

Rother District Council

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	14 September 2020
Title:	Waste Collections, Street and Beach Cleansing Contract Review
Report of:	Joe Powell – Head of Service Housing and Community
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the first twelve months of the Joint Waste Contract within the Rother District Council area.
Officer	
Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. The contract with Biffa commenced on the 29 June 2019 and replaced the previous contract which Rother joined in April 2014. The waste collections, street and beach cleansing contract is the Council's largest contract and it affects every one of the 45,523 households in the district.
2. As Members will be aware, the contract operates waste collection and street cleansing services for Rother District Council in partnership with Wealden and Hastings Councils. The partnership is coordinated by the Joint Waste Team which is governed by the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee, comprised of all parties to the partnership. A full description of the governance of the contract can be found at Appendix A. Note that the waste disposal authority is East Sussex County Council who operate a separate contract across the whole of East Sussex.
3. Members will recall that the outcome of the tendering process for the new contract resulted in an increased cost to the Council for the delivery of waste collection services. The outturn in 2019/20 being £4.6 million compared to an outturn of £3.3million in 2018/19 under the previous contract.
4. The challenges associated with managing the performance of the previous contract will be well understood by Members. In contrast to the previous contractor Biffa are a waste collection specialist and the Council has benefitted from this specialist expertise when working to improve the performance of the service. We have benefitted from improved performance in the first year of operation and officers are confident that we will continue to see greater improvements in performance as the contract becomes more embedded.

5. While the purpose of this report is to present to Members the performance of the Biffa contract in its first year, it is helpful to provide a high-level comparison between Biffa's present performance and that of the previous contract. The table below provides a summary of the key areas of performance between the first twelve months of the Biffa contract (July 2019 to June 2020) and that of the previous contract (July 2018 to June 2019). Note the significant improvement in missed bin performance across all waste types.

	Missed Bins*
Previous contract	3,167
Biffa	1,770
Percentage (+ / -)	-44%

*Missed bins per 100,000 households

	Recycling %
Previous contract	49%
Biffa	50%
Percentage (+ / -)	+1%

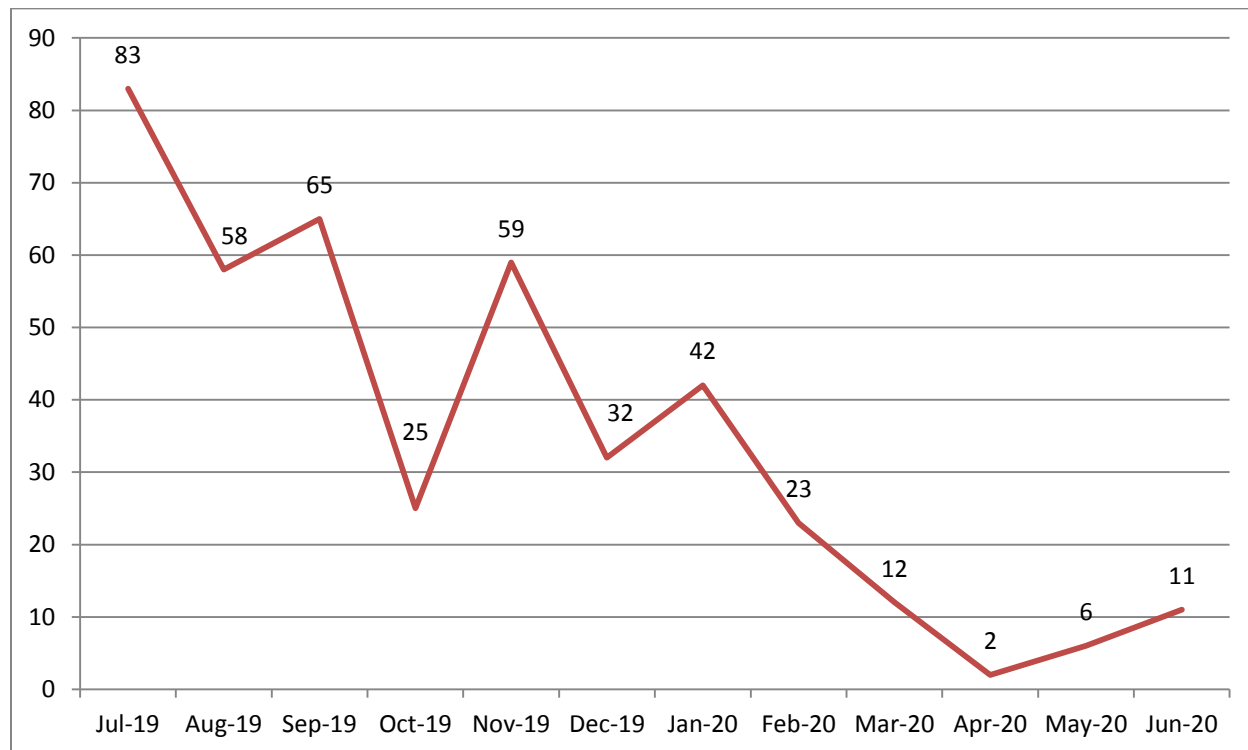
	Street Cleansing (% litter and detritus)
Previous contract	5%
Biffa	5%
Percentage (+ / -)	-

Performance update: July 2019 - June 2020

6. To remind Members, the Council employs a staff team of three full time officers to operate the contract, which falls under the management of the Housing and Community Service. The team oversee and manage the operational performance of the contract with Biffa, including the monitoring of rounds, performance data and coordinating customer enquiries and complaints.
7. Council managers and officers meet twice weekly with the local Biffa operations manager and supervisors to discuss performance and wider operational challenges, such as the locations of where bins have been repeatedly missed and street and beach cleansing queries. The Council and Biffa hold regular visits with residents to resolve collection issues.
8. The key performance indicators (KPIs) for each service are described in Schedule 8 of the Contract: the Performance Management Framework (PMF). The PMF is a mechanism which controls the standard of acceptable performance and the consequences of not achieving those standards. The key mechanisms depend on the application of performance points and separately, financial deductions.
9. From the end of the "honeymoon" period (September 2019 to end February 2020), contract performance was within acceptable levels.

Complaints

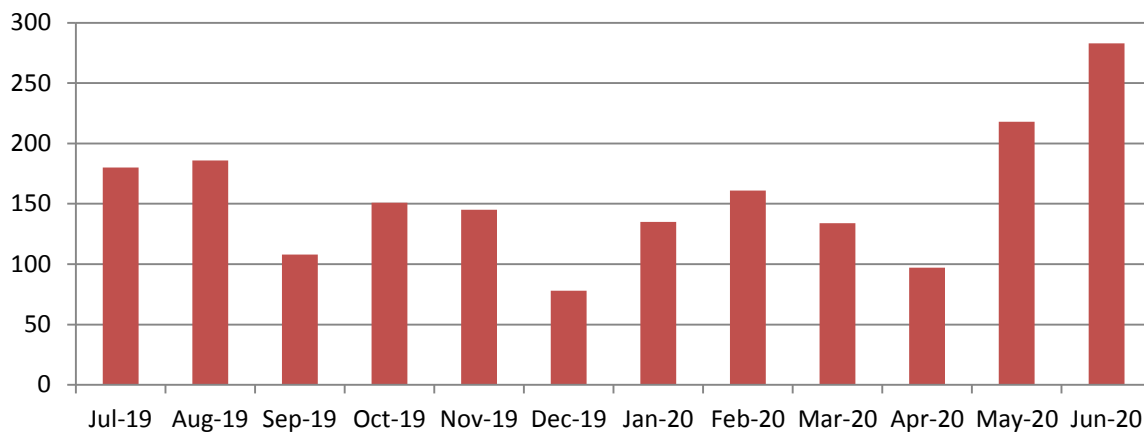
10. We have experienced a significant reduction in complaints over the first year of operating the contract due to the improvement in missed bin performance over the period (see chart below). This has reduced demand on the Council Customer Services and Waste teams, which was an unquantified cost under the previous contract and has delivered an efficiency saving to the Council.



Collection Services

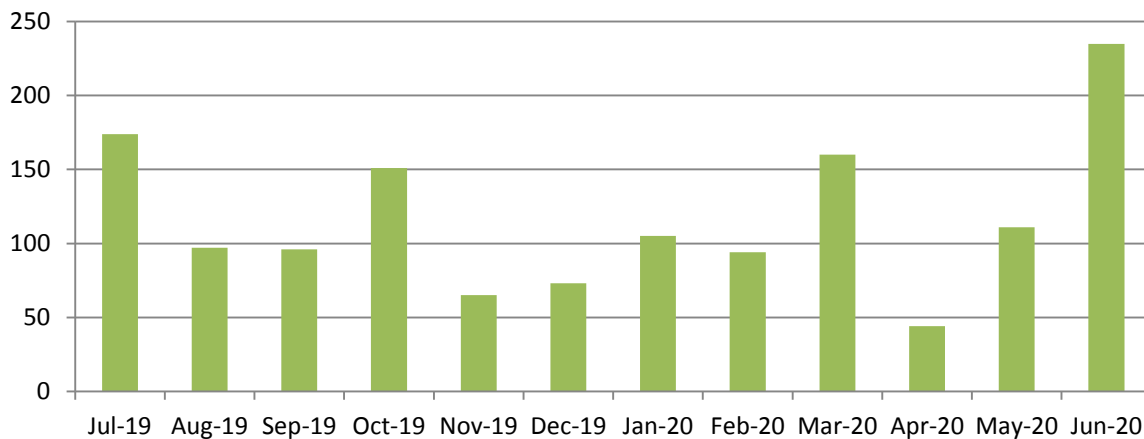
11. Members should note that a missed bin is defined as a bin that has not been collected on the scheduled day without a valid reason. This can be whole roads or individual bins which the resident has reported to officers either online or by telephone by 5pm the next working day. Biffa then has to return to collect within 24 hours.
12. The charts below illustrate the number of bins which have been missed per collection type over the contract period with Biffa, between July 2019 and June 2020. Note that the data is presented as the number of actual bins missed rather than per 100,000 households.

Missed Bins Domestic

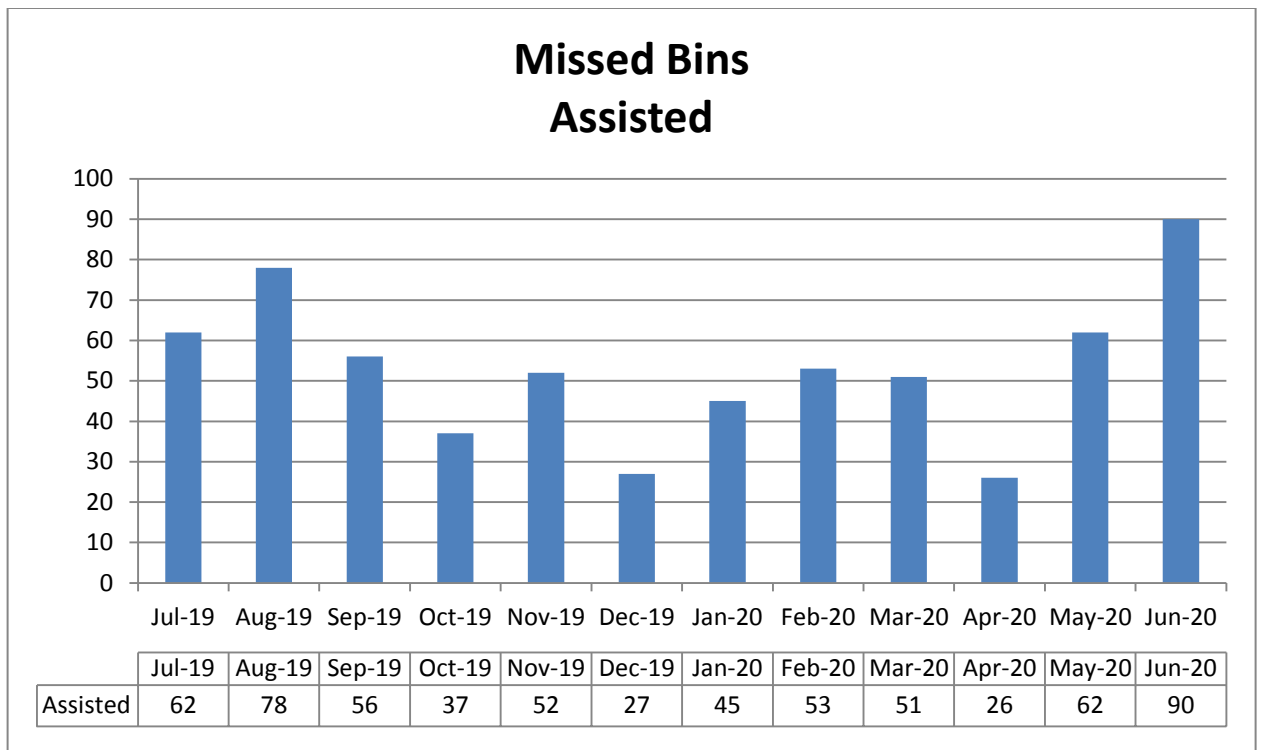


	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20
Domestic	180	186	108	151	145	78	135	161	134	97	218	283

Missed Bins Recycling



	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20
Recycling	174	97	96	151	65	73	105	94	160	44	111	235



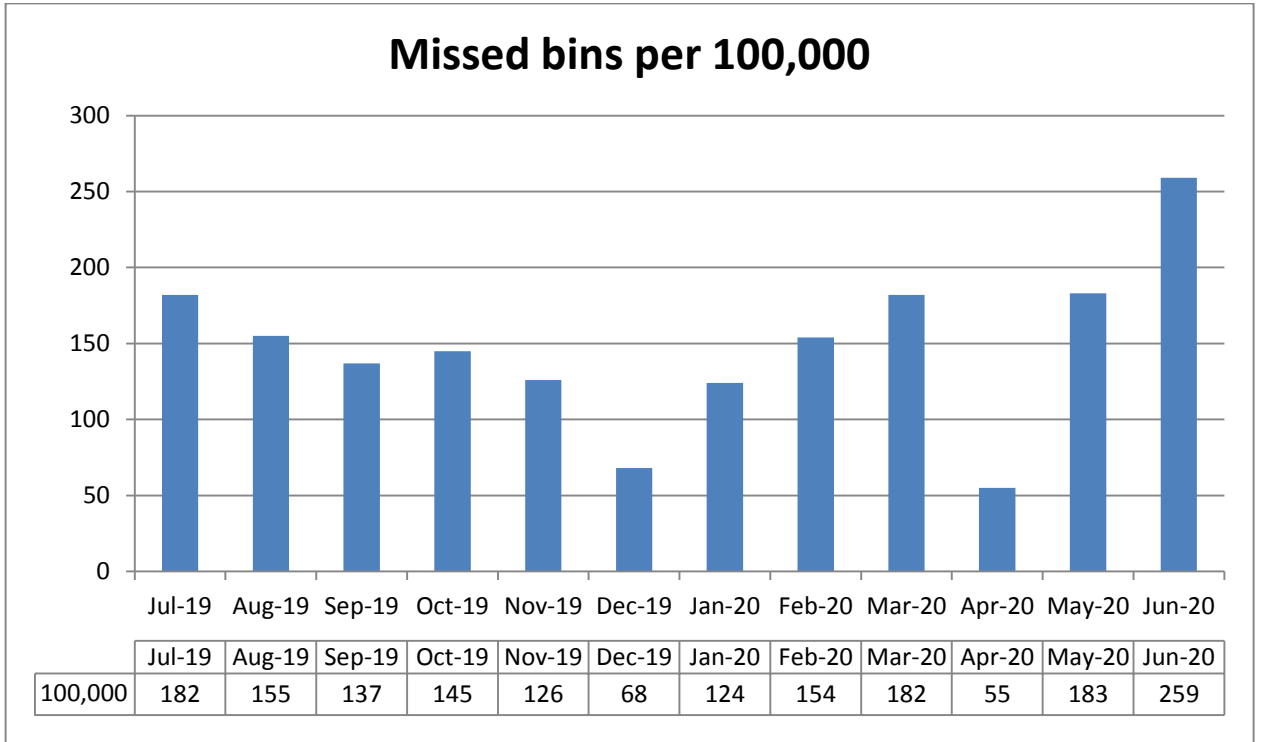
13. The missed bin performance was improving steadily prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. COVID-19 had a significant impact in Biffa's staffing levels and the availability of experienced drivers that know the collection rounds intimately. The situation led to the suspension of garden waste services for April 2020 which focussed resources on the remaining waste streams and improved performance.
14. However, since May 2020 the staffing challenges at Biffa have been compounded by the need to train a number of new drivers within the Rother team. The reliance on agency drivers and those new to the rounds has led to a very poor missed bin performance latterly; however, this has begun to improve during July 2020 as the new Biffa staff gain more experience of their collection rounds.

	Domestic	Recycling	Garden	Assisted
Jun-20	283	235	152	90
Jul-20	226	87	75	60

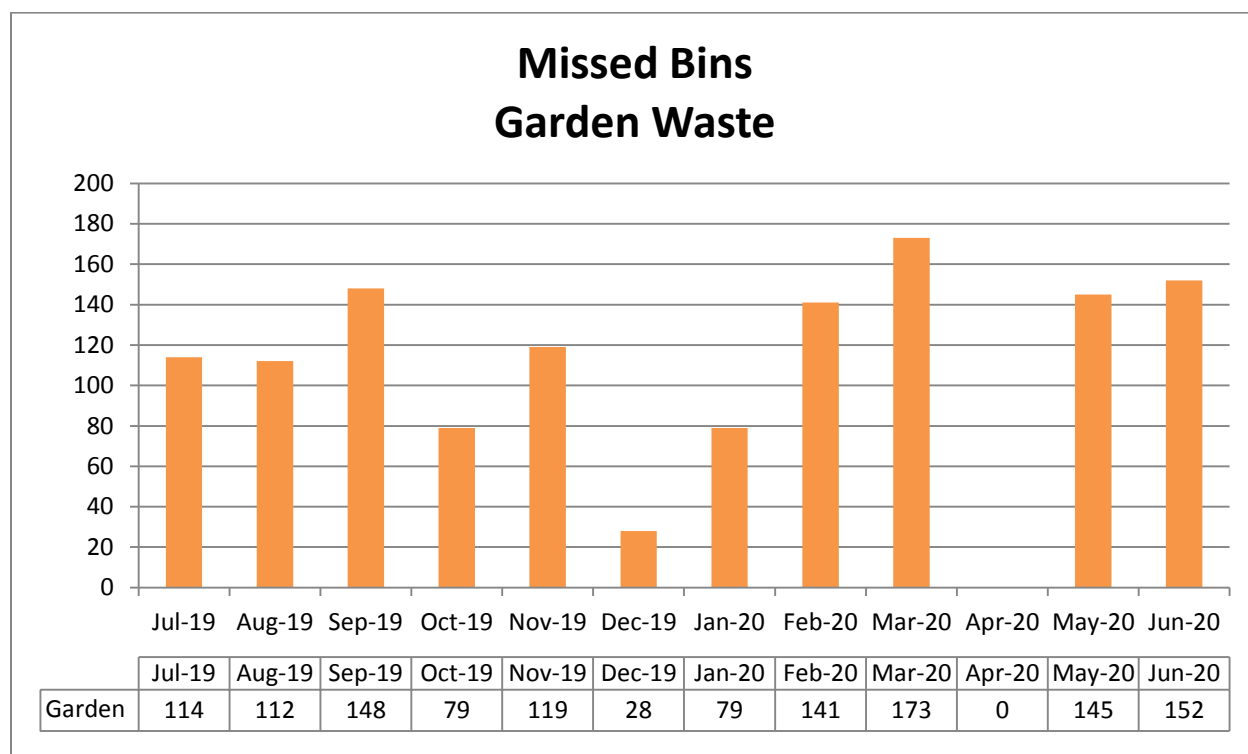
Missed bins per 100,000 collections

15. In order to provide a consistent measure across the three different local authority areas within the contract, for performance management purposes the number of missed bins is calculated as a proportion of 100,000 collections. The contract has a target of 120 missed collections per 100,000 collections.
16. The performance was below the target of 120 missed bins prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 but has risen latterly leading to an overall average for the period of 148

missed bins per 1000,000. It is relevant to note that the performance for July 2020 has returned to levels prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

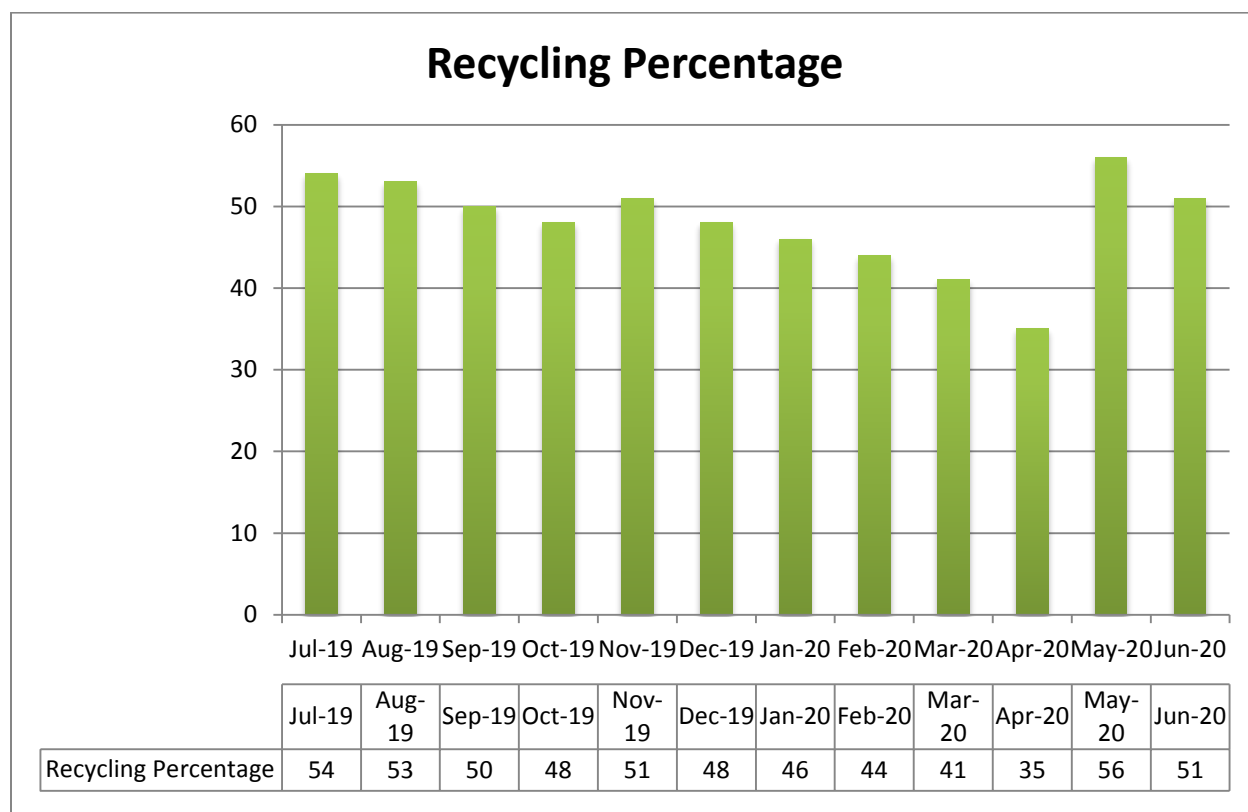


Garden Waste Collections



17. Due to the suspension of garden waste services during April and May 2020, as a result of COVID-19, the garden waste subscription was reduced by £5 for those residents renewing their subscription following disruptions to the garden waste collection service. The predicted income based on this change is £744, 053. This is approximately £135,000 lower than the target set for 2020/21.
18. The missed bin performance in garden waste was also improving prior to the impact of COVID-19 and latterly the performance has begun to improve from 152 in June 2020 to 75 in July 2020.

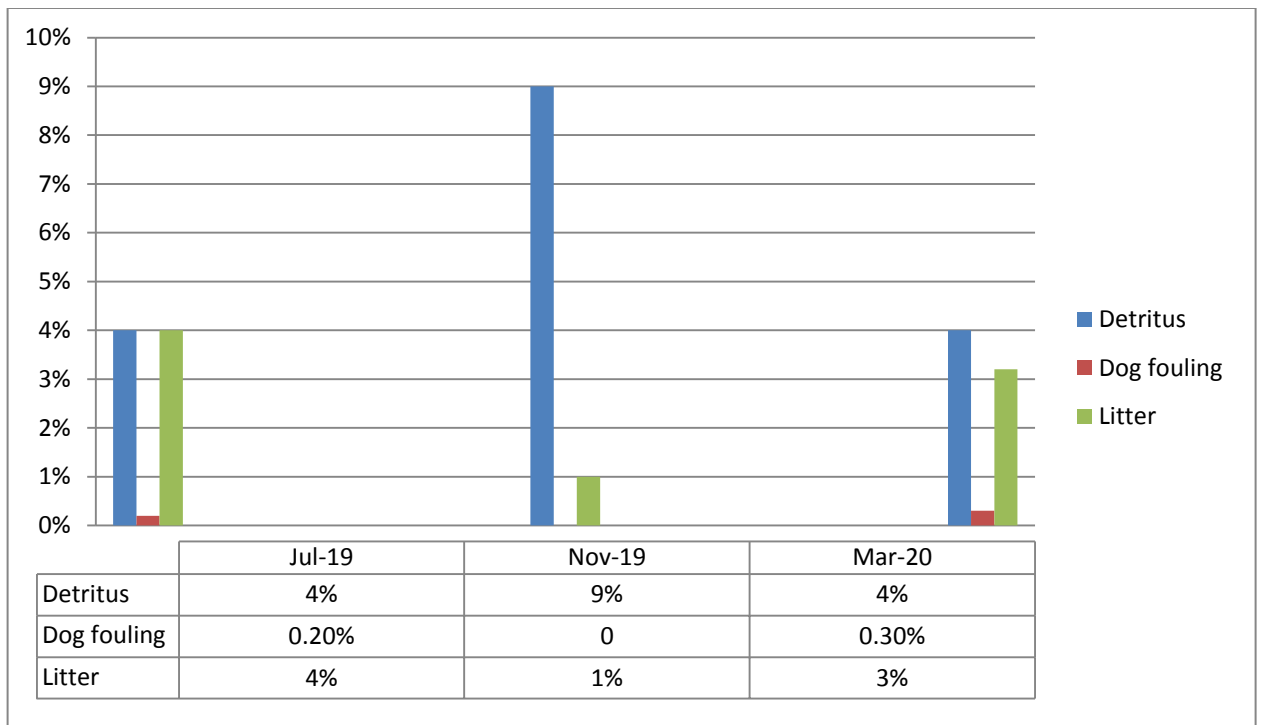
Recycling Percentage



19. Only acceptable items can be processed for recycling, so it is important for sources of contamination to be identified and action taken to exclude those items. The most common form of contamination stems from residents inappropriately using recycling bins to contain residual waste. In addition, contamination also occurs when collection staff mix residual or garden waste with dry-mixed recycling and the contamination becomes visible to waste transfer station staff when the vehicle is tipped. Biffa are improving the occurrences of these incidents, but more work needs to be done to reduce these.
20. There is an EU target for the UK to re-use, recycle and compost at least 50% of household waste by 2020. The performance in 2019/20 was comparable to the previous year except for Quarter 4. The indicative results from Biffa for Quarter 4 have been affected by the disruption to the garden waste service during March. The performance has been achieved at a time where recycling rates have fallen in other parts of the country and this has, in part, initiated a widespread government review across the industry.

Street and Beach Cleansing

21. Independent surveys of streets are completed by an external consultant every four months to measure litter, detritus and dog fouling. The results demonstrate that Biffa are meeting the required standards in all areas overall and consistently exceeding target in litter and dog fouling. Detritus is distinct from litter in being defined as organic material such as leaf detritus, for example.



Detritus - performance target is 8%

Dog fouling - performance target is 0.5%

Litter - performance target is 4%

22. Camber Sands Task Force that Biffa established to cleanse the Camber dunes and beaches has proved largely successful during both the 2019 and 2020 seasons. However, peak visitor days still prove challenging, particularly this year due to the exceptional circumstances around COVID-19. Following future operational reviews Biffa will be proposing changes to the litter bin placements at Camber Sands for next season.
23. Fly tipping has increased during months of May, June and July 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. For example, there were 62 fly tips reported in July 2019 compared with 119 reported in July 2020. We have seen an increase in small localised fly tips around bring sites and litter bins where it is proving difficult to identify evidence for further investigation. It is felt that the Government imposed lockdown combined with household waste recycling sites being closed has contributed to the increase. We will continue to monitor the situation closely with the Joint Waste Partnership. It is possible that we may be seeing a longer-term challenge as households move towards more shopping online, generating more household waste and recycling.

Conclusion

24. The new contract is performing well in comparison to performance under the previous contract; however, there are still improvements to be made and the missed bin performance is not satisfactory in the longer term. It is important to recognise that Biffa are improving what was a failing contract under the previous contractor and it is important to continue to support Biffa to improve performance. The main

benefit seen to date is a significant reduction in complaints and the associated reduced burden on Council resources.

25. While not a measurable result, it is important to note that in general the day-to-day working relationship with Biffa is positive and productive. For example, the drop in missed bin performance experienced under the COVID-19 Pandemic has begun to be resolved as promptly as possible and we are confident that the contract will return to being within target shortly.

Implications

Financial Implications

26. The improvements in performance are being delivered at a significant additional cost to the previous contract with the outturn in 2019/20 being £4.6 million compared to an outturn of £3.3million in 2018/19 under the previous contract.

Environmental

27. The waste contract supports the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities to provide a Waste Collections, Street and Beach Cleansing service. The effective delivery of the service supports the Council's ambitions to provide a clean environment from which residents benefit. The recycling rate achieved is presently within target; however, the reduction in garden waste services due to COVID-19 may affect this performance during 2020/21.

Sustainability

28. The success of the Waste Collections, Street and Beach Cleansing service in delivering its environmental outcomes relies upon the delivery of a sustainable contract that remains affordable to residents.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	A - Structure Chart
Relevant previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

STRUCTURE CHART

East Sussex Joint Waste Collection Partnership: Client Structure
 (Shaded boxes indicate functions of the administering authority)

