

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **31 July 2018**
Title: **Update Report on Garden Waste Service**
Portfolio Area: **Commercial Services**
Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview & Scrutiny**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Any recommendations can be presented to the Hub Committee meeting on 11 September 2018

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Recommendations:

That Members are updated on the Garden Waste Service and have the opportunity to comment upon the future delivery of the service.

1 Executive summary

1.1 Members requested that an update on the garden waste service after the first year of service be brought before Committee.

2 Background

2.1 Members requested that an update report be brought before Committee after the first year of service.

2.2 The opt-in garden waste service began on 31st July 2017. The subscription year was set at October to September to ease pressure on Customer First during March when Council Tax demands are issued and to fit with the later start date.

- 2.3 The participation and subscription rates were based on that experienced by other councils with similar demographics and set at 35% and £40 respectively. From this, the net income forecast was £67,500 in the first year with £190,000 for each subsequent year.
- 2.4 In 2017-18, the actual number of subscriptions was 19%. However, the target net income was met, largely due to the high initial number of subscriptions and savings on forecasted expenditure.
- 2.5 Assuming that all subscribers re-apply for the service before October this year, the forecasted net income of £190,000 for 2018-19 will be met. This takes into account a lower than expected expenditure as the low subscription rate means fewer sacks and deliveries are required. However, this leaves no surplus for future replacement of sacks and misses the opportunity of boosting income if the original subscription target can be met.
- 2.6 The communications campaign for the service has included large banners at the two Household Waste Recycling Centres, traditional and social media, and roadshows. An initial campaign to boost participation and test methods of communication was ran during the week commencing 2 May 2018. This consisted of a full page advert in the Tavistock and Okehampton Times and a week-long Facebook advert. Costs for the two types of advertising were similar, but the effects differed dramatically.
- 2.7 During the week of 2 May, only 38 calls were received on garden waste which included all garden related enquiries e.g. new subscribers, replacement sacks and missed bins. However, the Facebook advert generated 1065 hits to the garden waste webpage (compared with 1600 hits from 1 August 2017 – 2 May 2018 inclusive). This clearly illustrates channel shift as the social media advertising was more effective than the traditional local newspaper method.
- 2.8 From those 1065 website hits, 51% went on to the subscription page but only 45 actually subscribed. We have since set up a survey on our website to try and ascertain what is putting potential subscribers off though this function has a low take-up rate so is of limited use (only two comments have been received to date). We will continue to monitor however.
- 2.9 Members previously requested that direct debit be available by the next payment year (October 2018). This has now been set up and to encourage take-up a discount is applied to new direct debit subscribers to this current payment year. Anyone subscribing after 2 July has/will pay £15 (rather than £40) to receive the service until 30 September.
- 2.10 A full communications plan is in place for the next year.

3 Options available and consideration of risk

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications of the contents of this report. However, subscriptions are lower than anticipated and this will affect future net income post 2018.

4 Proposed Way Forward

- 4.1 The Waste Working Group will be considering future options for the service taking into account the current waste and cleansing procurement process. As participation is below what is expected, the Group will explore and make recommendations on boosting participation and therefore income to ensure the budget is met year on year.
- 4.2 This recommendation fits with the corporate themes of Environment and Council.

5 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering and scrutinising how the Council is performing as an organisation.
Financial	Y	There are no direct financial implications of the contents of this report.
Risk	Y	The risks are set out at section 3 of this report.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	Not applicable
Safeguarding	N	Not applicable
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	Not applicable
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	Not applicable
Other implications	N	None

Supporting Information

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

Council Report of January 2017