

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 20 October 2022 at 6.30 pm

In person at Abbey House, Abingdon OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Kate Gregory, Stefan Gawrysiak, Jo Robb, and David Turner

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Nathan Boyd (Chair), Andy Cooke and David Grant

Officers: Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations), Ian Matten (Environmental Services Manager), Ben Whaymand (Leisure Facilities Team Leader), Mark Foster (Property Asset Manager), Candida Basilio (Democratic Services Officer)

Cabinet Members: Councillor Sue Cooper (Cabinet Member for Environment – South), Councillor Sally Povolotsky (Cabinet Member for Environment – Vale), Councillor Emily Smith (Vale Council Leader), Councillor Andrew Crawford (Cabinet Member for Finance - Vale)

Guests: GLL representatives: John Amatt, Kevin Williams, Luke Askew

Biffa representatives: Francis Drew

Virtual attendance:

Councillors: Cabinet Member Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Community Wellbeing - South), Cabinet Member Leigh Rawlins (Finance - South), Cabinet Member Debby Hallett (Corporate Services - Vale), Cabinet Member Bethia Thomas (Community Engagement - Vale)

Officers: Adrian Lear (Technical Projects Team Leader), Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment)

Guests: Gene Webb from Street Angels Faringdon, Biffa Representative, Andrew Dutton, Saba representatives Nigel Griffin and Andrew Marr

Sc.8 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillor Ian White from South Oxfordshire and Councillor Cheryl Briggs from Vale of White Horse.

Sc.9 Urgent business and chair's announcements

No urgent business, however chair ran through housekeeping matters relating to the new office / meeting venue.

Sc.10 Declaration of interests

None.

Sc.11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 20 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record, and the chair will sign them as such.

Sc.12 Public participation

Gene Webb from Faringdon, and a member of Street Angels, addressed the committee in relation to item eight on the agenda.

She spoke of the group's interest in the look and cleanliness of the streets of Faringdon, and the work they do such as weed removal and sweeping, and she highlighted the improvements needed. Can the council encourage doorstep to door cleaning, including businesses, as well as litter picks? She hoped that Street Angels could meet with Biffa and the Council to discuss further.

Resolved: Cabinet for Environment (Vale) will get in touch with Gene Webb.

Sc.13 Work schedule and dates for Joint scrutiny meetings

The work programme was recirculated earlier today, and any comments can be submitted to chair.

Sc.14 Saba car park contract performance 2021-22

The Saba report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment for South, Councillor Sue Cooper, supported by Cabinet Member for Environment for Vale, Councillor Sally Povolotsky. Adrian Lear, Technical Projects Team Leader, was present virtually to answer any questions. Saba representatives attended virtually.

KPI 2,3 and 5 underperformance was identified as a lack of staffing at the time. The KPIs had improved due to work undertaken to attract new staff to the roles. Customer satisfaction responses to questionnaires were few in number. There were no formal complaints received. The overall rating was good. Civil Parking Enforcement will improve the performance further in future.

Committee members were welcomed to ask questions on the performance of the Saba car park contract in 2021-22.

- Maintenance of ticket machines was confirmed as a Saba responsibility, resurfacing and lines was responsibility of the council. A member asked if customer service surveys could be linked to the ticket machines / the point of collecting a ticket. QR codes on tickets suggested by Cabinet Member as more interactive.
- A discussion was had regarding the difficulty of collecting survey responses, and whether surveys could be collected in person at car parks. Technical Projects Team Leader explained how it was not practical to add surveys to tickets, as the customer would not be

happy by default due to receiving a ticket, and that would not reflect the customer service given. Other correspondence should include survey links, rather than the tickets.

Resolved:

Committee reviewed and discussed the performance and were content with the report.

Sc.15 Biffa waste contract performance 2021

The Biffa report was introduced by Cabinet Member for Environment for Vale, Councillor Sally Povolotsky, supported by Cabinet Member for Environment for South, Councillor Sue Cooper. Supporting officers were Ian Matten, Environmental Services Manager, Paul Fielding, Head of Housing and Environment and Biffa representatives.

Chair reminded committee that the garden waste service disruption during the performance period had already been looked at in detail by joint scrutiny committee (Cabinet and Council), therefore additional questions can be raised by email with officers or the Cabinet Member. However, there was the option to go into confidential session this evening if there was a need to discuss anything considered confidential.

Councillor Povolotsky summarised the background for the 2021 performance report. The contract was in place until June 2024. There were various issues during the period, such as a lack of HGV drivers. Retaining staff was an issue, and the loss of valuable route knowledge was a concern. The suspension of the garden waste services during the period was to enable retention of regular recycling, food and refuse collections. Concerns were raised about incomplete rounds and missed bins. This was mainly due to issues around staff recruitment and retention.

The overall performance was rated as good. Cabinet Member welcomed committee to provide comments before a final assessment on performance was made.

Committee raised the following points:

- KPT5: what was an incomplete round? Francis Drew confirmed this meant a round was not completed within a day, maybe because of an incident such as a vehicle fault.
- Table 1 page 28: general increase in waste – Cabinet Member explained that lockdowns meant more deliveries and online shopping, bulk shopping and related packaging. Francis Drew also mentioned that school closures impacted this, particularly relating to food waste, and household number increases. A committee member said it would be interesting to see figures against national trends and against population increases locally. Cabinet Member added that in relation to population increase, proportionally, the waste figures had lowered. The team will look at providing extra data in future.
- Fly tipping: Committee discussed this topic, Cabinet Member noting that there had been successful campaigns and prosecutions, but members of the committee wondered whether residents know who was responsible and who to report to. They raised concern that resident could no longer report fly tips through Oxfordshire County Council's "Fix my Street" reporting system.

Action: Chair / interested members can email Councillor Sudbury at Oxfordshire County Council.

- Missed food bins were queried: it was responded by Cabinet Member that they were small and less conspicuous, and therefore missed
- Can we track repeated missed bins at a household? Biffa responded that these are tracked
- Committee discussed untidy public areas, but Cabinet Member explained this would be for future consideration. A lot of this was behaviour change, such as attitude to littering.
- A member asked Biffa about how they envisage staffing issues to develop over the next year. It was responded that Biffa was investing in pay, but there could still be issues, but Biffa will continue to review how they attract staff. Reviewed route rounds had been created to improve staff work life balance. Andrew Dutton from Biffa added that industrial relations were good.
- Although not specific to this performance report, when asked about the national picture on waste, Cabinet member informed that she was working with CEAC/CEEAC committees to

look into waste in more detail, with case studies and comparisons on the national picture. Information on national waste targets, and what a waste service should look like, was still being awaited from central government. Both councils were in the top five councils for recycling rates.

- Customer satisfaction surveys were discussed. There were no specific surveys to residents, but officers are looking at their options for engagement. Cabinet Member highlighted other work from the council regarding waste, such as local events staffed by officers on educating and informing.
- Paragraph 56 was noted as it was felt more should be considered in this section. Potentially raise at CEAC/CEEAC.
- Cabinet member to contact Gene Webb regarding her topic in public participation.

Resolved: Committee considered Biffa performance 2021 and made comments as outlined above.

Sc.16 GLL (Leisure) annual performance reports 2019 to 2022

Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing (South) introduced the report, supported by Councillor Emily Smith, Vale Council Leader, who was standing in for Councillor Pighills, Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities (Vale), who was unable to attend. Chair reminded that Covid support packages were already scrutinised, and further questions would need to be sent to officers or dealt with in confidential session if necessary.

Cabinet member explained that officers had worked hard to produce these reports together to give an overview of 2019 through to 2022, capturing the difficulties caused by Covid and lockdowns, and in 2022 the impact was still being felt in the leisure sector, particularly for finances. Cabinet Member felt that we were lucky to still maintain these services despite the impacts of the pandemic. GLL as an operator had been impacted, not just the councils, and this was reflected fairly in reports.

Committee were asked: had we scored GLL fairly? Considering that some measures had no score due to the impacts of the pandemic, was it fair to give an overall score?

Present to the support the item were three representatives from GLL, and officers Mark Foster and Ben Whaymand.

Committee were welcomed to comment:

- Not related to the performance report, a member asked about options for rural / isolated communities who want to access leisure facilities. Shuttle buses, volunteer driver options? It was suggested that the committee member could email Cabinet Member and County Council. It would be a Council topic to discuss, not GLL or related to the performance periods in the reports.
- Page 85 – Compliance with corporate identity – this was queried. Officer responded that this was in relation to marketing and PR and how GLL links to councils websites and materials.
- Page 48: KPT4 – rated as poor – increase in concessionary memberships post Covid. Had work started on increasing concessionary membership? It was responded yes, and this should be reflected in future reporting.
- Page 98: reduction in electricity and gas consumption. Was there scope to update the figures. Cabinet Member added that there was partnership working between councils and GLL to meet carbon targets and work with the KPTs set when the contract was drawn up. Officer added that kilowatt hours (Kwh) figures would be used in future in relation to consumption. Committee member asked for breakdown of cost and carbon impact of gas and electricity units, as where gas was decreased in use, electricity could increase.
- Why was there no engagement from Active Communities Team? Officer responded that this was mainly because of furloughed staff at GLL and social distancing.
- Why was booking classes difficult? It was responded that quarterly meetings were now in place to help make improvements. GLL stated that they were frustrated with the IT project at the time, but they were happy with the progress being made now.

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council – Joint Scrutiny Committee minutes

- GLL on being asked, stated that they were happy with the partnership, which was delivering good community outcomes, but they queried whether an overall score should be given when there were categories not given a score at all, therefore negatively impacting an overall score. Members discussed this, and views were expressed that you cannot give an accurate overall rating for 2020-21 / 2021-22, and that the period required narrative to understand rather than a measure.

Resolved:

Scrutiny Committee reviewed the performance and agreed that for the period of 2020-21 and 2021-22 (affected by Covid restrictions), where there were performance dimensions with no rating, it would be unfair to give an overall rating. Therefore, there should be no overall rating. This was suggested for officers to make amendments to the reports with Cabinet Member approval.

Sc.17 Exclusion of the public

No confidential session was required.

The meeting closed at 20.10