

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Zero Waste Management Sub-Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>28 November 2017</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Recovery of Postal Costs for Bioliners</b>
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	<b>CHI/17/295</b>
<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR</b>	<b>Bernadette Marjoram</b>
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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval to introduce cost recovery for the postage costs associated with posting bioliners out to residents (with the alternative option being to collect from local collection points free of charge).

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- a) The Zero Waste Management Sub-Committee supports the proposal to introduce a charge to cover the postage costs for bioliners and refers this to Finance, Policy and Resources for formal approval.

### **3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Council has historically provided bioliners to householders for the collection of food waste free of charge. Householders can get these in two ways – either by collecting from any of a number of collection points across the city (see Appendix 1 for a list of locations), or by contacting the Council to request that they are posted out. This report addresses the cost of the postage for this service.

- 3.1.1 The cost of postage has risen dramatically since this was introduced and in 2017 the cost per package (2 rolls of 25 bags) is around £2.33. This has had a significant impact on the postage budget and increased uptake in the service due to recent service changes has also placed additional pressure on the administrative functions of the Council. This has come to a point where the Facilities Service has stated that the cost of posting bioliners has played a significant part in the overspending of this budget and therefore this has been reviewed to consider ways to reduce or eliminate this cost.

## 3.2 Options

3.2.1 A number of options were identified and considered for alleviating the financial burden of provision of bioliners by post. These are:

- a) cessation of the postage service entirely (and bioliners would then only be available for collection from the collection points around the city)
- b) continuing with the current arrangement but review current postage arrangements to investigate whether there is a better value option
- c) continuing to offer the postage service but the customer pays the cost of postage

3.2.2 In all scenarios the bags themselves continue to be provided free of charge at this time. This is to promote participation in the food waste service.

## 3.3 Considerations

- A number of issues were raised as part of the discussion:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
If bags are no longer posted out, are there enough collection points to give adequate coverage across the city?	The collection points have been mapped and reviewed. There were a few areas of the city that were identified as lacking in local collection points. Additional points have now been identified in these areas.
Can we able to keep the collection points adequately stocked as demand to collect will inevitably increase if there is a charge for postage.	The rate of current usage has been reviewed and a programmed delivery schedule would be put in place to ensure the points are kept stocked. Consideration will be given to better stock control/ordering procedures that help ensure that there is always stock.
Could we consider some form of "Click and Collect" type system to better control the distribution of bags at Collection Points?	This may be possible via the new digital platform and will be further investigated.
If a charge is introduced would we still post FOC to those on assisted collection on the assumption that they are unable to collect?	Yes. The contact centre have access to the information regarding who has an assisted collection so this can be used to allow this to happen.
Can we provide more and better information about alternatives to bioliners if people run out - e.g. wrapping food waste in paper or tipping food waste directly into the brown bin (not suitable for communal bins). Or that bioliners can be purchased from most supermarkets.	Recycling Team have put together information leaflets and posters on this subject and messages are on the relevant pages on the council website. This has also featured on the social media pages. We will continue to communicate this message wherever possible.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Prior to the roll out of the new services, the annual cost of posting out binliners was approximately £25,000, but this can vary according to demand. There was significantly higher demand in summer of 2017 during the roll out of the new services – this was due to increased demand due to the new service and associated increased publicity that accompanied this. It is expected that going forward, the annual cost is likely to be in the region of £30-35,000 which accounts for the additional participation that has occurred since the service changes and the fact that food waste has now been rolled out across all of the communal properties also.

4.1.1 It is proposed that the authority would continue to provide a free of charge postal service of binliners to those on the assisted collection service (which assumes that those using that service have limited mobility and therefore the collection option is not as suitable), but this would be negligible. Currently, there are around 1,200 households on this service, assuming they require 2 deliveries per year, at the current cost of £2.33 then this equates to £5,592 per annum. However, this assumes that 100% of those would require this which is unlikely to be the case.

4.1.2 This cost currently sits in the Facilities budget, not with the Waste & Recycling Service.

4.2 The proposed charge would be a straightforward cost recovery. No administration fee is being considered. At current rates this would be £2.33 per package.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Level</b>
Reduced participation in service as a result of charge being introduced.	Increased communication of alternative options such as picking up bags from collection points or using newspapers or putting loose food into the brown bins.	Medium
Increased demand on Collection Points	Communication with collection points increased, better stock control procedures put in place.	Medium

## **7. IMPACT SECTION**

### **7.1 Economy**

7.1.1 This report has no significant impact on the economy.

### **7.2 People**

7.2.1 This change will impact on those who are used to regularly requesting bags to be posted to them. However, it is likely that in many cases people are unaware of the other options. As the bags are still provided free of charge the impact should be minimal.

7.2.2 An EHRIA has been completed and is attached. There are no significant equalities impacts as this proposal does not reduce the options available for obtaining bioliners. Those people who are already using the assisted collection service will continue to receive the service free of charge as they are less likely to be able to collect their bags from a collection point.

7.2.3 A PIA is not required for this report.

### **7.3 Place**

7.3.1 This proposal will reduce the number of packages being delivered to individual households by post. Householders will be actively encouraged to collect their bioliners while they are out and about on other business. More information will also be provided on reducing food waste (this reducing the requirement for bioliners) and the use of alternative service options not requiring the use of bioliners. These actions should reduce the overall requirement for bioliners across the City – both in terms of provision and postal delivery.

### **7.4 Technology**

7.4.1 Further work will be carried out to look at the opportunities for the Council's new digital platform which can give additional information on where the usage of bioliners is high, e.g. this could allow for an "annual allowance of bioliners" per household if some form of "click and collect" type scheme were implemented. Where a household is exceeding this, action and support can be provided to help identify the reasons for the higher than average demand and help the household to reduce this.

## **8. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: List of collection points for bioliners.

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