

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Jon Hall (Environmental Services Manager)	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	All	7 th February 2017	
	PEST CONTROL - WASP TREATMENT SERVICE		

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Dearing

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the committee on the current wasp treatment service.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Kettering Borough Council provides a comprehensive pest control service, which covers a multitude of pests, one of which is wasps. A wasp nest may be in a roof space, hanging in a tree, shrub or in the eaves, in an air vent, or in the ground. If the location of a wasps nest makes normal life difficult, e.g. the nest is very close to a door, it may be necessary to have the nest destroyed. Wasps are classified as nuisance pests (ones that are more of an inconvenience), as opposed to a public health pest (such as rats and mice which can cause disease).
- 2.2 The Council employs professionally trained and qualified staff to provide a pest control service to residents of the Borough.
- 2.3 The following charges apply and must be paid at the time of booking the service. This is a call out fee and contributes to the cost of the officer transport time, 'on costs' (vans, fuel, equipment etc.), the time in treating the nest and officer expertise.

There are two sets of charges, one set of fees that cover domestic premises and one set of fees that cover commercial operations.

a) Domestic Premises

There are two price levels for this.

- I. £50
- II. £25 for concessions

These are flat fees irrespective as to the length of the call out, or the number of call outs to the same nest. The time that would typically be required to a kill a wasp nest is 30 minutes (once the officer is on site) but can take up to one hour depending on the circumstances. Approximately 70% of wasp nests are killed on the first visit and 30% on the second visit.

- 2.4 Concessions are applicable to domestic premises if they are pensioners, disabled residents, students, and those on means tested benefits. The provision

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of the concessions is based on the status of the home owner or registered tenant of the property.

Proof of eligibility is required prior to, or at the point of, service provision. Concessions are restricted to two uses in any one financial year.

A Premium Service for domestic premises is also available for a charge of £65.00 between 5pm and 7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. No concessions are offered on this service.

b) Commercial Premises

The charge for treatment is £60.00 per hour, plus the cost of pesticides.

- 2.5 The cost of a domestic treatment has not changed since April 2012 and is deemed to be very competitive. No other commercial company offers general concession rates or fees as low as £25. Pensioner concessions are not means tested. In comparison, one national company offers wasp treatment for in excess of £200 for domestic premises with any abortive visit costing £40.

The table shows the number of call outs received for wasps.

Period	No. of Call Outs Received for Wasps	Percentage of Concessions	Percentage charged at full price
01/04/15 to 31/03/16	217	126 (58%)	91 (42%)
01/04/16 to 31/12/16	312	183 (59%)	129 (41%)

- 2.6 Prior to a booking being made, the customer is advised by customer services or the pest control officers that the full charge of £25 or £50 is payable, even if there is customer miss-identification of the wasps, as this reflects a call out charge. The fee still covers the general cost of officer time (transport and inspection), 'on costs' and expert advice given. It is a charge for the timeslot that has been booked and loss of income that could potentially have resulted in the unnecessary visit.

Information of the call out charge is given on our website. Similarly free expert advice is given, along with a free identification service (through discussion, samples or photographs). The Council is currently reviewing how this is communicated to ensure that all service users are aware of the costs and the free identification service that is available.

- 2.7 Precise numbers of miss-identifications are difficult to measure, but it is estimated to be approximately 50 per year. These are especially weighted in the early wasp season (between March and June). In some circumstances, when it is judged by the visiting officer that the customer is particularly vulnerable, the call out charge may be refunded. This is authorised by the team leader or manager.

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- 2.8 Overall the pest control service runs at a deficit. Clearly a reduced call out fee would affect the income and it would follow that the deficit would potentially increase.
- 2.9 Currently, Public Services are exploring the possibility of expanding the pest control service with a view that the service becomes cost neutral.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 3.1 None – this is an information only report

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None - this is an information only report

5. USE OF RESOURCES

- 5.1 None - this is an information only report

6. RECOMMENDATION

That the report on wasp treatment service and the associated charges are noted.

Background Papers:

Title of Document:
Date:
Contact Officer: Jon Hall

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref:
Date: