



Report to Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

Date: 16 November 2021

Title: Demobilisation of the Biffa Waste Contract in the South of Buckinghamshire.

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Recommendations: None (report for information only)

1. Background

1.1 Biffa have successfully delivered waste collection and cleansing services in Buckinghamshire, and the legacy South Bucks area, for the last 14 years. Following an extensive procurement exercise in 2018/19 a new contract was awarded to Veolia covering all Southern areas of Buckinghamshire. On 7 September 2020 Veolia took over waste services in the former Chiltern and Wycombe area from Serco, on 1 November 2021 Veolia will take over delivery of waste services from Biffa in the former South Bucks area. This report provides an overview of the excellent progress the demobilisation project has achieved.

2. Main content of report

2.1 This report provides an update of key areas of Demobilisation comprising; Staff, Vehicles, IT, Policy, Finance and Depot.

2.2 Staff on the Biffa Contract are subject to applicable TUPE regulations. Most staff are expected to TUPE across, the Biffa contract manager and 1-2 Drivers are unlikely to transfer for personal reasons. Wages will increase for Biffa staff across the board as Veolia have a higher rate of pay as Veolia are committed to a minimum Living Wage Foundation rate under the contract. TUPE sessions were expertly support by Council HR and Waste colleagues – the success of this is reflected in the high number of individuals who will TUPE to Veolia.

- 2.3 Waste vehicles that Biffa use are owned by the Council, Biffa are required to fuel and maintain the vehicles under the contract. A third party fleet assessment in August deemed these vehicles to be in good condition when age is accounted for. The same vehicles will be used from 1 November, although re-badged from Biffa. Veolia are bringing in replacement new vehicles in late 2021, some capital following sale of the old Biffa vehicles will be available to the Council.
- 2.4 As the Council's IT systems currently 'look' towards Veolia's system this work stream has been significantly de-risked. Existing Biffa rounds have been triple checked by the Council and Veolia staff and are ready to upload on 1 November 2021. From 1 November the Council's systems will no longer 'look' towards Biffa's system, a simple switch off will occur. Residents in the former South Bucks area will receive improved IT including; being able to choose their most convenient day for Bulky Waste collections and more information will be available regarding potential missed collections.
- 2.5 There have been several minor amendments to service delivery in the South. Residents in the former South Bucks area are being asked to put *all* paper and card in recycling boxes – this is in line with other areas in the south. This change is almost complete with the majority of residents having adopted the new behaviour. Residents requesting a new refuse container will receive a slightly smaller size (240l to 180l) which is in line with the remainder of the south. A larger bin can be delivered providing the household has more than 6 occupants or 2 or more children in nappies.
- 2.6 The Dropmore depot which Biffa use for their waste operations is Council owned and will be operated by Veolia from 1 November 2021. The Lease has been agreed and, at time of writing, signatures are being sort. Estates colleagues are supporting with dilapidation and condition surveys. Veolia plan minor spend circa £50k to refresh the depot.
- 2.7 All invoices on the Biffa Contract are paid to date. The end of contract commercial wash-up has been concluded with no real issues and everything agreed, unlike our experience with Serco which took nearly a year to resolve. Following assessment by council finance colleagues there is likely to be a £50k per month saving to the Council following harmonisation of Waste Services in the South of Buckinghamshire.

3. Next steps and review

- 3.1 Importantly residents will notice very little difference after 1 November 2021. The same vehicles will be driven the same routes by the same crews. A Veolia badge will replace the Biffa badge on vehicles and uniforms – this is the extent of the change residents might notice.

- 3.2 Veolia are super-resourcing the first 2 weeks of November to ensure standards are maintained in terms of collection and cleansing. Indeed, it is encouraging to see there has been almost no deterioration in service delivered by Biffa in the final week of their service.
- 3.3 A round re-organisation project is in progress and is currently at the pre-desktop review stage. New rounds are scheduled to go live in late February 2022, a comprehensive communications programme will be delivered to residents and stakeholders to ensure changes to collection days are well advertised to those impacted. It is too early to forecast the level of changes to residents.

