

COMMITTEE - Housing and Environment

DATE – 13 April 2010

CORPORATE DIRECTOR – Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT – Bulk item uplifts from HRA properties

REPORT NO – H&E/10/047

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents Committee with an update to the decision taken at the 6 October 2009 meeting that reintroduced a free uplift service to Council House tenants and includes details on the effectiveness of this interim arrangement and provides long term options for members to consider.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- 1) Approves the continuation of this free uplift service for up to 4 items for Council House tenants for 2010-11.
- 2) Notes that funding commitment is available and will be met by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of £135,000 (Waste Collection aspect).
- 3) Instructs Officers to prepare an advertising campaign to promote the availability of this scheme.
- 4) Instructs Officers to progress discussions for consideration of developing a service using the Social Enterprise approach through the power of wellbeing for 2011-12.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As indicated above there is provision within the Housing Revenue Account 2010/11 for £135,000 for fly tipping within Council House estates, under the subject heading Waste Collection. Under the present procedure, the Housing Teams are invoiced for each fly tipping report that lies on Housing owned areas within estates. This is currently £75.00 per collection and is in line with the commercial rate charge. Where there are unidentified disposals of bulky items within the boundary of a Council property then the Housing Teams are invoiced for each fly tipping report and a domestic charge is applied at £20.00 per uplift. The same charge applies for those tenants that seek the free uplift service through the reporting to the Contact Centre.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Single Outcome Agreement

We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance for future generations.

Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

VDFL - this report is in line with the Council's key aim to enhance the total environment in social housing areas.

Housing Service Plan 2009-2012 – we have committed to establishing and Environmental Standard for our estates.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Systems & Technology – The existing Confirm, Consillium and Lagan systems will handle these enquiries.

Risk – Since the budget saving decision taken last year, there is anecdotal evidence that fly tipping within Housing estates is on the increase and this has not only been recognised by staff but also by Community Safety partners. In addition to the associated fire hazards, this item has also been highlighted and discussed at the Aberdeen Community Safety Partnership where key stakeholders and partners have raised concern at the high incidence of fly tipping within our estates.

Environmental – This is contained within the Housing Service Plan 2009-2012 as one of the priorities is to establish an environmental standard in our housing estates.

6. REPORT

Background

At the Resources Management meeting of 3 June 2008, a report on Charges for Special Collections from Households – Internal & Trade Waste Customers was approved. As a consequence of this, the free uplift service of any two items per year to our tenants was removed and a charging mechanism was introduced. The effect on our tenants was that they would pay £20.00 for the special uplift of up to 4 household items and with those on low incomes and in receipt of state benefits paying a reduced charge of £10.00.

Since the budget saving decision was taken, anecdotal evidence was available that advised Officers that fly tipping within Housing Estates was on the increase and this was not only been recognised by our staff but also by Community Safety partners.

The procedure for fly tipping and organising bulk uplifts within Housing estates was also proving problematic. Tenants on restricted budget (Housing Benefit) could apply through the Housing Offices to have items picked up at reduced rates provided they could provide (in person) evidence of their entitlement. Additional problems consisted of where the item lies and ultimately who took responsibility for uplift. Although our Special Collections Team collected from open areas such as pavements, curbside and roads, Housing staff needed to authorise specialised uplifts from communal housing areas and open spaces such as gardens, communal lobbies and additional time is taken to undertake checks on responsibility and where ownership lies. After these checks were complete and no owner had been identified a special request was made and the Housing Team charged at the commercial rate of £75.00 per uplift. The very nature of some items and where they lay e.g. Bulky item within communal lobby, led to increased risk and fire hazard.

At the Housing and Environment Committee meeting of 6 October 2009, members considered a proposed solution report and Committee approved the following:-

- 1) to approve the reintroduction of a free uplift service of up to four items for Council House tenants until the financial year end;
- 2) to note that funding commitment was available and would be met by the Housing Revenue Account; and
- 3) to Instruct Officers to monitor the effectiveness of the decision and to report back to a future meeting of the Committee in the new financial year including budgetary consideration of the longer term solution, including the consideration of outsourcing the service to a social public partnership.

Since these decisions were taken and in anticipation of reviewing the success of the revised service, it is evident from the feedback from our front line staff and that of the tenants that there is a lack of understanding and appreciation on the availability of this scheme. Should members approve the recommendations then Officers will need to prepare an advertising campaign to promote the service availability and existing networks will be used for this approach.

In relation to the actual spend and recharge to the HRA since this interim service was reintroduced, the following information has been collated:-

Information accurate as at 17 March 2010 – Broken down into Housing Team by Geographical Area.


| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Central | £36,088.04 |
| North | £7725.00 |
| South | £20625.00 |
| Total | £64,438,04 |

7. AUTHORISED SIGNATURE

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8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Resources Management Report - 3 June 2009
Housing and Environment Committee – 6 October 2009