

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

18 September 2018

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT

This report seeks approval for a new “opt in” garden waste charge, the provision of new containers and a marketing/communications budget all associated with the new Waste Services Contract.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 At its meeting on 4th September 2018 Cabinet considered and approved a number of recommendations associated with the new Waste Services Contract. These included the award of the contract to the successful contractor, the approval of service options and the approach to future communication/marketing.

1.1.2 In addition, Cabinet made a number of recommendations to Council as follows:-

- the new opt-in garden waste charge at the standard rate of £40 per year, as outlined in the report to Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board at paragraph 1.4.3 be agreed; and further detail on a reduced introductory charge be considered in accordance with proposals set out at 1.4.3 at a future meeting of the Advisory Board;
- the provision of new containers for the Waste Services Contract be added to the Capital Plan, funded from the earmarked reserve, as set out in the report;
- a marketing/communication budget be established to publicise and promote the new enhanced service in the sum of £100,000 funded from the Invest to Save reserve”.

1.1.3 Members will be aware that the new Waste Services Contract is due to commence on 1st March 2019, with the new improved service arrangements to be introduced on a phased basis between 1st July – 30th November 2019. The new service arrangements will include the following:-

- weekly food waste collection;
- fortnightly collection of residual waste;

- alternate fortnightly collection of mixed dry recyclate in a wheeled bin with a separate container for paper and card, and
- the separate fortnightly collection of garden waste (as an “opt in” charged service).

1.1.4 The new Waste Services Contract will improve service delivery, meet customer expectations for kerbside collection of dry recyclates, improve levels of recycling performance and make a financial contribution to the Council’s Savings and Transformation Strategy.

1.2 Charging Proposals

1.2.1 The proposed charging regime considered by Cabinet for the “opt in” garden waste service were as follows:-

- Annual fee for fortnightly collection of garden waste from a 240 litre garden waste bin - £40.00. Initial introductory offer to be made to residents to encourage take up - £35.00 guaranteed for first 2 years.
- Garden waste bin to be provided free of charge and remain in ownership of TMBC.
- Neighbours will be entitled to share a garden waste bin so long as one of them takes out a subscription.
- Residents can join the scheme at any time throughout the year. Payment options will include direct debit.
- A subscription only sack service for those with no room for a bin will also be provided on a fortnightly collection - £40.00 for three 90 litre hessian sacks. Same introductory offer as garden waste bin to apply.

1.2.2 Council will note from the above that the proposed “opt in” garden waste scheme offers excellent value for money at under £1 a week for the service with a proposed introductory offer to encourage as many people as possible to join the scheme. The introductory offer equates to 67 pence per week and is below the national and county average. The introductory offer would represent the lowest charge for this service in the county. The proposed approach outlined above has taken into account good practice from other local authorities which have recently gone down this route. The proposed charge also takes into account the contract cost to deliver this service, the depreciation cost of the containers supplied free to residents, the administration costs of processing the application and the client costs associated with monitoring this aspect of the contract. A number of details relating to the application of the charges, particularly in relation to the introductory offer, will be considered at the November 2018 meeting of the Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board.

1.3 New Containers

- 1.3.1 The new collection arrangements will require both District Partner Authorities (this Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council) to purchase new containers for residents in relation to internal and external food waste collection, and the “opt in” garden waste service. The selection of the new containers will be considered by the District Partner Authorities in close liaison with the successful contractor and Members of the Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board. A sum of £700,000 was set aside in an earmarked reserve specifically to meet the purchase cost of the new containers.
- 1.3.2 The estimated cost of the new containers is in the region of £600k based on published figures from the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework. This accounts for 51,000 internal and external food caddies, caddy liners and 20,000 240 ltr. wheeled bins for garden waste. Subject to final product selection and costings it is therefore anticipated that the earmarked reserve will be adequate to fund the container purchase in full.

1.4 Marketing/Communication

- 1.4.1 At meetings of the Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board Members have stressed the need for a high priority to be given to communication with residents over the changes being made to the service. Members have also expressed a wish for a wide range of marketing techniques to be used to reach as many residents as possible, and for communication to start as early as possible.
- 1.4.2 To assist in this regard a Strategic Communications Overview was approved by Cabinet on 4th September 2018 incorporating objectives, key messages, key communication principles, audiences, route to market, timings and risks. The Overview will be used to develop a more detailed Operational Marketing Plan.
- 1.4.3 To deliver a comprehensive Operational Marketing Plan will require an adequate budget. Whilst it is not possible at this stage to accurately specify a budget, as a number of initiatives may be delivered in partnership with the contractor or TWBC, the Waste & Resources Action Programme suggests a minimum budget of approximately £1.50 per household for communicating details of a new service. This would suggest an overall budget of £100,000. It is therefore the intention to utilise the Invest to Save Earmarked Reserve to fund the implementation of the Operational Marketing Plan at this level.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Council has a legal duty to provide waste and street cleansing services. The adoption of the proposed recycling collection services is considered to assist the Council in meeting its requirements under the Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011, which are to provide separate collections where necessary to achieve high quality recycling.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The financial implications of the new Waste Services Contract were outlined in detail in the reports considered by the Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board on 4th September 2018, including financial details on the garden waste charge, new containers and the marketing and communication budget.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 The proposed “opt in” garden waste charge has taken into account good practice from other local authorities and is below the market average to encourage take up levels. In order to successfully introduce the new service arrangements it is essential that a carefully considered marketing plan is developed and implemented, designed to reach all of the community. Without such an approach there is a clear risk that residents will not fully engage in the new service and the objectives of the new contract will not be achieved. The budget to support the Marketing Plan has been based on industry guidance and close liaison will be undertaken with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, the successful contractor and Members of the Council. The use of a purchasing framework for the purchase of the new containers will address a number of risks associated with procurement, and will provide a cost effective and efficient means of providing the new food caddies and wheeled bins.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 A detailed EQIA on the new Waste Contract was reported to the 4th September meeting of Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board. The report identified actions to address any impacts identified in the EQIA.

1.9 Policy Considerations

- 1.9.1 Communications
- 1.9.2 Community
- 1.9.3 Customer Contact
- 1.9.4 Procurement

1.10 Recommendations

- 1.10.1 It is RECOMMENDED that:-
- i) the new opt-in garden waste charge at the standard rate of £40 per year, as outlined in the report to the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board at paragraph 1.4.3, be agreed; and further detail on a reduced introductory charge be considered in accordance with proposals set out at 1.4.3 at a future meeting of the Advisory Board;

- ii) the provision of new containers for the Waste Services Contract be added to the Capital Plan, funded from the earmarked reserve;
- iii) a marketing/communication budget be established to publicise and promote the new enhanced waste service in the sum of £100,000 funded from the Invest to Save Earmarked Reserve.

Background papers:

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Nil