

Swale Borough Council
Waste & Street Cleansing Scrutiny Review
Summary of recommendations with explanations:

Number	Recommendation	Explanation
1	TUPE information should be provided earlier in the tender process (as far as permitted by legislation) in future projects.	<i>Theme: Resources and staff. Any employment contract issues that may arise from the TUPE process (Transfer of undertakings – Protection of Employment), can be resolved in plenty of time before the commencement of the new contract.</i>
2	Training for contracted staff prior to the new service is essential to ensure a smooth transition. Where possible use a phased approach for training to minimise service disruption.	<i>Theme: Resources and staff. Staff received lots of new information on special training weekends ahead of the start of the contract. This should be phased to ensure maximum efficiency at the start of the contract.</i>
3	Where relevant, the council should request that the contractor considers the use of personal safety cameras for their operatives if they are not explicitly mentioned in a bid, and also that CCTV on vehicles should be operational from day one of the next contract.	<i>Theme: Resources and staff. Abuse towards staff is unacceptable and contractors should be encouraged take steps, such as use of personal safety cameras, to overcome this. CCTV on vehicles is essential from the start of the contract to assist with resolving complaints.</i>
4	For future project implementation where there will be a change to a service, ensure there is adequate staff resource in place to deal with potentially high levels of incoming queries.	<i>Theme: Resources and staff. The project originally felt that there was sufficient resource but found it difficult to resource/recruit as the disruption period went on longer than anticipated. Ensure there are sufficient trained staff in place who have the capacity to deal with an increased workload should there be high levels of queries.</i>
5	Ensure the appropriate skills are in place at contract implementation.	<i>Theme: Resources and staff. Recognise the need to bring in short term resource for specialist analysis/IT/resident engagement etc.</i>
6	Ensure data is provided earlier, with agreed timescales, in the	<i>Theme: Data and rounds. Data was found not to be as accurate as needed and then</i>

	tender process and carry out checks to ensure it is correct.	<i>service changes we delivered too late to test and communicate effectively.</i>
7	The Contract and Resources team are consulted in the early stages of a planning application to ensure that estate design takes account of the ease and consistency of bin collections and that the accessibility of communal bin stores is assessed.	<i>Theme: Data and rounds. Whilst the team are involved greater work needs to be done to ensure new housing are designed to ensure that bin collections can be carried out with ease.</i>
8	An annual review should be requested to ensure rounds do not become unmanageable over time due to new housing development.	<i>Theme: Data and rounds. As new housing developments are built, the rounds should be regularly checked to ensure the extra collections won't impact the rest of the round.</i>
9	Reassess if Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) should be carried out at key points during tender preparation. If there are any significant changes to a contract or when unexpected problems arise, this should trigger the completion of an EqIA.	<i>Theme: Data and rounds. Even if it is anticipated that a service will not change when a new contract starts, regular reviews should be carried out to ensure that people with any of the 9 equality protected characteristics are not disadvantaged by any changes to the service.</i>
10	Link Contract Monitoring Officers (CMOs) to vulnerable properties better in times of disruption so that potential problems are identified quickly.	<i>Theme: Data and rounds. Vulnerable properties should have a named Contract Monitoring Officer who will monitor and resolve any problems they may be experiencing.</i>
11	Member working group meetings during tender and mobilisation were useful, however needed more regular updates to the parent committee. Request that the Constitutional Working Group agree a model set of Terms of Reference (TOR) as a guide, so that at the implementation of each new working group, full and clear TOR can be set.	<i>Theme: Contracts and project management. The flow of information and updates between member working groups and the parent committee is essential to ensure that any issues during the tender and mobilisation phases are addressed quickly.</i>
12	Adequate officer resourcing should be put in place at the outset so that SBC are prepared for any worst-case scenario situation.	<i>Theme: Contracts and project management. To ensure a smooth transition to a new contract, ensure there are sufficient trained staff in place</i>

		<i>who have the capacity to deal with an increased workload should there be high levels of queries.</i>
13	If it becomes apparent that a service is going to change significantly, the responsible Service Committee should consider calling it in for scrutiny, even if it is late in the day. To assist with this, the mechanism for Service Committees to scrutinise should be clarified and a recommendation should be made to the Member Development Working Group to provide ongoing training for Members on scrutiny as a governance mechanism in the committee system.	<i>Theme: Contracts and project management. Small groups of Members can examine aspects of service change in detail via a scrutiny review and feed their findings back to the parent committee. The Environment and Climate Change Committee recommend that training on scrutiny within the committee system should be provided for members.</i>
14	As a matter of course when working on a new tender, learnings from scrutiny reviews and project evaluations from the previous contract, should be available to review.	<i>Theme: Contracts and project management. It is important to carry learning forward from previous contracts.</i>
15	The process for councillors to report issues to officers should be made clear from the outset of a new contract to ensure that duplicate reports are not made to multiple officers.	<i>Theme: Communications. This is to ensure that the right issues get to the right people and avoids duplication.</i>
16	For future major projects, ensure that scrutiny is carried out in the preparation and implementation phases to assess risk and in advance put precautionary additional resource in place in readiness for the unknown.	<i>Theme: Communications. Whilst risks were recorded during the project, these should be reported to the relevant committee in advance and measures put in place to deal with them should they arise.</i>
17	Ensure the member/officer protocol covers working relationships in strategic meetings so that they are a safe space where officers and Members will have confidence there will not be a blame culture.	<i>Theme: Communications. The wellbeing of officers and members working in stressful situations must be protected.</i>

18	Consider holding briefings twice a year for all councillors where information can be shared on what teams throughout the council are working on and have planned for the future to assist with improving member/officer working relationships.	<i>Theme: Communications. It is important for Members to be regularly updated on what is happening in the Council.</i>
19	Clarity on decision making processes under the Committee system should be established so it is clear where decisions are made on operational solutions in any future emergency situation.	<i>Theme: Communications. The governance of the Council has changed so that decisions are made by members more widely. When urgent decisions are needed, Members and officers need clarity on how this should happen.</i>
20	Regular member update meetings have been useful and should be implemented if there are similar ongoing incidents in the future.	<i>Theme: Communications. Members being regularly updated during ongoing incidents will ensure they can answer resident queries. However there needs to be a balance between time spent on resolving issues and reporting issues.</i>
21	A waste contract update report will be considered twice a year by the Environment and Climate Change Committee with the first one in July 2025.	<i>Theme: Communications. It is important to monitor key contracts at committee level.</i>
22	A request for training on data interpretation to be referred to the Member Development Working Group. Any data provided for members should be clearly presented in an easily understandable format.	<i>Theme: Communications. Any information provided to Members should be clear and easy to interpret.</i>
23	Ensure the project communications plan considers major service changes and how to respond in periods of disruption, with particular reference to the use of social media.	<i>Theme: Communications. A communications plan is prepared for major projects such as a new contract and it should be made clear in the plan how to deal with any periods of disruption to a change in service.</i>