

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 2 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair), Andrew Bennett, John Ballman, Michael Dickinson (Vice-Chair), Emma Faramarzi, Mary Friend, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Robert Wright, Vera Tomlinson, Steve Weisinger (Deputy).

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, Richard Hurley, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery) and Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Ford, Cindy Matthews and Stan Pajak.

1. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions asked.

3. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reminded the Committee that at its meeting on 16th December 2013, it had determined that Cabinet Minute 64 concerning "Proposed Changes to the Waste Collection Service", be referred back to the Cabinet "for consideration of the various financial issues raised during the course of the Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the matter". It had subsequently been determined that a special Cabinet meeting would be held on 2nd January 2014, followed by a meeting of this Committee on the same day to consider this matter. The Cabinet at its meeting held earlier, had determined to approve the recommendations in the further report it had received (2nd January 2014) and to reiterate its previous decision to implement the proposed changes.

79. *Proposed Changes to Waste Collection Services*

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council and Councillor Richard Hurley Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery), the Head of Commercial Services, the Head of Public Protection and Streetsmart, the Head of Finance and Strategic Projects, the Strategic Commissioner, Major Partnerships and the Head of Finance, Resources, Localities and Streetsmart responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors present regarding:

- A request for further information on the other local authorities offering a paid for green waste collection service that had been contacted by the Council and had provided data used to inform the Council's proposals, particularly, on the costs and the take up rate by residents. Southampton City Council was identified as one of the contacts and further information was requested on the data the Council had used to determine likely take up of the service

(Councillor Moffatt). The Head of Commercial Services agreed to make this data available to Councillor Moffatt and Scrutiny Committee members;

- Clarification was provided on the implications for operatives involved in the collection of green waste bags under the new service proposals given the advice received from the Health and Safety Executive regarding such collections (Councillor Bennett);
- Clarification on the cost of the service for those individuals on the green bag scheme in comparison to those on the green bin scheme was given and it was noted that bins provided a significantly greater capacity in a year than that provided by 100 bags but the charge remained the same for both types of service user (Councillor Small);
- Confirmation that the Cabinet Member and officers' calculations on the cost of the scheme had taken into account the probability that residents would group together and share the use of green bins (Councillor Tomlinson);
- Clarification of the cost elements of the service broken down on a year by year basis, including the purchase and delivery of the bin or bags and the costs of the collection service together with an explanation of how these elements were reflected in the proposed annual charge and in the estimated savings target (Councillor Tomlinson);
- Confirmation that over a seven year period, residents would find the proposed new green waste collection service financially beneficial when compared to the existing service (Councillor Dickinson);
- Clarification of the number of reported incidents and accidents to operatives involved in the current green waste collection service. It was reported that there had been no specific incidents in Swindon, but that the Health and Safety Executive were advising against current practise (Councillor Wright);
- Whether consideration would be given to the use of other types of containers apart from plastic bags, for those households that were not suitable to be provided with the green waste bin service, given the advice from the Health and Safety Executive (Councillor Wright);
- Clarification on the income received by the Council from the sale of the different type of recycled products (Councillor Bennett);
- Clarification of the implications in terms of operative and vehicle costs if take up was greater than anticipated, but did not reach the 50% threshold, where an additional collection round would be required. (Councillor Small);
- Clarification on how any spare capacity would be used given that the proposals looked for increases in the take up of the green waste service up to a 50% level where an extra collection round would be required, and that this implied that an existing underutilised capacity must exist within the staff and vehicle resources delivering this service. It was noted that the issue of spare capacity would be monitored as the service developed to ensure that any identified capacity was used effectively to support the Council and that the use of agency staff allowed for flexibility within the service (Councillor Small);
- Clarification on the capacity of the green waste bins together with an explanation on how estimated collection costs would be impacted in years with different growing conditions, for example very wet years such as 2012 (Councillor Wright);
- The possibility of investigating the practicality of providing a green waste collection point at the neighbourhood recycling centres, such as those in the rural areas at some distance from the civic amenity site (Councillor Penny);
- The number of bins to be bought for the implementation of the proposed service (Councillor Moffatt);

- Clarification on how the monitoring of take up would take place and how regularly the data would be reviewed (Councillor Bennett)
- Clarification on the percentage of the anticipated take-up of the green waste service that would be on the green bag scheme because of the nature of the properties involved (Councillor Dickinson);
- Clarification of the costs associated with the purchase of additional green bins should take up be greater than anticipated and on the “call-off” contract that was in place to facilitate this.(Councillor Dickinson).

Resolved - That the decision of the Cabinet (Minute 79 of the Cabinet) be noted.