

## HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to The Executive

6 December 2018

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Household Waste Bin Charges</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Thrane - Executive Councillor for Operational Services</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nicola Kemp – Operations Manager (Contract Management)</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>All</b>

### **Appendices Attached – Revised bin charges motion**

#### **1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 A motion (as attached at Appendix 1) was presented to Council at its meeting on the 13th September requesting a review of household waste bin charges. It was agreed at this meeting to refer the motion to the Community Select Committee for consideration.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Executive keep the present system of charging for bin replacements in line with the existing fees and charges policy.

#### **3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 There are over 123,700 household waste bins in use across the borough, the average cost to a replace a standard wheeled bin is £30.
- 3.2 Many local authorities have been successfully charging for replacement bins for many years. Such policies were developed in line with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 s46 (3) which enables an authority to determine if the provision of receptacles for waste be made free of charge to occupiers, that they be provided to an occupier upon receipt of payment or that it requires the occupier to provide them.
- 3.3 A £30 charge for replacement and new bins was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. This charge was approved as part of the annual Budget and Updated

Medium Term Financial Plan report (Appendix D fees and charges) which was presented to Council on 16th February 2017 taking effect from April 2017.

- 3.4 The impact of introducing bin charges in 2017-18 was a 63% fall in the total number of new and replacement bins requested and a 75.5% drop in requests to replace a bin that had gone missing or been stolen. Fees for 2018-19 were reviewed, as a result we reduced the charge for a small black refuse bin (140 litres) (£25) and increased the charge for a larger refuse bin (360 litres) (£35). The aim was to encourage waste minimisation aiming to increase the Council's recycling performance.
- 3.5 The financial impact of charging for all bins, except those damaged or lost during collection, means that all costs of wheeled bin provision are covered via our fees and charges structure.

#### 4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 By levying charges for new or replacement bins to households, the Council will be able to meet financial challenges and provide value for money.

#### 5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 There are two options available in regards to the proposed motion:

1. Retain the current charging policy, and levy charges for the replacement of all bins that are damaged or go missing with the exception of those reported by collection staff. (**Recommended**)
2. Amend the charging policy as per the motion, thus providing residents with a free of charge replacement bin when theirs becomes damaged or goes missing. The initial impact of such a decision could be in excess of £11,640 per annum based on 2017-18 data but would be expected to rise considerably in future years. (Not recommended).

Keith Parker  
**Head of Operational Services**

#### **Web Links and Background Papers**

2017-18 Budget & Updated  
Medium Term Financial  
Plan report 16.2.17 2018-  
19 Budget & Updated  
medium Term Financial  
Plan report 20.2.18

#### **Location**

Website

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#### 6. **Detail**

- 6.1 With in excess of 41,740 properties in the High Peak and 98.8% of properties using wheeled bins, there are over 123,700 bins in use across the borough. The majority of dwellings are supplied with a 240l black, brown and green lidded bin as standard with larger bins available for families of five or more or where a medical condition generates additional waste. In flats and apartments, dwellings share larger, industrial sized bins.
- 6.2 Wheeled bins have been used in the High Peak for around twenty years when black bins for general waste were introduced. Green lidded bins were rolled out across the borough from 2006 onwards and brown bins for recycling in June/July 2012.
- 6.3 Requests for replacement bins from residents have been increasing year on year. Bins were always supplied to a property free of charge, upon request on the assumption that the property genuinely needed a new bin. In 2015-16 the Council received 4,529 waste container requests equating to 3,566 wheeled bins of varying sizes and colours. The remaining 963 requests related to kerbside boxes (used to collect glass) or bags. The most common reason for a new bin request was as a result of the bin being damaged due to wear and tear (23.3%) or as the bin had gone missing or been stolen (21.12%). The remaining requests were for bins needed at new properties, by new occupiers or as a result of residents wishing to obtain an additional, larger or smaller bin.
- 6.5 In 2016-17 requests received for wheeled bins increased to 3,826, 23.3% were as a result of the bin being damaged, a further 18.69% was a result of bins going missing or being stolen. The cost to the Council of supplying bins across the borough was approximately £100,000 per annum. As our bins continue to age, the total future replacement costs to the Council would be in the region of £3.6 million.
- 6.6 Attempts have been made to try and tackle the increasing numbers of bins reported as missing or stolen. Up until around five years ago HPBC required residents to report missing bins to the Police in order to obtain a crime or lost property reference number, the aim being to discourage false reports. However, around 2011/12 Derbyshire Police wrote to HPBC asking that this procedure ceased with immediate effect as it placed unnecessary pressure on their resources.
- 6.7 Evidence shows that nearly a quarter of all requests received by the Council are as a result of the wheeled bin being damaged. It is actually very difficult for the collection staff to physically cause damage to a bin during collection, the primary reason for this volume of replacements will therefore be as a result of the bins age. Most common damage to bins occurs at the point of moving parts i.e. hinges or wheels, it would be expected therefore that as the majority of bins were issued to properties between twelve and twenty years ago that failure rates will continue to increase over time.

## **7. Introduction of charges for bins**

- 7.1 Due to the increasing costs being incurred by this Council in regards to replacing wheeled bins, consideration was given as to how these increasing costs could be mitigated. Research identified many other local authorities including neighbouring Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, have been successfully charging for replacement bins for many years. Derbyshire Dales District Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council introduced charges for bins from April 2017.
- 7.2 Such policies have been developed in line with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 s46 (3) which enables an authority to determine if the provision of receptacles for waste be made free of charge to occupiers, that they be provided to an occupier upon receipt of payment or that it requires the occupier to provide them.
- 7.3 Charges for all replacement or new wheeled bins were introduced effective of April 2017. All fees and charges levied by HPBC are subject to approval as part of the annual Budget and Updated Medium Term Financial Plan report presented to Council. The charge for wheeled bins featured in Appendix D Proposed fees and charges as was presented to Council on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to take effect in April 2017.
- 7.4 The £30 charge levied from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 covered all small, standard or large sized domestic bins. This charge reflected the actual costs to HPBC of providing this service.
- 7.5 Exclusions for bin charges do apply, this includes instances where:
- a bin is damaged during collection or it fell into the back of the collection vehicle - if such occurs the crew should record this and leave a card for the householder advising what has happened and confirming that a new bin will be delivered within 10 working days.
  - a brown bin is split - a defect has been identified in our supplied brown bins, whilst the manufacturer disputes this, we have experienced many bins suffering splits down the body of the bin. We have replaced all such bins free of charge. To date the manufacturer has provided over 1,000 replacements bins to HPBC free of charge.
- 7.6 In line with the exclusions detailed above, the Council replaced 272 bins in 2017-18 and 215 bins in 2018-19 to date of varying colours.
- 7.7 Following the first year of charges being levied, the fees for 2018-19 were reviewed. As a result we reduced the charge for a small black refuse bin (140 litres) to £25 and an increased the charge for a larger refuse bin (360 litres) to £35. We hoped this would support our policies of waste minimisation and would support the Council's desire to increase the boroughs recycling performance. The standard charge for all other domestic sized bins remained at £30.
- 7.8 From April 2017 up to the end of October 2018 the Council received 33 comments relating to our bin charging policy. The majority of these were logged as the resident was unhappy to pay for a new bin as they believed the damage was caused during collection and therefore they were not at fault.

Please note that a complaint against a policy decision, is initially logged as a comment.

- 7.9 Where the cause of damage is disputed or not clear AES, have when possible offered a preloved (second hand) bin as a replacement free of charge. Unfortunately as the majority of bins they collect in are damaged, such an offer is difficult to make in all instances due to limited stock availability.
- 7.10 HPBC supported by Alliance Environmental Services Ltd (AES) is currently in the process of procuring a fleet of refuse collection vehicles which will be used to deliver frontline waste and recycling services across the borough. These vehicles are being procured with 360 degree CCTV cameras which will not only provide benefits to the collection crews in regards to health & safety but will provide evidence to AES in regards to whether a bin was lost or damaged during collection. These vehicles are anticipated to be in received and in use by summer 2019.

## 8. The impact of introducing charges for bins

- 8.1 The table below details the numbers of bins requested in recent years and the two most common reasons; bins going missing or being stolen or due to damage. Please note this table excludes those bins the council has replaced free of charge.

	<b>Total no. of container requests</b>	<b>No. of bins requested - missing/stolen</b>	<b>No of bins requested - damaged due to wear and tear</b>
<b>1.4.18 - 30.10.18</b>	1542	98	288
<b>2017-18</b>	1428	175	213
<b>2016-17</b>	3826	715	892

- 8.2 It is clear from the information above, that the introduction of charges has had a significant impact on the total number of bins requested since 2017-18. This suggests that prior to charges being introduced, some residents were choosing to have a new bin rather than actually needing one.
- 8.3 Overall requests received in 2017-18 were down by 63% on the previous year. In addition the numbers requested as a result of the bin being missing/stolen were down by 75.5% suggesting that residents are taking more responsibility for their bins.
- 8.4 A new property or new occupier is now the commonest reasons for requesting a new bin from the Council (43% in 2017-18, 44.6% in 2018-19 to date). It is difficult to ascertain why the remaining fall in bin requests has occurred, other than assuming the charge is putting residents off changing their bins and waiting until it is absolutely necessary for an exchange to occur.

- 8.4 The Council only became aware of splits appearing in the brown bins in early 2017, and as a result replaced 145 bins free of charge in this year, this increased in 2017-18 to 326. It should be noted that the numbers of brown bins replaced due to splitting has been excluded from the figures detailed in the table at 8.1 from 2017-18 onwards, such instances would previously have been recorded as damaged due to wear and tear.
- 8.3 As a result of residents being charged for new or replacement bins, the charging policy generated £37,351 in 2017-18 and in 2018-19 to date £34,299. This income fully covers the bin replacement costs the Council would otherwise have incurred.
- 8.4 If the Council's charging policy changes to provide all residents a free of charge bin if theirs is damaged, goes missing or is stolen through no fault of their own, the financial impact to the Council would be in the region of £11,640 per annum based on volumes in 2017-18.
- 8.5 The figures provided at 8.1 highlights that the number bins required to replace a damaged bin in 2018-19 is increasing and is currently higher than requests in 2017-18. The cost of replacing these bins and those stolen or missing to date in 2018-19 would already be £11,580.
- 8.6 Providing all damaged or missing/stolen bins free of charge could be open to abuse by residents, this could revert the impact charging has had on the volumes of bin requests returning numbers to those previously seen in 2016-17.
- 8.7 In addition as we know our bins are aging and therefore more likely to become damaged as time passes, the financial impact of such a change in policy as proposed by the motion, would further increase the financial burden to the Council year on year at a time when pressure on resources continues to be challenging.

Motion to be tabled for debate at High Peak Borough Council's  
Full Council Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Proposed by Councillor Ray Atkins  
Seconded by Councillor David Lomax

“This Council believes that the current system of deciding whether or not to charge a householder for replacing a damaged or missing waste bin is inconsistent.

At present, with regard to damaged bins, the Council agrees to bear the cost of a damaged bin when it is accepted that the Council's waste contractor is responsible for the damage - otherwise the householder is asked to pay.

On the other hand, the Council asks the householder to pay for replacement of all missing bins – regardless of who is culpable.

This Council meeting now resolves that this situation is unacceptable and that where there is clear evidence that a householder is not responsible for the disappearance of one or more waste bins from their property and, particularly, where there is a strong suggestion that the Council may bear responsibility - such as on collection day - then the Council should carry the cost.”