PUBLIC REALM AND WORKS SERVICES UNIT TASK GROUP – 27 MAY 2010

A meeting of the Public Realm and Works Services Unit Task Group will be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 27 May 2010 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Carol Bradford
Head of Democratic and Legal Services

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes - to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2010.

2. Apologies – to receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest.

   To receive declarations of –

   (a) personal interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors;

   (b) prejudicial interests as defined by the Council’s Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

   (c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

4. Timing of Review.

5. Grounds Maintenance Performance Indicators.

6. Works Services Unit – Other Services.

7. Visit to Sevenoaks DC Works Services Unit.

8. Dates of Future Meetings – please bring your diaries to the meeting.
9. Motion to Exclude the Public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

To consider passing the following resolution: -

“under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that in all of the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

PART 2 – EXEMPT INFORMATION

1. Sevenoaks DC Works Services Unit Financial and Performance Information.

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed here via the website.

Membership of the Task Group:

Councillors Day, Gillias, Kirby, Mistry, Ms Robbins, Roodhouse, Sewell, Helen Walton.

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn Enticott, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533523 or e-mail linn.enticott@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the Scrutiny Unit (01788 533591 or e-mail Scrutiny@rugby.gov.uk)

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.
# Agenda No 4

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name of Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Public Realm and Works Services Unit Task Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>27 May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>Timing of Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer(s)</strong></td>
<td>Joanne Birkin, Assistant Scrutiny Officer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone: 01788 533593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Joanne.birkin@rugby.gov.uk">Joanne.birkin@rugby.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

This report presents the timetable for the rest of the review.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of this report.

**Financial Implications**

The review will have far-reaching financial implications that will be revealed during the course of the task group's work.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications as a result of this report.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

**Legal Implications**

The task group will need to be aware of legal requirements in respect of matters such as contracts and transfers of undertakings.
Summary

This report presents the timetable for the rest of the review.

1. Introduction

At the first meeting of this task group members agreed the following programme of work

Phase 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>Value for money; refuse and recycling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Street cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Grounds maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>General improvements and other work areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>External income opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/July</td>
<td>Public involvement, civic pride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>Evaluation of choices on extension or reframing of the SLA or putting out to market competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Finalising of recommendations and review report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the elections the meeting in April was cancelled and topics from April are being considered at this meeting.

2. Next Steps

Members are asked to decide whether they wish to amalgamate the final 2 topics in Phase 1 or to have an additional meeting.

If the task group holds their final meeting in October then the review report will be considered by Cabinet on 22nd November.

Members are asked to bring their diaries to the meeting so that the final meeting dates can be arranged.
Name of Meeting: Public Realm and WSU Task Group
Date of Meeting: 27 May 2010
Subject Matter: Timing of Review

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Document</th>
<th>Officer’s Reference</th>
<th>File Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

**Name of Meeting**  
Public Realm and Works Services Unit Task Group

**Date of Meeting**  
27 May 2010

**Report Title**  
Grounds Maintenance Performance Indicators

**Ward Relevance**  
All

**Contact Officer(s)**  
Joanne Birkin, Assistant Scrutiny Officer,  
Telephone: 01788 533593  
Email: Joanne.birkin@rugby.gov.uk

**Summary**  
At the last meeting the Group were informed that there were no performance indicators for grounds maintenance other than those which are based on empirical measures such as the number of times grass is cut. This report sets out the methods used by other councils.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**  
There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of this report

**Financial Implications**  
The review will have far-reaching financial implications that will be revealed during the course of the task group’s work.

**Risk Management Implications**  
There are no risk management implications as a result of this report.

**Environmental Implications**  
There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

**Legal Implications**  
The task group will need to be aware of legal requirements in respect of matters such as contracts and transfers of undertakings.
Summary

At the last meeting the Group were informed that there were no performance indicators for grounds maintenance other than those which are based on empirical measures such as the number of times grass is cut. This report sets out the methods used by other councils.

1. Introduction

At the last meeting of the task group members asked that other Councils be contacted to ask if they had any performance indicators in place for their grounds maintenance services.

The scrutiny officer contacted all of the Councils within the “family group” which is often used for comparisons and also those which had been awarded beacon status.

2. Responses

Rushcliffe and Kettering responded that they do not have any formal performance indicators.

2.1 Test Valley Borough Council

Test Valley are just introducing some as there were none previously. Their service is in house and initially they will be looking at introducing some customer PIs initially e.g. % of service requests responded to on time.

They will then be looking at the detail e.g. the various different types of requests and those individual ones in detail that fail. As they set what the response time is, this can be amended later as performance improves. This is seen a good measure of doing what they promise.

2.2 Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

Newcastle under Lyme base most of their indicators around the number of times tasks are undertaken, or response times. The key elements are published on their website and are:

- Keep neighbourhoods clean, green and safe, with teams of experienced and multi-skilled operatives carrying out a range of tasks.
• Park areas, grass verges and open spaces are mowed up to 16 times a year.

• Litter is collected from grassed areas before they are mowed and response time to litter complaints is within a timeframe of one hour to one week.

• To empty all litter bins that are reported to be full within 24 hours. Dog waste bins throughout the Borough are emptied up to three times a week. Bins in Newcastle town centre are cleared up to three times a day.

• Clean all ‘Zone 1’ shopping areas every day and sweep residential streets four times a year. All other areas are cleaned at frequencies ranging from daily to monthly, according to need.

• Racist and other offensive graffiti is removed within 24 hours of reporting and all other reported graffiti is removed within three working days.

• If a tree is classed as dangerous they respond and make it safe within four hours of it being reported.

• All Borough playgrounds are inspected every week and any equipment that is found to be dangerous will be made safe within four hours.

2.3 Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council publishes a very informative guide to their street scene services on the internet, which also informs residents how they can assist in maintaining the standards. The services are carried out by Street Force.

Some of the key points from their website are:-

The City Council is responsible for maintaining

• 13 million square metres of grass
• 1,250 hanging baskets and planters
• ¼ million bedding plants throughout the year
• 200km of gennels and remote footpaths

Grass Cutting

• The frequency of grass cutting is very dependent on the weather.
• Try to keep to our mowing frequencies but if it is not possible to mow for several days due to bad weather, the next mowing cycle will be late.
• Aim to maintain the grass height between 20mm and 100mm and to keep the paths and surrounds to grass plots as clear as possible, of any clippings deposited by the mowers.
• Locations where grass plots have Daffodils and Crocus planted will not be cut until the leaves of the bulbs die back, usually in July.
How You Can Help

- Do not drop litter on to grass areas and verges
- Do not park on grass verges
- Report any overgrown grass areas to our helpline on (0114) 273 4567

Hedge Cutting

Street Force is responsible for cutting rural hedges adjacent to the highway. During the spring and early summer, birds nest in hedges and because of conservation issues no hedge cutting takes place during this period.

Aim to cut all rural hedges every year.

Street Force also cuts housing estate and school hedges. The clippings are collected and disposed of at an approved tip; however, clippings are not removed from hedges in rural areas cut by tractor mounted flails. The clippings are very small pieces which fall to the ground providing environmental refuge for small animals and prevent weed growth.

How You Can Help

- Keep your own hedges tidy so they do not cause an obstruction by blocking footpaths
- Be patient when following hedge cutting equipment
- Report any overgrown hedges to our helpline on (0114) 273 4567

Floral Decorations

Street Force provides floral decorations from its own nursery. It has a reputation for providing high quality flower displays on sponsorship sites or to enhance the look of shops, offices and buildings, including floral towers, baskets and plant troughs. It also offers a full back up service of watering, feeding and dead plant replacement.

Weeds

Street Force is responsible for keeping weed growth under control on roads and footpaths in housing estates and some schools. Most of the weed control is designed to keep areas free of unwanted vegetation so that sites look tidy.

Aim to keep the following weed free:

- Channels and edges of roads and footpaths
- Obstacles in verges and along the bottom of railings
• Perimeters of buildings
• Shrub and rose beds
• The base of hedges that belong to Sheffield Homes

Some weeds are particularly difficult to control especially Japanese Knotweed, Bindweed, Dandelions and Willow herb.

**How You Can Help**

• Regularly sweep along the base of your boundary wall
• Report any problems to our helpline on (0114) 273 4567

**New Landscape Works**

Street Force also provides no obligation quotes for landscape design. They design shrub and tree planting schemes to compliment new buildings or enhance the look of existing sites. Design schemes are individually tailored and include shrubs that flower at different times of the year, trees, evergreens and plants with varied foliage to provide seasonal interest, grassed areas and hard landscaping.

2.4 **Northumberland County Council**

Northumberland County Council has a different approach which is to involve the public in assessing the quality of the street scene. The council does the following:

• Engages the public and involves Community Forums, Parish/Town Councils, Councillors, managers employees and partners in the process of change and continuous improvement.
• Measures the performance of existing services seen through the ‘customers eyes’
• Analysis that performance and effectively communicates results and pin points specific areas for improvement
• ‘Puts things right quickly at the sharp end’
• Demonstrates responsiveness through action in the eyes of the public
• Brings about culture change and improves the future planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces – ‘places for living’

Examples of how innovation and performance can be enhanced are as follows:

• A proactive approach to service delivery can be applied
• Area ‘hot spots’ can be clearly identified
• Duplication can be reduced by more joined up delivery
• Improved public perception and satisfaction
• Improved access to service
• More effective customer service

They have also recruited a number of neighbourhood champions 20 Environmental Champions being recruited to act as the eyes and ears locally feeding in their issues directly to local team. They have also developed partnership working with officers from the Environment Agency.

2.5 Stafford Borough Council
Attached at Appendix 1 is a document from Stafford Borough Council which lists the services it provides, explains the standards that it sets and can also be used to canvass the opinion of the public.

3. Next Steps
Members are asked to decide whether there are any elements from any of these other authorities that they would like to see included in future grounds maintenance contracts.
## STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
### GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE

**Services Provided**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stafford Borough Council Provides</th>
<th>Stafford Borough Council Does Not Provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Borough Council owned public open space grass areas, playing fields, grassed areas of Council housing open space and Council sheltered housing grassed areas</td>
<td>Maintenance of highway verges and other highway land. This is provided by Staffordshire County Council, the highway authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of shrub beds, rose beds and bedding displays on Council owned land or planted on other land by Stafford Borough Council</td>
<td>Maintenance of shrub beds and roses on verges and other highway land. This is provided by Staffordshire County Council, the highway authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of formal parks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Council owned football pitches, bowling greens and grass tennis courts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of cemeteries and crematoria grounds including digging of graves and burial of cremated remains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of closed church yards</td>
<td>Maintenance of church yards in use for burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of grounds of heritage sites owned or managed by Stafford Borough Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision and maintenance of town centre hanging baskets, floral displays and floral features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting of hedges on and around land owned by Stafford Borough Council</td>
<td>Cutting of hedges on highway land. This is carried out by Staffordshire County Council, the highway authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection and maintenance of trees on land owned or managed by Stafford Borough Council</td>
<td>Inspection and maintenance of trees on private land and highway land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Service Standards

Grass Cutting - General Amenity Areas

(Playing fields, public open space, Council housing open space and sheltered housing grassed areas)

Maintain grass length between 25 mm and 90 mm. Grassed areas left free from litter and dog fouling after mowing.

Grass cuttings left on grass surface but swept or blown from adjacent hard surfaced areas following cutting.

Weed-killing

(Council housing open space, sheltered housing and ornamental grassed areas)

Apply selective weed killer annually

Shrub Beds and Rose Beds

Hoe and remove all weeds six times between March and October

Prune once per annum at the appropriate time

Bedding Displays

Clear beds and plant out bedding in Spring and Autumn

Dead head, hoe and remove all weeds every two weeks March to October and every month November to February

Keep topsoil moist to a depth of 230 mm at all times.

Grass Cutting - Ornamental Areas

(Formal Parks, Cemeteries and Crematoria)

Maintain grass length between 15 mm and 45 mm. Area left free from litter and dog fouling after mowing.

Grass cuttings removed from grass surface and from adjacent beds and hard surfaced areas.

Leaves removed from grass surface in autumn.

Football Pitches, Athletics Facilities, Bowling Greens and Grass Tennis Courts

Maintain in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate national associations.
Grass Cutting - Closed Church Yards

Maintain grass length between 50 mm and 300 mm.

Heritage Site Grounds

(Stafford Castle, Izaak Walton Cottage)

Maintenance regime appropriate to site

Hanging Baskets, Floral Displays and Floral Features

Make up hanging baskets and floral displays and install in Stafford and Stone town centres. Water and dead head displays daily. Feed displays with liquid feed weekly.

Hedges

Cut hedges annually and clean out hedge bottom

Trees

Inspect trees annually and carry out work required for safety

How Well Does the Service Perform?

In 2002

Britain in Bloom

- Second place in national competition (Stafford)
- Award for best floral display in national competition (Stafford)
- Gold award in regional competition (Stafford)
- Silver gilt award in regional competition (Stone)

What do you think?

Please take a few moments to fill in the questionnaire below and return it to:

Chris Hindle
Head of Planning and Engineering Services
Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford ST16 3AQ

or e-mail to

chindle@staffordbc.gov.uk
Do you think we provide a satisfactory grounds maintenance service for:

Public Open Space
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Council housing open space
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Sheltered housing complexes
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Formal Parks
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Football pitches
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Bowling Greens
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Grass tennis Courts
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Cemeteries and crematoria
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Closed church yards
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Stafford Castle
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Izaak Walton Cottage
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Town centre hanging baskets and floral displays
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Hedge Cutting
If No how are we failing?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No
Tree maintenance
If No how are we failing?

Which area of grounds maintenance do we perform best?

Which area of grounds maintenance do we perform worst?

What changes do you think we could make to the way we carry out grounds maintenance to improve the service provided?

We currently spend around £1 million per annum on grounds maintenance. Would you be prepared to pay more for a better service?

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No
**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Meeting</th>
<th>Public Realm and Works Services Unit Task Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Meeting</td>
<td>27 May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Title</td>
<td>Works Services Unit – Other Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Relevance</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Officer(s)</td>
<td>Andy Smith, General Manager WSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone: 01788 533331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:andy.smith@rugby.gov.uk">andy.smith@rugby.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**
As part of the ongoing work programme of the Group a report on the other services operated by the WSU was requested. This report provides details of those other services provided by the Works Services Unit including town centre public conveniences, vehicle workshop, highways/civils service and commercial waste collection service.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**
There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of this report.

**Financial Implications**
The review will have far-reaching financial implications that will be revealed during the course of the task group’s work.

**Risk Management Implications**
There are no risk management implications as a result of this report.

**Environmental Implications**
There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

**Legal Implications**
The task group will need to be aware of legal requirements in respect of matters such as contracts and transfers of undertakings.
Summary

As part of the ongoing work programme of the Group a report on the other services operated by the WSU was requested. This report provides details of those other services provided by the Works Services Unit including town centre public conveniences, vehicle workshop, highways/civils service and commercial waste collection service.

1. Other services background

On top of its core businesses such as refuse, recycling, grounds maintenance and street cleansing the WSU also carries out other services, either in support of its core services or specialist operations for both internal and external clients.

2. Public conveniences

The WSU is responsible, from both a client and service provider perspective, for the cleansing and management of the Councils town centre public convenience situated in North Street. The North Street Public Convenience is open to the public in excess of 65 hours per week and is fully attended throughout that time. The WSU employs two attendants who each work on a one week on, one week off basis (attendants work 70 hours during their working week and do not work the following week, thus averaging 35 hours per week). The attendants ensure that high levels of cleanliness and hygiene are maintained at all times. Vandalism levels are now very low compared with those associated with the previous non attended town centre facilities, with very few incidents being reported since the opening of the facility. There have however been reported problems of vandalism and improper use of the disabled facility, which is accessed from the outside of the building. However these problems have been occurring outside of normal operating hours.

4. Vehicle maintenance workshop

This service is primarily responsible for the maintenance of the WSU fleet and plant. The fleet now consists of 70 vehicles with some 20 pieces of mechanical plant. The vehicle workshop comprises four qualified mechanics, including the workshop foreman all working under the guidance of the Operations and Business Development Manager. The Operations and Business Development Manager is also the Councils Operators (O) Licence holder as it is a legal requirement for any company that has vehicles with a gross vehicle weight over 3.5 tonnes on its fleet to have a technically competent person responsible for all its vehicular operations.

The vehicle workshop also carries out additional works for the Council such as private hire and taxi testing and car loan vehicle inspections.
Maintenance and repair works are carried out in the vehicle workshop at Hunters Lane. The workshop was purpose built in the late 60’s as part of the WSU depot development. The vehicle workshop was extended in 1977 as it was no longer fully fit for purpose due to the increase in size of refuse collection vehicles. The extension provided two full size maintenance bays that were capable of housing a six wheeled refuse collection vehicle. The WSU now operates with fourteen full sized refuse collection vehicles working weekly, however with only two full sized maintenance bays that are suitable for carrying out repairs to these vehicles it often means that the mechanics are having to work outdoors in the depot site in order to carry out necessary repairs. Capital funding for a further workshop extension has been approved, however Officers have delayed the commencement of this work until the completion of this scrutiny exercise.

This service is one area that may be suitable of expanding to external clients and providing income generation. Officers noted that the Sevenoaks vehicle maintenance workshop offers a number of services to the general public and local businesses that generate significant external income whilst providing its customers with a quality, trustworthy service. Officers shall investigate the possibility of external income generation from the vehicle workshop and other WSU services and report back to the next meeting of this group.

5. Highways/Civil Engineering Team

Until 2002, the council operated a highways agency for Warwickshire County Council. The WSU acted as the Council’s main contractor and had as many as 15 operatives working on this service providing highways infrastructure works within the Agency area. The Agency area encompassed the Rugby Town area as well as Clifton, Long Lawford and Dunchurch. The County Council ceased all its agency agreements with the districts in 2002 and the WSU transferred all but three members of its highway team to WCC.

The small highways team that remained in the employ of the WSU has since that time carried out various highways and civils works for the Council and external customers, as well as a number of miscellaneous duties in support of the WSU’s core activities. The following is an example of the types of works carried out by the WSU highways team:

- Highway/Drainage construction schemes for RBC.
- Street furniture installation and repair.
- Removal of bulky fly tips with the grab truck.
- Private car crossings (on WCC approved list of contractors)
- Works for Parish Councils (footways, car parks and lay-bys etc)
- Private and RBC winter gritting.
- Private works (driveways, block paving etc)
- Fencing
- White Lining
- Environment Agency Contractor for brook clearance.
- Environment Agency emergency call out.
- General land drainage works.
In the past the highways team carried out internal works on a cost plus profit basis. However for the last year all internal works have been carried out on an open book basis with the Street Scene Team Leader agreeing what should be paid for works based upon cost and small administration fee only. Closer working relationships with the Public Realm team have been forged and the management of the WSU allow the Street Scene Team Leader to direct the staff carrying out works in the absence of the WSU Operations and Business Development Manager. These closer working relationships have allowed far more flexibility within service provision as well as reducing costs of schemes.

Whilst the team is only small, with three operatives, the WSU provides whatever sub-contract labour is required to complete works. The General Manager of the WSU is also in a position to employ additional staff should the amount of work require it.

6. Commercial Waste Collection Service

The Council does not have to provide a Commercial Waste Collection service directly, as long as it has the ability within its domestic waste collection contract to provide such a service upon request.

Since 1991, the WSU has successfully operated an independent commercial waste collection service which to date has just over 1000 customers spread throughout the borough. As this is a commercial venture the Council cannot support it through its general fund. Therefore it must cover its costs via all the income generated through sales of the service. It competes with both local and national suppliers of this type of service and does so with some success as it continues to maintain its customer level.

The council is presently providing a low level commercial recycling service utilising its limited spare capacity however this service will not be able to continue in its present guise much longer as the spare capacity will not be available. As a consequence of this the commercial waste service is investigating the possibility of expanding into commercial recycling collections. However this can only be accomplished if such a service is self-financing.
# AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name of Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Public Realm and Works Services Unit Task Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Meeting</strong></td>
<td>27 May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Title</strong></td>
<td>Visit to Sevenoaks DC Works Services Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ward Relevance</strong></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Officer(s)</strong></td>
<td>Andy Smith, General Manager WSU &lt;br&gt; Telephone: 01788 533331 &lt;br&gt; Email: <a href="mailto:andy.smith@rugby.gov.uk">andy.smith@rugby.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The Chairman and officers visited the Sevenoaks WSU to look at the various operations carried out by them and also meet with the relevant officers to discuss operational activities. The report provides outline detail of each of the services operated by the WSU at Sevenoaks.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of this report.

**Financial Implications**

The review will have far-reaching financial implications that will be revealed during the course of the task group’s work.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications as a result of this report.

**Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

**Legal Implications**

The task group will need to be aware of legal requirements in respect of matters such as contracts and transfers of undertakings.
Summary

The Chairman and officers visited the Sevenoaks WSU to look at the various operations carried out by them and also meet with the relevant officers to discuss operational activities. The report provides outline detail of each of the services operated by the WSU at Sevenoaks.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the initial meeting of this task group Councillor Roodhouse suggested a site visit and meeting be arranged with officers at Sevenoaks DC. He was aware through his work with IDeA that Sevenoaks DC had been judged an Excellent authority with an in-house WSU. This report provides members of the Task Group with a review of that visit attended by Councillor Tony Gillias, Sean Lawson, Andy Smith and Gill Russell.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

There are 48,000 households in the Sevenoaks District and 119,000 residents. The District is 95% green belt and consists of 3 towns each with a population around 20,000 and several large villages with populations around 15,000. The remainder of homes are in rural hamlets.

3. OVERVIEW OF SERVICE PROVISION

Sevenoaks DC Works Services Unit carries out the following operations on behalf of the council:

- Dry recycling and refuse collection
- Garden waste collection
- Commercial refuse and recycling
- Street Cleansing
- Convenience and premises cleaning
- Garage Services
- Minibus service
- Minor construction works
- Pest Control
- Emptying of cesspools
3.1 Sevenoaks WSU – Management Structure

The Sevenoaks DC Works Services Unit is responsible wholly for both the Client and Contractor function for all services detailed in this report. They do not operate a split between Client and Contractor.

3.2 Dry Recycling and Refuse Service

Recycling and refuse collection consists of a weekly collection of recyclables in clear sacks and residual waste in black sacks. All refuse is delivered to a transfer station, bulked up and sent to the Energy from Waste (EfW) plant. Dry recycling also goes via a transfer station, is bulked up and sent to the MRF at Allington. Glass is not collected from the kerbside. Residents take glass to the ‘bring’ sites of which there are 50. Residents are provided with 20 black and 25 clear sacks to cover a 20 week period, additional black refuse sacks are available but have to be purchased. Unlimited additional sacks for recycling are provided free of charge.

3.3 Garden waste service

Garden waste collections are fortnightly and currently 5,200 households subscribe to the scheme which is a chargeable service for which residents pay a £41 subscription to hire a bin for twelve months and receive a fortnightly collection. Additional bins have to be purchased and are £30 per bin.

For residents who do not produce large quantities of garden waste, paper sacks are available at a cost of £11 for 25. This service is provided on a casual basis whereby residents put their material out in sacks as and when they require a collection. However this means that the collection crews have to drive the whole round daily on the off chance that there is material out on the kerbside for collection.

3.4 Commercial refuse and recycling

Sevenoaks DC WSU has 600 trade customers and uses split bodied vehicles to collect trade refuse and trade recycling at the same time.

3.5 Street cleansing service

The street cleansing operation is an input based service whereby all areas are on a two to six week schedule with the two Town Centres on a daily schedule. The District is divided into four zones and each zone is allocated a team of three. Emphasis is placed on mechanical plant, each of the four teams consisting of an HGV sweeper, a pedestrian sweeper and one litter picker. Officers from Sevenoaks DC stated that the input based service does mean that some streets are cleaned when they don’t require it, although they are training their operational crews to use discretion where this is the case.
They do not employ agency workers on the street cleansing service; instead a ‘depot’ team of seven cleansing operatives are employed to cover sickness and annual leave. When cover is not required the depot team are tasked with additional work on the street cleansing service.

3.6 Convenience and premises cleansing

The WSU carry out premise cleaning of all civic buildings, leisure centres and all of Sevenoaks DC public conveniences. In addition they also carry out cleansing of public conveniences, council offices and depot offices for Tonbridge & Malling Council.

3.7 Garage services

Sevenoaks DC officers stated that services undertaken by the garage workshop are fundamental in generating income to offset the WSU overall running costs. The council garage workshop is used for MOT testing and taxi licensing; taxis are tested every six months. The MOT service is very successful and relies only on repeat business and as the garage is working at full capacity no additional advertising is required. During 2009/10, 868 MOTs were carried out.

3.8 Community minibus service

The council run a subsidised minibus service operated by the Works Services Unit. This service is primarily to take elderly people to day centres, though it is also used for local youth groups.

3.9 Minor construction works

When Kent County Council removed the highways agency agreements from the district councils the vast majority of Sevenoaks DC highways operatives were transferred to the new contractor under TUPE. Sevenoaks DC has totally scaled down its highways and minor construction works service to a level that generally involves maintenance of the depot site. The two operatives still employed by Sevenoaks DC on this service are multi-skilled and assist in other services operated by the council as well as carrying out depot maintenance works.

3.10 Pest Control

Two operatives are employed to deal with pest control issues affecting the residents of the District. The WSU provides a chargeable service for dealing with the following; rats, mice, bedbugs, fleas, cockroaches, wasps, squirrels and ants.

3.11 Emptying of cesspools

Sevenoaks DC still provide a cesspool emptying service, servicing those properties without mains sewerage.
3.12 Grounds Maintenance

Sevenoaks DC Grounds Maintenance Department is based at a smaller depot. It is managed separately from the WSU operation; but in the same way whereby the management not only carry out the service provider role but also the role of ‘client’. Works carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Service do not include highway verge cutting, weed control or tree maintenance. A political decision was made by Kent County Council to withdraw the highways agency from the district councils within the County. At this point Sevenoaks DC relinquished all responsibility for these services and the County Council carry out these functions. Officers from Sevenoaks explained that Kent CC receive a significant amount of complaint in respect of highway verge cutting from the public but owing to the fact that Kent CC made the decision that created the problem Sevenoaks make it clear to residents that the problems are for the County Council and not the districts to sort out.