
News Release



Communications Team: (01394) 444361 or (01502) 523637

Suffolk Coastal ... *where quality of life counts*



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Register for Garden Waste Collection – Now!

People can now sign up to register an interest in joining Suffolk Coastal's Garden Waste Collection Service.

At its Cabinet meeting in December 2017, Suffolk Coastal decided to introduce a charge for collecting garden waste from homes during next financial year (2018/19).

People in Suffolk Coastal will be given the option of paying an annual charge of £43 per garden waste bin (the equivalent of paying about £1.65 per fortnightly collection).

This is a completely voluntary scheme, which people will have to opt to join (rather than residents automatically becoming part of the scheme).

The first paid-for collections are scheduled to start from the beginning of May 2018, with local residents able to subscribe for the new service from 1 March 2018 and we will email them when the subscription service is live.

However, in the meantime, people can register their interest by completing a simple online [form](#).

"The reality is that Suffolk Coastal District Council protected the 'free' collection of garden waste for as long as it could," explained Cllr Carol Poulter, Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

"In 2015, when most of the councils across Suffolk and Norfolk introduced charging, we decided to maintain the 'free' garden waste collection service and to bear the cost of reduced Recycling Performance Payment support, despite the financial pressures on the Council."

"However, at the time, we did recognise that this is a discretionary service that we provide and we always said we would have to keep this decision under review."

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Suffolk Coastal District Council is under increasing pressure financially, with dwindling support from central Government. Next year (2018/19), we are faced with a budget gap of over £2.8 million.

Providing the organic waste collection and composting service currently costs Suffolk Coastal over £1.2 million a year. This cost has been exacerbated by the £200,000 per year reduction in support for recycling organic waste previously provided by Suffolk County Council.

The East Suffolk Business Plan identifies the need for us to become increasingly financially-self-sufficient in the future.

“The key thing that people need to realise is that this is about us protecting local services and being able to keep Council Tax increases down to a minimum. Any funds raised from the garden waste collection service will be re-invested in providing services to local people and reducing our budget gap,” said Cllr Poulter.

“Suffolk Coastal remains committed to an ambitious programme of community-based and major capital investments, such as the current leisure redevelopment, in the coming years. So we need to continue to identify strong income streams, now and in the future.”

Later in the year, subscribers to the scheme will also be given the option of receiving a free, larger (240 litre) green bin for their garden waste (240 litres is the most common wheeled bin size, but the current brown organic waste bins in Suffolk Coastal are 140 litres).

The new, larger green bins are expected to be delivered during the autumn (2018) to those residents who request one and have subscribed to the garden waste service.

Ends

Background – Note to Editors:

Suffolk Coastal currently collects about 50,000 tonnes of domestic household waste a year. About one third of this (about 15,000 tonnes) is organic waste. This is comingled garden (estimated 13,000 tonnes) and food (estimated 2,000 tonnes) waste.

The remaining waste is made up of general ‘residual’ waste at 22,000 tonnes (44%) and dry recycling at about 13,000 tonnes (26%).

The comingled organic waste (food waste collected together with garden waste) collected by Suffolk Coastal Norse for Suffolk Coastal is currently processed into an agricultural soil improver at an in-vessel (IVC) composting facility at Parham.

This organic waste processing contract ends on 31st March 2019, so a new contract is required to provide waste processing arrangements from April 2019 onwards.

So, at this stage, local people will still be able to put food waste in with their garden waste.

Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) is a member of the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP), a strategic partnership of all the Suffolk councils, which working together aims to continuously improve waste management services throughout Suffolk.

In autumn 2015, faced with mounting budgetary pressures, Suffolk County Council determined that it could no longer maintain its financial support for organic waste recycling at the same level and that the service, provided by district councils, should be chargeable in future.

District Councils, as Waste Collection Authorities, do not have the power to charge for household waste collections generally. However, the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 do permit them to charge for collecting household garden waste.

In due course, SCC also resolved that from April 2016, it would reduce the Recycling Performance Payment (RPP) support it provided to those district councils who continued to provide 'free' garden waste collections.

These changes occurred at a time of both on-going reductions nationally to the core grant funding levels provided to councils and the general rising of cost pressures. While for many local authorities this has resulted in a period of service cuts and disinvestment, in contrast, SCDC has continued with its commitments to significant capital investments and support of its highly successful community enabling programme.

SCDC is planning to deliver one of its most sizeable and ambitious capital investment programmes to date with an estimated value of about £30m, without relying on any external borrowing.