

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MARCH 2010**

#### **REPORT OF HEAD OF CHANGE AND SCRUTINY**

**Report prepared by Esther Bell**

#### **1. Informal Junk Mail Review Workshop**

##### 1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider the evidence of the witnesses with regard to the Committee's Junk Mail review.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of Head of Change and Scrutiny

1.2.1 That the Committee interviews the following witnesses with regard to junk mail:

- Alex Walsh, Head of Postal Affairs, Direct Marketing Association;
- Bill Moss, Maidstone Town Centre Manager; and
- Robert Rijkhoff, Co-ordinator of a 'Stop Junk Mail' Campaign Group.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2010, Members agreed to carry out a review of junk mail. The relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting is as follows:

"A Councillor suggested a one-off review on junk mail as a number of residents had made complaints regarding the amount of unsolicited mailings and menus they had received. The Committee considered the possible scope of the review, noting possible outcomes could include:

- A 'no junk mail' sticker scheme endorsed by the Council and supported by local businesses; and or
- Revisions to the Council's website to include information about opportunities to reduce unsolicited mails, such as advertising the Mailing Preference Service.

The Committee felt that it would be useful to interview business representatives, including; Town Centre Management and the Chamber of Commerce. Members also suggested that it may be useful to interview a representative from the Post Office to discuss unaddressed mailings delivered by Postman. A number of Members felt that given the economic climate it was not prudent to introduce a costly scheme, however the Committee felt a cost effective scheme could be introduced, such as a tear off sticker below existing recycling stickers distributed by the Council. The Committee felt there was scope for a one off review and agreed to add it to its work programme. Members agreed to collate any junk mail they received in the next two months to inform the Committee's findings."

1.3.2 Furthermore, the Committee considered the draft junk mail review scoping document at its meeting on 23 February 2010 and agreed that it may be more appropriate to hold an informal workshop style meeting to undertake its review and that an additional daytime meeting may also be required in order to cater for all possible witnesses.

1.3.3 The scoping document for this review is attached at **Appendix A**.

1.3.4 Background information regarding each of the witnesses is attached as follows:

- **Appendix B** – Direct Marketing Association;
- **Appendix C** – Town Centre Management; and
- **Appendix D** – Stop Junk Mail Campaign.

1.3.5 A representative from Royal Mail was invited to attend the Committee's meeting, however they were unfortunately unable to attend and therefore provided the attached statement at **Appendix E** to assist in the Committee's review. A representative from the Federation of Small Businesses was also invited to attend the meeting, however no response was received.

1.3.6 Copies of the information supplied on Maidstone Borough Council's and other Local Authority websites regarding junk are attached at **Appendix F** for Members information.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 None.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Council's Strategic Plan 2009-12 priority themes include "a place that is clean and green" and its Environmental Excellence and Climate

Change three year objective includes 'supporting better cleaning, waste minimisation and recycling'.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no risks associated with the Committee undertaking its Junk Mail Review.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management


1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

- Appendix A** – Junk Mail Review Scoping Document;
- Appendix B** – Direct Marketing Association;
- Appendix C** – Town Centre Management;
- Appendix D** – Stop Junk Mail Campaign;
- Appendix E** – Royal Mail Correspondence; and
- Appendix F** – Information on Local Authority websites.