

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20th JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL STREETSCENE SERVICES CONTRACT – FOURTH ANNUAL REVIEW

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Committee Members on the current position with the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract and the development of the service. Members are also invited to recommend 2011/12 work stream priorities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Biffa is the Council's chosen contractor for the delivery of waste collection and street cleansing services. Since the contract was awarded in June 2006, Technical Services and Biffa have worked in close partnership to transform Environmental Streetscene Services in Wirral. This has resulted in continuous improvement of service quality as evidenced in the comments contained in the last Comprehensive Area Assessment. The services are also held in high regard by Wirral's residents and achieved high acclaim in the recent 'Living in Wirral' consultation exercise that was undertaken to ascertain key service priorities for the authority.

Details of specific performance improvements are highlighted in section 5 of this report.

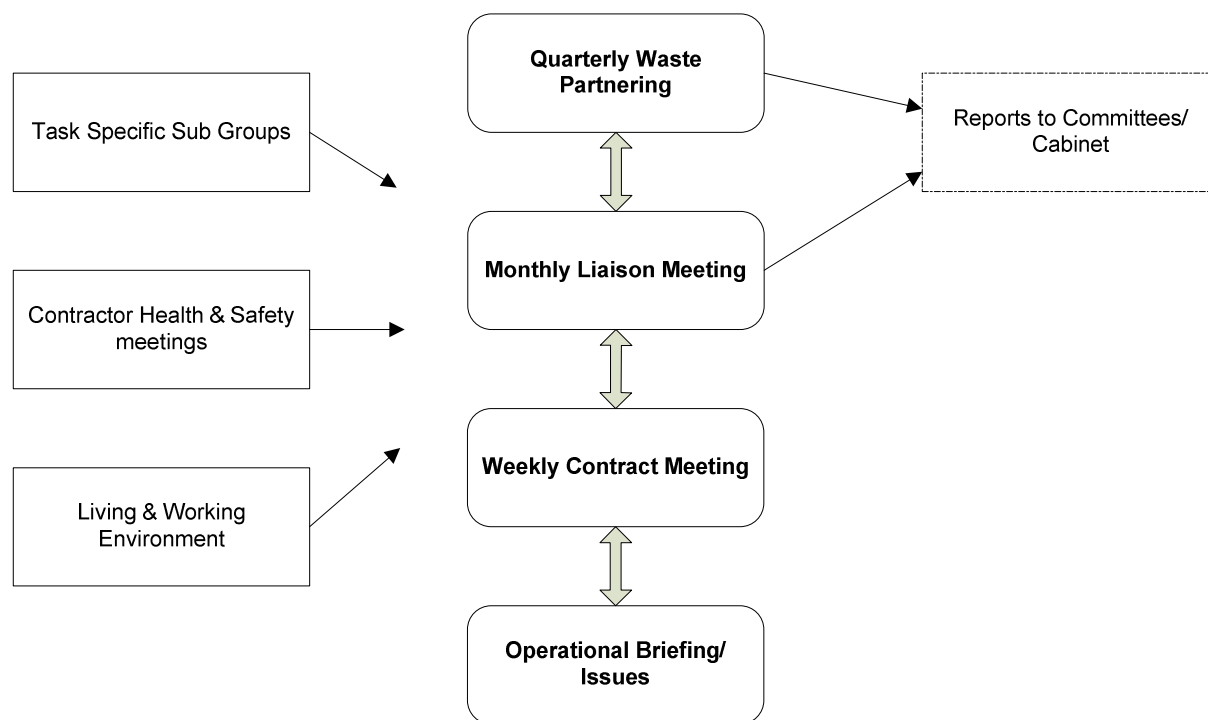
2.2 Contract Governance

The Environmental Streetscene Services Contract is managed at three levels. This enables operational and strategic decisions to be made at the appropriate hierarchy of management and presents an escalation procedure where contractual matters require resolution. Figure 1 below illustrates the management structure and how the partnering arrangement feeds into the wider Council business. Special progress meetings are held to discuss particular challenges and monitor the work streams.

The communication between Council officers and Biffa employees is excellent. The vast majority of issues are resolved on a daily basis through the area managers and the corresponding personnel at Biffa. Contract meetings are held every two weeks. Reports covering that period and any outstanding day-to-day issues are dealt with at that level.

Liaison meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis. The agenda covers the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monthly report, operational considerations and any unresolved matters from the Contract meetings. Partnering Board meetings are held quarterly. While there is a review of the operations for the last three months, the main discussions are concerned with the overall strategic approach, concentrating on the current work streams being developed. Project "highlight reports" and presentations can be brought to the Liaison and Partnering Board meetings at the request or agreement of the Chairperson conducting that particular meeting.

Figure 1: Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Management Framework



3.0 PROGRESS ON KEY WORK STREAMS

In January 2010, the Waste Partnering Board agreed five partnership work streams, outlined below, for implementation in 2010/11. The work stream progress is monitored formally at quarterly board meetings and challenges arising from the work streams are discussed at Liaison meeting level.

3.1 Street Cleansing: Improving Environmental Quality with particular focus on Litter and Detritus

This work stream was originally developed in response to the Public Service Agreement 8, which stipulates the cleansing standards Wirral must achieve to be eligible for the associated reward grant totalling £818k. Members will be aware that the standards were achieved in 2008/09 and the grant has subsequently been awarded.

The work stream involves a number of strands, including operations, education and enforcement.

The Government have recently indicated that the Council, as from April 2011, will no longer be monitored using National Indicators to achieve LAA priority targets. However as street cleansing is a key service area the Partnering Board will continue

this work stream into 2011 and beyond, in order to ensure achievement of targets for NI 195 (or a similar suitable replacement local KPI) to monitor the percentage of streets that fall below an acceptable level of cleanse.

Biffa have re-organised their street cleansing resources in order to encourage greater ownership by cleansing crews, facilitate closer supervision and increase mechanical sweeping in areas where detritus has been identified as a particular problem.

Key initiatives in this area during 2010, have included:

- A continuous review of the NI 195 standards, including a full review of detritus cleansing along main roads, rural roads and 'other highways' such as footpaths and cut-throughs.
- An ongoing review by Biffa of their approach to deployment of street cleansing resources to encourage greater ownership by cleansing crews and operational supervisors, via area based working (this is likely to be fully implemented in the spring of 2011).
- The introduction of a dedicated, improved weekend cleansing shift, which has extended both the resources and working hours and has resulted in a full seven day approach to cleansing throughout the Borough.
- Development of a targeted smoking related litter education and enforcement campaign.
- Taking enforcement action, via the serving of "section 46" notices, to address the high levels of household "black bag" fly tipping that exists in back alleyways and continued monitoring of fly tipping levels.

The above initiatives have resulted in a demonstrable improvement in cleansing performance, which is illustrated in the contract key performance indicators outlined within section 5.0 of this report.

3.2 Compaction & Contamination of Collected Co-mingled Recycling – Risk Reduction including Waste Reduction

This work stream has been developed with the aim of reducing contamination 'at the kerbside' by residents and ensuring that loads of co-mingled recyclates are not compacted by Biffa prior to the delivery to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Bidston. This is because over compacted waste results in loss of recyclate during the waste segregation process, as well as slowing down productivity time.

Initiatives undertaken during the past year include:

- The employment of an additional six recycling via assistants via the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) Initiative. This additional resource has supplemented the existing participation officers and has enabled the Council to target waste collection rounds where contamination levels are particularly high. The additional staff have been able to support the waste collection crews during their rounds by giving enhanced and immediate feedback to residents who have contaminated their bin, or are producing side waste on a regular basis.
- Using these FJF staff, Biffa and Technical Services are currently piloting an approach to cease collecting additional green bins that residents are not

entitled to. Residents who have been presenting two or more green bins and do not meet the agreed procedures for an additional bin(s), are being offered further advice on how to reduce the amount of waste they produce.

- Biffa are currently trialling various initiatives to prevent loads being compacted and tipped at the Bidston MRF and subsequently being rejected as a result of contamination due to compaction. These initiatives will continue into 2011 and are part of wider partnering working with other Merseyside districts, the MWDA and Veolia to improve the performance of the Materials Recovery Facility at Bidston, and to reduce the overall amount of waste that is thrown away.

3.3 CRM Springboard Integration

3.3.1 In-Cab Confirmation

PDA's (hand held computers) had previously been installed in all 35 collection round vehicles for refuse and recycling services. These devices provide real time data. For example, the crews are able to confirm when a road has been completed and log exception data for any roads or individual properties that could not be serviced on the first attempt. This could be due to blocked access or non-presentation of bins, or the crews may record if a recycling bin has not been emptied because of high levels of contamination. Digital photographs of key issues can also be taken to provide additional documentary evidence. This information is available in real-time to Biffa depot staff through the Biffa Intranet and to Council staff via the Internet. There are currently 54 council users in both the call centre and waste services set up who can access this system.

The PDA's have been replaced with a new, more robust industrial device. They have provided improved functionality in various areas including GPS (satellite navigation) positioning.

During 2010 the use of PDA's was extended to street cleansing operations and now gives the facility for similar confirmation, exception reporting and photo evidence that previously existed for refuse and recycling.

3.3.2 CRM Integration

Both Biffa and the Wirral Council IT department have been working on the integration of the Council CRM and Biffa Springboard systems. The project has been monitored through the Streetscene Customer Access Team with progress on the project being reported back to the Council's Strategic Change Programme Board.

Following a series of meetings, the full specification of the work was agreed and progress made on addressing the technical aspects such as firewalls and access levels.

The first phase of the integration programme was completed during 2010. This now means that Streetscene can raise a task for missed bins and it will go through to the Springboard system at Biffa. When the job is completed and closed down by Biffa this will be automatically closed down on the Council CRM system. The next phase

of the programme, to address bin deliveries, fly tipping, street cleansing and bulky waste collections, will start early in 2011 and continue through the year.

3.4 Review of the Severe Weather Contingency Plan

The severe weather events that were experienced early in 2010 and at the end of the year, has reinforced the need to have a robust and flexible plan in place to minimise the disruption to the delivery of the Council's environmental services during such periods.

A snow contingency plan has been in operation for the last three winters, however, the plan has now been reviewed from both a communication and operational perspective to ensure best practice is adopted from districts who are more frequently affected by snow and ice, and that lessons are learned and improvements implemented from our own experiences. Particular focus has been on how to maximise the use of the Council website and other media outlets to communicate service updates.

During 2010 the contingency plan was extensively reviewed as has resulted in the following improved benefits:

- Improved co-ordination and integration of the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract Contingency Plan into a council wide approach to providing and maintaining key services during severe weather periods.
- Better use of the Council web-site and other communication outlets, to ensure that the best information, on the likely disruption and the contingency plans in place to maintain services, is provided in a timely manner to residents and businesses within Wirral.
- Better integration and use of Biffa street cleansing resources to assist in snow clearance and gritting on pavements in key shopping areas etc.
- The introduction of new contingency arrangements to maintain alternative collection services. For example, the provision of refuse freighters at selected car parks to provide residents with additional static facilities to which they can bring refuse and recyclable material.

Clearly, given weather trends over the past two winters, there is a need for continued development and review of this Plan and it is proposed therefore that it will continue to feature prominently as a current partnership work stream. A key strand will be to investigate the use of suitable health and safety equipment, e.g. crampon type snow boots, which may enable Biffa operatives to work safely on pavements that are subject to snow and ice, in those roads where refuse trucks are able to drive and safely access bins.

Specifically, it is proposed that the current Plan will also be reviewed to determine any 'lessons learnt' from the recent prolonged spell of bad weather before and after Christmas 2010.

3.5 Biffa Environmental Policy/ Sustainability Plan

This important piece of work is outstanding from the initial “Benefit Realisation” report put forward at the procurement phase of the contract. Now that Biffa have completed all major round re-structures, this work can commence and progress will be tracked at the quarterly Partnering Board. It is anticipated that the findings of the sustainability appraisal will help the Council to get a full picture of the impact of our current waste collection and cleansing services on the environment, and highlight any improvements that can be realistically made to minimise environmental impact, including helping Biffa to develop their localised carbon reduction strategy.

Biffa propose to model their operations using the WRATE model, which has been developed by DEFRA as a tool to model carbon emissions and the impact of operations arising from the provision of refuse and cleansing services. This work has yet to be undertaken and will be carried forward into the current years work stream.

4.0 OTHER KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010

Other key achievements and improvements to the collection infrastructure that were addressed during 2010 include:

- Background preparation for the assessment and implementation of a ‘kerbside’ recycling collection service to those multi occupancy properties on bulk bins and hard to reach properties on black bags, who currently do not receive a service. These properties are now scheduled to receive a service early in the New Year.
- Continued roll out of recycling collections to all Council offices. Again this is an ongoing programme and will continue into 2011 with the aim of providing recycling services to as many suitable Council buildings as is possible.

Further details on the above initiatives are contained in the separate report “Recycling and Waste Minimisation Action Plan Update” which is also being considered by this Committee.

5.0 CONTRACT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A full list of contract performance indicator results for 2010 is detailed in **Appendix 1**. All performance figures have shown improvements when compared with the corresponding figures for 2009.

The following three service areas represent the highest profile areas of performance based on numbers of service requests:

5.1 Missed Bins

Missed bins are measured as the number of failed collections per 100,000 collections scheduled to have been made. Missed bins have reduced significantly throughout the year. Biffa have a target of 40 per 100,000 for grey, green and brown garden waste bins.

Performance has improved steadily throughout the period with the latest figures showing less than 30 failed collections per 100,000. This represents exceptional performance for a service of this type.

Whilst, the disruption caused by the severe weather at the start and end of the year will impact on the standard being achieved under 'normal' circumstances, the underlying performance continues to improve as a result of the work by Biffa to maintain and improve this core service standard.

5.2 ERIC Service

The service continues to perform extremely well with 99.9% of all collections completed within the 10-day service level agreement, again a very satisfactory standard of performance.

5.3 Street Cleansing

Street cleansing standards have also shown continuous improvement throughout the period.

The latest results show that the NI targets have been achieved and bettered – see KPI SC1 in Appendix 1. There has been a marked improvement in addressing detritus levels, this being a specific area of concern in the past.

6.0 BENEFITS REALISATION

6.1 As part of the Gateway review process, the benefits from the procurement of the new waste contract were determined and are subsequently tracked by the partnership. An updated benefits realisation report is detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report.

7.0 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 2011 Work Streams

Following discussions at the Partnering Board, the following work streams are proposed as the focus of areas of improvement/progress in 2011:

- Street cleansing (including fly tipping) (continued from 2010).
- Springboard phase 2 integration – bin deliveries, fly tipping (including other non-scheduled cleansing), street cleansing and bulky waste collections (continued from 2010).
- Compaction and contamination risk reduction – further Future Jobs Fund initiatives and vehicle overweight/compaction initiatives amended from 2010).
- Continued development of Severe Weather Contingency Plan (continued from 2010).
- Biffa Environmental Policy/ Sustainability Plan (continued from 2010).

Members are invited to put forward suggestions for any new or additional partnership work streams, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract.

7.2 Efficiency Savings

In the past, Cabinet have requested that further efficiencies are to be sought from the waste contract.

This has formed a key strand in the ongoing partnership working and has resulted in the implementation of new initiatives, such as three monthly payments in advance for core contract work, which have already achieved savings in the region of £132k pa.

Further initiatives are being jointly developed and will be presented to Cabinet as and when appropriate.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific staffing implications arising from this report.

8.2 The annual cost to the Council for delivering the Biffa contract is £12.9 million. Waste collection and recycling costs approximately £7.9 million and Street Cleansing costs approximately £5 million.

9.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equal opportunity implications arising from this report.

10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific planning implications arising from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications under this heading.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications under this heading.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no implications under this heading.

14.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising directly from this report.

15.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

15.1 All current and planned activity surrounding waste collection aims to reduce overall waste arisings and divert waste from landfill. This waste strategy compliments LA21 objectives.

16.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

16.1 No background papers have been used in the preparation of this report.

17.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS.

17.1 The Environmental Streetscene Services Contract operates across all Wards.

18.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 Committee is requested to:

- (i) Note the progress of the contract during the past year outlined in the report;
- (ii) Suggest work stream topics for consideration to be included in the development programme for 2011/12 outlined in section 7.1.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES