better with gardening seasons and would be in line with the process in East Herts.
- Under the new waste contract, the overall cost of garden waste collection would rise by 42% and a further inflationary increase would apply in May 2025.
- The current charge in North Herts was one of the lowest in the county.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Claire Winchester
- Councillor Matt Barnes

In response to questions, the Service Director – Place advised that:

- They had not explored the option of applying a reduction to residents with multiple garden waste bins.
- The 42% rise related to the cost of garden waste collection in the contract. The charge to residents was not rising by this percentage.
- Future changes to the price charged were within the remit of Cabinet, but current forecasts included the £55 per year rate for future years.

- Only one collection of the garden waste should have been missed over the Christmas period and individual issues with this would be discussed with the relevant Members.
- She could not currently confirm any increases by neighbouring Councils, as these had not yet been published. However, it was expected that they would be increasing charges and they may be available ahead of the Cabinet decision.

In response to questions, the Service Director – Resources advised that:

- The 2% drop off included in the report was an estimate to reflect the potential for people to leave the service. Based on previous increases to the charge, there had not been a drop in numbers, however there may be a tipping point in charging and there was potential for more than 2% to leave.
- No commercial alternatives were known of in the area.
- The 42% rise was specific to the unit rate for the garden waste collection in the contract and other costs had been factored into that rise.

Councillor Ian Albert advised that he had spoken to the Service Manager – Waste, who had advised there was a small error in the communication around collections over the Christmas period and a garden waste collection would take place on Saturday 11 January. The Council would be providing communication of this to residents.

As part of the debate, Councillor Ralph Muncer noted that he was not supportive of the new waste contract in general and, as a representative of multiple rural communities, his residents generally had multiple garden waste bins, and they would be impacted twice.

Councillor Matt Barnes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Donna Wright seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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