

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 22 May 2017 at 6.30 pm

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

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Richard Pullen (Co Chair), David Turner, John Walsh, Ian White (in place of Sue Lawson)

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Alice Badcock, Ed Blagrove, Debby Hallett (Co Chair), Mohinder Kainth, Chris Palmer

Officers: Susan Harbour and Ian Matten

Also present: Councillor Charlotte Dickson and Tony Harbour
Representatives from Sodexo Ltd (Horticultural) and Biffa (Municipal).

Sc.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from South councillors Sue Lawson and David Dodds.

South councillor Ian White attended as a substitute. South councillor Toby Newman was expected to attend as a substitute but was unable to attend.

Sc.2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2017 were agreed by the committee as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the chairman as such.

Sc.3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Sc.4 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

Sc.5 Public participation

No members of the public had registered to speak.

Sc.6 Performance review of Sodexo Ltd (Horticultural Services) - 2016

Kevin Harkness and Mark Hibbs attended from the contractor Sodexo.

Portfolio holders Charlotte Dickson (Vale) and Tony Harbour (South) and Ian Matten, Waste and Parks Service Manager, were in attendance and introduced the report.

The officers' report recommended that the contractor be awarded an overall rating of excellent.

Sodexo had scored "excellent" in its customer satisfaction rating and key performance targets and "good" for council satisfaction. They had exceeded 3 of 5 performance targets. This was an improvement on the previous year's overall rating of "good".

The Scrutiny Committee debated the report and asked questions.

The committee asked what had changed to improve performance over the previous year. The contractor had retained the same personnel, but had made the following improvements:

- a new staff training programme
- employment of a new health and safety officer which has improved performance
- restructuring of the team to improve responsibility areas and to create team leaders which gave more accountability.

The improvements had also been brought about by the ongoing relationship between the contractor and the council. It was noted that the weather also plays a part in this contract.

The contractor feedback raised areas of concern which came from their customer survey which were within the remit of the council, these were:

- more play equipment
- update some of the play equipment
- picnic benches
- improve the toilet facilities
- provide café selling drinks

The committee looked for a response from the council on this:

- there is an ongoing rolling programme in the Vale for play equipment
- there is an ongoing maintenance programme for picnic benches and similar furniture.

The committee asked how the contractor performance fed back into the setting of the objectives which are in the corporate plan. The portfolio holders confirmed that they are the liaison point with the wider councils.

The maintenance of burial grounds is a South only service as the council owns two cemeteries. The service currently breaks even.

The committee commended the contractor, officers and portfolio holders on the improvements made over the year.

RESOLVED

To support the officers' recommendation of "excellent" for Sodexo's performance for 2016.

Action Points

In the next report the committee would like a breakdown of the customer base between South and Vale for the customer satisfaction survey.

Sc.7 Performance review of Biffa Municipal Limited - 2016

Brian Ashby and Darren Kenney attended from the contractor Biffa

Portfolio holders Charlotte Dickson (Vale) and Tony Harbour (South) and Ian Matten, Waste and Parks Service Manager, were in attendance and introduced the report.

The officers' report recommended that the contractor be awarded an overall rating of "good".

Biffa had scored "good" in its customer satisfaction and council satisfaction ratings, but only "fair" in the key performance targets.

The Scrutiny Committee debated the report and asked questions.

Biffa ascribed most of its difficulties over the year to issues with its vehicles breaking down. A new fleet had been due to arrive this summer, but this had now been rolled back to October. The committee wondered why the age of the fleet had not been a risk which had been identified in the previous year.

Concerns were expressed that missed collections seem to build up in the same area in cul-de-sacs and crescents and difficult to negotiate places. Biffa confirmed that they were trying not to affect the same people every week, but that the overall drive was to prevent the vehicle breakdowns in the first place. To this end, they had changed the way that they maintain the fleet and had taken this service in house. They also hired additional vehicles to support the fleet. One of the reasons why cul-de-sacs and difficult to negotiate places were repetitively missed was due to the lack of manoeuvrability of vehicles. Originally the vehicles were expected to go onto landfill. The new fleet will have rear steer and will be more manoeuvrable. There is, however, a recording mechanism for roads which are being continuously missed.

A system was in place where parishes could notify Biffa on their priorities for deep cleansing. All parishes are written to before their deep cleanse is due. District councillors could encourage parishes to respond.

The committee asked whether the KPIs accurately reflect the services which Biffa provide, eg fly tipping and carcass removal. New KPIs will be in place in June 2017 and will include two indicators on fly tipping. Currently, crews report fly tipping and pick up at the time if they have the capability.

The committee raised concerns about textile recycling which was often not done and wanted to know how it could be done more efficiently and reliably. Biffa confirmed that the

hired in vehicles cannot accommodate the cages for the textiles. This should improve with the new vehicle roll out.

Other Issues:

Items which are recyclable, but not on Biffa's list of target materials which are put into the recycling bins, still earn the councils a credit for recycling. Bus stop and layby bins are part of South and Vale responsibility.

The Environmental Protection Team investigate illegal fly tipping.

RESOLVED

To support the recommendation of the officers' recommendation of Good for Biffa's performance for 2016.

Action Points

Provide benchmarking against other councils

Schedule on deep cleansing in inFocus.

Put recycling guide on the internet.

Sc.8 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee discussed its very heavy forthcoming workload and agreed that the Chairs and clerks of all three Scrutiny Committees would consider how best to manage the workload over the coming months.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm