

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 30 September 2024 at 6.30 pm
at the Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Stefan Gawrysiak (co-chair in the chair),
Alexandrine Kantor, Leigh Rawlins, Jo Robb, Ed Sadler

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Katherine Foxhall (co-chair), Andy Cooke,
Judy Roberts, Ron Batstone and Peter Stevens

Officers: Candida Basilio (Democratic Services Officer), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place).

Cabinet members - Councillors Mark Coleman (Vale of White Horse District Council, Member for Environmental Services and Waste) and Sam James-Lawrie (South Oxfordshire District Council, Member for Environment)

Present online:

Officers: Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment), Scott Williams (Environmental Services Manager)

Sc.25 Chair's announcements

Co-Chair Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak opened the meeting and invited Deputy Chief Executive for Place to update committee on the delayed item on the future of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), which was now likely to come to committee later once a paper was received.

Sc.26 Apologies for absence

None.

Sc.27 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting on 16 September were agreed as a correct record, and the chair would sign them as such.

Sc.28 Declaration of interests

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

None.

Sc.29 Urgent business

None.

Sc.30 Public participation

None.

Sc.31 Work schedule and dates for Joint scrutiny meetings

The committee noted the work programme.

It was mentioned that an item on Joint Air Quality Action Plan would likely be added for joint scrutiny in May 2025. Leisure Procurement Strategy will likely be added to a January meeting, which would need to be arranged.

Sc.32 Future Delivery of Household Waste and Street Cleansing Services

Chair summarised the recommendations for committee to consider:

That the Joint Scrutiny Committee, reviews the Cabinet report, noting the confidential appendices and asks questions, then offers comments relating to the content contained within. The report asks that Cabinet:

- (a) Reviews the options available for the future household waste and street cleansing service provision from June 2026, as set out in this report
- (b) Subject to this review, agrees to progress Option 1 and delegate to the Head of Housing and Environment, in consultation with the responsible cabinet members, to undertake a joint procurement exercise between South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council to let a new joint contract for Household Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Services from 29 June 2026.

Chair reminded committee that discussion of confidential appendices would need to go into a confidential session if committee vote in favour.

Cabinet member for Environmental Services and waste for VOWHDC introduced the report. Cabinet member for Environment for SODC was also present. Officers present to support were the Head of Housing and Environment and the Environmental Services Manager.

This was a review of future delivery of the household waste collection and street cleansing services ahead of the contract end date for the Biffa contract in June 2026. The recommendation to go out and procure a new contract differs from the existing contract, in that the councils will provide and lease the street cleansing vehicles for service delivery to the new contract provider as well as an operational vehicle depot. There would be flexibility built into the contract for continual improvements and changes in service needed to adhere to the Environment Act 2021. There would also be clear responsibilities for residents to understand who to contact, as well as a focus on street cleansing service improvements. Joint Scrutiny Committee were welcomed to provide their views on the report before it was submitted to Cabinet.

Committee commented as follows:

- Members noted they would prefer an appendix where links were not working.

- There was a discussion about option three. It was explained that existing LATCOs had been approached by officers but were not in the position to provide a costed proposal needed by South and Vale at this time.
- Page seven, paragraph seven: regarding OCC responsibility, it was confirmed that both councils collect dry mix recycling (DMR) and how it was managed. In Oxfordshire, this was district responsibility and was not planned to change.
- Paragraph 14, where it stated the business case was not strong for in-house, Head of Housing and Environment explained this sentence referred to a commercial waste collection service.
- What was the timeline for contract details after deciding on the option? Cabinet member for SODC explained that by 2026 there was time for procurement to be carried out. Head of Housing and Environment explained that operational details such as the service specifications would not come back to committee ahead of a procurement process but the team would come back to committee with an update once the procurement process had concluded. Flexibility within the contract would allow for changes wanted (in response to a three-weekly collection comment).
- It was confirmed by Cabinet member that officers had looked at a high level and as broadly as they could in assessing the contract end options.
- Cabinet member responded when asked about extension that the councils weren't legally able to take up another extension to the current contract.
- Cabinet member explained to members the futureproofing of a depot with potential for non-diesel vehicles. It would make a more attractive contract if the depot was already owned and leased out to contractors.
- Paragraph 12: Do we fully understand the implications of the Environment Act? Cabinet member responded that there was some uncertainty on dates due to the new government administration. Head of Service did add that more was known that one year ago.
- A member considered that there was not enough detail on the benefits of insourcing.

Some members felt the report was weighted towards option one and were not certain that they had enough detailed information on all options, in order to make a recommendation.

Due to the questioning in public being completed, the chair suggested a confidential session to cover other questions on confidential appendices.

The public session closed at 19:09. Members returned to public session at 20:20.

The chair summarised that members had scrutinised confidential items thoroughly and would now come to a conclusion. Chair read out a proposal and members discussed it, then voted on the following, with the majority in favour:

Recommendation:

Joint Scrutiny Committee reviewed the options available for the future household waste and street cleansing service provision from June 2026. Committee voted in favour of making the following recommendation to Cabinet:

Report recommendation (b) as follows "Subject to this review, agrees to progress Option 1 and delegate to the Head of Housing and Environment, in consultation with the responsible cabinet members, to undertake a joint procurement exercise between South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council to let a new joint contract for Household Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Services from 29 June 2026."

Committee added that Cabinet should be mindful of the positives in other options, and if resulting procurement outcomes are not suitable, they suggested having contingency in other options and engagement in further exploration of other options in terms of costs and risks. Committee asked for a procurement update to come back to the committee in October 2025, with Co-chair's agreement.

Sc.33 Exclusion of the public

The committee voted in favour of excluding the public to discuss confidential appendices at 19:09.

Sc.34 Confidential appendices from the report on the Future Delivery of Household Waste and Street Cleansing Services

Committee considered confidential appendices before returning to the public session (Sc.32).

The meeting closed at 20:30

Signed by Chair:

Date: