

**Public
Key Decision - No**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Garden Waste Subscription Service Update

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny – 11th July

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Simone Taylor

Report by: Andrew Rogan, General Manager for Operations

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Huntingdonshire District Council approved the decision in September 2023 to introduce a garden waste subscription service. This service went live on the 1st April 2024. The design and the role out of the scheme was informed by significant engagement and input from members, parish councils and the feedback they provided from their communities.

We committed to providing members with updates on the impact of the scheme, and the supporting presentation is designed to do that and to enable councillors, to explore the delivery of the project, and to raise any questions that they have.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Review and comment on the presentation outlining the early results of the introduction of the garden waste subscription service.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform members on the outcome of the introduction of the garden waste service, and to provide members with the information to scrutinise delivery, and to appropriately inform their residents should they have questions.
- 1.2 The presentation covers all aspects of the project planning, operational delivery and community initiative schemes enacted as part of the change, and input is sought on all three areas.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

- 2.1 The service went live as planned on the 1st April 2024, which was a bank holiday, and with minimal operational issues to both the waste collection service and customer services.
- 2.2 Subscription demand has been higher than forecast, with significant take up of the “early bird discount”, which enabled residents to take advantage of a preferential subscription rate, which will be held for three years. This also enabled the service to take advantage of being able to use this subscription rate to use February and March to design waste rounds, and minimise operational issues when the service went live. The outcome of this scheduling on large numbers of subscribers across the district meant that collection days and the fortnightly scheduling did not have to change for residents.
- 2.3 The service was designed to be digital by design, supported by enhanced customer service support in our call centres. Between the end of November 2023 and the end of May 2024 the customer service team answered and dealt with 13,063 enquiries. Given that the bin subscription service has approximately 40,000 subscriptions this equates to two-thirds of subscriptions being handled entirely digitally and is testament to the technical delivery of the project, allowing residents to subscribe and have payment taken entirely via the HDC website.
- 2.4 The recognition of the scale of the change to residents was clearly understood as part of the programme, and planned for via additional customer service resource, and communication support. The high level of take up, and relatively low level of customer contact, missed bins and complaints, indicate that impacts of the change have been minimised.
- 2.5 In seeking to minimise the impact of the service changes, the council committed to a programme of community initiatives to seek to ensure that no member of the community was differentially impacted by the service. Full details can be found here - Garden Waste Community Initiatives - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk. Take up on these services has been slower than anticipated, but this is likely in part due to be the higher than anticipated take up of the subscription service, and the slow start to the growing season.

3. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The garden waste subscription service contributes to Priority 3 of the corporate plan, and our commitment to “Doing our core work well”.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current financial costs of the service are within the budget envelope agreed for the project, and will be subject to quarterly reporting.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Garden waste subscription service update presentation

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