

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Council Offices,
Urban Road,
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Addendum

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday, 26th July, 2017**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road,
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

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Report To:	EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Date:	26 JULY 2017
Heading:	RESPONSE TO CALL-IN – GARDEN WASTE SUBSCRIPTION CHARGE 2018		
Portfolio Holder:	ENVIRONMENT		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject To Call-In:	NO		

Purpose Of Report

This report provides further information relating to the decision to introduce a subscription charge to the garden waste service in 2018. The decision was “called-in” in accordance with the provisions of part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Rules No. 13 (Call-in).

Recommendation(s)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Note the details contained in the report in response to the call in as part of its considerations.

Reasons For Recommendation(s)

Further information is given in this report to provide Members with the appropriate responses to concerns raised in the call-in.

Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)

Alternative pricing options were considered as part of the financial modelling for the original decision, this is outlined in the report details. In addition to this, a cross party working group was also established to discuss the various options available.

Detailed Information

The changes to waste collections including garden waste were approved at Cabinet on 5 November 2015 and Council (as necessary) on 17 November 2015. The report and its recommendations made it clear that the garden waste collection service would be free to residents for two years and that the reintroduction of a charge was anticipated for 2018 onwards.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy was updated in February 2017 and identifies a £3.8 million savings target over 5 years, with a £1 million savings target for 2018/2019. The MTFS includes a summary overview of expenditure and income. The MTFS is prudent in assuming charges for garden waste collection will be levied from 2018 in accordance with the previous Cabinet and Council decision.

The MTFS notes that the savings targets identified therein would be met by a range of initiatives including income generation via the Commercial Enterprise Strategy which was also approved at Council on 15 November 2015.

The Commercial Enterprise Strategy supports the Council's MTFS with the strategic aim: *"To stimulate innovation, grow existing business and develop a commercial approach which generates a greater return and assists the Council's financial resilience, enabling it to safeguard services and more effectively deliver its Corporate aims and objectives."*

The Strategy goes on to say it is imperative for all services to have greater visibility of their true costs and to explore the potential for new or enhanced income streams. The Strategy also stressed the importance of the Council making use of its available charging powers.

Section 45(3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Schedule 1 of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 permits the Council to charge reasonable costs for the provision of a garden waste collection service. The collection of garden waste is not a mandatory duty. The Council may offer such a service and a resident may then confirm they wish to receive the service. Reasonable costs are not limited to the recovery of the costs for the provision of the specific service.

The projected income generated through the garden waste scheme will therefore contribute to firstly offset the expected service expenditure and any surplus will contribute to the savings target as envisaged by the MTFS thus reducing the need for other service cuts.

An informal Cross Party Working Group with representatives present from all groups met recently to discuss and review the various garden waste charging models. One of the options considered, and articulated within the Executive Decision Record, was to reinstitute the charging structure in place prior to the 2 year payment holiday and it was envisaged that this would create a small deficit position. In reality this is the 'no cost to the council' option as clearly the number of subscribers projected is an estimate based on modelling assumptions. The group considered but rejected this option and agreed with the option which the Portfolio Holder later decided to adopt.

The option of not providing a charge at all was discussed by the Cross Party Working Group but was not a viable option given that it would result in a net additional revenue cost of £700k to maintain the 5 vehicles and crews necessary to continue a free garden waste service 2018 onwards. The MTFS has made no provision for this additional burden which would significantly increase the £3.8m saving required outlined above. A no charging option would also be counter to the expectation created by Cabinet in the November 2015 Cabinet report.

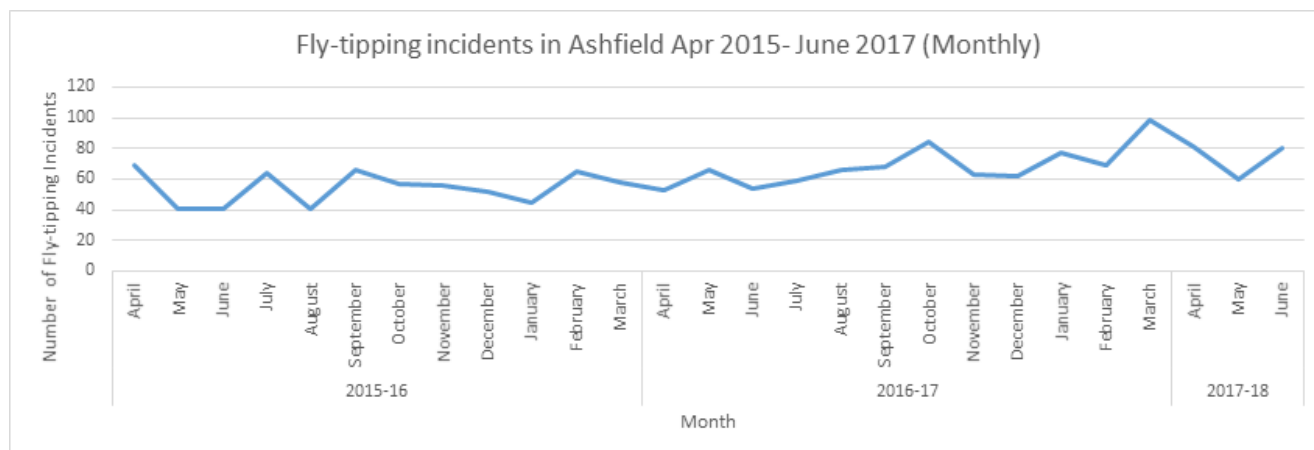
In relation to recycling targets, as mentioned the Council has an aspiration to work towards the 50% target as set out in the European Waste Framework Directive, though it should be made clear that this target is for the UK as a whole and at this stage has not been disaggregated to individual local authorities. Naturally there is some uncertainty about the future of recycling targets following Brexit.

In relation to the projections of future subscription levels, they are based on the Council's own experience and evidence from other local authorities. Mansfield is an appropriate comparator given it is typically seen as having a similar demographic and often is within the same 'Family Group' of local authorities for which comparisons and benchmarking are often undertaken. The EDR also does provide a future projection of likely recycling performance post the introduction of the charge, providing a range of 38-40%.

In 2014, the Council introduced variable charging for garden waste subscriptions, with residents able to pay a lower fee for paying by direct debit. This was in operation until the service became free of charge in 2016. The approach taken by the Council is consistent with many service providers who recognise the lower transaction and administration costs associated with direct debit. Residents will ultimately have a choice as to which route they wish to take and as before, officers are on hand to offer advice to residents should they require it.

Fly-tipping is a national problem and is increasing across the country. Within Nottinghamshire, 6 out of the 7 districts reported an increase in fly-tipping incidents from 2015/16 to 2016/17. Ashfield reported an increase of 19%, however Mansfield (21%), Rushcliffe (42%) and Newark and Sherwood (44%) all reported higher increases. None of these districts implemented changes to their waste collection and therefore there is no evidence to suggest that the changes to Ashfield's waste collection have had a significant impact on fly-tipping levels across the district. Similarly the graph below shows the level of fly-tipping in Ashfield has been steadily increasing over the last couple of years (as per the general trend above) but there is no significant spike at the time the changes were introduced in early 2016. Fly-tipping is always a concern and the Council is not complacent about the issue. Members have already expressed their desire to consider the issue further at a future scrutiny meeting and the portfolio holder and officers will be keen to support this process. The evidence does not support the suggestion that changes in waste collection services have driven an increase in fly-tipping.

There is also no evidence to suggest there is insufficient capacity in people's residual waste bins. The Council makes larger bins available for larger families or those with medical waste needs. A waste sort in 2016 also found that 10% of material contained in the red bins could be easily recycled in one of the other waste receptacles. Our efforts must be on continuing to encourage people to separate their waste appropriately.



Implications

Corporate Plan:

The decision taken in relation to the garden waste service supports the Council's corporate Place and Communities theme and purpose of helping residents dispose of their waste responsibly and in a sustainable way.

Legal:

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Finance:

Further financial detail relating to the call-in concerns are detailed in this report:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	As detailed in the report.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Human Resources / Equality and Diversity:

None

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency (if applicable):

None

Exempt Report:

None

Background Papers

[Decision taken by the Portfolio Holder for Environment on the 20th June 2017](#)

[Creating a Greener Ashfield - Cabinet Report, 5th November 2015](#)

Report Author and Contact Officer

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