

JOINT CABINET AND EMPLOYMENT & GENERAL COMMITTEE**Monday, 5th February, 2024**

Present:-

Councillor Gilby (Chair)

Councillors	Holmes	Councillors	Davies
	Serjeant		Falconer
	Baldauf-Good		Sarvent
	Brock		Staton
	Culley		Stone
	Davenport		

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

13 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations of interest were received.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Innes and P Innes.

15 MINUTES**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meeting of Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee held on 19 September, 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16 INTRODUCTION OF CHARGING FOR THE COLLECTION OF GARDEN WASTE

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Environment presented a report setting out the results arising from a review of the current garden waste kerbside collection arrangements and making the case for the introduction of an annual service charge to households for the collection of garden waste, with the new charge to be introduced from 1 April 2024.

The report had been developed following Cabinet approval on 13 November 2023 of a range of budget savings proposals listed in the council's Budget Strategy Implementation Plan.

It was reported that the collection of garden waste was a discretionary service for which the Council could make a reasonable charge under the provisions of the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012. The Council had provided a non-chargeable garden waste kerbside collection service for many years but given the unprecedented financial pressures that the Council was facing and in line with the recently adopted fees and charges policy, it was felt appropriate for the Council to consider the introduction of an annual charge to households who wished to continue to receive the kerbside service.

The total cost of providing the non-chargeable service in 2023/24 was circa £672,000. The introduction of an annual charge for the garden waste kerbside collection service would make a significant contribution to reducing the total cost of providing the service whilst enabling the Council to continue to provide a valued service to those households who chose to opt-in.

The Council had launched its 'budget conversation' with the borough's residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in November 2023. The conversation had captured views on the Council's budget strategy and the generality of the budget savings proposals. However, a specific consultation exercise had been undertaken between 20 December 2023 and 10 January 2024 on this specific proposal. The results indicated that circa 25% of households would be prepared to pay an annual charge for the service.

It was recommended that an annual charge of £40 be introduced for the kerbside collection of garden waste from 1 April 2024, and that a year one early bird annual charge of £30 be made available for any household subscribing to the service before 1 May 2024.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the introduction of an annual fee for residents who wish to continue to use the kerbside garden waste collection service from 1 April 2024 be approved.
2. That the current free of charge service be ceased on 31 March 2024.
3. That an annual subscription charge of £40 per annum for the service be approved.
4. That a year one only, early bird annual subscription charge of £30, be approved for any resident subscribing to the paid garden waste collection service before 1 May 2024.
5. That a sum of up to £40,000 be allocated, to enable the Service Director – Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Environment to make appropriate adjustments to the current staffing arrangements within the Council's waste management service to support the introduction of the paid garden waste service and its ongoing management.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To comply with the Council's Budget Strategy for recovering fees and charges to contribute to the costs of service delivery.
2. To respond to the savings targets identified in the Budget Strategy Implementation Plan, which was approved in November 2023. This will enable the Council to work towards developing a balanced 2024/25 budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

17 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**RESOLVED –**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on

the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

18 **TRANSFORM VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE TO DIGITAL DELIVERY AND REVIEW THE USE OF VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE**

The Cabinet Member for Town Centres and Visitor Economy presented a report setting out proposals for the Council to move to a more digitally enabled visitor information service as opposed to continuing to operate a visitor information centre (VIC). The Cabinet Member also promoted the idea of re-purposing the VIC to enable the development of a new crooked spire experience, in line with the priority action set out in the council's Visitor Economy Strategy.

A detailed review of the services that the Council provides from the VIC had been carried out in January/ February 2022. The review had assessed the range of services provided and the amount of time that staff spent delivering the services.

There had been a significant decline in demand for face-to-face visitor information services in recent years and the afore mentioned review had identified that most of those visiting the VIC were not by visitors to Chesterfield. All of the services provided at the VIC, whether Council services or services provided for third parties, could be provided elsewhere through alternative face-to-face, telephone and online channels.

There was also recognition of the potential tourism value to Chesterfield of developing an experience around the borough's most valued asset, the Crooked Spire.

The Council had launched its' 'budget conversation' with the borough's residents, businesses and other stakeholders on 15 December 2023. 70 respondents had expressed views on the Council's proposal to close the VIC and move to a more digitally enabled visitor information service. These were detailed in Appendix F of the Cabinet Member's report.

It was reported that in 2022/23 the cost of operating the VIC stood at £155,092. Following agreement to reduce the VIC's opening hours from 1

April 2023, the operating cost had reduced to £109,660 in 2023/24. The VIC's closure would result in further savings of £43,176 in 2024/25.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) be closed and the planned re-shape of the Visitor Information Service to be more digitally focussed be approved.
2. That the delivery of other council services, which have traditionally been provided at the VIC, be transferred to appropriate services across the Council, as set out in Appendix A of the officer's report.
3. That it be noted that the closure of the VIC will lead to implications for employees and that they will be supported by Human Resources (HR) and trade union colleagues, in line with the Council's HR policies and procedures.
4. That the proposal to re-purpose the VIC building at Rykneld Square, to support the development of the crooked spire experience, in line with the priority objective set out within the Council's visitor economy strategy, be supported in principle.
5. That authority be delegated to the Service Director for Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Town Centres and Visitor Economy to develop heads of terms and in time appropriate lease arrangements to support the development of the crooked spire experience for the benefit of the borough.
6. That officers be authorised to explore alternative options for the future use of the property, should the development of the crooked spire experience not proceed.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To support the council and stakeholders in the delivery of key priorities within the visitor economy strategy and ensure that the council continues to deliver services that provide value for money to Chesterfield borough communities.

