

# Joint Scrutiny Committee Agenda



Listening Learning Leading



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22 July 2015

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A meeting of the

## Joint Scrutiny Committee

will be held on Thursday, 30 July 2015 at 6.30 pm

Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton OX14 4SB

### Members of the Committee:

#### Councillors

Richard Pullen (co chair), South

Judy Roberts (co chair), Vale

Martin Akehurst, South

Alice Badcock, Vale

David Dodds, South

Katie Finch, Vale

Monica Lovatt, Vale

Ben Mabbett, Vale

Bill Service, South

John Woodley-Shead, South

#### Substitutes

##### South

Pat Dawe

Jeanette Matelot

Alan Thompson

Ian White

##### Vale

Every political group may appoint all or some of its members who are not voting members to serve as substitute members, provided that they are not members of the Cabinet

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Margaret Reed, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

# **Agenda**

## **Open to the Public including the Press**

### **1. Confirmation of chairing arrangements for Joint Scrutiny**

To confirm Judy Roberts to chair the first meeting, and the arrangements for future meetings.

### **2. Notifications of substitutes and apologies for absence**

To record the attendance of substitute members, if any, who have been authorised to attend in accordance with the provisions of standing order 17(1), with notification having been given to the proper officer before the start of the meeting and to receive apologies for absence.

### **3. Minutes and actions arising and referral**

This is the first meeting of this committee, so there are no minutes, actions arising or referral for consideration.

### **4. Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting; and of any other relevant interests.

### **5. Urgent business and chair's announcements**

To receive notification of any matters, which the chair determines, should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances, which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

### **6. Statement, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee**

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under standing order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

### **7. Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings (Pages 9 - 10)**

To review the attached scrutiny work schedule. Please note, although the dates are confirmed, the items under consideration are subject to being withdrawn, added to or rearranged without further notice.

## REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### 8. Annual review of the waste contract: Biffa

(Pages 11 - 29)

*To receive the report of the head of corporate strategy.*

#### **Minutes of the previous Scrutiny review meetings**

Vale 20.3.2013

*Reg Waite, Cabinet member for waste, Ian Matten, and Simon Chown from Biffa were available to answer questions from the committee on the contractor's performance, and the council's management of it during 2013:*

*The committee considered that "fair" was a harsh outcome for 30 missed collections per 100,000 and would like the bench marking for this KPT to be reviewed.*

*Last year's minutes reviewing this contract stated:*

- There had been an increase in the amount of non-recyclable waste. The committee suggested that there should be a further publicity campaign, reminding householders of what could be recycled. The committee asked the Cabinet member and the contractor to monitor the effect of this campaign and report back to the committee in due course.*

*Following this, Biffa undertook to:*

- Report back to the committee on the impact of the publicity.*
- Include more literature when sacks are delivered to residents who use the sacks.*
- Provide information on the recycling of detritus: the scheme started in September/October last year.*
- Liaise with town and parish councils on issues such as Christmas tree recycling.*

*Further discussions points were as follows:*

- Food waste as recycling has decreased, but there is no evidence of it going into recycling or landfill and there may be a reduction in the amount of food wasted.*
- There is an overall (and across Oxfordshire) increase in landfill, but there are no discernable reasons: the percentage of recycling has not changed*
- If data is available, it will be broken down on an area basis next year.*
- The situation of contamination at Dalton Barracks has been successfully addressed.*
- There have been no ongoing complaints about the removal of the bring sites and contamination of former sites has improved.*
- 360 degree cameras with audio will be fitted into vehicles to record data and pick up information. This will comply with the Data Protection Act and management of information. Biffa, not Vale is controlling the data and legality remains with Biffa.*
- Biffa have had 26 compliments and ten complaints.*
- Committee noted that communication between Vale staff and Biffa is improved on street cleansing.*

*The committee requested the following:*

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- *Improved information for new tenants/residents on absent bins when they took over a property.*
- *A further improvement at Dalton Barracks next year.*
- *That details of broken down vehicles is notified to ward councillor/ public.*
- *Information on the recycling of detritus, landfill tax and recycling credits to be provided next year.*
- *For arrangements to be made for councillors wanting to see a demonstration of the new technology.*

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) *to recommend the Cabinet member for waste to award a “good” performance rating to the waste management contractor Biffa (and wished to add its comment “tending towards excellent”), for its performance in 2013; and*
- (b) *to ask the officers to follow up the actions listed in the bullet points above.*

South 22.4.2014

*Mr Ian Matten, Waste and Parks Service Manager, and Mr David Dodds, Cabinet member, introduced the report and answered questions from the committee. Mr Simon Chown, contract manager for Biffa, answered questions and showed photographs of the ‘deep clean’ of streets across the district.*

*In answer to questions, they explained:*

- *the process for registering and rectifying a missed collection;*
- *free garden waste collections were offered to all properties on military bases as this was more cost-effective for both the occupants and the council given the high turnover in occupants;*
- *staff turnover was relatively high as people moved on in their careers and Biffa was taking steps to improve retention rates;*
- *Installation of 360° cameras on vehicles would give evidence in cases of allegations of damage from reversing vehicles. There should be no incidents if procedures were followed;*
- *information about recycling and waste collection was sent to every newly built home.*

*Councillors discussed the reasons for the fall in the recycling rate. Street sweepings had to be landfilled in accordance an Environment Agency directive, which reduced the recycling rate by approximately three per cent. Alternative treatments were being evaluated. The campaigns to reduce packaging had the effect of reducing this by 20-30 per cent; and the campaign to reduce food waste was also having an effect. Additional houses increased the total amount of waste produced. However, there was no clear reason why the national trend should be for increased waste tonnages and decreased recycling rates. Councillors noted that waste would now be sent to Ardley for incineration. The termination of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership reduced the ability of councils to publicise and co-ordinate waste reduction campaigns.*

*They asked for confirmation of the accuracy of 2013 figures in table one on page 6.*

*Councillors expressed the view that the evaluation of the missed bins target as fair was harsh as the number of missed bins was very low. The calculation should be revised. They appreciated the work done during the deep clean, and residents were pleased with the results.*

*They suggested a campaign to encourage people not to drop litter and ruin the good work of the street cleaning teams.*

**RESOLVED:**

*To recommend that the Cabinet member for finance, parks and waste assess the performance of Biffa Municipal Limited in delivering the household waste collection, street cleansing, and ancillary services in South Oxfordshire from 1 January to 31 December 2013 as:*

**Good**

**9. Annual review of the horticulture contract: Sodexo**

**(Pages 30 - 47)**

To receive the report of the head of corporate strategy.

**Extract from minutes of the previous Scrutiny review meetings**

*Vale 20.3.14*

*Councillor Reg Waite, the Cabinet member for commercial services; Ian Matten, waste and parks service manager, and Matthew Fowler, regional director with Sodexo, came to the table to introduce the report and to assist the discussion.*

*Councillor Waite introduced the report to the Committee. Sodexo had completed 13 of the 15 points which were in their action plan for the year, and the other two items were on track.*

*The Committee discussed this item and below is a summary of the main points:*

- The contractors are showing continuous improvement against contract and there has been a low level of complaints: the complaints which have been received show no particular pattern.*
- Town and parish councils have been consulted for their views on the performance of the contract as per last year's Scrutiny Committee request.*
- The committee was pleased with the apprenticeship scheme run by the contractor.*
- There may need to be a review of time-scales on notifications by the council to address issues; it needs to be considered in agreement with the contractor, rather than imposed by the council as at present.*
- The committee was pleased with the retention of the Green Flag status in Abbey Gardens.*
- Dissatisfaction from the public relating to parks may not necessarily be issues related to this contract.*
- Committee asked to know whether customers who were dissatisfied with the parks were dissatisfied with the same or different parks.*
- Abbey Meadows is cleared frequently of litter but has very high usage. Additional bins will be provided in the summer. There were very few comments in the customer satisfaction survey about litter in Abbey Meadows.*
- A new tracking system will be introduced to show where the crews are located, and the council will have access to this information.*
- The contractor is able to draw resources across contracts where need.*
- The contractor has requested that the council "support with winter works to retain our*

*(sic) seasonal workforce". In response to the committee's request for clarification, the contractor is looking for work to undertake during the non-growing season to enable them to retain the expertise of their workforce from one year to the next. The committee recognised that this was an operational matter, not a Scrutiny one, but saw that this could be beneficial in some circumstances.*

*The committee requested the following:*

*For the next annual review to provide the following information:*

- *To include consultation with the town and parish councils, even where they are not the owners of the parks, as some customer comments may go to them.*

*For next year's action plan to contain the following information:*

- *Communications*
- *Time/response targets*
- *Tracking of operations technology*
- *Play areas – annual report and weekly visual inspection*
- *To know whether customers who were dissatisfied with the parks were dissatisfied with the same or different parks.*

**RESOLVED:**

- To recommend the Cabinet member for waste to award a "good" performance rating to the grounds maintenance contractor, Sodexo, for its performance in 2013; and*
- to ask the officers to follow up the actions listed in the bullet points above.*

*South 22.4.2014*

*The committee considered the report of the head of corporate strategy setting out the performance of Sodexo Limited in providing grounds maintenance services in South Oxfordshire from 1 January to 31 December 2013.*

*Mr Ian Matten, Waste and Parks Service Manager, and Mr David Dodds, Cabinet member, introduced the report and answered questions from the committee. Mr Kevin Harkness, representing Sodexo, answered questions.*

*They explained that performance had improved since the previous review. The majority of the work under the joint contract was carried out in Vale of White Horse District Council. Work for this council covered diverse small areas mainly around Didcot and burial grounds in Kidmore End and Wallingford. Customers and council officers looked for different things from the contractor. The apprenticeship scheme was going very well. Officers were working on setting more realistic and achievable timescales for resolving complaints and notifications.*

*Councillors congratulated Sodexo on its apprenticeship scheme and on exceeding its health and safety targets.*

**RESOLVED:**

*To recommend that the Cabinet member for finance, parks and waste assess the performance of Sodexo Limited in providing grounds maintenance services in South Oxfordshire from 1 January to 31 December 2013 as:*

**Good**

## **10. Introduction to Scrutiny and terms of reference for joint working**

**(Pages 48 - 49)**

Attached to this agenda is an introduction to scrutiny. The terms of reference for this committee, agreed by both annual councils, is laid out below (extract from original report).

There will be full training for councillors on scrutiny matters, in November, which will be delivered by the Local Government Association. At this joint scrutiny meeting, councillors are encouraged to ask questions on the role of scrutiny and also to consider practical ways of supporting the work of the joint committee, within the terms of reference of the committee.

### **Joint Scrutiny Committee**

1. Council is invited to consider the establishment of a joint scrutiny committee to meet at least twice a year to review a number of standing items that affect both councils as set out below:
  - Performance reviews of joint contracts
  - Other issues that affect both councils jointly
2. Joint Scrutiny may meet on additional occasions if the need arises.
3. The purpose of a joint scrutiny committee is to ensure a consistent approach, avoid duplication of resources and improve joint working between both councils. This committee will only seek to address matters which are being progressed across both councils.
4. The creation of a joint scrutiny committee meeting initially twice a year, with an option of increasing joint meetings as we go forward, would reduce the number of reports being written and the number of evening meetings staff have to attend and would enable contractors to attend just one meeting a year. Running joint meetings in addition to those already scheduled at each council would have resource implications in terms of staff capacity. Officers therefore propose a reduction in the number of Vale scrutiny committee meetings by two.
5. The information below sets out the proposed membership of the joint committee, arrangements for the location and regularity of meetings, the proposed chairing arrangements and the proposed terms of reference.

### **Membership**

- Five councillors from Vale of White Horse District Council (not cabinet members); and
- Five councillors from South Oxfordshire District Council (not cabinet members).
- Politically balanced in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. (Politically balanced by council, not necessarily across both councils).
- Substitutes from the political groups (not cabinet members).

### **Quorum**

Four members, two from each council.

### **Regularity of meetings**

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At least two per year, with additional meetings on an *ad hoc* basis.

**Location of meetings:** At the councils' offices in Milton Park.

**Chairmanship**

- The committee will be co-chaired (one from each council) and the person presiding at any meeting will alternate between the two councils. These shall be non ruling group and non Cabinet members and their will be no vice chair.

**Terms of reference**

- to monitor the performance of contractors delivering joint contracts;
- to consider any matter affecting both areas or their inhabitants jointly (subject to the agreement of the chairmen of each council's scrutiny committee).

The establishment of a joint scrutiny committee will not impact upon the ability of each council's scrutiny committee to review specific issues covered by the above terms of reference – for example a specific issue relating to a contract.

**Scrutiny Call-in**

The right to call in decisions, in line with the council's constitution, will remain with the district Scrutiny committee, but the chairman of this committee may choose to refer it to the joint committee.

If agreed officers will make the necessary changes to the council's constitution to reflect the above.

**EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER 100A(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**