

Lessons Learned Report

Project : Implementation of the changes to recycling and garden waste collection services 2010

Date: June 2010

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What went well?

Officers identified that there were major crossovers between changes to the recycling collection service and the garden waste project group. This highlighted areas of similarity between the 2 projects and enabled a more joined up approach.

Development of the back office systems to enable payments to be more easily pulled through into the Uniform system.

Early launch of service changes to Members and Parish Council's and Customer Service Centre staff enabled a dialogue to start about the service changes early on in the project therefore contributing to understanding.

Starting communications with residents early (1 year in advance) and drip feeding messages through to them.

£264, 426 of Wrap funding was awarded to the overall cross-county project for communications relating to the new EnviroSort facility after a joint bid with other Hereford & Worcestershire Authorities.

A member of the project group was selected for the joint steering group that managed the funding and subsequent communications; this had a direct influence on where the funding was directed.

The temporary staff member employed to assist Business Support in taking payments and processing bin requests was key in enabling the day to day business support functions to continue whilst handling the additional requests for information, bins and queries etc.

What would you want to make sure you would do again next time?

Ensure Members and Parish Councils are communicated to early.

Drip feed information when getting across service messages (to internal & external)

Use postal delivery to send out main communications to residents.

Explore external funding sources however avoid reliance on external finance bids to fund communications and make joint applications – ensure a contingency budget is in place should funding not materialise.

Where possible work with neighbouring authorities for economies of scale.

What went less well and why?

Delivery of bins to residents:

Residents in some cases had to wait months for a bin to be delivered due to the backlog of customers waiting; In part this was due to the supplier and in part our system of delivery:

The snow and ice experienced in January and February 2010 prevented the bin delivery vehicles from working on 4 separate days. This therefore added additional pressure to the workload.

After delivering bins, a significant number of residents reported they were still waiting for a bin; this was exacerbated due to there being no mechanism of recording a bin to a particular property.

The quantity of additional green bins required was underestimated and funding for these bins was not catered for in service budgets. (There was previously an assumption that most households were in possession of a green bin)

The funding sanctioned for purchasing new brown bins was insufficient to cater for 2010 applications; therefore an additional order for brown bins was submitted at a later date, subsequently the manufacturer could not deliver the bins for the time required.

There was a delay in allowing development of the ATP payment method to go ahead despite engagement with finance from the conception stages; had there been more time to plan this element, the workload and possible costs could have been reduced. Also, the use of direct debit payments may have been employed for the 2010 period had finance had a more strategic understanding from the start of what Environmental Services were trying to achieve.

As no cut off point was implemented for the application process for 2010 collections, additional pressure (including financial) was been loaded on the operational side of bin delivery the administration processes and the Customer Service Centre. Employing cut off dates and late payment process may assist to some degree in controlling the timing of applications and prevent this bottle neck of work for future years.

What would you do differently next time?

Introduce a method of bin management to reduce the number of missing bins and control the number of bins collected from each property (ideally from the start of the project as retrospectively this is more challenging).

Revise the method of bin delivery.

Clarify with finance how funding additional bins will be undertaken

Ensure there is a contingency plan in place for snow / ice weather conditions to prevent a back log of bin deliveries.

Use a control method to narrow down the window of opportunity for applications (cut off date / incentives)

Ask for feedback from customer base prior to service developments

Was there a clear definition of success? (Refer back to the PID and Business Case)

The recycling collections from green bins and the garden waste collections from brown bins commenced in line with agreed plans

Was it achieved?

The commencement date for collecting recycling from green bins and garden waste from brown bins was already defined and these deadlines were achieved, however, it is not clear how many households were not in receipt of their bins to take part in the collection service at the start date.

How well were risks and issues managed?

There was no contingency in place for bin delivery during the periods of poor weather or for the late delivery of bins from the supplier.

Did the programme team have the right skills in place?

The project group involved in delivering the service changes were enthusiastic about meeting the deadlines involved and in general did have the right skills to deliver the project.

Where involvement is required from IT to assist with Uniform development, it is understood that external assistance is required, this can delay timescales and increase costs considerably.

Involvement from senior finance and IT staff would have been beneficial to be involved at the conception stages to allocate work as necessary and provide a full picture of what can realistically be provided.

Some external input/ support regarding scheduling bin delivery / bin recording / would have been useful at the planning stages to prevent mis-delivery of bins and registration of bins to properties.

Input from senior management on long term planning would have been useful to provide direction in areas such as handling applications at the CSC – direction was unclear and to some degree was conjecture.

Overall project management

The project was managed in the main by the previous Head of Service. With the changeover of personnel however early in 2010, leadership of the project became uncertain but the project group carried on with the planned changes in the absence of a project manager.

Opening and closing events

Na

Funding approach

Na

Communications – internal and external

Early involvement of Members, CSC and relevant departments enabled good communication internally. Externally, some positive feedback was received about the information received.

Some residents reported they found the key on the calendar misleading as to when the brown bin collections started.

Additional Findings