

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 1 March 2018

Special Uplifts Service

Item number	8.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	23 , 25

Executive Summary

This report provides an update to Committee on the outcome of changes to the charging structure for Special Uplifts, including impacts on costs, income, numbers of uplifts and fly-tipping.

It reaffirms the intention to seek a partner via procurement, initially through a pilot service focussed around reuse.

Special Uplifts Service

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report;
- 1.2 It is recommended that Committee notes the intention to procure a pilot collection service to encourage reuse of materials within a defined area;
- 1.3 It is recommended that further changes to the service or pricing structure be postponed to avoid undermining this pilot.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan was agreed at Transport and Environment Committee on [1 November 2016](#).
- 2.2 Action 48 of that plan specified two activities which relate to the development and redesign of the Special Uplift service for bulky waste as follows:
- 2.3 “Undertake a review of the Special Uplift service with particular focus being placed on the charging structure (i.e. move to a new charge of £5 per item) and opportunities to work with the voluntary sector to undertake collections.”
- 2.4 This report provides an updated picture of the impact of the changed charging structure in relation to collection costs and fly-tipping and affirms the intention to develop and seek a service pilot with a third sector partner or partners.

3. Main report

Impact of new charging structure on Special Uplift Service Demand, and Flytipping

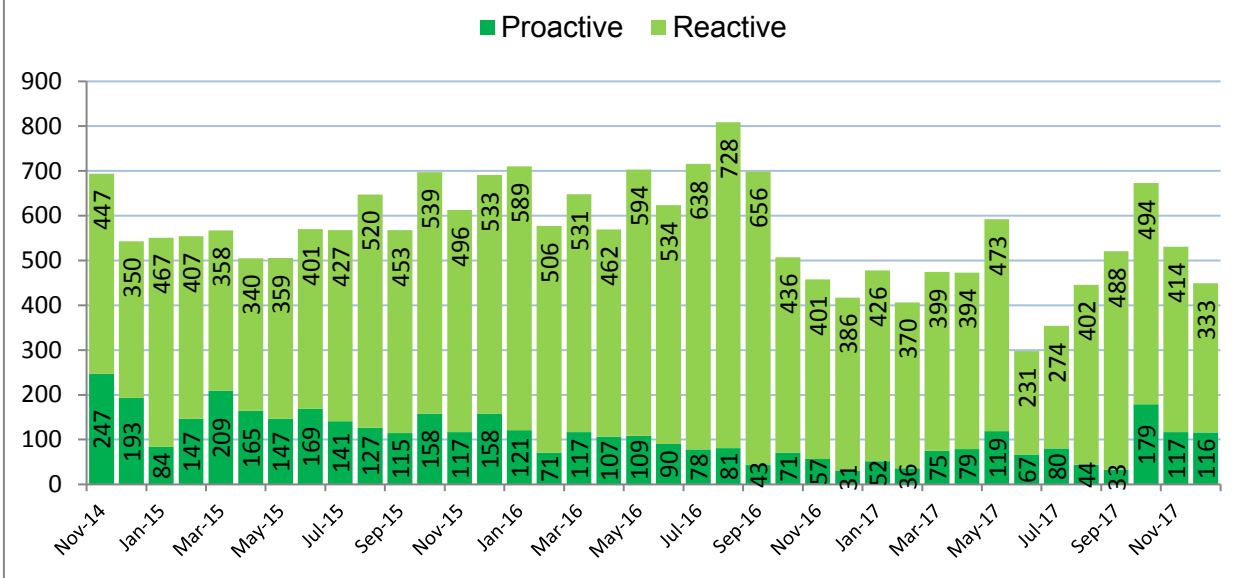
- 3.1 The new charging structure for Special Uplifts was introduced on 23 January 2017 following approval at Transport and Environment Committee on [17 January 2017](#). The new charge is £5 per item, not £26 per uplift, and so is cheaper for many service users
- 3.2 Demand for this service has increased as a result of this change. The number of uplifts has increased by 120% (period February to December 2017), while the number of items uplifted has increased by 26%.

3.3 Although demand for the service has clearly grown following the introduction of the new charging structure, this data suggests that around 80% of the items would still have been uplifted previously and that fewer items are uplifted on each occasion.

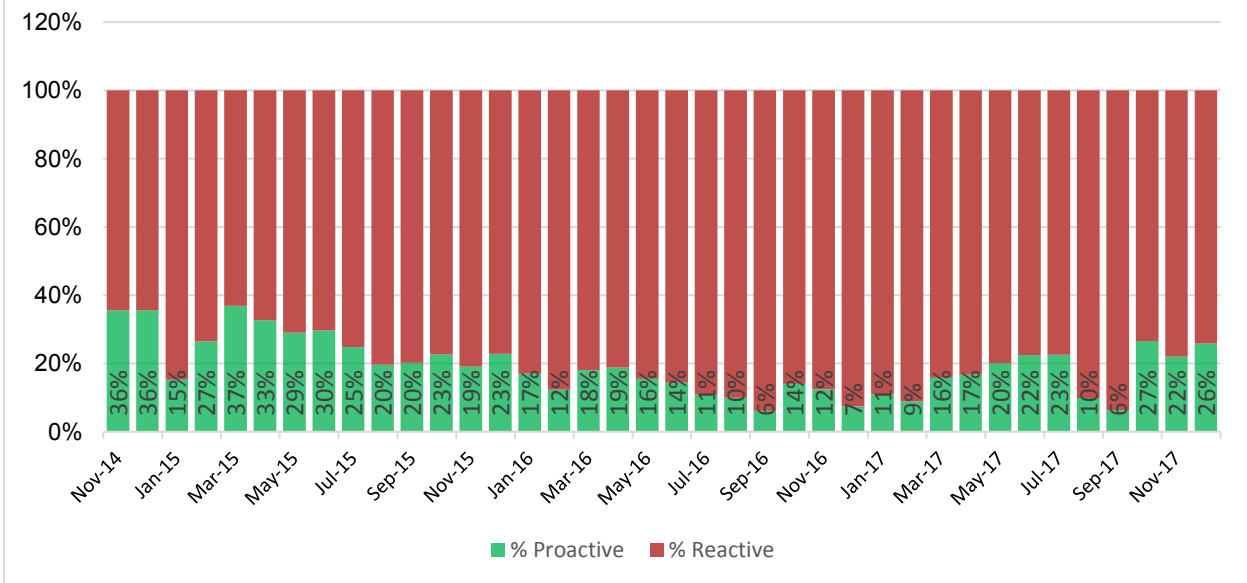
Number of Items			Number of Uplifts		
	2016	2017		2016	2017
Feb	2899	3383	Feb	710	1344
Mar	3415	4196	Mar	823	1718
Apr	2980	3613	Apr	710	1475
May	3152	4280	May	733	1764
Jun	3004	3869	Jun	701	1610
Jul	2648	3734	Jul	649	1583
Aug	2930	3875	Aug	705	1645
Sep	2740	3300	Sep	668	1431
Oct	2646	3454	Oct	664	1524
Nov	2693	3434	Nov	676	1543
Dec	2568	2775	Dec	656	1237
Grand Total	31675	39913	Grand Total	7695	16874

- 3.4 One reason to change the pricing structure of the service was to reduce fly-tipping. However in parallel the service has actively encouraged “proactive reporting” by staff which will impact on the number of incidents reported. This and other improvements resulting from the Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan, mean that it is challenging to provide a true picture of the impact the charging change has had on fly-tipping.
- 3.5 It is also the case that some reports are not captured on the system and may instead be written or verbal so there may be gaps in this data. An example of when this could occur, is if the crew uplift a dumped item they come across that has not yet been reported.
- 3.6 Broadly speaking the number of incidents reported overall is significantly less than in previous years, but it appears that this trend commenced in late 2016 some time prior to the implementation of the service change. Again this may suggest that other measures employed by the service may serve to be controlling fly-tipping.
- 3.7 It can be seen that there are fairly wide fluctuations from month to month, although it may be possible in part to explain these as a result of known factors, such as localised targeted initiatives, and seasonal factors such as holidays or end of term for students. It is notable that the number of proactive reports by staff tailed off in late 2016 before increasing again during 2017.

Street Cleansing Dumping and Fly-tipping Service Requests from Nov 14 to Dec 17 by Proactive vs Reactive Status



Street Cleansing Dumping and Fly-tipping Requests from Nov 14 to Dec 17 by % Proactive vs Reactive



Cost impact of new pricing structure

- 3.8 The number of vehicles and crews who operate this service has been increased to cope with the demand. Previously the budget allocation for this service was two vehicles and crews; this has increased to three (at approximately £90,000 additional costs per annum).
- 3.9 The income from the 39,913 *items* at £5 each is £199,565.
- 3.10 The income from 16,874 *uplifts* at £26 each would have been £438,724.
- 3.11 It can therefore be seen that the new pricing structure has considerably increased the net cost of delivering the service, but there is more limited evidence to suggest

it has reduced fly-tipping (as this reduced prior to the price change), and will be affected by other service improvements.

- 3.12 It is possible to compare with Glasgow City Council, whose bulky waste service is free at the point of use. Glasgow City Council report their service carries out approximately 100,000 uplifts per annum of 500,000 items.
- 3.13 Although the population of Glasgow is around 20% greater than Edinburgh, the free service is of a different order of magnitude to that provided in Edinburgh.
- 3.14 One justification for introducing the charge in Edinburgh originally was that it would reduce fly-tipping because the Council could not previously keep up with demand, leading to waiting times of weeks or months at certain times. Any removal of the charge would therefore require careful consideration of the shape and size of this service, and the level of resourcing required in future.

Barriers to use of current service

- 3.15 As part of a wider project to examine behaviours in tenement parts of the city, Changeworks has explored barriers to the use of the current Special Uplift Service.
- 3.16 Only 20% of respondents said they were more likely to use the service now it was cheaper, while more than 30% of respondents said they did not know about the service.
- 3.17 Accordingly, it would appear that understanding the appropriate way to dispose of waste may be a greater factor leading to fly-tipping than the current pricing structure.
- 3.18 The Waste and Cleansing Service and Localities teams have been running campaigns under the banner #ourEdinburgh to tackle this and other issues in local communities and will continue to do so. In addition the service is engaged with the two Zero Waste City projects being delivered in Edinburgh, in Leith and South Edinburgh, both of which may serve to tackle this awareness issue in several areas prone to fly-tipping.

Working with the Third Sector

- 3.19 The Waste and Cleansing Service has been investigating the development of a partnership approach with the third sector to deliver this service, as happens in some other areas of the country, and as outlined in the Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan.
- 3.20 The potential benefits of this approach could be a more customer centred approach (including collections from within the home), with higher levels of recycling and more items diverted for reuse. Funding from Zero Waste Scotland allowed the Council to work with Changeworks and AEA Ricardo to investigate this with several potential partners.
- 3.21 The engagement exercise and subsequent report highlighted several things:
- 3.22 No “lead partner” emerged among the organisations who participated, in spite of some interest in being part of such a project.

- 3.23 The business case models demonstrated that while such a service could potentially be financially viable, it was extremely vulnerable to the assumptions which had been used, demonstrating a significant degree of financial risk.
- 3.24 The size of Edinburgh's collection service was a barrier to participation for some potential partners, as was uncertainty over the quality of materials collected.
- 3.25 In addition it is notable that Edinburgh's service collects a range of materials (such as general household waste and garden waste) which other similar services may not collect; it would be necessary to further explore these issues with potential partners.
- 3.26 The Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan Update report ([October 2017](#)) sought approval to seek notes of interest from potential partners to deliver this service, with an intention to seek a third sector partner or partners if possible.
- 3.27 However, taking into account the points above, and the increased scale of the service following the change in the pricing structure it is proposed to develop this work into a pilot service to take place in a specific part of the city (yet to be confirmed) in order to test the issues above, to give a better idea of the quality and value of items collected, and to minimise any financial risk. It is expected that a pilot on this scale should be more attractive to potential third sector partners than a citywide approach and if it proves unsuccessful or not financially viable the Council would at least have an end point.
- 3.28 In view of the likely impact of any change to the pricing mechanism for Special Uplifts as well as the ongoing work to raise awareness of the service within communities it would be desirable to delay any further changes to the pricing at this time, to allow this work to be progressed.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 It would be the objective of any changes to the Special Uplift service to reduce levels of fly-tipping across the city and provide a convenient way to dispose of large items.
- 4.2 In addition, the specific procurement of a third sector partner or partners to operate a pilot would seek to enhance levels of waste diversion from landfill for reuse or recycling.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no direct impacts at this time.
- 5.2 The outcome of any procurement exercise would require to be approved by Committee at the appropriate time.
- 5.3 Any subsequent change to the cost structure would be expected to impact on the cost basis of providing the service.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 There are no direct impacts at this time.

7. Equalities impact

7.1 There are no impacts at this time. However the development of a third sector model may be seen to offer an enhanced service collecting from inside the home, and may result in wider social benefits.

8. Sustainability impact

8.1 Moves to reduce the environmental impact of managing waste through diversion of unwanted materials to reuse and recycling, rather than landfill, will ultimately help to minimise environmental impacts on a global level.

8.2 Reducing fly-tipping serves to enhance the local environment.

9. Consultation and engagement

9.1 Initial engagement with the third sector has already taken place as outlined in the report.

9.2 It is proposed to further engage the third sector in a procurement exercise.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 [Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan – Item 7.1](#) Transport and Environment Committee 1 November 2016.

10.2 [Charges for Special Uplifts - Item 7.8](#) Transport and Environment Committee 17 January 2017.

10.3 [Waste and Cleansing Improvement Plan - Update - Item 8.3](#) Transport and Environment Committee 5 October 2017.

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11. Appendices

None