

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	23 November 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Depot Services Working Group Update
<b>Report of:</b>	Waste Contracts Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Head of Community Services
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Clean & Green Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	2

## **Executive Summary:**

In July 2019, this Committee agreed to establish the Depot Services Work Group in order to facilitate a better understanding of the operational, financial and governance aspects of Ubico and its partnership relationship with the Council.

The Terms of Reference for the Working Group (Appendix 1) require a report be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a biannual basis to update Members on the work undertaken. The last update was received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2021 at which time Members noted the good progress made and agreed that the Working Group should continue at least for another municipal year. Since that time, the Group has met on two occasions and this report provides the Committee with an update on progress so far this year.

## **Recommendation:**

**To CONSIDER the progress of the Depot Services Working Group.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To update the Committee on the work of the Depot Services Working Group.

## **Resource Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

## **Legal Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

## **Performance Management Follow-up:**

The Working Group will operate within the guidelines set out in the Terms of Reference. The Working Group will report back to this Committee at the end of the Municipal Year.

**Environmental Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** At its meeting on 23 July 2019, this Committee agreed the establishment of the Depot Services Working Group. The reason for establishing the Working Group was set out in a report to this Committee and, in part, included the fact that Members have, at times, expressed frustration about a perceived lack of control and transparency with Ubico. It was considered important that Councillors understand how Ubico operates and the relationship between the Council and the company.
- 1.2** The stated aim of the Working Group was to receive reports and information pertinent to the operation and strategic direction of waste and recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services.
- 1.3** The Terms of Reference for the Working Group (Appendix 1) require a report be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a biannual basis to update Members on the work undertaken. The last update was received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2021 at which time Members noted the good progress made and agreed that the Working Group should continue for at least for another municipal year. Since that time, the Group has met on two occasions and this report provides the Committee with an update on progress so far this year.

**2.0 WORKING GROUP CONSIDERATIONS****Meeting 1 – August 2021**

- 2.1** At its first meeting of the municipal year in August, the Working Group considered and agreed its Work Programme for the year (Appendix 2).
- 2.2** The Working Group also received an update from the Accountancy Officer on the budget position at that time. Members noted the considerable rise in fly-tipping that had taken place over the last 12 months and discussed concerns about the national driver shortage which is caused by external factors, outside of the control of the Council and Ubico, which may have impact on our services.
- 2.3** Members also received a presentation from the Ubico Head of Operations on in-cab technology / connected workforce which is a way of managing the communications better between the customer, Council and Ubico operatives via digital technology. They heard about some of the benefits to that system such as sharing information in real time rather than the current system of e-mails et.c which is time consuming and slow. This system should be available for the Tewkesbury contract some time during 2022/23.
- 2.4** Members received a briefing on the Council's response to the DEFRA waste and resources strategy consultation and the potential significant financial and operational impact that this may have on the Council's waste services if some of the proposals on the consultation were imposed on the Council.
- 2.5** Finally, the Working Group was informed that a new Waste Contracts Manager had been appointed and was due to start in his role in August and also that the Council had undertaken a soft launch of the Small Waste Electrical Items collection service and that a full launch was planned for September.

## **Meeting 2 – October 2021**

- 2.6** At the second meeting of the group in October, Members received an update on Ubico's quarter one performance and raised a number of queries around why the number of food collections were higher than missed collections for other waste streams; fly-tipping collection performance; and health and safety issues. The Ubico Head of Operations outlined actions Ubico was taking to address the issues.
- 2.7** The Working Group discussed in some depth the current trade waste project and considered the project plan that was presented by the Principal Trade Waste Officer. Members heard about the improvements to the bulky waste service and that it was expected approximately 70% of the material collected would be recycle rather than going to landfill as previously and also the fact that the service should generate a surplus in income in order to support other elements of the waste service and minimise cost to the Council tax payer.
- 2.8** Members received a verbal update on the depot project in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council and expressed concern that this project was taking some time to get off the ground. Members asked that Tewkesbury Borough Council consider a plan B in the event this project did not move forward.
- 2.9** Finally, the Working Group received an update on the seasons grass cutting to date. Members were advised that the grading and overall quality of grass cutting had improved as it approached the end of the season. The group also heard about improvements that had been made in the two cemeteries within the borough to address quality issues experienced earlier in the year. Concern was raised that some of the work identified by the previous Grass Cutting Working Group had not progressed and was reassured that this work was noted in the Work Programme but it was a matter of prioritising the work that needed to be undertaken. A further discussion took place regarding the work that the Council carried out on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council on grass verges and considered a suggestion that wildflower planting could be undertaken in these areas instead.
- 3.0 NEXT STEPS**
- 3.1** The Working Group is due to meet two further times this municipal year in December 2021 and March 2022 to consider the matters as set out in the Work Programme.
- 3.2** A further report will be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 April 2022 summarising the work undertaken during the year. At that time Members will be asked to consider whether there is a continuing role for the Group and if any changes to the Terms of Reference are required.
- 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 4.1** None
- 5.0 CONSULTATION**
- 4.2** None
- 6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 6.1** None

- 7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 7.1 Waste and Resources Strategy 2020.
- 8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 8.1 None
- 9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 9.1 Service changes or improvements relating to waste collections will be in line with the Waste Framework Directive and the Waste Hierarchy and aim to deliver more sustainable waste and environmental frontline services.
- 10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 10.1 None
- 11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 11.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 23 July 2019

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**Background Papers:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee report - Depot Services Working Group Update – April 2021

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 - Depot Services Working Group - Terms of Reference.  
Appendix 2 - Depot Services Working Group Work Programme