

Joint Scrutiny Committee Report

Report of Head of Housing and Environment

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To: JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 16 November 2020

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Performance review of Saba (Car Park Operators) 2019 - 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That scrutiny committee considers Saba's performance in delivering the Car Park Operations contract for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and makes any comments before a final assessment on performance is made.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To ask scrutiny committee for its views on the performance of Saba in providing the car park operations services in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2. The service contributes to Vale's strategic objective of building stable finances and South's strategic objective of openness and accountability.

BACKGROUND

3. Managing contractor performance is essential for delivering the council's objectives and targets. Since some of the council's services are outsourced, the council cannot deliver high quality services to its residents unless its contractors are performing well. Working jointly with contractors to review performance regularly is therefore essential.
4. The council's process for managing contractor performance focuses on continuous improvement and action planning. The council realises that the success of the

framework depends on contractors and the council working together to set and review realistic, jointly agreed and measurable targets.

5. The overall framework is designed to be:

- a way for the council to consistently measure contractor performance, to help highlight and resolve operational issues
- flexible enough to suit each contract, including smaller contracts which may not require all elements of the framework
- a step towards managing risk more effectively and improving performance through action planning.

OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW FRAMEWORK

6. Evaluating contractor performance has four elements:

- i. performance measured against key performance targets (KPI)
- ii. customer satisfaction with the total service experience
- iii. council satisfaction as client
- iv. summary of strengths and areas for improvement, plus feedback from the contractor on the overall assessment and the contractor's suggestions of ways in which the council might improve performance.

7. The first three dimensions are assessed, and the head of service makes a judgement of classification. The fourth element is a summary of strengths and areas for improvement and includes contractor feedback. Where some dimensions are not relevant or are difficult to apply fairly to certain types of contract, the framework may be adjusted or simplified at the discretion of the head of service.

8. The report includes a summary of officer's assessment for 2019/20 for each dimension. This is the first year of the current contract directly with Saba. In future years the results will include a comparison against the previous year and reported as part of future reports.

9. The contract with Saba was novated to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils for the supply of car park operational service at the beginning of April 2019 following the transfer of the contract from VINCI Construction UK Limited (VINCI).

10. The value of the contract as of the end of 2019/20, as a fixed annual charge was £479,196 per annum of which the Vale proportion was £246,972 per annum and the South Oxfordshire proportion was £232,224 per annum. The reason for the difference in values is because of the car park ownership at each authority.

11. The contract is to carry out all parking enforcement in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 (RTRA), issue and process Excess Charge Notices (ECNs)). This includes delivery of the following services:

- maximize income from parking, keeping close accounts of spends, income and reconciliations in line with council policy
- relevant administration of permits and notice processing and administration of Excess Charge Notices (ECNs) under the 1984 (RTRA).
- assisting with internal and external audit reviews and attending committee meetings as required by the council
- dealing with out of hours emergencies in car parks
- maintain excellent customer relations by dealing with emails, first disputes against ECNs, telephone calls in line with relevant legislation.

- forward second and further disputes to the nominated council officer for consideration
- taking and checking all payments by all methods, balance income from the pay and display machines and record the data, deal with queries make any relevant transfers, checking VAT calculations in line with proper accountancy practices and to all car park accounts are accurate and up to date

The main duties and responsibilities of enforcement officers are:

- Enforcement is carried out by officers who are responsible for the day to day running of the car parks, issuing ECNs and ensuring the smooth and safe operation of the car parks.
- ensure good customer satisfaction by ensuring that the ticket machines are maintained in good working order which includes replenishing supply of tickets in machine, carry out regular checks and scheduled inspection surveys to identify any potential health and safety issues and signs are clear and graffiti free
- carry out enforcement role effectively and efficiently by inspecting all vehicles to check that a current parking ticket, season ticket or disabled badge is displayed and issue appropriate ECN in accordance with legislation
- act as an ambassador for the council, offering information and assistance to members of the public on a variety of issues (not only car parking). Provide excellent customer service by dealing with confrontational and emergency situations in a polite and efficient manner

DIMENSION 1 – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

- KPIs are recognised as an important element of monitoring the contractor's performance. The KPI cover those aspects of the service which are most important as a means of benchmarking against which performance can be measured. KPI's are reported monthly to the council using a traffic light system Green – achieved, Amber - Area for concern and Red – Failure and are discuss at the monthly Client/Contractor meeting. If issues persist, they are referred to the quarterly contract meeting attended by the Head of Housing and Environment and the Saba's Regional Commercial Manager.
- KPI are split into a number of sub-areas which added together make up the KPI score, a table showing the results of all sub-areas with a detailed breakdown of the scores is included within Appendix A.
- The following table shows the annual results for the KPI for 2019/20.

	Area	KPI SCORE	Monitoring score
KPI 1	Administration	89%	4
KPI 2	Notice Processing	99%	5
KPI 3	Reporting	100%	5
KPI 4	Financial management	100%	5
KPI 5	Disputes Management	100%	5
KPI 6	Authorised Use	100%	5
KPI 7	Customer satisfaction	0%	1
KPI 8	Asset Condition	99%	5
	Total	86%	4

Table 1

15. The KPI which is highlighted as an area for concern is KPI 1. The KPI is split into three sub areas, the sub area covering the 'time to respond to call outs' (of users locked in at Charter car park, Abingdon) was considered a failure. This failure was due to the fact that Saba's sub-contractor was not always able to get to the Charter Car Park (Abingdon) within the 30-minute target time. These call out are to release cars parked on floor 3 and above after the Charter car park has been locked up for the evening. All the requests were responded to within 1 hour, however this dropped the overall rating for this KPI 1 into the area of concern. Saba are working with their contractor to improve the response time.
16. The KPI which is highlighted as a failure is KPI 7 Customer satisfaction. Most of the customer contact with the Saba team is when they receive an excess charge notice. Asking these customers to complete a satisfaction survey may be problematic since they have just had to pay a penalty. The Saba contract was originally included within the facilities contract with Vinci, which covered many more areas of operation. Agreement has been reached for 2020/21 that all email communications sent out by Saba will provide the opportunity for customers to complete an online questionnaire asking how they feel they have been dealt with by the Saba staff. The results of this survey will be used to assess the customer satisfaction score in future reports.
17. As no results can be provided showing the level of customer satisfaction with the service that Saba provide this KPI it was marked as nil

Overall KPI performance

18. Based on Saba's performance an overall "average" KPI performance rating score of 98 percent has been achieved. A detailed analysis of performance against the KPI's and sub KPI's can be found in Appendix A.
19. For reasons of consistency and for fairness between contractors, the following is a guide to the assessment of Saba against all KPI:

Percentage Score	0 – 69.9%	70% – 79.9%	80% – 84.9%	85% – 94.9%	95% – 100%
Monitoring Score	1	2	3	4	5
Classification	Poor	Weak	Fair	Good	Excellent

20. The head of service has made a judgement on KPI performance as follows:

KPI judgement	Good
Previous KPI judgement for comparison – This is the first year of this contract	N/A

DIMENSION 2 – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

21. There is no data relating to customer satisfaction for 2019/20. As previously stated, a customer satisfaction survey of those who have received an ECN is unlikely to provide reliable.
22. Officers have agreed with Saba that email communications from Saba administration staff on car parks will provide the opportunity for customers to complete an online

satisfaction questionnaire for future contract monitoring and assessment on how Saba have dealt with their issue or query.

23. There were no formal complaints regarding Saba staff logged as part of the council's complaints procedure during the review period.
24. In order to complete this assessment, the head of service has made a judgement based on anecdotal evidence on customer satisfaction as follows:

Customer satisfaction judgement	Good
Previous customer satisfaction judgement for comparison	N/A

DIMENSION 3 – COUNCIL SATISFACTION

25. As part of the performance review officers with direct knowledge and who frequently interact with the contractor were asked to complete a short questionnaire. This included the staff within the waste team, legal, finance, audit, engineers, parks, communications, facilities and the technical services business support team. In total 14 questionnaires were sent out and 10 returned.
26. Based on Saba's performance an overall council satisfaction rating score of 3.96 has been achieved. An analysis of council satisfaction can be found in Annex C.

Score	<3.0	3.0 – 3.399	3.4 – 3.899	3.9 – 4.299	4.3 – 5.0
Classification	Poor	Weak	Fair	Good	Excellent

27. Based on this performance, the head of service has made a judgement on council satisfaction as follows:

Council satisfaction judgement	Good
Previous council satisfaction judgement for comparison	N/A

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

28. Taking into account the performance of the contractor against KPI, perceived customer satisfaction with staff attitude and council satisfaction, the head of service has made an overall judgement as follows.

Overall assessment	Good
Previous overall assessment for comparison	N/A

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

29. Annex C also records strengths and areas for improvement relating to the performance of the contractor in this review period.
30. Areas for improvement identified in the review are:
 - The implementation of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system

- Suggestions for improving the service, based on knowledge of service delivery (e.g. change in enforcement officer deployment based on usage/ECNs?)
 - To work with the council to assist council staff in checking if issues have been correctly identified whilst undertaking their patrols to save time in council staff having to visit facilities only to find out that the issue has been corrected e.g repairs to car park fences
31. Officers have commented that the contractor's staff are approachable and provide a quick response to urgent requests. Particular mention was made about the limited number of stage two disputes received, which shows the Saba staff are dealing with appeals effectively. (2777 ECN's issued of which 336 were challenged or which 20 went to an appeal).
32. The Head of Service also wished to thank Saba for working so effectively with the Council to manage the COVID 19 situation particularly during the lockdown.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

33. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

CONCLUSION

34. Saba have had a good year providing car park management and enforcement services to the councils throughout the first year of the contract. In Dimension 1, they have achieved an "Good" rating on seven of their eight KPI's.
35. As stated in the report the customer service (Dimension 2) has not been measured this year due to the difficulties agreeing the method of measuring customer satisfaction.
36. The Dimension 3, council satisfaction of score 3.96 ("Good") for a first year of a contract and shows that Saba have delivered a good service with only a few areas for improvement.
37. The head of service has assessed Saba's overall performance as Good for its delivery of the car park management and enforcement services for 2019/20. The committee is asked to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for car parks to enable them to make a final assessment on performance by way of an Individual Cabinet Member Decision.
38. If the committee does not agree with the head of service assessment, then this report will be referred to Cabinet for further discussion and a final assessment of Saba's performance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Annex A – Key performance targets

Monitoring evaluation KPI rating score (excellent = 5, good = 4, fair = 3, weak = 2, poor = 1)

	KPI	KPI SCORE	Monitoring Score
KP 1 - Administration		89%	4
1.1	Reply to all public, officer and councillor parking and car parks queries (where relevant to Saba, for off street, public parking), 100% of full responses sent within 10 working days	100%	5
1.2	% of call outs for lock-ins to the Charter Car Park where responded to and released within 30 minutes. .	67%	1
1.3	2 usage surveys (one for each council of all car parks) completed per annum with results published within 30 days of the survey end date (Council to give 30 days notice)	100%	5
KPI 2 - Notice Processing		99%	5
2.1	% achievement of target for notice progressions (for 1984 regs) - Send out 7 day letters after 21 days of being unpaid after the 23 rd day	100%	5
2.2	% of all notice disputes fully replied to within 10 working days	99%	5
2.3	% achievement of target for cpi error "excess charge notices" (not to exceed 93 % of total issued averaged over the year)	99%	5
KPI 3 - Reporting		100%	5
3.1	Patrol the car parks - in accordance with the deployment plan - TBC South and Vale visits	99%	5
3.2	% of monthly reports (stats in tabular and graphical format on notices issued, P+D income and permits issued (number and income)) issued by the tenth of each month	100%	5
3.3	Provide monthly financial records on income vs budget for pay and display fees, ECN/PCN and permits and all other miscellaneous uses separately for each council in table and graphical format.	100%	5
3.4	Requests from the council's (Internal) auditors, acknowledge requests within 24 working hours and provide all relevant information requested with five working days	100%	5
3.5	Production of Annual Report (summarising all aspects of the car park operation and service) – Annually (by 30 April each year)	100%	5
KPI 4 - Financial management		100%	5
4.1	100% of all records of cash collected for the previous month to be reported and reconciled by the 10th of each month. (Agresso vs Saba collection)	100%	5
4.2	100% of all records of non cash collected for the previous month to be reported and reconciled by the 10th of each month. (Agresso vs Saba collection)	100%	5
4.3	% of payment vouchers and refunds raised within five working days of requests	100%	5
4.4	All payments received at the 135 to be banked within 24 working hour of recents (on site)	100%	5
4.5	All funding collected from the ticket machines to be transferred to the Council's bank account within 6 working days	100%	5
KPI 5 - Disputes Management		100%	5
5.1	Forward all draft second and third disputes responses to the council where relevant - within 5 working days of receipt	100%	5
5.2	% achievement of target for number of second disputes - 97% of total issued averaged over the year (up to 3% can be cancelled at 2nd dispute) ie incorrect interpretaion of cancellation criteria	100%	5
KPI 6 - Authorised Use		100%	5
6.1	% of permitted use issued or forwarded for agreement, within three working days being agreed and Saba being notified	100%	5
6.2	Issue 100% of (parking) permits (season tickets) within 3 working days once agreed (excluding bulk application requests) and Saba being notified	100%	5
KPI 7 - Customer satisfaction		0%	1
7.1	% of agreed number of customer satisfaction surveys completed annually and publish results within 30 working days.	0%	1
KPI 8 - Asset Condition		99%	5
8.1	Report H+S issues and confrontational situations monthly to the council (incidents and accidents and near misses) via monthly report	100%	5
8.2	Car park inspection survey (all car parks including those free) – Completed an agreed checksheet once a quarter to identify issues within the car parks that need resolving by the Councils.	100%	5
8.3	% achievement Risk assessments - to review and update Saba risk assessments once per year or as required following any reported incidents. 100% compliance required	100%	5
8.4	% of car park machine faults responded to and fixed within three day working day of identification - via monthly report (Three working days Monday to Saturday)	97%	5
Total		86%	4

Annex B – Customer satisfaction

There is no customer satisfaction data. However, for the sake of completeness, the head of service has agreed a level of customer satisfaction as below based on anecdotal evidence:

The following is a guide to the assessment of Saba on overall customer satisfaction for the car parking service:

Score	<3.0	3.0 – 3.399	3.4 – 3.899	3.9 – 4.299	4.3 – 5.0
Classification	Poor	Weak	Fair	Good	Excellent

Annex C - Council satisfaction

This assessment allows the council (as a client) to record its own satisfaction with aspects of a contractor's performance which lie outside Key Performance Targets and customer satisfaction. Each officer with direct knowledge and who frequently interacts with the contractor should complete this form. Some questions can be left blank if the officer does not have direct knowledge of that particular question.

Contractor / supplier / partner name	Saba				
From (date)	1 April 2019		To	31 March 2020	

1 Service delivery

When thinking of Saba service delivery, please rate the following items on the scale provided:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Monitoring Score
Understanding of the client's needs	2	5	2			4.00
Response time	3	5	1			4.22
Accuracy of information	2	6	1			4.11
Approach to health & safety	2	5	1			4.13
Question Monitoring Score						4.11

2 Communications and relations

When thinking of Saba communications and relations delivery, please rate the following items on the scale provided:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Monitoring Score
Easy to deal with	3	5	1			4.22
Communication: keeping the client informed	3	4	1			4.25
Quality of written documentation	1	5	2			3.88
Compliance with council's corporate identity	1	5	1			4.00
Quality of relationship	3	5	1			4.22
Question Monitoring Score						4.11

3 Improvement and innovation

When thinking of Saba's service objectives, please rate the following items on the scale provided:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Monitoring Score
Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work	1	2	5			3.50
Compliant with legislation	2	3	2			4.00
Goes the extra mile	1	5	3			3.78
Supports the council's sustainability objectives		3	4			3.43
Supports the council's equality objectives		4	3			3.57
Degree of partnership working		5	3			3.63
Question Monitoring Score						3.65
Council Satisfaction Rating						3.96

Score	<3.0	3.0 – 3.399	3.4 – 3.899	3.9 – 4.299	4.3 – 5.0
Classification	Poor	Weak	Fair	Good	Excellent

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths

Very good customer relations
Head of Service would particularly wish to thank the Saba staff for working effectively with us to manage lockdown and the matters which have arisen in connection to COVID 19.
Good working relationship between Saba and the Council's officers, helpful and always supportive and quick to respond to issues
Pleasant and helpful both office-based staff and those within the car parks, who are always willing to provide information and identify issues
The team understand council policy and liaise with officers when complex issues arise
Very few 2 nd stage disputes

Areas for improvement

Communication within the car parks team re updates from legal etc.
The implementation of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system so that it works across both council's areas as there are many examples of it working effectively in other similar areas.
Suggestions for improving the service based on knowledge of service delivery (e.g. change in deployment based on usage/ECNs?)
To work with the council to assist council staff in checking if issues have been correctly identified whilst undertaking their patrols to save time in Council staff having to visit facilities only to find out that the issue has been corrected.

Annex D - Contractor 360° feedback

CONTRACTOR'S REACTION / FEEDBACK ON COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT

In a highly difficult and unprecedented year, I believe this is to be a fair and reasonable assessment of the contract performance. The two elements of service level improvement have in the main been disrupted by the influence of COVID 19, however we will strive to correct this going forward. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both S & V council administrations and management teams for their support and collaboration approach throughout this period.

ANY AREAS WHERE CONTRACTOR DISAGREES WITH ASSESSMENT

None

WHAT COULD / SHOULD THE COUNCIL DO DIFFERENTLY TO ENABLE THE CONTRACTOR TO DELIVER THE SERVICE MORE EFFICIENTLY / EFFECTIVELY / ECONOMICALLY?

Feedback provided by

Date