

COMMUNITY SKIPS

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE



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PORTFOLIO	Community Services
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PURPOSE

1. To respond to the motion raised at Full Council on the 19th December 2018 by Cllr Commis proposing that “This Council reintroduces a Community Skips scheme.”

RECOMMENDATION

2. The Executive is recommended not to reinstate the community skip scheme on the basis of the increased financial costs , which is currently not budgeted for, and operational risk implications for the Council.
3. It is recommended that the Council strengthens its existing targeted ward interventions, within existing officer and operational budget resources, to deliver alternative additional environmental activities to wards and residents that require additional support with recycling and household waste collections. This approach will co-ordinate events and activities that aim to respond to local priorities and will align with existing Urbaser resources and existing third sector organisations to remove and upcycle re-usable/unwanted household items.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4. Any re-establishment of a Council operated scheme will require additional budgetary allocation for skip provision, back office administration, dedicated and fully trained deployed Officer(s) and insurance liabilities to meet the requirements of the Council’s insurers and the waste disposal authority.
5. Associated operational costs to deliver a community skip scheme have increased significantly, rendering the motion to reinstate cost prohibitive.
6. There is no local evidence to support a business case for the re-establishment of the provision of skips that will require increased investment at current costs. There is no evidence to support that the provision of community skips increases resident participation in household recycling or reduces fly tipping.
7. The borough’s recorded incidents of fly tipping have shown an annual decrease since the withdrawal of the scheme.
8. Alternative operational targeted ward initiatives and patch management working by Housing and Streetscene Officers in conjunction with residents have yielded better outcomes.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Background:

9. The Council operated a community skip scheme from 1998 via Streetscene's operational duties and budgets. There is no statutory requirement to provide community skips. The Council initially introduced and maintained the scheme to help disadvantaged / vulnerable residents to dispose of bulky waste and to provide assistance to residents in the borough. However, in later years of the scheme's operation, there became less evidence that the community skip service was meeting its intended objectives. Low collection tonnage, increased administrative requirements of back office resources and the increasing abuse of community skips for the disposal of hazardous / non household recycle all impacted the scheme's intended performance effectiveness. During the life of the scheme Lancashire County Council, as the disposal authority issued a formal notice for the continued incidents of contamination of controlled hazardous waste in Burnley's Community Skips.

Key Events and Factors:

10. In August 2015, the Council were notified by the skip provider that there had been a significant fire at the facility. Widespread damage had occurred and it was alleged that the fire had emanated from a Council operated skip. Whilst the investigation and case has subsequently been concluded with no liability being placed on the Council, the immediate suspension and review of the scheme, ultimately led to the Council looking to deliver community recycling engagement via different mechanisms. In March 2017 the Council's Executive approved the Needs Led Community Clean Up Education Initiative and the community skip scheme was dis-established.
11. During 2017/18 the Needs Led Community Clean Up Education Initiative, delivered 5 targeted ward initiatives across the borough that aimed at addressing ward priorities. These activities were resourced by a £30k 'One Off budget allocation (approved by Full Council in September 2017) along with £13k residual operational community skip budget. The delivered initiative activities included; additional cleansing, support of volunteering activities and community litter picks, enforcement action where appropriate, the issuing of recycling equipment, affixing house numbers to rear gates and bins, offering advice/guidance and sign-posting to residents, increasing Kingdom's presence in the area and housing inspections. In addition, 59 properties across the borough were fitted with steel gates in areas with reports of persistent fly-tipping. Monitoring of these gates has shown the initiative was successful with no reports of fly-tipping in the yards of the properties fitted with gates. Feedback from Councillors and residents following these interventions was also very positive.
12. Prior to the dis-establishment of the scheme and during the suspension period, options for its continuation were considered but the delivery of a viable scheme within existing resources was identified as being cost and operationally prohibitive. The following has been identified and remain pertinent in any decision to re-establish the scheme;

- The dedicated post with responsibility for the operational delivery of the scheme was deleted from the establishment as part of the Council's previously required budget savings proposals. As such, and due to other corporate priorities, there is currently no staff resource provision to facilitate the delivery of the scheme.
- In addition, a review of the scheme post-fire recommended that any future skip deployment in the community would require an additional resource for each skip deployment to be overseen by trained officers. This is currently no provision within the Council for this and as such this would be an increased / currently unmet cost.
- Recent preliminary discussions with the Disposal Authority have reinforced the point above and have indicated that further disposal costs and requirements could be associated with the re-introduction of the scheme.

13. The figures below show that since the withdrawal of the community skip service fly tipping incidents have actually decreased.

Fly Tipping incidents by year	
Skip Service In Operation	April 2014 to March 2015 = 4663
	April 2015 to March 2016 = 5962
Skip Service not in Operation	April 2016 to March 2017 = 3101
	April 2017 to March 2018 = 2660

14. The activities outlined in Para.10 have shaped the existing environmental ward priority work of both Streetscene and Selective Licensing Officers within existing resources and work undertaken in conjunction with the community, Urbaser and Kingdom Environmental Services. This work continues to deliver positive outcomes in tackling fly tipping and resident re-cycling engagement than were previously obtained by the operation of the community skip scheme. The targeting of areas with promotional and engagement activity to offer assistance and equipment and the flexible use of partner resources continues to be maintained. In addition and when required, the work is supported by enforcement activity. A key development has been the use of strengthened anti-social behaviour powers for environmental and fly tipping incidents that were not in force at the time of the operation of the community skip scheme.

15. In December 2018, the Government published its Waste Strategy (*Resources and Waste Strategy for England*) and whilst it is currently too early to fully comprehend its implications for Lancashire or at the local level, it is clear that further focus will be given in the short / medium term on growing the recycling and re-use agenda in addressing the existing 'throwaway' societal trend. The Strategy highlights that further follow up national consultations will be rolled out across 2019 and as such, it is anticipated that further information will be provided. However, it is suggested that the community skip scheme reinforces the disposal via landfill of potentially recyclable materials that the current

Strategy is trying to move away from.

16. Lancashire County Council as the disposal authority have confirmed their position, should a future community scheme be introduced by a collection authority. Lancashire County Council have confirmed that they would not cover disposal costs relating to the operation of a community skip scheme unless recyclable materials were separated at each location into the different recycling streams (at least three separate skips per deployment) at source and a Burnley Council Officer was on site throughout and for every deployment to prevent contamination.
17. As an alternative approach to the community skip scheme, it is recommended that the Council builds on its existing environmental approach. Frontline Officers as part of their existing roles will co-ordinate targeted ward events. As part of these planned ward days, it is the intention to provide and align existing waste and cleansing caged vehicle resource to offer a free bulky collection removal to help disadvantaged / vulnerable residents (as the original intended target beneficiaries of the community skip scheme) across the borough. Wherever possible and within local third sector operating parameters, the Council will aim to maximise the re-use opportunities from the collections. The additional activity will support existing ward action days and the focus of the targeted ward initiative will remain on the facilitation and co-ordination of community engagement and activity in addressing ward environmental priorities and concerns. For instance, maintaining volunteering and litter picking activities within the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

18. The Community Skip Scheme's allocated operational budget prior to the scheme's suspension was £6,500pa. Work undertaken in the 2016 post scheme suspension identified that any future operational costs (of a like for like service) would increase to a minimum of £18k pa in light of the Environment Agency's 'approved provider list' requirements. This figure does not include potential additional disposal costs or additional officer resource for back office administration and the martialling of skip deployments.
19. An indicative estimate for the whole service provision on this basis is suggested to be circa £45 - 55k pa as follows;

If the conditions imposed by the disposal authority were adopted and the Council was not required to pay disposal costs, based on the delivery of community skip events at previous levels, the cost of providing the service to Burnley Borough Council is set out below:

3 skips X 60 events	= 3 X £120 X 60 = £21,600
Officer time	= £25,000
Total cost	= £46,600

If the Council chose not to adopt the conditions imposed by the disposal authority and the costs of any future scheme incurred disposal costs, this would be as set out below;

1 X skip X 60 events = £7,200
Disposal costs at an average 3,000 weight = circa £23,400
Officer time = £25,000
Total cost = £54,400

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

20. None.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

21. Lancashire County Council

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. None.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

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ALSO: