

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 October 2013

DEPOT CONTRACT SERVICES ANNUAL REVIEW 2013

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (NEIGHBOURHOODS & ENVIRONMENT)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update for Members on the second year's experience of the depot services contracts which began on 1 October 2011. This issue was also considered by Joint Environmental Services Committee made up of Cabinet representatives from the City Council and East Hampshire District Council on the 23 October and any comments from that meeting will be included in an oral report at the same time that this report is presented to Committee. The report presented to that Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It includes separate summaries from the Joint Client Team, Biffa Municipal Ltd and The Landscape Group with their views since the last report was considered by Committee in December 2012.

Also included in this report is a summary of formal complaints received through the City Council's corporate complaints system which should be considered in conjunction with the Lagan service complaint data which forms part of the Joint Client Team Manager's report.

Both contractors and representatives of the Joint Client Team will be attending The Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer questions from members on current performance. The information contained in this report should help to identify areas for further questioning and investigation at the meeting.

The City Council has recently established a Joint Scrutiny Committee with East Hampshire District Council which will meet for the first time on the 18 November. The remit of the Scrutiny Committee will be discussed at that meeting so Members should consider how the relationship between that Committee and The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will function in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Note the contents of the reports on depot contract services performance since the issue was last considered in December 2012.
- 2) Identifies any issues that it wishes to refer to Cabinet for consideration following consideration of
 - i) The JESC reports
 - ii) Questioning of contractor and client representatives at this meeting.
 - iii) The views of the TACT Landscape Scrutiny Group
- 3) Agrees that the following principles are recommended to the Joint Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the proposed terms of reference:
 - a) The Committee should report back to its parent committee as necessary (which for the City Council will be The Overview & Scrutiny Committee) who can then refer any matters of concern to their respective Cabinets
 - b) An annual report should be produced by the Scrutiny Committee and reported to the parent committee
 - c) Any matters of concern can be referred to the parent committee if requested by resolution of the Committee or at least 2 or more Members from either authority.

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1. Detail

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Members on the experience of the depot services contracts since the issue was last reported to Committee in December 2012. Although annual reports were originally anticipated the Chairman has requested that this issue be considered earlier than originally planned in 2013 because of concerns about current performance in some areas.
- 1.2 The depot services contracts began on 1 October 2011 following joint procurement with East Hampshire District Council which resulted in contracts with Biffa Municipal Ltd and The Landscape Group Ltd to run the refuse/recycling and street cleaning/grounds maintenance services respectively. A further contract was let to Superclean for the cleansing of public conveniences and this is referred to in the Joint Client Team Manager's report described below.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 is a copy of the report considered by the Winchester City Council/East Hampshire District Council Joint Environmental Services Committee (JESC) on the 23 October 2013 as part of their role to oversee the performance of the contracted services. It includes annual reports from both contractors and also the view of the East Hampshire Joint Client Team Manager who acts as client for the contracts as part of the Administrative Authority under the terms of an Inter Authority Agreement between both Councils. The JESC conclusions will be reported orally at The Overview & Scrutiny Committee as there was not time to include these within this report because of the preparation and dispatch deadlines.
- 1.4 Both contractors and representatives of the Joint Client Team will be attending The Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer questions from members on these and other issues. The information contained in the JESC report should help to identify areas requiring further explanation or clarification.
- 1.5 The report from the Joint Client Team Manager includes data relating to service requests following contact by a member of the public to report an issue such as failure to deliver the contracted service. These are described as 'Lagan Cases' as this is the IT system used to record them and track progress with resolution.
- 1.6 Some service failures result in formal complaints to the City Council's on-line system or correspondence received either direct or via an elected Member or MP. These complaints are tracked and monitored separately and help provide additional information on issues which have been escalated using this route.
- 1.7 The way these complaints are categorised does not easily fall within the separate contract areas so some additional analysis has been carried out in order to do this, the results of which are shown in the table at Appendix 2 which includes comments on the possible reason for the changes shown.

2. TACT Scrutiny Group

2.1 Since the commencement of the contract TACT has had its own 'Landscape Scrutiny Group' monitoring contractor performance and discussing concerns with both contract client officers and the contractor. The main issues of concern relate to the following areas:

- a) Standards of work undertaken and equipment used
- b) Lack of adequate supervision by the contractor
- c) Progress with the shrub bed recovery plan
- d) Problems with the grass cutting and weed/moss removal
- e) Delays in the communication between the client and contractor
- f) Insufficient emphasis placed on the Housing associated works.

2.2 Representatives of the TACT Landscape Scrutiny Group will be in attendance at the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting to provide further details of these concerns for Members in order that these can be taken into account as part of the overall scrutiny process.

3. Future Scrutiny arrangements

3.1 Committee has also previously agreed to establish a Joint Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee with East Hampshire District Council representatives in order to scrutinise the depot services contract as well as recycling performance and joint working as part of the Project Integra Partnership. This agreement followed the completion of a previous City Council ISG on Project Integra and Recycling which reported its findings in September 2012. It has taken some time to set up the panel whilst nominations were agreed by the 2 Councils and a meeting date agreed but a first meeting is now scheduled for 18 November.

3.2 Whilst the terms of reference for the joint scrutiny Committee have not yet been agreed it is considered important that its remit should not just be limited to recycling rates alone but should also consider contractor performance and the response of the JESC. Committee is asked to consider this aspect and decide how it wishes its relationship between the Joint Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee to work in the future. These views can be reported back to the first meeting on the 18 November for consideration. It is recommended that the following principles are incorporate within the proposed terms of reference:

- a) ;The Committee should report back to its parent committee as necessary (which for the City Council will be The Overview & Scrutiny Committee) who can then refer any matters of concern to their respective Cabinets
- b) An annual report should be produced by the Scrutiny Committee and reported to the parent committee

- c) Any matters of concern can be referred to the parent committee if requested by resolution of the Committee or at least 2 or more Members from either authority.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

The delivery of the depot contracts services contributes towards the aims of the High Quality Environment outcomes of the Community Strategy.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. However, with nearly 2 year's experience of the delivery of services on the ground, work is nearing completion of any final contract variations so as to establish a 'business as usual' position. Where possible any contract variations will be considered on the basis of being cost neutral by changing the allocation of existing budgets across services.

5.2 It is expected that the conclusions of this work will be reported to the JESC on the 23 October when the draft budget for 2014/15 will be considered. In the event that additional resources are required these will be quantified and submitted for consideration as part of the City Council's 2014/15 budget preparation process if required.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

6.1 The main risk associated with performance on the contracted services is the potential loss of reputation of the City Council caused by poor contractor performance.

6.2 The other main risk areas concern the possibility of contract failure due to either contractor going into administration or the partnership between the 2 Councils failing.

6.3 Both of these risks have been properly evaluated and risk control measures have been put in place including performance bonds and contractual arrangements.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

1. Joint Environmental Services Contracts Annual Report Year 2 - Committee Report EXGK.30/12 - 23 October 2013
2. Complaints analysis table



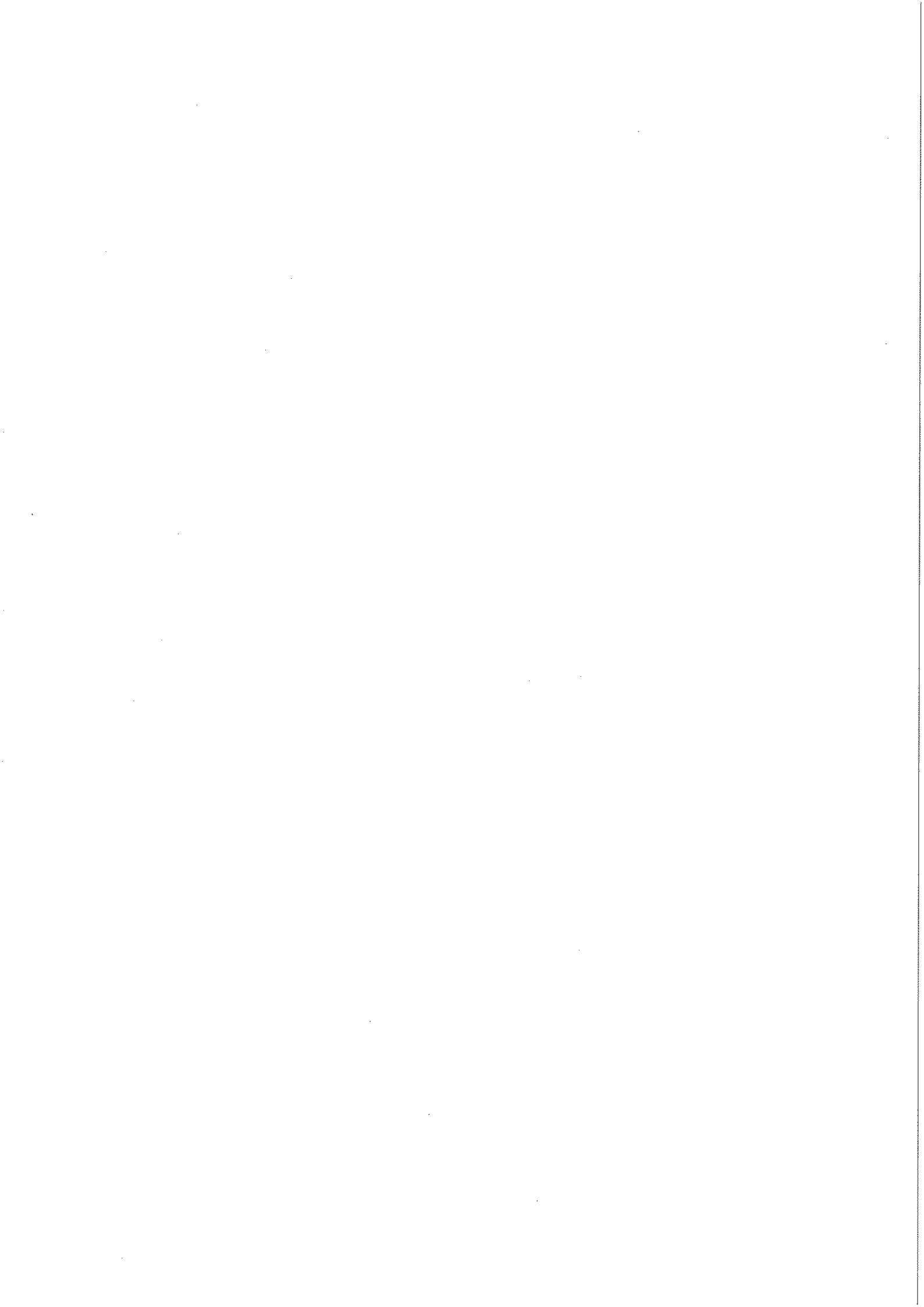
Report EXGK.20/13

Joint Services Contracts Annual Report Year 2

EHDC/WCC Joint Environmental Services Committee

**23 October 2013
Council Chamber, Penns Place,
Petersfield, GU31 4EX**

Please bring these papers with you to the meeting



NON-EXEMPT

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL & WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

EHDC & WCC Joint Environmental Services Committee

23 October 2013

JOINT SERVICE CONTRACTS - ANNUAL REPORT YEAR 2

Executive Head Environment & Neighbourhood Quality EHDC

EXGK.20/13

Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods & Environment) WCC

For Decision

**Portfolios: Cllr Melissa Maynard (EHDC, Environment),
Cllr Richard Millard (EHDC, Commercial Contracts),
Cllr Jan Warwick (WCC, High Quality Environment)**

Key Decision: No

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform the Joint Committee of the performance against the various joint environmental services contracts during their second year of operation, to include the activity of the Joint Client Team in monitoring and managing this work.

2.0 Recommendations

1. The Joint Committee agree to invite senior representatives from Biffa and The Landscape Group (TLG) to the next meeting of Joint Committee on 27 November to discuss any matters arising from their reports on the contract performance in year 2;
2. Subject to 1) above the Joint Committee identify particular areas of contract performance they would wish to explore with Biffa and TLG;
3. The Joint Committee notes that the Joint Client Team Manager, and representatives of the Biffa and The Landscape Group have been invited to attend the Winchester City Council Overview and Scrutiny

Committee on 28 October, and invites the O&S to refer any particular issues arising from their Scrutiny to the Joint Committee for consideration at their meeting on 27 November; and

4. That the Joint Committee notes the intention for officers to report the outcome of work with TLG and Biffa with respect to the interpretation of the strategic performance framework and the street cleansing specification of the contract with TLG at the meeting on 27 November.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 A review of the second year of the three joint contracts, covering the contractors' operational performance and how the contracts have been improved in response to some of the operational failings of the first year is addressed in each of the three reports submitted as appendices to this report.
- 3.2 A report on the monitoring activity of the Joint Client Team (JCT) is attached at appendix A, which includes changes to management arrangements and staffing during the year and how the team has responded to some of the challenges coming out of the previous year, and activities in 2014/15. The report also includes a summary of the project work that the JCT carries out on service development and improvement, and in particular the behavioural change initiatives towards improving recycling performance and quality.
- 3.3 A summary of the strategic position of the Biffa & TLG contracts at the end of the second year is included at Appendices B & C. An analysis of the performance of Superclean is only included in the report of the JCT Manager.

4.0 Subject of Report

- 4.1 Year 1 of the contracts proved a challenging time for the councils and the contractors. The mobilisation of three contracts across two councils posed numerous challenges and as a consequence residents did not receive at the outset the service which they were used to under the previous contracts. Whilst the councils anticipated changes as a result of the revised contract specifications the outcome was disappointing. In Year 2 we have now seen some significant improvements at the same time as some continuing concerns around performance of the contractors.
- 4.2 With respect to Biffa, council officers have in year 2 worked with Biffa to resolve the contract issues with respect to the WCC Trade Waste Contract, collection points, crew performance and returns policy as set out

in the report of the JCT Manager. The focus for year 3 is on establishing a strategic performance framework that properly reflects performance of the contract and preparing for the additional housing growth in both council areas.

- 4.3 The TLG contract which covers grounds maintenance and street cleansing has posed significant challenges for both the Client Team and the contractor. The service provided has affected by weather conditions, the condition of the shrub beds handed over by Serco in Winchester and ambiguities in both the grounds maintenance and street cleansing contracts. With respect to the grounds maintenance specification, in year 2 the JCT & TLG have addressed and resolved issues with respect to grass cutting and leaf clearance, and have a clear programme of how to deal with the dilapidated shrub beds, albeit in the latter case progress is slower than anticipated.
- 4.4 At the beginning of the year officers agreed with TLG and Biffa that there was need to set up a task and finish working party to look at the detailed interpretation of the requirements of the contracts. The Group has met monthly since February and has agreed a common view of the detail of various aspects of the contracts which will result in better performance on the ground. The outstanding matters from this group are with respect to the interpretation of what constitutes a strategic performance failure with respect to both the Biffa and TLG contracts and the interpretation of the street cleansing specifications. In both cases the intention is to report the outcome of this work to the JESC at it's November meeting.
- 4.5 In 2014 the councils will need to prepare for the retendering of the public conveniences contract in 2015.

5.0 Implications

- 5.1 **Resources:** The cost of the various services and that of the Joint Client Team are covered by approved revenue budgets at both councils.
- 5.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.3 **Strategy:** The Joint EHDC/WCC Environmental Services Partnership have agreed a joint waste strategy, which is contained in the Joint Waste To Resources Action Plan (J2WRAP). Progress against various aspects of this plan is reported on in this report.
- 5.4 **Risks:** There are a number of unresolved contractual matters that represent a significant risk to service delivery, but these are currently being systematically reviewed by a joint client/contractor Working Party,

which will report on its findings to the November 2013 meeting of this committee.

- 5.5 **Communications:** There are no specific communications issues arising from this report.
- 5.6 **For the Community:** There are no specific community issues arising from this report.
- 5.7 **The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following:** An IIA was been carried out for the services covered by the new Joint Environmental Services Partnership prior to going out to tender with the contracts.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 None applicable for this report.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Joint Client Team Annual Report
Appendix B - Biffa Annual Report
Appendix C - The Landscape Group Annual Report

Background Papers: none

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**Joint EHDC/WCC Environmental Services Client Team
Annual Report 2012/13**

1.0 Activities of the Joint Client Team and Winchester CSC

1.1 Joint Client Team – Contract Monitoring and Management

- 1.11 During the previous year the JCT carried out proactive contract monitoring checks on all of the contractors, as well as reactive investigation and handling of residents' service requests, enquiries and complaints.
- 1.12 The JCT dealt with 10,031 Lagan cases in total during the year, with 6,245 of these being forwarded directly to Biffa by the CSC through the Lagan case management system. Of these, the JCT had to carry out investigations and raised rectification notices on 484 occasions, for a variety of service failures including non-collection of bins and sacks, non-delivery of new waste bins and not replacing bins properly at assisted collection locations. Biffa failed to resolve the service failures in these rectification notices on 50 occasions for which they received default notices.
- 1.13 The JCT also dealt directly with 3,786 Lagan cases for TLG, which the CSC logged straight to the relevant contract monitoring officer for the area. Partly from these and from their own proactive checks, the JCT raised 258 rectification notices where works were either not carried out to correct contract standards, or where they had not done work at all. These were escalated to a default notice on 30 occasions; where TLG did not either remedy the failure in time, or to the correct standards.
- 1.14 Prior to April 2013, the JCT carried out mainly reactive checking of the contractors, based upon the workload coming into the team through Lagan cases. However, from April onwards the JCT contract monitoring officers (CMOs) have also been carrying out a set programme of proactive inspections every month. This programme of checks has been constructed by the JCT managers on a risk assessed basis (i.e. in any month the JCT will do more checking of those services which have significant amounts of work being carried out by a contractor, and then based on areas of highest impact – city and town centres being the most obvious examples).
- 1.15 The programme changes each month in accordance with the annual calendar of works. Over the summer period more checking of grass cutting and grounds maintenance work was done, with checking of street cleaning and waste collection minimised. In the autumn and winter this trend will be reversed, when the other services become more important and visible to the public.

1.16 Outcomes from the CMO inspections are then being logged by the JCT onto Lagan in terms of work requests or rectification notices to the relevant contractors, depending upon the level of service failure. Over time it is hoped that carrying out more intelligent targeted inspections such as these will see a corresponding reduction in the number of customer service contacts from the public.

1.17 During late 2012 the JCT changed its management arrangements, so that one manager was responsible for the Biffa waste contract and another for the TLG streets and grounds contract. These managers divide their time across both districts, and work at both council offices. This work pattern is repeated by the Joint Client Team Manager. This has vastly improved communications and allowed closer management of the services across all parts of the joint contract area. In particular, liaison with other WCC Client Managers has been strengthened through regular meetings, as well as those with WCC housing tenant groups.

1.2 Joint Client Team – Joint Waste Projects

1.21 To advance service performance and develop new services, the JCT undertakes a broad range of targeted project work, mainly around improving the councils' recycling results. These have been consolidated into a Joint Waste to Resources Action Plan (J2WRAP), and have led to the following successful outcomes being achieved in 2013:

- Garden Waste Wheeled Bins – new service rolled-out in EHDC
- Knowle Village – Communal Bin Stores recycling contamination drive
- West of Waterlooville MDA - community engagement events

1.22 Other projects currently being worked on below will result in some significant changes at the councils' recycling bring sites from 2014, where new services are planned be introduced, and a number of new sites created:

- Textiles – final discussions taking place to join new collection contract
- Bring site improvements – new signage and new materials planned

1.3 Joint Client Team – Service Data and Performance

1.31 Recycling Rates

Both councils continue to experience lower recycling rates during 2013, a trend common across all of the other Project Integra councils in Hampshire. Recycling rates fell and have stayed at current levels since 2009, when the economic downturn led to a reduction in the amount of

recyclable materials being disposed of by residents. In addition to this, councils nationally are no longer allowed to count composted autumn leaf-fall collected from the highway, which has reduced rates by 2%. Results for the year ended March 2013 showed EHDC at 34.7% and WCC at 35.5%. April 2013 to September 2013 has seen an increase in the WCC rate to almost 37% due to high levels of garden waste being collected during the fine summer.

1.32 Contamination Rates

Contamination of the recyclable material that we collect from residents comes in the form of both residual waste that cannot be recycled, and recyclable materials that are not "targeted" due to there not being a market for its re-use. The JCT distributed "bin-hangers" to all residents in 2012 containing guidance on what to recycle and will be carrying out more "behavioural change" campaigns with both residents and Biffa waste collection crews in 2013/14. Both EHDC and WCC have enjoyed relatively low rates compared with other Hampshire councils, and this continued during 2013, when EHDC sampled recycling loads returned an average contamination of only 6.83% - the lowest in Hampshire. Winchester's contamination rate rose slightly to 8.22%, although this is well below the County average. Specific campaigns in the Winchester district, such as those previously mentioned in this report at the communal bin stores and with students should see future improvements in this rate.

1.33 JCT Service Data Table

	Year 1	Year 2
Biffa – Monthly Service Requests (average)	496	390
Biffa – Rectification Notices raised by JCT	374	380
Biffa – Default Notices raised by JCT	48	50
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TLG – Monthly Service Requests (average)	391	316
TLG – Rectification Notices raised by JCT	181	258
TLG – Default Notices raised by JCT	22	30
	Apr 11 – Mar 12	Apr 12 – Mar 13
Recycling Rate - EHDC	36.3%	34.5%
% Contamination - EHDC	7.88%	6.85%
Recycling Rate - WCC	36.5%	35.9%
% Contamination - WCC	6.73%	8.22%

1.4 Winchester CSC – Joint Environmental Services Activity

- 1.41 Between October 2012 and September 2013 the Winchester CSC received almost 30,000 service enquiries and requests from the public via telephone calls and the WCC website. Just over 10,000 of these were subsequently logged onto Lagan as requiring investigation by the JCT or action directly by the contractors, as detailed in paragraph 8.2.
- 1.42 Of the 30,000 CSC calls received, over 8,000 of these were for Garden Waste services – the majority of which were residents calling to renew their licence for the EHDC chargeable service or make enquiries about the newly offered wheeled bin option.
- 1.43 The remaining calls dealt with by the CSC will have been requests for information or guidance that the CSC staff were able to provide to the caller and required no further action. Overall volumes of service requests has now stabilised after the initial mobilisation period in the first 6 months of the contracts and reflects broadly similar levels of activity to those before the joint partnership was formed.
- 1.44 In addition to the enquiries and service requests, members of the public also registered 196 corporate complaints and Freedom of Information requests on both the EHDC and WCC complaints management systems (EHDC = 44, WCC = 152 on the subject of service delivery, service data and the work of the JCT).
- 1.45 At the end of 2012 the Joint Client Team presented the Annual Report of the first year operation of the new joint environmental service contracts firstly to the Joint Environmental Services Committee (JESC), and then on for scrutiny purposes to the WCC Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This report contained performance information on all of the joint contracts, a commentary by the Joint Client Team (JCT) and separate reports from both Biffa and The Landscape Group (TLG), the two major contractors.

1.5 Lessons Learnt from Year 1

- 1.51 The WCC O&S Committee made a number of recommendations at its meeting, where specific service areas that failed to meet the required standards in Year 1 needed improvement, and where Client-side processes and communication methods should be improved. These have been addressed during Year 2 and are as follows;
- a) *Review the inspection and supervision procedures of both the client and contractor.*

Response: The JCT have introduced a new programme of planned monitoring (see paragraphs 5.5 to 5.7 of this report for details)

- b) *Review the grass cutting and leaf clearance services, in addition to reviewing the number of missed bins and how to best tackle the contamination of recycling bins collected from house of multiple occupation.*

Response: Feedback from other local authorities confirmed that the exceptionally poor weather conditions in Year 1 affected grass cutting across the country in the same way as we experienced locally. Therefore the existing contract standard of 9 cuts per year for highway and open space grass was continued in Year 2 and outcomes monitored. The 2013 growing season has been normal in comparison to 2012, with service quality levels being much improved.

Response: The leafing service was reviewed after the eventual completion of the problematic 2012 works and improvements made to incorporate other roads not on the original contract list, remove some that were no longer necessary and produce a new programme of work for 2013. This exercise added an additional 20 kilometres of roads to the list at a cost of £6,000 per year. The new programme will be strictly adhered to by TLG, who will be commencing work in mid-October 2013 and visiting each road on the programme in strict rotation, with a total of 3 visits per road scheduled (where necessary) to ensure that all of the leaf-fall is cleared.

Response: A targeted project to reduce the amount of recycling contamination has been carried out with the residents of Knowle Village, where there is a high level of communal waste storage areas. The results of this work will be monitored in 2014 and rolled-out to other areas of the district if successful. Additional work has also been carried out with Winchester students at the recent "Freshers Fair", to encourage the proper segregation of their waste when they "live out" in student houses from Year 2 onwards. This will be the subject of a targeted communications drive during 2014.

- c) *Consider how the public and Members could be better informed about services such as grass cutting, bin collection, road sweeping and leaf clearance.*

Response: The Joint Client Team have been more proactive during 2013 in keeping members better informed about service issues, as well as making more service information available for customers via the council websites.

- d) *Make representations to the County over the negotiations with Veolia to resolve the issue of tipping with Biffa (paragraph 5 of Appendix 3 refers).*

Response: Specific concerns raised by Biffa were over the need for them to transport glass collected at the kerbside in EHDC to the Chineham disposal at Basingstoke on Tuesday and Wednesdays, when their collection rounds were in the central and southern parts of the EHDC district. In 2013 Biffa have been allowed to tip glass at the Portsmouth ERF site, which has saved them significant travelling time.

Minor issues over mis-directed Biffa loads still persist and these are dealt with by the JCT on a case-by-case basis.

- e) *Ensure that the contingency budget for the contracts is maintained to an appropriate level.*

Response: Each council has made appropriate provision for contingencies within its budgets, and these have been released as necessary to either pay for additional services (such as the expanded autumn leafing clearance service detailed in paragraph 4.2 (b) above, or services that were omitted from the original contract in error. The WCC contingency budget has now been fully utilised and the balance of the EHDC contingency reserve will be returned to general reserves at the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

- 1.52 The following sections represent highlights of the performance achieved and challenges faced on each contract during Year 2.

2.0 Performance of Contractors – Year 2

2.1 Waste Contract - Biffa

- 2.11 At the end of the first year of the contract, Biffa were approaching a level of performance that officers and members regarded as being satisfactory. This has continued into the second year, which has seen Biffa making further performance improvements. Their collection rounds are now operating very consistently, with residents now receiving a reliable service. Whilst missed bins do still occur, albeit now in small numbers, they are generally re-visited and emptied promptly.
- 2.12 However, there are two service issues that are causing problems for residents and are reflected in an increased level of complaints. The first of these are that Biffa crews are not returning bins correctly after collection, which is a symptom of the Biffa collection rounds being at capacity. In order to complete rounds by the end of each day, crews are having to hurry the collections, with bins occasionally going astray. The JCT are working with Biffa to reduce these, and are defaulting Biffa where they are at fault.

- 2.13 The second issue concerns the Returns Policy contained in the contract which is actually working well, and through which over 2,400 residents of both councils have been able to contact us in the last year and get their bins emptied despite them forgetting to put their bins out for collection. This is a great improvement for EHDC residents, who did not have this facility before, although in the WCC area something similar was already in place in the old Serco contract. So, although the overall service is now much improved, some customers have complained about the 12pm (mid-day) cut-off on the day following their normal collection day. Residents have to contact the JCT before this deadline for Biffa to return to make a collection. This timescale was set because, from the point a resident discovered their error in not putting their bin out, this gave customers the rest of the day plus the following morning to make a phone call, send an e-mail or log their request directly onto the WCC website – which should be sufficient. Any increase in the deadline would have a significant impact on Biffa resources and would lead to them having to operate a dedicated “mop-up” round, at the councils’ cost.
- 2.14 In the latter part of 2012 Biffa replaced their previous local management team, and since then the new managers have established a more effective relationship with the JCT and have resolved a number of long standing operational issues. They have also introduced a more robust supervisory framework that gives greater control of the crews.
- 2.15 Biffa has worked closely with the JCT to ensure that the roll-out of the new option for Garden Waste Wheeled Bins at EHDC was successful. Since April 2013, over 1,400 customers have paid for a new brown wheeled bin and licence, with 1/3 of these being entirely new customers to the service. If this pattern continues to the end of the financial year EHDC should generate an extra £100,000 of income.
- 2.16 The JCT and Biffa have also commenced planning for the various MDA (Major Development Areas) housing growth phases that will occur during the current and potential secondary term of the contract (i.e. to 2019 initially, and then potentially to 2027/28). These developments will involve the overall addition of approximately 20,000 new homes across the two districts, and it is therefore essential that service provision is made to accommodate these. The phasing of the new builds will drive the timing and nature of any necessary changes, and it is almost certain that this will require a fundamental re-think of how Biffa operates its collection rounds.

2.2 **Street Cleansing & Grounds Maintenance Contract – The Landscape Group**

- 2.21 The performance of The Landscape Group (TLG) during the first year of the contract was variable, and whilst performance with respect to the

service failures of Year 1 has now improved through joint analysis and action by TLG and the JCT, there are still service areas which require further work.

- 2.22 One of the areas where TLG have improved their performance is in the timely completion and quality of the main G4 highway verge/open spaces grass cutting. In 2012, weather conditions were not conducive to grass cutting for large parts of the season, however 2013 has been a year of almost ideal weather, and this has been reflected in the TLG grass cutting performance.
- 2.23 The grass cutting service provided at WCC Housing Units is based on a 14 day cycle. During Year 2 TLG achieved an average of 15 days per cut, a result which they aim to improve upon during Year 3. Recent joint site visits by the new TLG managers and WCC housing officers have been productive and have led to the identification and remedy of other specific problems.
- 2.24 During 2012 TLG the weather delays to grass cutting had a knock-on effect on other services, with the result that TLG were unable to complete all of the specified works to the shrub beds on open spaces and formal gardens, particularly in the Winchester district where the majority of these occur. This left many areas looking poorly maintained and led to a Shrub Bed Recovery Plan being agreed, in which TLG were to carry out remedial work during autumn 2012/winter 2013 to the shrub beds to bring them back to specification standards by the end of March 2013, without penalty. In the end this "catch-up" work was completed in April 2013.
- 2.25 There has been a considerable amount of JCT officer time spent on inspecting the WCC shrub beds, a large number of which were historically in a dilapidated state. This has taken staff away from other routine inspections and management work. There has been a similar impact on TLG, particularly in the identification and logging of the dilapidated shrubs. With the completion of this back-log of historic work the JCT should be able to focus more of its attention on regular contract monitoring in future.
- 2.26 TLG also underwent a change to their local contract management during May 2013, and a new contract management team is now in place. Whilst the new management have responded very positively to the operational challenges of the contract, the lack of a proper handover has led to a number of service related failures and delays. A lack of TLG supervision of their own crews has also been evident, although this has recently been much improved since the change of management.
- 2.27 The other service that suffered a significant delay in 2013 has been the completion of Moss & Weed treatments to WCC hard-surfaced areas

(such as tarmac, paved and gravelled areas around housing complexes, car parks and the city offices and guildhall). Two treatment visits per year are specified, each visit consisting of weed-spraying followed shortly after by manual removal of the weed/moss debris after the herbicide has taken effect.

- 2.28 The visits are scheduled for May and September each year; however TLG did not start spraying until early June 2013, citing wet weather as reason for the delay. They then progressed slowly through June and stopped spraying in mid-July when the very warm weather commenced, again citing conditions as not being suitable for safe spraying. The JCT have been pressing TLG to apply more resources to this work and recover some of the lost time, but as at the beginning of October 2013 the first treatment visit had still not been completed.
- 2.29 The upshot of this is that the second visit for 2013 has been cancelled, and the WCC Clients will receive a refund of the £9,755 cost.
- 2.30 Despite some operational problems persisting into Year 2, there has been a significant improvement in the working relationship between TLG and the JCT, with managers jointly carrying out a lengthy data reconciliation exercise to correct some historical mapping and measurement inaccuracies. This improved partnership working has also extended to joint training sessions on shrub bed maintenance and sports pitch renovation. The management of scheduled work has also been improved by the introduction of comprehensive work programmes and the routine submission of completed works returns by TLG. The absence of these in Year 1 made the monitoring work of the JCT more difficult and had led to communication problems between the teams, which are now much improved.

2.4 Public Conveniences Cleansing Contract – Superclean

- 2.41 The Superclean public conveniences contract has undergone a significant change during the year, with the removal of the Petersfield Central Car Park Toilets attended service in April 2013. This was replaced by adding these toilets to the mobile cleansing round, and they are now visited 3 times a day. The change to service has proven popular with most users, as the 20p entry charge for the cubicles has also been removed, although some complaints have also been received about standards of cleanliness. This alteration to the contract has netted EHDC a budget saving of £15,000 a year.
- 2.42 Overall service quality, whilst improved against standards in Year 1, is still less than satisfactory during the second year of the contract, and the lack

of a local Superclean manager has made the communication and timely resolution of service failures difficult for the JCT.

- 2.43 The cost and management of consumables stocks is also a problem that the JCT are pursuing with Superclean, and a meeting with the company managing director is planned for October.

2.5 Strategic Position of Contracts

- 2.51 During the last year the Biffa contract has been subject to negotiations over the specific issue of the Winchester Trade Waste Rebate. Biffa submitted a claim that the actual number of trade waste customers on the service at the beginning of the contract was far fewer than that indicated in the contract tender documents.

- 2.52 After seeking independent arbitration on the matter, the findings were that neither party were entirely culpable. Therefore a compromise position has been agreed which reduces the annual rebate income payment from Biffa to WCC from £172,000 a year to £120,000, a reduction of £52,000. This reduction will be funded through the WCC contingency budget.

- 2.53 Since January 2013 a working party of client officers and contractor representatives have been working on the Contract Specification Verification Group, which was formed after both Biffa and TLG challenged the meaning and interpretation of various elements of the two major service contracts. Major "common" factors were highlighted by them as requiring examination and revision, such as the imposition of Rectification and Default Notices and the operation of the Strategic Performance Framework, as well as a number of specific operational clauses.

- 2.54 To date the group has carried out a lot of work on the TLG contract specification and have agreed on a number of smaller clarifications that will in turn be incorporated into the contract. However, there are also a number of major areas of the Street Cleansing specification that require agreement, and the JCT is taking legal advice on the matter and will report its findings to the JESC.

- 2.55 The Annual Report for Year 1 explained that Biffa were consistently failing against the monthly Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) in the Waste Contract. They have continued to fail the monthly SPIs during Year 2. Strategic discussions with Biffa and positive feedback from the JESC and council members in general have supported the fact that the actual level of Biffa performance is satisfactory, and that the SPI targets require revision. As a result, the application of the SPI failures has been deferred, in order to jointly establish a meaningful set of strategic indicators that can be used for the remainder of the contract. JCT officers are producing a proposal,

which is based on combining “performance” defaults (derived from missed bins) and actual service defaults (for instance, for not putting an assisted collection bin back properly). This will give a far broader measure of overall performance, whilst still posing Biffa a significant challenge. Officers will bring details of this to a future JESC for consideration and approval.

- 2.56 TLG failed two of their SPIs in June 2013. Along the same lines as Biffa, the application of the SPI failures have also been deferred, as it is acknowledged that there is a similar need to improve the present contract SPIs. These will also be reviewed in a similar fashion to Biffa.
- 2.57 The senior officers of the Joint Environmental Services Board have established quarterly strategic meetings with Biffa and TLG directors at which the issues above, and overall service performance is discussed. The subject matter in these meetings has moved on from the immediate challenges of the operational performance during Year 1, and issues on the agenda now include planning for future service changes, such as the housing growth mentioned elsewhere in this report.

3.0 Year 3 – Key Actions

3.1 Biffa

- 3.11 The key priority for the JCT in 2014 will be to progress work with Biffa on planning and implementation of new waste collection rounds, in response to the planned housing growth across both districts. The scale of this work cannot be underestimated, with Biffa reflecting that the scale of the new housing exceeds anything that they are facing in any of their other contracts.

3.2 The Landscape Group

- 3.21 The key focus of the JCT for 2014 will be as follows:

- Conclude the work of reviewing the TLG contract specification
- Implement any changes identified and amend contract
- Communicate any changes within and outside of the JCT to all associated stakeholders
- To improve the contract monitoring and management of the TLG work, with the aim of improving overall performance

3.3 Superclean

3.31 Work to re-let this 4 year contract will need to commence during 2014, as its expiry date is September 2015. The JCT will also focus efforts on drive up improvements in performance by Superclean.

3.4 **Waste Projects**

3.41 Work with Havant Borough Council is ongoing on some joint behavioural change projects, set up specifically to compare the results that we are able to secure using local campaigns, versus the county-wide Recycle for Hampshire service, which EHDC, WCC (and HBC) all contribute to through Project Integra. In 2014 a decision on whether EHDC and WCC continue to fund Recycle for Hampshire will be made, based on the outcomes of these local projects.

3.42 A full range of specific projects will be run in 2014, to either reduce recycling contamination or increase the capture of materials. Some of these will see the roll-out of other new collection banks at bring sites, as well as potentially small additions to the established kerbside recycling collections.



East Hants & Winchester Contract Year 2 Review for the Joint Environmental Committee

Introduction

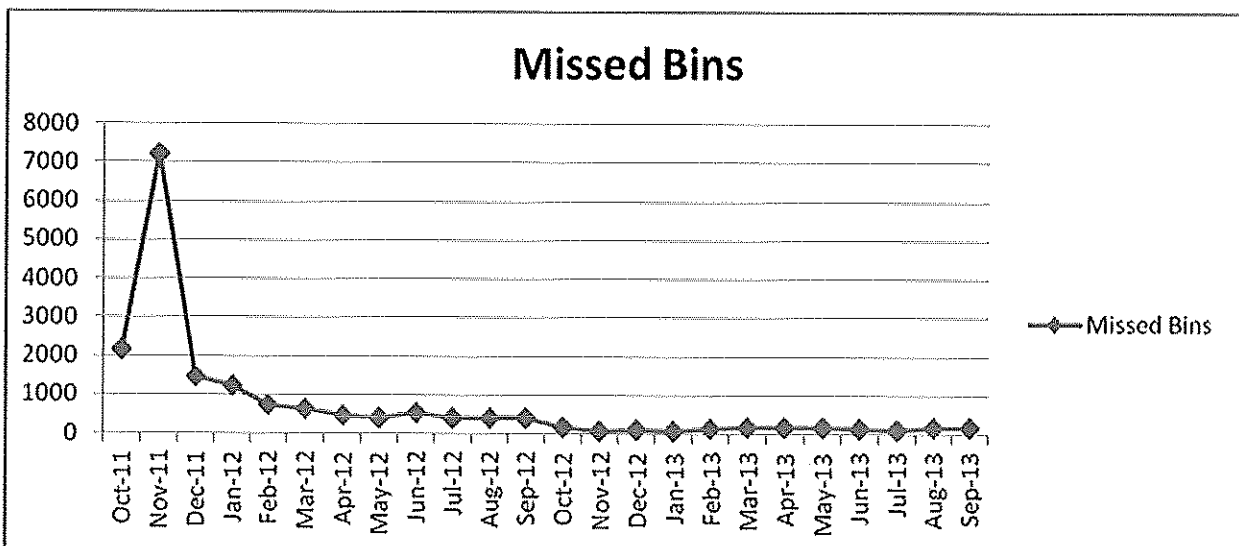
This report highlights and comments on the performance of the East Hants & Winchester Waste and Recycling Contract, for Year 2.

There have been many improvements and operational successes throughout the second year, improved missed bin levels, better Health and Safety performance, improved attendance and reduced sickness absence levels, all of which go toward the improvements in performance at a local level.

Collections (Refuse & Recycling)

We have continued to maintain a high level of service over the last year.

I have collated a chart for YTD from the start of the contract on missed collections below;



We are currently averaging a **99.96%** success pass rate, which is a fantastic achievement, with the geographical area that we cover.

We have been looking to reschedule the narrow access rounds with a view to make them more efficient.

Whilst confirmed misses have reduced there has been an increase in the amount of complaints we have been able to refute as being unfounded due to the higher level of control and management we now have on the contract.

Complaint Type	Biffa Cases Raised			
	Number of cases 2012	Number of cases 2013	Rectifications complaint type 2012	Rectifications complaint type 2013
AWC	2881	1329	127	136
Bulky Waste	98	347		
Clinic waste	111	57	9	15
CMO Complaint	20	27	8	15
Complaint	17	10	9	8
Garden	1631	533	77	59
Glass	578	255	42	55
Health & Safety	6	124	1	7
Overflowing bring banks	58	62	8	4
Return cases	554	1934	93	81

The number of cases increased for the returns in 2013, this was due to the adverse weather that was experienced, and it was agreed that all calls to query missed collections, the returns policy would be used as a fair and easier way to manage the issues that were caused.

We are currently discussing the implications of the larger developments going on in the district including West of Waterlooville (WoW) and Barton Farm and the implications this will have on the rounds during the current contract. There will shortly be a working group set up to look at ways to maximise efficiency, minimise disruption but also ensure continuity of service and we will report on this later in the year.

As part of these discussions, we have relocated vehicles to the Petersfield Depot. We currently have 10 vehicles operating from there which are proving to be more fuel efficient, thus having a lower carbon footprint and greater productivity from the operatives in Petersfield.

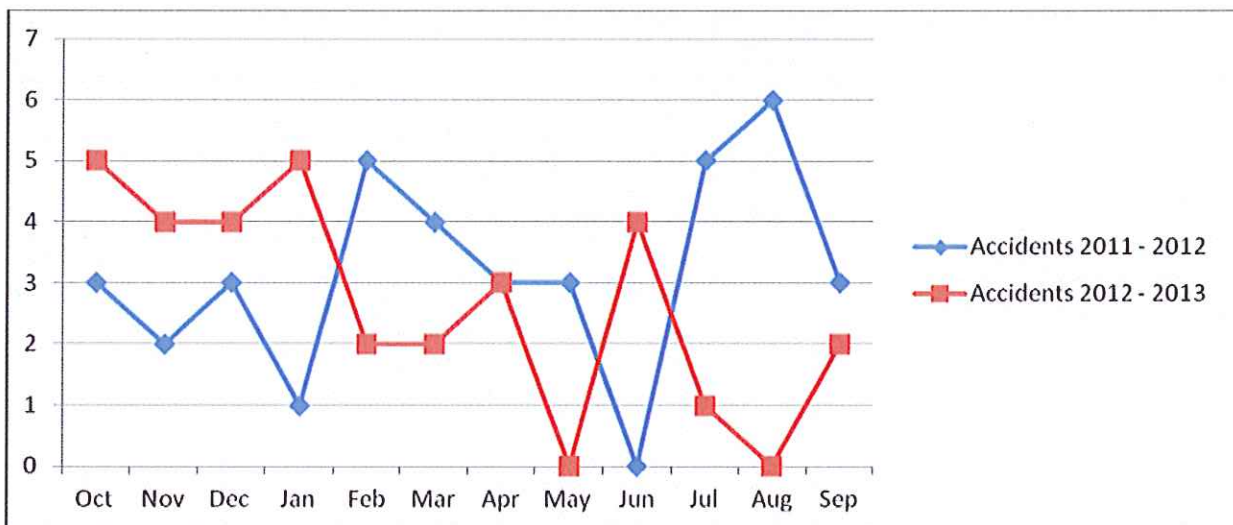
We have changed personnel on some of the rounds to ensure that we get the best knowledge and performance of the crews, whilst having done this, we have also scheduled the Supervisors to have their own sort of Business Unit, so they have a number of crews to look after and to make them more accountable for their teams. This will help and develop the Supervisors to have a better all round knowledge of the business and giving them the guidance and knowhow of managing teams efficiently.

As a result of the delivering the Green Waste Bins for the East Hants District, we agreed for the Bin delivery dates to be extended from 5 days to 10 days, this has been agreed and a contract amendment has been made for 6 months.

Health & Safety

We have had 32 personal accidents in year 2, whereas we had 38 in year one, as a result of these accidents, 9 of them were Lost Time Incidents, and 2 RIDDOR reportable incidents and we lost 312 days from the LTI and RIDDOR's.

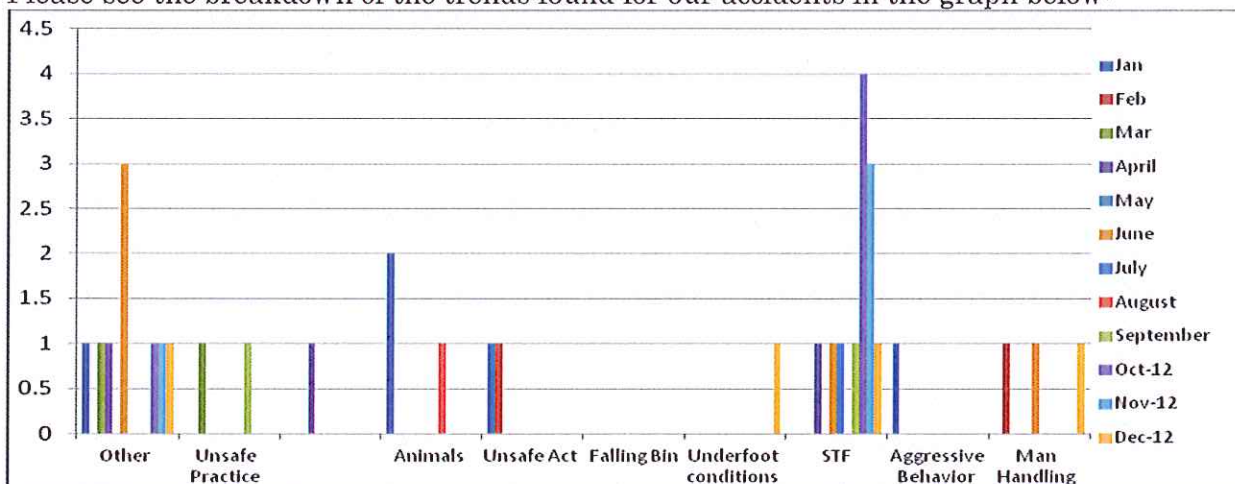
Please see below;



Accidents and absence have been a major issue on the contract, and we have instigated a far more in depth investigation process which can take up to 3 days to find the root cause of any accident. This means that once we have identified these causes we can prevent them from happening again. All the Management team and Supervisory staff have completed extra training regarding these investigations which adds to their own personal development.

Having looked at the trends of accidents over the last 12 months, we can now identify and focus on causes to prevent further incidents of the same kind and try to eliminate employees getting injured at work.

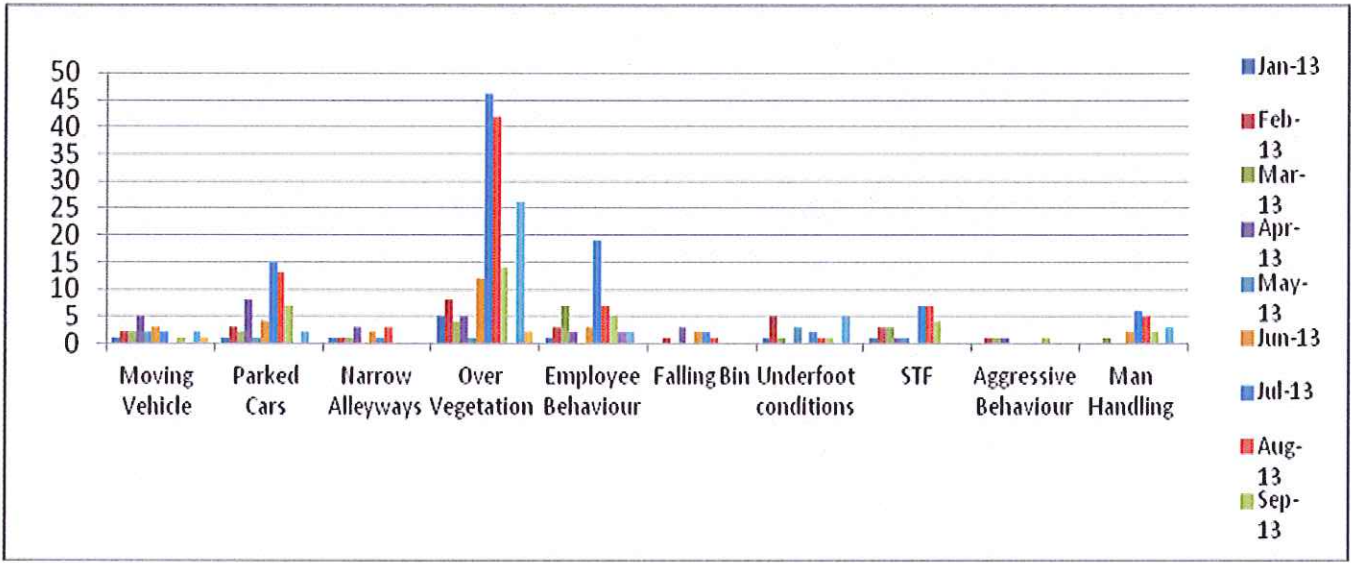
Please see the breakdown of the trends found for our accidents in the graph below:



East Hants & Winchester Contract Year 2 Review for the Joint Environmental Committee

Statistically there is a direct correlation between Near Miss reporting and accidents occurring so we have recently started to promote the reporting of Near Misses and Hazards. This will help to identify causes of accidents, we are actively trying to encourage more reports and by doing so we have introduced a initiative for the PDA, so that the driver can report near misses direct from his hand held device, this has helped with an increase of near misses throughout several periods when this was introduced. Also there is a potential financial benefit to staff who do take the time to report these incidents.

We have also analyzed the trends for our near misses please see graph below:



Whilst this list is not exhaustive, we will encourage the employees and the Management team to fill in the NM and Hazards.

We have held regular meetings with Peter Elliott (Biffa SHEQ Coach), regarding coming up with a plan to reduce the accidents that have been occurring at the Depot, this has been instructed by Ian Wakelin himself, this has been really positive and encouraging for the whole team to get involved with, we have been having a great emphasis on reducing all accidents at the depot.

We have started to re educate all employees with a complete H&S Induction process, this is to refresh and retrain all employees, also to help with the reduction of accidents and refocus them.

Also included in the figures above, the incident were the vehicle flipped onto its roof, this really was an unfortunate accident and it was a miracle that no one was severely injured we still have one employee of sick as a result of the accident, the driver and loader are back at work. It is a testament to the recent Health and Safety push that all staff involved were wearing their seat belts at the time of the incident as without this there would undoubtedly have been much more serious injuries.

Green Waste

We have been asked to deliver Brown Bins to the East Hants Payable service of the GW, since this started in March 2013 and we have delivered circa 1300 bins across the East Hants District. We have indicated that we would like to introduce the Biffa GWC as current contract resources are at full capacity, and the introduction of wheeled bins will only increase this problem. The client are looking into this and have asked that we propose some figures and meeting have been set for the future.

Trade

We have gone through the process of moving all the work onto the Central System, with this in mind we have been having several meeting with I&C and IT, and they are using the PDA technology that is used on the core service, this transition will hopefully help us develop the Trade and build on it, currently we are servicing a portfolio of 793 customers

We have also held meetings with our Southampton Depot. These were to discuss taking work from them, as it seemed inefficient to have several of their vehicles passing the depot and doing work that we could do, we have taken 99 customers from them, this has helped reduced Carbon Footprint for the company, this being one of Biffa's annual targets. It has also greatly improved the efficiency of these rounds.

Roger Edwards and Dave Kenney went back to the floor for the day on the trade round's which was positive for the workforce to see.



Recruitment and Resourcing

There has been a fairly high turnover of staff over the last few months; and although we have filled some of these vacancies we still have some positions left open.. We also continue to recruit staff, that live in either of the local authority districts, this therefore, gives greater flexibility to place them at either of our depots.

Sickness has reduced dramatically, we have gone from an average of 8 people off a day to 1 if not 0, which is great news for both the contract and the client as with less illness there should be direct improvement in the quality of the service.

We currently have one staff member on Long Term Sick and his return to work is being encouraged using our HR support functions.

To date, we have completed 496 hours of the Driver CPC training, we have 30 drivers that have to complete 35 hours over a 5 year period, and we have a further 5 courses scheduled in 2014, so we will comply with the new legislation in September 2014, when we recruit any new drivers CPC training is part of the employment criteria so that we don't fall foul of the new law when it comes into force.

We have also had a few changes within the Supervision department, we have reduced this from 5 to 3 as the service has settled to a manageable level and as stated above they have their own staff to manage as pseudo stand-alone Business Units.

Fleet

We don't have any major issues with Dennis Eagle we are constantly communicating with each other and they are completely aware of the level of service that is required to fulfill the contract, this is managed with meetings if needed plus an annual meeting is scheduled with the Directors to discuss any issues that could be impacting the service.

New Depot

We have finally moved in to the depot, this hasn't been a simple process, we have no heating in the building, until 15th October 2013, WCC have provided portable heating in the interim period.

Prospective Projects for the New Year.

To increase recycling participation, CMO's to knock doors, leaflet drop, waste analysis in the various areas of the contract, what we learn from that and what we do next.

To reschedule routes to accommodate the new developments in both districts as mentioned above.

To explore the withdrawal of the Igloo (Titan) banks from the East Hants district and replace with 1100 bins.

To explore the introduction of, small WEEE and Textile collections, that can be collected at the kerbside.

Summary

The contract performance has improved considerably year on year and will continue to do so for the length of the current contract and beyond, this has been achieved by developing a stronger and more stable management team and encouraging the work force to work with us to improve efficiency and Health and Safety performance.

This year we have seen a significant improvement in the stability of the management team and as a result a consistent methodical approach to the operation decision making has been achieved. This has resulted in a far more efficient and consistent service.

We are looking to have a much more Health & Safety conscious workforce, so that we can continue to reduce accidents to our employees and are currently considering several projects and promotions to enhance this.



**East Hampshire District Council and Winchester City Council Grounds
Maintenance and Street Care Contract**

**Year two report to the Joint Environmental Services Committee and
recommendations for the Annual Service Improvement Plan**

Summary

Year two of the contract which commenced on October 1st 2012 has been significantly more successful operationally. As expected, The Landscape Group (TLG) has built upon local knowledge and experience gained during the first year and invested heavily in staff skills and management training.

There still remain issues to be resolved as to exactly what TLG is expected to deliver according to the specification and schedules against which the contract was let. As a consequence the contract remains under resourced for the amount of work we are both attempting to do and which is expected of us by members and the Councils' customers. That, from time to time, inevitably leads to a discrepancy between what we are able to produce and that expected of us.

This should not however detract from recognising the hard work put in this year by both TLG staff and members of the Joint Client Team (JCT) who remain committed to making this project successful.

The table below indicates the number of service requests logged in year two compared to year one. Whilst not a pure measure of performance service requests are an important barometer in measuring performance quality improvement.

	Service Requests May 2012 to Sep 2012 Requests per month	Service Requests Oct 2012 to Sep 2013 Requests per month	Change	% Change
Dead Animals	19	22	3	15.8%
Bring Sites Cleansing	2	2	0	0.0%
Fencelines	5	1	-4	-80.0%
Flytip Clearance	115	121	6	5.2%
Grass Cutting	84	25	-59	-70.2%
Hedges	40	17	-23	-57.5%
Leaf Clearance	<i>n/a</i>	68		
Litter-picking	18	28	10	55.6%
Play Sites	3	5	2	66.7%
Dog Bin Emptying	15	13	-2	-13.3%
Litterbin Emptying	19	6	-13	-68.4%
Road Sweeping/Street Cleansing	40	43	3	7.5%
Vegetation Control	6	3	-3	-50.0%
Shrub Beds	22	15	-7	-31.8%
Total (excluding leaves)	388	301	-87	-22.4%

Note: Monitoring data not collected during leafing season in year one. Rate per month is over the leaf collecting season.

Remaining Contract Issues

Following Scrutiny last year and the discussion concerning members' expectations concerning leaf clearance it was apparent that there were differences between that which the Winchester City Council (WCC) expected and what the actual specification said and therefore we were trying to deliver in this regard. Further examination by the Joint Client Team and TLG indicated that there was potential for this to be the case in a number of areas of the specification. In January a working group was commissioned by the Executive Group to address these issues and agree ways in which where gaps between the specification and expectations were identified propose solutions.

It was agreed that on a without prejudice basis TLG would continue to attempt to deliver the whole service as envisaged by WCC as opposed to that which the schedules attached to the specification actually require and also in the spirit of partnership that we would not, pending outcome of the Working Group's activities, pursue a claim for additional works carried out in year 1.

The Working Group has worked very well and all issues surrounding the grounds maintenance aspects of the specification have been resolved and good working arrangements put in place. In the case of cleansing however there remain significant differences between the schedules as written and therefore tendered for and paid for via the Bill of Quantities and what TLG is actually expected to achieve. The cleansing service remains therefore under-resourced in comparison to the latter as it was originally resourced according to the former. We have since continued to commit to the project by investing significant additional sums in labour and equipment in order to maintain as far as practicable a reasonable standard of cleansing in the "missing areas". It is TLG's position that in year 2 we have on the JCTs instruction carried out significantly more cleansing work than we are engaged to do and that we have not yet been paid to do. **This report is therefore written on the basis that it is without prejudice to that position.** What is clear is that the procurement of the cleansing aspects of this contract was at best ambiguous; there remain outstanding contractual issues as a consequence that need to be addressed if both all partners are to recognise the full benefits of the joint procurement.

Contract Delivery

Management

During the second year there was a change in The Landscape Group's General Manager providing an internal opportunity for an experienced General Manager, David Cowie. David was previously General Manager at our Wiltshire Contract. David's experience of managing similar combined grounds and street cleansing contracts allowed for a swift transition of management with the majority of on-going issues being translated into actions.

This appointment together with increased levels of support provided to the contract by the Group and Region have seen a more sustained emphasis on identifying areas of service delivery requiring improvement and areas of Council asset improvement. We have recently also appointed Carl Harney an experienced contract manager overseeing the Winchester part of the contract, his appointment together with that of David are already showing signs of developing a strong working relationship with the JCT.

Staffing

Following the completion of the skills gap analysis in year 1 as previously reported, this identified significant shortages of the necessary key skill of the transferring workforce. The Landscape Group

together with our training providers have implemented a programme to increase core qualifications amongst staff and can confirm that during the previous 12 months the following training has been achieved:-

- 3 Staff attained NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Cleaning and Support Services Skills
- 13 Staff attained NVQ Certificate in Team Leading
- There are currently a further 5 staff pursuing NVQ (now Work Based Diploma) qualifications
- 3 Staff working towards Diploma in Work-based Horticulture
- 2 Staff working towards NVQ Certificate in Business and Administration

In addition to this there have been many hundreds of hours spent on job specific job training. When this tranche of training is completed a further skills analysis will occur to identify any additional or specific training required.

Another area that had been identified as being in need of change following the assessment of staff that had transferred was the level of staff absence either unauthorised or sickness which in comparison to the levels achieved elsewhere in the Group was unfavourable, the impact of The Landscape Group's HR team involvement in investigating each case and where required supported by evidence obtained from vehicle trackers has resulted in 5 incidents of disciplinary action being taken for absenteeism.

The Landscape Group can also report that absence as a percentage of working days available fell from 6.5% to 5% in year two. There remains further work to be done as the average is 3%.

Work Programming, supervision and tracking of our people

During year two The Landscape Group has implemented the initial components of Project Acorn. Described in our tender submission, Acorn is a real time a dynamic work programming, work recording and productivity data capture system. The data capture and tracking part of the programme is already installed. We now know the location of all of our teams in real time and can track their movements. Uniquely, for front line equipment such as ride on mowers and shortly sweepers, our on-line telemetry means we can we can track both in real time where the machine is and what it is actually doing. That is whether it is actually cutting grass or not and if not why not. Down time is recorded such as travelling, broken down, etc. Contract and regional management can now look the efficiency of machines in real time and historically can make comparisons between teams and routes.

The works programming module is now up and running, although currently being tested as a manual system prior to going live on the web in January/February (i.e. ahead of the grass cutting season). This is however behind schedule. The Landscape Group embarked on implementing the work scheduling and quality assessment database that is the pre-cursor to Acorn however, as previously identified, the quality of the contract data provided particularly with respect to Winchester has caused some difficulties.

Contract Performance Ground Care

Grass Cutting

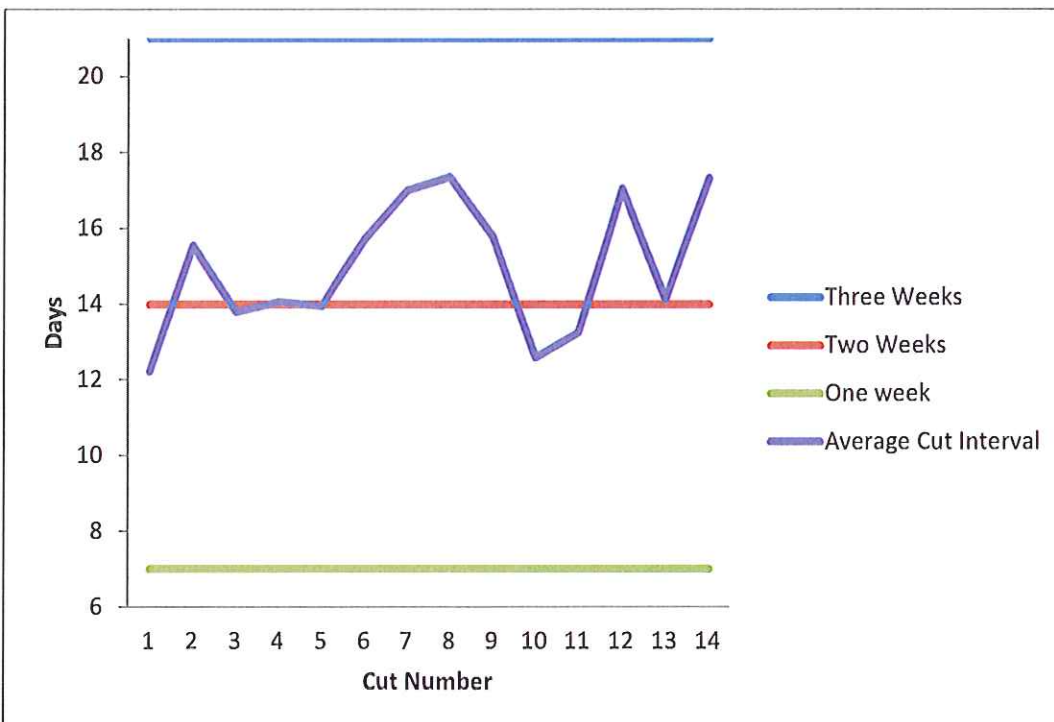
After the summer of 2012 it was hoped that the weather would be more conducive to grass cutting as opposed to grass growth and indeed it turned out to be.

The Landscape Group can confirm that all grass cutting categories were largely completed throughout the season in line with the specification. This is reflected in the 70% reduction in level of service requests. However, during the peak growing season customer complaints and member interventions remains higher than we would like. Investigations into complaints indicated that the cause is twofold.

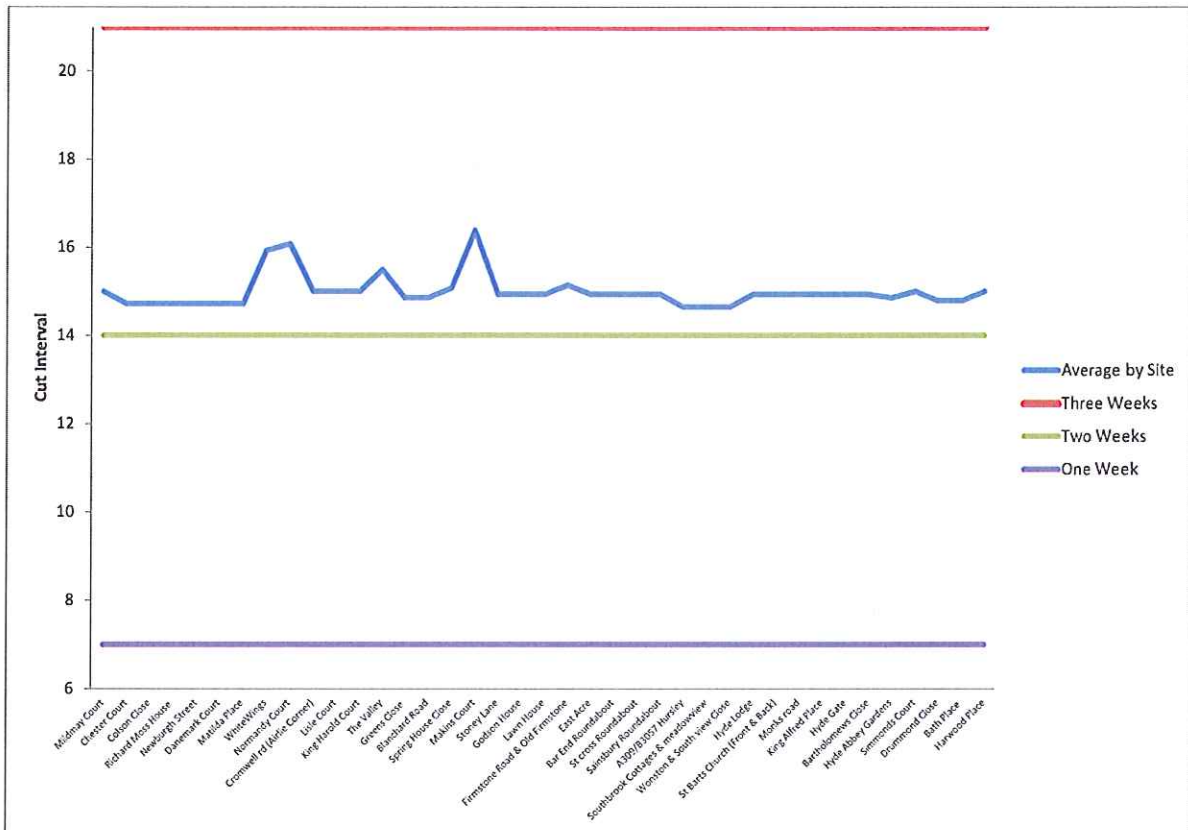
Firstly, many of the requests for service do not relate to a failure to cut grass according to the specification but the length to which the grass is growing between cuts. This is something that can be attributed to the low frequency of cutting required in the specification. The most common complaint received about our quality of grass cutting is where there are excessive arisings, again a problem created by the specification rather than the workmanship of the individuals doing the cutting. This long grass scenario will be repeated each year until the specification is improved, with the severity of complaint numbers only affected by weather conditions and the suitability for cutting.

Secondly, there has been adverse comment from residents representatives concerning sheltered housing sites (so called G3 grass), whereby residents complain of “missed cuts”. This problem also has its roots in a lack of communication by both TLG and JCT as to the requirements of the specification. Grass is required to be cut 18 times per year which equates to a frequency of approximately once every two weeks. The key indicator therefore is the average time interval between cuts (either overall or more importantly at individual sites.) Clearly the target interval is 14 days between cuts. **The overall average interval achieved for this season is 15.2 days.** So whilst we can still improve this is by no means a poor performance. The charts below show graphically the performance in this regard during the season (up to end of September) as the cutting season progressed and by location.

Average of cut intervals at each site during the season.



Average cut interval for each individual site for whole season



Grass cutting is dependent upon many factors including the weather, access, and site drainage as well as contractor performance. The expectation of some residents that this service is similar to the waste collection service and the grass will be cut “every other Monday” is neither realistic nor a requirement of the contract. There do however remain a small number of site specific issues that serve to bump up the average such as one interval of 28 days at Whitewings and Normandy Court that need to be resolved.

Cutting of steep slopes and banks has become a significant issue this year. The Health and Safety implications of this activity have become acute and the focus of the Health and Safety Executive in the last two years. This follows a number of very serious accidents, some of them fatal, in other parts of the country. What was considered acceptable even two years ago is now not so. Both the Council and TLG would be liable to prosecution if such an accident occurred in East Hants and Winchester. This has led to some banks not being cut and significant resident dis-satisfaction. However, **TLG makes no apologies for putting the health and safety of its employees first.** TLG and JCT have made a commitment to produce specific site risk assessments and revised strategy for each and every slope by the end of October.

Shrubs and Hedges

During the winter of 2012/13 a full assessment of all shrub beds was completed in Winchester jointly by JCT and TLG staff. This identified that approximately 70% of beds in Winchester were deemed to be in a dilapidated condition for a variety of reasons. The term dilapidated in this context means that the bed was clearly significantly out of specification as at 1 October 2011. This included areas that

were being wrongly classified as shrubs when a description of "hedge" would be more applicable due to the passage of time and little or no maintenance being carried out over the years.

Progress in the Joint Client Team receiving instruction from WCC in dealing with these sites has, we have to report, been slower than anticipated. At the time of writing there remain some 66% of all shrub beds in Winchester that are in a dilapidated condition, were at the commencement of the contract and for which both TLG and JCT await instructions. In the meantime we are maintaining these beds in their current condition, removing litter, attempting to keep them weed free and ensuring that they do not become overgrown to the extent that public safety or convenience is jeopardised. This is often a more onerous task, particularly the weed control, for TLG than maintaining a properly planted mature shrub bed according to the specification.

Shrub beds classed as "shrub high" have been maintained in accordance with the changes agreed by the working group that addressed the anomalies within the specification.

Hedge cutting in general throughout the year has been successful although it is noted that on certain housing sites an initial cut in May on these sensitive sites was delayed through a combination of factors including concerns over late nesting birds, but also exacerbated by management short comings and weak communication on the part of The Landscape Group. The service improvement plan must address this such that we do not encounter similar issues next year.

In response to these issues TLG and JCT will produce, agree and publish a revised schedule to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with reference to the nesting birds.

Contract Performance – Cleansing

Throughout the year, The Landscape Group has performed, where possible, the cleansing operations according to the expectations of the client. As explained at the head of this report this is significantly more work than that which was contained in the schedules and Bills of Quantities against which The Landscape Group initially tendered and subsequently resourced the contract against. It is against this background that performance should be judged. **Overall, the numbers of service requests per month on cleansing activities are exactly the same as in year one.**

Litter collection and sweeping has been consistent throughout all sites together with emptying of litter bins with the coordinated approach to activities realising real benefits in the aesthetic appearance. As expected, there are instances of bins being reported as being problematic due to being routinely overflowing, when it is identified that this is a result of scheduling The Landscape Group request either a schedule change, or implement its own regime change to ensure compliance with the output specification as appropriate, this has worked very well, with only a handful of instances of requests for service recorded compared to the 14,000 individual bin services carried out each month.

Criticism of TLG surrounding the collection of leaves last autumn (the beginning of year 2) was subsequently found to be largely unfounded as almost all of the complaints involved areas that we were not contracted to carry out leaf clearance. (This has now been resolved by the Working Group)

One area that The Landscape Group considers it did not perform at all well versus the requirements of the contract however was with respect to moss and weed control to hard surfaces. The contract requires us to complete all of the work twice in May and in September. This, with hindsight, is impossible without deployment of a vast resource that would detract from the grass cutting also its

peak in May. Once it became apparent that the plan was not going to work, on request of the authorised officer we submitted a recovery plan which we adhered to. However, during October the client suspended the programme. Whilst entirely, his prerogative, we do not agree with this as the programme is for both weeds and moss. Due to the "Indian summer" we have experienced, the peak accumulation of moss this year will be late October.

It is agreed that TLG and JCT will produce and agree a revised strategy for weed and moss control throughout the season for next year.

Although work is continuing on interpretation of what the specification requires compared to what it is thought there are still on-going instances where CMO's are interpreting detail differently to Landscape Group managers, a situation that is frustrating both parties operationally and restricting progress. It is essential therefore that without further delay:-

- The exact specification required is determined by the Councils and the contract modified to reflect that
- The contract is amended to facilitate its delivery
- A programme of communication of the new arrangements for the staff of all sides is undertaken

Litter picking throughout the contract has continued to be challenging in certain locations especially on footpaths due to the fact that this area of the contract is where the difference between expectation and what we are contracted to do is most apparent. The schedules against which the service was resourced contained no requirement for TLG to litter pick pavements and paths on and around the vast majority of streets. Alongside the JCT we are addressing this in that we have identified hotspots and thus receive increased monitoring and attendance by both parties to ensure that any accumulations are quickly removed either in accordance with the contract or a way of preventing excess work, this process is undertaken in addition to litter collection from footpaths.

One aspect that has been identified as requiring a joint assessment and investigation is that the parties have recognised that there are several locations where bins are used either as trade waste receptacles or utilised after local car boot sales attracting complaints from officers and residents, the issue of use of bins following car boot sales has been raised with officers and is currently being monitored. Ways to address this will be include in the Service Improvement Plan

Notwithstanding the above it is considered that throughout the year these two important services have been delivered successfully and at a standard significantly in excess of that which TLG is required by the contract to do.

In reviewing sweeping it can be reported that this aspect of work attracts most of the adverse comments of all services particular within Winchester, a fact that is not assisted by the difference between expectation and requirement within the contract specification. However, The Landscape Group respond positively to any issues raised in addition to undertaking the service in accordance with expectation.

Within areas that have special requirements for sweeping, these are largely defined clearly in the schedules and all services have been delivered successfully.

One aspect that has been raised as being in need of review is washing of stairs in car parks with a proposal that these areas may benefit from a deep cleanse to eliminate odours associated with anti-social behaviour.

One area that continues to perform excellently is the removal of fly tipped rubbish and it is recognised that the mechanism utilised in reporting these instances is effective.

Financial Performance

Despite increasing management support to the contract and the efficiencies obtained following two new management appointments, for the reasons outlined above concerning the volume of cleansing work being carried out compared to that which we are being paid for via the schedules and Bill of Quantities, The Landscape Group's financial position has continued to fall behind that expected of a year two contract.

Notwithstanding this The Landscape Group has continued to invest in the contract directly through increased equipment, staff numbers, equipment and training and indirectly through increased management support and remains fully committed to this contract.

Summary of Items required in the Joint Service Improvement Plan

Although performance this year has, it is considered, been much better than year one there are still a number of aspects of the contract that need to be addressed by the partners as follows:

- An early resolution of remaining specification anomalies and amendment of the contract where appropriate
- Clear communication of the actual requirements of the contract to all stakeholders, in particular TLG supervision and management and JCT staff, residents and members
- Deployment of the correct level of resource by TLG reflecting the agreed requirement
- A detailed plan for the continuation of staff skills training, including the recruitment of apprentices
- Roll out of the remaining elements of project Acorn, in particular the dynamic scheduling of works and real time recording of works carried out. Including continuing to work with the JCT to resolve residual data issues.
- A plan for the use of Acorn generated to further improve efficiency and control and client information
- A review by the clients of the amenity grass cutting specification. In the event that it does not change then a programme of stakeholder communication is required
- A permanent resolution found for each of the 66% of shrub beds that are dilapidated followed by reclassification and rewriting of the shrub maintenance Bill of Quantities as appropriate
- An improved more flexible programme and process for hedge cutting incorporating compliance with the Council's obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.
- A change to the time lines for weed and moss control and a robust programme of work from TLG
- Improved arrangements for the cutting of banks / slopes
- Advance notification of changes to schedules by JCT
- Response times to works orders
- A review of litter bin provision and condition

- Establishment of a reactive team (hit squad) to respond to localised neighbourhood issues and assist with community events

Complaints Analysis

Complaint Topic	Description	2011/12	2012/13	Variance	Trend*	Comments
Missed Bin Collection	As described	66	40	-26	▼	Encouraging downward trend which is to be expected as crews become more familiar with rounds
Missed garden waste collection	As described	23	15	-8	▼	Encouraging downward trend which is to be expected as crews become more familiar with rounds
Bin Method	Mostly relate to the way a bin or garden waste sack was returned after collection	18	40	+22	▲	Significant increase on last year which may suggest that crews are rushing collections and not returning containers as instructed
Bin Policy	Relate to the 24 hour rule for reporting missed collections	15	22	+7	▲	Approximately a 50% increase and is due to increasing frustration with the policy that missed collections must be reported within 24 hrs if they are to be collected or await next scheduled collection 2 weeks later
Grounds Maintenance	Shrub bed or hedge maintenance	7	10	+3	▲	Minor increase in formal complaints which needs to be considered alongside Lagan case data
Grass Cutting	As described	15	5	-10	▼	2011/12 was a very challenging year for grass cutting activities due to weather conditions and growing season.

Litter/Dog Bins	Overflowing or missed collection	6	5	-1	▼	Very minor decrease which needs to be considered alongside Lagan case data
Fly tip Removal	Delays in removal	0	2	+2	▲	Minor increase in formal complaints which needs to be considered alongside Lagan case data. Procedure to deal with fly tipping has been strengthened with proactive operations to identify offenders.
Street Cleaning/Leaf removal	Delay in service or inadequate works	5	8	+3	▲	Minor increase but need to consider final trend once leaf clearing season for 2013 has been completed.
Public Conveniences	Poor cleaning	4	5	+1	▲	Minor increase in formal complaints which needs to be considered alongside Lagan case data
Total		159	152	-7	▼	Minor overall decrease but longer term trend over next few years will be important

*Notes – size of symbol indicates scale of trend