



## **JOINT WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Friday 22 February 2019 – 2:00pm**

### **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill**

Minutes of the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber at Town Hall, Bexhill on Friday 22 February 2019 at 2:00pm.

Joint Waste and Recycling Committee Members present: Councillors A. Ganly (RDC) (Chairman), P. Chowney (HBC), C. Fitzgerald (HBC), R. Galley, (WDC), M. Kenward (RDC) and R. Standley (WDC).

Other Members present: Councillors I.R. Hollidge (RDC), D.B. Oliver (RDC) and Mrs S.M. Prochak (RDC).

Advisory Officers present:

<b>Hastings Borough Council:</b>	Director of Operational Services and Waste and Cleansing Manager.
<b>Rother District Council:</b>	Executive Director (Secretary), Assistant Director Resources, Head of Service Housing and Community, Contracts Manager and Democratic Services Officer.
<b>Wealden District Council:</b>	Director of Environment and Community Services, Lead Head of Service and Waste Management Officer.
<b>Central Client Team:</b>	Joint Waste Partnership Manager, Deputy Project Manager, Deputy Contract Manager x 2 and Business Support Officer.
<b>Biffa:</b>	Managing Director, Development Director, Senior Operations Project Manager and Senior Business Manager.

Others present: 2 members of the public.

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Publication Date: 28 February 2019

The decisions made under PART II will come into force on 8 March 2019 unless they have been subject to the call-in procedure.

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#### **JWRC18/14. MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2018 as a correct record of the proceedings.

## JWRC18/15. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N. Bennett (ESCC), Kevin Boorman – Marketing and Major Projects Manager (HBC), Justin Foster – Waste Team Manager (ESCC), Mike Hepworth – Assistant Director Environment and Place (HBC), Deborah Kenneally – Neighbourhood Services Manager (RDC), Dr Anthony Leonard – Executive Director (Lead Director) (RDC), Karl Taylor – Assistant Director Operations and Contract Management (ESCC) and Carl Valentine – Head of Transport and Operational Services (ESCC).

**PART II – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** – subject to call-in procedure under Item 10 of the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee Constitution by no later than 4:00pm on 7 March 2019.

## JWRC18/16. **INTRODUCTION TO BIFFA AND THE NEW CONTRACT** (7) **COMMENCING 29 JUNE 2019**

The Joint Waste and Recycling Committee (JWRC) welcomed representatives from Biffa to the meeting and introductions were made. Members received a presentation on mobilisation progress to date of the Waste Collection, Recycling, Street & Beach Cleaning and Associated Services Contract. During the presentation the following points were noted:

- Biffa Group had been established for approximately 100 years and was one of the UK's leading integrated waste management companies providing collection, recycling, treatment, disposal and technologically driven energy generation services across four operating divisions: 1) Industrial and Commercial Waste Management; 2) Resource Recovery and Treatment; 3) Energy from Waste; and 4) Household Waste Management (Municipal).
- Biffa currently operated 39 waste contracts across the UK from St Erith in Cornwall to East Lothian in Scotland to Kent in the South East.
- Service design highlights included local knowledge, appropriate resource levels, market leading IT support team, health and safety focus, team engagement and mobilisation.
- £10m capital investment in new standard / narrow (Dennis Eagle) tailored vehicles and communications.
- Existing routes would be utilised until October 2019, with changes implemented, following meetings with the Partnership and subject to final sign off.
- The contract would be operated by highly experienced / motivated staff. It was Biffa's intention to run a recruitment programme, with an aspiration to reduce the need to employ agency staff.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, local knowledge, machine / vehicle trials would be used to shape the cleansing service across the Partnership.
- Street / road patrolling to commence from April 2019 to understand and ensure that the correct level of resources were applied to each route.

- The mobilisation period would be overseen by Biffa's Project Mobilisation Manager. A detailed project plan had been established and split into two phases, strict deadlines applied: Phase 1 included regular meetings and reviews, property assessments, TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings [Protection of Employment] Regulations 2006) transfers and reviews, delivery of units, uniform and stationery, project planning and purchasing vehicles. Phase 2 included round monitoring, reviews with the Partnership, operative reviews (re-route), analysis of key performance targets, drive efficiency, training, building data for re-routing, building new rounds in Whitespace (waste management software) and new rounds implemented from October 2019.
- TUPE transferring would be a significant challenge for Biffa. Communications would be held with the previous contractor and all staff.
- Anonymous Engagement Surveys to be undertaken by Biffa to assess the skill set of the workforce, as well as supporting the HR strategy, development of goals, dreams and aspirations.
- Partnership support was essential to ensure a smooth and successful mobilisation period.
- A series of campaigns would be held to ensure that communication was undertaken in a clear and effective way with the workforce. Driver apprenticeships would be promoted and annual engagement seminars held.
- Significant operational challenges included the transition of key agency staff to full-time employment; development of a recruitment programme; managing sickness using the Bradford Factor (measuring worker absenteeism); embellishing Biffa's culture within the workforce; and developing relationships with recognised unions.
- A robust training programme would be established across all areas to ensure a professional management and skilled workforce.
- Biffa's main focus and single common goal was to ensure successful mobilisation.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Biffa provided answers to a number of questions which had been submitted to them prior to the meeting. Members considered the answers and during discussion the following was clarified and salient points noted:

1. **A significant number of rural homes are situated down uneven and/or narrow country lanes and have persistently suffered from a chronic, unsatisfactory waste and recycle service. Can you reassure such residents that Biffa will provide them with a competent service and explain how you will access these areas?**

**Answer:** Lists of narrow access locations had already been provided to Biffa through the tender process. Biffa's fleet consisted of different sized vehicles (7½ to 26 tonnes) and GIS technology would be used to ensure that appropriate vehicles were assigned to each route. To maintain service performance, it was important that Biffa was made aware of any specific issues / requirements.

2. **There have been reports from residents in Eastern Rother that one or two vehicle drivers have deliberately not collected**

**waste/recycling and have at times been rude to residents. Can you guarantee sound management of staff to ensure these sorts of incidents do not happen, but if they do, that complaints are dealt with swiftly and fairly?**

**Answer:** Assurance was given that a strong HR, Management and Disciplinary programme would be implemented and any complaints dealt with appropriately.

3. **During peak summer months Camber Sands requires more than a satisfactory service. What are your proposals for providing a flexible service when the beach needs it most?**

**Answer:** Local knowledge would be utilised, weather and resource levels monitored to adjust service requirements, as and when required.

4. **Given your record of improving Ashford's recycling rates, what would you do to make Rother the #1 Council for recycling?**

**Answer:** The Councils' retain responsibility for influencing and communicating with residents but there is potential opportunity to coordinate recycling information with any intended collection re-scheduling (i.e. a new household calendar). Details of intended communications would be reported to a future meeting of the committee.

5. **The Great British Spring Clean which evolved from Clean for the Queen on her 90th birthday year is now being promoted by the Daily Mail. What can Biffa do to assist community groups to become involved, thus saving on street cleaning?**

**Answer:** General support, health and safety advice, as well as safety equipment would be provided.

6. **Given that Biffa's refuse trucks will cover every location in Rother are you looking to work with partners, East Sussex County Council / Highways England to embrace technology which can monitor: a) road surfaces, pot holes etc. b) Air Quality with NOx and other pollutants?**

**Answer:** There were no plans to introduce technology to monitor road issues however they would be reported to the appropriate statutory body. Pollutant monitoring was not planned, but could be a consideration for the future, if desired.

7. **As per the current contract, will the collection teams continue to work the same rounds across the district and, in particular, in Bexhill?**

**Answer:** Yes, existing routes would be utilised until October 2019; changes would only be made after that time, if required and by agreement.

8. **Do Biffa agree that collection teams' knowing their rounds reduces the number of missed bins?**

**Answer:** Yes, crews would be responsible for missed collections. Assurance was given that route workforce changes would be kept to a minimum with support from the Partnership.

9. **Do Biffa agree it would be good practice if managers of collection teams also had local knowledge of the district?**

**Answer:** Yes, where possible Biffa would enable the management team to develop extensive local knowledge.

10. **What is Biffa's policy on assisted kerbside collections? Will this be rolled-on from the previous contract for existing residents? It is important that residents who cannot place their bins at the kerbside receive assistance from the Contractor.**

**Answer:** Yes, would remain as per the current contract.

11. **Will Biffa ensure that emptied bins are replaced to the location that they were presented?**

**Answer:** Yes, it was part of Biffa's policy to return all emptied bins to the location they were presented, however this might not always be possible during e.g. inclement weather conditions.

12. **What sanctions and penalties are built into the contract?**

**Answer:** Biffa was currently working with officers on the detail of contracted penalties and performance monitoring. A detailed report would be presented at the next meeting scheduled to be held on Friday 26 April 2019.

13. **What are the details of plans to inform the public about changes?**

**Answer:** A joint communications campaign would be launched by Biffa and the Partnership to ensure that residents were aware of service changes from 29 June 2019. One significant change, glass would be co-mingled with recycling materials.

14. **There is much confusion about what can be recycled. Are there plans for ongoing information on this or perhaps stickers to go on the recycling bin?**

**Answer:** Yes, see answer to question 13.

15. **The most frustrating complaints are where the same residents time after time have had their bins missed. What is in place to avoid this?**

**Answer:** ICT technologies would be used to clearly define ongoing / hotspot issues. Supervisors to ensure that all rounds were satisfactorily accomplished and mop-ups rounds completed during shift.

16. **Will Bring Sites continue?**

**Answer:** Yes, as per the current contract. All aspects of the contract would be monitored. Changes would only be implemented, if deemed necessary and once Partnership agreement was sought.

17. **Will residents in places where unadopted roads too risky for vehicles e.g. Virgins Croft be required to bring their bins to the roadside?**

**Answer:** Locations of particular concern should be listed so that site visits can be made and practical solutions agreed.

18. **Reflecting on issues that have arisen with previous service changes, what reassurance can Biffa provide that they have fully considered the size of the waste vehicles required to ensure they will be able to access all the locations where properties are located and bins need emptying, particularly along narrow rural lanes and tracks?**

**Answer:** See answer to question 1.

19. **Now that Wealden are moving to a chargeable garden waste service what assurance can Biffa provide that the reliability of collections will be improved?**

**Answer:** Detailed plan to be implemented with a specified cut-off subscription date.

20. **How do Biffa intend to improve staff morale for both the crews and depot staff?**

**Answer:** A robust training programme and incentive system would be established across all areas to ensure a professional skilled and motivated workforce.

21. **Do Biffa have the capacity (including the availability of appropriate vehicles) to collect segregated refuse and recycling from street litter bins, if this were to be implemented in the future?**

**Answer:** Yes, additional costs would apply.

22. **Have additional measures (resources) been put in place to manage any routing changes that may be implemented during the mobilisation phase of the contract?**

**Answer:** Yes, new rounds would be implemented from October 2019, subject to a full review by Biffa and Partnership agreement.

23. **What mechanisms will be put in place to ensure swift resolution of missed bin reports?**

**Answer:** Yes, see answer to question 15. Missed collections would be collected next day.

24. **Can Biffa give Members and residents a binding assurance they have suitable plans for litter picking along roadside verges, particularly on main roads?**

**Answer:** Yes, all main routes would be regularly monitored and Biffa's service plan co-ordinated with the Highways Authority and East Sussex County Council. Some particularly dangerous locations would require road closures to safely work along the verges. Traffic priorities meant that road closures of the most littered locations was infrequent.

25. **What are Biffa's environmental policies and how they can demonstrate those to us during this Contract? Green approach – how we hold contractors to the green standards expected in Hastings. Does this contract allow for tweaking locally, so Biffa may do things a bit differently in one authority?**

**Answer:** Biffa was committed to reducing their carbon footprint. They had recently purchased a 26 tonne electric vehicle to service

the Manchester area. Interesting data was being received and analysed. Battery technology was continuously evolving / improving. A significant aim for the future would be to reduce fossil fuels. A consistent service approach was applied across the Partnership, however each authority's requirements would be considered individually and changes made, if necessary.

**26. What are Biffa's environmental practices, how do they aim to improve and achieve high standards over the period of the contract?**

**Answer:** All information was provided within the Contract's Method Statements which included future energy reduction methods.

**27. Can you confirm the frequency of collections in Hastings particularly in twittens (Castle Ward, as well as the Old Town) and other places where access is insufficient / limited?**

**Answer:** Daily rounds were identified in the specification; changes would be made, if and when required.

Biffa assured the Committee of their commitment to and providing a successful Contract across the Partnership.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman thanked the representatives from Biffa for their presentation, contributions and attendance at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

**JWRC18/17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

(8)

It was confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Friday 26 April 2019 at 2:30pm in the Court Room, Town Hall, Eastbourne.

**CHAIRMAN**

The meeting closed at 3:34pm

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