

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1 November 2018

POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR THE COLLECTION OF GARDEN WASTE (REP1742)**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report sets out the performance of the Easy Green Bin (EGB) scheme for the year 2018.
2. Year 1 saw a very good performance with around 50% of eligible households opting into the paid scheme. This is the highest level of sign up in the county, when compared with all other Suffolk District Authorities.
3. High points for the year include higher than expected sign up from new householders, continued growth in online sign ups, both in terms of online applications but also in the form of email rather than in person contact.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Graham Catchpole, Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships
Supporting Officer:	Kerry Blair Head of Operations 01502 523007 kerry.blair@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 2018 is the third year of the Garden Waste Scheme (previously referred to as the Easy Green Bin Scheme or EGB). The paid scheme replaced a previously free collection service, and was put in place as part of a Suffolk wide initiative to review the way green waste was processed and charged.
- 1.2 The smooth running of the scheme was essential, as the introduction of charges was a sensitive issue. The intention was to both recover some of the costs of collecting organic waste through households, without impacting on important work that had been done to encourage recycling in the county over many years.
- 1.3 The project in years one and two was a success, with a level of sign up to the scheme that outperformed all other districts within the county at that time.
- 1.4 Lessons were learned during the roll out, which were used to improve the second year of the programme in Year 2.
- 1.5 This report sets out the findings from Year 3.

2 PROJECT REVIEW

- 2.1 This section explores what went well, lessons learned and actions to take forward.
- 2.2 Lessons learned were passed down from year 1 to year 2, with some successful achievements:

Lessons Learned from Year 2:	
Self and order forms need to be thoroughly tested on multiple devices before taking the campaign live.	Successfully complete in year 3
The cash payment system needs to be "Owned" by the green waste specialist team in Customer services to avoid customers slipping through the net.	Successfully complete in year 3
Processing orders and shipping stickers needs to be done on a pre-agreed timetable to avoid delays.	Successfully complete in year 3
Avoid January start to the campaign if possible	A January start to taking orders was unavoidable as explained in 2.3
Better training for Customer Services Agents needed ahead of the start of campaign – especially temps	Successfully complete in year 3
Channel shift means that a greater number of customer queries now come via email. Staffing levels were too low to cope with the increased email traffic at the beginning of the campaign.	Staffing Levels adjusted to cope with increased online comms
CRM email addresses are not validated and customers supply fake email addresses.	Firmstep improvements successfully deployed

2.3 What went well:

- Year 3 saw the introduction of a new computerised Waste Management System at Norse (Bartec) which has enabled real-time integration with the Firmstep Forms.

Initial teething troubles caused a slight delay to the start of the campaign. However, it has brought benefits to the online user experience, and streamlined the administration of the scheme.

- A new bin sticker design was employed to address some customer issues. The production of the stickers used new manufacturing techniques so that the letter and backing to the sticker are both recyclable. The sticker design also enabled a more efficient process for printing and dispatching to customers.
- Reduction in complaints and customer issues when compared to years 1 and 2 of the scheme.

2.4 What could have been done better?

- It remains an objective of the project team to start the year 4 campaign during December 2018 to try to smooth out the peak of customer contact during the campaign and to avoid issues experienced in January 2018.

2.5 WDC will be working with Norse in Year 4 to introduce rolling subscriptions in an effort to taking forward further service improvements. The change aims to further smooth demand for signing-up to the scheme throughout the year, and to reduce complaints caused by having a fixed collection period (1 March to 28 February each year). Customers joining the scheme after 1 March have missed out on some collections under the current scheme. Rolling subscriptions will mean starting their collections a few days after they sign up and continuing for the full 26 collections.

2.6 Norse will also be introducing a new system for checking membership of the scheme that will eventually remove the need for bin stickers entirely. The system involves fitting a tag, similar to the ID passes used by staff at Riverside, to each bin. The tag can be read by special devices, used by the refuse collection crews, to identify the property to which the bin belongs. The positive ID will enable onsite checking for a current garden waste subscription before the bin is emptied.

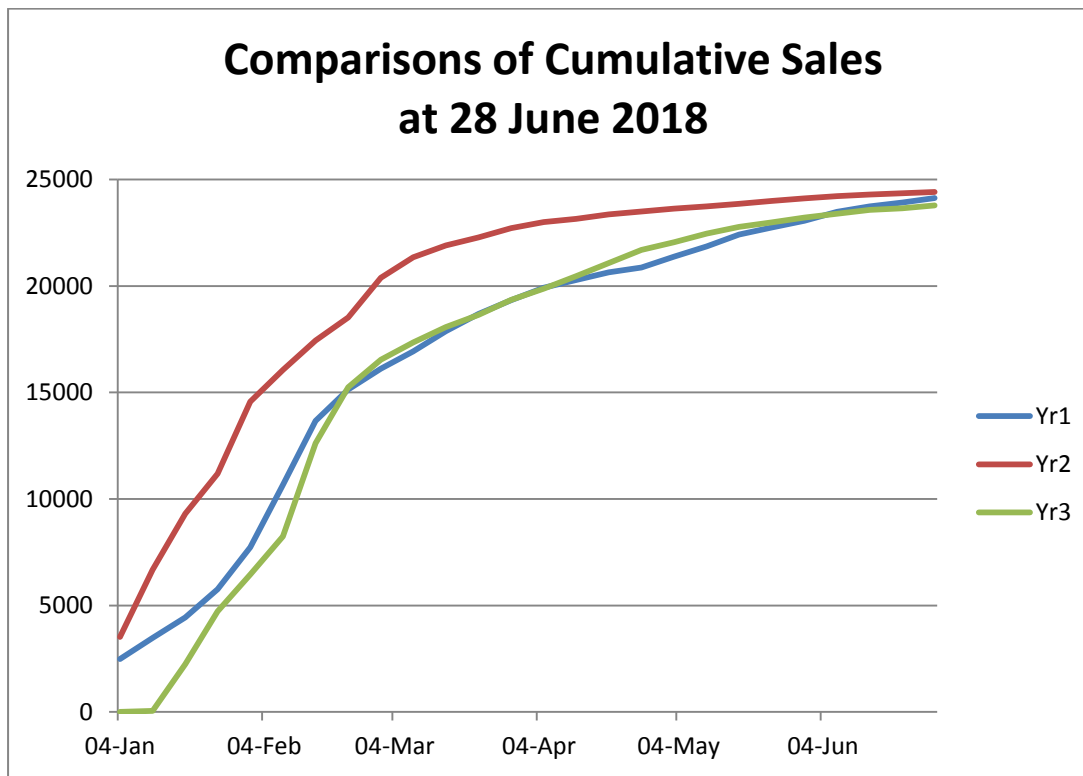
3 SALES UPDATE

3.1 As of 12 October 2018, the Waveney Garden Waste orders reached 2424,482 (or 25062 bin subscriptions) providing gross revenue of £1,077,600. That represents approx. 97.5% of the target orders for the year and places sales approx. 650 behind the Year 2 subscriptions.

Comparison	Year 3	Year 2
Orders taken (up to 28 June both years)	23,779	24,409
Gross Revenue (to 28 June)	£1,022,500	£1,025,200
Percentage of orders placed online	51%	51%

3.2 The proportion of orders placed online continues at 51% with the other 49% placed through the call centre or in person at the Marina Centre.

3.3 Sales activity through the year compared with years 1 and 2:



4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 4.1 This project helps WDC achieve a number of key elements of the East Suffolk Business Plan:
- 4.2 Financial self sufficiency: The introduction of the scheme has reduced the level of subsidy that WDC needs to put into the green waste collection and processing service. The delivery of waste collection is one of the highest items of cost for District Councils, therefore the success of this project has a high impact on the budgets of the authority.
- 4.3 Channel shift: part of the strategic approach of the authority moving forward is to change the way that citizens engage with the authority, moving more and more interactions online and ensuring that face to face meetings are used for more complicated issues. The EGB project has achieved a high level of success, ensuring that over half of sign ups and subsequent enquiries are made electronically.
- 4.4 Trading and income generating: The council has identified a number of areas in which it is possible to generate revenue, so as to reduce the financial pressure on other council services. Money generated through the EGB scheme supports the financial strength of the council in delivering a wide range of services each year.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This table shows the level of income achieved through the EGB programme in 2018:

Financial and sales information (see also appendix)	
<i>Financial information is estimated based on orders received up to and including 28 June 2018</i>	
Gross Revenue to 12 October 2018	£1,077,600
Properties Subscribing to 12 October 2018	24,482
Bins subscribed to 12 October 2018	25,062

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Overview and Scrutiny note this report as a summary of the progress of the scheme in 2018.
2. That areas for learning are explored, and any actions that need to be carried over into the delivery of the programme in 2019 are summarised and implemented