

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	19 July 2017
Subject:	Bulky Waste Audit Progress Report
Report of:	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Rob Weaver, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor J R Mason, Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	2

Executive Summary:

To provide an update on the progress of the recommendations following the audit of the bulky waste collection service

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in respect of the recommendations arising from the bulky waste audit.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To provide assurance to the Audit Committee that progress is being made to address the recommendations and, where an assurance level of limited was recorded, actions are being taken to address this.

Resource Implications:

It is an action within the Joint Waste Team 2017/18 action plan to undertake a review of the bulky waste service.

Legal Implications:

None directly relating to this report other than the Council being mindful of its consultation responsibilities in respect of changes to services and/or charges under its best value (s 3 Local Government Act 1999) and equality duties (s149 Equality Act 2010).

Risk Management Implications:

Currently there are no staff dedicated to the management of the bulky waste collection service.

There is a risk that the audit recommendations may not be completed on time or in a sustainable manner if this cannot be assigned to a role within the Council.

Performance Management Follow-up:

A follow-up audit will be programmed in by the Audit department.

Progress is being made with Ubico Ltd to identify key performance indicators for service delivery which will include a target delivery time for bulky waste collections and bin deliveries. These KPIs will be the responsibility of both the Council and the contractor to deliver the service to customer satisfaction.

Environmental Implications:

None associated with this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 An audit of the bulky waste collection service was carried out during 2016/17 and the audit opinion reported to Audit Committee on 22 June 2016. The audit highlighted a number of improvements which can be read in the report and recommendations in Appendices 1 and 2. Two aspects of the internal control environment were given a 'limited' opinion. Where a 'limited' or 'unsatisfactory' opinion has been given, then it is protocol for the responsible manager to report back to a future Committee on progress in resolving the issues identified. The limited opinion related to:

- The bulky waste fee of £20 and the 50% discount for customers on housing benefit and Council Tax benefit (now Council Tax reduction scheme) had not been reviewed since 2011.
- Some areas of the borough were experiencing a seven week wait for a collection.

1.2 The bulky waste collection service not only collects bulky and furniture items from domestic properties, but also operates as a bin and caddy delivery service delivering new and replacement containers to new developments and existing properties. It also delivers the bins for events such as fetes and summer fairs. This diverse operation enables maximum use of the resources allocated to the service, which are a driver and crew member plus the caged flatbed vehicle.

1.3 The administrative management of the service has been with the Council since the transfer of operational services to Ubico Ltd in April 2015. Prior to April 2015, it was a combination of the Council's Customer Services department and the Direct Services department based in the depot to manage the service. Ubico Ltd now delivers the services based on customer orders and delivery requests made through the Council's Achieve computer system.

2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE FOLLOWING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The 2016 audit highlighted a number of areas of improvement to reduce the risks across the Council's business including financial loss, service delivery, and data management. All areas have been progressed with some work to continue as they are aligned with other Council projects. Progress towards mitigation of each identified risk is outlined in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Financial loss

2.2.1 A review of the charge has taken place and this has now been increased from £20 to £22 for all standard charges, with an increase in the discounted rate from £10 to £11. The

50% discount is for residents who are receiving housing or Council Tax benefits. This increase was implemented in April 2017. Moving forward, annually, fees will be reviewed in accordance with the Fees and Charges Strategy that was approved at Executive Committee on 26 April 2017. The cost for the delivery of new bins for new developments is covered by the Section 106 charge to developers for the provision of bins.

- 2.2.2** A further recommendation is for a full review of the bulky collection service which will be carried out by the Joint Waste Team and the Council this year, before April 2018, as per the implementation date. This is a programmed action; the Joint Waste Team action plan was presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 October 2016.

2.3 Service delivery and lead times for collection and delivery

- 2.3.1** As mentioned in Paragraph 1.2, the service team deliver a variety of functions, not only the collection of bulky items and furniture. Demand for the services provided is changeable with peaks being linked to new developments, especially for the bin delivery service.

- 2.3.2** In June 2016 the service was unable to meet the level of demand and the average wait time rose from approximately 14 days in March 2015 to 40 days in June 2016. To combat this additional days were put on to deal with the back log and changes were made to the way the service operates to increase the number of bookable slots from 460 per month to 610 per month, with additional slots being allocated to the Parishes with the highest demand.

- 2.3.3** The service lead times is standing item on the Agenda for the Ubico and Customer Services Team meeting to ensure that they are regularly monitored. Where a trend appears to be leading to a backlog, the team can move some of the higher demand area to the lesser demand areas days to reduce the backlog.

2.4 Data management

- 2.4.1** The bulky waste database has proved to be flexible in terms of being able to re-allocate calendar days when there is peak demand. In terms of developing a retention policy, this has yet to be implemented but will be picked up within the wider review towards compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulations. Improvements to the online offering to customers will be in place by the end of August. The website page and the online form for the request and payment of a bulky waste collection are currently under review. The Council's new website was scored 3* (out of 4) by the Society for IT Practitioners in the Public Sector (SOCITM) which has made recommendations, particularly around improvements to the reporting of bulky waste collections. This is now taking priority within the new online forms project and should lead to the website achieving a maximum 4* rating.

2.5 Refund policy

- 2.5.1** A new waste and recycling policy is currently being drafted with the intention to have it formally approved in autumn. The terms and conditions will come from this policy. In the meantime, additional information about the service will be added to the website to improve the service that customers receive. In terms of refunds - albeit small in number - delegated authority has been given to the Customer Services Team Leader to approve such refunds.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1** None

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 None

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Gloucestershire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2007-2020
The Council Plan 2016-20 (Customer Focused Services, Finance and Resources)

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990
Waste Strategy for England 2007

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 None from this report

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Ensuring the management of the service delivers value for money

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Bulky Waste Collection Service Price Increase April 2017

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: Appendix A: Bulky Waste Audit 2016/17 Recommendations
Appendix B: Bulky Waste Audit Report 2016/17