

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2022**

#### **Attendees:**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon, Mrs Blackmore, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Hinder, Jeffery, Knatchbull, McKenna and Brindle</b>
<b>Lead Member present as Witnesses to the Review:</b>	<b>Councillor Martin Round (Lead Member for Environmental Services)</b>

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Brice, Knatchbull and T Wilkinson.

16. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Brindle was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Brice.

17. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman reiterated the receipt of an urgent update which contained information relating to the consideration of Item 11 – The Council’s Performance against the Waste Strategy, as outlined at the Committee’s previous meeting.

18. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

19. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

20. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

21. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

22. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

23. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

25. THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE WASTE STRATEGY (WASTE STRATEGY REVIEW)

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report, outlining the lines of enquiry relevant to the second stage of the review. Of the external stakeholders consulted, Golding Homes was unable to attend but would be able to answer any questions arising from the review; Kent County Council and the Kent Resource Partnership were unable to attend, although an offer of informal engagement with the Chairman and/or Committee Representatives had been given from the relevant Head of Service for Waste Collection Services.

The witnesses to the review of the Council's Performance against the Waste Strategy (the Waste Strategy) were identified as follows:

- Jennifer Stevens, Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm
- Councillor Martin Round, Lead Member for Environmental Services
- Austin Mackie, Major Projects Team Leader (Planning)

The urgent update provided was referenced throughout the Committee's questioning of the witnesses.

In response to questions on the use of Development Planning Documents (DPD) to improve waste collection services, the Major Projects Team Leader explained that the determination of planning applications was more robust when supported by a policy base, particularly when additional conditions were placed upon an application's approval. The ongoing Regulation 18A public consultation on the proposed Design and Sustainability (D&S) DPD was referenced, as waste collection could be included within the wider sustainability measures of the policy. The importance of commenting on both the contents of the Scoping, Themes and Issues Document of the D&S DPD, as well as those aspects that were mentioned only briefly, such as waste collection, was reiterated. The Major Projects Team Leader stated that the Committee Members could contact him with their comments on the D&S DPD, for inclusion within the Planning Department's response to the public consultation.

The Major Projects Team Leader confirmed that vehicle entry and exit was considered as part of an application's determination. As residents were now spending more time in their local areas, greater emphasis was being placed on the provision of open public spaces within housing estates; an example of where these areas could be improved in relation to waste collection, was to include the provision of public collection facilities within the D&S SPD. The Head of Environmental Services stated that any public facilities provided needed to have a suitable capacity and be visually engaging, to be of sufficient use and benefit; the

Street Cleansing Team had previously had to replace inadequate public collection facilities.

Several Members of the Committee questioned alternative types of waste collection infrastructure. In response, the Major Projects Team Leader stated that the viability of underground bin units depended on the development, with the proposed Garden Communities contained within the Council's Local Plan Review given as an example where the guiding framework could consider waste generation and management. The Head of Environmental Services stated that the cost of underground bins, which required a specialist vehicle to empty alongside their smaller than required capacity, had prevented their use within the borough. Ashford Borough Council's (ABC) use of underground bins was referenced, as whilst useful, ABC was not looking to install further units due to the reasoning provided by the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm. It was stated that facilitating the anaerobic digestion of food waste and the processing of garden waste could be considered in the future as part of the collection and processing of waste from new developments.

In response to questions, the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm stated that Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in response to fly-tipping. This prevented an additional service cost to the Council being incurred. Managing agents and Housing Associations were required to clear any additional waste, with the Council having worked collaboratively with those organisations to support their direct engagement with residents and to reduce waste crime. The Council also provided a commercial waste collection service and generated additional income by clearing fly-tipping that affected the Highway. The challenges to the service included providing additional collections for residential blocks which accounted for 10% of the Council's waste collection services. The waste collection services contract re-procurement would include provision for alternative methods to support recycling, such as providing re-useable waste bags, to support residents in sorting their waste in the correct bins.

The Committee adjourned for a short break between 7.21 p.m. to 7.26 p.m.

In response to questions, the Major Projects Team Leader referenced Policy CSW 3 of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2020 as contained within the urgent update. Several suggestions were made to the Committee that; the Officers within Development Management and the Planning Committee undertake training on the policy, to ensure that waste collection was appropriately considered as part of the consideration and determination of future planning applications; and that waste collection should be considered as part of the design review process. The Head of Environmental Services reiterated that the technology provided through the service's contract re-procurement would provide improved waste collection and recycling data across the borough.

Several Members of the Committee expressed concern at the amount of commercial waste produced; the Major Projects Team Leader stated that any action from a planning perspective had to be reasonable and depended in part on the site's classification. One Maidstone provided a litter collection service, which the Committee felt should be included within their next bid if applicable, in managing the town centre.

The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm outlined the good level of co-operation between KCC and the Council to avoid affecting the waste collection

routes, with most of the issues arising from unexpected road closures. The success of the Town Centre Street Scene meetings was referenced. It was possible that the information relating to waste collection services within different areas of the borough could be reported to Ward Cluster meetings.

In respect of facilitating waste collections on private roads, the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm stated that these were facilitated either through driving onto private roads or by asking residents to move their bins to the road's opening. There had previously been incidents where private roads were not wide enough to allow a waste collection vehicle to safely manoeuvre. The Major Projects Team Leader stated that where the highway was privately owned, modelling into the vehicle turning circles took place. As the turning circles for waste collection vehicles were much larger, this supported the need for the relevant Council Officers to undertake training on waste collection, with the Planning Committee report template to be amended to include a prompt for officers to consider issues that affect waste collection, such as the provision of visitor parking and vehicle turning circles.

The Witnesses in attendance were invited to make a closing remark. Councillor Round stated that several issues had been raised positively by the Committee, including across several of the Council's service areas. The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm expressed their thanks to the Committee in reviewing the Waste Strategy and the positive suggestions made.

The Committee expressed support for the actions suggested within the urgent update provided, as it was felt that these suitably highlighted the importance of considering waste collection facilities as part of the planning process. These actions would then positively impact the Council's Waste Collection Service.

The below actions were identified for further consideration based on the evidence collected:

- The initiation of a design review process, in accordance with recommendation one of Appendix 8 to the report;
- The Development Management Officers and Planning Committee Members receive training in accordance with recommendation two of Appendix 8 to the report;
- Kent County Council be recommended to provide a substitute representative when their initial representative is unable to attend a meeting of the Committee;
- One Maidstone be recommended to include street cleaning provisions within their next bid;
- Policy CSW 3 of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan be given higher prominence within the assessment of planning applications and planning policy, as advised by the Major Projects Team Leader;
- Consideration be given to implementing additional planning consent conditions, where appropriate, concerning the waste collection from commercial establishments that may generate high levels of waste;
- To amend the Development Management Officer report templates used for Planning Committee agendas, to include a prompt on waste collection considerations;
- To consider methods to provide information relating to waste collection to Ward Cluster meetings, similarly to that provided within the Town Centre Street Scene meetings.

- Officers be requested to review the public realm guide, as part of the Design & Sustainability Development Plan Document, in relation to the provision of public waste collection facilities.
- Pending the receipt of data relating to waste collection services following the new contract's commencement, the Committee consider whether any further public information and/or amendment to Council policy should be recommended.

**RESOLVED:** That the evidence collection stage of the review be concluded.

Note: Councillor Knatchbull left the meeting during the item's discussion, at 7.33 p.m.

26. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.31 p.m.

Note: The Committee adjourned between 7.21 p.m. to 7.26 p.m. for a short break.