

Committee: PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: November 15, 2006

8(ii)

Title: **AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION OF WASTE AND STREET SCENE**

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report advises members of the outcome of the Audit Commission inspection of waste and street scene.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that members note the report and consider inviting the Audit Commission to return for a 'light touch' revisit next year as the outcome of the recycling strategy becomes evident.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.
 - Audit Commission report as attached.

Impact

4.

Communication/Consultation	Relevant member and officers have been involved in the inspection. The inspectorate was free to consult who they deemed relevant to their research. Published report will be of interest to the press and community.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Finance	None.
Human Rights	None.
Legal Implications	None.

Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	This report is of particular interest to those involved in the service and is a motivational tool for the teams involved.

Situation

5. The inspection took place from the 19-23 June 2006. This followed the rollout of phase 1 of the recycling scheme so they had the opportunity to witness the implementation whilst our three principal teams undertook:
 - (i) First collections from wheeled bins
 - (ii) Hotline dealing with customer enquiries
 - (iii) Recycling officers visiting households to agree exemptions and assisted collections.

The report awards a “one star” rating based upon the historical performance but a “promising” rating in respect of the plans that are in place. The inspection came at the point where there was little firm evidence of how the 3 bin scheme would perform but the auditors were interested to know the outcome.

Targets

6. The inspection was ‘to establish how effectively the service contributes to the protection of both Uttlesford’s environment and the wider environment’.

Options

7. The possibility of a return visit was discussed with the inspectors and received an encouraging response. As this is an innovative new scheme that fits with the very latest guidance from DEFRA and the National Audit Office (24 July 2006) they wish to track our scheme’s success and may be able to revisit next year to undertake a ‘light touch’ inspection.

Pay-Offs/Penalties

8. A ‘light touch’ inspection adds a level of completeness to the inspection that measures our performance as ‘fair’ in the old refuse/recycling arrangements. It would give the opportunity to look at the new recycling scheme and its ‘promising’ score once implemented.
9. The very many positive comments made by the inspectors serve well to encourage members, employees and the community to support the recycling strategy as follows:

The service has promising prospects for improvement because:

- The council has plans to improve the service that address most weaknesses and wider environmental aims;
- The Council has been prepared to take difficult decisions in order to secure significant improvements in performance;
- Project planning for the introduction of the new system of waste and recycling collection is of a high standard and is providing positive outcomes;
- The introduction of a new three-bin system has been the subject of good project management and is well resourced. It has been supported with effective communication and information about the changes to refuse collection for local people and should significantly improve recycling;
- Service capacity has been enhanced, with effective and positive leadership and is delivering improved recycling performance and less waste to landfill.

Risk Analysis

10. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this issue.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
The Audit Commission is targeted to drive improvement			The recommendations of the Audit Commission be considered and where appropriate brought before members for decisions.