

Report to Scrutiny Committee – 9th December 2013

Members are aware that the changes to waste collection services in July resulted in a period of turbulence during which we experienced higher numbers of missed collections and higher call volumes. I reported this to the Scrutiny Committee on 2nd September 2013.

As expected the Quarter 2 (Q2) performance report reflects this period of disruption, with DE_194 showing high figures of missed collections, CS_010 showing a sharp fall in the percentage of calls answered within the target timeframe and CS_11 showing a rise in the telephone abandonment rate.

I reported in September that the direction of travel was positive, and the purpose of this brief report is to update Members on the current and recent levels of performance.

Missed collections

The Q2 performance report shows the number of missed collections (all containers) to be well over 1000 per month, on average, across Q2. The figures are down to 448 for October and 467 for November (the November increase being due to the knock on effects of the storm in late October). **This is back in line with the performance in Q1 before the service change.**

Prior to April 2013, the average number of missed collections per month under the previous contracts (SITA and Wealden District Council) was around 300. Specialist Advisors meet Kier on a weekly basis to discuss and review contract issues are working to bring the figure down towards the previous figure.

Recycling

Our target for recycling for 2013/14 is 33%, and for quarter 1, that target has been exceeded.

Recycling figures for dry recyclables and garden waste are available on a quarterly basis from ESCC but there is always a time lag of several months. The most recent figures are for quarter 1 and the quarter 2 figures are imminent.

Month	April	May	June
Recycled	16.8%	14.2%	14.3%
Composted	14.9%	23.4%	24.9%
Total	31.7%	37.6%	39.1%

This increase is because a greater variety of materials can now be recycled including a range of plastics, and customers now have a bin for co-mingled recycling with a separate box for glass. These opportunities have led to an improved level of recycling, in line with the national position which shows better performance for co-mingled collections as against source separated recycling. Given that customers continue to request to join the garden waste and recycling service, we anticipate that these figures will continue to improve.

Street cleanliness

Street cleaning standards are generally high with a minimal number of complaints being received.

Bin delivery and collection programme

Kier have continued to deliver brown and green bins to customers and collect surplus bins since the service change in July 2013. However, due to the large volume of requests it has not been possible to keep up with demand, and this has resulted in a backlog of requests. We have circa 2,500 worksheets to review, although many of these are collections rather than deliveries, and we have multiple worksheets for the same customer in many cases.

Brown garden waste bins were out of stock across the Partnership in late October/early November, but these are now back in stock and so can be delivered.

We are now working closely with Kier on a joint project to complete this work. Our customer advisors will be proactively calling customers to confirm their outstanding requirements and Kier will be aiming to deliver 70 containers per day to clear the backlog. This work started in early December and will continue into January.

Calls Handled and Waiting Times

Call volumes, which nearly trebled at times during Q2, have returned to normal levels. In November we answered 96.7% of calls to 410000, an abandonment rate of 3.3%, which is consistent with the Q1 performance.

Our target for call answering times is 80% within 30 seconds. We discovered that the system reporting threshold was wrongly set to 20 seconds, meaning that we can only report past performance against this figure, for which our performance was 74.7% in November. We are confident that we would have exceeded the target had the threshold been set correctly.

The threshold has been set to 30 seconds from December onwards and we will be reporting accordingly in future.

Conclusion

The reasons for the poor performance levels in Q2 have been discussed at the previous Scrutiny Committee. Q3 performance so far shows that we have addressed the majority of the issues arising from the waste collection service changes, with the exception of the backlog of bin deliveries, for which a specific project has been started. Our telephone performance has likewise returned to the high performance levels that existing prior to the service changes.