

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY  
19 JANUARY 2010**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)  
Councillors Butler, Chittenden, Mrs Gooch, Hinder,  
Verrall, Mrs Joy and Mrs Smith

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors J E Wilson and Yates

**72. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast**

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

**73. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors J E Wilson and Yates.

**74. Notification of Substitute Members**

It was noted the Councillor Chittenden was substituting for Councillor J E Wilson.

**75. Notification of Visiting Members**

There were no visiting Members.

**76. Disclosures by Members and Officers**

There were no disclosures.

**77. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information**

**Resolved:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

**78. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2009**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2009 be agreed as a cored record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**79. The Best Value Review of Waste and Recycling Implementation Plan**

The Chairman welcomed the Director of Change and Environmental Services, David Edwards, the Policy and Review Officer, Anna Collier, the

Environment Manager, Jonathan Scott and the Waste Collection Manager, Jennifer Gosling to the meeting. Following a brief introduction from the witnesses outlining the progress of the Waste and Recycling Services Best Value Review, the Committee discussed the following:

- Mr Edwards set out the background to the review and that historically the level of waste generated per household had been very high in Maidstone, recycling levels low and costs of waste collection about average when compared to other local authorities. Although levels of recycling had increased in the past year following the introduction of the new dry recycling scheme;
- The draft implementation plan outlined how the options agreed by the Cabinet in November 2009 would be implemented, but noted that the implementation plan was subject to review every six months;
- Since producing the Best Value Review Options report, Aylesford Newsprint Ltd had approached the Council to develop a paper collection service. It was anticipated that a paper collection service would provide a source of income and discussions with Aylesford Newsprint and Kent County Council were ongoing, however normal procurement rules applied. The Committee agreed that an action on consultation with regard to paper collections should be incorporated into the implementation plan;
- Members noted that Barming and Loose Scouts were collecting paper and this was a large source of their income and agreed that the Council should consult with those scout groups providing a paper collection service. Furthermore the Committee agreed that a competing paper collection scheme should not be undertaken by the Council in these areas;
- The Council had been successful in its bid for a food waste pilot whereby food waste was to be collected on a weekly basis and dry recyclables and remaining waste on alternating weeks. Officers explained that in the future it may be possible for only one refuse vehicle (with a pod) to collect both the food waste and the recyclables or the remaining waste on each collection round;
- It was clarified that moving to an alternative weekly collection would save the Council up to £400,000, this was primarily because fewer rounds would be required on any given day;
- The make up of residual waste was 40% food waste, 20% paper/card 12% mixed plastics, 8% glass and 20% other. It was anticipated that the actions depicted in the plan would therefore reduce each of these items in the residual waste stream;
- Members were concerned that some residents could have storage capacity issues with regard to food waste receptacles. It was therefore recommended that the feasibility of food waste containers fitting inside the residual and recyclable receptacle be explored as an action in the implementation plan, to negate resident's storage issues;
- Resident's green waste was composted in Rainham, Essex and then given back to Kent County Council to be distributed and/or sold;
- A number of Members were concerned that incidences of fly tipping would increase following the removal of the freighter service. Ms

Collier advised the Committee that incidences of fly tipping, bulky waste collections and freighter stop locations had been mapped over a number of months, and that this had shown there was no relationship between the three;

- The items collected by the Freight Service were sent to landfill. Contamination of the materials meant there was no opportunity to reuse them. Ms Collier highlighted that it was hoped that with a simpler bulky waste collection, use of the green waste service and greater engagement with the third sector, significant changes to the freighter service could be considered;
- Members noted that education was key to enhancing the waste and recycling service and agreed a method of educating the public could include road shows and workshops in those areas where recycling was not embraced. Furthermore, Members agreed that waterproof stickers on the lip or lid of recycling bin could be used to advise residents what they could and could not put in their recycling bins;
- The Committee highlighted the importance of close working relationships with the press and agreed an action be included in the implementation plan of working with press to ensure changes to the service were effectively communicated to residents as part of reviewing education and promotion;
- Kent Enviropower's audit of Maidstone's recycling rates had found a 6% contamination rate in comparison to an average of 19% across Allington Incinerator users;
- Demand for Maidstone's clinical waste service had increased and the number of collections had therefore increased from once to twice a week;
- A Member highlighted a typing mistake on page 3, paragraph 1.5.2 in the implementation plan covering report and it was agreed it should be amended to read 'One of the key issues'; and
- A Member suggested that the Committee recommend that it 'objects to stopping the weekend freighter service' and the Committee agreed to undertake a recorded vote. The results were as follows:

For: Councillors Chittenden, Mrs Joy and Smith  
Against: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Hinder and Verrall  
Abstentions: Councillor Mrs Gooch

Furthermore, Councillors Chittenden, Mrs Joy and Smith were concerned that the residual waste service would be replaced by an alternate weekly waste and recycling collection and asked that it be minuted that they did not support the loss of a weekly residual waste service.

The Committee congratulated the witnesses on the production of the Implementation Plan and thanked the officers for an interesting and informative presentation.

The web cast from this session is available at <http://clients.westminsterdigital.co.uk/maidstone/archive.aspx>.

**Resolved** That:

- a) Paragraph 1.5.2 of the Best Value Review Implementation Plan covering report be amended to read 'One of the key issues'; and
- b) The following be added to the Implementation Plan:
  - i. An action of consultation with regard to paper collections, including with scout groups providing this service;
  - ii. That the Council does not provide a competing paper collection service in those areas scout groups already operated;
  - iii. Water resistant stickers for the lid or lip of recycling bins be produced to inform residents of what can and can not be recycled be explored as an action;
  - iv. An action of undertaking road shows and/or workshops in areas with poor recycling;
  - v. An action of working with the press as part of the education programme; and
  - vi. An action investigating the feasibility of food waste containers fitting inside the residual and recyclable receptacle to negate resident's storage issues.

## **80. Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that officers had requested that the 'Carbon Reduction Targets' item be moved to its meeting on 16 March 2010. The Committee agreed to this change. Furthermore, Members noted that the Street Cleansing Review Report had been removed from its work programme as it was felt that its input into the production of the draft was sufficient.

A Member highlighted the progress of the Community Toilet Scheme and noted that she had only seen one community toilet scheme sign in the town centre. Furthermore, another Member noted that he felt a notice depicting the location of nearby public conveniences and/or community scheme toilets would be useful at the location of closed public conveniences in the town centre. The Committee therefore agreed to receive a written update on the implementation of the public conveniences decision at its meeting on 16 February 2010. The Committee also agreed to identify where community scheme toilets were whilst they were in the town centre, as well as locating information regarding the Council's public conveniences on the Council's website to inform its response to the written update. A number of Members noted that the closure of town centre public conveniences had reduced the number of needle disposal points and agreed to ask the Street Cleansing Team whether or not it had noticed an increase in the number of inappropriately disposed used needles in the town centre.

The Committee expressed its gratitude to Mr Raymond Diprose for hosting its tour of the Allington Incinerator. Members agreed to write a letter of thanks to Mr Diprose to express their appreciation for the amount of time and honesty he contributed to their visit.

The Committee noted the sections of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions that were relevant to its remit.

**Resolved** That:

- a) The 'Carbon Reduction Targets' item be considered at its meeting on 16 March 2010;
- b) A written update on the implementation of the public conveniences decision be considered at its meeting on 16 February 2010;
- c) Committee Members locate community scheme toilets whilst in the town centre and search the Council's website for information regarding its public conveniences to inform its response to the written update;
- d) The Overview and Scrutiny Officer ask the Street Cleansing Team whether or not it had seen an increase in the number of inappropriately disposed used needles following the closure of the town's public conveniences; and
- e) A letter of thanks be written to the Mr Diprose regarding its tour of Allington Incinerator.

**81. Duration of the Meeting**

6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.