

**Minutes of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment
Scrutiny Board**

**12th July, 2018 at 5.40pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Ashman(Chair);
Councillors Singh (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Ahmed, Allcock, Chidley, E M Giles and
Preece.

Apology: Councillor Ali and Hickey.

In attendance: Julia Bridgett, Business Manager Environment and
Fleet
Gary Smith, Contract Manager SERCO

11/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June, 2018
be approved as a correct record.

12/18 **Integrated waste and cleansing contract**

The Council's Business Manager, Environment and Fleet and the Contract Manager, SERCO attended the meeting to provide the Board with background about the Sandwell Integrated Waste and Cleaning Contract and an update on service performance for the period January to March 2018.

The Board was advised that the 25-year contract had been signed in November 2010 and that there was an integrated approach, with the team being co-located at Shidas Lane. The Board heard that the partnership worked well together.

The presentation covered the following key points:

- An overview of Sandwell waste partnership;
- Services provided:
 - Collections;

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- Cleansing;
- Household Recycling Centre (HRC);
- Transfer Station;
- Sub Contracts;
- Key Partners/Suppliers
- Infrastructure:
 - Shidas Lane Depot Build;
 - Transfer Station;
- Location of Disposal Outlets;
- Communications and core activities;
- Other Partnerships – Eco Bus & Litter Watch;
- Annual Campaign – The Big Spring Clean.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and issues highlighted:

- Indexation and cost for increase of service demand were built into the contract
- There were in the region of 85,000 collections per day, 425,000 collections a week.
- Cleansing was predominantly of the roads, with some parks and open spaces and some housing carried out. Also, dog wardens service and gully cleansing was part of the contract and SERCO had a contract with SMBC Grounds maintenance team to do weeding spraying.
- The W2R incinerator at junction 12 was procured at the time that the contract began. Most of the residual waste from Sandwell goes to the W2R incinerator as a partner with Staffordshire County Council. Warwickshire and Walsall Councils had also signed up to use additional capacity at the incinerator as partners.
- The Shidas Lane Transfer Station and depot and Household Recycling Centre (HRC) improvements and Eagle Lane Transfer Stations build has been a benefit to Sandwell.
- The site, is away from residential premises, was prepared and planning permission obtained prior to bidding for the contract. The Shidas Lane Transfer Station and depot site was upgraded from portacabins to new buildings.
- There are from time to time issues with an increase in traffic around the HRC site and where traffic filters into one lane around the corner from the site. To address this opening hours at the site had been reduced to reduce the impact at peak problem times.

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- The Eagle TS site had not yet reached full capacity and there were several disposal outlets around the Borough and a facility for composting at the Jack Moody's sites in the region.
- Several core activities were being developed and communicated relating to waste and recycling. These were being communicated and promoted using social media, through schools, community visits and the Eco Bus.
- The vehicle fleet was transferred to Serco and infrastructure is leased to SERCO and the employees were TUPE'd from Sandwell to SERCO.
- Adjustments to the equipment - such as additional costs or upgrades to equipment or new technology was covered in the original contract.
- The Council could make no profit from the contract but long term savings were projected to be achieved from the Waste Improvement Plan.
- If there are performance problems, penalty charges could be applied to SERCO.
- The process for transferring waste was confirmed – grey bin waste was tipped into dedicated bays, then transferred into 40 tonne vehicles and taken to the incinerator.
- Composting – garden waste and food waste was separated. Approx 4500 tonnes of food waste is collected each year with a resident participation rate of only 18%. There had been a rewards scheme in place for composting and there is a special 'pod' on collection vehicle for food waste collections.
- There had been a suggestion to start clothing collections to recycle clothing and discussion about small electrical item (WEEE) collections which had been discontinued due to the small WEEE being taken by dealers prior to the Council collection.
- Litterwatch work in partnership with Serco and SMBC and operate the Eco Bus to promote waste and recycling. The activity vehicle was fitted with IT and games to play, the bus visited 120 schools and community centres last year but it was unclear if the bus had an impact on the overall recycling rate.
- The Eco Bus visits, Litter-watch litterpicks, Big Spring Clean Partnership Project and recycling road show were carried out to raise awareness and promote recycling.
- Satisfaction surveys were carried out quarterly which was a requirement of the contract. More comprehensive surveys carried out bi-annually. The Board felt that this survey could be asking more information about how we could improve what we do and what was important for the residents in Sandwell.

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- Two Waste Awareness Officers visit residents to advise on collection services and currently there are two Environmental Enforcement Officers carrying out flytipping enforcement. Officers clarified the difference in roles between the 16 Neighbourhood Wardens (plus 2 supervisors) known as the Environment Protection Team and Environment Enforcement Team. The Board heard that there had been several special incentive schemes to encourage increase recycling, such as ‘Bingo’ for food waste and ‘Go Green’ for recycling.

The Board considered matters raised by the public during work programme planning public consultation. The following issues were discussed:

- contamination of recycling bins with general waste;
- bin location and bins not being replaced in the right place;
- number of assisted collections missed;
- bulky collections and collection of refrigerators;
- clinical waste arrangements with the NHS.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and issues highlighted:

- Officers placed a sticker on contaminated bins, advising what items could be placed in the bins and what needed to be removed.
- Awareness about what could be placed in bins needed to be strengthened, for example that polystyrene could not be recycled and that cling-film and bubble wrap caused problems for the recycling machinery.
- Out of every 17 recycle vehicles 3.5 vehicles would be contaminated, equating to 20 tons or 20% of contaminated recyclable waste.
- Domestic clinical waste was collected from residents, through an arrangement with the local NHS.
- The Board was advised that collection service remained at a 99.98% collection rate with only 1235 missed collections over 13 weeks out of 1,144,000 bins.
- Flytipping instances and enforcement to prevent this occurring, especially in Smethwick, was discussed at length and it was felt that a stronger and better resourced enforcement team was needed.

Members thanked SERCO for the presentation

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Resolved:

- (1) That a visit by the Panel to the Eagle TS, Shidas Lane Depot and the HRC plus the Eco-bus be arranged.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment be requested to consider the feasibility of allocating additional resources to increase the number of enforcement officers in order to enforce correct use of collection services and increase recycling to reduce the cost of disposing of contaminated recycling.

(Meeting ended at 18:40 pm)

<p>Contact Officer: Deb Breedon Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3896</p>
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