

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

REPORT OF HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

Report prepared by Jennifer Shepherd

Date Issued: 6 February 2014

1. PROGRESS UPDATE AND REVIEW OF WASTE STRATEGY

1.1 Key Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the progress made towards the objectives set out in the Council's Waste Strategy.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Environment and Public Realm

It is recommended that:

1.2.1 The achievement of the objectives set out in the Waste Strategy 2010-2015 is noted; and

1.2.2 A new five year strategy is prepared to define the Council's future aspirations to achieve a recycling rate of 60% by 2019.

1.2.3 That the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee be consulted on the new draft waste strategy.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 In 2010, the Council adopted a five year Waste Strategy which outlined key objectives to reduce waste and increase recycling.

1.3.2 The strategy followed the principles of the waste hierarchy, focusing on waste reduction, reuse and recycling to achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2015.

1.3.3 The strategy set out the following key objectives:

- † To increase the amount of household waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting to 50% by 2015 (above the national target of 45%)

- † To reduce total household waste arisings by 10% by 2015 compared with 2005-2010 average.
- † 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.
- † To improve the value for money of the waste collection service.
- † To improve residents' satisfaction with Maidstone Borough Council's waste and recycling services.
- † To increase glass recycling collections by up to 600 tonnes during the period of the plan.
- † 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.
- † 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

1.3.4 As part of the strategy, key actions were identified for each level of the waste hierarchy. These included publicising waste prevention initiatives, reducing waste through fortnightly refuse collections, promoting reuse through enhanced textile collections, introducing new recycling collections such as food waste and minimising waste sent to landfill.

1.3.5 The council has achieved all of these objectives two years ahead of the target.

1.3.6 **Objective: Achieve a recycling rate of 50% by 2015 and increase glass recycling by up to 600 tonnes**

1.3.7 In January 2011 the Council introduced a weekly food waste collection alongside a fortnightly refuse collection.

1.3.8 The weekly food waste collection was extremely successful with over 80% of households participating in the service and achieved a recycling rate of 45% in 2011/12.

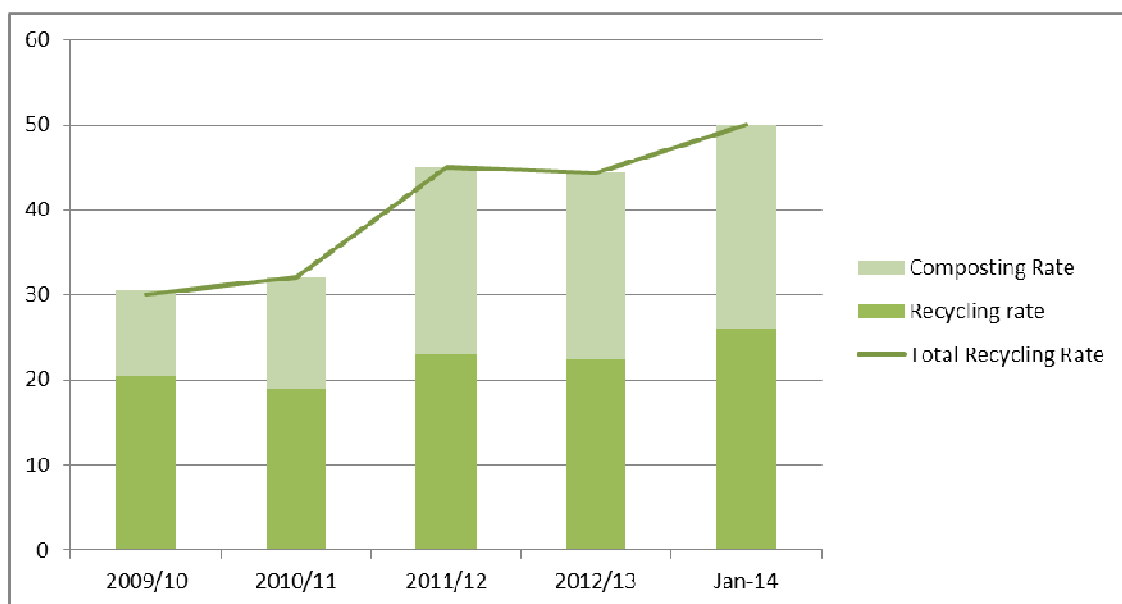
1.3.9 The service was also awarded the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee's (LARAC) "Best Communication Campaign 2011" due to the exceptionally high levels of resident engagement and high customer satisfaction.

1.3.10 In 2013, the Council joined in partnership with Ashford and Swale Borough Councils and Kent County Council for a new Mid Kent Joint Waste Contract. This partnership approach has provided Maidstone with significant savings, in excess of £1million per year, and has also improved the services offered to local residents.

1.3.11 In August 2013, the existing recycling services were extended to include glass bottles and jars, plastic food packaging and cartons. Separate collections for textiles, small electrical items and household batteries were also introduced.

1.3.12 The enhanced service has enabled the Council to achieve a recycling rate of 50% during the peak garden waste season. This has exceeded the Council's objective to recycle 50% of household waste by 2015.

1.3.13 The graph below shows the recycling performance over the past 5 years:



1.3.14 Since 2009/10, an additional 1,254 tonnes of glass has been recycled, twice as much as the target. This is expected to increase further now glass bottles and jars are included in the kerbside recycling service.

1.3.15 There have also been other improvements including

1.3.16 **Objective: Reduce total household waste arisings by 10%**

1.3.17 A key objective of the strategy was to reduce total household arisings through the promotion of waste prevention and reduction initiatives.

- 1.3.18 The average annual tonnage for 2005-2010 was 60,093.35 tonnes. In 2012/13, a total of 53,025.91 tonnes of household waste (including recycling) was collected. This is an 11.76% reduction in total household waste arisings.
- 1.3.19 The introduction of the weekly food waste collections resulted in the rubbish in residents' grey wheeled bins falling by 37%, with total waste arising reduced by 11%.
- 1.3.20 The Council has continued to promote waste reduction messages including Love Food Hate Waste and reusable shopping bags.
- 1.3.21 **Objective: Meet additional costs through external funding and service efficiencies and improve value for money of the waste collection service**
- 1.3.22 The Council has introduced significant improvements to the refuse and recycling collections over the past 5 years. However during this time the service has also generated savings to the Council and funded improvements through external funding.
- 1.3.23 The introduction of weekly food collections was cost neutral to the Council. The provision of containers and additional operational costs were funded by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Kent Waste Partnership (now known as Kent Resource Partnership) and savings generated through changes to the refuse collection.
- 1.3.24 The new waste collection contract in partnership with Ashford and Swale Borough Councils is also enabling the council to improve services whilst cutting costs. This contract is generating savings of £1 million per year for the Council.
- 1.3.25 Kent County Council are also making support payments to the Council which reflect the waste disposal savings.
- 1.3.26 **Objective: Improve customer satisfaction**
- 1.3.27 Quarterly customer satisfaction surveys have been carried out over the past couple of years. These have shown consistently high results with 97% of residents satisfied with rubbish collections and 93% satisfied with recycling collections. These were the same as the results obtained in January 2011, before the new services were introduced.
- 1.3.28 Customers' satisfaction is also measured annually as part of the bi-annual customer survey. This has shown high levels of satisfaction have been maintained.

1.3.29 Objective: Maximise recyclate value and minimise the incineration of recyclables

1.3.30 The Council continues to work with Kent County Council and the wider Kent Resource Partnership to ensure maximum value is obtained from the material collected.

1.3.31 Whilst a fully commingled service has been retained in Maidstone, there is still a strong focus on ensuring high quality materials are captured and segregated. The recycling is now being sent to an advanced material recycling facility (MRF) in Edmonton where technology is used to separate the different recycling streams. The Council's rejection rate is now between 3-4% compared with 15% at the previous MRF.

1.3.32 Objective: Support the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction

1.3.33 The environmental impact of the new waste collection contract was considered during the procurement and is focused on reducing the mileage and fuel use of the collection vehicles.

1.3.34 The service now uses split-bodied vehicles enabling a "single-pass" collection. This has significantly reduced the number of vehicles required to collect the waste and recycling, with 5 less frontline vehicles now being used.

1.3.35 Changes to the garden waste service have also contributed to this objective with collections only being made from services who subscribe to the service rather than all households in the Borough.

1.3.36 Objective: Future Aspirations

1.3.37 As the objectives of the Council's first waste strategy have been achieved, it is recommended that a new strategy is prepared to continue improving performance.

1.3.38 It is recommended that the new strategy considers:

- A target of 60% recycling by 2019
- Recycling in flats and from communal collection points
- Communication campaigns to increase capture rates for new materials including glass and plastics
- Public engagement through door-knocking
- Options for bulky waste
- Recycling of street litter
- Current waste and recycling policies

These will enable the Council to identify opportunities to reduce service costs as well as having a clear strategy which will enable the Council to attract external funding. Recent informational visits to Councils operating similar collection services have highlighted these as key opportunities to increase recycling and improve services.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 Whilst the Council has achieved and in many cases exceeded the objectives set out in the Waste Strategy, it could decide to maintain the current performance rather than develop any further objectives.
- 1.4.2 This is not recommended as the Council will fail to benefit from additional recycle income as part of the profit-sharing agreement with Kent County Council.
- 1.4.3 As part of the Joint Waste Partnership, the Council will receive a significant proportion of any profit achieved through the sale of additional recycle. It is therefore potentially financially beneficial to the Council to increase the amount of waste segregated for recycling.
- 1.4.4 It is proposed that the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee are consulted regarding the new strategy.
- 1.4.5 In addition, the previous five year strategy has shown that by focusing on waste reduction, reuse and recycling, significant service improvements can be achieved which offer value for money and increase customer satisfaction. Without the focus of a Waste Strategy, there is a risk that the service will lack direction and will fail to deliver continuous improvement.
- 1.4.6 It is also likely that without a new strategy and focus on promoting waste reduction and recycling, the current performance will also start to decline. WRAP studies have shown that residents require repeated engagement in order to maintain performance. Without this, participation and capture rates are likely to decrease and the Council will not generate any profit share.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The current Waste Strategy supports the Council's objectives to be a decent place to live and for corporate and customer excellence. The service improvements provided as part of this strategy have ensured Maidstone residents are provided with a high standard of service which meets their needs and is cost effective for the local taxpayer.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 This is an update of actions which have already been taken and therefore there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

1.6.2 Risks associated with the new strategy will be considered as part of a separate report and will include risks associated with possible legislative changes including the EU requirement to separately collect paper, metals, plastic and glass.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	

1.7.2 Whilst the recommendations of this report do not have any specific implications, the adoption of a new five year strategy with further aspirations is likely to have financial and staffing requirements.

1.7.3 These implications will be considered as part of the adoption of a new five year waste strategy.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

1.8.2 Appendix A – Waste Strategy 2010-2015

1.8.3 Background Documents

1.8.4 Waste Strategy 2010-2015

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, this is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:None.....

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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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