

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor Field to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

What is the final destination of the County's plastic which is collected for recycling?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Waste collection and disposal arrangements across the county changed on 29 June. In Hastings, Rother and Wealden a new collection contract with Biffa has commenced, whilst Eastbourne and Lewes councils have opted for an in-house collection service. Plastics, along with a wide range of other recyclable materials, are collected from East Sussex residents and are sent under new arrangements to the Viridor materials recovery facility in Crayford, Kent, under a new contract with the County Council.

The dry mixed recyclable materials that are collected on our doorsteps are sorted at the Crayford plant into the various material streams, compacted and baled. Plastics are then sent to one of Viridor's specialist plastic reprocessing plants in the UK to produce plastic pellets and flakes. This end product is then sold as a raw material that is used both in the UK and overseas in the manufacture of new products. Plastic sacks, shopping bags and film are reprocessed in the UK.

The resource market remains a global market, governed by the principles of supply and demand and where any material is sent abroad, Viridor only works with Environment Agency accredited and licensed facilities. Material is sold as an "end-of-waste product" or raw material for reuse in manufacturing. Viridor has a robust system of traceability across its supply chain and receives accreditation from the companies it works with, demonstrating reprocessing has taken place. Countries outside of the EU to which 'end of waste' plastic product has been and is sent to are Turkey, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, China, Malaysia and the Philippines.

2. Question by Councillor Swansborough to the Lead Member for Resources

The Orbis Public Law Partnership had been launched with a fanfare and heralded as a flagship inter-authority agreement.

You received a report at the Lead Member for Resources meeting on 25 June 2019 which extolled the benefits of the partnership and which highlighted the savings that had been made.

However, the report went on to say that Surrey County Council, had "embarked on a comprehensive transformation programme", as a result of which it had withdrawn from with the planned integration within Orbis Public Law and effectively had scuppered that plan.

Would you please let us know the actual savings that have been earned by Orbis Public Law during its lifetime and its expected financial position in the future? Will it still be earning savings in the future and if so, how much?

Apart from Legal Services, is Surrey County Council's "comprehensive transformation programme" expected to have any further implications for the remaining services provided by the Orbis Partnership? Is Surrey County Council still committed legally and politically to that operation?

Is East Sussex County Council contemplating a similar "complete transformation programme" to bring administration costs more into line with its declining activity?

Answer by the Lead Member for Resources

As a result of the Surrey County Council transformation programme Surrey Legal Services will be reviewed internally in the next 12 months and it is for this reason that they could not commit to the planned integration of the Orbis Public Law structures, budgets and the case management. Surrey will however remain part of existing initiatives

In light of SCC's decision and the impact that this has on the authority's contribution ratio the Sussex partnership decided not to move to full integration but will build on the collaboration already in existence and look for further benefits via collaborative projects and initiatives, although we will not now be able to achieve the more significant gains that were anticipated.

With ESCC having the lowest cost per hourⁱ the main reasons for forming the partnership were to increase our resilience and improve Legal Service's staff development and retention opportunities. Although savings were not necessarily anticipated during the set-up process, benefits have been realised via the collaboration model without the integrated structure and these initiatives will continue.

Savings that have been realised by the partnership to date include:

- **Digital Court** – £90k saved annually across the partnership and an estimated 4.5 tonnes reduction in the use of paper.
- **Work sharing** – reduction in the partners undertaking the same work multiple times across the partnership. Estimated value at least £36k.
- **Training programme** – OPL has benefitted from 700 free training places with an estimated value of value of £70k
- **Insurance claims** – insurance claims handling in OPL will save the partnership £80k in its first full year
- **Legal Framework Contract** - jointly procured legal framework has resulted in reduced rates. £97.5K will be saved across the partnership in 19/20 on representation in Care cases alone.

In respect of the wider Orbis Partnership, the Chief Executives of the three Orbis partners jointly commissioned a review at the end of 2018. The central question to be addressed was:

“How are the functions and services provided through the Orbis integrated business infrastructure partnership best arranged and managed to enable the delivery of efficient and quality services that best serve the needs, requirements and interests of each sovereign Council?”

This review made recommendations for some changes to the scope of some services being delivered through Orbis as follows:

Finance	Continuation of Finance Centres of Expertise for all Partners; Strategic Finance to remain for ESCC and BHCC but withdrawn for SCC.
HROD	Continuation of a fully integrated service for ESCC and BHCC but withdrawn for SCC
Property	Withdraw strategic property and strategic asset management for all partners and undertake a further review on what Property Centres of Expertise should continue to be delivered in Orbis.
Information Technology & Digital	Retain as a fully integrated service across 3 Partners
Procurement	Retain as a fully integrated service across 3 Partners
Business Operations	Retain as a fully integrated service across 3 Partners

All three partners are legally committed to the partnership to March 2020 and to a further 3 years following this. This has also been agreed by the Leaders of the 3 Partners.

In respect of East Sussex County Council, our administration costs are aligned with the overall activity of the Council.

The Council operates the Reconciling Policy Performance and Resources integrated service and financial planning process which as a feature inherently aligns the costs of administration with the priorities for the Council and therefore does not require a step change transformation programme approach to achieve this.

ⁱ When staff costs are divided by productive hours.