

REPORT TO:		Cabinet	
DATE:		7 th December 2022	
REPORT OF:		Cllr Lorraine Cox, Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Ben Caulfield, Policy and Scrutiny Officer	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Outcome of the Call-In of the Cabinet Decision – Subsidised Pest Control Treatments	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the outcome Call-In of the following Cabinet Decision, made by Cabinet on 21st September 2022 and considered by the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th October 2022:

“That Cabinet agree to reduce the subsidy to pest control treatments for rodents relating to domestic properties through a £30 appointment fee.”

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the following resolution of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to the above decision:

“The Committee releases the Cabinet decision in part for implementation, and refer the outstanding part of the decision back to the decision making body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns”

- 2.2 In reference to the above, and following the procedure for call-in of cabinet decisions, the Committee release the implementation of a £30 appointment fee, but recommends:

That Cabinet sets up a suitable mechanism to refer those residents who cannot afford the £30 fee into the Household Support Fund, who can provide funding for those eligible to meet the costs; and

That Cabinet reviews the impact of the decision in 12 months-time and reports back to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

3.1 At its meeting on 21st September 2022, Cabinet considered the following item “Subsidised Pest Control Treatments. The report related specifically to issues with the waiting list for pest control treatments for rodents at domestic properties, currently at 5 weeks. Cabinet made the following decision:

“That Cabinet agree to reduce the subsidy to pest control treatments for rodents relating to domestic properties through a £30 appointment fee.”

3.2 In accordance with the Call-In procedure for Cabinet decisions, the procedure was activated on 7th October 2022 by two members of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Call-In was sponsored by Councillor Scott Brerton. Several reasons were given for the Call-In. Full details are provided in the Call-In Form, which was included with the agenda for the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th October along with the minutes of that meeting. They can be found here <https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=2704&Ver=4>

3.3 Councillor Scott Brerton presented the reasons for the Call-In to the Committee. Councillor Steven Smithson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services presented the reasons for the original decision, and responded to some of the points made on the Call-In.

3.4 The Chair invited the Committee to ask questions of the Portfolio Holder, Sponsor of the Call-In and Officers in attendance. The following issues were discussed:

- Councillors are aware that current waiting times are a problem, but what other methods can be used to reduce the waiting list other than implementing a charge
- Affordability of the payment, particularly during current economic times
- Public Health concerns
- Consultation with the public
- The rented sector and irresponsible landlords
- Environmental Health powers to deal with landlords who do not take responsibility for rodents in their domestic properties
- 40% of pest control appointments result in no pest control work being carried out, mainly due to no access to properties
- Plans to reduce the waiting time from 5 weeks to between 2 and 5 days if the decision is implemented

3.5 Councillors Scott Brerton and Steven Smithson were then given the opportunity to sum up before the committee made their decision.

- 3.6 The Committee discussed several options, including delaying the decision, or introducing alternative methods to reduce the number of no access appointments, such as phone call/text message reminders.
- 3.7 The Household Support Fund was brought into the discussion. The fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support through the winter, and is managed by Hyndburn Leisure. Round 3 of the fund is due to open in November 2022 until the end of March 2023.
- 3.8 The Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure was at the meeting to report on the fund under a later agenda item, and was able to respond to questions from committee members on how the fund could be used to support vulnerable residents to access funds to cover the cost of pest control appointments. It was confirmed the referrals from Pest Control services would be eligible, should the resident meet the eligibility criteria of the fund.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Council’s Call-In procedure gives Scrutiny Committee’s three options when dealing with a Call-In decision:

To release the Cabinet decision in full for implementation;

To release the Cabinet decision in part for implementation, and refer the outstanding part of the decision back to the decision making body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns; or

To refer the decision back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. The decision maker shall then reconsider amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

- 4.2 Cabinet may choose to accept or reject the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The Sponsor of the Call-In, Portfolio Holder and Head of Service provided information for the Committee.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments)	Not applicable to this report.
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for the Council)	
Legal and human rights implications	Not applicable
Assessment of risk	Not applicable
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	Not applicable

**7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:
List of Background Papers**

- 7.1 Agenda, reports and minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th October 2022
<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=2704&Ver=4>