

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 22 February 2017

Councillor Tony Briggs: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Lead for Operations, Environmental Services and NORSE.

Norse South East – Havant Borough Council Partnership Update

PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR COUNCILLOR TONY BRIGGS

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Income Management

The partnership is managing the following income streams on behalf of HBC that constitute the £1.855m (financial income Anchor) that forms part of the Councils overall budget to deliver the services.

Beach Huts
Grounds (open spaces and cemeteries)
Refuse
Green Collection
Vehicle Maintenance (workshop)

Processes for income collection and reconciliation between NSE/HBC are improving, and work will continue to establish changes to payment processes/connectors to allow payments from public to go directly to NSE.

Positive progress has been made on debt recovery as demonstrated by the Beach Huts. Assuming the defaulting on instalments is minimal the current actual debt is around £5k and we expect this to come down further before year end. This is set against 284 total invoices with a value of £282,604. This is a significant improvement on the £40k 2015/16 unrecovered HBC debt that we were anecdotally informed of.

Sales and Marketing

Marketing and promotional activity includes:

New mixed-media marketing plan for 2016/17 now live. CSR and PR opportunities also now being recorded
E-shot sent re: trade waste and grounds sent to schools, parish councils and commercial properties
New “easy quote” tool for trade waste for website has just gone live alongside Google analytics campaigns, as well as data purchased for telemarketing programme through to March
Grounds Maintenance e-shot sent Oct
Multi-service brochure sent to all schools and targeted commercial organisations
MOT/Vehicle and Fleet services marketing delivered since November

Business Growth being pursued includes:

We are tracking and targeting local businesses as well as schools for trade waste with marketing messaging that we are a high quality alternative to national competition.

Business Gained:

Hants County Grounds Framework - Lot 2 – commenced Jan 17
2+2 year cleaning at Havant Academy - commencing Apr 17

SERVICE UPDATES:

Waste Management

Strategic Waste: Officers continue to attend Project Integra meetings as this provides an opportunity to discuss issues and opportunities affecting all Hampshire Local Authorities.

Hampshire County Council have reviewed their decisions relating to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). Operating hours will now not be reduced in January 2017 and the current charge for certain materials (Soil, Rubble, Plasterboard, and Cement Bonded Asbestos) is being reconsidered.

NSE plans to capitalise on this by advertising its chargeable Bulky Waste and garden waste services at HWRC sites. Also using the sites for advertising Vehicle Maintenance Workshop services.

Refuse: currently processing requests for green bin subscription for 2017/18. Customer base for 2016/17 was approx. 9,200 customers, with 1,406 new customers having joined the scheme.

New/replacement bin deliveries are within 10 day agreed target figure.

Number of missed bins per 100,000 is averaging 38, slightly above target of 35.

Assistant Managers continue to remind crews and monitoring collections in an effort to improve service delivery.

Trade Waste: the new NSE commercial trade waste service has continued to grow steadily. Our customer base has increased to almost 60 businesses.

NSE officers continue to work closely with their Business Development Manager and have put in place a strategy for the ongoing medium to long term growth of the trade waste service. Competition from national service providers is challenging the core strength of our service offering comes from our public sector credentials and our commitment to the highest possible professional standards.

NSE has secured its first schools waste contract at Havant Academy, and as well as saving the school money this contract has since led to further work with the same customer and elsewhere within the Academy chain.

Cleansing and Cleaning

We have now recruited to all vacant posts within street cleansing as of November 2016.

During October and November the team experienced a very busy period dealing with autumn leaf fall throughout the Borough, especially outside schools, pedestrianised routes and shopping areas.

We have started a regular programme of works to clean the inside/outside of Havant Bus Station and it is going well. The first couple of cleanses made a remarkable difference to the inside paved area and this will only get better with the ongoing quarterly visits we have planned. We have also replaced the old ageing litter bins with new ones.

Cleaning: whilst outside of this reporting period NSE have secured its first significant cleaning contract worth £67k p.a. for a 2+2 year contract at Havant Academy, starting from January 2017. Up to 9 staff including a supervisor will be transferring under TUPE into NSE. This will give us a nice start to build more cleaning business in the area and launches the cleaning element of the NSE business portfolio.

Grounds and Open Spaces

Highway Grass Verges - after coping with the early flush of growth grass cutting went well, we completed 7 cuts during the season (April - October).

Weed spraying: it was a very difficult season as we insourced this work instead of using contractors. The weather conditions resulted in rapid weed growth which got ahead of the resources we had allocated, however complaints remained controlled and the team will learn from this so we can flex our arrangements in future.

NSE recently completed its first formal bid for Hampshire County Council grounds maintenance work. Our officers and Business Development Manager collaborated to produce a detailed tender document for two separate packages of work, 1) Petersfield & Alton 2) Horndean to Hayling Island. We were successful in winning the Petersfield & Alton work. We were just 8 marks short of the winning bid for the larger work package, which bodes well for future working with HCC.

Hampshire Farm Meadows: were formally handed over to HBC at the start of November 2016. This forty-acre site lies between Westbourne and Emsworth. It is an important area, not only does it bring two communities together, but it also provides an important recreational area for local residents. Work has been done to improve the wildlife biodiversity of the area and this will be continued with a management plan along with a newly created conservation volunteer group. NSE supplied tools to the newly formed volunteer group to enable the group to provide conservation focused work within the area.

HCC Highways: HCC have now concluded their full tender process for their highways services contract. For the current financial year, 2016/17, HCC is paying HBC a total cost of £222,407 for urban grass cutting, shrubs and hedge maintenance and £30,450 for weed treatment. These figures are based on a minimum of 6 urban grass cuts and 2 weed treatments.

The payment for 2017/18 is £215,735 for urban grass cutting, shrubs and hedge maintenance and £17,661 for weed killing. These figures are based on a minimum of 4 urban grass cuts and 1 single weed treatment per year.

The new allocations from HCC are likely to remain in place for a minimum of two financial years (2017/18 and 2018/19), and subject to future budgetary pressures that may be applied to local authorities, further changes and reductions may be required after the two year period has lapsed. The combined cost pressure is around £20,000 p.a. to HBC/NSE which NSE will be seeking to absorb whilst still delivering acceptable public perceived outcomes for this service

Arboriculture: tree inspections and resulting works have been slightly behind schedule, and we will continue to adjust resources to catch up and ensure resident enquiries are dealt with in a timely manner.

There is continued interest in our arboriculture expertise from a private and commercial customers. In December the NSE's arborist completed a job on an ancient yew tree within the grounds of St Mary's Church, Hayling. Currently undertaking a significant project for Horizon Leisure at Waterlooville.

Beach Huts: HBC Scrutiny Panel continue to oversee the Hayling Island Beach Hut project, they have identified a suitable location to increase the number of beach huts. NSE officers continue to support this project as required. As previously mentioned bad debts are now being effectively controlled.

Cemeteries: Officers continue to provide support to HBC in regards to a proposal for a new cemetery.

NSE have created a new ashes interment plot within Havant Cemetery

We introduced some additional services: memorial wall plaques, memorial rose garden and memorial cleaning services.

Allotments: The waiting list changes weekly depending on demand, peaking Feb - April and following regular allotment inspections. Historically plots had been left a long time before re-letting, becoming overgrown and unattractive to prospective tenants. This has then been compounded by delays in clearing the plots and the admin process to re let them. The “undesirable” plots relate to the ones that required clearances, weed-kill and strimming before they could be let. Some maps had been sent out but as they remained unpopular we then arranged and waited for them to be cleared.

The number of people on waiting lists differs for each area, currently we are able to offer a plot to those on waiting lists;
Immediately for sites in Emsworth.
Within 12 months for sites in Havant and Waterlooville.
Within 4 years for sites on Hayling Island

Sports Grounds: Football and Rugby teams are now playing on HBC pitches and invoices are being sent out on a monthly basis (pay and play) and on a 2 monthly basis for clubs that have taken on self-management.

Beachlands: The team worked hard throughout last summer including work to ensure West Beach (Blue Flag) was clean, tidy and safe. Work continues throughout the winter months which will include maintenance to the SSSI areas.

Fleet

Vehicle Replacement: 4 new 26t Refuse Collection Vehicles were delivered in early December, these vehicles are now in service. An order for a new mechanical sweeper will be placed during February for expected delivery May/June

MOT Centre: since October we have had a fully operational independent MOT Station for Cars, Vans, Motorhomes, Fleet Vehicles, Mini Buses and Motorbikes. We can also undertake repairs and servicing and marketing of the centre is ongoing.

Training and Development: All of our Fitters have gained IMI Accreditation in Light Vehicles, Transport Manager has gained MOT Managers qualification. All of our fitters are now qualified MOT Testers.

Staff

Sickness Rates: Managers are working with Norse HR which has led to ongoing steady improvements in sickness rates;

CONCLUSION

NSE has continued its positive start to business. The team has continued to flexibly approach taking on new challenges and opportunities.

Positive to date include; opening the MOT test centre, employing our first 2 apprentices, i delivery of our first four new refuse freighters, establishing our trade waste business, winning our first school cleaning contract and winning grounds work with HCC.

There are still challenges to refine back office processes and IT systems, and by March we would like to have moved the whole team into a single open plan work space on the ground floor, rather than be fragmented across both floors.

As well as time spent commercialising and Norsifying the services, officers have continued to work closely with HBC colleagues and maintain strong working relationships.

Housing Enforcement (Including DFGs)

New Home Improvement Agency

The current contract for the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), the private body that partner the council in the administering the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme, comes to an end on 31st March 2017. Unfortunately our current partner, Family Mosaic, have decided not to continue in the role so HBC have been searching for a new HIA to partner with.

The DFG team, in conjunction with colleagues in the Capita Procurement team, have worked very hard to find and secure the services of a new HIA and the process has proved to be a great success. Subject to the final contract being signed, Millbrook Healthcare have agreed to become our partner for the next 3 years and both parties are looking forward to working together and forging a positive and productive working relationship.

Millbrook Healthcare are a family owned south Hampshire based business who specialise in community equipment, wheelchairs, assistive technology, and they also provide HIA services to a number of other local authorities.
