

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Review of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) - Scoping Report	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/016	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
Portfolio holders:	Councillor David Bowman Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk Mark Christie Service Manager (Business) Tel: 01638 719220 Email: mark.christie@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To establish a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group to Review the Garden Waste Collection Service.	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: It is RECOMMENDED that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established, as set out in section 2 of this report, to carry out a review of the garden waste collection service and to make recommendations for 2019 onwards.	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:			
Alternative option(s):		At the commencement of the GWCS it was agreed to undertake a review of the first three years of operation.	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the subscription charge and/or the number of subscribers will impact upon the amount of income generated. 	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated with the introduction of any changes to the way the current service is administered and delivered operationally. 	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the ICT functionality will need to be assessed and scheduled with consideration of the other ICT projects planned. 	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the current terms and conditions will impact on the current service rules for customers. 	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
The Task and Finish Group are not able to reach conclusions on the future of the GWCS in the timeframe and with the available resources before a West Suffolk decision is needed on what should happen in 2019.	Medium	The review is properly resourced, with good quality information provided and appropriate support for engagement and deliberation.	Low
The conclusions are not able to be considered prior to the start date in 2019.	Medium	Ensure all technological implications and other risks are fully understood and assessed before a decision is made.	Low

Potential proposals relating to Garden Waste terms, conditions and processes do not complement the councils' agreed policies, including the target operating model for customer service.	Medium	Ensure all relevant Officers are involved in the review.	Low
There are insufficient resources to deliver any change to the GWCS that is adopted as a result of this review.	High	Ensure all changes are fully costed and the capacity required to implement are identified. Ensure all relevant officers are involved in the review to enable implementation plans to be considered alongside other resource and capacity demands across the councils'.	Medium
Ward(s) affected:	All West Suffolk wards		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	FHDC Cabinet 15SEP15 report CAB/FH/15/041 FHDC PASC 25NOV15 report PAS/FH/15/029 FHDC PASC 28Jan16 report PAS/FH/16/003		
Documents attached:	None		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 West Suffolk councils agreed to the introduction of an annual subscription charge of £40 per bin for the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS); to take effect from April 2016.
- 1.1.2 The changes were driven by an impending change to the funding arrangements for organic waste and an expected increase in the organic waste treatment costs. At the time, extensive research was undertaken to review experiences elsewhere and a number of unknown variables were estimated and assumptions made in relation to:
- Household take-up rate;
 - Annual income generated;
 - Cost of waste treatment, due mainly to the procurement of a new contract;
 - Quantity and quality of material collected, considering estimated take-up and the exclusion of kitchen food waste; and
 - The impact of the change on residual waste collections.
- 1.1.3 As a result, the new service was restricted to the inclusion of garden waste only and participation was voluntary. As part of this change, a 50:50 cost/benefit sharing approach between West Suffolk councils and Suffolk County Council (SCC) was agreed by Public Sector Leaders to ensure that no single organisation would be in a worse financial position following the change.
- 1.1.4 Preparations for the introduction of the new service commenced in October 2015, involving an officer team made up of representatives from numerous council departments, reflecting the extent of the changes needed. This included:
- Establishing a subscription price and associated terms and conditions.
 - Development of a marketing plan and communication messages;
 - Development of service application and payment systems in line with the corporate customer access strategy.
 - Procurement of a new waste treatment contract;
 - Design and implementation of IT systems.
- 1.1.5 Overall the approach intended to maximise the use of technology, reduce the ongoing resource demand needed to administer the service and to provide ease of access for customers.
- 1.1.6 During the first two years of operation, around 30,000 households have subscribed each year and the service is generally operating in line with the original assumptions and expectations.
- 1.1.7 However, a review of the GWCS is now proposed for the following reasons:
- i) It was agreed that the subscription charge, and the service itself, would be reviewed after the first three years of operation.

- ii) A new funding arrangement with Suffolk County Council takes effect from April 2019.
- iii) Implementation arrangements for Year 4 of the GWCS will need to commence in October 2018 ready for April 2019.
- iv) IT improvements are required to reflect changes to the corporate CRM, online functionality and the GDPR regulations.
- v) To consider opportunities to amend the customer "application and pay experience" and the associated service terms and conditions.

1.1.8 In addition to the above, at the St Edmundsbury Borough Council meeting on 19 December 2017, Councillor Nettleton gave notice under paragraph 9.1 of the Council Procedure Rules of the following motion:

"That with effect from April 2018 new subscribers to the Brown Bin emptying service be charged at the following rates, depending on the month the subscription is approved:*

April £40: May £37: June £34: July £31: August £28: September £25: October £22: November £19: December £16: January £13: February £10.

No new subscriptions accepted in March as officers busy organising renewals.

**Subject to technical amendments"*

1.1.9 It was agreed that this matter be referred to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It was recommended and subsequently agreed to review the GWCS once the main 2018/19 subscription period had passed, normally by around June, and discuss the options for Year 4 onwards.

2. Garden Waste Collection Service Review

2.1 It is proposed that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established to carry out a review of the GWCS to make recommendations to the West Suffolk Shadow Executive in Autumn 2018. This is subject to agreement from St Edmundsbury' Overview and Scrutiny Committee who are considering an identical paper at their meeting on 6 June 2018.

Membership

2.2 It is suggested that the Joint Task and Finish Group comprises of **eight Members; four from each council** with **at least one from each council being a member of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**. The Group would be supported by officers and the Portfolio Holders.

Review period

2.3 The review will be carried out between July and October 2018, in order to feed into final reports for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in

November, and a report to the Shadow Executive. This will allow time for the recommendations to be taken account of before the arrangements for 2019 need to commence (there are system and communications arrangements that need to be undertaken ahead of the annual soft launch for payments in February).

Scope

2.4 It is proposed that the Review covers a range of issues, as follows:

Finance	Review the current financial position of the GWCS and the subscription charge from April 2019 onwards.
Customer access	Examine incentivising the use of online transactions - for customer convenience and to reduce demand on customer services (channel shift and self-serve). This would require a corporate policy position that could be applied to the GWCS.
Service terms and conditions	Including payment options – how to pay and the payment period.
Impact on residual waste	The policy options for managing garden waste in the black bins.
Communications and marketing	Review the current arrangements for marketing and communication with customers.
Operational changes	Evaluating a different collection day to black and blue bin collections to further reduce service costs.
Impact of proposed changes	Understanding the impact of proposals, including implementation risks, costs and customer impact.