

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 7TH NOVEMBER 2017

SUBJECT OF REPORT: WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT

TOWN OR PARISH: DISTRICT WIDE

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: COLIN RUSSELL, RECYCLING & WASTE SERVICE MANAGER

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel receives the contents of this report which provides an update on the work carried out by the waste team and Biffa in outlining the concerns raised by Full Council on 26th September 2017 and how these are being addressed. The report further details the overall performance of the contract to date and the joint work being carried out between North Somerset and Biffa to reduce waste and increase recycling.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report details the work being carried out to respond to the concerns raised by Full Council on 26th September 2017 and provides some initial responses to the resolutions from that meeting. This is referred to in more detail below.

The report details the high level performance of the contract in the first six months which shows a recycling rate which is in excess of the level expected and shows a level which is the highest for the last 3 years.

Finally the report outlines some of the pro-active work being carried out by the waste team and Biffa in promoting recycling, this includes work with Councillors and forthcoming campaigns

2. POLICY

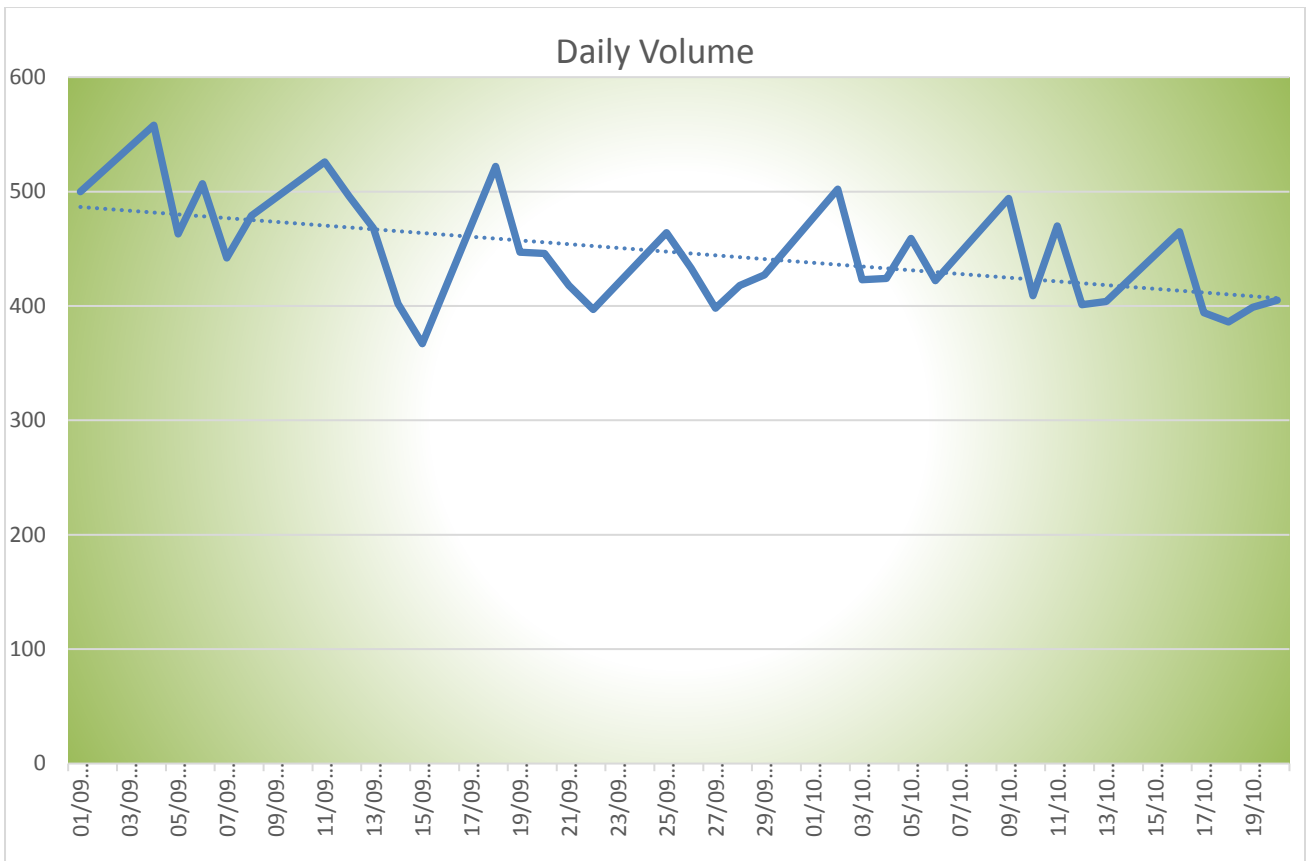
- 2.1 One of the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan is to protect and improve the environment. A key priority included within this is to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill

- 2.2 The Municipal Waste Strategy 2013-17 was approved and adopted by Council in February 2013.
- 2.3 One of the shared priorities in North Somerset Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy is 'living within environmental limits'. One of the aims of this priority is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing landfill is a key component of this.

3. DETAILS

3.1 The new recycling and waste contract commenced on 1st March 2017. During the first six months of the contract there have been a number of issues which has resulted in the contract not performing to the levels expected at this juncture As a result it was resolved at Full Council on 26th September that the following performance reports were to be produced. These are listed below with some commentary (*in italics*) on the actions taken so far to comply with this resolution:

- Regularly update members and the public on the work being done, including time lines, to get the contract to a steady state so that residents can have expectations of a service that delivers 99 per cent on the day and collected in full.
 - *Since the spike in poor performance during the summer holiday period, there has been a reduction in incomplete rounds week on week. A twice daily operational conference call has now been set up between Biffa, the contact centre and the waste management team to run through any performance issues from the previous day and also any issues that anyone is aware of for the day ahead. This has greatly improved communication and allows the contact centre, in particular, to be able to deal with incoming calls more effectively. The daily log of calls coming into the contact centre is now showing a steady decline and this is shown in the table below.*



- *Photographic evidence showing blocked access, contaminated recycling boxes or other exceptions (meaning collections cannot take place), is a key requirement for this contract as it provides the necessary evidence. This information is provided on the crews PDA (tom toms). Usage of these devices is slowly increasing with further tool box talks carried out Friday 20th October which reiterated the need for the system to be used and encouraged the crews to use them. Crews are now more responsible and if exceptions are not reported they will have to go and correct it. This will also apply to the non-access issues, if no photo then they will have to go back!*
- *When Biffa started there were 34 vacancies as the previous contractor, understandably, had not recruited and there was a high level of agency staff being used. Since starting Biffa have recruited over 50 staff (out of a workforce of around 160) and now have a full complement of drivers. There are still 5 loader vacancies as well as 6 on the HWRC's but this is due to churn rather than a failure to recruit. Biffa and North Somerset are currently working with Weston College to recruit loaders and HWRC staff with the first tranche of candidates currently going through the system which should result in some starting within the next couple of weeks. This is a trial with the college and they will decide on when, or if, to proceed with the next tranche once this is completed. This is a novel approach in trying to help some of the longer term unemployed into a job and is a good example of delivering local social value through traineeships with a local provider.*
- *Sickness is still running at 6% which although considerably lower than the previous contractor, is higher than most other Biffa contracts. It has risen to as high as 18% over the summer months, this is expected on most contracts but has a much greater impact when you are starting from a higher level anyway.*
- *Biffa are investing more time on supervisor training to help make them more efficient at what they do. This is supplementary training on things like carrying*

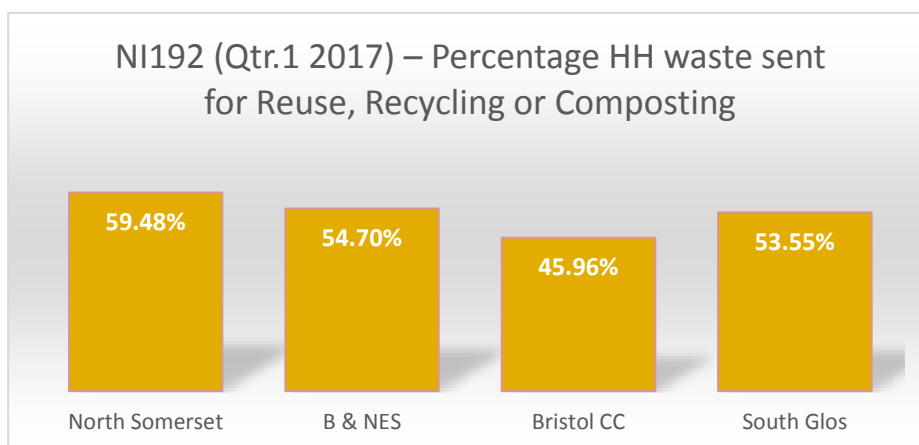
out interviews and investigations and is in addition to the normal Biffa processes which has happened as well.

- *ROMAQUIP, the recycling vehicle manufacturer, are currently on site and will be training each and every crew and supervisor on the efficient and best way to use the vehicles. Four vehicles have also had software updates as part of a trial to get them working more efficiently, this should allow the materials to be packed whilst the vehicles are moving, making collection faster.*
- Produce for Ward members by 9am on the next working day after planned day of collection a list of services failed in that Ward and an action plan to resolve the missed collection.
 - *This is now being sent out and includes information on any work missed together with expected rectification period.*
- Produce weekly statistics for whole council on number of failures in absolute terms and as a percentage of total contracted number of collections.
 - *This will be produced during November and will be split between collections not completed and without justification and those collections not completed due to exceptions beyond Biffa's control for example, parked vehicle causing an obstruction.*
- Thank all members of NSC waste team for their efforts to deal with the repercussions of such high levels of service failures by Biffa.
- That the council apologise to residents for the poor performance standards so far.
- That members be advised what if any performance penalties have been imposed on the contractor to date and how these have been used by the council.
 - *This will be produced starting from November.*

3.2 Although operationally the first six months of the contract has had issues which has impacted on quality and performance of service, the underlying recycling percentages achieved have been excellent and above that expected or forecast for our key performance indicators. In particular this has been achieved at the same time as the changes to the garden waste service took place which, it was expected, would result in a worsening of recycling percentages achieved. Listed below are some of the headline achievements from the first six months of the contract.

- The headline recycling rate at the end of Qtr.2 is 59.23%. This is very slightly less than Qtr.1 which was 59.48%. The 2017-18 target is 57% so we remain well above this.
- The rolling twelve month recycling rate which we use for consistency is 56.38% so current performance remains significantly higher and is actually the best Qtr.2 performance for the last three years.
- Kerbside green box recycling has increased this quarter being 147 tonnes higher than the previous year.
- Garden waste collected from households continues to fall being 950 tonnes less than at this stage last year.
- Garden waste taken to HWRC's has increased as expected with the new household registration scheme and on total is now 360 tonnes higher than this stage last year.

- Residual waste taken to HWRC's continues to fall dramatically and is now 1,800 tonnes less than the same period last year. It seems likely that the continuing HWRC permit scheme plus the enhanced checks around commercial waste is having a positive impact here.
- Recycling at HWRC's is also down over the period by around 1,000 tonnes. However this includes 610 tonnes of wood and 230 tonnes of scrap metal which may also be due to less commercial waste being allowed into the sites.
- All the corporate key performance indicators for the waste service remain as GREEN and we expect to keep on target for the remainder of the year.
- Performance compared with the other WoE authorities remains high. For QTR.1 of 2017-18 NSC has the best recycling rate as shown below



- 3.3 Since the commencement of the contract the waste management team and Biffa have been working on a number of campaigns to help promote recycling and reduce waste. This has included:
- Five organised visits for Councillors to go to the Biffa depot in Winterstoke Road to show how recycling is processed once delivered by the Romaquip vehicles. This visit also included information on Biffa's dangerous driving on pavements (DRoPS) campaign which highlights impatient drivers mounting pavements to get past working recycling and waste vehicles and also gave Councillors the opportunity to ask any questions relating to the operation and accepted poor performance during the first few months of the contract.
 - Councillors spending time with the recycling team within their Ward areas. This has helped to highlight where recycling is not separated out properly in recycling boxes and the additional time these unsorted boxes take for crews to empty (approximately 2 minutes to empty an unsorted box compared to 20 seconds for a well separated box). This in turn impacts on the time crews hold up traffic behind them and is related to the DRoPS campaign referred to above. From these visits, a number of themes have emerged which will be further explored. These include carrying out trials using different colour boxes for different materials, box dividers and the use of cards/stickers which the crews can use to inform residents if the recycling box is poorly presented or if it is first class with a big 'thumbs up'
 - The re-introduction of visits to schools and other groups such as Beavers or Countryside Day, where there were 2,500 primary school children. This is seen as a vital way in engaging with the next generation and for these children to help educate their parents on the importance of recycling and reducing waste.
 - At the recycling centres a campaign is being launched in November requesting that users of the facility bring a form of identification with them – either their driving licence or council tax bill. This is to ensure that our sites are used by North Somerset

residents only. Initially this was going to be achieved through the introduction of a residents permit but this was considered too complicated to administer and a simpler requirement of bringing identification will achieve the same results.

- A food waste campaign is being launched in November and is included in North Somerset Life. This campaign will include 'no food waste' stickers being put on the lid of the residual waste bins and a 'bin hanger' placed on the rear bar. This hanger is removable and provides advice on how easy it is to recycle food and the importance of doing this, as 24% of the contents of the residual waste bin (by weight) is food waste.
- In January, the new recycling campaign will be launched. This will include new banners on vehicles outlining the importance of recycling, the financial savings made and that residents 'make the difference' when it comes to improving our recycling rate and reducing waste.

4. CONSULTATION

The Waste Management Team has worked in close consultation with the Waste Scrutiny Steering Group and the CCO Policy and Scrutiny Panel throughout the contract procurement and mobilisation stages of this contract and will continue to do so throughout the term of this contract.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The contract includes mechanisms to increase reuse and recycling and reduce waste. This has the potential of saving in excess of £1m per annum from the Council's annual budget.

6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment was completed prior to approval of the North Somerset Municipal Waste Strategy.

7. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The reduction in waste sent to landfill will have significant implications for the council's service delivery, both in terms of reputation and mitigation of financial penalties.

AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Award of Contract for Recycling and Waste collection and Household Waste Recycling Centres – report to Council on 19th July 2016
- Briefing to Councillors from the Executive Member for Environment on 21st February 2017