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REFUSE, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In June 2012, Cabinet gave approval for consultation to start in relation to a number of proposals for service changes and in August 2012 the Citizens' Panel questionnaire found that, in order to save money:
- 88% of respondents agreed that the Council should consider a review of refuse and recycling collections, which may mean collecting refuse and recycling on a different day. As a consequence of this, a review of collection routes is now underway, with a view to working in zones. This will allow us to better utilise the time of some of our puller/loader staff for street cleansing duties, so that each zone would have a substantial litter pick one day per fortnight;
 - 94% of respondents agreed that the Council should move to an 'on demand' garden waste collection over the winter months;
 - 52% were happy for this to cover the months of October to March
 - 42% were happy for this to cover the months of November to January
- 1.2 In August and September 2012, a cross-party Member Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established to consider a review of street cleansing. They made a number of recommendations, which are incorporated into this report. These recommendations had implications for the service and the staff so it was appropriate to consider them as part of this review; those recommendations have been integrated into these proposals, and it is recommended that wider consultation is now carried out in relation to these.

2. OPTIONS AND IMPACT

2.1 Overview of Proposals for Consultation

Changes in service delivery are likely to have an impact on the level of service which can be delivered. This section provides an overview of the proposals. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be prepared following consultation.

2.1.1 *Changes to the Town Centre Caretaker (TCC) Service*

One of the recommendations of the TFG was to review the TCC service with the aim of possible reduction and more flexible working patterns being established.

It is proposed that this service is reduced and re-configured so that one team would cover all the town centres, rather than having one member of staff dedicated to one town centre. This will allow greater flexibility of deployment of staff to cover holidays and sickness. It is further proposed that

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consideration be given to providing this team environmental enforcement responsibilities. They would also be able to issue promotional materials to takeaways, nightclubs etc. with regards to the promotion of cleanliness, again as per the TFG recommendations.

This change would generate savings of around £31,000 per annum. A recommendation of the TFG was that the Whitworth Town Council contribution towards their Whitworth caretaker should be increased and that the reduction in contribution from RBC should be determined by the Director of Customers and Communities. She will carry this out in consultation with the Whitworth Town Clerk.

The savings are to be determined in consultation.

2.1.2 Reduction in the number of street litter bins

One of the recommendations of the TFG was to look at removing one cage truck which is currently used for collecting litter from street litter bins, and reducing the number of litter bins, through prioritising hotspot areas and removing bins which are under used, but maintaining the same level of collections and cleanliness. This would require the removal of around 86 bins (14% of the total number of bins in the Borough), which could be achieved by re-profiling some staff roles, removing bins with low usage and replacing clusters of smaller bins with fewer, larger bins. It is proposed that this recommendation is now considered as part of this review. Details of the proposals will be shared with all members to ensure full engagement in this process.

This change would generate savings of around £30,000 per annum.

2.1.3 Removal of recycling bring sites

Another recommendation of the TFG is to remove all 'bring sites' in the Borough. This is because residents now have a doorstep recycling collection service, and because many of the 'bring sites' are abused by fly tippers who do not dispose of their waste responsibly and who contaminate the recycling bins. This creates a great deal of additional work for staff, who then need to investigate and clear up the fly tipping. This is also unsightly for those residents living in the vicinity of these 'bring sites'. A number of these facilities which were on private land have already been removed at the request of the land owner for these reasons. It is proposed that the remaining 'bring sites' are now also removed.

This change would contribute towards allowing us to re-profile the work of one of our street cleansing crews to allow them to provide support to the refuse and recycling collection crews. This in turn would allow us to remove the front line Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) which currently provides 'back-up' to the service. This would generate savings of around £90,000 per annum.

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2.1.4 *Street Sweeping*

The TFG recommended that the Council review the frequency of the small mechanical sweepers (pavement sweepers) and investigate the feasibility of reducing one small sweeper. In addition they recommended that the rotas of the pavement sweepers and road sweepers be reviewed, which may result in the reduction of one of the large sweepers (road sweepers). They recommended joint working with Lancashire County Council to increase the number of times that grates are cleaned. It is proposed that these recommendations are now considered as part of this review.

Removing one small sweeper would generate savings of around £34,000 per annum and removing one large sweeper would generate an additional saving of around £64,000 per annum.

2.1.5 *Garden waste collections in summer*

Linked to 2.1.3, in order to contribute to allowing us to remove the current 'back up' crew and vehicle, we need to reduce the amount of time that it takes to collect garden waste in the summer. It is therefore proposed that the policy for providing a garden waste collection service is reviewed and modified, to include, for example:

- Limit of one brown bin per property;
- No garden waste collections for properties with back-yards only;
- Reduced or no garden waste collections for 'outlying' properties (where the crew would have to travel a distance to collect a small number of bins, for example).

In addition, as part of the review, opportunities in relation to income generation should be identified and brought forward in due course.

2.1.6 *Develop more flexible policy on returning for missed bins*

RBC currently has a policy whereby if a resident tells us that their bin hasn't been collected, irrespective of the reason, a Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) is dispatched to make a special trip to collect that bin. This usually occurs during or at the end of the day if there is enough time to make the trip, or the next day, even if a RCV is not due to be in that area that day. It is therefore appropriate in light of the wider review to update the policy and review the criteria therein.

2.1.7 *Proposals for consultation*

Because these proposals impact on all residents who live in the Borough, it is proposed that consultation will be via the Citizens' Panel Questionnaire. There will also be further consultation via the Overview and Scrutiny process. In addition, targeted consultation will be undertaken as required.