

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES**

**Report prepared by Jonathan Scott**

**Date Issued: 18 March 2010**

**1. STREET CLEANSING REVIEW**

**1.1 Issue for decision**

- 1.1.1 To consider a review of the street cleansing service and proposals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

**1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services**

- 1.2.1 That the Cabinet Member agrees the recommendations identified in the street cleansing review as attached as Appendix A.

- 1.2.2 That the changes be implemented as part of an overall programme of improvement in the operation of the service and as a result realise savings of £120,000 for 2010/11 in accordance with the budget strategy.

- 1.2.3 That further options regarding the rationalisation of the service be explored during 2010/11.

**1.3 Reasons for recommendation**

- 1.3.1 The Council has always sought to provide services that are lower than average on cost and higher than average in performance. In the case of the street cleansing service there is high performance on the national indicator NI195 (the measure for cleanliness) and it is rated as one of the best in Kent and in the top quartile nationally.

- 1.3.2 However, when considering the cost of the service, it is average when comparing cost per head nationally but when compared with the CIPFA family group it is third highest and therefore lower quartile.

- 1.3.3 In addition customer satisfaction from the Place Survey in 2008 and through satisfaction cards is average with 20% of those completing the Place Survey not satisfied with the service.
- 1.3.4 Changes to the town centre operation during the past year have proved very effective with much improved cleanliness and satisfaction. Plaudits have been received from a number of traders including the town centre manager.
- 1.3.5 With all these factors in mind, it was considered appropriate to review the service both in operational terms but to also carry out detailed customer consultation to gather the views of the public. The detailed report is attached as at Appendix A. This includes a number of recommendations to take the service forward and improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.3.6 Early on in the review it was identified that efficiencies and savings could be made and these were included as part of the budget strategy for 2010/11. A saving of £120,000 from the street cleansing service has been identified. The report shows how these savings can be achieved without adversely impacting on service outcomes.
- 1.3.7 However, when compared with other authorities in the CIPFA family group, costs will still be above average. Therefore it is proposed to implement the changes and then review further options to improve the Council's position within the family group by reducing costs and maintaining high performance.
- 1.4 Alternative actions and why not recommended
- 1.4.1 The Cabinet Member could decide not to accept the report but as a result the service will not improve and it is likely that resident dissatisfaction will remain at the current levels. There would also be a shortfall in the budget strategy for 2010/11.
- 1.4.2 Other options could have been chosen but those recommended reflect the best way forward for the service at the present time. Further work will be done during 2010 to identify further opportunities to reduce service costs and to establish how these may impact on the service.
- 1.5 Impact on corporate objectives
- 1.5.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to keep land open to the public free of litter and to keep roads and footways clear of detritus.

1.5.2 The Council has an objective to keep the borough clean and green and street cleansing operations are a key factor in the achievement of this aim.

1.5.3 Clean streets help to provide a good environment to support the objective of quality living.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There is a risk that the change to area based working will not prove successful, however, this has been carefully researched and visits made to councils that are currently using such a system. The risk is therefore low.

1.6.2 There is a risk that the publicity campaign, action plan and operational changes will not improve public satisfaction. All surveys reflect views received at a particular point in time and responses given can be affected by external influences. However, considerable public research was undertaken and the proposals fit with a wider agenda to improve value for money and satisfaction in key service areas.

1.7 Impact on Corporate Implications

1. Financial

x

2.Staffing

x

3.Legal

4.Equality Impact Needs Assessment

5. Environmental/Sustainable Development

6. Community Safety

7. Human Rights Act

8. Procurement

9. Asset Management

1.7.1 Financial

The budget strategy for 2010/11 identifies a budget saving of £120,000 from the street cleansing service. The review identifies how this can be achieved by improving efficiency and effectiveness without impacting on service outcomes. Further work will be carried out during

the year to make further savings and thereby move the service to low cost and high performance.

1.7.2 Staffing

The review does identify staff reductions but it is hoped to make the changes through a decrease in temporary staff and retirement. It is hoped that no redundancies will have to be made.

1.8 Background Documents

None.

**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?      Yes      ☐      No      ☒

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?      Yes      ☐      No      ☒

Reason for Urgency

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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