

Bromsgrove District Council Waste Service – Update report for Overview and Scrutiny 1st October 2018

Introduction & Overview

The Waste Collection Service operates a statutory service across Bromsgrove District, providing a domestic waste collection service to every household on a two week cycle of 4 day working (06.30 - 17:00 Tues – Thurs, 06:30 - 16.00 on Friday – 37 Hours Total), alternating between the Grey Bins for residual waste one week, and the Green Bins for recycling waste on the second week.

In addition to this, we operate a discretionary Garden Waste Service for which a charge is made, that operates across part of the district in conjunction with the Grey Bin service, and the other part of the district in conjunction with the Green Bin service so that residents receive their collections on the same day.

The Depot also operates a Commercial Waste Collection Service and a Commercial Tanker service for Cesspool emptying that generate an income for the Council, and have both experienced strong growth in the last 3 years.

To provide these services, the Council started the 2018 financial year with funding for the following resources in our structure (Unchanged from 2017/18 Financial Year):

- 51 Staff.
- 13 full crews 9 Domestic & 4 Brown (39 staff)
- 2 crews of 2 Trade & Rural Domestic Round. (4 staff)
- 1 Tanker Cesspools (1 staff)

That is 44 staff needed every day on the books, leaving 7 Spare Staff every day to cover A/L & Sickness.

We need 6 staff to cover holiday over the course of the year. (Garden waste staff are a bonus to help with this, but only over winter whilst the service is not available).

However, it was identified that operationally, we have also been running the following due to growth of the services.

- 1 Crew of 2 Trade Recycling (2 staff)
- 1 Tanker Cesspools (1 staff) – Continuing growth in customer base
- Snagging Bin Deliveries (1 staff) – Full time role with new properties and increasing trade waste customer numbers
- 1 Crew of 3 Round 11 (3 staff). Used to accommodate New Builds across District.

Therefore 7 additional people were needed every day, which leaves us with no one on the books to cover A/L & Sickness without taking staff from other service areas which then impacts on their work. This is not considered to be a sustainable option.

In 2017/18, BDC spent £93,641¹ on Agency staff to support services as a result of sickness, as the structure had no additional resources to absorb an impact on the service.

¹ Offset by £16,446 underspend on salaries due to a vacant post and a member of staff on £0 Pay due to length of sickness absence. Actual overspend for 2017/18 was £62,641

Until 2015, this level of expenditure was written into the budget, but the restructure of Environmental Services in 2015 provided for new staff to act as “pool staff” to support the service where needed.

The Pool staff have since been used to support front line service rather than cover sickness and leave as had been intended. The cost associated with the cover for sickness and leave provided by agency staff had been mitigated by savings in other areas of Environmental Services and therefore were not highlighted.

As part of an ongoing review of the Environmental Services Budgets to support Council Wide savings, budgets have been refined to more accurately reflect our expenditure, which means current expenditure levels result in overspends to current budgets.

Between April – June 2018/19, it was identified that there was approx. £90,000 expenditure on Agency staff across BDC & RBC Waste service (some of this covering vacancies & long term sickness)². This equated to 10-12 agency staff being used almost daily across the joint Environmental Services waste team (BDC & RBC) to plug holes and provide services, but this was alongside finishing times that typically averaged 3.30pm under Task & Finish arrangements, that didn’t utilise the full time available from our existing staff.

This was discussed with our Portfolio Holder as a concern, and that we would look to review how we delivered the service across the District and assess what was achievable with our current resources.

In order to determine if additional staffing was needed, and give us evidence to support a formal business case to support the service now and for the future (ref new housing over the next few years), it was determined that we would look to refine our services to confirm our current capacity within our structure, and ensure we were achieving full efficiency with our existing resources.

Route Optimisation data and observed finishing times were used to determine that the service should be deliverable with current resources, and service changes were planned based on that data. A low risk was identified around changing the routes to spread the work across the rounds, as this might have resulted in small scale issues if the work wasn’t balanced evenly, but it was felt that this would be equivalent to the level of disruption when we experienced a vehicle breakdown, and would be manageable across all the rounds.

The first step in planning these changes was to ensure that all positions intended to support the Domestic Waste collection were filled, with temporary posts filling all the additional roles that had been putting pressure on staffing domestic services.

After recruitment of these roles, it was identified that we would have a pressure on our annual leave due to new starters having pre-planned leave in addition to the leave already booked by staff, but sickness levels had been consistent over the previous few months and it was felt that this would be manageable as part of the project, so the risk to the service was considered to be at a manageable level with low risk to the wider service.

To ensure staff understood what was being done and why, the plans for the changes in service delivery were discussed face to face with the Waste Teams, along with details on monitoring and recording of how the

² As of 20/9/18 £70,469 spent on Agency to support the waste service in Bromsgrove, which gives us a current overspend for this year of £55,469 (mainly covering sickness. Vacant post filled August 2018).

service has operated to either confirm delivery, or evidence specific failings for review and potential future business cases.

Actions implemented to support service review

As part of reviewing our service delivery, we planned for the changes by ensuring that were filled. In addition, temporary posts were filled to support the growth in service areas that were previously utilising the domestic waste staff.

The recruitment process to support an accurate review of the Domestic Waste collection service took place during July/August 2018, and formalised temporary contracts for roles that were being undertaken, which would be reviewed formally as part of a separate business case for the future of the commercial service.

- 6mth Temp - Bin Deliveries Person (1 staff) - Funded from increased income.
- 6 mth Temp - Trade Recycling Driver & Loader (2 staff) – Funded by additional income from service.
- 6 mth Temp - Tanker Operative (1 staff) – (Funded by additional income from service)
- Permanent – Domestic Waste Loader (1 staff) - Replacing vacant post due to retirement
- Formal Sickness Cover – 2 Agency – Domestic Waste Loader (2 staff) – covering for sickness

This recruited/formalised all the trained Agency Staff that were on our books, and increased the establishment to 56 staff funded by additional income.

Part of the changes to service introduced Round 11, an extra round that had been introduced operationally, but all of our evidence from observed finishing times and our route optimisation software indicated that there was capacity within our structure to put this work back on to our other crews. (Figures below show calculated finishing times inclusive of Round 11, although in practice Round 11 was finishing earlier than planned, and then supporting other crews which resulted in earlier finishing times across all areas).

As such, this was stopped w/c 21/8/18, and this also released 3 staff back into service for covering sickness & A/L. Monitoring was planned for the wider workload to determine if additional resource is needed to accommodate new builds across the district now/in future.

The planning indicated that there was a low risk of minor disruption as crews absorbed this work back into the core rounds, and rounds were adjusted to balance the workload and make use of the spare capacity identified across the service, the plans for service delivery were discussed with the Waste Team so that all staff were aware of what was happening and why, along with details on monitoring and recording of how the service has operated to either confirm delivery, or evidence specific failings for review and potential future business cases.

Any failings that might have occurred from the original planned changes were expected to be limited to small areas and would be managed as soon as they were identified, in the same way as vehicle breakdowns are managed in day to day service. As there would be changes to some residents collection times, and there was an identified risk that there might be minor disruption during the implementation of these changes, details were circulated to members, and the Council Website was updated with information on the planned changes and details of why we were reviewing how we delivered the service.

The service has previously made significant changes to service delivery as an on-going process of evolution around the volume of work and issues that might cause problems. This has included changing days of

collection for large numbers of residents as part of operational route planning, or changing the routes to avoid pinch points that are identified within each day’s work, and have been done without any significant disruption.

The work was expected to be a routine part of service change, which is an on-going process not normally circulated outside of the service area, and staffing had been strengthened to support this process. As such there was no consideration of briefing CMT or Leaders group.

As can be seen from the chart below, which summarises the staffing levels for the BDC waste collection before and after our recruitment and adjustments to services, the main changes that had been made were to formalise staffing and make it clearer to see where issues in service delivery might have arisen as part of the project.

	Staff formally in Post	Pool staff used on additional services	Pool Staff to cover A/L & Sickness	Vacant Posts	Temporary Posts	Average No. of Agency Staff used daily	Total
Staffing Before	50	7	0	1	0	8	58
Staffing After	56	0	7	0	4	2	58

All of the changes being implemented were discussed with Unite, GMB and Unison Representatives in July, and the GMB representative confirmed that all other local authorities they were dealing with were going through the same sort of reviews and changes at the moment in light of the current financial pressures on local government.

ROUTE	OP	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8	Round 9 (Rural)	Round 10	Round 11	Total Hours	Number of Rounds	Unused Capacity	Spare Capacity per Round
Tues (9.5 Hrs)																
Aston Road		6.11	5.95	6.55	6.4	6.83	5.63	7.14	6.6	8.16	7.19	8.19	74.75	11	16	1.5

Weds (9.5 Hrs)																
Aston Road		7.57	7.51	6.2	5.97	7.28	7.53	6.75	6.09	5.77	7.17	7.49	75.33	11	15.42	1.4

Thurs (9.5 Hrs)																
Aston Road		6.8	6.7	6.14	5.66	6.54	7.53	6.29	7.07	7.33	7	6.48	73.54	11	17.21	1.6

Fri (8.5 Hrs)																
Aston Road		5.19	7.45	7.29	7.58	6.63	5.85	7.17	7	5.2	5.32	0	64.68	10	7.82	0.8
															56.45	

Current Staffing Data

BDC

	Staff on the Books	Total Working Days	Total A/L	Sickness*	Staff needed to cover absence	Staff needed to cover holiday
Domestic	29	6032	725.0	301.6	1.5	3.5
Brown	12	2496	300	124.8	0.6	1.4
Trade Waste	2	416	50	20.8	0.1	0.2
Trade Recycling	2	416	50	20.8	0.1	0.2
Tanker(s)	2	416	50	20.8	0.1	0.2
Snagging	1	208	25	10.4	0.1	0.1
Pool	8	1664	200	83.2	0.4	1.0
Agency	5	832		41.6		
	56	12480	1265	343.2	7.5	6.7

Total No of Days Worked	208
Total A/L	25
*Estimated Yearly Sickness (% staff days)	5

Staffing Levels – Holiday & Sickness

The table below shows our staffing and sickness levels during the period of disruption, and in combination with the chart shows that the Service Failure that occurred was not as a result of the changes to the service, but unprecedented sickness levels that completely changed the dynamic for providing the service.

We exceeded the maximum number of people on Annual Leave in late August, as several of our new starters had pre-booked holidays that we had to honour. The maximum we should have on leave is 9 staff, without impacting on service. “On Loan” are staff pulled from other teams to support delivery of the refuse service.

Date	Total Staff on Books	Total Staff Required	Holiday	Sickness	On Loan	Agency	Available	Difference
21/08/2018	56	47	9	4	1	2	46	-1
22/08/2018	56	47	8	4	1	2	47	0
23/08/2018	56	47	9	4	1	2	46	-1
24/08/2018	56	47	10	4	1	2	45	-2
28/08/2018	56	47	9	10	2	2	41	-6
29/08/2018	56	47	10	11	1	2	38	-9
30/08/2018	56	47	10	11	1	2	38	-9
31/08/2018	56	47	13	12	1	2	34	-13
04/09/2018	56	47	7	11	1	2	41	-6
05/09/2018	56	47	8	12	5	3	44	-3
06/09/2018	56	49	5	11	10	2	54	7 (3 Extra Crews)
07/09/2018	56	49	7	10	9	2	53	6 (2 Extra Crews)
11/09/2018	56	47	5	6	0	5	50	3
12/09/2018	56	47	5	6	0	5	50	3
13/09/2018	56	53*	6	5	3	5	53	0
14/09/2018	56	53*	7	5	3	5	52	-1
18/09/2018	56	47	6	6	2	5	51	4
19/09/2018	56	50**	6	6	1	5	50	0
20/09/2018	56	50**	7	6	1	5	49	-1

* 2 Additional Rounds put on to support service – Double Collections.
 ** 1 Additional Round put on to support service – Safeguarding service

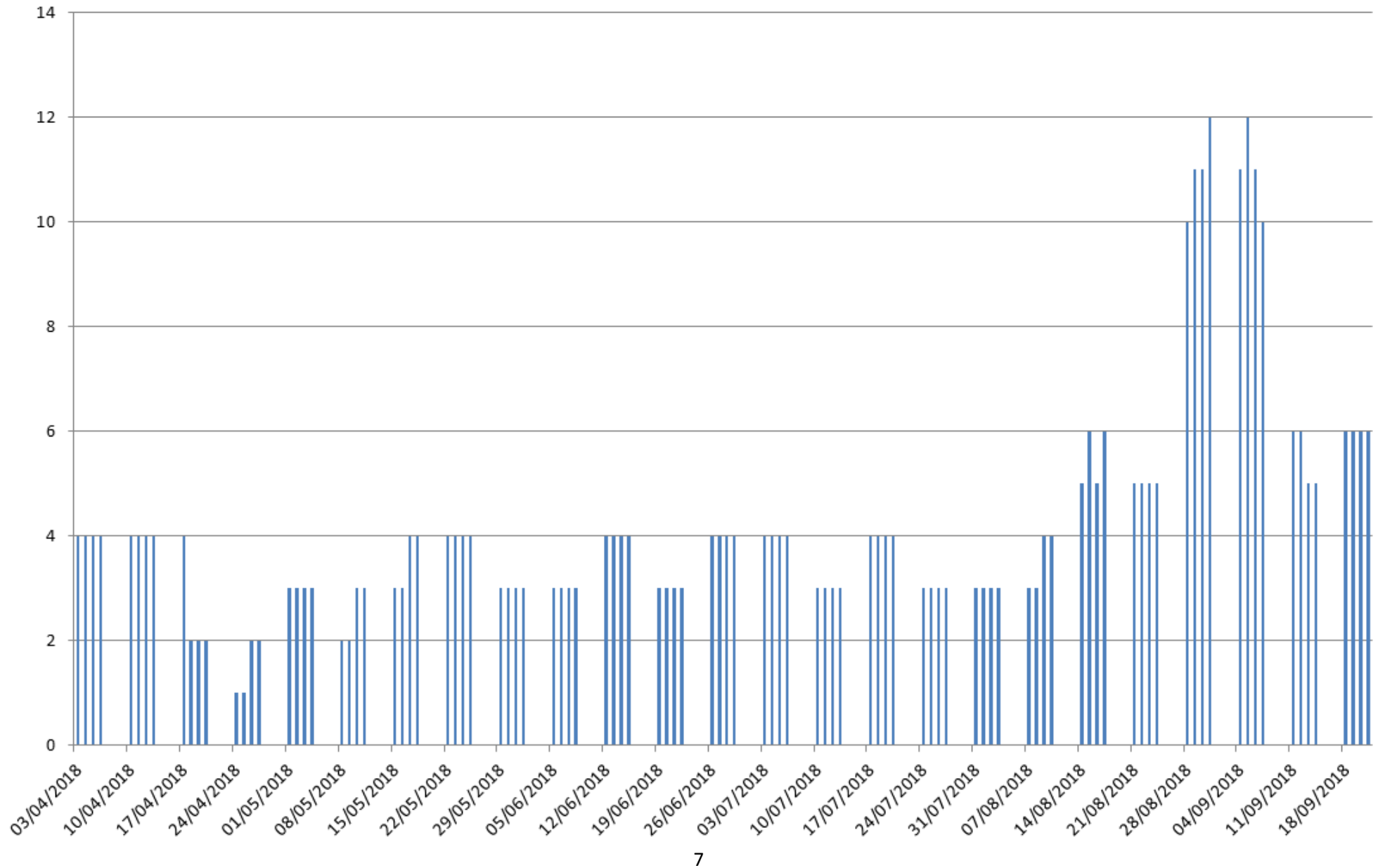
Having completed the recruitment to formalise the staffing of the service, the implementation date of our project (21st August) was decided upon based on Coordinator availability, as that was seen to be the key point for successful monitoring of the service to ensure successful implementation and evidence gathering.

Having circulated an update on the changes we were implementing before the service failure occurred, we rapidly found that our message had to change, and this undoubtedly caused confusion for residents as they associated the service problems with our initial message rather than two separate issues that overlapped.

There was no communications plan in place beyond publicising that we were making some changes to plan future service delivery, more because we expected the time of collections to change, and wanted to be open about what we were doing in case there were minor failings, than because we expected to need to manage a larger conversation.

As soon as the service failures started to occur as a result of the significant sickness, the Comms team were notified and we started daily updates on our website, with support from Comms on Social Media.

BDC Waste Collection Team - Sickness 2018/19 Financial Year



Timeline of Issues

- 17/8/18 - Disruption to staffing and some vehicle breakdowns resulted in work not being completed in Hagley and paid garden waste service in Redditch. Scale not fully identified until following week. Recycling affected.
- 20/8/18 - We were planning for minor disruption as a result of taking round 11 off this week, and so circulated details to Councillors, and set up a new page on the website that we might have some disruption over the next few weeks as we tried to plan for the increasing pressures on the service without being reliant on Agency staff.
- 21/8/18 - Successfully caught up on Friday's work, but some disruption to normal scheduled service – level was manageable and expected to be caught up over following couple of days. Residual Waste affected.
- 22–24/8 - Domino effect continued throughout week. Small gains to catch up, but still running 1 day behind in a couple of areas. Following week expected to have capacity to catch up alongside normal service as recycling week is normally lighter loads, so able to collect more properties before tipping off.
- 28/8/18 - Significant jump in sickness, and high annual leave as last week of summer holidays. 1 Round not operating. Prioritising catch up from previous week, but fell further behind on scheduled work for Tuesday. Recycling affected. Press article in Bromsgrove Advertiser regarding disruption to services.
- 29/8/18 - Continued sickness & leave – 2 Rounds off, plus carry over from previous day. (1.5 Days work) Discussions started around impact on Grey Bins the following week, and options to resolve/reduce district wide impact of service failure. Staff asked regarding overtime to work over the weekend/Monday to help catch up the recycling.
- 30/8/18 - 1.5 Days work outstanding. Minimal staff available to help catch up over weekend/Monday. Discussions around delivery of service and publicity to inform residents.
- 31/8/18 - 2 Days work outstanding plus small areas from Tuesday & Wednesday. Decision made to catch up Tuesday & Wednesday Work using available staff on overtime. Reduction in staff on annual leave next week, but no viable option to catch up outstanding work without impacting on scheduled service. Work affected on Thursday & Friday to be resolved on double collection in 2 weeks' time. We will be planning for extra support from our Place Teams if necessary to ensure that this is then fully resolved without further disruption.
Decision publicised on Website, Social Media and through local newspapers.
- 3/9/18 - Catch up work carried out on overtime for all known areas affected from Tuesday 21st & Wednesday 22nd August.
- 4/9/18 - No work carried over from previous week. Sickness still impacting on ability to provide all services. 2 Rounds not operating. Radio interview with Karen May publicising issues. Discussions around service delivery for rest of week. Pulling staff to support service from elsewhere in Env Services to put out full resource tomorrow.
- 5/9/18 - 6 Additional Staff from other service areas supporting waste. 2 Crews catching up Tuesday work. 7 Crews + Rural round operating as normal. 1 Additional truck operating to catch up work not completed by crews that were operating on Tuesday. Expected deficit at end of day likely to be 2 full collection rounds. Reviewing options to pull further staff to support service delivery 6/9 & 7/9.
- 6/9/18 - 10 Additional Staff brought from other service areas to support service delivery, including 3 Additional crews operating to support work rolled over from previous days. Sidemoor area not completed as scheduled. Breakdown on Rural round prevented small area of rural properties being done.

- 7/9/18 - 9 Additional Staff in place from other service areas. 3 Additional rounds operating to support completion. Small amount of work not completed on Stoke Pound Lane, Fish House Lane and some properties on our Rural Round (narrow access areas not serviced by large RCV's). 1 Crew coming in to resolve these areas on Monday for Overtime.
- 10/9/18 - All areas outstanding from Friday 7/9 collected.
- 11/9/18 - All services provided in full. Working to revised service model as originally envisaged for 21/8/18
- 12/9/18 - All services operating in full. No issues with service delivery.
- 13/9/18 - First day of Double Collections. Hagley & Bromsgrove. 2 Additional vehicles operating. Additional staff drafted from other service areas within Env Services.
- 14/9/18 - Second day of Double Collections. Hagley & Bromsgrove. 2 Additional vehicles operating. Additional staff drafted from other service areas within Env Services. All catch up work completed.
- 18/9/18 - All services completed. 1 Agency resigned 3 Additional
- 19/9/18 - Pressure identified on service. Staffing sufficient to operate additional round. All service completed.
- 20/9/18 - Vehicle issue impacted on 1 crew for 60 minutes. Hartlebury Energy from Waste site closed. Hagley waste diverted to Redditch – Impact on efficiency of working as higher time impact for emptying vehicles. Additional round put on to support services and offset this impact.

Review Points as part of Learning from the recent disruption

- Communication –Residents without access to the internet. Was coverage in the local Papers and Radio, but still difficulties for elderly and disabled residents to access information. How can we get messages out better. Managing Social Media Chinese Whispers. Similarities/differences from extreme weather disruption messages. Potential partners in Care providers.
- Long Term Sickness –Authorised overspend/budgeted funds/trends & health monitoring. Aging workforce – resilience.
- Short Term Sickness – Staffing Levels. Training of staff in other areas across Env Services. Increased flexibility in wider staffing. Role of Agency.
- Resource Levels –Reviewing across RBC & BDC, alongside route optimisation and on the ground monitoring. Formal Business Case to address sustainability of the service and future staffing levels.
- Implementation of future changes to service – Planning process, and communication with other services and members.