

10.4 WASTE STRATEGY PROJECT 8 - COMMERCIAL WASTE SERVICE UPDATE

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That COUNCIL NOTES the progress update on implementation of Council's decision to cease the City's commercial waste service as part of Project 8 of the Waste Strategy.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide Council with a progress report on Waste Strategy Project 8 and the implementation of the cessation of the City's Commercial Waste Service.

BACKGROUND:

Project 8 of the City's Waste Strategy 2018 – 2023 "Commercial Waste Collections Options Appraisal" was established to investigate the value of providing the existing commercial service in this capacity and review alternative options.

At the 15 September 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council received a business case detailing the following options:

1. No change to service
2. City provides a fit for purpose service
3. City provides a limited charged service as per residential customers (three bin FOGO service)
4. Discontinue existing commercial service
5. Discontinue existing commercial service with rate rebate

The decision was made to end the City's commercial waste and recycling service effective 30 June 2021, with a one-off rebate granted for all commercial ratepayers (i.e. Option 5). The decision was based on the findings of the options appraisal and aligning business case, which demonstrated that the current commercial waste service is no longer a viable option in the future, for the following reasons:

- a) It does not meet the objectives of the City's Waste Strategy or its vision of achieving zero waste to landfill;
- b) The current commercial system is an extension of the City's residential two bin system and does not offer a tailored approach to the requirements of different businesses;
- c) The introduction of a third Food Organics Garden Organics bin in 2021 would introduce greater inefficiency in the current commercial service; and
- d) A significant additional investment would be required for the City to provide a fit for purpose commercial service.

At the Council Meeting 18 May 2021 Council received two petitions in relation to the discontinuance of commercial waste on the 30 June 2021. Council made the decision to receive the petitions and requested that a report be prepared.

At 22 June Council Meeting, Council noted the Administration response to the petitions and did not alter their decision to cease the service as of 30 June 2021, with two additional requests, as detailed below. That Council:

- REQUESTS a further report on the ceasing of the commercial waste service at the August 2021 Council meeting.
- REQUESTS Administration to seek to verify that an alternative waste service has been sought, including the proposed micro-service where applicable, at the time of removal of commercial bins between 1 July and 31 August 2021.

This report has been prepared in accordance with these requests.

DETAILS:

In accordance with the Council Decision, the city's commercial waste service ended on 30 June 2021. Detailed below are the steps taken in the run up to the service end and a current status update:-

Progress to date and outstanding actions

- Initial letter/notification to all 1748 commercial Ratepayers on 22 September 2020 - advising of service end from 30 June 2021 and rationale for change.
- From December 2020 until April 2021, every commercial premise was visited by our in-house team members. Face-to-face site visits were carried out, consulting with businesses and handing out information leaflets, as well as marking bin infrastructure in preparation for removal. During this period, 4645 bins were marked for removal, almost 1800 flyers were issued and over 1600 individual businesses consulted.
- Each site visited was captured and entered into the City's Intramaps Mapping system, to highlight completed areas and areas where an additional visit was required.
- In June 2021 a final reminder letter was sent to all commercial ratepayers. This letter detailed their scheduled bin removal dates, and contact details for any further support or guidance with the transition to a new supplier.
- City staff answered queries and provided supplier options for those who had yet to organise a new supplier (Refer call statistics below).
- Bin removals commenced on Monday 5 July. Uplifts were aligned with usual bin collection/presentation days, and each collection area allotted three days. Initial uplifts for all 5 collection areas was completed on Friday 23 July. Mop up collections are on-going for those that forgot to present their bin during the first visits. It is anticipated that the vast majority of bin removals will be completed by the week ending 8 August.
- This has been a massive undertaking, with resources deployed to ensure both an efficient removal service and smooth transition for our Commercial Ratepayers to their new supplier.
 - Uplift Crews - 4 x Staff from Waste Operations Team and 4 x Staff from Engineering Construction Team – dismantling, stacking and loading bins
 - 2 x enclosed moving vans – used to transport bins
 - 1 x small tip truck – to transport wheels and axles
 - 2 x utes with flashing beacons – used as a spotter vehicle for safety requirements
 - 1 x rubbish truck – to empty bins ahead of the removals team

Customer Support during the Transition.

During the bin removal process, to address the Council request to seek to verify that an alternative waste service had been sought, and in addition to the removal crews, the City deployed a dedicated on-site officer to be available to liaise with businesses as required and to assist business owners if they had not secured a private provider.

Three business owners directly approached the bin removal crews/officer to advise they had not sourced a new supplier. In each instance, the bins were left on site to allow the customer to source a new supplier (aided by the Waste Team with multiple supplier contact details). Two of these businesses have now moved to a new supplier, whilst the third has commenced a "microbusiness" service with the City.

In addition, Administration had two office support staff answering calls and allocating customer requests to the Waste Project Officer. This resulted in site attendance at mixed-use properties to ensure that an adequate number of residential bins were remaining, micro-business assessments and general transition support/advice. A summary of the key call types is detailed below and between 1 June and 30 July – 143 customer enquiries/requests were received and resolved:

Waste - General Enquiry	16
Complaint/Feedback	8
Moved to private provider - remove bins	11
Commercial bins not removed (forgotten to place out on scheduled collection)	51
Removed too many bins	7
Stickered/removed residential bins in error	10
Businesses using residents bins	1
Microbusiness query	24 (20 signing up for service)
Commercial - mixed use enquiry	3
Commercial - interim collections	3
Rating query	9
TOTAL	143

The table below highlights the current position, as of close of business on Friday 6 August:

	REMOVAL SCHEDULE (ORDER)	BINS MARKED FOR REMOVAL	BINS REMOVED
AREA 1 MONDAY	5-7 July	446	522
AREA 2 TUESDAY	13-15 July	520	563
AREA 3 WEDNESDAY	21-23 July	1133	1186
AREA 4 THURSDAY	8-10 July	1245	1304
AREA 5 FRIDAY	16-20 July	1301	1372
	TOTAL	4645	4947

The bin removal process, including “mop up” is now complete. The City has actually recovered 302 more bins than initially stickered for removal (107% recovery). This is primarily due to some commercial bins not being presented or accessible during the initial audits/visits undertaken between December and April. Operational front line personnel will continue to report any “stray” bins seen or presented in the future so that they can be removed.

The entire removal process has been undertaken during some atrocious weather and field crews have worked hard to ensure the operation runs as efficiently as possible, while maintaining a strong and professional customer focus.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

The City developed a Communications Strategy to outline how it will engage with businesses, prior to, during and post the discontinuance of commercial services. This Strategy was approved at the 15 September 2020 Council Meeting. Business e-newsletters, media releases and social media has also been used regularly to highlight the change.

LEGAL/POLICY:

Nil.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Low: There is a low risk that a commercial business has not successfully transitioned to a private service provider.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Enhanced Environment

We have improved resource efficiency and waste management.

By discontinuing the commercial waste service, commercial customers will be provided with a tailored, contemporary waste service that incentivises and delivers diversion from landfill, which the City would be unable to deliver without significant investment and high risk.

The City's Waste Strategy 2018-2023 has a vision of zero waste to landfill through maximising recovery and avoidance and cost effective, sustainable and contemporary waste services.

The City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024 has identical aims and sets the target of zero waste to landfill by 2028.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the following key sustainability outcomes of the *City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024*.

Waste Reduction

City of Vincent commercial premises will have access to tailored waste packages from private providers including variable recoverable/recyclable waste streams. This will provide a cost effective collection service which incentivises correct waste behaviours. We expect this will facilitate increased diversion from landfill and assist in the delivery of our Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024 target of zero waste to landfill by 2028.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

Reducing the number of commercial waste bins throughout the City is in keeping with the following priority health outcomes of the *City's Public Health Plan 2020-2025*:

*Reduced exposure to environmental health risks***FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

A one off rebate (from operational savings) of around \$520 has been approved for the coming financial year. This has been processed by the City's Rates Team.

The impact of the change will be monitored and a further review report will be presented to Council six months after the service ends. This will highlight any ongoing service or financial impacts. Further support for business could then be considered by Council.