



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

O&S REPROVISION OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CONTRACT WORKING GROUP

April 2018

Foreword

The objective of this Scrutiny activity was to

- Help non-Executives understand the re provision process and the legal framework around the re-provision of the contract.
- Enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the process.

The Scrutiny Working Group was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: myself, Councillor Rufia Ashraf (Deputy Chair) and Councillors Tony Ansell, Mohammed Aziz, Janice Duffy, Jamie Lane, Brian Sargeant, Zoe Smith and Graham Walker.

This Scrutiny activity took place between March 2017 and April 2018.

It was a very interesting and informative piece of Scrutiny activity, with clear evidence received. The Working Group presented its interim report to Cabinet in October 2017, its key findings at that stage being that Overview and Scrutiny Committee was satisfied that the right processes have taken place. The processes to date had been robust and carried out with due diligence. the procurement process had been robust.

The Working Group was very pleased to note that the new contractor will have both an Engagement Manager and Officer that will work on community engagement projects and liaise regulator with local groups and forums.

The final report mirrors the findings of the interim report with additional conclusions and recommendations.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in this detailed piece of Scrutiny activity.



Councillor Dennis Meredith

Chair, O&S Re provision of the Environmental Services Contract Working Group

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny

Final Report of the O&S Re-Provision of the Environmental Services Contract Working Group

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the O&S Working Group was to:

- Help non-Executives understand the re provision process and the legal framework around the re-provision of the contract.
- Enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the process.

2 Context and Background

2.1 Two non-Executive Councillors called in the decision of Cabinet of 16 November 2016, (item 11 – Re-Provision of the Environmental Services Contract). A Call In Hearing was held on 29 November 2016. During the deliberation session, the Overview and Committee concluded that there was a need for wider consultation, the recommendations were ill-informed, based on assumptions regarding costs, before quality; the areas of methodology used were flawed; and the contracting out option had been based on a failing contract. The Committee further concluded that there was a need for Overview and Scrutiny involvement at the relevant stages of the process.

2.2 The Chair advised of the information received and asked the Committee to consider whether the Call-In would be upheld or not.

2.3 Upon a majority vote it was resolved that:

(1) That after all the evidence had been heard that the Call-In be accepted on the grounds that:

- (i) there is the need for wider consultation;
- (ii) the recommendations were ill-informed, based on assumptions regarding costs, before quality;
- (iii) the areas of methodology used were flawed;

(iv) the contracting out option had been based on a failing contract.

(2) That there is Overview and Scrutiny involvement in the relevant stages of the process.

2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee then convened a Working Group comprising Councillor Dennis Meredith (Chair), Councillor Rufia Ashraf (Deputy Chair); Councillors Aziz, Janice Duffy, Terrie Eales, Jamie Lane, Brian Sargeant, Zoe Smith and Graham Walker to carry out this Scrutiny activity.

2.3 This Scrutiny activity links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely (Delivering quality modern services) and Protecting Our Environment (A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors).

2.4 A series of meetings were held that provided key information to the Scrutiny Working Group. Further meetings will be held during the process. An interim report of the Working Group was Cabinet ion 18 October 2017. Within this report the Working Group highlighted that:

From the information provided to the Working Group to date, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the right processes have taken place to date. From the information provided so far the processes to date have been robust and carried out with due diligence.

From the information received, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the procurement process has been robust.

2.5 The purpose of the meetings held was to:

- Help non-Executives understand the complex procurement process that was being followed.
- Enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the proposed process.

2.6 At its meeting in February 2018, the Working Group considered a notice of motion:

“Councillor Haque, as the proposer of the motion accepted an alteration to the motion submitted by the Conservative Group.

Upon a vote, Council accepted the alteration of the motion.

Councillor Haque proposed and Councillors Smith seconded:

This Council notes the new contractor for Environmental Services will be announced in January 2018. A new contractor will take over the running of Environmental Services from June 2018.

This Council believes that Residents, Resident Associations and Parish Councils understand best the environmental challenges in their area such as fly tipping hot spots and overgrown grass verges. They should be able to fully share their views with both the Contractor and Borough Council so that information can be acted on promptly and effectively.

This Council therefore commits to positive and productive collaboration with Residents, Resident Associations and Parish Councils. Further to the new Contractor being chosen, the Cabinet will ask Overview and Scrutiny to determine the most effective process for the sharing of the views of members of the public and community groups with the Contractor and report back before June 2018.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.”

- 2.7 As part of its evidence gathering, the Working Group had sight of the specification of the contract.

3 Conclusions and Key Findings

- 3.1 The findings from Scrutiny activity, reiterated the interim findings that :
- 3.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the comprehensive presentation given to the O&S Working Group its inaugural meeting and supported the feedback and progress.
- 3.1.2 From the information received, the O&S Working Group is satisfied that the right processes have taken place. The processes to date has been robust and carried out with due diligence.
- 3.1.3 From the information provided to it, the O&S Working Group gives its support for the robustness of the procurement process followed.

- 3.1.4 In considering the notice of motion at its February 2018 meeting, the Working Group concluded that there is a need for more public consultation on the environmental services contract with local groups and forums. It was noted that the new contractor will have an Engagement Manager and an Engagement Officer who will attend a number of groups and forum meetings as part of their roles. £25,000 will be set aside for community engagement projects.
- 3.1.5 Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) will have its own contractor for housing land.
- 3.1.6 The Working Group felt that it would be important for both the contract manager for the new environmental services contract and the contract manager for the contract on NPH land to have sight of the Notice of Motion and for their to be regular liaison with local groups and forums, such as Residents' Associations and Community Forums.
- 3.1.7 Whilst recognising the importance of meetings such as Residents' Associations and An alternative platform for public input, such as online information, in addition to Group and Forum meetings, is available.”
- 3.1.8 It is acknowledge that the contract has provision for help and support being made available to individuals and groups that want to undertake clean ups around the town; the Working Group emphasises the importance of the promotion of the availability of this support.
- 3.1.10 The Working Group supported the meeting that took place, in February 2018, hosted by the Cabinet Member (Environment) and the Director for Customers and Communities that had been open to all Councillors to attend to put forward any comments, queries or concerns that they had regarding the contract.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The purpose of the O&S Working Group was to help non-Executives understand the re provision process and the legal framework around the re-provision of the contract and enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the process.

The O&S Working Group therefore recommends to Cabinet that:

- 4.1.1 Cabinet considers the findings of the O&S Working as detailed in section 3 of this report.

- 4.1.2 Notes that, from the information provided to it, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the right processes have taken place. The processes to date has been robust and carried out with due diligence.
- 4.1.3 Notes that, from the information received, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the procurement process has been robust.
- 4.1.4 The Contract Manager is asked to forward details of the Notice of Motion, as set out at paragraph 2.6 of this report, to both the Council's contractor and NPH's contractor for their information; with emphasis that there must be regular liaison with local groups and forums, such as Residents' Associations and Community Forums.
- 4.1.5 An alternative platform for public input, such as online information, in addition to Group and Forum meetings, is available.
- 4.1.6 As part of the contract, the help and support that is available to individuals and groups that want to undertake clean ups around the town is widely promoted.
- 4.1.7 A Working Group is set up to monitor the purchasing of the vehicles and equipment to ensure they are value for money.

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- 4.1.8 The O&S Working Group carries out a site visit to the Depot once the contract is in place.