

Cabinet Lead for Environmental Services – Councillor Lulu Bowerman

Delivery of environmental and amenity services under Norse contract

Customer Service

There has been further significant progress towards delivering services which are reliable and to a high standard. Our partners at Norse have been focusing on improving day to day management controls, leading to reduced missed bin collections and high standards of service delivery in street cleaning, grounds maintenance etc. This has enabled the Council's Client Liaison Team to resolve the backlog of complaints from over 200, ensuring that the handful received each week are resolved within policy timescales.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work carried out by the team on Hayling Island, who cover a wide range of street cleansing and maintenance tasks throughout the year. The team worked diligently to clear up the detritus and damage caused by the severe weather and flooding in November; working closely with the Council's Coastal and Property teams. This reflects a constructive and flexible approach to challenges which cannot be delivered through traditional commercial contract provision – the partnership and collaboration between Norse and our other partners is proving to be invaluable.

Garden Waste Rounds Re-balancing

Garden waste rounds have been rebalanced during December, ensuring that collections can be completed on the scheduled day. This required a change of collection day for around 8,000 households and was implemented successfully by Norse and the Council's liaison team.

Industrial action by Royal Mail staff resulted in some residents receiving letters after their scheduled collections, however Norse were proactive and resolved issues as they were identified. The option of a third garden waste round is currently being investigated to establish if the additional demand is likely to be adequate to cover the operating costs.

Separation of the HBC/EHDC waste collection contracts

The most significant current work stream is the separation of Havant and East Hants contracts, which is requiring extensive work by the Council's legal, finance and contract liaison teams. It is anticipated that the contract novation will be completed in January 2023. However the process of splitting assets, liabilities, and the TUPE arrangements for transferring staff are all complex.

Environment Act

The services are faced with significant new issues which will impact from early 2023 and over the coming years. Developments in national policy are addressing the challenges of climate change and resource use and will have wide ranging impacts

on how waste and recycling is collected and processed. The Environment Act 2021 is enabling legislation which sets out a framework for government to direct councils to improve recycling services, such as introducing food waste collections and separating recycling into different containers to improve material quality. This will have environmental benefits but will require additional resources to deliver and it is not yet clear how this will be funded and when changes will become mandatory.

A recent change as from 1 January this year is a national requirement that upholstered seating is treated separately from other waste and incinerated safely to stop persistent organic pollutants (POPS) from entering the environment. Some items of upholstered furniture such as dining chairs, armchairs and sofas are likely to contain pollutants which stay intact and do not break down. We are required by law to ensure these items are diverted from landfill, separated from other waste and disposed of carefully at one of our energy recovery facilities.

We have put in place the necessary arrangements and included information on our website. Norse have been proactive on this and they are satisfied that HBC/Norse are compliant.

Service reviews and Improvements

A review of all aspects of allotments and how to improve the service provision is scheduled to take place. In addition, further improvements will be considered on Hayling Island seafront, for example through better litter provision during the summer season. Norse has recently invested in a waste compactor located at the seafront office, increasing capacity to store waste on the island during busy weekends. Plans are also in place to set out more mobile waste bins in peak periods.

Future Challenges

Challenges for the next few months include a review of glass recycling banks to ensure that residents have good access and that the service can be delivered reliably within current resources. Further improvements in processes for handling customer complaints and reporting service issues are ongoing, working closely with Capita and Norse to ensure householders can access up to date information about problems with services, for example during adverse weather.