

Responses to scrutiny comments/recommendations from RPPR process in 2017/8

Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny comment / suggestion / recommendation at Dec 2017 RPPR Board, Grass Cutting Review Board and Waste Review Board	Response
<p><u>ETE Scrutiny Committee RPPR Board 8 December 2017</u> Attendees: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Godfrey Daniel, Pat Rodohan, and Barry Taylor.</p> <p><u>Comments to Cabinet</u></p> <p>The RPPR Board of the ETE Scrutiny Committee had serious concerns about the savings proposals for waste and grass cutting, in particular, but recognised the corporate need to make the relevant savings against the background of the wider economic context for East Sussex County Council, in which such savings have to be made.</p> <p>The ETE Scrutiny Committee would do its best to work constructively to mitigate the impact of the savings proposals on residents.</p> <p>The work to examine the savings proposals by the Waste Review Board and Grass Cutting Review Board is still ongoing, and the Review Boards will provide further detailed comments (see below).</p>	
<p><u>Grass Cutting Review Board</u> Board Members: Councillors Claire Dowling (Chair), Godfrey Daniel and Barry Taylor</p> <p>The Review Board examined the proposed savings options, their impact and any likely additional costs referred to in the options appraisal. The Board noted that only option 3 was predicted to achieve the full savings requirement of £400,000 per annum.</p>	

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<p>Comments to Cabinet: Reducing the frequency of grass cutting would be very unpopular with residents and lead to significant additional costs or reductions in service levels. The Board considered that a move to one rural grass cut and one urban grass cut per year (option 3) was untenable due to the impacts this would have.</p> <p>The Board considered there were risks to the Council if one rural cut and one urban cut were to be implemented in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reputational damage to the Council; • additional, reactive costs reducing the amount of savings that can be achieved; and • impaired maintenance of drainage systems particularly in rural areas, potentially undermining existing investment in highway drainage. <p>The Board found that there were significant additional costs for reactive grass cutting maintenance of around £200,000 for two additional grass-cutting gangs; increased demand on the Contact Centre equating to approximately two full time equivalent posts; and potential reductions in the level of service which could lead to reputational damage. This would significantly offset the initial savings and will have longer term impacts.</p> <p>The Board identified potential alternative savings of £84,000 within the verge management budgets. It recommends that alternative options for providing the grass cutting service are investigated within the total verge management budget to mitigate the proposed reduction in the frequency of grass cutting in rural and urban areas.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged the need to make savings, but recommends that the frequency of grass cutting in rural and urban areas is carefully considered, taking into account the potential impacts.</p>	<p>Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the savings proposals for grass cutting be consulted on during 2018/19 for 2 urban and 2 rural grass cuts; and • the savings target be retained, but implementation be deferred until 2019/20 to allow for the consultation with Parish (and Town), District and Borough Councils.

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<p><u>Waste Review Board</u> Board Members: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Godfrey Daniel, Darren Grover and Barry Taylor.</p> <p>The ETE Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14 June 2017 established a Scrutiny Review Board to examine in detail the opportunities for savings and efficiencies in the Waste Contract as part of the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process. The Waste contract net budget is currently £25.927 million per annum, with an original savings target of £800,000 in 2018/19 for the Waste Disposal Service in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>The Review Board has considered evidence on the work that is underway to review the current Waste contract, and the opportunities for savings that this may produce. The Board supports the approach that has been adopted, and understands the need to examine other aspects of the Waste Disposal Service in order to achieve savings in the shorter term.</p> <p><u>Summary Findings and Recommendations</u></p> <p>Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) Service – Proposed introduction of charging for non-domestic waste</p> <p>A third of local authorities currently charge for non-domestic waste. The Review Board found from the experience of other local authorities that the introduction of charging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Has not led to an overall increase in fly-tipping compared with national trends. b) Will lead to a drop in the volume of non-domestic waste delivered to the HWRS sites, which could be up to 75% depending on the level of charging. This will produce savings in the form of avoided costs for disposing of waste, in addition to an income from charges. <p>The Review Board examined the possible impact of a number of different levels of charge on waste volumes and levels of savings.</p>	<p>Cabinet recommended to Full Council that authority be delegated to Chief Officers to consult on the savings proposals contained in the budget which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the introduction of charging for non-household waste (soil, hard core, asbestos, plasterboard and tyres) at household waste recycling sites; • a review of the current use of household waste recycling sites by registered charities; and • the possible closure of the household waste recycling sites at Forest Row and Wadhurst. <p>The full year savings target for the Waste Disposal Service has been revised to £720k, with a part year saving of £558k in 2018/19.</p> <p>At this stage any decision on changes to the HWRS service such as charging, use of the service by charities, and site closures, are subject to a consultation before a decision is taken. So no decisions about the HWRS service have been taken at this point in time.</p>

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<p>The Board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the evidence, the charging level which is likely to achieve the savings target is considered for inclusion in the savings proposals, which it understands is likely to be in the region of £4.00 per bag of waste. If charging is introduced for non-domestic waste, the waste contractor should be approached to explore whether it would be feasible to introduce a chargeable service for commercial waste at HWRS sites for small to medium sized businesses. <p>The Review Board found that there was some uncertainty around the level of savings it will be possible to achieve from charging. Consequently, it may be necessary to consult on other changes to the Waste Disposal Service in order to deliver the savings required by the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>HWRS Opening Hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evidence suggests that further reductions in HWRS site opening hours would not achieve the level of savings necessary, and that limited HWRS site closures may need to be considered. <p>HWRS Site Closures</p> <p>The Review Board examined evidence on the impact of limited site closures on the accessibility of the HWRS Service for residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review Board has some concerns about the proposals for limited HWRS site closures but understands that, in the context of the need to make savings, they may be necessary. 	

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<p>Public Consultation</p> <p>The Reviewed Board examined the options for public consultation on the potential changes to the Waste Disposal Service.</p> <p>The Board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both charging and limited site closure measures are included in the forthcoming consultation, rather than having to consult again separately on site closures should they be necessary. • The Council consults on detailed proposals regarding charge levels and specific sites, if closures together with charging, are the only way to achieve the necessary levels of savings. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Review Board has undertaken a considerable amount of work, which underpins the summary findings and recommendations. The Board will examine the proposals for the Waste Disposal Service in more detail once the public consultation has been completed, and will submit further comments to Cabinet in due course.</p>	