

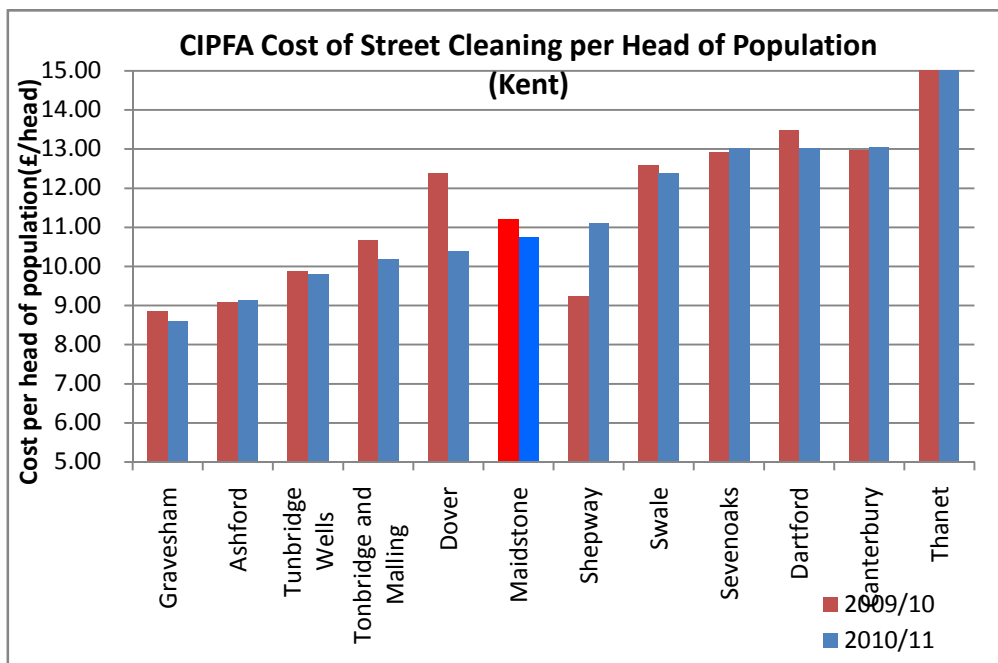
Appendix 1- Street Cleansing Assessment

- 1.1 Savings from recent street cleansing tenders in East Kent have been modelled against the Council's current costs and if the service is put to tender, the modelling indicates potential savings of £70k per annum. Savings in Ashford and Swale are potentially higher and both authorities currently have external contractors.
- 1.2 In Maidstone, the service is provided "in house" and recent improvements in the way the service operates using area-based cleansing has seen improvements in performance and public satisfaction and reductions on cost.

Cost Comparison

- 1.3 In comparing Maidstone's cost with other Kent authorities, the cost per head of population was £10.75 last year and has reduced again this year to £10.10. Last year, Maidstone was 12% lower than the Kent average despite having the most significant night-time economy which adds to the overall cleansing costs. On average, Maidstone is mid-table for cost in Kent, higher than Ashford and lower than Swale.

If comparing last year's figures with the new lower cost for Maidstone, then it would be 4th lowest.



Borough	Cost per head (£) 2009/10	Cost per head (£) 2010/11
Gravesham	8.85	8.60
Ashford	9.08	9.14
Tunbridge Wells	9.88	9.79
Tonbridge & Malling	10.67	10.18
Dover	12.38	10.39
Maidstone	11.21	10.75
Shepway	9.24	11.09
Swale	12.59	12.37
Sevenoaks	12.91	13.02
Dartford	13.47	13.02
Canterbury	12.96	13.03
Thanet	25.11	25.04

Performance Comparison

- 1.4 The best available data to compare the performance of street cleansing is via the Defra NI195 database. Although NI195 will not be continued as a national indicator, the results for 2010/11 are available and many authorities will continue to use its general methodology as it offers a standard and objective way of monitoring performance.

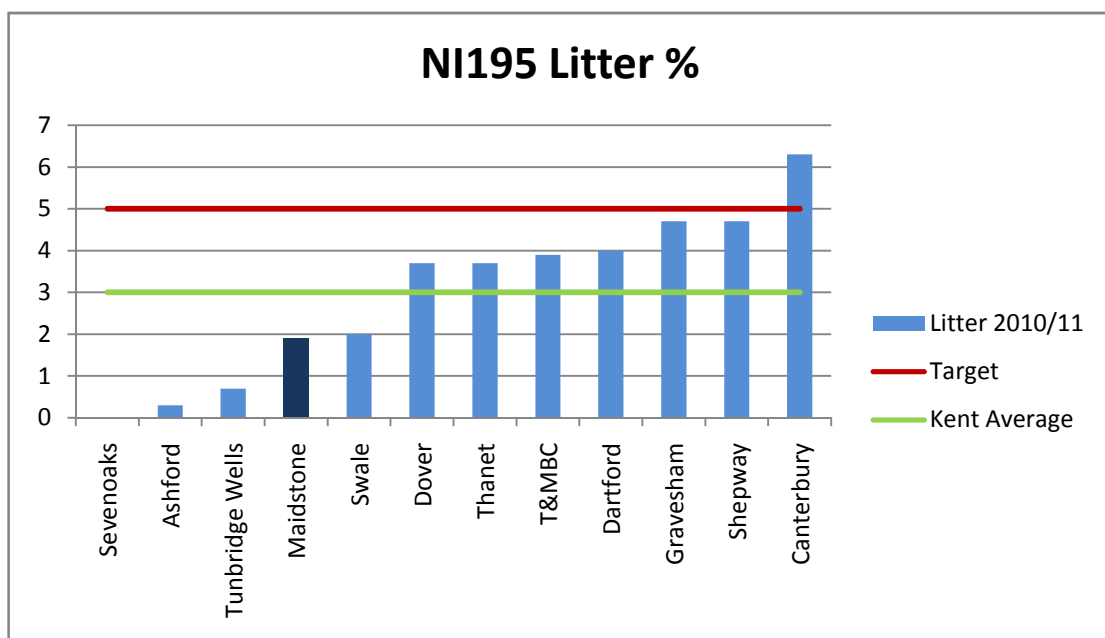


Figure 1

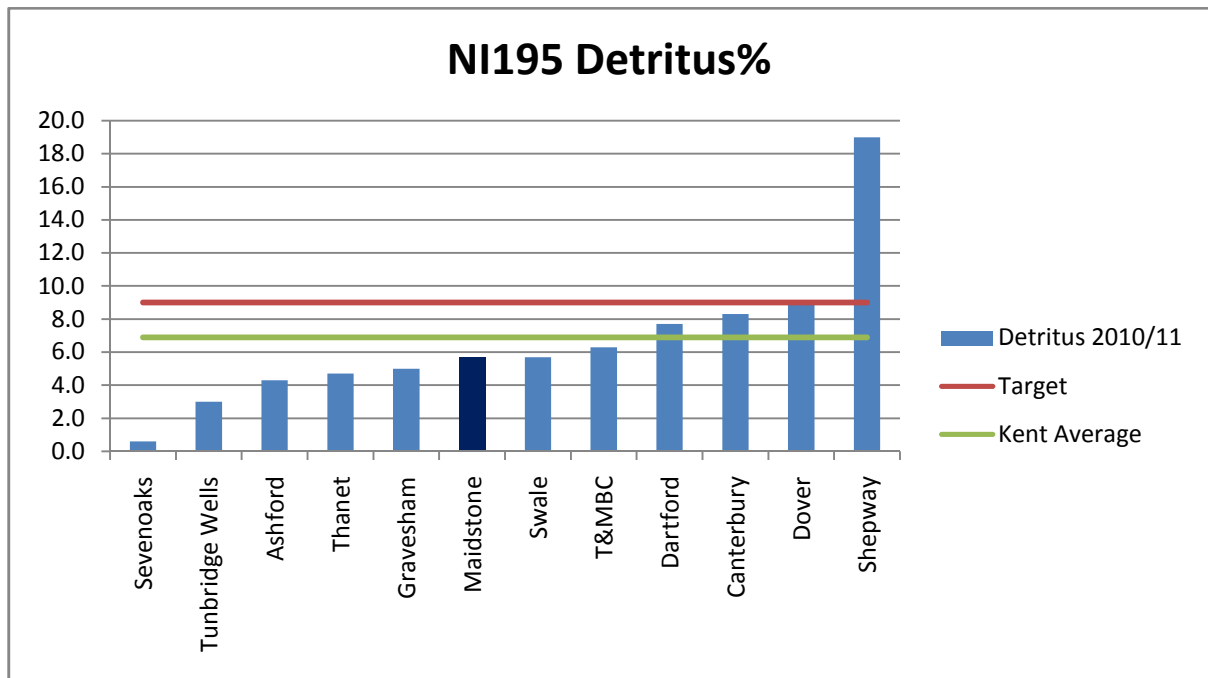


Figure 2

- 1.5 A lower NI195 score represents a higher (better) level of cleanliness. *Figures 1 and 2* show that Maidstone's NI195 scores for litter and detritus are both below the averages for Kent and position Maidstone as 4th out of 12 for litter and 6th out of 12 for detritus.

Considering these results in relation to the cost performance measures presented above, Maidstone can now be seen to be delivering higher than average performance at lower than average cost when compared within Kent.

Satisfaction levels had previously been static in the high 60% but by changing the method of collecting the data, through face to face surveys, satisfaction is now above 70%.

Value of an "in house" service

- 1.6 The information provided above shows the current performance for Maidstone's street cleansing section. There are also less tangible benefits delivered by this team which are worthy of consideration when determining the future direction of the service.

- This is a highly visible service which is considered by many to represent the face of the Council and can have significant impact on the reputation of the Council.
- Street cleansing comprises of many elements including: flytipping, graffiti removal, flyposting and a flexible, local workforce that can respond quickly to specific issues.

- Staff feel part of the Council and take pride in the work they do
- There is a low staff turnover, helping retain local knowledge and build experience in the team.
- Emergencies regarding flooding and snow can have rapid response due to the flexibility of the individual teams.
- Recent winters have seen staff deployed on various activities such as snow clearance, gritting, assisting social services and the local health authority and delivering meals on wheels.
- Previously, staff have been deployed on the Council's response to severe flooding issues.
- This flexibility is also demonstrated in response to special events such as the River Festival, community clean-ups and supporting other services with one-off requests e.g. elections, bin deliveries, etc.
- The Council's mechanical sweepers are reaching the end of their natural life and tendering the service would not require the Council to make a capital outlay for new vehicles. In a related way, residual costs will be low.
- There is no annual price fluctuation payment made to the DSO. The budget remains the same, requiring year on year savings to be found to meet the cost of inflation. Most contracts have a price fluctuation payment each year.
- Members are assured of a rapid response to specific issues in their ward.
- These additional activities often receive positive feedback. The Council receives more compliments regarding the street cleansing service than any other.

Possible tenders for mechanical sweeping

- 1.7 Street cleansing is generally provided by operatives or small mechanical machines operating in discreet town centre and rural areas. Area-based cleansing has teams specifically operating in designated areas. Options for economies of scale are for the most part of service rather limited.
- 1.8 Management costs could be reduced by combining the operations across three authorities but as the street cleansing is to be combined with refuse and recycling, the main management savings will be achieved through the combined refuse and recycling services.
- 1.9 However, the mechanical sweeping elements of the service involve the most sophisticated plant and could operate more effectively and efficiently by a combined three-authority cross border operation. This

could generate savings in the region of £30,000 and would have no impact on the service to the public. Management arrangements would be slightly more complicated but can be contained within existing resources.

CONCLUSION

1.10 Savings could be produced by including the street cleansing service in the contract with Ashford and Swale (including refuse and recycling). However, these savings are relatively low at £70k although it is accepted these could go up as well as down. Further proposals will be made to achieve some of the potential savings.

1.11 The current "in-house" service provides a highly motivated, flexible and stable organisation that is performing well and contributes to the wider corporate needs of the Council.

This cannot be guaranteed with a separate contractor and street cleansing is a key performance indicator impacting on the reputation of the Council.

1.12 Modest savings could be generated by seeking tenders for the mechanical sweeping which would maximise the cross border arrangements with Ashford and Swale.

1.13 Overall, it is considered that the flexibility and "value" of the current street cleansing workforce outweighs the potential limited savings that have been modelled and therefore, the van part of the service should remain in house. However, the mechanical sweeping should be tendered for the reasons identified above.