

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 September 2017
Subject:	Ubico Update Report
Report of:	Peter J Tonge, Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Peter J Tonge, Head of Community Services
Lead Member:	Councillor J R Mason, Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	2

Executive Summary:

The report provides an interim update on the Ubico contract for waste and recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services.

The report details the performance outturn figures for 2016/17 and the first quarter figures for 2017/18.

Recommendation:

To consider the 2016/17 outturn and 2017/18 quarter 1 performance update on the services provided by Ubico.

Reasons for Recommendation:

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2017 it was agreed that an interim report on the performance of Ubico be provided to the Committee at its meeting in September 2017 given that the next annual report is not due until July 2018.

Resource Implications:

None

Legal Implications:

None

Risk Management Implications:

There are no significant new risks or opportunities arising within the period under review.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Performance is monitored and managed in conjunction with the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team through the monthly client meetings, Environmental Service Partnership Board and the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

An interim improvement plan has been created to monitor the immediate improvements that need to be made as a result of issues arising from the roll out of the new service. This is monitored regularly by officers of the Joint Waste Team, Council and Ubico and regular corrective action is taken.

Environmental Implications:

None

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2017 it was resolved that an interim review of the performance of the Ubico contract be undertaken and brought back to the Committee in September.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Ubico has been delivering the Council's waste and streetscene services since 1 April 2015. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the performance of the contract on an annual basis.

2.2 The 2016/17 annual review report provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2017 did not include Q4 figures due to the timings of the report. It was agreed that, going forward, reports would be prepared for the July Committee meetings to enable full year performance figures to be included and allow for comparison year on year; as such the next annual review report is due in July 2018.

2.3 In order to align to the financial year, Members requested that an interim report be provided with the 2016/17 performance outturn figures.

2.4 In addition, at the meeting in May, Members raised concerns about service failures that had arisen as a result of the service change that was implemented in April 2017. As such, the Committee requested the report include Q1 figures so that it could monitor performance to date.

3.0 PERFORMANCE

3.1 Appendix 1 attaches the Commissioner Report which is prepared for the Partnership Board and details service requests, performance and health and safety statistics.

3.2 Residual Household Waste Per Household (kg/per year) and Household Waste Reused, Recycled and Composted

3.2.1 The table below shows the 2015/16 and 2016/17 outturn figures and also shows the Q1 figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

3.2.2 The final outturn for 2016/17 shows a decrease in the amount of residual waste sent to landfill and an increase in the percentage of waste reused, recycled and composted. This is positive given the backdrop of declining recycling rates nationally.

3.2.3 The 2017/18 Q1 performance is showing a further improvement which is probably as a result of the communications to residents on the service change which reiterated how residents can recycle more of their waste.

	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17 Q1	2017/18 Q1
Residual Household Waste per Household (kg/hh)	427	410	109	93
Percentage of Household Waste Reused, Recycled and Composted	50.68%	53%	54.8%	58.44%

3.3 Percentage of Household Collections Completed on Schedule

3.3.1 On a weekly basis there are 86,000 collections taking place which equates to 4.4 million collections per year.

3.3.2 During 2016/17 there were 2,240 missed collections (on average 43 per week) - well within the contract target of 99% of collections completed on schedule (of total collections). The total for Q1 was 620. Q1 of 2017/18 has seen a significant increase.

Comparison of numbers of missed collections for quarter 1.	2016/17 Q1	2017/18 Q1
	620	2,034

3.3.3 Whilst it is acknowledged that a service change will normally result in an increase in missed collections, issues would usually be resolved and the service return to normal levels within a two month period. However, the level of missed collections in June 2017 was still at 503 and rose again in July to 534.

3.3.4 The increase in missed collections has resulted in a high level of calls to the Customer Services team and multiple call-backs from customers leading to complaints and customer dissatisfaction. The nature of the missed bins is shown in the table below:

Type of bins missed	No of Missed	% of total missed
More than one bin e.g. refuse and food or recycling and food	100	5
Food	961	47
Garden	361	18
Refuse	337	17
Recycling	275	13
Total	2034	100

3.3.5 Food waste represents the highest numbers of missed bins; this is likely to be due to new driver and crews and the fact that food waste is now collected on a separate vehicle with new dedicated rounds. It has taken some time for the public to get used to this change in particular.

3.3.6 The impact of matching Ubico's round changes with our existing garden waste system has resulted in unexpected challenges in respect of Ubico's garden waste collection lists, such as properties on the same street being on different collection days or residents paying for bins which are located at different properties (i.e. private or social

landlords). This has resulted in missed garden waste bins and a level of investigation per instance. We are working with Ubico to find resolutions to each collection list issue as it arises.

3.3.7 Also, during the first quarter, there has been an increase in the numbers of residents reporting that they are having repeated missed collections. Over 530 residents fall into this category which - although a small number of the total 39,130 residents (1.36%) - is still a poor level of service for the residents that are affected.

3.3.8 At the end of Q1, approximately 150 missed bins were being reported per week which represents 0.17% missed collection rate. In response to this, an improvement plan was agreed with Ubico with the following key aims:

- to reduce the number missed to collections to less than 100 per week by the end of August, and a further 50% reduction by the end of October (from the end of Q1 figure). This will equate to 0.09% missed collection rate - well below the 1% performance target;
- improve communications between Tewkesbury Borough Council and Ubico;
- develop better reporting systems; and
- ensure that the stock of bins is monitored and maintained in order for Ubico to deliver bins to residents when needed.

3.3.9 The improvement plan has had some success and, as of 14 August, missed collections were down to 95 per week; although this reduction is not yet consistent. The number of missed recycling and refuse bins has reduced and Ubico is continuing to focus on the missed food waste and garden waste bins to ensure that the October target is met. As such, Ubico has increased the supervision to support these crews to identify specific problem areas that remain unresolved. The additional supervision has included visits to specific properties that have reported an intermittent service to try and identify why missed collections may be occurring. Property visits also include a discussion with residents, if they are available, and updated instructions or reminders are provided to crews to ensure a consistent service for future collections.

3.3.10 There is recognition at Ubico that, as the garden waste is paid service, it is imperative that repeat missed bins are reduced. A system must be in place to ensure that those that pay receive a consistent and high quality service and those who do not are clearly identifiable. In response to garden crews not always finishing the rounds, Ubico is maintaining 3 garden waste crews to cope with elevated levels of garden waste and to ensure rounds are completed through the summer and into autumn.

3.3.11 When there are service issues that may result in delayed collections (e.g. breakdowns, blocked access) Ubico has improved proactive communications to Customer Service so that messages can be communicated to residents to inform them about the issues.

3.4 Bin Deliveries and Bulky Waste Collection

3.4.1 The new system for bin deliveries and bulky waste collection has reduced lead times to an acceptable level. There are further improvements being implemented in September which will add an additional 2 days per month to the schedule in areas where demand is

highest. The lead times are monitored at the monthly Joint Waste Team / Customer Services / Ubico meeting and corrective action is put in place if lead times start to rise. Currently wait times vary from between 2 to 4 weeks.

- 3.4.2** In June Ubico ran out of garden waste bins which resulted in bins not being delivered to residents at the agreed time and under-utilisation of resources for a short period. As mentioned above, as part of the improvement plan Ubico has assigned a person responsible for monitoring stock levels, gaining quotes and ordering bins and has committed to maintaining adequate levels of stock. In addition, following a review of the Swindon Road depot, more space has been identified to store larger numbers of bins on site. This will also help to resolve any stock issues going forward.

3.5 Grounds Maintenance

- 3.5.1** The Head of Community Services has identified a shortfall in the monitoring of the grounds maintenance service, which is carried out by Tewkesbury Borough Council, and is in the process of developing an action plan to rectify this situation as a matter of urgency. Various options have been explored for improving how this element of the contract is managed and the Officer responsible for this work is now leaving the Council. Therefore, the Council's Management Team has approved the direct recruitment of some specialist resource to assist with this project and in carrying out the role. Recruitment is underway and it is hoped to have someone in post by the end of the summer.

- 3.5.2** When the resource is in post, Ubico has committed to support the review of the grounds maintenance service to ensure that existing resources are being used according to need and demand.

- 3.5.3** Grounds maintenance is also provided by the County Council and there may be an opportunity to improve the coordination and efficiency of grounds maintenance services for residents across Tewkesbury Borough. Appropriate engagement with the County will be included as part of the ongoing development of the action plan to explore any opportunities to achieve this aim.

3.6 Street Cleaning / Litter / Fly-tipping

- 3.6.1** The Joint Waste Team is commencing a review of the street cleansing service in September to analyse the type of requests that are being received by the Council and establish if there are better ways of working. This work should be completed by the end of Q3.

- 3.6.2** The fly-tipping figures reported in Appendix 1 are the number of reports that are sent to Ubico to investigate. The numbers have reduced from 261 in Q1 2016/17 to 234 in Q1 2017/18 which may be due to the pro-active enforcement work that is being carried out by the Environmental Health team. Tewkesbury Borough Council is only responsible for removal of fly-tipping from public highways and Council land. If a fly-tip is on private land, including housing association land, it is the responsibility of the landowner to clear the area rather than the Council.

- 3.6.3** The actual number of fly-tips that the Council was responsible for clearing in Q1 2017/18 was 106; this was the same figure as Q1 2016/17. The reason that the number of fly-tips reported is higher than those which are cleared is because there are often duplicate reports of the same fly-tip and some of the fly-tips reported to Ubico are on private land or housing association land. Where there are reports that are on housing association land, Ubico liaise

directly with the housing association so that they can get them cleared and pass any reports of fly-tips on private land to the Environmental Health team to liaise with the landowner.

4.0 FORMAL COMPLAINTS

4.1 The table below shows the number of complaints by year by complaint type:

Complaint Type	No of complaints	
	2016/17 (total)	2017/18 (Q1 only)
Waste and Recycling		
Crew Behaviour e.g. crew rude to member of the public	11	1
Standard of service e.g. containers not being returned back to position,	15	2
Failure to provide a service e.g. repeat missed bin	17	15
Damage to property	4	2
Policy e.g. changes to rounds, days	4	1
Grounds maintenance	5	

4.2 The details of the 2016/17 complaints were provided in the report in May.

4.3 The context of the complaints for Q1 2017/18 is similar reoccurring issues although there has been an increase in those relating to repeat missed bins. The policy-related complaints were as a result of the service change in April and the fact that a resident was unhappy that they had to wait for 3 weeks between collections due to routes changing as they had not received a calendar. There were two reports of damage to property but only one of these was upheld. The vehicle's CCTV was checked and shown not to have caused the damage to property as suggested.

5.0 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

5.1 The 2016/17 Q3 forecast was an overspend of £28,000; however, the end of year outturn was more positive with an actual outturn of £7,801 overspend. This was due to a small overspend on staff costs in refuse and recycling, although savings were delivered in other areas to mitigate this.

5.2 The 2017/18 Q1 outturn is an overall £8,000 overspend, which is leading to a projection of £40,000 by the year end. Ubico is working to manage this to keep to the budget and reduce this overspend through the course of the year.

5.3 Full details of the financial performance for 2016/17 and 2017/18 can be found at Appendix 2.

6.0 COMMUNICATIONS / PROJECTS

6.1 In July 2017, Gareth Edmundson the new Managing Director at Ubico attended the Member Seminar at Tewkesbury Borough Council to improve communication and understanding of Ubico and how it works in partnership to deliver Council services. At this meeting a service improvement plan was presented which covered reducing missed collections, improving communications and ensuring better bin stock control processes were put in place.

6.2 Ubico is working in partnership with the Council to improve online forms to make them simpler and clearer, as well as improving the back office systems to improve the communications between the Council and Ubico operational staff and between the Council and residents. The first new stage of this project will go live in September. The changes to the system will also enable the collation of improved data so that more effective performance indicators can be implemented and in place for 2018/19.

6.3 Ubico is also working with the Council to support the introduction of a garden waste licence system in April 2018 that will provide customers with clearly visible stickers to place on their bins to identify who has paid for the service.

6.4 The joint review of the ownership, management and profitability of commercial waste services is in progress and a full report is due shortly.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Improvements are being made and officers of the Council, Joint Waste Team and Ubico are working closely together to monitor progress regularly.

7.2 Particular improvements have been made in reducing the number of missed bins and better communications between partners has assisted greatly in this and has enhanced the level of communication with our communities.

7.3 Management are determined that the issues are resolved effectively and more quickly and are closely monitoring standards and will take corrective action as necessary to resolve any further issues.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 None

10.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

10.1 Joint Waste Committee Business Plan
Ubico Business Plan

11.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

11.1 None

12.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 12.1 None
- 13.0 **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 13.1 None
- 14.0 **IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 14.1 None
- 15.0 **RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 15.1 None

Background Papers: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 2 May 2017

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Ubico Commissioner Report
Appendix 2 – Ubico Financial Reporting