

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Domestic Waste Collection Service – Additional Funding

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

Environmental Services have had a prolonged period with high levels of sickness and frequent requirements for staff to isolate, which has significantly impacted on service delivery and has now reached a high level of service risk.

Changes have been proposed and implemented to support service delivery in the short term by:

1. suspending the garden waste service for four weeks.
2. writing to all garden waste customers to notify them of the suspension and the reasons.
3. Fast track recruitment to recently vacated roles, and long-term sick positions that are being progressed through capability.
4. taking on additional short-term agency for a period of four-five weeks to support services whilst recruitment is finalised.

To support services in the medium term it has also been proposed to recruit three new driving posts to the shared Environmental Services as an additional revenue expense to secure the service.

The associated costs of the short-term arrangements are proposed to be funded from the General Fund, as there is no available Covid Grant Funding to support this. This will cover the short-term agency costs, and the costs of our direct mailout to customers. (£13,105)

The new salary costs are an additional pressure, and as such, additional revenue funding is being sought to support the service during 2021/22 and 2022/23 as per the table of costings below:

It is expected that this would not be a permanent increase to the staffing levels of the service, and will be considered as future drivers leave employment as to whether service levels can be returned to pre-covid levels and the additional expense removed.

Decision:

RESOLVED that

additional revenue funding, as detailed in the table below, be allocated to the Environmental Services budget in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to fund the recruitment of three new staff posts:

	2021/22	2022/23
Additional Revenue requirement (BDC)	£17,820	£42,768

Date: October 2021

RESOLVED:

Grounds for Urgency:

Staff absences have been high throughout the last 18 months, but have increased significantly during July, August, and September.

Even with support from other areas of Environmental Services, refuse crews have been regularly operating short-handed due to isolation requirements, and this has driven increases in physical injuries as a result of the physical nature of the role, but has also seen an increase in mental health issues due to the challenges of maintaining services.

It has been identified that the service is on the verge of failure, and is unlikely to be able to continue provision of waste collection services over the coming winter without additional investment and support for the team. This is partly due to on-going pressures arising from Covid 19, and also the fact that sickness is normally higher in the winter months due to the impact of cold wet weather on a highly physical outdoor role.

The current pressures nationally on HGV drivers is well documented, and there are no agency drivers available locally to support the service if we lose further drivers, so recruitment of additional driver/loader positions will significantly reduce the risk of service failure, and support more consistent staffing levels that can withstand the current and expected sickness levels over the coming months.

Waste Team Absence statistics for the 2021 Calendar Year to date:

685 Staff days lost through Isolation YTD
1067 Staff Days lost through Sickness

DECISION APPROVED BY:

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Chief Executive Dated

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Section 151 Officer Dated

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Monitoring Officer Dated

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Leader Dated

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Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board Dated

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Chairman

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Dated