

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S**  
**REPORT TO CABINET**

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Report Title:** Approval for Award of Contract for Health & Safety Monitoring

**Submitted by:** Service Director, Sustainable Environment

**Portfolios:** Sustainable Environment

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
For Cabinet to approve the award of a contract for the provision of Health & Safety Monitoring for the Councils Recycling and Waste collection service front line vehicles and staff.	
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>	
That Cabinet:	
<b>Approves the award of contract for Health &amp; Safety Monitoring on a 3-year contract with the option for 3 x 1-year extensions.</b>	
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>	
The Council has operated remote Health & safety monitoring for the last 3 years, where it has proven beneficial in the Council being able to effectively manage Health & Safety and reduce hazards within the recycling and waste collection service, an area which nationally remains one of the most dangerous industry sectors, and has helped embed an improved culture for Health & Safety.	

**1. Background**

- 1.1** The waste industry remains among the HSE's most dangerous industry sectors with significant levels of injuries, and unfortunately fatalities occurring each year. Although great strides have been made over the years, and the sector has improved, more work still needs to be done, and the sector remains a major focus for the HSE, and in particular local authority collections.
- 1.2** Following a successful trail with Lichfield District Council integrating a third-party monitoring system developed in collaboration with Biffa, using their monitoring control room infrastructure and vehicle CCTV system supplier (Contel) to provide independent monitoring of recycling and waste collection operations, the Council joined with Lichfield to roll the service out for 3 years.

- 1.3 The system effectively allows Biffa to audit individual vehicles for a period of around 20 minutes independently monitoring 7 defined areas of compliance such as reversing, use of lifting equipment, manual handling, uniform & PPE slips / trips/ falls and so on. The driver and crew of the vehicle don't know when the audits are taking place, and staff at the control centre have no knowledge of the individuals they are auditing.
- 1.4 The system has allowed the Recycling and Waste team further imbed health and safety compliance and has seen a marked improvement in compliance with risk assessments and safe systems of work, which in turn has reduced the risk of accidents and lost time through injury, effectively paying for itself.

## 2. Issues

- 2.1 The current contract with Biffa comes to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and needs to be reproced. There are now several other Waste Collection Authorities (WCA's) (2 in Staffordshire) and one outside of Staffordshire have current arrangements with Biffa that come to an end around the same time or wishing to implement the service. It was sensible therefore to undertake a joint procurement exercise for all 4 authorities, with this Council taking the lead.
- 2.2 Front-line staff are exposed to significant risk in terms of working on the highway, around moving vehicles including reversing, operating dangerous machinery and manual handling.
- 2.3 Task and finish for daily collections was implemented for a period during and following the Covid pandemic to support social distancing. This way of working is associated with a higher risk of shortcutting and lower compliance to safe systems of work (SSOW). When task and finish was ceased there was a risk that bad habits may have become embedded.
- 2.4 Alongside this a service change was implemented in 2020 which meant that the Risk Assessments (RA's) and SSOW for operations were refreshed.
- 2.5 As well as refresh of the RA's and SSOW, classroom-based training was rolled out to all staff, and in 2022 the remote monitoring service was implemented to ensure that staff were following the revised SSOW.

## 3. Proposal

- 3.1 Award of the contract will be for 3 years with 3 x 1-year options to extend.
- 3.2 The procurement documents stated evaluation would take place on a split between quality and price, with price being awarded 60% of the marks and quality 40%.
- 3.3 3 bidders in total put in tenders for the contract. The three bidders for the Council will be referred to as bidders A, B, & C.
- 3.4 These bids have been fully evaluated and moderated, with the outturn scores calculated.
- 3.5 Due to the commercial sensitivity of the contract, the evaluation results, and preferred bidder are not included on part 1 of the agenda and are exempt from publication by reasons of paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the Local Page 107 6 Government Act 1972. The proposed charges can be found in appendix 1 in part 2 of the Cabinet agenda.

#### **4. Reasons for Proposed Solution**

- 4.1** A range of training methods are provided to the workforce from full sessions covering RA's and SSOW to Toolbox talk refreshers, written crib sheets and practical sessions (i.e. behind an RCV). Managers are mindful to the fact that staff learn in different ways and some staff have low levels of literacy.
- 4.2** The remote monitoring means that each team member has a weekly debrief based on the outcome of the audit. This was implemented in a supportive way that encouraged behaviour change. The default conversations were around further training needs and any reasons that may prevent safe / encourage poor behaviours or even poor habits.
- 4.3** Competence is not assessed at an individual level, but rather at a team level using the outcomes of the remote monitoring audits. Although the audits primarily measured compliance, levels of non-compliance are used as an indicator of competence. It is recognised that non-compliance could stem from a range of factors - including gaps in knowledge or understanding, training needs, or team dynamics - so audit findings are interpreted with this broader context in mind. Competence before and after the intervention was therefore assessed by comparing the number and nature of hazards identified during each audit, reflecting overall team performance rather than individual capability.
- 4.4** Audit scores and compliance with safe working methods have increased significantly since implementation, the number of hazards observed have decreased considerably. At implementation in 2022 there were approximately 4 hazards observed in every 10-minute audit. In 2023 the average was 1.78 and in 2025 this has decreased to less than 1.
- 4.5** Weekly debriefs mean that staff engagement in H&S is high (albeit not measured) and there is some healthy competitiveness between teams in terms who aspire to score 100%.

#### **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1** The Council could opt to cease remote monitoring and return to supervisors physically monitoring compliance of front-line crews. However, history tells us that this is not an effective way to monitor compliance, as human behaviour means people will tend to comply when they are aware they are being visibly monitored. With remote monitoring, no one knows exactly when they are being monitored, therefore this provides a reliable indication of compliance overall.

#### **6. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The procurement process has been conducted to meet the requirements of the Procurement Regulations 2024. It also meets the Councils requirements to secure Best Value.
- 6.2 The contract will be awarded individually to each local authority lot and managed by those authorities individually. This is how the current contract arrangements operate and have proven to work very well.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 Awarding the contract for Health & Safety monitoring does not have any direct impact on equalities.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The financial cost of the proposed contract for Health & Safety monitoring is within existing budgets at around £30k per year.
- 8.2 Resource implications in monitoring and use of the system are already covered in the Recycling & Waste service staffing.

9. **Major Risks & Mitigation**

- 9.1 The risk of not awarding a contract under the procurement is that there is no effective way to manage H&S compliance within the RWS service.
- 9.2 The contract demonstrates that the Council is committed to proactively monitoring and improving health and safety reducing the risk of significant harm to employees and members of the public.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**



11. **One Council**

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

**One Commercial Council**

*We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.*

**One Digital Council**

*We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.*

Procurement of remote Health & Safety monitoring supports the One Digital Council initiative, making use of the latest technology, and linking into existing digital systems operated by the Council

**One Sustainable Council**

*We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.*

Recycling and Waste is one of the key services in helping create a more sustainable borough for people to live and work.

**12. Key Decision Information**

**12.1** The award of this contract is a key decision due to its overall value.

**13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

**13.1** None

**14. List of Appendices**

**14.1** Appendix 1 is contained in part 2 of the Cabinet agenda.

**15. Background Papers**

**15.1** None