

# **Report to Stronger Place Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 8 November 2022**



**Portfolio:** Contracts & Commissioning Portfolio (Councillor N Avey)

**Subject:** Waste Management Contract Update

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:** To note and comment on the Waste Management Contract Update.

## **Report:**

1. The Council is currently in contract with Biffa Municipal Ltd. for the delivery of waste, street cleansing and processing of dry recycling services. The Contract is due to expire in November 2024 after an initial period of ten (10) years and has the option to extend by (up to) a further ten (10) years, by mutual agreement.

## **Contract Management**

2. The contract is managed through monthly managers meetings, where performance of the delivery of services in accordance with the agreed contract and against the performance standards are reviewed. Contract performance is monitored daily by the waste and recycling team manager and area waste officers, who monitor and carry out inspections throughout the district.

3. The Waste Management Partnership Board provides strategic oversight and robust challenges over the contract, providing effective dialogue and resolution of issues at senior officer and Member level.

4. The waste management contract has suffered from unprecedented levels of missed collections over the course of this year. Officers and members have worked closely with Biffa to reduce and stop the number of missed collections currently affecting the waste collection services. Members of Epping Forest District Council's Cabinet met with Biffa's Commercial Director and Regional Manager in August to discuss the issues and hear what Biffa are doing to improve the service delivery.

5. The missed collections are due to multiple factors, including a national shortage of staff, in particular Drivers and loaders. Biffa have increased the pay of operatives through a GMB National Agreement for pay which was applied in August and back dated to April. Further pay increases have recently been agreed as part of a two year pay agreement offer.

6. The breakdown of vehicles has also led to the current missed collections; this has been compounded by the lack of hire vehicles available and the time it takes to get spare and new parts for vehicles which result in increased amount of time the waste vehicles are off-road. To overcome this Biffa have introduced a brand new 26 tonne RCV bought into Epping end of June. Biffa are also having ongoing discussions with their vehicle maintenance provider to

improve vehicle reliability and reduce downtime for the remainder of the contract, including further investment in newer and refurbished vehicles.

7. Officers continue to monitor the performance of Biffa and work in a positive manner to improve service delivery and ensure that there are no further missed collections. The reporting of missed collections has also been looked at and improvements in this process have been implemented. Biffa have a new management team now employed to bring stability and experience to the contract and invested in updating Whitespace (Waste Management Software) to enable more efficient monitoring and reporting.

8. In addition Biffa have made the following investments and improvements to the contract:

- Increase in their Overheads by creating a new role and currently in the process of trialling an Operational Support colleague to help track and drive improvements within the contract. They will be employed on an initial fixed term 6-month contract.
- Two replacement footpath sweepers procured through fixed term lease which are estimated to arrive in Epping in October 2022.
- Two replacement cage vehicles and a replacement van being sourced.
- Invested in a new Pick-Up Truck for the Streets Supervisor.
- Full refurbishment program is currently ongoing for the 32t Scania fleet. They have already completed 4 refurbishments to the current fleet.
- A better solution for Narrow Access is being trialled so they can remove the problematic Garwood vehicles

9. Epping Forest District Council and Biffa are running a pilot scheme using wheeled bins for recycling in selected roads and are looking for residents to volunteer to have a blue lidded recycling bin. All recycling can be placed loose in the bin so no need to use the clear recycling sacks or to collect them from outlets. Glass can also be placed in the blue lidded bin instead of the current blue box.

10. Officers are reviewing the current arrangements for weed spraying and assessing how and when it takes place to ascertain what improvements can be made to ensure better service delivery and ensure the weed spraying has maximum effectiveness.

11. Cabinet agreed to go to market and run a full procurement process for the Waste / Street Cleansing Contract which expires in November 2024. Officers have begun work to start the procurement process. Market engagement events have been held with potential waste contractors.

12. A Cabinet report recommending the establishment of a Waste Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group will be determined at November's Cabinet meeting. The group will provide advice in dealing with the current challenges and support the procurement of a new waste and recycling contract.

**Reason for decision:** To note current issues affecting the waste management contract and the actions taken to address these issues.

**Options considered and rejected:** n/a

**Consultation undertaken:** n/a

**Resource implications:** n/a

**Legal and Governance Implications:** None.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** Environment Bill, it is still not clear what new environment measures will be introduced and when by Government.

**Consultation Undertaken:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Impact Assessments:** N/a

**Risk Management:** Good and robust contract management is required for the remainder of this contract to ensure the missed collections is kept under control and performance improves to the standard that is expected by officers, members, and residents.