REMOVAL OF CHEWING GUM UPDATE

1 SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the costs involved in purchasing the specialist equipment for the chewing gum removal process and associated labour costs.

1.2 The report also gives an update on the responses received from the Town/Parish Councils in respect of contributing to the cost.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Following a previous report to the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2003, Members agreed at the special Council meeting on 28 January when the budget was set that a provision of £8,000 be made in the 2003/04 budget for a twice yearly clean of the various town centre areas. This was dependent on the Town/Parish Councils confirming that they would share the cost on a 50/50 basis.

2.2 Members also requested that details were brought back to this committee on the costs involved in purchasing a suitable machine ourselves and the staff costs etc. to carry out the work “internally.”

3 PURCHASE COSTS

3.1 Research has been undertaken on the availability of suitable machinery that the Council could purchase to carry out the removal of the chewing gum, by similar methods to those used by the Chewing Gum Removal Company, who carried out the free trial in Rochford Square.

3.2 As a result, Go Gum Ltd., provided a quotation for their Go Gum Enviraclean machine at a cost of £16,000.

3.3 The machine works using a combination of heat and pressure in a similar way to the trial and can operate with two lances enabling two people to work simultaneously.

3.4 It comes with 2 x 640 litre water tanks and a twin axle trailer for transportation purposes.

3.5 In addition to the purchase costs, there would still be a significant labour cost for actually carrying out the work, requiring a minimum of two people.

3.6 As the Council does not have the staff resource itself to undertake this work, Officers have approached Serviceteam, who have quoted between £35 - £40 per hour for two people and a vehicle to undertake the works.

3.7 Taking Rochford Square as an example, there would be a staff cost of approximately £200 compared to the total cost of the Chewing Gum Removal Company of £265. The Specialist Removal Company's staff should also be more proficient due to this process being their full time job.

3.8 There would be a one-off cost of £300 for a local extraction licence from the Water Authority in addition to servicing costs of the machine of approximately £400 per year.

3.9 Based on the above detailed costs, there would not be a significant saving in the cost of carrying out the chewing gum removal process "internally" with the additional capital cost of £16,000 to purchase the equipment.

4 TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

4.1 Since the previous report, a further letter has been sent to the Town / Parish Councils, notifying them of the decisions taken and requesting if they wish to contribute 50% of the costs.

4.2 At the time of writing this report, the following responses have been received in relation to this sharing of the cleaning costs.

4.3 Rochford Parish Council is still discussing this issue and will hopefully provide the District Council with a definite answer following their Council meeting on 19 February 2003.

4.4 Hullbridge Parish Council will be discussing the issue on the agenda of their March Council meeting.

4.5 Great Wakering Parish Council has declined to contribute any funding towards the cleaning process.

4.6 There have been no further responses from either Rayleigh or Hockley Parish Councils since their original responses, detailed in the previous

report. (Rayleigh would contribute £1000 but Hockley could not contribute at this stage).

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The effective cleaning and removal of chewing gum from the town centre pavements would improve the environmental standards existing in those areas.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Purchasing the Go Gum Enviraclean machine would cost the Council £16,000 in addition to £300 for a water extraction licence and fuel costs. The labour cost to carry out each area of cleaning would not be significantly cheaper than using an external contractor such as the Chewing Gum Removal Company.

6.2 At the special Council meeting on 28 January, a provision of £8,000 was made in the 2003/04 budget for a twice yearly clean of the town centre areas.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

1) To use an external specialist company to undertake any future chewing gum removal cleansing rather than purchasing the machine ourselves, due to the financial outlay involved.

2) To only undertake the cleansing of the town centre areas on a twice yearly basis, where the relevant town/parish council has agreed to contribute 50% of the cost.

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Background Papers:

None.

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