

Joint Waste and Recycling Committee

Date	-	8 January 2021
Report of the	-	Lead Director, Averil Price
Subject	-	Service Performance Update

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Report Author: Madeleine Gorman, Joint Waste Contract Manager

Introduction

1. This report offers analysis and commentary on the standards of service performance achieved through the Joint Waste Contract (JWC) for the period June to November 2020.

Performance Management

2. The key performance indicators (KPI) for each service are described in Schedule 8 of the Contract: the Performance Management Framework (PMF). Fundamentally 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. Ultimately both aspects (points and financial deductions) can lead to termination of the JWC. Members are advised that 100,000 performance points (or £125,000 financial deductions) incurred over any six month rolling period is the trigger for a Warning Notice.
3. The sources of data that are measured for each KPI have been assessed and clarified during 2020. Throughout 2020, the Councils have considered Biffa's KPI performance against their own internal council data each month (number of customer complaints, number of waste related customer service calls etc.) and are pleased to conclude that the analysis conducted by Biffa is accurate. This now allows Biffa's reports to be fully utilised for senior management and committee purposes as intended. So, whereas previous Service Performance Update reports made to the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee included a client analysis of performance on the main services, Members should now refer to Biffa's presentation and consider the commentary on local matters offered by each Supervising Officer as follows:

Local Performance: Hastings Borough Council

4. Over the past few months collection services in Hastings have broadly achieved the required standard, and with the exception of a spike in missed collections in September, KPIs have been achieved. Good communication between client and contractor, coupled with enhancements to Biffa's management processes have driven improvement, resulting in much lower missed collection rates in October and November. All other elements of the collection contract (clinical waste collection and bin deliveries) are operating as expected.

Local Performance: Rother District Council

5. Rother collection and street cleansing services were impacted from late March 2020 onwards by Government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Services continued from the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown period in line with the Partnership Business Continuity Plan. Bulky waste collections were suspended, along with garden waste collection services, and Rother, unlike Hastings and Wealden, took the decision to continue to suspend garden waste collections until 4 May 2020 from when they were reinstated.
6. During the initial period of lockdown, with no garden waste rounds going out and minimal traffic on the roads, waste collection service levels improved with a general reduction in missed bins and complaints. 'Bring sites' standards also improved in this period with a significant reduction in abuse and contamination except that the Salvation Army stopped emptying clothing bank sites from end of March 2020. Despite social media messages and notices placed on the clothing banks this resulted in mountains of bagged clothing being left at certain bring sites, thereby increasing the amount and cost of fly tipping. Street cleansing continued as planned in most areas across the district during the lockdown period and advantage was taken of reduced traffic to increase cleansing of fast roads, traffic islands and car parks, wherever possible.
7. Since the easing of lockdown, services have returned to normal operations. Garden waste rounds experienced high volumes throughout the summer-autumn period and 'bring sites' struggled to keep pace with volume of recycling brought about by the increase of packaging through people internet shopping whilst shops are closed. The volumes of litter also increased as visitors returned to the beaches, parks and open spaces in far greater numbers than usual due to a combination of fine, warm weather, schools closed, 'staycations' and many people on 'furlough'. Added to this, many restaurants have adapted to providing take-away food, thereby creating more litter.
8. During the summer period, following the lifting of lockdown, Rother missed bin collections increased to a peak in June 2020 at 259 missed bins per 100,000, since then, the service has seen a sustained and steady improvement, achieving the contractual target of no more than 120 missed bins in August and the most recent of 39 missed bins per 100,000 for November. It is expected that this performance will continue unless the recent increase in local COVID-19 rates impact staff resources. Biffa has 'pre-inducted' staff waiting in the wings should sickness levels increase significantly after Christmas. At present, Biffa's absence levels remain within planned operational levels and all services continue as usual.
9. The main impact across the Rother district during the last six months has been on levels of contamination in recycling bins, and most particularly in certain bring sites. Kerbside waste tonnages in general saw an increase in the summer, reflected across much of the UK, due to people working from home and shopping on-line thus creating more waste. Unfortunately this has had a knock on impact on many 'bring sites' where not only has tonnages increased, but contamination of recycling containers has been a major issue. This is most evident at Ravenside 'bring site' where, despite new containers and reverse lockable lids installed earlier in the year, contamination has

reached such a level that it is no longer viable to collect many of the containers as recycling material. Investigations are in progress to ascertain more detail on the contamination, and officers are focusing on this particular site to trial different lids, more robust locking mechanisms and signage to improve the quality of recycling. Officers have also been reviewing other, less used or problematic 'bring sites' located in areas across the district which benefit from kerbside recycling collections, with the intention of removing some 12 sites in a phased approach in early 2021 once approved.

10. The garden waste subscription renewal went well and since September 2020, the Council has been working to increase the number of households subscribing to the collection to achieve and exceed the target of 20,000 households by Christmas 2020. To date, the Council is on track to achieve the target but work must continue to maintain the numbers into 2021 and beyond.
11. The street cleansing service has remained at an acceptable level and independent surveys in Rother show that litter, detritus and dog fouling have all achieved or exceeded contractual targets.

Local Performance: Wealden District Council

12. Collection performance is good and has shown further improvement with effective work between Biffa and client officers at a local level resolving day-to-day issues. Focus has been given to missed assisted customers which has also seen improvements. There is a need for attention to be given to collections from recycling bring sites in the north of the District where several of the more popular facilities may require more frequent collections than they currently receive.
13. Biffa's resilience to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic is proving effective with all services continuing to be deployed. We continue to work closely with Biffa at a local level on staffing and service issues as they arise however, both the Council and Biffa are concerned that should the general prevalence of the virus increase in early 2021 we will experience higher levels of staff absence either directly due to positive tests or through proximity via NHS Test & Trace. Despite the contingency measures in place, the impact could be more severe than March 2020 and we may need to consider difficult decisions regarding the services we provide on a short term basis.
14. Container deliveries continue to be completed within the required service level agreement and we welcome this position given this part of the service has previously been difficult to manage effectively .
15. Street cleansing performance is good with effective cleansing schedules now in place and continued coordination with the highways authorities. Clearance of the autumn leaf fall using an additional sweeper has been good and the latest street cleansing survey results indicate all targets are being achieved.
16. Performance for fly-tip clearance remains good despite challenges with numbers of incidents remaining higher than has been seen in recent years with the effects of COVID-19 likely to be a contributory factor. Clinical waste collection performance was generally reliable but there has been a welcome improvement with the occasional disruption resulting from Biffa staffing issues being resolved. Bulky waste collections performance remains consistently good.

Performance Assessment: Authorised Officer

17. It is the view of the Authorised Officer that during 2020, Biffa has very successfully introduced the administrative and management processes that allow resources to be deployed to best effect. Given the many operational changes and personal safety requirements that have been imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic and the legacy of many inefficient local practices left by the previous contractor, Biffa's efforts are recognised and appreciated by each client.

Recycling Contamination

18. It has been established that the highest levels of contamination in recycling stem from residents inappropriately using 'bring site' recycling bins for residual and/or commercial waste. A detailed analysis of material collected from 'bring sites' is being undertaken by East Sussex County Council and Viridor in December 2020 so that each Council can pursue the local actions needed to deal with this issue.

Administering Authority Update

19. With regard to the transfer of the Administering Authority role to Wealden District Council (Minute JWRC20/19 refers), Members are advised that the required Cabinet approvals have been secured and an officer group has been established to manage the transfer.

Risk Register

20. The Contract Management Group (Authorised Officer, Supervising Officers and Biffa managers) are actively managing three inter-related "amber" risks as follows:
 - (i) COVID-19 related staff absence (7-14 days).
 - (ii) Extensive use of agency staff by Biffa.
 - (iii) Major Natural Disaster impacts one or more council areas (e.g. pandemic affects council and contractor personnel and procedures).
21. The number of staff absent each day obviously impacts the services but the experience gained while handling high levels of staff absence early in the Coronavirus pandemic period improved Biffa's ability to forecast and manage the situation. Since May 2020, Biffa has very successfully planned for and deployed alternate resources whenever necessary to maintain, and indeed improve, performance on all services.
22. With increasing local rates of Coronavirus infections and forecasts that staff absence could increase mid-late January, these risks are monitored each day and all parties are prepared if/when necessary to urgently engage and take the local decisions that may become necessary. Each Council has verified its service priorities so any need for services to be suspended can be appropriately managed.

Averil Price
Lead Director

Risk Assessment Statement

No risks arise from the recommendation of this report.