

Date of Meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following comments:	Response/Comments
22-Nov-2017	Waste Services	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.	As stated the evidence and the performance indicators and statistics over the recent months have consistently indicated that the service is now performing at a good level, in the main. Certainly the level of customer contact is now as low as it was prior to the new contract commencing in April and also in comparison, missed collection levels are better than other neighbouring local authorities where that information is available. Similarly the backlog of outstanding deliveries has been successfully addressed and the performance of the call centre is much improved and in line with contractual requirements. Importantly the overall recycling rate in the County Borough in quarter 2 was just below 74%, one of the highest in Wales and therefore the UK, with compliance with the 'two bag rule' very high among residents. There are clearly pockets of service performance that still need to be improved and many of these were covered in some detail at the meeting. The Council and the contractor will continue to work diligently to address any performance issues in these areas and also with regard to further changes to collection routes that are bound to cause some disruption early in the new year. Beyond this it is important that it is recognised that a service with over 6 million separate collections from residential properties annually will always create a small level of query and complaint, and that therefore the expectations of residents of the County Borough are managed. Historically in the previous waste contract, generally regarded as running very well, there was an average of about 195 waste related queries/complaints per day to the Council's call centre. It is important therefore that in those isolated cases where residents raise queries that the appropriate channels are used to manage and resolve any issues otherwise if issues continue to be escalated it will give the impression of a service performing at a worse level than it actually is. This is important because even as the service has greatly improved it is obvious that the Council is not always being successful in some of its public relations on the waste contract, leading to a perception that the service is still performing poorly when this is no longer usually the case. It will also be important that the Council continue to provide relevant information to local residents and elected Members to demonstrate that the service is running well and address any outstanding concerns.

		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.	This matter has been raised with Kier and there is clearly some room for improvement. However, as highlighted above it is also important that the appropriate channels of communication are used and that, if possible, multiple copying of queries/complaints to a lot of Kier employees and various Council officers and elected Members is avoided as this creates inefficiencies and often some confusion about who is dealing with the query/complaint. A revised elected Member protocol has been issued to this effect and, as explained at the meeting, the improved web site will ensure that responses to most queries are more readily accessible. These measures will ensure that overall communication is improved.
		Members wished to make the following recommendations	Response / Comments from Officers
		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 will recall that both the Council and Kier did issue an apology in June 2017 to the residents of the County Borough for the poor performance at that time. As highlighted the service has greatly improved since that time.
		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.	The AHP service was a new service introduced as part of the new contract. It has proved particularly popular with local residents with initial uptake greater than envisaged. Undoubtedly the introduction of the service caused some initial issues with registration issues and missed collections, a situation compounded as the rounds changed weekly as more people enrolled. It is anticipated that this situation will stabilise early in the new year allowing the current rounds and use of vehicles to be reviewed and an assessment of the current service to be made. This in turn will ensure greater consistency of service and eliminate many of the problems that have been highlighted.

		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.	For a period of time following service change and the disruption in June, a direct email address for members to contact Kier was made available. However this resulted in a number of issues as members also copied officers and member referrals. The duplication of emails relating to single items resulted in confusion over who was dealing with an issue and sometimes this lead to either inaction or multiple resources being deployed. Along with much wasted officer time in duplicated administration. Following Scrutiny on the 22nd November a new member protocol to simplify the process and to request that all member complaints are directed solely to member referrals was issued on the 24th November. (Copy attached for ease of reference). With regards to the 10 days concern, whilst complex issues may need the 10 day referral timeline, simple missed collections, missed deliveries or other straightforward complaints are typically passed from member referrals to the waste team and issued to Kier for action on the same day.
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		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.	The vast majority of requests are dealt with within 10 days. Queries are answered during the call if possible e.g. when is my collection day. Complaints are all logged into the Kier Echo system and a record is held on the system. If a repeat request is made after Kier have closed the job as completed e.g. additional container requests, these are now treated as a failure and the previous complaint is re-opened to highlight the issue for urgent resolution. In extreme cases of repeated requests and complaints of non delivery, photos are taken of the containers on the residents property as evidence of delivery should this be required. Changes to collections days are usually advised via the post and a revised collection calendar providing at least 7 days notice. Assisted assessments are targeted to be carried out within 10 days and should a resident not be at home when the assessment is carried out the resident is left a card informing them of the visit. The Kier team will then try again on a different date and in the majority of cases still within the 10 days.

		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	The position concerning communal collection is reviewed on an ongoing basis already leading to some improvements in some areas as highlighted during the meeting. This includes providing additional collection points in parts of Wildmill.
		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.	Two Council cleaner streets officers do as a part of their role monitor the Kier contract and the performance on the ground, visiting area's following collection looking at quality of collection and container return as is being suggested, along with crew inspections at the roadside. The web cameras on each collection vehicle also provide the means for Kier to monitor crew behaviour and performance. Training for all operatives is comprehensive and repeated and reinforced as necessary. For example, the recent training on 'stacking' of recycling bags/boxes after 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 contribute to a further increase in the recycling rates throughout the Borough.	This matter can be looked at but it will not be achievable without increasing the overall cost of the service as the expense of deploying the garden waste collection vehicle and crew for the winter months would be considerable. This cost would be incurred at a time when less residents would require it during the winter months and less material would be generated. A balance would therefore need to be assessed between the additional cost that would be incurred at a time of ongoing austerity and budget pressure, and the impact it would have on overall recycling rates.
		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.	Agreed, any new routes proposed by the contractor will be carefully considered by the Council before approval. Minimising disruption will of course be at the forefront of our thinking, albeit it is important to recognise that some further disruption is inevitable. It is a contractual requirement that Kier seek approval from BCBC to implement significant changes to the collection round structure and it has already been stressed to Kier that they are required to demonstrate that a high level of planning has been undertaken before changes to rounds are approved. All new routes will be fully communicated to both elected Members and local residents.

		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: 1. The impact of the recently recruited senior managers and front line staff 2. 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 3. Changes of days for the communal collections 4. Impact of the new collection vehicles 5. The review of BCBC in house Street Scene enforcement activity - solution in place by April 2018 6. Longer term trend of flytipping 7. Full induction of recycling staff that is due to take place in January 2018	Noted
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**Members of the Committee asked to receive the following further information:
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.