

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 March 2023
Subject:	Depot Services Working Group Annual Report
Report of:	Waste Contracts Manager
Head of Service/Director:	Head of Community Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	1

Executive Summary:

In July 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish the Depot Services Working 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 state that it will continue to meet in line with the Ubico contract extension to March 2027. The Working Group has met on four occasions throughout 2022/23 and considered a wide range of subjects as set out at paragraph 2 of the report.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made by the Depot Services Working Group during 2022/23.

Financial Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Safeguarding Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Impact on the Customer:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At its meeting on 23 July 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish the Depot Services Working Group to ensure that Members fully understood the relationship between Ubico and the Council. The primary aim of the Working Group, as set out in the approved Terms of Reference, was to receive reports and information pertinent to the operation and strategic direction of waste and recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services.
- 1.2** At its meeting on 5 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the work undertaken by the Depot Services Working Group in the previous year and approved the continuation of the Depot Services Working Group in line with the Ubico contract extension to March 2027. A biannual update report was provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2023.

2.0 WORK UNDERTAKEN DURING 2022/23

- 2.1** In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Working Group has met on four occasions during the year and, at its first meeting, agreed a comprehensive work programme in order to focus the meetings and ensure that all projects are being monitored and progressed.
- 2.2** There are a number of standard items on the Agenda for each meeting as follows:
- Ubico Quarterly Finance Report
 - Ubico Quarterly Performance Report
 - Grounds Maintenance Update
- 2.3** In addition, the Working Group receives updates on a number of projects at appropriate intervals, progress on which is summarised below.
- 2.4 Trade Waste Project**
- 2.4.1** A trial area has operated in Brockworth for much of the year which expanded the service offered to include recycling and investigated the appetite for food waste collections. Work has taken place to have systems in place to streamline the customer portal and automate processes ready for administration to move to the Council from Ubico.
- 2.4.2** Due to inflationary pressures increasing the deficit, a review of the service is underway, being led by the Head of Community Services. This review will determine if a change in approach is now needed to remove the service deficit.
- 2.5 Street Cleansing Review**
- 2.5.1** The majority of litter and dog waste bins have now been mapped using PSS-Live and the next phase will be mapping regular litter picking and fly tip hot spot checks. Routing can then take place through PSS-Live to increase the efficiency of the crews.
- 2.5.2** Around 70 properties receive weekly refuse collections rather than the full waste and recycling services. A previous plan to alter collections for these properties within the streets service was superseded by a successful growth bid to have two 3.5 tonne vehicles within the collections service to address collections safety issues in narrow roads across the borough.

- 2.5.3** An Officer group has been set up to monitor litter bin requests, as part of a long term focus on consolidating bins through working more closely with Parish Councils across the borough. This group also focuses on areas where bins are collected outside of local authority responsibility, such as a small number of housing estates where management companies have retained responsibility.
- 2.5.4** A review of road zoning has started which will support the street sweeper schedules. The zoning work is being input into existing GIS software with a view to being linked directly into the new in-cab software once it is operational.

2.6 Depot Project / Strategic Waste Site

- 2.6.1** Work is now progressing on the depot project and various options are being considered. The next step is for the Council to agree to the principles and establish a joint programme board to include the relevant Lead Members and a programme team to oversee and deliver the various phases of the project. This is a long-term project and is likely to run for six to seven years.

2.7 Connected Workforce/In-Cab Technology Project

- 2.7.1** The Alloy system has been procured of behalf of four Gloucestershire authorities. The system has already gone live in Cheltenham and Gloucester, with Stroud and Tewkesbury following from April 2023. For Tewkesbury Borough Council, collections will go live in quarter one; streets and grounds will use the system by quarter three.

2.8 Grounds Maintenance

In addition to the regular items and projects, the Working Group is also responsible for progressing a number of recommendations made by the previous Grounds Maintenance Working Group. Progress against these items is as follows:

2.8.1 Maintenance of Land on Behalf of Gloucestershire County Council

Officer discussions were held with Gloucestershire County Council through summer of 2022 with the aim of reducing the number of subsidised rounds of grass cutting, introducing meadow areas on County Council land or removing some of the least efficient rural cutting locations. Unfortunately, these talks stalled; however Members were keen that another attempt was made by Officers to find a way forward before alternative approaches were considered. This approach has resulted in positive discussions and a cut and collect proposal to support meadow areas is currently being considered by the County Council.

2.8.2 Grass Cutting Standards

A more robust set of grass cutting standards was implemented in the previous year, but the results of improvements made by Ubico's Grounds Maintenance Supervisor were available following the first full grass cutting season since the changes were made. Grass cutting scores increased from a 48% pass rate in 2021/22 to 82% in 2022/23, which reflected significant improvements in the service.

2.9 Fleet Procurement

- 2.9.1** The majority of waste and recycling collection vehicles, street cleansing and grounds maintenance vehicles are due for replacement in April 2024. A procurement approach was developed and shared with the Working Group before being discussed and agreed by the Executive Committee.

2.9.2 The approach takes into account the uncertainty created by the delayed consultation feedback on waste policy and the goal of reducing carbon emissions from the waste fleet against the backdrop of the financial pressures on local authorities.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 None

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 None

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 None

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 None

Background Papers: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report – 23 July 2019
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report - Depot Services Working Group Report – 5 April 2022

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Depot Services Working Group Terms of Reference