

**HDC Due Regard (Equality Analysis)**

Due Regard (Equality Analysis) is an on-going proactive process which requires us to consider the effect our decisions are likely to have on local communities, service users and employees, particularly those most vulnerable and at risk of disadvantage.

This template has been designed to assist in the collation of information and evidence required to support the 'Due Regard' process when introducing new policies/procedures/functions and services or reviewing existing ones.

For help with this template please view the guidance document, which contains advice to assist you when you are considering the impact (both positive and negative) of the proposed actions on each of the protected equality characteristics.

**Name of policy/procedure/function/service being analysed:** Charging for Garden Waste

**Department and section:** Contracted Services

**Name of lead officer:** Simon Riley

**Other people involved (assisting or reviewing – including any service users or stakeholder groups etc.):** Tom Day, Matt Bradford, Alison Leavens (AMEC Foster Wheeler), Rachael Felts

**Date assessment completed:** September 2015.

**Step 1: Defining the policy/procedure/function/service**

Is this a new, amended or reviewed policy? What are the aims, objectives and purpose and how will they be achieved? What are the main activities and which communities are likely to be affected by these activities? What are the expected outcomes?

This is a new policy changing the fortnightly garden waste collection service from a free service to a chargeable service from April 2016.

The objective of charging for garden waste is to ensure the residual, recycling and garden waste collections are maintained on a fortnightly and affordable basis both to the Council and residents. The Council has a statutory duty to collect household waste and recyclables, but not garden waste.

On top of reductions in government funding, the Council is due to lose income in the region of £1.4 million per annum through the loss of recycling credits and a reduction in the amount received for the recycled materials collected.

Fortnightly collections are highly valued by residents, which is evidenced by a recent consultation on the future of collection services completed by 8,026 respondents, just over 21% of households across the district.

- Over 90% of respondents thought their current waste collection service (residual, recycling and garden waste) was either very good or good.
- Majority of respondents (85%) wanted their residual waste collected every two weeks, along with their household recycling (87%) and garden waste (72%). A small percentage of respondents said they would be happy to have three weekly collections for their garden waste.

The garden waste collection service affects all households, with the exception of flats and sheltered accommodation premises that have shared waste facilities.

In charging for garden waste collections, communities which may be at a greater disadvantage are:

- People with a disability or long-term health condition
- Households who cannot afford the new charge.
- Households where no-one is able to take garden waste to Household Waste and Recycling Centre. E.g. people who do not have access to a suitable vehicle.

Residents will still be able to dispose of their garden waste for free by taking garden waste to a Household Waste and Recycling Centre for disposal or home composting. There is also the option of using private contractors offering alternative service to the Council.

Across Leicestershire district and borough councils, Charnwood, Blaby and Melton already charge for garden waste.

## **Step 2: Data collection & evidence**

What relevant evidence, research, data and other information do you have and is there any further research, data or evidence you need to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known affects of the policy on different communities? Include quantitative data as well as qualitative intelligence such as community input and advice.

The Council is obliged to provide services which are accessible to everyone and in the exercise of our functions we are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a 'protected' characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Impact Assessment is required to consider the impact on those people with protected characteristics. However, for the wider context data has been collected on the whole demographic of the District

**All households.** The number of properties which currently receive a waste collection is 39,400 (this is not necessarily the number of households with gardens). Of these properties, 728 (1.85%) receive an assisted collection. Assisted collections are provided on a case by case basis, with justifications logged on the system under the following headings: mobility, medical, elderly, disabled.

**Working age low income.** Recent work undertaken to understand the impact to the District concerning Universal Credit, using the Mosaic profiling data and residents currently in receipt of benefit, found residents who could be on lower incomes made up 4.8% of the district. These residents may be among some of the households who would find it difficult to pay additional charges for a garden waste collection.

**Older people low income.** In 2012 figures of Pension Credit Claimants there were 590 Harborough District residents aged 60-69 years claiming pension credit, 660 aged 70-79 years and 1,110 claimants aged 80+. Of these residents 810 were male and 1550 female. These residents may find difficulty paying for the service and or taking their refuse to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre due to age-related mobility.

**Older people living alone.** Census 2011 figures show that there were 4,368 one-person households in the District where the single occupant was aged 65 or over.

**Households with no access to a car or transport.** Depending on the physical ability of the number of households with no access to a car or van is 4,217 (10.7% of households within the District).

**Residents with a disability.** Census statistics for Harborough District residents whose day to day activities are limited a little or a lot are 12,424 (14.55 % of District population) and 5,005 (5.86% of District population) respectively. Depending on the ability of others in the household these residents may find it difficult to dispose of their waste by taking it to a Household Waste and Recycling Centre

**Households currently receiving an assisted collection.** Any household that receives an assisted collection receives the collection for all receptacles (recycling, residual and garden). Where an assisted collection household pays for the chargeable garden waste collection, this collection will remain an assisted collection.

**Tonnage data** for the garden waste collection 2014/15 is provided below:

	tonnes	%
<b>Q1 (April- June)</b>	3,763.55	36.0%
<b>Q2 (July-Sept)</b>	3,403.92	32.6%
<b>Q3 (Oct-Dec)</b>	2,042.45	19.6%
<b>Q4 (Jan-March)</b>	1,237.35	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	10,447.27	100%

This data suggests that a seasonal collection rather than a full year collection is the most efficient and cost effective option. It is therefore proposed that collections are not made for the months of December, January and February.

### **Step 3: Consultation and involvement**

Have you consulted and if so outline what you did and who you consulted with and why.

A District-wide consultation was undertaken July/August 2015. The consultation comprised of a paper survey, designed to be easy read, delivered to each household in the District. The public could either complete and return the paper copy or complete the survey on-line. The survey was publicised using local media and social media.

There were a total of 8026 completed surveys. Not all respondents wanted to answer the equalities section of the survey. Below is the breakdown of those who wanted to complete the equalities section of the consultation form;

- 55.7% were female, 44.3% were male, compared to Harborough District 2011 census statistics that showed 49.6% were female and 50.4% male.
- 58.1% of respondents were aged 60+, compared to Harborough District 2011 census statistics that showed 32.45% were age 60+.
- 25.6% of respondents declared that their day to day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability, which has lasted or expected to last at least 12months. This is compared to 20.41% of residents in the Harborough District 2011 census.
- 98.7% of respondents were white, 1.4% of respondents described themselves as being from a black or minority ethnic group. This is compared to 94.67% of residents in the Harborough District 2011 census who described themselves as white, and 5.33% as being from a black or minority ethnic group.
- 98.5% of respondents were heterosexual / straight, 1.2% gay, lesbian, bisexual or other.

Elected Members were also asked to attend a workshop. The workshop covered the following:

- Background information to the Service
- Reason for considering Service Changes i.e. cost pressures
- Options modelled and their results
- Overview of the governance arrangements for the project
- Members were asked to consider the advantages and impact of the modelled options.

**Step 4: Potential impact**

Considering the evidence from the data collection and feedback from consultation, which communities will be affected and what barriers may these individuals or groups face in relation to Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities and also the potential impact on Community Cohesion. Remember people have multiple characteristics so the impact of a policy on a particular community may impact people within the community differently. Where possible include numbers likely to be affected.

Charging for garden waste would impact on all households which produce garden waste. In responding to the proposed changes, households will fall into 1 of 3 groups.

**Group 1**

Those who can afford the additional charge and have the ability to take their garden waste to a disposal site or other alternative means.

**Group 2**

Those who could afford the charge but would be unable to use an alternative free disposal method.

**Group 3**

Those who cannot afford the charge and are unable to use an alternative free disposal method.

The greatest impact will be on residents who fall into group 3. These will be people on low incomes, who by limited ability would be unable to dispose of their garden waste for free at the household waste recycling centre. This could include groups of people such as those on disability related benefits and pensioners on a low income. Statistically females have a lower income, greater instance of disability and longer life expectancy. So would be at greater disadvantage than males by the implementation of a chargeable garden waste service.

*Mitigation*

Considering all groups,

- (i) the provision of alternative services mitigates those with mobility issues by the provision of an assisted collection.
- (ii) Those without their own transport have the option of home composting or to pay for the annual subscription.
- (iii) Those with limited ability to pay will be given advice on home composting.

We would not expect the changes being considered to adversely impact any particular individual or group based on Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, or Sexual Orientation. For residents who are pregnant or on maternity leave there may be a temporary disadvantage.

The Policy for Assisted Collections will remain the same regardless of any changes with the collection arrangements.

By stopping the universal current free garden waste collection service and replacing this with a chargeable subscription service will be accessible to all people who share a 'protected characteristic'. For example, someone who has a disability or limited movement will be able to apply to subscribe to the services and they will also be offered an assisted garden waste collection, as long as they meet the Council criteria, at the same cost to others.

It is important to consider that changes to welfare and charging for services/price increase by other public sector bodies will create a cumulative impact on some residents.

**Step 5: Mitigating and assessing the impact**

If you consider there to be actual or potential adverse impact or discrimination, please outline this below. State whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give reasons. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. Consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs have identified can be addressed.

A pricing concession has been considered to mitigate the impact on low income residents. However,

- Variations to pricing will make the scheme more difficult and more costly to administer (changes in circumstances, evidence requirements etc.)

- Increase in officer resources to administer.
- Offering a lower price would seriously compromise the business case, built upon 9250 bin lifts @ £40
- The system would be open to abuse, i.e. someone eligible for a concession paying a lower rate on behalf of their neighbours (this happens elsewhere where the Council offers a cheaper 2nd bin)
- Concessions are not offered by other Leicestershire LA's or any other local authority contacted for comparable data operating the scheme.

Therefore offering a concession will incur an additional administrative burden and may result in the scheme not making the necessary service savings.

There are possible alternatives to collecting garden waste, or taking garden waste to a local HWRC. They include reducing the amount of garden waste generated or to dispose in the home through home composting. Advice on garden waste minimisation or home composting is available from Harborough District Council's website and the County Council website. Measures might include: installing a home compost bin, cutting grass less frequently or removing the grass collection box from the lawn mower. Market Harborough residents can access additional information and support from Sustainable Harborough <http://www.sustainableharborough.co.uk/>

#### **Step 6: Making a decision**

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy will meet Harborough District Council's responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and human rights. Does it contribute to the achievement of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty – eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?

The Council wishes to continue to provide a garden waste service which would be available to all households on a chargeable basis. The need for a move from a non chargeable to chargeable services arises from significant reductions in external funding and the requirement to service redesign the Environmental Services contract to deliver annual savings from 2018/19 onwards of £1.4 million.

The replacement of the universal current free garden waste collection service and replacing this with a chargeable subscription service will be accessible to all people who share a 'protected characteristic'. For example, someone who has a disability or limited movement will be able to apply to subscribe to the services and they will also be offered an assisted garden waste collection, as long as they meet the Council criteria, at the same cost to others.

Some groups may be disadvantaged due to the imposition of a charge for a discretionary service that was previously free. However, all Households have the option to manage their garden waste in different ways, for example home composting, mulching and the option to

take garden waste to household recycling centres. It is considered that the cost of administering any concession scheme would be disproportionate to the impact and therefore this is not recommended. The Council will signpost people to advice on home composting.

**Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation & review of your policy/procedure/service change**

What monitoring systems will you put in place to promote equality of opportunity, monitor impact and effectiveness and make positive improvements? How frequently will monitoring take place and who will be responsible?

1. Review of whether revised service delivery model delivers required savings.
2. Customer feedback reported via CRM on a sample basis.
3. Any feedback from residents experiencing cumulative impact of wider changes in the public sector and welfare.
4. Annual pricing reviews.
5. Initially there would be an annual review of EIA. The EIA would then be carried out periodically or when there is a significant change to the delivery of the service.

## Equality Improvement Plan

### Equality Objective:

**Action:** Review EIA in readiness for the meeting in November 2015.

**Officer Responsible:** S Riley

**By when:** 30.10.15

### Equality Objective :

**Action:** Consider options for capturing customer feedback within the CRM system.

**Officer Responsible:** R Felts

**By when:** 01.04.16

### Equality Objective :

**Action:** Annual pricing reviews

**Officer Responsible:** S Riley

**By when:** 01.02.17

### Equality Objective :

**Action:**

**Officer Responsible:**

**By when:**

**Signed off by:**

**Date:**

Once signed off, please forward a copy for publication to Julie Clarke, Equality and Diversity Officer  
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