

Agenda Item

Executive Board

13 September 2006

MR/JT/F5



Sandbag Deliveries to Town and Parish Councils

Summary

The current policy of the Council is to provide filled or unfilled sandbags to Town and Parish Councils once a year. A letter is sent to each Town or Parish, in August, asking them to inform the Council of their requirements for sandbags for that coming winter. The Council will then deliver the request to one address in each Town or Parish.

The Town or Parish is responsible for supplying these bags to their residents. If a request to this authority is received from an individual resident, then that resident is directed to their Town / Parish Council.

In the last two years, on average, thirty –five requests per annum have been received from Town and Parish Councils. Approximately fifty percent of these requests have been for empty sand bags.

During an emergency, further supplies can be collected from StreetScene Depots during normal working hours.

Recommendation

That the attached policy for the delivery of empty sandbags, to Parish / Town Councils annually be recommended.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

StreetScene has been trying to keep the cost of this service within current revenue budget provision. The cost of this service over the last two years has been £7,000 per annum. In the last financial year pre-filled sand bags were purchased in an attempt to keep the cost of this service within budget. However, it has been found that the bags have a limited shelf life unless they are kept under cover in dry conditions. Unfortunately, there is insufficient inside storage capacity available. It has been seen that potential savings on this new service method are minimal.

With increasing flooding events and a perceived increase in requests for sandbags it is anticipated that this service will; overspend this financial year by approximately £3,500. In order to manage this service revenue costs, it is proposed that the Council will provide only empty sandbags, to Parish / Town Councils annually. Letters will be written to Parish and Town Councils in August / September offering a supply of empty sandbags for their and their residents use. The sandbags can be collected from the Council or if preferred they can be delivered to one address in that Town / Parish. During an emergency, further supplies can be collected from StreetScene Depots during normal working hours.

Other reasons why consideration should be given to the service change are that empty sandbags are more easily delivered and the shelf life is much longer than filled bags. Past experience indicates that residents have tended to prefer empty sandbags. This is because

they can be more easily stored and utilised when required. The resident does not have to rely on the Council to provide sandbags at inconvenient times, which could increase the risk of flooding to their property. The empty sandbags can be filled by the residents when they are required.

b) Alternative Options

Continue with the current service method and risk a budget overspend.

c) Risk Considerations

None

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

This is not a statutory service but can be perceived that the service contributes to the public good. Currently there is no written policy for this service, however in reviewing the historic service practice the opportunity has been taken to produce a formal service policy.

If the service changes are accepted then, incorporating the expected growth in the service, it is anticipated that the service can be delivered within budget.

e) Date for Review of Decision

None

1 Main Body of the Report

See attached proposed policy.

Legal Implications

There are no apparent legal implications requiring comment on this report

Financial Implications

Financial implications are detailed in the report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

Background Papers

None

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