

## Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### Estimated cost of waste service disruption

Peter Holt, Chief Executive

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It is important to transparently account for the costs of this service disruption to Councillors, and ultimately to the general public. Rather than just give a single figure, for sake of transparency, a detailed breakdown is offered as below. Some of these figures are based on estimates, including the largest element – the amount that Braintree District Council will ultimately recharge to Uttlesford District Council for their costs in assisting with our collections during the period of disruption, which were hugely appreciated.

It is important in being fully transparent to also avoid double-counting, and to take account of costs incurred that can subsequently be reclaimed.

For example, had Uttlesford never lost its operating licence and operated as usual during the weeks in question, it would have spent an estimated £28,745 in diesel. As the costs recharged to us by Braintree District Council will include the costs to them of the diesel they used, a line item has been included in the table below to account for this double-counting of 2 sets of diesel when only 1 was actually burned.

Similarly, costs recharged by Widdington Skips includes the amount that they had to pay, when assisting us, to discharge the waste they collected, but which Essex County Council has helpfully agreed (in writing) to subsequently refund to Uttlesford, and this is estimated at £19,000 (ie offsetting more than half of the £36,000 that Widdington Skips have had to charge us for their assistance).

Similarly, officers thought it important to show not only the cost of the appropriately qualified extra staff member brought in to allow us to apply for the new licence, but also the savings on the permanent staff member post that this temporary staff member was replacing.

**In total therefore, the total net cost to the Council (and therefore to Council Tax Payers) of this period of disruption is estimated at approximately £53,000.** A full and final accounting will be provided in due course, once all elements therein have been finalised and are all actual rather than estimated costs.

This approximate £53,000 cost contrasts to the very rough estimate given to Members previously of £80,000-£100,000 by the chief executive.

It would be possible to look beyond the period of disruption in January and February 2024, and also consider excess costs/further savings – e.g. approximately six months' salary saving at c £5,000 per month in 2023 from the vacant qualified manager post, but officers want to be careful to not be seen to be minimising net costs on reputational grounds, so are providing a full and transparent costs breakdown related to the actual period of disruption only.

<b>Direct cost of revocation of licence</b>	
Widdington Skips	36,000
Full Cycle Waste Management	6,848
Braintree District Council – NB estimated cost (invoices not yet received)	45,000
Replacement Licence Application Fee	800
Overtime for Customer Service Centre staff answering concerned residents	2,508
Overtime cost for Waste Services inc operating catch up for bins not emptied during the main period of disruption	9,321
Temporary licence holder staff costs for period of disruption	4,400
Transport consultant advice	515
<b>Less items that represent double-counting, recoverable costs, or salary for vacant post covered by temporary licence holder</b>	
Diesel	(28,745)
Tipping fees to be reclaimed from ECC, as agreed with them	(19,000)
Saving on Fleet Operations Manager vacant post for period	(5,070)
<b>Net total cost of service disruption (including current estimates pending invoice receipt etc.)</b>	<b>£52,981</b>