

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 22 September 2021

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Cabinet Lead Capita and Commercial Contracts

Capita

Customer Services performance remains a challenge in terms of telephone call response times. This is due to ongoing issues with waste collections and the volume of calls. The Council continues to work with the Norse Joint Venture and Capita to help mitigate this. Communications between Norse and the Capita Contact Centre have improved materially with regular meetings which are helping to ensure customers are kept better informed with improved complaint responses. However, high call volumes may remain a challenge whilst service challenges persist.

The Communications team have also been involved with the improvements and have requested that the information they receive is as accurate as possible so that their posts on the website and social media and information to the call handlers regarding the current situation with waste collections is informative and timely to limit negative feedback from residents when possible.

Longer term, development work is underway to support linkages between systems used by Capita and Norse, to improve operational reporting and facilitate use of in cab technology.

With regard to IT Services, work continues on engagement with Capita, to support developments within the Shaping our Future Project.

Commercial Contracts

Norse - Environmental Services

Waste services

The on-going difficulties of ensuring full 'crews' for the refuse collection vehicles continue nationally and locally and unfortunately it seems unlikely there will be a quick solution to them, although the government is investigating different ways of easing this problem. Despite the challenges, our waste collection services have made a good recovery from the service level problems we experienced earlier in the summer and are now relatively stable with few issues but this situation is still dependent on the number of

HGV drivers and loaders available to work on a daily basis due to the skill shortage, “track and trace” and how reliable agency staff are for working everyday.

Part of the solution moving forward is for Norse to train more drivers and I am pleased to announce that the first candidate going through their HGV course passed last week. There will be some internal assessments to be conducted and then he will be out working a round. Obviously, an important part of this solution is not only to recruit and train new staff but also to retain them as the market for HGV drivers is very competitive at the moment so this is being looked at as a matter of urgency.

Other improvements being carried out include a report into 'route re-balancing' of how collections are carried out street by street as this will improve the work programme for each crew. Norse are also installing the Bartec 'in-cab' system for all the collection vehicles in Havant so data such as missed bins and their locations can be logged.

Garden waste and glass collections remain the biggest challenges for Norse/HBC.

We are continuing to operate Garden Waste collections unlike many councils. However, due to the need to focus on refuse and recycling it is the first to suffer when we have staffing shortages. Garden Waste collections are still running behind schedule but Norse are providing additional resources for catch up whenever possible. An additional smaller vehicle has also been commissioned that does not require an HGV driver to operate it and this is helping to alleviate the backlog of missed bins.

We will keep the situation under close review going into the autumn when Covid and other illness may increase which will once again have a serious impact on services.

On 23 August the decision was made to stop any further sign ups for the garden waste service until April 2022 which will enable the review of the collection rounds to be undertaken and an additional vehicle to be considered for commission in order to cope with this very popular service.

The help of fellow councillors with the reporting of missed bins on behalf of the residents in their wards has been much appreciated as this helps with resolving the issues more quickly. Residents are encouraged to continue to register their missed collection with customer service and then leave their bins in their usual collection place and check or log a missed bin via HBC's website: <https://www.havant.gov.uk/bin-collections>

Hampshire County Council has stopped glass being taken to the HMRC's by residents and so our collection rate has had to increase substantially which is providing a considerable challenge. “Bring site” glass collections have also been affected recently by staff shortages and the crew have been experiencing a large amount of excess at the sites when they are emptied.

The “bring site” collections have been more regular in the last couple of weeks and the service is now getting back on track.

All these factors have been taken into consideration when considering how to improve the glass collection service. A survey is being carried out of all glass collection sites in the borough and a proposal is being considered for some of the current glass collection bins of 1100 litres to be replaced by skips which could give much increased capacity and improve the safety aspects for the drivers and loaders.

Commercial glass waste will also be investigated and checked.

Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning

Grass cutting is continuing throughout the Borough. NSE are currently on the 5th cut of the season. Progress for each cut is still taking longer than usual this year due to the length of grass, however with this drier, warmer weather we are currently experiencing we are hoping the grass growth will steady and the crews will be able to make better progress.

Hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance has started and the crews are working their way around the Borough. The crews are prioritising hedges and shrubs that are overgrowing the footpaths. Street cleaning service have been continuing as normal with no service issues to report.

Conversations with Norse South East and Chevron have started to discuss the next scheduled 6 monthly sweep and litter pick of the A27. We are looking to programme this in for November time (the last sweep and litter pick was in May). Once road space is booked, we will be able to begin planning resource.

Hayling Seafront

We have utilised the Welcome Back Fund to provide extra resources for toilet cleaning and litter bin emptying over the summer period but acknowledge that with very fine weather these facilities can be quickly overwhelmed. We will review the position and consider improved arrangements for next year as part of annual service and budget planning.

We are exploring options for next year with additional litter bins. We are currently unable to use wheeled bins due to limited resources on the waste team so are looking at other temporary litter bins which can be manually emptied.

Norse have recently taken delivery of a steam cleaner and have now carried out deep cleans at all seafront toilet blocks.

Administration for the Beach huts has started work to consider how to make improvements in the positioning of certain beach hut locations this winter in time for Summer 2022.