

## **CUSTOMER, COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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### **Minutes of a meeting of the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 4 October 2016 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G4, Addenbrook House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT 7**

**Present:** Councillors J Ashford, N England (Chair), L Murray, S J Reynolds, P Scott, J Seymour, B Tillotson. Co-optees P Doherty and D Johnson.

**Also Present:** Cllr. A McClements, Cabinet Member Transport, Customer & Neighbourhood Services (CCPSC-11); A Astley, Assistant Director Customer & Neighbourhood Services (CCPSC-11); D Germany, Waste & Neighbourhood Services Performance Service Delivery Manager (CCPSC-11); S Jones, Scrutiny Officer; S Roberts, Waste Contract and Customer Engagement Team Leader (CCPSC-11); C Slaytor, Communications Manager – Veolia Midlands (CCPSC-11).

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Members and co-optees taking part in the paperless meeting pilot. Feedback would be welcomed.

#### **CCPSC-08 Apologies for Absence**

None

#### **CCPSC-09 Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **CCPSC-10 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meetings of the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee held on 10 May 2016 and 4 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **CCPSC-11 Waste Management Services**

The Chair welcomed Cllr McClements and officers to the meeting and thanked Ms Slaytor from Veolia for attending.

The Committee was given a presentation to address various questions on the waste management services contract let to Veolia in 2014 including:

- The phases of the contract implementation
- Savings and investments arising from the contract
- Changes to Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)
- The engagement and communications strategy
- Key performance data including recycling rates and impact on landfill
- Technological and vehicle improvements.

Highlights included:

- A £30m saving over the 25 year term of the contract

- £140k saving from early changes to HRCs with extended opening hours
- The new transfer station at Hortonwood would deliver immediate diversion of waste from the landfill site in Granville to an energy from waste facility at Four Ashes
- Veolia cabs and crews equipped with CCTV and hand held devices linked to the contact centre to respond to missing reports and complaints in real time
- Activities to promote recycling included the bi-annual household calendars, hosted visits to Hortonwood, engagement with schools (47 this year), a voucher reward scheme, social media and media events, information on vehicles etc.
- Performance data showed continuous improvement over the first two years of the contract (2014/15-2015/16) on missed bins, customer complaints, delivery of new containers, recycling rates and projected savings on landfill charges.

The following information was then given in response to Members' questions:

- A breakdown of missed red top, green and recycling collections was provided showing improvement across all types. The number of Green missed was at a lower rate as this service was not used all year round.

	Red top	Green	Purple bin and Blue bag	Total
2014/15	3203 (0.18%)	1227 (0.07%)	1732 (0.1%)	6162 (0.17%)
2015/16	2179 (0.12%)	867 (0.05%)	848 (0.05%)	3894 (0.11%)

- In response to questions about the pattern of missed bins and how they are dealt with, there was no pattern to the reports or cases of a whole street being missed. The response to a missed bin report depended on which provider was responsible for collection i.e. Veolia for recycling or TWS for red top and green waste. Veolia cabs were fitted with cameras and crews equipped with hand-held devices linked to the contact centre enabling a real time or fast response to reports from customers. CCTV footage enabled Veolia to check whether a bin had been missed or if the customer had not put the bin out and photographs could be sent by the crew to the contact centre advisor dealing with the customer where a bin had not been presented. The number of missed bin reports to the contact centre had reduced since the technology was introduced. Contractually the onus was on Veolia to provide evidence that a bin had not been put out. The TWS vehicles did not have the same technology which made it more difficult to prove a bin had not been put out. The calendars delivered to all households were important for informing customers about collection days and the need to put out containers the night before.
- In response to a query about the size of the new signage to the HRC in Hortonwood, advice had been taken from highways on the size regulations for signage but this would be checked. It was also noted that once the public became used to using the centre they would not need signs.
- Regarding the potential impact of the closure of the Ketley and Granville CRCs on fly tipping, national research showed fly tipping was not on the increase and the closures were not expected to have any significant impact. However, CCTV cameras had been installed on the old Ketley site in case anyone turned up after the closure and tipped their rubbish. The fly tip collection service was currently

provided by TWS until 2019 but would be included as part of the Grounds and Cleansing Procurement. Veolia were responsible for the disposal of this waste. Under the existing Grounds and Cleansing contract the Council paid a fixed annual amount for collecting fly tips regardless of the number but from 2019 would pay according to the number of collections. It was therefore in the Council's interest to reduce fly tipping and work was being done to consolidate enforcement activity to maximise the use of notices and convictions as a deterrent. Help from the public would be needed to tackle the issue. It was also possible that the extended opening hours of the HRCs may reduce the likelihood of fly tipping.

- Members were informed that performance data was provided by Veolia and checked for accuracy by the Council and wanted to know how this process worked. It was explained that data on reports from customers was verified against the Council's own records from the contact centre. Members were given assurances that there was a high degree of accountability and transparency and the Council had methods for tracking and checking information provided by Veolia. Performance was monitored on a continuous improvement basis against criteria set in the contract. Contract performance, or any issues, were reported twice yearly to a Strategic Board of the Cabinet Member, Director, Assistant Director and Veolia regional managers as the accountable body. There were monthly performance management meetings with Veolia to monitor performance against the framework and any failures would result in a payment deduction.
- There was a question about how the Council was looking to the future in terms of capacity at Hortonwood for commercial waste to divert away from landfill. Local authorities did not receive funding for commercial waste and had no responsibility to collect or dispose of commercial waste other than statutory duties which were costed into the contract. However, the Council wanted to help businesses to act responsibly and the business support team sign-posted businesses to Veolia and provided information about responsible recycling and waste disposal on the website. It was up to individual companies to decide their strategy and which provider to use.
- With regard to monitoring other waste sites in the borough, specifically Pink Skips, the Council's providers did not use Pink Skips. Controls on the site were the responsibility of the Environment Agency or the highways team were responsible for road issues.
- A member asked if any changes were being planned to the £18 charge for bulk collections. There had been consultation during the budget consultation on the option of introducing a sliding scale for bulk collections. The majority of the Council's costs related to disposal so increased according to the number of items. Under the new charging process residents would be able to have 3 items collected for the same price as now, they would also be able to request up to 12 items to be collected, improving on the current restrictions of maximum of 6 per collection.
- As to whether enough had been done to convince the public that the 'two super-CRC' strategy was the right way forward, there were no known concerns. There

was a need to promote the benefits of the super HRCs to the public so people understood what was happening and the reasons for it. The communications team had developed a programme to promote recycling and there would be a feature in the next edition of Your Voice. Ideas would be welcomed on what more could be done.

- A member asked how the recycling targets had been calculated and how they compared to other authorities – the projected long-term rate seemed static at 59.8%. The targets for recycling had been projected using calculations run by Veolia based on the services offered and then checked by the Council. The introduction of the purple top bins had led to an increase in the rate of recycling which had then plateaued. More needed to be done to encourage recycling but what really made a difference was the introduction of new services. For example, food accounted for 30% of waste in red top bins and the jump in the recycling rate after 2019 was accounted for by the introduction of the food collection. The food collection would be weekly and new vehicles would be introduced to collect food at the same time as green and red top bins to reduce collection costs. Veolia was committed to meeting the targets and took the risk by incurring penalties if the target was not met. The national average recycling rate was currently around 43% and Telford & Wrekin had moved up the table by around 60 places over the last few months and it was hoped this improvement would continue. Telford & Wrekin's longer term target of almost 60% was higher compared that of a neighbouring authority at 50%.
- In terms of tackling people who refuse to recycle, there had been some success from going into schools and engaging children who then taught their parents to recycle. Recyclers fell into three main categories: committed recyclers, people who do some but could do more and non-recyclers. The strategy was to target the middle group first as their behaviour was easier to influence quickly. The Veolia communication and engagement team knocked on doors if there were issues with contamination but did not door-knock non-recyclers. There were issues with HMOs which tended to have transient populations. Students at Harper Adams had been leafleted and this would be repeated.
- With regard to emptying public litter bins and grounds cleansing, this was a separate contract from the domestic waste service and was with TWS until 2019. Waste from litter bins was not currently separated into recyclable and non-recyclable because of contamination but that was not to say it could not happen in future. Road sweepings were collected by TWS until 2019 but were taken to Hortonwood for Veolia to manage under the disposal element of the contract. Veolia then separate the recyclables from this waste which go towards the Borough's recycle rate.
- There had been no involvement with Harper Adams on the large scale biomass project but this could be discussed in future.
- Work was being done with voluntary organisations to recycle or re-use bulk items which would previously have been landfilled.

- Data on waste from community centres or public buildings was not included in the performance data as it was classed as commercial waste. Organisations which generate a profit were classed as commercial but charities and not-for-profits were not classed as commercial and entitled to a waste collection where their waste is household waste.
- A Member raised an issue with litter from fast food outlets and expressed his view that there should be a byelaw to place more responsibility on restaurants.
- Members said they would like to see more awareness raised about composting and reducing food waste. Food waste tonnage tended to reduce with the introduction of a collection service because people could see how much they were throwing away.
- With regard to progress on recycling plastic film, the technology remained an issue and film was not currently recyclable. It was suggested that Members visit the materials recovery facility (MRF) in Four Ashes to see what materials can be recycled and how they are separated and processed for recycling. Ms Slaytor also offered the opportunity for members to join a cab on a collection round.

When there were no further questions, the Committee acknowledged the good steps forward made under the new contract. It was agreed that the next stage for scrutiny would be engagement on the options for the food waste service.

The Chair thanked Ms Slaytor for attending the meeting and her colleagues at Veolia for organising the visits to Hortonwood. Ms Slaytor and officers left the meeting.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That the improved performance under the new contract be noted**
- b) That scrutiny be engaged in the options for the food waste service at the appropriate time**

#### **CCPSC-12 Work Programme 2016/17**

The Chair introduced the item which was for the Committee to agree items and meeting dates for the remainder of the 2016/17 work programme.

In July the Scrutiny Management Board had agreed a benchmark of six formal meetings for each scrutiny committee for the year and allocated suggestions to the scrutiny committees to consider. Suggestions for the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee were shown in Appendix 1 of the Work Programme report. In addition, the Committee would join the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee to review Car Parking Enforcement.

The Chair recommended focussing the work programme on a small number of priorities and suggested Houses in Multiple Occupation, the procurement of the Grounds Cleansing and Environmental Maintenance contract and the Community Safety Partnership but welcomed Members' views.

There was a discussion about the suggestions and it was agreed that the priorities would be Houses in Multiple Occupation and Housing and Homelessness, the Grounds Cleansing and Environmental Maintenance contract and the Community Safety Partnership. There was also interest in Flood & Water Management, the Definitive Map for Rights of Way, the role of the public speaking at Council meetings and the impact of changes to business rates on the Growth Hub.

Dates of future meetings were agreed as 5 December 2016, 20 February 2017, 20 March 2017 and 15 May 2017.

**CCPSC-13 Chair's Update**

The Chair informed Members that as the Telford & Wrekin representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee he had attended the first meeting on 15 July to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair and to consider the committee's Terms of Reference. A work shop session arranged for September to discuss the scrutiny arrangements and how the committee would work in detail had been postponed and a new date was awaited. The Chair would provide updates as things progressed.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....