

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 11th December, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chair)
Cllr Thomas Day (Vice-Chair)
Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Leola Card
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr S. Trussler

Cllr Nadia Martin joined the meeting online and was therefore unable to vote on any of the items.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 23rd October, 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

22. REGISTERED PROVIDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee welcomed Zoe Paine, Strategy and Enabling Officer who was in attendance to advise the Committee of the work undertaken to review the Terms of Reference and working arrangements of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group since the meeting in June 2025.

The Committee were being asked to agree a name change for the Group to the Housing Oversight Group and agree new Terms of Reference.

The Committee discussed the Terms of Reference and agreed both changes, subject to the following additions/changes to the Terms of Reference:

- An increase in the regularity of meetings, three a year wasn't considered enough
- Inclusion of a process for the Portfolio Holder to report back to the Committee
- A greater number of Members on the Group, which currently had five Members, seven was suggested and political balance would need to be considered

- Confirmation that Private Rented Housing would be included in the Group's remit
- Inclusion of a mechanism in the Terms of Reference to ensure that the widening of the Group did not affect the ability to hold Registered Providers to account - this was considered a priority.

Mrs Paine, agreed to rework the Terms of Reference to incorporate the changes/additions. The revised Terms of Reference would then be shared via email with Members for agreement.

The Chair thanked Mrs Paine for her time.

23. **SERCO ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

The Committee welcomed Ruth Whaymand, Environmental Contracts Manager and Aaron Straker, Serco Contracts Manager, who were both in attendance to report on the Serco Annual Report 2024/25.

The Committee received a presentation from Ms Whaymand which provided an overview of the Serco contract, including a background to the procurement, how the contract was audited, service changes, new legislation timetables and the introduction of 'Simpler Recycling'. Mr Straker then gave a presentation which covered details on the workforce, the services delivered in Rushmoor (Collections, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance), contract management and compliance, whitespace, Supatrak and onboard CCTV, health and safety and wellbeing, recycling, innovation, added value and the future.

The Committee discussed the presentations and raised the following issues:

- Street Cleansing changes in some areas were considered to not be successful, in particular in the North Camp area, and as a gateway into the Borough for the forthcoming 2026 Airshow and Armed Forces Day, a request was made for attention to be given to all gateways into the Borough to ensure all were well maintained and clear of rubbish for these important events.
- Food waste KPIs and what targets were considered realistic? - Mr Straker advised that work was underway to set realistic targets for food waste collections and advised he hoped these would be fairer in the future.
- Simpler Recycling – how would residents understand what could and could not be recycled? – it was noted that the new recycling rules aimed to make it easier for residents, as all counties would be aligned with the same recycling requirements. It was reported that metals, plastics and glass would be co-collected, and paper and card would be collected separately to avoid co-contamination. Consideration was being given, by the Working Group, to the receptacle to collect paper and card, and a wheeled bin was thought to be most appropriate to avoid any cross contamination or manual handling issues.

Members requested that the Group thought about space for wheeled bins, from a residents' point of view, when deliberating the matter.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the cost of any new bins and vehicle infrastructure, due to changes as a result of Simpler Recycling, were currently being discussed with Hampshire County Council, as the disposal authority. Should the County Council order local authorities to make changes, they would be responsible for the additional cost, but at present the cost would be the responsibility of the local authorities.

In response to a query regarding the income from PackUK, the Government's chosen administrator for the UK's Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging programme, in relation to Simpler Recycling, it was estimated that the Council were expected to receive around £1m for 2025/26, however only £615k was guaranteed as it was dependent on the funds being collected from manufacturers by PackUK. The funds would be ringfenced for waste and recycling services.

- Apprenticeships – in response to a question regarding apprenticeships leading to permanent positions, it was advised that this was not always possible but there was a potential to transfer to other sites in the area.
- Bin Contamination – It was noted that the Serco Communications Team worked with the Council to help educate residents in relation to contamination of waste and recycling bins. It was understood that the Team thoroughly investigated bins, that were not collected due to contamination, to inform residents what the issue was so it could be avoided going forward. Tools were available to help with education, including posters, stickers, reusable bags and mailshots. Issues relating to food waste contamination could be from the use of thick or black plastic sacks instead of small thin bags. It was hoped that the new Simpler Recycling would help reduce contamination rates, as residents were already putting some of the new items into their recycling bin, which was contributing to contamination, for example, currently approximately 6% of contamination was plastic pots, tubs and trays which would be excepted for recycling under the new legislation.
- Tracking data – a request was made for vehicle tracking data to be made more publicly available to residents. It was noted that the system could not be accessed until after 15:00hrs and the info was shared with the Council's Customer Services Unit, and the Contracts Team, so was available when residents called to report missed bins.
- Electric vehicle maintenance costs – it was advised that the two vehicles in use currently were only on trial and any decisions to use electric vehicles permanently, going forward, would be for the Working Group to discuss and would ultimately be dependent on the details of the contract extension.
- Business waste – in response to a query relating to waste from businesses being blown on people's driveways/gardens, it was noted that it would be

unrealistic to ask the street cleansing teams to litter pick on private property and many residents would not welcome it.

- Bulky waste – it was commented on that the cost of bulky waste collections was not reasonable. The Portfolio Holder advised that consideration was being given to the cost depending on the number of items being collected.
- Electrical waste – it was noted that the limiting factor for electrical waste was size. The pink bins had a limited size opening for items, and the kerbside vehicles only had a small cage to collect items in. It was advised that if the item fit in a standard supermarket bag the item should be accepted. With regard to laptops, mobile phones, tablets, etc. these were disposed on at the owners' risk and the owner should be aware of potential data protection risks.
- Clinical waste – It was noted that clinical waste collections could only be arranged if referred by a medical professional who would provide details on how to dispose of the clinical waste to the disposal authority. In cases where a medical professional referral was not possible, items should be able to be returned to the individuals GP.

Other issues raised included, broken wheelie bins, legionella flushing, commercial waste, proposed road tax increases, the Human Rights Bill and co-funded pay increases.

The Committee discussed the management of shrub beds since changes, driven by the climate emergency and cost savings were introduced in 2022. It was noted that the weeds had gone from being controlled with chemicals to stopping any kind of control. As a result, the brambles had now taken hold and were well established in the shrub beds. During discussions, it was suggested that a one-off intensive programme could be put in place to clear the weeds and brambles. However, this was considered to be a costly, significantly difficult and challenging manual task. The Committee also discussed pockets of grassland that had been left unmown to encourage biodiversity and data had been requested on the overall size of such areas.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the existing Cabinet Working Group was proposing to review the weed treatment of the Borough's shrub beds, that had been reduced in 2022.

The Committee voted unanimously to support this review and **RECOMMENDED** that the reinstatement of a greater focus on weed treatment in beds should be prioritised in the Council's contract negotiations with Serco.

ACTION:

Detail	By Whom	When
Provide data on the size of land left unmown (conservation grass) to encourage biodiversity.	Andy Ford, Parks Manager	January, 2026

The Chair thanked, Mr Straker, Mrs Whaymand and Cllr Guinness for their contribution to the discussions.

24. WALK THIS WASTE PILOT

Environmental Contracts Manager, Ruth Whaymand gave a presentation on the Walk this Waste Pilot which aimed to reduce fly-tipping in the Borough. Fly-tipping had a significant impact, especially in deprived areas, and encouraged crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Pilot, to provide a free bulky waste collection, was aimed at reducing fly-tipping in the most deprived areas and targeted residents with no access to transport or funds to dispose of their own bulky waste. A mobile collection vehicle undertook nine events, each with multiple stopping points, and was limited to collecting three items per household. It was reported that, 178 residents used the service and 333 items were collected, totalling 8.34 tonnes of waste. It was noted that the Pilot did not have the desired effect of reducing incidents of fly-tipping and overall, a slight increase was recorded. The Pilot had cost approximately £5,700.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Pilot had been well received by residents, and the choice to use a mobile vehicle had been more positive than the original choice to use a static skip. However, despite the service not reducing incidents of fly-tipping during the pilot, it was felt that should the service be extended to include one event in each ward per year at a cost of £7,970 (7p per resident a year), an impact could be achieved. The Pilot had also had a positive impact on the communities where it had been carried out.

Cllr Harden expressed his thoughts on the Pilot, and it was noted that he felt the funds could be used in a different way by targeting vulnerable or elderly people or those with more items and no ability to dispose of them themselves. He was supportive of the community aspect of the Pilot but felt that the funds shouldn't be spent on a scheme that had been proven not to work.

During discussion, the Committee acknowledged that the Pilot period had been short, and impacts may be seen if the Pilot were allowed to carry on for a longer period. Alternative options were also raised including, using funds from the Bulky Waste scheme to support initiatives around potential reduced rates or ward specific schemes as agreed with ward councillors. It was noted that it was important to reach those that needed the service the most and alternatives needed to be considered.

In summary, the Committee's key observations and recommendations to the Cabinet were:

- There was no evidence that the Pilot had achieved its primary purpose of reducing fly-tipping, although it was acknowledged that this may have followed should the scheme have run over a longer period
- The Pilot clearly helped engage communities in achieving 'Pride in Place'

- Concerns were expressed that the scheme excluded residents who were unable to carry large items to the vehicles
- The Committee requested Cabinet consider the following as alternatives to the Walk This Waste scheme:
 - A review of residents' accessibility to the bulky waste service, employing pricing incentives to encourage participation,
 - bespoke ward specific measures to be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors, and
 - that both the above options should focus on the wards that experience the highest incidences of fly-tipping.

The Chair thanked Mrs Whaymand and Cllr Guinness for their presentation.

25. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and were advised that the next meeting on 5th February, 2026, would be used to carry out pre decision scrutiny on the Farnborough Leisure Centre.

The meeting closed at 11.00 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIR)
