

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

**APPENDIX 4: GARDEN WASTE STRATEGY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the subject of the Garden Waste Collection Service at a meeting on 6th October 2010. The Committee concluded that, based on the information provided in this presentation, the Council should consider ceasing delivery of the service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that
the garden waste collection service be discontinued.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny plays an important role in policy development at the Council. Increasingly, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is reviewing important strategies and policies relating to both key and non-key decisions that are scheduled for consideration by the Executive Committee and / or the Council. The aim of the Committee is to scrutinise the issue in detail and to help the Executive by: identifying areas for improvement, assessing the feasibility of proposed actions; and ultimately advising on the validity of proposed decisions.
- 3.2 As part of this process the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the subject of the garden waste collection service at a meeting of the Committee on 6th October. Consideration of this item by the Committee followed previous scrutiny of Officers' proposals prior to the launch of a trial garden waste collection service on 1st October 2009.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

20th October 2010

- 3.3 The presentation that was received by the Committee outlined: the background to the introduction of the garden waste collection service; relevant performance indicators; relevant performance statistics for Redditch Borough Council; the climate change implications; customer responses to the service; and options for the future.
- 3.4 Members agreed that, based on the information provided in the report, they did not feel that either continuing the trial delivery of the service or extending delivery across the Borough represented viable options for the Council to pursue. For this reason the Committee recommended that delivery of the service discontinue. As a consequence, the Committee felt that it would not be appropriate for them to endorse Officers' proposals for the Council to investigate the potential to share delivery of this service with Bromsgrove District Council.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed their support for improving recycling rates and agreed that the launch of the trial in two separate areas of the Borough had been a worthwhile exercise. However, concerns were expressed about the reduction in performance over the past two years against a key national performance indicator for recycling: NI 192: the amount of waste re-used, recycled and composted. Members agreed that this performance did not compare favourably with the largely positive performance of other local authorities in Worcestershire for the performance indicator.
- 4.2 Members suggested that the low take up of the garden waste service indicated that it was not a viable service for delivery in Redditch. Instead, the Committee commented that Officers should focus on improving the performance of existing core recycling services. In particular, Members expressed concerns about the level of inappropriate items that were deposited in the green recycling bins. These inappropriate items were rejected when the Council's recycling waste was delivered to the Norton processing facility. It was acknowledged that around 12 per cent of the waste delivered in the green bins to the facility had been rejected in the first quarter of 2010/11 as opposed to 20 per cent in the last quarter of the previous year. (This level of reject rate had been due to the commissioning of the new plant and has now significantly reduced). However, Members suggested that further improvements could be made if Council resources

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

20th October 2010

were applied to addressing this problem rather than the delivery of the garden waste collection service.

- 4.3 The use of an additional bin for the garden waste collection service was also discussed by the Committee. The orange sacks, which could be utilised by residents for the disposal of extra household waste, would cease to be provided by the Council if the garden waste collection service was extended across the Borough. However, Members commented that many residents would find it difficult to accommodate three Council bins: the grey waste collection bin; the green recycling bin; and the brown garden waste collection bin. It was suggested that this would deter many residents, thereby reducing the viability of the garden waste collection service.
- 4.4 Members also noted that, prior to the introduction of the trial service the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a report on the subject in 2009. During that meeting Members had suggested that Officers should develop success criteria, against which it would be possible to assess the performance of the service. Members expressed disappointment that this did not appear to have been addressed. They suggested that, in particular, it would have been useful for comparative data to be provided regarding use of Crossgates by residents for the disposal of garden waste both before and after the introduction of the collection service. This could have helped the Council to determine to what extent introduction of the garden waste collection service had impacted on carbon emissions in the Borough. Whilst it was acknowledged that it might have been difficult to apply performance criteria to a trial, Members suggested that it should be possible to estimate the impact on carbon emissions and recycling rates based on any fluctuations in tonnage levels at the facility.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of running the trial garden waste collection service is approximately £12,000 and is funded by the income generated. Originally it was estimated that the trial would result in a shortfall of £6,000 based on a 10 per cent take up. However, this was mitigated as the Council did not have to hire in vehicles and instead optimised the use of the existing fleet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore believes that discontinuation of the service would have little financial impact on the Council.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

20th October 2010

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) 2009 sets the Partnership a target of 43% recycling/composting by 2014. As a signatory to the JMWMS, Redditch Borough Council has committed to play its part and increase its re-use/recycling/composting rate (NI 192) and provision of a garden waste collection service could help to do this.

7.2 However, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have expressed concerns about both the low take up of the service as well as the decline in performance over the last two years in relation to NI 192: the amount of waste that was re-used, recycled or composted. Members have suggested that to address this fall in performance the Council should focus on core recycling functions, which would not include the garden waste collection service.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

8.1 One of the Council's priorities is for Redditch to be clean and green. The continuing provision of a garden waste collection service could help the Council to increase the amount of waste that is recycled and composted, rather than disposed in the grey rubbish bins.

8.2 However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were concerned about the emissions from vehicles used for this collection service. Smaller vehicles than the usual recycling trucks were used for the trial garden waste collection service. However, Members were informed that delivery of the trial had added approximately 10 tonnes of carbon emissions to the output of the Council's fleet, which had emitted 590 tonnes in 2008/09. Furthermore, Members were concerned about the estimated 13.7 per cent increase in total carbon emissions from the Council's fleet that might result from extending the garden waste collection service Borough wide. The Committee are suggesting that, due to the low take up of the service, it is difficult to justify the continuing or even expanded delivery of the garden waste collection service if it could lead to this rise in emissions.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY
CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no additional risk management, including health and safety implications, to those considerations which listed in the main Garden Waste report to the Executive Committee.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

Removal of the garden waste collection service would have implications for the customers who currently utilise the service. Members were advised that only one of the 322 customers that had opted to utilise the service had decided to end the arrangement at the end of the year. Consequently, 321 customers would need to identify alternative arrangements for disposing of their garden waste.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities or diversity implications.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET
MANAGEMENT**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is contending that it is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in use of the service if delivery is extended across the Borough. Members have expressed concerns that many residents in Redditch, particularly residents living in more deprived communities in the Borough, do not have the type of sizeable gardens which would produce enough garden waste to justify use of the service.

The costs involved in delivering the trial service have largely been met through income generation. The Committee are concerned that this would not be possible to sustain if delivery of the service was extended across the Borough. Members have suggested that it would be unfair to require many residents to subsidise, through Council tax contributions, a service which is only likely to be used by a proportion of the local community. Under these circumstances they contend that the garden waste collection service does not represent value for money.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

There are numerous climate change, carbon management and biodiversity implications which are outlined in further detail in the report. In particular, the Committee is suggesting that continuing or extending delivery of the garden waste collection service, due to the low take up in Redditch, would actually have a negative impact on carbon emissions in the Borough.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Agency staff would be employed to operate the service if it was agreed that it would be further rolled out during 2011. Consequently, removal of the service would not have any direct implications for staff currently employed at the Council. However, it would reduce the number of additional employment opportunities that the Council could provide in the short-term.

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are contending that delivery of the garden waste collection service has not helped the Council to improve performance in relation to relevant performance indicators. Members are suggesting that improvements in performance could be made if the Council ceased to deliver the garden waste collection service and, instead, focussed on improving delivery of core recycling services.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

There are no community safety implications.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications for health inequalities.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

No lessons have been learned in the production of this report.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration of a presentation on the subject of the garden waste collection service formed part of a wider consultation process for this item.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No.
Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No.
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No.
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No.
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No, though this Director was present at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the item was considered.
Head of Service	Yes. The Head of Environmental Services was present and directly consulted during the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when this item was considered.
Head of Resources	No.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No, though the Head of Service was present at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the item was considered.
Corporate Procurement Team	No.

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards would be affected by the proposal to remove the garden waste collection service as no residents would then be able to make use of the service. However, the removal of this service would have particular implications for existing customers who reside in Webheath, Callow Hill, Hunt End, Walkwood, Winyates East and Matchborough East. These areas are located in the following wards: Astwood Bank and Feckenham; Crabbs Cross; Matchborough; West; and Winyates.

22. APPENDICES

This report has been produced as Appendix 4 to the 'Garden Waste Collection Service – Outcomes of Trial' report which is due to be considered by the Executive Committee on 20th October 2010.

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

'Garden Waste Collection Service – Outcomes of Trial', presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 6th October 2010.

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1st October 2009.

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6th October 2010.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

20th October 2010

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