



AGENDA ITEM NO.

Report Cover Sheet

Name of Meeting:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	10th December 2007
Report Title:	Pest Control Service
Summary of report:	The report advises on the changes in respect of the Pest Control Service.
For Further Information Please Contact (report author):	Richard Hall
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Policy Framework:	No
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budgetary framework:	No
Wards of the District directly affected by this decision:	All
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan?	No (If Yes, include reference number)
Is the report Private & Confidential	No
Background Papers:	None

Consultation Undertaken

Below is a table of the Council's regular consultees. However not all have to be consulted on every matter and if there was no obligation to consult with a specific consultee they will be marked as n/a.

Consultees	Yes/ No	Who
Other Committees	N/A	
Ward Councillors	Yes	
Portfolio Holders	Yes	Cllr Michael Kinson
Other Councillors		
Warwick District Council recognised Trades Unions	N/A	
Other Warwick District Council Service Areas	Yes	Finance – Marcus Miskinis
Project partners	No	
Parish/Town Council	“	
Highways Authority	“	
Residents	No	
Citizens Panel	No	
Other consultees	No	

Officer Approval

With regard to officer approval all reports must be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance Services and Legal Services.

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director(s)	23/11/07	Craig Anderson, Mary Hawkins
Chief Executive	23/11/07	Chris Elliott
CMT	23/11/07	
Section 151 Officer		
Legal	14/11/07	Clare Flanagan
Planning		John Edwards
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That amendments to the Pest Control Service, as proposed in the report, be agreed, including the cessation of the service for wasp nest treatment.

2.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 In response to the pressure on budgets within the Environmental Health Department, the Pest Control Service has been reviewed. As a result it is intended to reduce the number of in-house Technical Assistants from 3 to 2. However, in the year 2008/9 it is also intended to retain the budget for half of the post being suspended, to enable 'backfilling' of work through private contractors, should this become necessary. This will provide some resilience. After a year the service can again be reviewed to determine whether the budget allocation is satisfactory.

The Pest Control Service has for a number of years been provided by three in-house Technical Officers plus an additional 0.4 post utilised for a contractor to manage fluctuations in demand (see 4.3² below).

- 2.2 It should be noted that the Technical Assistants are also involved with other areas of work in addition to Pest Control eg drainage investigation work.

- 2.3 In order to make this reduction in the number of staff the following services would be discontinued:-

- **Private sewer clearing service** - It is felt that this service can be provided by private contractors. There are few requests for this service and therefore the impact of withdrawing the service would be minimal.
- **Wasp nest treatment service** - This service is resource intensive for a period of a five months in the summer (June to October inclusive). However, a major impact is that it places an administrative burden on the Department which, from 1 April 2008 we will not be resourced due to changes in administration.

The number of requests for service for wasp nest treatment varies greatly year on year, from 600 to 1300, largely dependant on the weather. The income and expenditure is likewise variable and also depends upon the number of concessionary treatments undertaken. The surge in service demand within the summer period can therefore be seen to stretch resources.

There are a number of pest control contractors which can be found in the local telephone directory. It is understood that the charges they make range from a similar level to that of the Council (i.e. £50) to well over £200. Suitable products can also be purchased at DIY stores etc for around £5, allowing residents to treat the problem themselves.

- **Provision of pest control service for non domestic premises** – Approximately 20 rodent control contracts were in existence prior to April 2007 and a service was offered to commercial premises on an ad hoc basis. These services realised an income of approximately £3700. On the retirement of two of the Technical Assistants earlier this year these services ceased as it was impractical to continue to provide the service utilising a temporary arrangement with a private pest control company whilst still providing a service to the public. It was felt that private companies could provide this service for commercial premises as they do in most cases.

3.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The option of putting the entire pest control service out to private contractors has been considered. It has not been possible to obtain comparative prices because of the variability of service choices and the inability to gain a like for like comparison. However, 'benchmarking' with other local authorities indicates that there are clear advantages in retaining a level of service 'in house'. This is particularly the case when considering the public health issues involved with control of pests such as rats, mice, fleas and bedbugs.

4.0 BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 A charge of £83 is made for drain clearing. The income gained in a year approximates to the cost of the service and the withdrawal of the service has little impact on the budget.
- 4.2 A charge of £50 is currently made for wasp nest treatment. However, there are concessionary charges of £25 for pensioners and it is free for those on income support or those registered as disabled.

Over a year the charges levied approximately cover the treatments carried out in total but this varies year on year depending on number of service requests not taking into account the administrative burden.

- 4.3 A charge of £160 was made for small contracts, others by assessment and for ad hoc treatments £41 per hour, realising approximately £3,700.

4.4 **Revenue Budget**

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Original 07/08</u>	<u>08/09</u>	
	£	£	
Salaries and oncosts	64,050	50,776 ¹	
Contractual Payment ²	<u>7,583</u>	<u>7,828</u>	
	71,633	58,604	<u>-£13,029</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Wasps ³	(10,000)	0	
Rodents	(6,000)	(2,100)	
Other Pests	(600)	(500)	
Drain Clearance	<u>(400)</u>	<u>(400)</u>	
	(17,000)	(3,000)	<u>(£14,000)</u>

¹This figure takes into account the reduction of the half post (£10,700) and also the reduced level of salary for the 2 new incumbents.

²Utilised to manage fluctuations in the demand for the Pest Control Service, but particularly the Wasp Contract. Any additional expenditure is provided via income from wasp treatments.

³This income is expended in providing the wasp nest service and is balanced where necessary by utilising Contractual Payments².

In accordance with the Fees and Charges Report 22 October 2007, the changes above have been reflected in the 2008/09 Revenue Budget. These result in a net cost of £3,300 (£10,700 half post saving, less £14,000 reduced income) however, as previously indicated, the income received is expended in providing the service.

5.0 **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Not applicable

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