

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12th January 2011

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE - OUTCOMES OF TRIAL

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment And Health
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services
Key Decision - yes	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

A report to Executive Committee on 20th October gave full details of the trial garden waste service which ran from March to November 2010. Members identified their preferred option which was to extend the trial area in the West of the town and stop the service in the East but this was subject to a further consultation exercise to seek customer response on likely take up and viability of the scheme. This report contains details of this consultation exercise.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That 'Option D', as detailed at in the 20th October report to Executive, 'Stop trial in East and increase West trial to cover 10,000 properties (figures based on 10% take up)', be approved as the preferred option for the future of the garden waste collection service;
or

2.2 That the trial service ends.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In January 2010 Members agreed that a trial chargeable garden waste collection service would run across two trial areas of the Borough. The service was offered to approximately 4,800 households and began in March, running to the end of November at a charge of £35 per customer.

3.2 This report supplements the report presented to Executive on 20th October, with the outcomes of the additional consultation that Members requested be carried out in the West area and further key issues.

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3.3 It was agreed on 20th October that officers explore options for the sharing of the service with Bromsgrove District Council, including roll out of the service across the whole Borough, as part of the transformation programme of environmental services during 2011/12;

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 A summary of the key issues presented in the 20th October report is below:

- a) Garden waste collection is a key way of increasing performance against NI 192 which measures the amount of household waste re-used, recycled and composted.
- b) 4,800 residents across two trial areas in the west and east of the Borough were offered the service as part of the trial.
- c) There was a greater level of customer take up in the west (10.5%) than the east (2.6%) with the overall take up rate at 6.7%.
- d) All districts in Worcestershire offer a chargeable garden waste service. Some garden waste is disposed of in grey bins and many residents use orange sacks to dispose of garden waste in the summer months.
- e) There is a need to support the county wide approach and reduce the amount of biodegradable waste which is disposed of to landfill.

4.2 Members identified their preferred option for taking the service forward as 'option D' which is to end the trial in the East and extend the trial in the West of the town.

4.3 If option D is implemented, it is important to note that the service will still be a trial. With a 'non permanent' service we are unable to set up automated phone/on-line payment mechanisms and therefore all calls have to be dealt with manually. This creates a short term peak in customer contact and requires a temporary back office system in place to deal with calls and bookings. This will be done by putting additional temporary resources in the contact centre to deal with the calls – this could cost around £1K per week – or by externalising the calls to a specialist company; we are currently finding out what this would cost.

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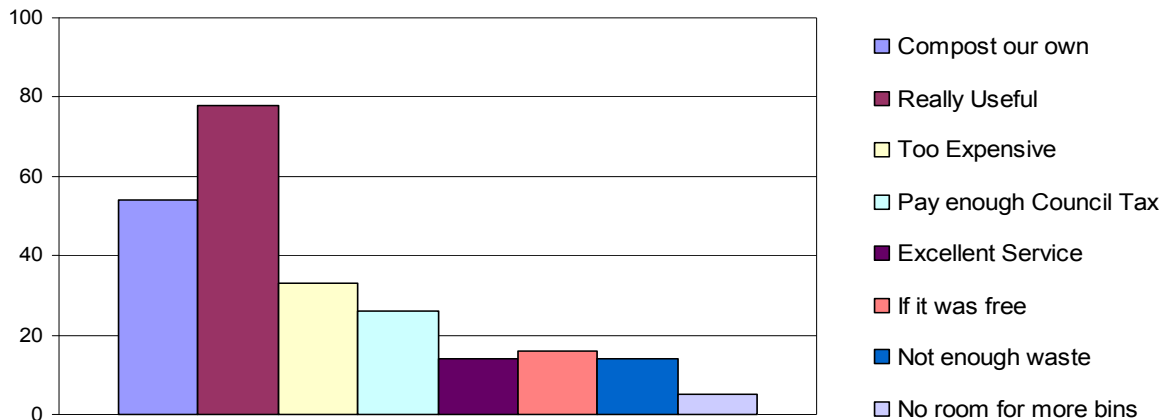
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- 4.4 It is important to note that we will not be able to carry out any borough wide/press promotion of the service as it generates calls from residents outside the trial area – this increases impact on the contact centre and reduces customer satisfaction when they have to be told that they don't qualify for the service.
- 4.5 Worcestershire County Council have confirmed that a local delivery point at Bromsgrove would be available for the disposal of garden waste collected. This reduces transport emissions and costs in taking the waste to Pershore, which has been done during the trial in 2010/11.

Consultation outcomes

- 4.6 A pre-paid postcard was delivered to the targeted properties in the west area during early December with a closing date of 13th December. Of the potential 9,760 new customers (excluding the 244 existing customers), 54% (244) said that they would take up the service and 46% (208) said that they would not.
- 4.7 The card also asked for feedback and the graph below details the most popular comments:

Most popular responses from consultation



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- 4.8 Towards the end of the trial a user satisfaction survey of the existing customers in the west resulted in 185 customers stating that they would use the service again next year.
- 4.9 The consultation exercises have identified that we have a 'confirmed' customer base of 244 new customers in the west and 185 existing customers in the west – a total of 429 or just over 4%.
- 4.10 It is important to note that this survey has generated a response rate of 4.5%. Statistics based on small sample sizes can be imprecise and therefore the limitations on this data must be recognised. This coupled with the fact that this is not a good time of year to undertake consultation, particularly to a service that is more high profile in spring and summer months, the outcome of the consultation may not be a true reflection of the level of take up that could be achieved.

East area

- 4.11 Whilst we had a significantly lower take up in the East area (just under 3%) Members requested that we consider ways that we maintain the service in the East. Members were concerned about the cost of providing a small number of collections in the East and officers have calculated the cost of providing each collection in the East compared to the West as below:

	Cost per bin collected	Number of customers	Total cost of trial (based on 16 collections)	'profit' per property
West	1.20	242	4646	15.84
East	1.49	73	1740	11.16

- 4.12 The 35 for sixteen collections = 2.19 per Income per collection – which covers the cost of collection.

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5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Members have supported the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy approach of the service charge covering the cost of the garden waste collection service.

5.2 The table below shows the original costs of Option D provided in the 20th October report and the costs based on the predicted customer take up.

Service components	OPTION D	OPTION D based on predicted customer take up
	£'000	£'000
Publicity printing & delivery	8	8
Operational costs (staff & vehicles & Fuel)	27	27
Total cost of running service	35	35
Income received	35	15
Shortfall	0	-20

Estimated charge per customer to cover cost of service	£35	£82
Additional wheeled bins required (approx £21 each)*	£16k	£3.6

5.3 *for the extension of the area to 10,000 properties, green bins would continue to be used as the service would still be a trial; the costs of the 73 bins in the East area have been deducted.

5.4 For the continuation of the service a number of bins would have to be purchased for customers. There is currently a £15k saving within the service area relating to grant received for waste management. It is proposed that this saving be utilised to fund capital costs arising from the

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additional bins. It should also be noted that the 73 bins which are currently with East area customers could be utilised.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council has a duty to collect household waste, which includes garden waste generated by households, but may make a charge for its collection.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A summary of the policy implications is given below:

- a) the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) 2009 sets a target of 43% recycling/composting by 2014 and a garden waste collection service helps to meet this target and is in line with all other Worcestershire districts;
- b) the majority of residual waste collected in Worcestershire is land filled and we need to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill in order to meet Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme limits in future years.
- c) residents should continue to be offered the option of purchasing up to two orange sacks per fortnight for the disposal of extra household waste until such a time that the service is offered borough wide.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Provision of good quality, customer focused waste collection services meets the Council priority of a 'Clean and Green' Borough.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 A risk management plan will be developed as part of the roll out of the service, should this be agreed. The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- a) loss of income due to lack of customer take up;
- b) failure to increase performance (NI 192) and meet county wide targets set in the JMWMS;

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- c) County Council levied Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) penalties if limits for the amount of biodegradable waste landfilled in Worcestershire are exceeded;
- d) if the take up level is higher than 10%, we will not have sufficient bins and will need to try and provide residents with an alternative or even borrow them from neighbouring authorities.
- e) the small window for publicity between full council on 7th February and the start of the service in March may not be enough time to attract the target 10% level of customers, particularly as we cannot undertake borough wide publicity.

9.2 These risks along with a risk management plan will be entered into the risk registry.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

There are 242 existing customers in the west and 73 in the east. A large % have said through consultation that they are pleased with the service and would take it up again.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Assisted collections, different sized bins and information on the service in different formats are all available to residents upon request.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 In accordance with the JMWMS, it was agreed that the service should aim to be cost neutral.

12.2 Members may wish to consider increasing the charge of the service to reduce the risk of running at a deficit.

12.3 The option of sharing the service across Redditch and Bromsgrove is one which will be explored further as part of the transformation programme for environmental services during 2011/12.

12.4 The aim is for the service to be self financing including provision / replacement of bins to existing customers

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13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

13.1 A summary of the implications is given below:

- a) Last year **2,216** tonnes of garden waste were taken by residents to the Household waste site which involves residents using their own vehicles to transport small amounts of waste;
- b) The Strategic Environmental Assessment which forms part of the JMWMS, states that ***“options which have area wide green waste collections secure more benefits overall than other options because of increased tonnages of waste recycled, principally biodegradable waste”*** (SEA p.38).
- c) The service has an impact on climate change indicator NI185 due to increased transport emissions. Mileage has been minimised by the size of vehicle used and next year, we will be able to dispose of the garden waste locally rather than transporting it to Pershore.
- d) Whilst Redditch waste currently goes to an energy from waste facility, diverting biodegradable waste from this route could provide capacity for other Worcestershire waste to be diverted from landfill.
- e) In accordance with the Waste Hierarchy, our initial aim was to prevent waste and our publicity materials promoted home composting as the best way to deal with garden waste, ***“our garden waste collection service is specially designed for residents who generate a lot of garden waste but don’t have sufficient home composting facilities.”***

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Agency staff would be employed to operate the service if it is agreed that it will be further rolled out during 2011. This would continue until the preferred option of service delivery has been identified as part of the transformation programme.

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Since the introduction of targets for increasing the amount of waste recycled and composted (NI 192), one of the key reasons for providing a garden waste service has been to improve performance.

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15.2 For comparison, recycling performance including garden waste stands at 28.9% year to date. Without the garden waste this figure is reduced by 0.3% to 28.6%.

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

There are no direct community safety implications.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct health inequalities implications.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

The trial has allowed us to assess: level of customer demand, costs, operational and administrative impacts and effective publicity.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As part of the trial several pieces of customer consultation were completed.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No
Climate Change Manager	Yes

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21. WARDS AFFECTED

There are a number of affected wards and these vary depending on the preferred option

22. APPENDICES

None

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Executive 20th October 2010: Garden Waste Collection Service –
Outcomes of trial
Draft Revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2009

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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