

# **Borough Services Policy and Review Panel- 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

## **Briefing note – Pest Control**

### **Background**

**As a Local Authority we have a duty under the Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949 to ‘take such steps as may be necessary to secure as far as practicable that the district is kept free from rats and mice’.**

Until 2008 Rushmoor met this duty by providing a comprehensive in-house pest control service. This covered all pests of Public Health significance and included a free advice and baiting service for rats and mice in residential premises and chargeable wasp nest treatments in both residential and commercial premises. The service was provided by two in house pest control officers.

We also used our powers under the PDPA in appropriate circumstances to require landowners to take the necessary steps to treat and proof premises and land. This included for example requiring owners to treat premises where flea infestations were found.

Occupiers of land have an obligation to notify the local authority of the presence of rats and mice on their land. We in turn will arrange for baiting, as outlined above, and where necessary require owners and occupiers to take steps to protect their properties from future rodent infestations.

In 2008 our Pest Control service was put out to contract following the retirement of our Pest Control Officer, the second officer had already left the Council. At the time, a two-year contract was awarded to Brand Pest Control.

The work carried out by our appointed contractor is restricted to dealing with rats and mice in residential premises and helps to ensure that we meet our responsibilities in relation to rodent control. The contractor will bait premises where rodent infestations are found and will provide advice on any works recommended to keep their land free from rats and mice. These services are provided free of charge.

In addition, we continue to provide free treatment for Bedbugs and Cockroaches to anyone on qualifying benefits.

In cases where baiting is insufficient to successfully deal with the problem the case is escalated to officers in our Environmental Control and Pollution team who will intervene to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to deal with the cause of the problem. If necessary, this may include formal action under the PDPA.

These arrangements have worked successfully and we have made substantial savings, compared to the former in-house arrangements. We have also benefitted from a more resilient service.

The contracted out service was originally provided by Brand Pest Control but is now provided by DialAPest, SDK Environment Ltd following a full procurement process. The arrangements with SDK have been in place since the summer of 2013.

### **Current Arrangements**

Arrangements are in place to refer residents reporting rodent infestations in premises to SDK. In most cases, callers to the Council are transferred using an internal number to SDK. Arrangements are then agreed by the resident with SDK for one of their pest control officers to visit at a time and on a day convenient to the resident.

Under the terms of our contract with SDK, they are required to visit premises reporting a rodent problem within 48 hours of the initial request. There is some flexibility with this as the date and time of the visit must be agreed with the resident.

SDK are required, during their initial visit, to determine by detailed survey the extent of the infestation reported and the initial treatment that is required. Where baiting and advice is insufficient to deal with the problem SDK are required to escalate the case to Rushmoor as outlined above.

SDK are also required to refer cases where it appears a 'hotspot' is identified to Environmental Health and Housing, this allows us to identify the likely causes and the approach required to deal with the emerging issues. This includes where for example three or more properties in close proximity are reporting rodent problems.

Further visits will be made to the property by SDK at appropriate intervals until the infestation is cleared.

Residents reporting other types of pests are advised to contact a pest Control Contractor (membership of an approved professional body such as the British Pest Control Association is recommended) to request treatment. We continue to provide free treatments for Bedbugs and Cockroaches to residents on certain types of benefits.

Advice on identifying pests and their control is available from Environmental Health and Housing.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

The Customer Service Unit carries out a satisfaction survey on behalf of Environmental Health Services. On a monthly basis, contact is made with all residents whose pest control cases are closed within the month by either phone or email.

Customers are given the opportunity to comment on the service provided by SDK. All comments are forwarded to Environmental Health who in turn makes enquiries of SDK where necessary in an effort to improve the service provided.

The information and feedback from the customer satisfaction surveys has been considered as part of the work ongoing to renew our contract as the current contract is due to end in June 2017.

In addition, SDK carry out a survey of customer feedback and provide feedback to Rushmoor quarterly. Arrangements are in place to meet at least quarterly with SDK to discuss the service they provide.

### **Number of treatments provided by SDK June 2013- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

	<b>No of callers seeking advice or Treatment</b>	<b>Total number of Appointments</b>	<b>Total Cost of treatments</b>
<b>June 2013-31<sup>st</sup> March 2014</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>£ 23,371.85(This includes payments to Brands up to the start of SDK's contract)</b>
<b>1 April 2014- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>£ 17,051</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> April 2015-31<sup>st</sup> March 2016</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>1335</b>	<b>£15,290</b>

## **Other Considerations**

Complaints regarding overgrown gardens, accumulations, vacant premises etc. where there may be associated pest issues are dealt with by officers in our Environmental Control and Pollution team.

An overview of the work of this team was provided at the November 2013 meeting of Borough Services.

## **Conclusion**

Following the contracting out of this service, the arrangements in place have worked well, and realised substantial savings. In 2007/8 the same service cost in the region of £74,770. Any concerns raised regarding the service have been addressed, as far as possible, and will inform future contracts.

Working arrangements with our Contractor allow us the opportunity to identify and address areas of concern, particularly in residential premises.

Whilst we are unable to eradicate rodents completely, we are able to control numbers by providing treatment in appropriate cases through SDK and by the intervention of the Environmental Control and Pollution team where necessary.

It should however be recognised that other teams and services have a role to play in responding to pest problems. In particular our Food, Health and Safety team, in commercial food premises and from within Community our Contracts team, through the waste and grounds maintenance contracts. Their work has not been covered by this note but is integral to the success of any Pest Control regime.

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**November 2016**