

# **Waste and Recycling Strategy 2010 – 2015**



**September 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to reducing household waste, increasing reuse and recycling whilst offering cost effective and sustainable waste and recycling services.

This needs to be achieved in partnership with our residents, local businesses and other boroughs including the County Council (who are the waste disposal authority). The Council will be letting a new waste collection contract in 2013 and also wants to assess the sort of service that is required in the longer term, particularly as waste disposal costs increase.

As part of the Kent Waste Partnership, Maidstone is committed to the Kent Waste Strategy. Waste minimisation and reuse are key priorities with the intention to break the link between waste production and economic growth as well as increasing recycling or composting to over 40% by 2012/13. These are reflected in Maidstone's vision and the objectives set out in Maidstone's Waste Strategy.

The 'Vision for Kent' is the county-wide community strategy which is about the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities. This sets out an objective for waste disposal infrastructure, including processing, composting and transfer facilities, to be delivered in line with improvements in district services at best value to the Kent taxpayer. Maidstone's Waste Strategy supports this objective through partnership working, cost effective services and consideration of local recycling and treatment opportunities.

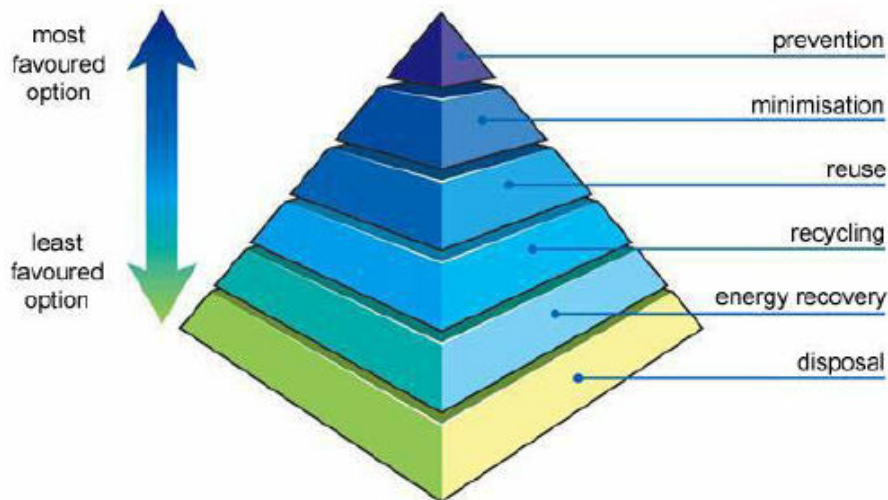
Nationally, the government has recently announced its ambition for a zero waste economy, with focus on waste prevention through innovative product and packaging design. A full review of waste policies in England is being carried out by Defra to ensure that this ambition is achieved. With the forthcoming adoption of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive into UK legislation, nationally the focus remains on waste prevention and reduction initiatives. This strategy fulfils the objectives of both European and national priorities for waste management. The outcome of this review will also produce new targets for recycling which will at least meet the current national targets of 45% of waste arisings recycled by 2015 and 50% by 2020.

The revised EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) is to be brought into UK domestic legislation by 12 December 2010. The main features of this directive are the application of the waste hierarchy as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation, the separate collection of paper, metal, plastic and glass by 2015 and a recycling target of 50% from households by 2020.

This strategy supports the revised directive and recycling targets set.

Maidstone Borough Council will apply the principles of the waste hierarchy whereby waste prevention and minimisation offer the optimum solutions to waste management compared with energy recovery and disposal. Appreciation of the most favourable options will ensure Maidstone meets local and national targets and enable us to move to the forefront of waste management in Kent.

This is the first Waste Strategy that the Council has produced and will sit alongside the Council's medium term plans (Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan).



## **OUR VISION**

Overall the Council wants Maidstone Borough to be a place that is clean and green and one that provides value for money for local taxpayers. For waste services this is to provide an excellent service which will reduce waste, ensure sustainable and cost effective recycling collections and enable Maidstone residents to achieve high levels of participation.

## **OBJECTIVES – WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

In order to achieve the vision for the future of the service, the following objectives are proposed:

- i) To increase the amount of household waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting to 50% by 2015 (above the national target of 45%)
- ii) To reduce total household waste arisings by 10% by 2015 compared with 2005-2010 average.
- iii) To meet any additional costs of operating the service through the support of the Kent Waste Partnership and efficiency improvements in the rest of the waste collection service.
- iv) To improve the value for money of the waste collection service.
- v) To improve residents' satisfaction with Maidstone Borough Council's wasteand recycling services.
- vi) To increase glass recycling collections by up to 600 tonnes during the period of the plan.

- vii) To work with KCC to minimise the amount of recyclables sent to incineration and maximise the benefits of the value of those materials for both the Council and KCC.
- viii) To support the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction through the optimum utilisation of resources, increased consideration of energy efficiency and higher priority given to service improvements which offer energy reduction

By reaching a recycling rate of 50%, Maidstone will also exceed the national diversion target of reducing waste which is not recycled, reused or composted by 35% from the level of waste in the year 2000, by 2015.

## **HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?**

In order to achieve the objectives and ultimately the vision for Maidstone's waste and recycling services, there needs to be the combination of service development and targeted promotion. Priority will be given to development options which best support the objectives and principles of the waste hierarchy, starting with waste prevention as the most favourable option.

### **1. Waste Prevention**

Waste prevention primarily focuses on the avoidance of waste from manufacturers and retailers; however it is important that residents are aware of ways they can also help. This will remain a key message throughout the educational campaigns, with advice about avoiding products with excessive packaging and using their consumer power to force manufacturers to improve their sustainability.

The Council also supports the Courtauld Commitment which is a voluntary agreement for retailers, manufacturers and suppliers to reduce household packaging and food waste. Details will be available on Maidstone's website, including links to free support from organisations such as Envirowise and BREW (Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme).

### **2. Waste Minimisation**

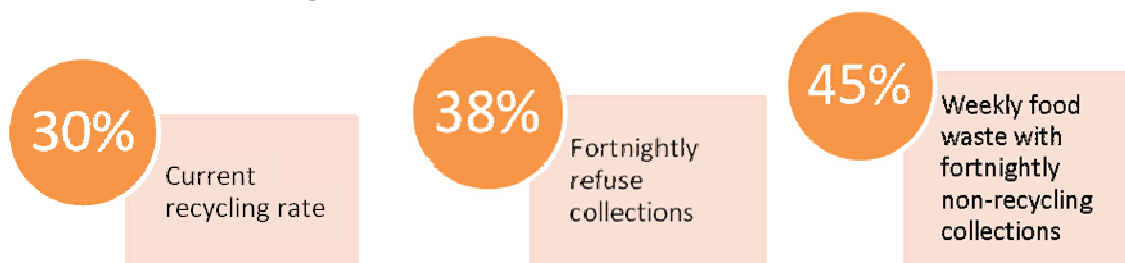
The key priority is to promote waste minimisation or reduction through strategic service developments. All options which support this priority will be considered.

Collecting the non-recyclable element of household waste on a fortnightly basis has been shown to reduce the amount of waste collected by 25%. It also encourages residents to use recycling services more effectively thereby increasing recycling rates and offering better value for money. This waste minimisation measure helps engage residents with their recycling service, raising participation rates and reducing waste sent for disposal. It is therefore intended to move to fortnightly collection of residual waste to increase recycling by encouraging greater participation in the established fortnightly collection of dry recyclables. This move will also significantly improve the cost effectiveness of the waste collection service which is currently the highest in Kent.

Waste minimisation also supports the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction, through reduction in transportation requirements and therefore fuel usage. Optimisation of the fleet through careful monitoring through the use of technology, such as GPS tracking and in-cab devices will also ensure that the Council actively seeks ways to reduce the carbon impact of the waste and recycling service.

Although fortnightly collections offer a more efficient service, reduce household waste arisings and increase recycling rates, alone they will not enable the Council to achieve the current national recycling targets.

Surveys of residual waste have confirmed that up to 40% of that waste is food arisings. The option to combine the approach of fortnightly collections with a separate weekly food waste collection scheme will ensure that food, which is the highest category of waste that is currently present in the non recycling bin is recycled. In addition this type of service has also been shown to decrease the amount of food waste produced by highlighting the vast amount of food which is thrown away. By combining these themes the Council will be moving towards 50%.



***Waste Minimisation Strategy:*** *Fortnightly non-recycling collections and weekly food waste will support the Council's objectives of reducing household waste arisings and increasing the amount of waste recycled or composted*

Therefore the Council intends to introduce borough-wide weekly collections of food waste alongside the implementation of fortnightly residual waste collections from end of January 2011. The cost of the food waste collections will be met through the savings gained from the fortnightly refuse collections and through support from the Kent Waste Partnership. Set up costs for the new service will be provided by WRAP and the Kent Waste Partnership. It is also projected that by moving to this collection service now, additional savings will be made in 2013 when the new collection contract is let.

In addition to the above initiatives home composting offers two major benefits; the composting of garden waste and vegetable peelings produces nutritious plant food whilst also reducing the amount of waste which needs to be collected for disposal or treatment. Although the recycling of garden waste through kerbside collection or the Household Waste Recycling Centre is preferable to disposing of it in landfill or burning it, reducing the amount of garden waste collected significantly reduces the transportation and energy requirements, providing environmental and financial benefits. The council currently promotes subsidised home compost bins in order to encourage residents to use this option for waste reduction over the alternatives. The scheme will be monitored throughout 2010/11 to identify ways to increase uptake year on year.

The majority of methods to encourage waste minimisation are through education and increasing public awareness, including use of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign and these initiatives will continue with local groups and individuals. School workshops teaching children about waste prevention and inspiring them to be inventive with scrap materials remain a key part of the strategy. Regular roadshows demonstrating easy waste reduction techniques will also continue throughout the borough.

### **3. Reuse**

Reuse of items, such as furniture, is a very effective way of reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal.

Some items collected through the bulky waste collection and Saturday freighter services have the potential for being reused or recycled, whilst for other items on the freighter (such as green waste) there are better disposal options. A review of the services identified the composition of this waste and the extent that can be reused.

The weekend freighter service was re-launched in August as a Saturday-only service and no longer accepts items which could be easily recycled or reused within the borough. Diverting garden waste and large bulky items from disposal will reduce the Council's costs, increase recycling performance and reduce Maidstone's household waste arisings.

Discussions will take place with private and voluntary sectors regarding the reuse of furniture and electrical items in order to identify options available to divert these items from disposal.

Another area for reuse is textiles. Textiles are currently collected at the majority of Maidstone's recycling sites for reuse or recycling. Expansion of these banks and investigating options for a kerbside collection, facilitated through a third party partnership, will increase the reuse of textiles within Maidstone.

Smaller scale reuse also plays a fundamental role in the educational activities, with workshops and school assemblies showing children how to reuse everyday items into fun creativity. These remain an essential part of the Council's comprehensive educational campaign along with fostering children's imaginations through challenges and competitions.

### **4. Recycling**

Although Maidstone already recycles 30% of household waste, there is the potential to increase this to 45% through the introduction of weekly food waste and fortnightly residual waste collections. The current participation rate with the recycling service is high, over 80% and this will be built upon to ensure the success in the future. Through the expansion of the materials collected and concerted efforts to maintain and indeed increase participation levels it is hoped to reach the 50% recycling target by 2015.

Maidstone intends to investigate and implement the following improvements to the existing recycling service:

#### Food Waste

The food waste collected as part of the new service will be recycled through in vessel composting which ensures any pathogens are killed and produces high grade compost.

#### Maximising recycled material values

Currently recyclable materials collected in the borough are taken to KCC's materials recovery facility at Allington. Wherever possible the material is processed and sent for recycling. Contaminated materials are sent for incineration along with the residual waste. The borough council receives no income from the value of the recycled materials. However paper collected in the paper banks and glass collected in the glass banks does provide income for the Council. Therefore over the period of the strategy the Council will work with Kent County Council to find ways to minimise the amount of contaminated recyclable materials which are incinerated and maximise the benefits of the value of the recycled materials for both authorities.

#### Garden Waste Collections

The performance of this chargeable service is subject to seasonality and annual weather fluctuations. Promotion of the service, in particular the garden waste bins, is essential to maximise the recycling of garden waste whilst recognising the importance of home composting as the more favourable option for garden waste.

After six weeks of monitoring the weekend freighter service, it was evident that garden waste was the primary type of waste being disposed of by residents. As all waste disposed of through this service is sent to landfill, the Council decided to disallow garden waste to be disposed of in this way from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

The decision has also been taken to change from plastic garden waste sacks to compostable ones for the garden waste recycling collections. This will reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste generated by the council and improve the efficiency of the service. These bags will be available to purchase from retailers from the beginning of October 2010.

#### Recycling Sites

The need for paper and cardboard banks with Maidstone is perhaps questionable as these items are now collected through the kerbside service. However the paper banks generate the Council an income and aid the separation of a high quality material. For this reason the paper banks will be retained although options for cost savings will be investigated. However the cardboard banks were removed from the end of July 2010 as this material can be collected more cost effectively through the kerbside recycling collection and have negligible impact on Maidstone's recycling rate.

Separating glass by colour is the most effective and environmentally beneficial form of recycling glass as new bottles can be produced time and time again. Therefore additional glass recycling banks will be provided throughout the borough where locations can be agreed with local communities. Identifying suitable sites which will be convenient yet unobtrusive is difficult so a new joint proforma is being created with all stakeholders to highlight the criteria required for new recycling locations. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to increasing the number of recycling sites for glass and will continue to work with Ward Councillors, Parish Councils and businesses to find suitable locations over the next 5 years.



650

tonnes of extra glass could be recycled through additional glass banks, increasing Maidstone's recycling rate by 1%

Other materials such as CDs, batteries, WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) and drinks cartons can be recycled and the possibility of increasing the materials accepted at local recycling sites will be investigated. The Council proposes to collect new materials at the recycling sites by March 2012.

### **5. Energy Recovery**

Maidstone's priority is to reduce the overall volume of waste requiring treatment and maximise the diversion of waste from energy recovery to recycling or reuse. Energy recovery however presents a more favourable option to disposal through landfill. Therefore household waste which can not be reused or recycled should be sent for energy recovery wherever possible. The Allington Energy from Waste (EfW) facility allows the recovery of energy from the majority of Maidstone's household waste.

Kent County Council is currently undertaking a trial of shredding bulky waste to allow it to be taken to Allington EfW for recovery. Maidstone supports this trial for any bulky waste which is not suitable for recycling or reuse and will work with the County Council to encourage the extension of this trial.

### **6. Disposal**

Disposal is the least favourable option as it is costly both environmentally and financially. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to maximising the diversion of waste away from disposal.

At present the only waste which is sent to landfill from Maidstone is bulky waste collected through the bulky waste service or the weekend freighter. The Council is committed to achieving zero waste to landfill by 2015 with the support of Kent County Council, the waste disposal authority.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

It is important to ensure that Maidstone residents understand why changes are being made and want to become involved.

The Recycle for Maidstone "brand" has played a key role in the past few years and is widely recognisable; however the priority of waste reduction and reuse has out-grown this campaign.

Maidstone Borough Council's commitment to waste reduction, reuse and recycling through the development of a coordinated service will be promoted in the same way; a coordinated campaign which is recognisable and promotes community ownership.



A comprehensive communications campaign will be used to promote the complete package of changes being undertaken as well as ensuring that the profile of the service is raised and that local communities are more engaged. This will include direct public engagement through meetings, roadshows, community events, school workshops and door-knocking alongside promotion through Maidstone's website, Borough Update, local press and informational leaflets. Mosaic will also be used to identify and target key messages to individuals or groups.

It is important that the local press are provided with details of the schemes and actively engaged to ensure that the true benefits of the proposals are realised and that any negative experiences elsewhere do not adversely impact the success of Maidstone's services.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Efficiencies, savings and the generation of increased income will allow the service to evolve and develop and increase performance. At present the cost for Maidstone's waste and recycling services is the highest in Kent. Therefore increasing the cost efficiency of the service is a key objective. The strategy aims to fulfil this through the introduction of services which will maximise income and reduce costs. This will also need to be undertaken in collaboration with the current contractor (SITA) in the short term and also the County Council. In addition, through taking a more proactive approach to dealing with waste it is envisaged that the Council will be able to access a range of regional improvement funds, including the Kent Waste Partnership's Service Improvement Plan (SIP) Fund.

It is also envisaged that through these initiatives the overall kilograms of waste per household will be reduced (currently one of the highest in Kent) which will also have an impact on the service costs. However, at this stage the financial savings are being investigated.

The costs of implementing the services identified in this strategy will be met from improvements to service delivery and the kind support from WRAP and the Kent Waste Partnership.

The Kent Waste Partnership has also agreed to fund the preparation of a business case for the possible joint procurement and contract arrangements for those mid and west Kent authorities seeking new contracts in 2013. This work will be completed before the end of this year and will identify contract options and potential savings.

## **FURTHER DETAILS**

If you require any details please contact the waste and recycling team on 01622 602162 or email [waste@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:waste@maidstone.gov.uk)

Alternatively information on waste and recycling initiatives can be found on the Council's website at [www.maidstone.gov.uk/recyclingrubbishandwaste](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/recyclingrubbishandwaste).