

This Report will be made public on 27 August 2021



Report Number **OS/21/04**

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 07 September 2021
Status: Non Key
Responsible Officer: Ewan Green, Director of Place
Cabinet Member: Councillor Rebecca Shoob, Chairman of Task & Finish Group

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM REVIEW OF THE WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING CONTRACT

SUMMARY: This reports presents the recommendations that have been formed from the Task and Finish Group's review of the Council's Waste and Street Cleansing Contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/21/04.
2. To agree the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.
3. To agree that the recommendations be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member and the Corporate Leadership Team.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Following a request from the Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control, and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Task and Finish Group was established to review issues arising from the operation of the new Waste and Street Cleansing Contract.

1.2 The request was made following a significant level of service failures related to the waste collection as a result of the implementation of a route optimisation project which was aimed at improving the efficiency and sustainability of the service. Key issues which led to this can be summarised as:

- Errors in the design and modelling of new routes.
- Insufficient surveying of new routes prior to implementation.
- Issues with data transfer and application of new IT system.
- Lack of testing the new routes with operational staff locally.
- HGV driver shortages.

1.3 The scope of the Task and Finish Group review is set out below:

1. To review the operation of the new Waste and Street Cleansing Contract with a focus on the route optimisation project (new collection routes started on 10/5/21), including staffing and Echo IT system.
2. To invite Veolia Senior Management to the task & finish group meeting to be set up during July 2021.
3. For Veolia to present detailed plans to recover service levels to the contracted standards for –
 - a. Refuse/Recycling/Food Collections
 - b. Assisted Collections
 - c. Communal Bin Collections
 - d. Garden Waste Collections
 - e. Street Cleansing
 - f. health and safety
 - g. environmental risks
4. To consider the council response in terms of
 - a. contract management,
 - b. customer services response
 - c. complaints handling.

1.4 The Task and Finish Group met on 26 July 2021. Council officers and Veolia representatives were present at the meeting to respond to questions from the group. Member's considerations and questions during the meeting were based on a set of Key Lines of Enquiry:

1. **Rationale & Planning** - including the basis for the route optimisation project and expected outcomes, planning, governance, communications and risk mitigation.

2. **Current Position** - including performance pre and post route optimisation changes, impacts on collection service delivery for customers, impacts on Council services.

3. **Recovery** - based on Veolia's Folkestone & Hythe Action Plan detailing interventions to recover service levels for waste collection and street cleansing.

4. **Council Response** - including contract management (actions taken, management escalations, performance monitoring), customer services and complaints handling.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE ENQUIRY**

2.1 The minutes of meetings of the Task & Finish Group have been presented on the Agenda for this meeting. The following are the recommendations formed from the Group's enquiry:

1. That the Corporate Leadership Team ensure that robust and appropriate management and risk processes are in place to underpin both the award and delivery of new contracts.
2. That the council utilises all measures available within the terms of the contract to seek appropriate compensation and reimbursement of costs associated with the failure of the route optimisation project.
3. That communications in relation to significant issues such as waste collection route changes are proactive and consider impact of key messaging on all customers using a variety of methods.
4. To ensure that staff from the contractors are engaged fully in planning for significant changes to services and that this includes a risk assessment of potential impacts across all teams.
5. That Council staff continue to be supported as the service recovers.
6. That any IT and data management systems which are central to the effectiveness of service delivery are rigorously assessed and tested prior to implementation.
7. That the Council continue to impress upon Veolia's Senior Leadership Team the need for proactive action so that the waste service is returned to the required service levels as a matter of urgency.
8. To hold a joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Dover District Council in order to scrutinise Veolia's Recovery Plan and in particular any changes to collection routes which may be proposed.

2.2 Members are asked to consider the recommendations and agree that these be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member and the Corporate Leadership Team for consideration.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 There are no risk management implications in this report.

4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

There are no legal implications in this report. It should be noted that legal assistance will be necessary should there be a need to enforce any of the covenants in the contract.

4.2 Finance Officer's Comments

There are no financial implications in this report.

4.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

There are no diversities and equalities implications in this report.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Ewan Green, Director of Place
Telephone: 07783659864
Email: ewan.green@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None.