

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 21 September 2020 at 6.30 pm
virtual meeting

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Ian White, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Stefan Gawrysiak, Alexandrine Kantor and George Levy

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Nathan Boyd (Chair), Andy Cooke, Amos Duveen, Hayleigh Gascoigne and David Grant.

Officers: Karen Brown, Andrew Down, Diane Foster, Liz Hayden, Simon Hewings, Suzanne Malcolm, Ian Matten, Adrianna Partridge, Ben Watson and David Wilde

Also present: Councillors Sue Cooper, Andrew Crawford, David Rouane, Emily Smith

Guests: CI Matthew Bullivant, Andrew Dutton and Francis Drew.

Sc.23 Apologies for absence

No apologies received.

Sc.24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record, and the Chair will sign them as such.

Sc.25 Declarations of interest

None.

Sc.26 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The Chair reminded the committee to use the chat bar to notify their wish to speak. Try not to use the chat bar for conversation, as you should ask to speak and your comments might be missed.

Sc.27 Public participation

None.

Sc.28 Biffa annual performance report

The Biffa annual performance report was introduced by Leader of the Council, Councillor Emily Smith.

Also present was Liz Hayden, Head of Service Housing and Environment, Ian Matten, Environmental services manager, and Biffa representatives Francis Drew and Andrew Dutton.

It was recommended that scrutiny committee considers Biffa Municipal Ltd (Biffa) performance in delivering the household waste collection, street cleansing and ancillary services contract for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 and makes any comments before a final assessment on performance is made.

The service contributes to Vale's Corporate Plan (2016 – 2020) of running an efficient council and continue to improve our environment and South's Corporate Plan (2016 – 2020) of delivering services that reflect residents needs and build thriving communities by making communities clean and safe.

Key performance targets (KPT) for 2019 have exceeded those of 2018, with a rating of 'good' across the board, from the previous 'fair' rating.

Chair reminded the committee that the report is pre-Covid-19 so no questions are needed on this.

Questions on the report were raised, as follows:

- It was confirmed that there are still 6 Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) bring banks
- The committee asked about whether there needs to be a longer window for reporting missed collections. This may be a contractual issue that would need to be discussed with Biffa.
- Discussed whether food bins are missed because they are very small and aren't seen.
- It was confirmed that the improvements in rectifying missed collections were caused by getting back to the route ASAP and a shift in staff focus.
- Can we change the measurement to total amount of waste, not a percentage? This may be contractual and would need to be discussed, and the contract end is 2024.
- Ideas – zero waste shops, reduce recycling amounts.
- Committee discussed plastic contaminants – painted plastic, e.g., crisp bags. It was confirmed that the recycling plant in Edmonton cannot recycle 8%. Milk containers are already recycled material. Biffa to query painted plastics.
- Councillors asked about higher household numbers and lower recruitment levels. Biffa representative confirmed that they are trying to recruit directly which is positive, there are issues regarding the UK leaving the EU, the government points system and now the Covid-19 pandemic.
- KPT5 – incomplete rounds – can rounds be reviewed? which houses are affected by incomplete rounds? Biffa representative did confirm that the South and Vale rounds are two distinct rounds because the waste tonnages are reported per district, which is why the rounds are carried out as they are. Officers noted as part of the pending round review we may be able to make an exception for areas where district boundaries cross, like on Great Western Park, Didcot.
- Customer satisfaction survey – This information is collected corporately every two years. Corporate strategy are reviewing the process going forward for public consultation / satisfaction survey.
- It was confirmed that a formal stage 1 is an escalated complaint through the Council complaints system.
- Councillor request to refer to properties as "homes" instead?

Biffa and officers were thanked for their positive results and work.

Sc.29 Community Safety Partnership annual report

The Community Safety Partnership annual report was introduced by Cabinet member Councillor David Rouane.

Also present were officers Liz Hayden, Head of Service for Housing and Environment, Diane Foster, Community Safety and Licensing Service Manager, Karen Brown, Team Leader for Community Safety, and Chief Inspector Matthew Bullivant was present to answer any police-related questions.

The committee were asked to;

(a) To note the progress that the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) made in 2019/20 in delivering its priorities and statutory functions

(b) To support the CSP's view that the 2020/21 plan will continue to deliver core priorities and statutory functions and focus on these three key priorities:

- tackling domestic violence and abuse, including early intervention to reduce harm and improving services for victims;
- working with vulnerable people and children to reduce the likelihood of being exploited;
- reducing knife crime and harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol.

A typo was noted on paragraph 10 – paragraph 33 in the table should read 38.

Councillors noted that the work of the CSP is an unsung area of council work and this report notes the progress in 2019-20.

It was confirmed that there are 3 separate ways for the public to report crime:

1. Crimestoppers, which is anonymous
 2. The Police
 3. Community Safety Partnership – anonymous – officers noted this is not a 24/7 service and therefore if a member of public feels they are facing danger they should call the police.
- The committee were informed that the three priorities were signed off before lockdown and data analysis supports that they are still appropriate.
 - Regarding the potential increase of sanctuary scheme referrals, we have to wait to see any pattern of referrals as a result of lockdown.
 - Councillors asked about having modern slavery awareness training for Councillors.
 - Safe places - raising awareness – is newsletters best? Potentially through social media. There will be a map of 'safe places'
 - It was confirmed that Guard Cams are in place longer now due to lockdown.
 - SCR paragraph 24 – target hardening is security for a home, situational harm reduction – lighting, fire-proof letter box etc.
 - Safe spaces data on usage is held by the organisations running the space. Want to spread spaces out into rural areas to reach more communities. Training is given to organisations on how to support. Officers confirmed they are always looking for new spaces.
 - We are first responders in modern slavery cases. Three were identified last year.
 - Discussion was had regarding public space protection orders (PSPO's) – Thame has been successful in using these to deter drinking alcohol in public spaces that can lead to anti-social behaviour.
 - Councillors asked if awareness raising was an effective measure to reduce domestic abuse. Officers explained behaviour change is hard to measure, however raising awareness improves reporting and understanding of issues. The desired outcome is a drop in crime rates due to priorities being in place.
 - How do we reach more people – example, plays being held, small workshops at Abingdon college – how do we reach a wider audience? More is happening and there is work going on with other organisations- e.g. Didcot Girls School.

- There is an action plan for each of the 3 priorities progress will be reviewed at the quarterly CSP meetings.

Cabinet member, officers and Chief Inspector Bullivant were thanked for their work, and the committee supported the two recommendations.

Sc.30 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The Chair reminded the committee that with the heavy programme, please read papers as soon as possible.

Sc.31 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that: (i) they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Sc.32 Confidential - 5CP negotiations

The committee were updated on Capita negotiations.