

Briefing note: Garden waste collections 17 March 2017

What is happening?

The winter four weekly garden waste collection cycle is coming to an end, week commencing 6 March 2017.

However this year the service will switch to a three weekly collection cycle. The three weekly service will run all year round, and will not return to a four weekly cycle in winter.

Why is this happening?

We recognise that the garden waste collection service is valued and well-used by residents. The decision to change the frequency of the collections was made following a detailed review, which also took into consideration that garden waste collections are a non-statutory service.

It was agreed as part of the 2016/17 budget savings to change the frequency of the service to help the Council make its required savings. By changing the frequency of the collections to once every three weeks all year round, instead of once every two weeks in the summer and every four weeks in the winter, we are able to continue to offer the service and make savings of over £200,000 per year. This will allow us to manage budget pressures whilst ensuring we can continue to provide the garden waste service and the on-going delivery of key statutory services.

How is this being communicated?

A range of methods are being used to communicate the change.

- Letters were sent to 31,000 properties in December to make residents aware of their festive bin collections. The letters also highlighted the changes to garden waste collections.
- 2017 recycling calendars were published online in January and these highlight the changes
- Web pages have been updated with information about the changes and there is also a banner on the key waste landing page http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_and_recycling
- Crews are applying stickers and tags to residents' wheelie bins
- 500 lamppost signs are being installed across the city to advertise the changes
- Social media and targeted online digital campaign is being run
- Press release

How will enquiries be managed?

Initial contacts will be fielded by the Contact Centre with supplementary responses

managed by Waste and Cleansing staff.

Key messages will be consistent for responses:

- The service change was required as part of the 2016/17 budget savings.
- The changes will help the Council make its required £38 million of savings in 2017/18.
- The changes will allow us to manage budget pressures whilst ensuring we can continue to provide the garden waste service and the on-going delivery of key statutory services.
- Garden waste collections are a non-statutory service.
- We recognise that the garden waste collection service is valued and well-used by residents.
- Many Local Authorities have reduced or ceased this service or introduced a charge for it.
- Garden waste can also be disposed of free of charge at our Community Recycling Centres which are open seven days a week.

How long will households have to wait for garden waste collections?

In the changeover period, because of the change of vehicle routes, some households may need to wait longer than four weeks for their first collection on the new calendars. This is because the new routes may not align with the last collection on the old calendar.

Where residents would have to wait for 5 or 6 weeks we are writing to those affected to provide them with an additional interim collection, week commencing 27th February.

This situation however is partially offset by the fact that this is taking place early in the growing season.