

Council claim branded misleading by opposition councillor

The City of Edinburgh Council has been accused of misleading residents into thinking they are getting “a deal” on garden waste pick up charges.

People living in Edinburgh who signed up for the £35-a-year service have been contacted to be told that the fee has been frozen

The message claimed residents who pay for the collections were being compensated for services hit by strikes last year, when a number of collections were missed.

But a Liberal Democrat councillor involved in drawing up the budget proposals which were passed at the City Chambers earlier this year stressed there “were never any plans to increase the garden waste charge”.

He said he was “very concerned and frustrated” to learn that “thousands of households” in the city had received the letter.

The council defended the move saying the registration fee would otherwise have risen to £40 to meet “increased operational costs”.

The environment convener said that officials did not include the price hike in revised fees and charges for income-generating services put to councillors for approval in

response to the impact of industrial action on garden waste pick-ups last summer.

Two brown bin collections were missed in August after staff walked out over a pay dispute, as resources were diverted to deal with overflowing rubbish bins and a build-up of household waste.

The recent note sent to affected residents said the council had pledged to “let you know how we would compensate you for the missed garden waste collections” before pointing out that the cost of the two missed collections was £3.

It went on to say that the cost of running the service in 2023 to 2024 “has increased” and it said to “reflect the £3 for missed collections” for permit holders “we will keep the cost for 2023 to 2024 the same as 2022 to 2023”.

The leader of the council’s Liberal Democrat group – whose budget was approved in February – called the offer “entirely misleading and wrong”.

Cllr Kevin Lang said: “Let’s be clear. There were never any plans to increase the garden waste charge this year, certainly not in the Liberal Democrat budget which was passed by a majority of councillors.”



Cllr Kevin Lang leader of the Liberal Democrat group on The City of Edinburgh Council PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter Cllr Lang said people had been left thinking they were “getting some sort of special deal in return for last year’s strikes when the garden waste charge was always likely to stay the same as last year”.

He called on the council to be “entirely open and honest with residents” about the charges given “controversy” surrounding the previous SNP-Labour coalition’s decision to introduce a garden waste tax in the capital.

“I am very concerned and frustrated that such a communication was agreed and sent out to thousands of households,” he added.

The Transport and Environment Convener Cllr Scott Arthur said: “Each year at budget time, after looking at staffing costs and inflation in all service areas, officers propose increases in fees and charges for income-generating services.

“Each political party can then decide to accept the proposals

or put forward or offer up an amendment and changes to be voted on.

“Despite costs increasing to around £40 per registration, officers didn’t propose an increase in garden waste fees for this year to ensure residents were given some compensation for loss of service during last year’s strike action.”

Cllr Lang responded: “Rather than recognising and correcting this error, it’s concerning to see the transport and environment convener doubling down and giving his backing to such a false and inaccurate communication being sent to residents across the city.”

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.

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