

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER**  
**2011**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)  
Councillors Field, FitzGerald, D Mortimer, Mrs Parvin,  
Paterson, Mrs Stockell and Yates

**77. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.**

The Committee discussed Item 10, Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011. Members agreed that there were no changes to be made so the item could be taken in Part I with item 7, Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011 which would enable the meeting to remain in Part I.

**Resolved:** That all items should be web-cast

**78. Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ash.

**79. Notification of Substitute Members.**

There were no Substitute Members.

**80. Notification of Visiting Members.**

There were no Visiting Members.

**81. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

There were no disclosures.

**82. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.**

**It was resolved** that all items should be taken in public as proposed.

**83. Amendment to order of Business**

**It was resolved** that that Item 10, Part II minutes of the meeting held on 11 October should be taken in Part I to following item 7, Part I minutes of the meeting held on as their were no amendments to be made.

**84. Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011**

**Resolved:** That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

**85. Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011**

**Resolved:** That the Part II minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

**86. Amendment to Order of Business**

It was resolved that item 9, Future Work programme and Scrutiny Officer Update should be taken before item 8, 'Making Waste Work for Maidstone' Review, as the witness had not yet arrived.

**87. Future Work Programme and Scrutiny Officer Update**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan and their Future Work Programme. Members agreed that they did not require a future update on the Local Strategic Partnership which now formed part of the Locality Boards. Members discussed their next meeting which was to focus on NOAH enterprise and the provision of the Bulky Collection and Freighter Service as part of the new Waste Contract. Members discussed the Freighter Service and the review that had taken place of the service recently as well as a number of years ago by the previous Waste Manager. It was agreed that there would be enormous benefit in inviting the Waste Manager, Jennifer Gosling, to the next meeting to discuss the figures collated on the Freighter Service usage by her and to compare these with the usage figures collated by her predecessor.

Members were reminded that the next review topic, agreed at the beginning of the Municipal Year, was Neighbourhood Action Planning. A preliminary meeting had been arranged with the Chairman and Jim Boot, Community Development Manager to explore the topic to gain an understanding of what had already been achieved by the authority.

The Committee were reminded about their visit to Aylesford Newsprint, which had been arranged with Councillor Yates. It was to take place on Friday 2 December from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and would assist the Committee's understanding of paper recycling which was an important part of the new waste contract and the Committee's current review topic.

The Scrutiny Officer provided Members with all the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) responses so far in relation to the review. The Chairman asked the Committee to consider the responses given by Officers and suggest any additional action to be taken.

Members felt that some of the responses given could be addressed in more detail. The Committee's desire to consider alternatives to the current Bulky Collection and Freighter Services were part of the Best Value Review in 2009 and whilst the Officer's response answered their question it did not offer any indication as to what would be done to continue with this action. Members agreed that they would like to be updated further by the Waste Manager, Jennifer Gosling, and this could be addressed at the next meeting. It was felt action plans and timescales would be needed to fully address many of the recommendations made.

The Committee discussed the British Legion Village and 'The Beacon' at Shepway and suggested that these two organisations should be investigated in terms of the recycling and reuse of bulky items.

The Gateway was discussed as a collection point and the collection of plastic bottle tops which was an initiative of LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics. Members felt that there could be improvements made in the provisions available to families for the collection of small recyclable items such as electronic goods, batteries, ink cartridges, energy saving light bulbs (which contained mercury) and plastic bottle tops.

**It was recommended that:**

- a) The reuse of items collected by the Freighter Services by the British Legion and the Beacon at Shepway should be investigated by the Scrutiny Officer and reported back to the Committee; and
- b) The use of the Gateway as a collection point for other small items such as batteries, ink cartridges, energy saving light bulbs (containing mercury) small electrical items and plastic bottle tops should be investigated by the Scrutiny Officer as a means of improving recycling provisions for families.

**88. 'Making Waste Work for Maidstone' Review**

Unfortunately the witness scheduled to attend the meeting, Carolyn Gomez, Environmental Systems Manager at LUSH Handmade Cosmetics was unable to make the meeting.

Members discussed initiatives that LUSH had advertised such as recycling the plastic bottle tops used to make their black pots used to sell their products. This was because the type of plastic in the bottle top differed from the type the bottle was made from and was not recycled with other plastic recycling. This tied in with the company's aim to have 100% of their packaging easily recyclable, compostable or biodegradable. Reference was also made to the company's targets for recycling in their shops and factories which was set at 85%.

The Committee discussed the best course of action to take and decided to put forward questions to the Scrutiny Officer and seek a written response from the absent witness.

**It was resolved** that Members should put their questions forward and the Scrutiny Officer would seek a response to them.

The following questions were posed by Members:

- The products used by LUSH are predominantly for use in the bathroom. Given the company's impressive green ethos, what consideration has been given to the impact of the products on the waste water supply?
- What relationship do LUSH have with the company Closed Loop?
- What experience do LUSH have in the tendering of Waste contracts and what advice could they offer Maidstone Borough Council as they enter into a ten year contract in partnership with three neighbouring authorities?
- LUSH's admirable packaging and recycling target of 85% in their shops and factories has been noted by the Committee, what update can be given on the progress of this target?
- Five LUSH shops have been tasked with reducing the waste they send to landfill to less than 5%, equivalent to zero waste. How successful has this been so far?
- How successful are the in store initiatives to reduce and reuse packaging such as returning five black pots in exchange for a free face mask?
- A lot of items are sold without packaging in branches, how do the raw ingredients reach the factories, are suppliers sought with a similar approach?
- With branches situated on the high street, what relationship do LUSH have with other retailers, restaurants and bars and are there any waste and recycling initiatives being developed with other businesses?
- Have branches experienced any resistance from customers with regard to the 'no packaging' approach, has there been an impact on sales?
- What demographic/age group are predisposed to LUSH's ethos and are therefore the company's target market?

## **89. Duration of Meeting**

6.32 p.m. to 7.19 p.m.