

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 9.30 AM**

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	N Clarke	P Davies
DG Howells	A Hussain	DRW Lewis	RMI Shaw
RME Stirman	G Thomas	E Venables	MC Voisey
JE Williams			

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Kelly Watson	Group Manager Legal & Democratic Services

Invitees:

Joanne Norman	Finance Manager - Education, Transformation and Communities
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Cllr Hywel Williams	Deputy Leader
Cllr Richard Young	Cabinet Member Communities

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 of 13 September 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer reported on items which had been prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included the next item delegated to this Committee to consider. She also presented a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation requested the Committee identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form.

Conclusions

1. That the Committee approved the feedback from the previous meeting of this Committee and noted the list of responses including any still outstanding and accepted the feedback from Officers on their recommendations for Developing Bridgend as a place to work, live and visit. Members asked for further clarification on the following points:
 - The proposal by Cabinet to procure an external company to take on the role of prosecuting offenders who drop their litter and fly tip their rubbish.
 - Members sought clarification as to when this was going to happen and if any further information could be provided to them and if it was financially viable to keep the service in house;
 - Members requested that the light review of the Destination Management Plan is fed back to Members;
2. That the Committee identified additional information it wished to receive on their next delegated to them in the Forward Work Programme (FWP) and determined that it wished to invite representatives of BAVO and Pencoed Town Council to attend to assist in their investigation of Community Asset Transfer and representatives of Pencoed Town Council be invited to attend to assist in the investigation of Town Centre Regeneration;
3. The Committee considered the completed criteria form and determined that it wished to add to the Forward Work Programme the budgetary impact of Parc Prison on the Council;
4. That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to prioritise items on Dementia Care; School Modernisation Band B; Emergency Housing and Prevention, Wellbeing and Local Community Coordination from the FWP;

That the item on Dementia Care be put forward as a suitable item for webcasting from the overall Forward Work Programme.

14. **THE COUNCIL'S NEW WASTE CONTRACT**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report which summarised the current position with regard to the new Waste Contract. She requested the Committee consider asking questions of the invitees based on the themes within the report.

The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that the report attempts to answer the questions of Members in relation to the Waste Contract, which had undergone a significant change programme. He stated that for a short time in June 2017 following the mobilisation of the new contract, both the client (the Council) and the contractor, Kier had faced performance issues in the

delivery of services. There had since been an improvement in service delivery and this improvement would need to be continued going forward.

The Committee received a presentation by Zak Shell, Head of Neighbourhood Services and Maz Akhtar, Regional Manager of Kier on the waste collection service.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that the waste contract was now in its third mobilisation, with the driver for change being ever increasing Welsh Government recycling targets. Work had been undertaken with WRAP Cymru (Waste and Resources Action Programme) to limit residual waste householders can present; require pre-sort of household recyclables at HWRC's (stop displacement) and maximise trade recycling. He informed the Committee of the steps taken by other local authorities in Wales to restrict the amount of residual waste. He outlined the key steps taken which led to the start of the new contract on 1 April 2017, with full contract mobilisation taking place on 5 June 2017.

He highlighted the challenges since contract mobilisation which had seen an increase in requests for food caddies, which had not been predicted and had put an additional burden on Kier. Location specific and repeat issues had been experienced in Wildmill. He also highlighted the successes which had seen compliance with the 2 bag rule, revised garden waste collections, the acceptance of change of Community Recycling Centres and a current missed collection rate of 0.2%. Recycling performance in Quarters 1 and 2 in 2017 were 63.81% and 73.45%. He stated that the next challenges were continuing improvement in service levels; Christmas / New Year collections; new vehicles and round adjustment, a hard line 2 bag rule, with sticker and leave and a rolling delivery of sacks and bio bags.

The Regional Manager, Kier informed the Committee of the staff improvement plans, in that Claire Pring is currently the dedicated Interim Business Manager. He stated that the recruitment of a Business Manager had concluded and an appointment made. The recruitment for the position of Supervisor had completed and the recruitment of front line staff was ongoing. Staff training was taking place in PDA usage and recycling container placement, with full induction for all recycling staff taking place in January. He outlined further service improvement plans with new high capacity recycling vehicles to arrive from November which had resulted in a £2m investment made by Kier and unique to Bridgend. The new vehicles will be equipped with CCTV to enable remote service monitoring. In Cab PDA devices have been deployed for all services with an investment of £105,000 by Kier.

He also informed the Committee of the proposal to increase garden waste to from the current 4 days per week to 5 days per week and align collection days to that of residual waste collection days. This was attributed to higher than expected take up of garden waste service.

He stated that Kier are working on a solution to realign communal collections in Wildmill to that of non-communal collection days to address the issue of missed collections. Additional recycling capacity was being explored.

He also informed the Committee of further service improvement plans to address AHP collections, whereby there would be dedicated staff, final vehicle selection to be made once the baseline of customers had been established and additional sack delivery to be made. He also informed the Committee of changes to be made to the delivery of sacks with effect from January 2018 in order to reduce the number of complaints and non-deliveries. He stated that PDA devices would be deployed to confirm when streets are complete. He also informed the Committee of service improvement plans for CRC sites, due to issues of queuing being experienced and that a web cam had been deployed to assist residents in determining when best to visit the CRC. He stated that a polystyrene bailer had been introduced in order to take this stream out of residual in order that it could be taken to the market. He informed the Committee that these measures had been implemented over and above the tender. He stated that the challenges facing Kier was the round re-balancing exercise to take effect in February 2018.

He also informed the Committee that Kier established links to the Council's website where arrangements for the collection of bulky waste collections and online payments can be made. He stated that Kier had invested in the Tondu Deport by developing a new workshop facility and plans were afoot to replace the bailer.

Julian Tranter, Managing Director of Kier thanked the Committee for its invitation to participate at the meeting. He stated that his company is genuinely pleased to have been awarded the contract for waste and the method chosen by the authority had been industry leading. He informed the Committee that initial mobilisation of the contract had been met with challenges, however he had been in continuous dialogue during this period with the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Communities. He stated that Kier would review the lessons to be learnt from contract mobilisation and he congratulated the authority on its strong initiative and performance.

The Committee expressed concern at the quality of sacks for AHP as they service needs to be discreet due to the translucence of sacks. Concern was also expressed that some citizens may have difficulty in distinguishing between the sacks for AHP collections which are purple in colour with that of sacks for residual waste which are blue. The Deputy Leader commented that the Council had taken the opportunity to introduce AHP collections as part of the new contract. He stated that the Council takes dignity issues very seriously and that it would work with citizens to improve the service. The Corporate Director Communities commented on the challenges of introducing a new service, in that the number of requests for service had increased with rounds changing constantly. He stated that very little problems had been encountered by citizens with young children using the AHP service. Older residents who experienced difficulty with AHP collections and in order to preserve their dignity were being assessed in terms of being able to have assisted collections from within the curtilage of their property. The Regional Manager was unable to give detail on the number of properties which receive AHP collections, but the response time for receiving the service was 2 weeks. He stated that the number of citizens awaiting assessment is low. The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that as of Monday this week, there were 11 assessments to be made

for assisted collections. There were no citizens awaiting assessment for AHP collections.

The Committee expressed concern that Kier were not aware of the number of citizens awaiting assessment. Members were also aware that citizens had to make repeated requests for the delivery of AHP bags which was in excess of 10 days. Members expressed further concern at the performance levels of Kier and commented that when awarded the contract should have been prepared for contract mobilisation. The Regional Manager informed the Committee that difficulties had been encountered in the delivery of AHP bags; however households had received an annual supply of bags, although he was aware that some new customers had to wait for the delivery of bags to take place. He stated that the timeframe for the delivery of AHP bags is 10 days, the collection crew will deliver the bags and then the service will start.

The Committee expressed concern at the lack of co-ordination between the delivery of AHP bags and their subsequent collection and questioned how communication is made with operatives to collect. The Regional Manager stated that a call would be received by the contact centre which would generate a ticket, which would be transmitted to the crew's PDA device. A Member of the Committee commented that the collection service for AHP bags had improved since mobilisation, however the issue remained of households having to wait in excess of 10 days for the delivery of bags. The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that overall, there had been 351 requests for sacks, with 100 of those requests being outside the 10 day target. He stated that the material is recycled and turned into a fibre product. The Regional Manager informed the Committee that there was issue with AHP bags in June / July but performance had improved since September. He stated that he was aware of issues in the delivery of bags for residual waste which had gone outside of the 10 day timescale.

The Committee expressed concern that a panel van was being used for the collection of AHP bags as it did not allow for the compaction of products and whether Kier would consider using a different type of vehicle. The Regional Manager informed the Committee Kier are looking at a new solution, however the current panel van was effective as it had to undergo an 80 miles and a 3 hour round trip for disposal. Kier would assess the type of vehicle to be used having looked at the tonnage collected. A member of the Committee commented that deploying a panel van was more discreet and would be more nimble to get around the delivery rounds. The Head of Neighbourhood Services commented that the type of vehicle deployed was not important as long as it was safety compliant and reliable.

The Committee expressed concern at the quality of bags used which could be ripped apart by wildlife and whether there were plans to improve on their quality. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that residents can double bag products to be placed for AHP collection. He also stated that there were no plans to change the type of bags used and that the only issue experienced was where residents place food waste in residual waste bags which would attract the attention of wildlife and not in food containers.

The Committee commented on the importance focusing on future performance but had to recognise the issues of missed collections in Wildmill where some areas were covered by communal collections which had resulted in bins having insufficient capacity. A change in collection days would have led to reduced recycling levels. The Committee questioned what steps could be taken to improve capacity and to reduce residual waste as the County Borough had the highest missed collections. The Managing Director of Kier stated that Kier would need to review collections in communal areas.

A member of the Committee stated that the Ward members of Wildmill are working with Kier on a solution to improve communal area collections which could be rolled out across the County Borough. The Head of Neighbourhood Services conformed that the capacity of communal bins was being looked and could be replicated across the County Borough. The Committee commented on the need for the development control process to consider residual waste and recycling bins in communal areas and public to be educated on the importance of recycling. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that officers are engaging with the public on the importance of recycling which had seen positive results. The Cabinet Member Communities urged Members who have constituents experiencing problems with missed collections to follow the correct protocols to avoid complaints being sent to different email accounts and he stated that the process for the reporting of complaints would be simplified in due course.

The Committee expressed their concern that Kier had not responded to complaints and queries from constituents most notably the turnaround time of 10 working days to respond to and conclude an issue/ complaint. The Committee also expressed their concern at the impact of the significant amount of complaints had on officer time to the detriment of other work as well as its cost at a time of diminishing resources. The Committee commented that it would like to see a process whereby referrals are sent directly to Kier. The Head of Neighbourhood Services commented on the need to restore the public's confidence in the waste service and that a new protocol for the reporting of complaints would be rolled. He informed the Committee that the number of calls received were consistent with the usual volume of calls to the contact centre. The Corporate Director Communities commented that complaint calls had previously been dealt with by the Council, however they would be dealt by Kier under the new contract. He stated that the Council had not employed an additional resource, but it had stretched existing resources. He also stated that performance of the call centre is in line with the expectations in the contract. The Committee expressed concern that issues were not being dealt or answered by Kier's contact centre, although there were signs of improvement but not to the standards expected. The Regional Manager requested a list of complaints and performance issues so that Kier could respond to them. The Corporate Director Communities commented on the need for specific details of complaints in relation to missed collections to be provided to enable those issues to be resolved.

The Committee referred to the need for complaints to be dealt with by the Kier call centre in Torbay and questioned whether calls could be handled at Tondu as calls from Welsh speakers were already dealt with at Tondu.

The Committee thanked the public for its efforts for ensuring an improvement in recycling targets. The Corporate Director Communities also thanked the public and Members for their part in making improvements to recycling, which compared favourably with the rest of Wales. He stated there were areas where improvement was needed to be made and that an action plan would be developed with Kier. The Committee expressed concern that performance issues by Kier were reflecting badly on the Council and not on Kier.

The Committee referred to the number of missed collections and questioned how this performance compared with the previous contract and with other local authorities. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that current performance was comparable with that of the previous contract and also compares favourably with performance in other local authorities. However performance by Kier in June did not compare favourably with performance under the previous contract.

The Committee considered that Kier should explore the opportunity of relocating the contact centre or routing calls from residents to depot in Tondy to enable better communication. The Committee questioned what would happen when the 2 bag and sticker protocol is introduced. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee that ideally it would be helpful to have a local contact centre thereby having local knowledge which would better assist residents with resolving queries and complaints. He stated that adherence to the 2 bag and sticker protocol had been delayed to allow for the new contract to bed in. However it would be enforced after Christmas and a sticker would be left on bags where households had not adhered to the 2 bag rule. It would then be left to households to dispose of those bags. He stated that residents would face enforcement action should they wilfully not adhere to the 2 bag rule. The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that since the introduction of the 2 bag rule, there had been a good level of compliance and recycling results. The Committee questioned what would happen to collections post-Christmas. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that cans and bottles can be recycled; food waste would go into the food caddies, while residents could take wrapping paper to the CRCs for disposal. He also stated that residual waste bags would be stickered where it was found there had been a lack of compliance. Those households would receive a visit by an education officer.

The Committee commented that the waste service is the most visible of the Council's services and that it should be up to households to determine how many residual bags to use within their allocation. The Committee also questioned whether crews would be aware of some households not putting bags out for collection. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that the Council wants to maintain recycling targets and that if it did not have a 2 bag rule it would make enforcement difficult. He stated that the 2 bag rule works well for most households. The Interim Business Manager informed the Committee that the crews are equipped with in-cab devices to report issues of non-compliance on PDAs. She stated that the crews had settled down well and there was also support for the crews on the ground.

The Committee questioned what would happen whereby to bags which are stickered when bags from several households and are stacked outside one household, who would be responsible for its disposal. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that a framework was needed for the contract to work t and that it would difficult to enforce where bags from several households are placed outside one property. A decision would need to be made on a case by case basis where this happens.

The Committee questioned the training undertaken by operatives as some boxes are often not emptied fully and boxes thrown in gardens and are not stacked correctly following emptying. The Committee expressed concern that spillages are not picked by crews. The Interim Business Manager informed the Committee that crews are trained and are also monitored to ensure compliance and improvement in performance. She also stated that Kier have systems in place where crews do not adhere to the required performance standards. The Interim Business Manager stated that she would need to investigate specific issues of spillages and boxes not being placed in the proper manner following emptying. The Regional Manager stated any spillage caused by the crews would be picked up. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that it was not Kier's responsibility to clear up litter left on streets and that there was an initial spike in complaints about the performance of crews but these have now reduced significantly.

The Committee also requested that crews avoid collecting along school routes during school opening to avoid traffic congestion. The Regional Manager informed the Committee that all crews should be aware to avoid collections along school routes during the school opening times.

The Committee also questioned what had happened to the previous operatives. The Interim Business Manager informed the Committee that the existing operatives are still employed by Kier, but with changes being introduced to services, crews had been re-allocated.

The Committee requested that the garden waste service be extended to a year round service which will help increase recycling rates and reduce drains becoming blocked with leaves. The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that extending the garden service is under consideration. The Regional Manager informed the Committee that Kier would be looking at reviewing the garden waste service which would also be incentivised.

The Committee requested that consideration be given to revising current routes with the new vehicles being introduced in order to avoid missed collections. The Regional Manager informed the Committee that current routes were being reviewed and changes to the routes would be made in February and would be implemented on a phased approach. Letters would be sent to all households to advise of the changes 2 weeks prior to implementation. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that the new vehicles will have higher capacity. Cabinet would also be informed of the review of routes.

The Committee requested details of the number of properties where access is restricted and which have to be accessed by specialised. The Committee also

questioned who would make the decision requiring those households to place their waste in a single area. The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that there is a vehicle dedicated for use in narrow areas. He stated that a decision on households leaving their waste in a single area would be a joint one and would be made on a cases case by basis. He confirmed that there are places in the Borough where it is challenging to reach some properties. A member of the Committee was aware that the Council had agreed with residents that bags could be placed in a single area for collection where access is restricted, but as this was now under review how this would affect residents, many of whom are elderly. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that he would look at collections from properties where access is restricted. The Regional Manager stated that there was a need to come to an agreement on collection from restricted access areas as it currently unsafe for operatives and vehicles.

The Committee thanked the invitees for their contribution.

The Committee requested sight of an un-redacted copy the waste contract to enable the Committee to effectively scrutinise performance of the contract and to ensure Kier are fulfilling the terms of the contract. The Legal Officer informed the Committee that it was not the usual practice to release contract documentation. She advised that if a request is made, it would need to be reviewed in conjunction with the Corporate Director Communities and Kier due to there being issues of commercial confidentiality, which could not be disclosed.

The Committee made the following conclusions:

Members remained concerned that the Waste Services contract was now 5 months in and whilst they accepted that services had improved since the beginning of the contract, they were still not at a level that was acceptable for the residents of the Borough. Members stated that whilst the figures showed otherwise, they were still being contacted by residents who had not received recycling materials and who were still having repeat missed collections.

Members also remained concerned that the communication from Kier had not improved and residents had to call several times to get a query/ complaint resolved.

Further Information requested

- How many households were outstanding for the delivery of AHP bags and how long had they been waiting Members were not confident that they were receiving them within the 10 day deadline and were having to call several times to request them.
- How will the collection work in the future when the new delivery trucks are rolled out?
- The Committee requested to see an un-redacted copy of the Waste Services contract between Kier and BCBC in order for them to effectively scrutinise going forward and ensure that Kier are fulfilling the agreement as set out in the terms of the contract.
- Members asked how the rollout of the new vehicles would affect staffing numbers. Would the number of staff that Kier employ reduce as a result?

- Members asked when new homes and housing estates are built, how this information is communicated to Kier and routes adjusted as many residents moving into newly built properties were left waiting for several months to receive recycling materials and were left with no collections in their streets.

Recommendations

- Members recommended that Kier accept responsibility for the mistakes made upon commencement of the contract and issue an apology to the residents of Bridgend County Borough for the disruption caused.
- Members recommended a full review of the AHP collection service to include a streamlined way that members of the public can apply for the service, request bags, report a problem/ missed collections and are provided with an update as to how and when it will be resolved.
- Members recommended a separate review of the Kier customer service centre and the way in which they respond to Member and constituent queries, most notably the turnaround time of 10 working days to respond to and conclude an issue/ complaint which members stated was not acceptable for residents to wait a whole collection cycle for a resolution. Members recommended that a new protocol be introduced whereby they are able to contact Kier directly to raise an issue and it then be copied to Member referrals, or other appropriate BCBC officer to monitor and follow up if it is not responded to within the agreed timelines.
- Members recommended that Kier explore the opportunity of relocating the call centre or diverting calls for residents of Bridgend to the depot in Tondur to allow for better communication.
- Members recommended better communication from Kier to residents regarding queries/ complaints that are logged, delivery of recycling materials, changes to collection days/points for communal areas and assessments for assisted collections. Members stated that if Kier respond to initial points of contact and provide updates as to how and when reported issues will be resolved this would mitigate residents from using multiple channels of communication and ensure ownership of the complaint.
- Members recommended a full review of the collections in communal areas as they were currently not fit for purpose. There were an insufficient amount of recycling and residual waste bins available for the number of residents that use them, therefore residents were having to use recycling bins as overflow bins resulting in them not being collected due to contamination and further heightening the problem
- Members recommended that Kier carry out mystery shopper type exercises to ensure waste and recycling is being collected and materials returned sufficiently. This would assist in identifying if additional training is required or if any improvements to the service could be implemented to allow for more efficient collections.
- Members recommended exploring the opportunity to extend the grass waste collection service to the whole year as residents still produce garden waste throughout the winter months and this would therefore this would contribute to a further increase in the recycling rates throughout the Borough.

- Members recommended a review of the current routes, particularly around schools and ensure that any planned changes to the route in February are carefully planned and considered to minimize disruption to residents and also ensure that any changes are communicated with Members and residents in advance of the changes.
- Members of the Committee recommended that this item remain on the Forward Work Programme and is revisited in 6 months' time. BCBC and Kier should then be in a position to give members an update on the following within the report:

- The impact of the recently recruited senior managers and front line staff
- Updates to the CRC centre including the instalment of the polystyrene baler and webcam so residents are able to monitor the traffic flow at the site.
- Change of days for the communal collections
- Impact of the new collection vehicles
- The review of BCBC in house Street Scene enforcement activity – solution in place April 2018
- Longer term trend of fly tipping

Full induction of recycling staff that is expected to take place in January 2018

15. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 1.31 pm