

| REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE | | | Report No. 14 | |
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| Date of Meeting | | 6 December 2007 | | |
| Title of Report | | Cleansing & Amenities Improvement Plan | | |
| Portfolio | | Waste & Recycling | | |
| Link to Corporate Priorities | | Customer Focus and Waste & Recycling | | |
| Key Decision | | Yes | | |
| Executive Workplan Ref | | B361 | | |
| Public Report | | Yes | | |
| Summary of Report | | | | |
| This report is to update Members on the review currently being undertaken by the Cleansing and Amenities Service Improvement Board and to seek Members agreement on the proposed action plans for improving the service. | | | | |
| Officer Recommendations | | | | |
| That the Executive:- | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the plans for improving the service and request that the Personnel, Licensing & Administration Committee meets urgently in December to consider and approve the revised staffing structure to deliver the service improvements.2. Agree to delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive (Customer & Environment) in consultation with the Lead Member authority to implement the service improvement plan and provide a quarterly update to the Executive.3. Agree that a one-off contingency budget of £100,000 is considered to cover funding of improvements and £150,000 be identified as growth to implement a revised staffing structure as part of the budget setting for 2008/09 to deliver the service improvements.4. Agree that a future report is presented to the Executive setting out proposals to reduce waste and increase recycling and proposals to manage emptying of litter bins across the district.5. Note that the improvement plans have been discussed and endorsed by senior officers at Wiltshire County Council in line with the transition towards one council for Wiltshire. | | | | |
| Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report. | | | | |
| Financial Implications | Legal Implications | Community & Environmental Implications | Human Resources Implications | Equality & Diversity Implications |
| Yes | None | Yes | Yes | None |
| Contact Officer | Laurie Bell, Deputy Chief Executive, 01249 706561 lbell@northwiltshire.gov.uk Graham Wilson, Assistant to the Deputy Chief Executive, 01249 706420 gwilson@northwiltshire.gov.uk | | | |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to update Members on the work of the Cleansing and Amenities Service Improvement Board and seek Member agreement on the proposed plans for improving the service.

2. Background

- 2.1 Recent work undertaken as part of medium term finance planning highlighted that the Council's Cleansing and Amenities service was providing a low/medium performing service at medium cost.
- 2.2 The objective of implementing an improvement plan is to achieve medium performance at a low cost.

Waste collection went through a rounds review in October 2006, following the implementation of wheeled bins, to improve efficiency, decrease costs and increase performance levels. Recent data gathering has indicated that the number of missed bins has been reduced but in terms of economics and efficiency concerns still remain. In addition to the collection of household waste, a commercial waste collection service with over 1,200 customers is also operated and brings in an income of £460,000.

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) From April 2005, the Government has introduced a Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme which limits waste disposal authorities to a specific volume of biodegradable municipal solid waste which declines progressively year on year to 2020. Authorities, which exceed their allocation must purchase the unused allocation from another authority or pay a fine of £150 per tonne.

Wiltshire County Council (WCC) has identified a potential shortfall between its landfill allowance and the estimated landfill requirement in 2008-09 and has purchased "credits" to avoid any possible fine in that year. WCC is entering into a landfill diversion contract that should ensure that fines are avoided until 2012.

- 2.3 **Recycling** - 98% of all households have kerbside bins for recyclable items, however, the current participation rate is 49%. BVPI 82 a (dry recyclable) and b (compost) show first quarter 2007/08 **recycling performance is 22.58%** against a target of 21% by the end of 2007/08. However, new recycling targets have recently been set by DEFRA in the "Waste Strategy 2007". These are; 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020. These targets are in line with those of the Joint Strategic Waste Management Strategy, which all the Councils in the Wiltshire Waste Partnership have signed up to, therefore in Wiltshire we are working towards these new targets.
- 2.4 **Green Waste** - an opt in chargeable scheme was introduced for green waste collection in August 2005 and expanded in Spring 2007. The current take up is 6,600 households. The scheme was intended to be self financing but due to the way the service was introduced and the decrease in price from £30 to £25, as well as taking into account all costs incurred in running this service, the forecast for this year is a deficit of £50,000.
- 2.5 **Street cleaning and litter bin emptying** continue to be environmental aspects that matter to local residents. Currently, the service provided is reactive to complaints and requests and there is no district-wide schedule for these key services areas.
- 2.6 **Grounds maintenance** is provided on Council owned open spaces, including grass cutting, shrub, beds and tree maintenance. The service also carries out works for other

organisations, including Wiltshire County Council to carry out all highway verge grass cutting within the 30mph limit in urban areas. This service has been neglected for many years and requires a thorough review. There are currently no formal schedules or inventories of work, which makes it impossible to accurately assess its performance. Despite the lack of management information the service operates well with very few complaints. There are concerns, however, regarding the effectiveness and cost of the service provision to other organisations.

- 2.7 **Transport Maintenance** is provided at the depot for HGV's, LGV's and grass cutting machinery. In line with industry data, analysis has confirmed that it is more cost effective to purchase and maintain vehicles than to lease them. A vehicle procurement and maintenance programme is currently not aligned to the Council's budget, which has resulted in service inefficiencies. Work is also carried out for Westlea Housing Association and Chippenham Town Council, although this work has no formal contract and needs to be evaluated to ascertain its value for money.
- 2.8 **Public Convenience Cleansing** cleans, opens and secures 8 public conveniences across the district.
- 2.9 **Small Works Team** carries out small repairs and general maintenance to Council properties, e.g. public conveniences and car parks and litter bins in open spaces. It also maintains and services pumping stations and sewage works in the ownership of the Council, as well as carrying out a service for Westlea Housing Association to deal with blocked drains at their properties.

3. Service Improvements

- 3.1 The Service Improvement Board (formerly known as the C&A Best Value Improvement Programme Board) was set up following the Best Value Review of Cleaning & Amenities in 2005. The Service Improvement Board is focused on improving service delivery and performance.
- 3.2 The Service Improvement Board is chaired by the lead member, supported by the Deputy Chief Executive and has senior officer representation from front line and support service areas within the Cleansing and Amenities Service and the Council. It meets fortnightly and is focused on implementing improvements in line with the transition to one council for Wiltshire.
- 3.3 The Board commissioned an independent review of current operations, as highlighted above, to establish where service improvements and efficiencies could be made, where additional capacity and resources may be required, and what could be achieved prior to the transition to the new council. The review has been carried out by an external financial consultant with extensive experience in managing depot services in the public and private sectors. This report incorporates his findings and the Board's recommendations for improvement.
- 3.4 Based on the review, the Board has endorsed an action plan for improvements in a number of areas. The detailed project plan is available and will be reviewed by the Board on a regular basis and reported to the Executive on a quarterly basis, but the key areas are as follows:-

| Improvement Areas | Proposed Actions |
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| Waste Collection – Domestic | it is recommended that further work is undertaken to improve waste collection efficiencies and performance. This will include the fine tuning of rounds, reviewing the collection rates and implementing a number of human resources procedures to reduce overtime costs, the use of agency staff, ensure higher attendance records and reduce sickness levels. |
| Waste Collection – Trade | It is recommended that the viability of this service is assessed and future management options be considered. |
| Recycling – Kerbside | Implement a continual programme of education and awareness needs to go into getting the recycling message across to encourage those not currently recycling to participate. A campaign strategy in conjunction with the Wiltshire Waste Partnership needs to be implemented. |
| Recycling – Green Waste | Evaluate the current garden waste collection scheme. A well thought through strategy and careful management is required to ensure this service is operated in a financially sound manner. Report to Executive on proposals to reduce waste and increase recycling to an agreed target for 2008/09. |
| Streetscene – Street Cleaning Litter Bin Emptying | Implement a street cleaning schedule across the district and a bin emptying schedule. Review existing working practices in line with schedules and revise staffing resources accordingly. Implement emergency response teams to provide efficient reactive service complementing the agreed schedules. Procure 2 service vehicles for emergency response teams. Work with other councils as part of the transition programme to co-ordinate work in this area. Report to Executive on proposals to manage the implementation and emptying of litter bins across the district. |
| Public Conveniences | Align resources to the plans for closure and transfer. Review current working methods for cleaning and propose options for consideration. |
| Grounds Maintenance | Undertake a review of the service to include an assessment of data, inventory of equipment and schedule of works. Review the system for managing the implementation of section 106 land. Review the level of work undertaken. Produce an action plan to include improved co-ordination between other councils in delivering this service. |
| Small Works | Undertake review of works and assess viability and ensure records to demonstrate value for money. Record and measure the amount of non scheduled work carried out. |

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| Transport Workshop and Fleet | <p>Devise a new replacement programme that is built into the Council's budget and equipment fund.</p> <p>Review the service to both internal and external customers to ensure financial viability and impact of the service.</p> <p>Assess workshop extension requirements in accordance with health and safety.</p> <p>Undertake a review of the main cost elements of this service area and propose efficiencies in coordination with the transition to one council for Wiltshire.</p> |
| Financial Review | <p>The Cleansing and Amenities exceeds £4m. It is proposed to undertake a review of all the service budgets to assess if costs/income are correctly allocated and where efficiencies could be made.</p> |
| Systems Improvement | <p>Implement "Whitespace Power Depot", a software package specifically designed for waste collection, street cleaning and grounds maintenance (as approved by the Executive on 1 November 2007). The implementation of the new system will focus on customer needs and service improvements and provide accurate performance information.</p> |
| Customer Focus | <p>Review the first point of contact for Cleansing and Amenities service requests and complaints. It is proposed to review the customer contact centre and increase staffing to accommodate all enquiries relating to domestic waste collections, green waste recycling and bulky waste collections.</p> |
| Communications | <p>Implement a communications strategy to include campaign management, up to date web pages, service news, as required to customers and Members, regular staff briefings and management meetings.</p> |
| Staffing Structure – Roles and Responsibilities | <p>Implement a revised operational structure that clarifies roles and responsibilities of all staff.</p> <p>Create opportunities to devolve responsibility and provide training and development in people and management skills.</p> <p>Actions for improving the service will be "owned" by staff accountable for their delivery with an overarching project plan led by a dedicated project lead officer.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Service Improvement Board will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Improvement Plan with the lead project officer.</p> |
| Human Resources | <p>Review roles and responsibilities. Set clear targets and expectations for all staff. Implement revised structure. Agree standards and expectations for the service.</p> <p>Implement appraisals, briefings, return to work interview and support for managers to manage more effectively.</p> |
| Performance Management | <p>Install a robust system for collation of performance data.</p> <p>Agree targets and goals for the service area and accountability for delivery.</p> <p>Undertake a review of time and value of external groups and meetings.</p> |

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The cost to implement the improvements as shown above, including a revised structure is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 shows the cost of improvements, plus implementing a new structure would require revenue growth of £150,000 forecast budget for 2008/9, plus £35,000 for one-off growth actions. Given the number of reviews shown in the action plan it is suggested a contingency sum of £100,000 is allocated 2008/9 to include the identified £35,000 growth. In addition, a one-off capital growth of £40,000.
- 4.3 It is recognised that the service could be improved with dedicated financial expertise resource to ensure that the budget is being managed effectively and efficiencies are being driven and achieved where possible.

5. Community & Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The service provided within Cleansing and Amenities impact on every household and many businesses throughout the District. The improvements being implemented aim to improve the level of service and satisfaction of our customers.

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 To implement improvements in Cleansing and Amenities service area will need a review of existing roles and responsibilities. It is intended to minimise the impact and disruption to staff by encouraging opportunities for growth and expansion of roles in the transition to one council.
- 6.2 It is recognised that the service could be improved with a dedicated HR resource providing advice and mentoring on policies, procedures and people management.
- 6.3 There is currently not enough senior management capacity to take forward the improvements within the existing structures, to enable the improvements to be successful implemented it will be essential to appoint a project leader to manage and oversee the implementation.

7. Risks

- 7.1 To enable the above improvements to be delivered, it is essential to appoint a suitably qualified project leader to implement and manage the improvements. This has been costed into the new structure.

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| Appendices: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 1 – Table showing cost of new structure and capital and revenue growth items for 2008/9 <p>Note: A draft project plan for implementation has been produced within Microsoft Project. This has not been included within the report for circulation. A copy will be held with the Democratic Services Team for information should members wish to view it.</p> |
| Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report: | Previous Executive Reports and Resolutions |

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

| Report | Committee & Date | Minute Reference |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Procurement of Waste Management Software | Executive – 1st November 2007 | E105 |