

Call in of Cabinet decision on Shared Service for Waste and Street Cleansing Contract

We respectfully request that the Shared Service for Waste and Street Cleansing Contract is called in for the following reasons;

We acknowledge that there is a need to find both capital and revenue savings, and that as the largest item on NHDC's a budget, the waste contract cannot be exempt from this cost cutting exercise. However the way in which the contract has been handled, both in respect of lot 1 and lot 2 – the options – has not been transparent.

In particular, we believe the Council's duty to consult is taken extremely lightly and due regard has not been paid to the outcome of the consultation carried out. Over 8,000 people responded to the survey. But when recommendations were placed before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Committee was not furnished with any demographic breakdown of the results in order to evaluate whether the respondents represented an accurate and proportional representation of residents of the district. But more concerning was the recommendation to introduce a charge of £40 for green waste despite 85% of the respondents being against this. We also note the survey questions on how much people were prepared to pay for the service did not offer a 'nil' response. So the survey was geared towards delivering a pre-desired outcome.

Officers have completed a cursory risk assessment which indicates those on low incomes, older people, and people with disabilities are likely to be adversely affected by this decision. But nothing has been put in place to mitigate against the hardship these groups will face as a result of this decision. This is in direct opposition to Objective 1 of the Corporate Plan - To work with our partners to provide an attractive and safe environment for our residents, where diversity is welcomed and **the disadvantaged are supported**. To direct these groups to household recycling centres or to purchase home composting units is not, in our view, a suitable solution, nor is it one which recognises their needs and is in-keeping with the spirit of Objective 1. The decision not to allow payments by instalments is likely to further impact our most vulnerable residents disproportionately to other groups.

We are concerned that this decision will also be detrimental to the Council achieving its KPIs on recycling. A target of 60% recycling rates has been in place for some time, and currently NHDC is achieving 58%. The introduction of such a policy is likely to have a negative impact on this target. It will also increase the use of waste and recycling centres in Letchworth and Stevenage, which will have a negative environmental impact. We have seen no evidence that this has been considered and steps taken to avoid and mitigate against this. No information on the work with County Council to deal with increased facility use has been provided.

We have heard from other areas that fly tipping of green waste has increased as a result of the implementation of similar charges. The bins used for garden waste have also been dumped. So far no detail on how this policy will be implemented and risks avoided has been provided.

The main reason for introducing the charge for garden waste is revenue raising. But we've not been presented with a clear and proper assessment of the financial business case for this – which includes the expected return on investment. We also question what measures will be put in place to protect revenues and discourage bin-

sharing. So it's impossible to objectively assess whether this policy will meet its objective.

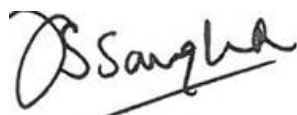
We note councillors will determine at some future date whether garden waste may be included in the residual bin. We are concerned that this point has not been considered so far as it will have financial and performance implications.

We also question whether the selection of the cheapest, and lowest scoring on quality, contractor for Lot 1 of the contract will deliver on the Council's KPIs. Councillors have been unable to consider whether this decision really does represent value for money as we have not been provided with the objective data and scoring matrix used.

The decision to transport waste to East Herts also increases the carbon footprint of the contract. Coupled with potential increased traffic to recycling centres we are concerned whether this decision is compliant with the Corporate Plan's objectives and air quality targets, bearing in mind the vehicles will likely be diesel powered. Officers have not reported on this so far.



Cllr. Ian Mantle



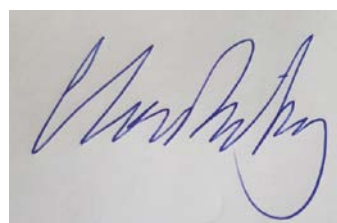
Cllr Deepak Sangha



Cllr Judi Billing



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