

ADULT AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

12th June 2006

Present:

Councillor Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Ralph Harrison, Head of Public Protection and Housing
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

1. Pest Control Services (*Head of Public Protection and Housing*)

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To consider the current, and possible future expansion of, the pest control service. The report highlighted the current pest control services provided by the Council and the pressures to provide an improved service.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Council currently operates a pest control service by employing two fully trained Pest Control Officers. The service deals with a wide range of pests following requests from both residents and businesses.

The Head of Public Protection and Housing reported a 30% increase in service requests since 2001/2002, making it increasingly difficult to meet expectations in response times. There had also been an increase in the number of enquiries to control other pests and increased concern in attacks from gulls. Given the current limited staffing and financial resources it was not possible to provide effective services to minimise these concerns.

Any bird control services would require consideration of obtaining a DEFRA licence to kill or trap birds and would undoubtedly result in some adverse reactions from the public and local environmental groups. A DEFRA licence would also require the authority to demonstrate control of the birds is necessary to preserve public health or safety. Experience of other authorities who have embarked on bird control measures suggests little benefit unless controls are enforced over a period of several years.

The Options were detailed as:

- Option 1 – Continue with the current level of pest control service and provide advice only (not control or treatment) to customers on feral bird control
- Option 2 – Appoint a third qualified pest control operator or outsource additional services from external contractors. Any additional resources could be offset by establishing business contracts with private companies to undertake pest control services. Any increased service would involve consideration of a feral bird control service and a suitable ornithological survey, expected to cost up to £3,000.

Decision

That Option 2 be supported, subject to identification of adequate resources and that the proposals be included as part of the budget process for 2007/2008.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 14th June 2006