

URGENCY ITEMS - MINUTE OF DECISION

Delegation arrangements for dealing with matters of urgency

Paragraph 7.2.1 of the Council's Constitution provides that Chief Officers may take urgent decisions if they are of the opinion that circumstances exist which make it necessary for action to be taken by the Council prior to the time when such action could be approved through normal Council Procedures. They shall, where practicable, first consult with the Leader and Chairman (or in their absence the Vice-Chairman) and the Opposition Spokesperson of the appropriate committee.

Subject: Budget Re-profile required to enhance the garden waste software system

Background Information

Previously the garden waste collection was delivered in partnership with Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) and Mansfield District Council (MDC). The garden waste service has approximately 11,500 garden waste customers.

At Policy & Finance Committee on 24 January 2019, Members agreed to transfer the administration for the garden waste scheme from RBC to an in-house provision and at the September 2018 committee to transfer the remaining RBC and MBC customers back in house, along with the addition of £450,000 into the Capital Programme for additional RCV's and to purchase the additional bins.

The first phase transfer from RBC was for the 4,500 properties administered by RBC but collected by NSDC. The renewal letters and stickers were sent out during February/March 2019 in readiness for the garden waste scheme commencing in April 2019.

Proposals

Following the initial transfer of these 4,500 properties it has been identified that further enhancements and modifications are required to the system used to administer the scheme to ensure that it meets both customer and process requirements for the additional 7,000 properties being transferred back to the council from April 2020.

Much was learnt from the first phase implementation and this second phase of software needs to be commissioned to address some of the usability and process flow issues that have arisen from using the initial implementation of the system for a number of months.

These enhancements/modifications include:

- Enabling bulk emailing for renewal letters which results in a streamline process for customers paying online and reducing postage costs.

- Addition of bar codes to enable customers who do not want to pay electronically to pay at post offices and other local outlets.
- Adjusting the collection routes in order to gain efficiencies.

Following the transfer of the 7000 properties from RDC and MDC an extensive marketing campaign, servicing the whole district, will take place to promote the garden waste service and increase take up.

The cost for the second phase of the software is £19,425. This is a one off capital cost and ongoing maintenance costs will not change from the current agreement.

The individual purchase price of the bins from RBC and MBC is less than was estimated in the business case at £80k however officers have managed to secure the bins at a reduced rate of approximately £54k, thus resulting in a saving of £26k.

Following the serving of notice to take the service back from the two respective authorities an agreement has been made whereby Newark & Sherwood DC will purchase and deliver all bins to new customers, signing up after 1 July 2019, within the Rushcliffe and Mansfield areas of the district. So far during the first week that cost has risen to £750. It is likely therefore that we will need to retain the £6k left over from the original £80k to cover these costs. It should be noted that this will still be using the money for the original intention all be it at a different point in the process. The remaining £20k could be used for the second phase of the software as described above.

Financial Implications (FIN19-20/1214)

As per the Policy & Finance Committee on 24th January 2019, £80,000 was added to the Capital Programme budget for 2019/20 to purchase the additional bins.

As per the Council's Financial Regulations, any underspends identified within the approved Capital Programme must be reported to Policy & Finance Committee and funding be released back to the central pot. However, it would be prudent at this stage to leave £6k of this saving with the budget for the purchase of bins, but the remaining £20k be redirected to Information Technology Investment.

Appropriate Committee:

Policy & Finance Committee

Details of Item and Decision Taken (including reason(s) for use of urgency procedure):

1. To seek approval for funding of £20,000 to be redirected to Information Technology Investment to enhance the garden waste software provision. The budget needs to be approved prior to the software provider being commissioned to carry out the work.
2. The enhancements to the software need to commence prior to the next Policy and Finance committee in September in order to meet the garden waste renewal schedule.
3. To use the £6k remaining to purchase garden waste bins for new customers in the two areas serviced by RBC and MDC.

Members Consulted:

Councillor David Lloyd - Chairman of Policy & Finance Committee – 18/7/2019

Councillor Paul Peacock - Opposition Spokesperson Policy & Finance – 16/7/2019

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'aef', written in a cursive style.

Date: 22/7/2019