

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 March 2018
Subject:	Ubico Update
Report of:	Peter J Tonge, Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Robert Weaver, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor J R Mason, Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

The report provides an update on the waste collections and grounds maintenance services provided by Ubico Ltd and informs Members of the work underway to review street cleansing services.

This report covers waste and recycling services, the garden waste club, grounds maintenance and street cleansing services.

The report looks at the improvement plan that has been put into place following the roll out of new rounds in April 2017.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the update on the waste collections and grounds maintenance services provided by Ubico.

Reasons for Recommendation:

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2017, it was agreed that the interim performance of Ubico be monitored by the Committee as the next annual report is not due until July 2018.

Resource Implications:

None

Legal Implications:

The Council's contract with Ubico dated 1 April 2015 includes provisions relating to contract monitoring and contract performance. Any changes to these arrangements may be accommodated through the contract variation provisions included in the contract.

Risk Management Implications:

A failure of our waste service could damage the reputation of the Council. This risk is managed through the contract management procedures that the Council has in place.

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 needed 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

1.1 In April 2017, the Council completed its fleet procurement and the new fleet was delivered. The Council had taken the view that it was more financially prudent to undertake a procurement exercise and purchase its own fleet. The fleet was due for replacement as the contract with CP Davidson expired at the end of March 2017. The new fleet has been purchased with consideration for the increase in housing growth in the borough during the lifetime of the fleet.

1.2 The procurement of this new fleet was a major project and was primarily managed by the Joint Waste Team in close liaison with the interim head of service and Ubico.

1.3 Significant round changes were planned and introduced in April 2017 and over 60% of the borough had a change of day or week to their waste and recycling collection, including a change to the way that food waste was collected, now in a separate vehicle rather than a pod on the main waste vehicle.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Any change to waste collections are expected to cause a degree of disruption to the service as drivers and operators settle into new rounds and new ways of working and members of the community get used to their new waste days or new collection methodology. Normally, this would disrupt the service for a short time but experience tells us that this settles down within a month or two.

2.2 In this case, however, the disruption continued well past this two month period, and to some lesser extent still continues, although there has been improvement due to the close working of Council officers, the Joint Waste Team and Ubico.

2.3 As a result of this an improvement plan was put into place to ensure that the Council saw improvements in the number of missed bin collections and, importantly, missed assisted collections. Assisted collections are where the customer cannot, for one reason or another, place the bin in the collection location themselves.

2.4 Also during this period a key member of staff who managed grounds maintenance retired from Ubico and the Council lost its client side monitoring officer for grounds maintenance. This led to a lack of knowledge and oversight of this element of the contract.

3.0 WASTE & RECYCLING SERVICES

3.1 At the end of Q1 2017, approximately 150 missed bins per week were being reported which represents 0.17% missed collection rate. In addition:

- There was an increase in repeat missed bins and particularly concerning was the number of assisted collections that were being missed.
- Public complaints were rising and, as the focus was on embedding the new service, these were not being responded to in a timely manner.
- The stock of new bins was not being checked and on several occasions Ubico ran out of bins.

3.2 Bins and/or caddies can be missed for a variety of reasons including a new crew member on the round, bins not being left in the usual place etc. This is particularly likely with food caddies due to their size.

3.3 In response to this, an improvement plan was agreed with Ubico with the following key aims:

- To reduce the number missed collections to less than 100 per week by the end of August, and a 50% reduction by the end of October on the Q1 figure. This will equate to 0.09% missed collection rate, well below the 1% performance target.
- Improve communications between TBC and Ubico.
- Develop better reporting systems.
- Ensure that the stock of bins is monitored and maintained in order for Ubico to deliver bins to residents when needed.

The standard of our waste collections continues to be monitored and improved.

3.4 The improvement plan has been monitored regularly at the various contract management meetings and some improvements have been achieved.

The table below shows the number of missed bins for the year to date by month.

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
1115	447	553**	690**	332	352
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	
262	279	418*	465*	326	

3.5 It should be noted that June and July had five collection weeks and that December and January saw snow and Christmas disruption.

3.6 As a result of the improvement plan we saw significant improvements for the months of August through to November and missed collections were brought down to a more acceptable level.

3.7 In addition to the close monitoring of missed bins another method of dealing with “repeat” missed collections was initiated - this was the introduction of the “red list”. This is a list of properties that had their bins missed on more than one occasion and were therefore the focus of additional attention.

3.8 Being on the red list means that a supervisor will pay particular attention to that property for three weeks and will check that this bin in particular has been collected.

3.9 The standard of our waste collections continues to be monitored and improved.

4.0 THE GARDEN WASTE CLUB

- 4.1** This year has seen the launch of the garden waste club. Membership of the club is an easy way of disposing of garden waste for composting on a fortnightly basis through kerbside collections of a brown wheelie bin.
- 4.2** Members of the club pay an annual fee, currently £45.00. Previously, customers had separate annual renewal dates meaning that the Council was invoicing and processing payments all throughout the year. We have now moved to a single annual renewal date making this process much more cost effective and timely.
- 4.3** Once customers / members have paid their annual subscription they are sent a distinctive adhesive sticker to place on their brown bin also making it easier for the collection crews to identify bins that are for collection. We currently have approximately 16,000 members.

5.0 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- 5.1** The Property team has been working with Ubico grounds maintenance team since the start of the winter works programme to establish a better working relationship and understanding of the current workloads and resource availability. The Asset Manager has met with the grounds maintenance crew to discuss their current issues and for the crews to explain their issues in delivering a better service.
- 5.2** Introduction of a task management software system which allows tasks to be logged and managed and KPIs to be monitored and detailed to ensure customers can be better informed as to progress of works. Property will be instructing work through this system to ensure the correct priority levels are being set with each task.
- 5.3** This is the start of agreeing a service level agreement and task will be instructed within the following categories:
- *Urgent*: if the task has health and safety implications or could have representational risk for TBC or Ubico this should be actioned within 24 hours.
 - *High*: to be action within two weeks.
 - *Medium*: to be action within three months.
 - *Low*: to be actioned in six months.

The new system will monitor and produce reports as to how Ubico is performing within these parameters.

- 5.4** The issues that were identified included:
- the current equipment isn't ideal for some of the tasks it is required for;
 - there has been a lack of investment in the equipment;
 - staff felt they had not been listened to regarding these issues;
 - work was being completed on land that is not owned by TBC; and
 - tasks were being completed based on historical information that was out of date.
- 5.5** All crews have been issued with mapping of the borough which shows TBC land ownership, the crews are updating these maps to include details of hedgerows and their annual winter works programmes. The maps are also being updated to include details of Gloucestershire County Council and Parish contracts to ensure the crews have a full understanding of what is required across the whole of the contracted works.

- 5.6 Ubico has invested in new small tools equipment, i.e. chainsaws, and has trained additional staff to use them, and are currently working up the grass cutting rounds to ensure these are the most efficient and meet TBC expectations.
- 5.7 The working relationship has improved greatly, with TBC's Property team having a greater understanding of the works being completed and Ubico having a better understanding of TBC expectations. TBC will continue to work with Ubico to develop the contract to include SLAs, quality management and KPIs.
- 5.8 In the late spring/early summer a further piece of work will be started to ensure grounds maintenance work across the borough is better coordinated with partners to ensure the most effective use of resources.
- 5.9 Recycling rates have seen a small but positive increase and are currently at a rate of 55.97% (as at Q3) and forecast to be 55.3% at year-end compared to 53.29% in 2016/17 (full year).
- 5.10 Equally importantly, the amount of waste sent to landfill has decreased to 283 kg / household (as at Q3) and forecast to be 367kg /hh at year end down from 411 kg / household in 2016/17.

6.0 STREET CLEANSING

- 6.1 The Joint Waste Team is commencing a review of the street cleansing service to analyse the type of requests that are being received by the Council and establish if there are better ways of working.
- 6.2 Since the services were transferred to Ubico Ltd in 2015, a new fleet of cleaning vehicles has been procured and much housing development has taken place.
- 6.3 A review is required to evaluate the service performance and also to decide whether the current levels of resourcing, frequencies of cleaning activities and schedules are sufficient to meet the service standards and legislation. The purpose of this street cleaning review is to appraise the current practices carried out by the Council's environmental service provider, Ubico, in line with the relevant governing legislation and the Council's vision under the Clean and Green Environment Portfolio.
- 6.4 This review will evaluate all aspects of the street cleaning services and provide a plan for the future in order to deliver cost efficient and excellent service.
- 6.5 There is a need to deliver high quality services on pressurised budgets and the street cleaning services can have unpredictable and expensive outlays such as fly tips and hazardous waste removal. Therefore, it is important all opportunities of smarter and joint working with other organisations are maximised as much as possible.
- 6.6 This review will cover the opportunities available, contacts and work areas where smarter working opportunities can arise.

7.0 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- 7.1 Budget setting for the forthcoming year has been much more robust and the Council's Finance team and the Head of Community Services, supported by the Joint Waste Team, have much more oversight of the process and made comments and suggestions at an early stage.

7.2 This ensures that the budget setting process is more accurate and incorporates elements such as a budget for road closures, agency staff etc.

7.3 Work to manage the budget better continues, for example, Ubico is considering ways to reduce the reliance of agency staff across its contracts.

8.0 CONCLUSION

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

8.2 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.

8.3 Management is 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.

9.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10.1 CONSULTATION

10.1 None

11.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES /STRATEGIES

11.1 Joint Waste Committee Business Plan
Ubico Business Plan

12.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

12.1 None

13.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

13.1 None

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

14.1 None

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

15.1 None

16.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

16.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 May 2017

Background Papers: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 May 2017

Contact Officer: Peter J Tonge, Head of Community Services
01684 272259 Peter.Tonge@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: None