

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

11 NOVEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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Best Value Review of Waste and Recycling - Options Appraisal

Executive Summary

At Cabinet on 21 May 2009 it was agreed that a Best Value Review of the Waste and Recycling Service would be undertaken during 2009/10. A scoping report was also discussed at the meeting with an options report to be presented to Cabinet at the second stage of the review process.

This paper contains the work to-date on the review and a range of options for Cabinet to consider. As part of a comprehensive review many different aspects of the service have been assessed and the detailed results can be found in the report and the accompanying appendices.

The waste and recycling service has been found to be effective in many ways and the introduction of the new dry recycling scheme in the past year has improved performance on the percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting to around 36%.

However, several areas for improvement and options for service delivery have emerged. These include greater service clarity, improving communication and value for money and also the range of services to the public.

An initial draft of this report was also discussed informally with the Environment & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 20 October and as a result several changes were incorporated.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet agree that:

1. There are no further options or areas of analysis to be considered;
2. The proposals for service delivery as set out in Option 1 of the report are explored, which includes the following:

- i. A Council Waste and Recycling Strategy is produced;
- ii. A fairer distribution of the recycling credits within Kent is sought;
- iii. Given the high levels of waste generated and the current service cost an alternate weekly waste collection is considered;
- iv. A separate food waste collection is investigated;
- v. Bring sites and the facilities for the recycling of plastics and glass are expanded;
- vi. Expressions of interest are sought from the private and voluntary sector to develop a programme to reuse materials;
- vii. Greater home composting is encouraged with the green waste service;
- viii. Better use is made of technology to enable residents to access information and services and improve reporting;
- ix. As part of a renewed bulky service the freighter service is withdrawn across the borough;
- x. Facilities are promoted more extensively and plans for an additional household waste recycling centre are pursued with the County Council;
- xi. Options for the collection of commercial waste are investigated further; and
- xii. Robust monitoring arrangements are established with a greater focus on the outcomes achieved.

3. That the range of smaller recommendations set out under each stream of the review be agreed. These include:

- That the Council signs up to the national waste and recycling commitment;
- That the Council considers further steps that can be taken to prevent waste generation and the top priorities in the waste hierarchy;
- To increase the information available to residents on the alternative Household Waste and Recycling Centres in neighbouring boroughs;
- To look at the opportunity to work with a furniture reuse company to deal with bulky waste; and
- To monitor the development of alternative fuels and explore the opportunities for trialling alternative.

4. That an Implementation Plan is prepared for consideration by Cabinet in January 2010.

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1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. Ensuring that services operate efficiently and provide sufficient value for money is a core value of the authority. Maidstone Borough Council is committed to being a high-achieving authority renowned for its innovation, and seeks to deliver this through a range of service review measures.
- 1.2. In order to continue to deliver this commitment in May 2009 the Cabinet agreed that a Best Value Review of Waste and Recycling would be undertaken in 2009/10 and the scope of the project.
- 1.3. There are a number of key drivers for improving the way in which waste services are delivered. These include the need to tackle increasing waste volumes, achieve higher recycling levels, encourage waste minimisation through reduction and reuse and increase resident involvement.
- 1.4. Recent developments also meant that the timing was right to undertake a comprehensive review of the waste and recycling service, these include:
 - The Council was now a year on from the first phase implementation of the new recycling scheme with the full scheme in place from May 2009;
 - The provisional results of the Place Survey showed varying levels of satisfaction with recycling across the borough;
 - The latest performance figures showed there was a high level of waste generation in the borough;
 - The Council has average performance on recycling but at a high cost;
 - The external auditors in 2008 and 2009 had highlighted the high cost to performance ratio of the service and this had been reflected in the Price Book;
 - The contract with the company that currently collects the waste on the Council's behalf (SITA) finishes in 2013 and there is a need to start to consider the best options for the new contract;
 - New local facilities to deal with food waste had also come on line; and
 - The national guidance on dealing with waste was also being reviewed and updated.
- 1.5. The report to the Cabinet in May 2009 included a range of background data. This information has not been repeated in this options paper but the papers do provide additional information on the key issues and should be read alongside this report.
- 1.6. One of the key issues that it is particularly important to highlight is that Maidstone Borough Council is the collection authority, the waste disposal authority is Kent County Council. That said, it is vital that both authorities

work closely to ensure good value for money and a wide range of services and choices are available for residents.

1.7 The next section of the report contains further details on each of the options.

2 **Options Appraisal**

2.1 Many different permutations in terms of the options have been considered as part of the review. In arriving at the recommendations four main factors have been considered. These are the waste hierarchy and in particular reduction and reuse, cost effectiveness, customer satisfaction and reducing emissions.

2.2 In terms of the challenge element the first question has been as to whether any service should be stopped, particularly as several services do not currently recover all or any of the costs.

2.2 The main elements are summarised below but throughout the report there are a smaller recommendations proposed under each of the workstreams.

2.3 The table below sets out the three options packages

	Option package 1	Option package 2	Option package 3
a	Producing a brief Waste and Recycling Strategy would clarify the council's overall direction; improve the potential for external investment and the targeting of resources. It is recommended that a brief Strategy is produced along with an Action Plan for 2010-12. The cost would be met from the existing budget.	As option one	As option one
b	The Council should pursue a fairer distribution of the recycling credits and a commitment from the County Council to provide base funding.	As option one	As option one
c	Given the high levels of waste generated in the borough and the cost per household of the service an alternate weekly	To continue with the existing weekly collection of residual waste, as	To reduce the level of materials recycled in the borough and

	<p>waste collection arrangement should now be considered to those households with wheelie bins. In addition given the success of the dry recycling scheme, the latest environmental assessments and the potential for savings of approximately £266,000 to £399,000 per annum (less the cost of promotion in the first year) this should be explored. There is also likely to be a reduction in the amount of general waste that is thrown away due to having less capacity in the residual bin.</p>	<p>resident satisfaction could be affected if alternate weekly collections are introduced. However, a number of residents are now saying their residual waste bin is half full or less on a weekly basis and this does not offer value for money.</p>	<p>generate a higher level of residual waste, which in the short term would provide savings. There would be a range of reputational risks associated with this along with failing to meet objectives as part of the Kent Waste Strategy.</p>
d	<p>A separate food waste collection should also be investigated (for those households who can accommodate a food collection bin). A bid is currently being prepared for participation in a food waste pilot, given the national timescales. Not only should this enable the Council to reduce the amount of waste collected and the amount of waste going to Allington but tackle concerns some residents may have about going to alternate weekly waste collections. The actual cost of expanding the service could be significant but could well be offset by additional recycling credits and associated efficiencies in the wider service.</p>	<p>Not to pursue the pilot exercise on a separate food waste collection, however, this remains the next biggest element of the waste stream to tackle. The Cabinet could decide to investigate collecting food waste with green waste which is the case in a couple of other boroughs in Kent. However, to date this has led to lower participation rates than separate food waste collections.</p>	<p>As option one or two</p>
e	<p>The facilities at the bring sites should be changed with the recycling type 1, 2 and 3 plastics introduced and the provision for glass expanded, this will include locating</p>	<p>To maintain the number of bring sites in the borough, although levels are amongst the lowest per</p>	<p>To reduce the number of bring sites in the borough, although levels are amongst the lowest per head</p>

	potential additional sites and undertaking an assessment to ensure that they meet a range of factors including minimum disturbance to local residents. The removal of the can banks would also help fund the initiative.	head of population in Kent.	of population in Kent.
f	Given the waste hierarchy expressions of interest should be sought from the private and voluntary sector to develop a programme to reuse materials which is also popular with the public.	As option one	As option one
g	Home composting should be encouraged as the first option for green waste although all the national schemes have now finished. The Council should be looking to work with local providers to see if a subsidised scheme can be offered. Any additional cost could be offset against the potential savings in the collection of this green waste and reviewing the winter collection arrangements.	As well as promoting home composting the Council could decide to withdraw the garden bin service and rely on residents using sacks. It could be possible to procure biodegradable sacks but these are likely to be more expensive for residents. However, there is a risk that residents could go back to putting this waste in with the residual waste.	Withdraw the garden waste service. There is a significant risk that residents could go back to burning their garden waste or putting this in with the residual waste. However, they could also take their garden waste to the tip;
h	The Council is only one of two Councils in Kent to provide a freighter service and in doing so waste cannot be reused and therefore goes to landfill. Steps will be taken to simplify the bulky waste collection by restructuring the payment scheme including providing a	To retain the freighter service and explore opportunities for reusing materials or payment when people use the service.	Introduce a charge for use of the freighter service, to recover the full cost of the service.

	subsidy to more vulnerable residents and those on benefits. As a result the freighter service should be withdrawn across the majority of the borough. This would provide savings in the region of £60,000 per annum.		
i	Public feedback suggested that a number of residents were not aware of the recycling facilities and services that were available from the Council. It is recommended that these are promoted more extensively. This will be progressed with the Communications Team within existing budgets.	As option one	As option one
j	Plans for an additional household waste recycling centre have been discussed with the County Council in the past. It is recommended this is revisited. Further steps will also be taken to highlight to residents the facilities in neighbouring boroughs on the borough boundaries. It is envisaged that Kent County Council would fund the cost of the additional centre.	As option one	As option one
k	Commercial waste collection opportunities should be investigated further; this will include possible links to the Council's existing waste collection service. This could provide an income stream in the future and also maintain levels of waste going to Allington.	The Council may wish to consider a smaller scale commercial venture, possibly with the small businesses in the borough or focus just waste collection.	As option one or two
l	More robust monitoring arrangements need to be	As option one	As option one

	established with a greater focus on the outcomes achieved and feedback from the public. Levels of contamination remain high in some areas which affect missed bins, resident satisfaction and the performance of the contractor.		
m	The green waste service should be revised with the frequency of collection in the winter (December to February) reduced.	As option one	As option one

2.4 There may well be other factors to consider, however, it was felt that this was the best way to display the options and also put together an overall package of proposals. The timescales for any change will be further explored in the Implementation Plan.

3 **Project Scope**

3.1 The scoping document contained six main themes that the review would focus on, these are outlined below.

Strategy

- The National Waste Strategy;
- The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy; and
- Maidstone Council's Policy.

The Collection Service

- Collection arrangements for waste and recycling;
- Bulky rubbish collection and the weekend freighter service;
- Trade waste;
- Clinical waste;
- Food waste; and
- Green waste.

Disposal Arrangements

- The facilities at the bring sites;
- Reducing and reusing materials; and

- Links with the household recycling sites.

Public Views

- Feedback from a range of surveys (including the recent Place Survey);
- Education and promotion; and
- Methods of contact with the Council, including promotion of the service.

The relationship between the Council and its Partners

- Kent Waste Partnership;
- Delivery on the contract (SITA); and
- Third party groups.

Performance and Value for Money

- Council and Kent wide targets;
- Waste collection performance (SITA);
- Kent performance comparisons; and
- Co2 emissions.

3.1.1 The scoping document also set out two areas that the review would not be covering; these were the Allington disposal site and the current waste collection contract with SITA.

3.2 Applying the Best Value Review Methodology

3.2.1 The review framework considers the 4 Cs of Best Value when assessing performance these are: -

- Competition;
- Challenge;
- Consultation; and
- Comparison.

3.2.2 In addressing these questions the Council considered whether providers were offering a better service in other boroughs and challenged the current thinking and approach. Obtaining the views of residents on the service provided and comparing relative performance were also key elements.

3.2.3 This ensured a comprehensive set of questions could be put together on the activity being undertaken by the Council. This included the quality and performance being delivered against the cost to the authority (i.e. whether

value for taxpayer's money is being achieved). Part of the Best Value Review process was therefore to look at whether resources could be made to work more efficiently or whether some aspects of the service should still be delivered.

- 3.2.4 Due to the wide scope of the review the framework of challenge, compare, consult and compete was applied across all of the review streams. Lessons were also learnt from the previous reviews with greater involvement of members through overview and scrutiny and a more project management based approach.
- 3.2.5 It was originally envisaged that a Kent County Council officer would be involved in the review. However, the County later advised that due to capacity issues this would not be possible. KCC officers were interviewed to ensure that the County Council views were represented and also to ensure that the review included information on how the disposal stream operates and the future plans for waste and recycling in Kent.
- 3.2.6 Cabinet agreed with the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it would be useful for them to be more involved with the review, as well as considering the review the Committee led on the review of the potential collection arrangements.
- 3.2.7 As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work a comparative exercise was undertaken across the Kent districts on the range of waste and recycling service provided. The results of this exercise will be referred to throughout the review and the full results can be seen at **Appendix A**. Please note that not all the councils in Kent responded to this exercise or responded in full.
- 3.2.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also undertook an exercise at an early stage in the review to look at the potential options for the future of the waste and recycling service. The Committee looked at potential options for:
- Recycling collection;
 - Residual waste collection;
 - Food waste;
 - Trade waste;
 - Bulky collection;
 - Clinical collection;
 - The freighter service; and
 - Garden waste collection.

- 3.2.9 The Committee provisionally rated the provisional options in line with the following aspects:
- Cost effectiveness;
 - Service delivery;
 - Supporting sustainability, reducing and reusing waste; and
 - Supporting Co2 reduction.
- 3.2.10 The results of this can be seen at **Appendix B** and are referred to in the Collection Approach chapter of this report.
- 3.2.11 In addition to the support from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, assistance was also provided from Waste Consulting who provided a contractor health check. Waste Consulting are specialist waste management consultancy which specialises in the public sector. This work was funded by Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE). The results of this work are within the Performance and Value for Money chapter of the report.
- 3.2.12 As well as providing a review of the Council's contract, Waste Consulting also completed an external challenge on other aspects of the waste and recycling service and this is referred to in the report.
- 3.2.13 The full report from Waste Consulting can be found at **Appendix C**.
- 3.3 Waste and recycling survey
- 3.3.1 A number of consultation activities were undertaken as part of this review and these are outlined in the relevant chapters. The largest exercise was the survey of residents which was completed in September 2009.
- 3.3.2 The survey was distributed to 5,000 residents throughout the borough. A copy of the survey can be seen at **Appendix D**. Overall there was a 45 per cent response rate (which is high for postal surveys) and a summary of the results can be seen at **Appendix E**.

4 **Strategy**

The following section considered the overall strategy for the borough, the key objectives and how this fitted with the national and regional agenda.

4.1 National Strategy

4.1.1 The Government published a revised waste strategy for England in May 2007 which set out the vision for sustainable waste management. The Strategy requires the following targets to be achieved:

- 4.1.2 Increasing recycling and composting of household waste;
- o To 45% by 2015; and
 - o To 50% by 2020.

The level in Maidstone is currently at 36%.

- 4.1.3 Increasing the recovery of (value from) municipal waste;
- o To 53% by 2010;
 - o To 67% by 2015; and
 - o To 75% by 2020.

By sending waste to the Allington waste to energy recycling facility the Council is contributing to this target. Kent County Council anticipates no issues in reaching these targets.

- 4.1.4 Reduce the household waste not reused, recycled or composted;
- o 29% of 2000 levels by 2010
 - o 45% of 2000 levels by 2020

The generation of waste has reduced by 105kg per household since 1999/2000, this is a 13.5% reduction in the kg of residual waste collected, so there is still some way to go to hit the central government target.

- 4.1.5 An increase of £8 per year to landfill tax escalator.

As of April 2009 Landfill tax (this is the tax applied to local authorities for each tonne of waste that is sent to landfill) will continue to rise by £8 a year until 2013.

- 4.1.6 The Strategy encourages greater segregation and sorting of waste at (or close to) its source by both households and businesses. The strategy identifies that the Government is urging improvements in the way two tier local authorities work together by encouraging partnerships, including powers to establish joint waste authorities. On the latter point this is something that is being investigated within Kent.

4.2 The Kent Waste Partnership Strategy

4.2.1 The Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (**Appendix F**) was published in April 2007. It is a 20 year strategy but is due for review during 2009/10.

4.2.2 The Kent Strategy was formulated following extensive research and consultation with many stakeholders. The strategy is a compromise to reflect the differing needs in the Kent Districts, however, balancing the needs of 13 municipal stakeholders makes achieving a consensus very difficult.

4.2.3 The key elements include:

- To view waste as a resource and seek to influence others of this;
- The development of a constituted formal committee which will seek the views and contributions of the community and industry;
- To deliver high quality services;
- To meet statutory targets set for Kent and exceed them where this is a locally agreed priority;
- To prioritise waste minimisation and re-use;
- To increase the performance of the existing scheme through information and education; and
- Meet targets for diverting biodegradable waste.

4.2.4 Each district has an individual target to enable the overall Kent target for recycling to be achieved; the target for Maidstone is 35% combined recycling and composting.

4.2.5 The principal of waste to energy is understood and the provision of a facility in Kent supports the proximity principal (disposal being as localised as possible) and therefore disposal is based on the Allington incinerator. This is combined with a separate and green waste composting site at Blaise Farm in Tunbridge Wells.

4.2.6 It should be noted that the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy was published in advance of the National Waste Strategy and although the Kent document is still relevant this strategy is due to be reviewed.

4.2.7 The Environmental Protection Act (1990) introduced a range of measures aimed at stimulating recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to

landfill. All Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) are required to prepare a recycling plan outlining their strategy for recycling in their area. The Act also introduces the recycling credit scheme.

- 4.2.8 In England, Waste Disposal Authorities (WDA) are in two tier areas are the county councils and they have the power (but are not obliged by law) to pay recycling credits to district councils who send household waste to be recycled. This 'carrot' reduces the amount of waste that Waste Disposal Authorities have to then dispose.
- 4.2.9 Recycling credits are supposed to provide the main incentive to minimise the amount of household waste for collection and disposal and are a means to pass on to authorities the savings made by the WCA in their disposal and collection costs.
- 4.2.10 The table in **Appendix H** (exempt appendix) sets out what each Kent authority achieved in waste credits for 2008/09 and 2009/10. The other column constitutes items that have been subsequently negotiated by a district and Kent County Council.
- 4.2.11 Although some disparity in the level of recycling credits is to be expected as each district operates a different collection services, in some cases the difference is substantial. This will also be reflected in the net unit costs that are used to assess each of the authorities.
- 4.2.12 Recognising the inequality in the distribution of recycling credits, the Kent Waste Partnership is currently reviewing the scheme. However, it is important to note that due to the range of players involved in the review and what some authorities already receive as part of the scheme, a fair and equal method of distribution may be difficult to reach unless additional funding is provided by the County Council.
- 4.2.13 This year Maidstone BC received a significantly reduced proportion of credits to what was received in 2008/09 (at a time when levels of recycling have increased significantly) and what has been made available to other districts over the past two years. The amount in 2008/09 had been based on implementing the alternate weekly collection which had been discussed at that time but was subsequently not progressed by the Council.
- 4.2.14 The additional £100,000 for 2009/10 is not guaranteed, but given the improvement in performance that the Council has made in the past twelve months a strong case has been made to Kent County Council by the Cabinet Member for the Environment.
- 4.2.15 It is important to note that without this additional funding from KCC in 2009/10 the service will experience a shortfall as this funding was included in the base budget.

- 4.2.16 On this basis the Council should not plan the future development of the service based on an increase in recycling credits from the County Council. This is particularly relevant as it has been highlighted at a national level that the current system of recycling credits is not necessarily working, providing good value for money or reflecting the aspirations set out in the Waste Strategy.
- 4.2.17 However at this time the Council will expect to receive an increase in credits for any increase in recycling, for example, via the bring bank sites.
- 4.2.18 The Council has in the past been successful in bidding for some additional funds and Kent County Council has been supportive, although it should be noted that more work needs to be undertaken with KCC officers to encourage greater involvement in the borough. Officers have become much more proactive recently and the potential Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP) bid for food waste is a good example of the Council working with other districts and the County Council.

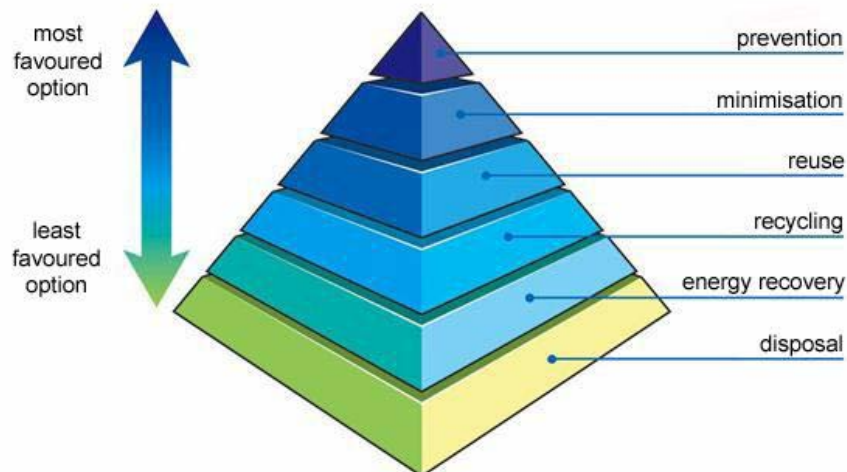
4.3 Maidstone's Strategy

- 4.3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets the overall strategy for the borough and this was produced in 2009 and developed by the Local Strategic Partnership. Below is the partnership's objective in terms of waste and recycling for the borough.
- Waste disposal infrastructure (processing, composting and transfer facilities) is delivered in line with improvements in district services at best value to the Kent taxpayer.
- 4.3.2 Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council are two of the key partners in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership should be involved in ensuring the Council is able to deliver on this target.
- 4.3.3 The Council's Strategic Plan 2009-12 outlines the actions that the authority will take in relation to delivering and improving waste services. The key objective and related actions are set out below:
- **Continue to support better cleaning, waste minimisation, and recycling and improve monitoring.**
 - With our Partners develop the various work streams of the Kent Waste Partnership Action Plan in order to improve performance and value for money in waste minimisation and recycling through innovation and new ways of working;

- Maintain and develop knowledge of developments in the field of waste management in order to identify good practice and to proactively develop the Council's services and working practices;
 - Develop an optimum model for waste collection, minimisation and recycling; and
 - Undertake benchmarking to check and ensure the service is providing value for money and take appropriate steps for improvement if necessary.
- 4.3.4 This are also links to targets in the Council's Performance Plan, which cover levels of waste generation, recycling and other methods of disposal. There are also a range of targets for Kent as a whole set out in the Local Area Agreement (Kent Agreement 2) for which Maidstone is expected to contribute.
- 4.3.5 The Council's key objectives and accompanying actions are being reviewed as part of the Strategic Plan 2010/11 update and it is anticipated that they will be refreshed and developed to give a more strategic outlook to the waste and recycling service.
- 4.3.6 The Waste and Recycling service accounts for seven per cent of the Council's overall budget. In 2008/09 the waste and recycling service actual gross cost was £4,630,779. Income for the same period was £1,369,331 which gives a net cost of the service of £3,261,448.
- 4.3.7 The Waste and Recycling Service is based within Environmental Services and consists of seven officers: -
- A Waste Collection Officer;
 - A Contract Monitoring Officer;
 - An Education Officer;
 - A Recycling Officer;
 - A Customer Services Officer; and
 - Two Recycling Promoters.
- 4.3.8 The latter two posts are on temporary contracts which are due to shortly come to an end as they were linked to the dry recyclables initiative.
- 4.3.9 The last two audit letters from the Audit Commission have highlighted the Council's Waste and Recycling service as an area for improvement, stating the Council should concentrate its efforts on improving recycling, the waste service and ensuring it is delivering good value for money.
- 4.3.10 There is currently no single strategy which sets out the Council's aims and priorities for the provision of waste and recycling services for the borough. The Council has an action plan which sits alongside the other Kent districts

as part of the Kent Waste Strategy. The development of the action plan is dependent on the Kent Waste Forum reviewing the Joint Waste Strategy in Kent. As a result there is no clear local strategic direction setting out the future of the Council's Waste and Recycling service.

- 4.3.11 Comparative work was undertaken across other waste partnerships nationally and other members of the Kent Waste partnership to investigate their individual Council strategies. There are no individual strategies in place for any of the district councils. However, it was noted that with the exception of the Kent districts, other Councils have smaller partnerships and their joint strategies had been more recently reviewed.
- 4.3.12 However, on balance it is felt that there is some value in developing a brief strategy and action plan to clarify the steps the Council is taking and how this fits with the overall objectives for Kent.
- 4.3.13 The waste hierarchy shown on the diagram below aims to encourage the management of waste materials in order to reduce the amount of waste materials produced, and to recover maximum value from waste that is produced.



- 4.3.14 It is recommended that any future development of a waste and recycling strategy for Maidstone should be based on the Waste Hierarchy, with prevention the number one aim. Potentially this will be the most cost effective and environmentally friendly option for both residents and the Council.
- 4.3.15 The Government agency WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have also invited local authorities to sign up to the first set of principles for a good waste and recycling service based on public opinion. The Commitment aims to help local

authorities improve residents' satisfaction with how their rubbish and recycling is collected and ultimately boost recycling rates.

4.3.16 The voluntary Waste Collection Commitment says:

We are committed to providing waste and recycling services which are good value for money and which meet the needs of our residents. This means we will:

- 1) explain clearly what services you can expect to receive;
- 2) provide regular collections;
- 3) provide a reliable collection service;
- 4) consider any special requests that individual households may have;
- 5) design our services and carry out collections in a way that doesn't produce litter;
- 6) collect as many materials for recycling as we can and explain to you what happens to them;
- 7) explain clearly what our service rules are and the reasons for them;
- 8) tell you in good time if we have to make changes to your services, even temporarily;
- 9) respond to complaints we receive about our services; and
- 10) Tell all our residents about this commitment to collecting waste.

4.3.17 Local Authorities have been invited to sign up to the commitment if their current service matches these principles or they are ready to introduce changes which will fill any gaps. It is recommended that the Council signs up to this commitment as a first step in setting the Council's strategic vision for the service.

4.3.18 As part of the waste and recycling survey undertaken for the review residents were asked **'What is the most important thing for the Council to consider in providing the waste and recycling service?'** Residents were given six options and asked to select the top three, these were:

- Providing a quality service (52%);
- Protecting the environment (46%); and
- Providing more ways for residents to recycle waste (46%).

4.3.19 This demonstrates that several of the aspects highlighted in the waste and recycling commitment are also supported by local residents.

4.3.20 In the survey residents were also asked to agree or disagree to statements to give an indication to attitudes about the Council's waste and recycling service. Around 85 per cent indicated that they would like the Council to collect more materials for recycling and this is something that will need to be considered when the next contract is let. However, a third of the

residents were not too concerned what happened to the waste and recycling after it was collected.

4.4 Strategy Options and Recommendations

4.4.1 As a result of the work on the strategy section of the review the following recommended options have emerged and these are set out below:

- i. **To develop a brief Waste and Recycling Strategy and Action Plan for the Borough;**
- ii. **That the Council plays an active role in the county agenda including the review of the recycling credits, lobbying for a fairer distribution of the funding and officers continue to be proactive in submitting funding applications.**
- iii. That the Council signs up to the national waste and recycling commitment;
- iv. That the Council considers further steps that can be taken to prevent waste generation and the top priorities in the waste hierarchy; and
- v. That the Council plays a full an active role in achieving the targets set out in the Kent Agreement 2 and local targets reflect the national waste and recycling targets that have been set for the medium and long term.

5 The Approach to Waste Collection

5.1 How waste is collected is a key consideration with many different models in operation throughout the country, this includes the frequency of collection, how materials are gathered, charging and the balance between doorstep collection and residents taking waste products to facilities for disposal.

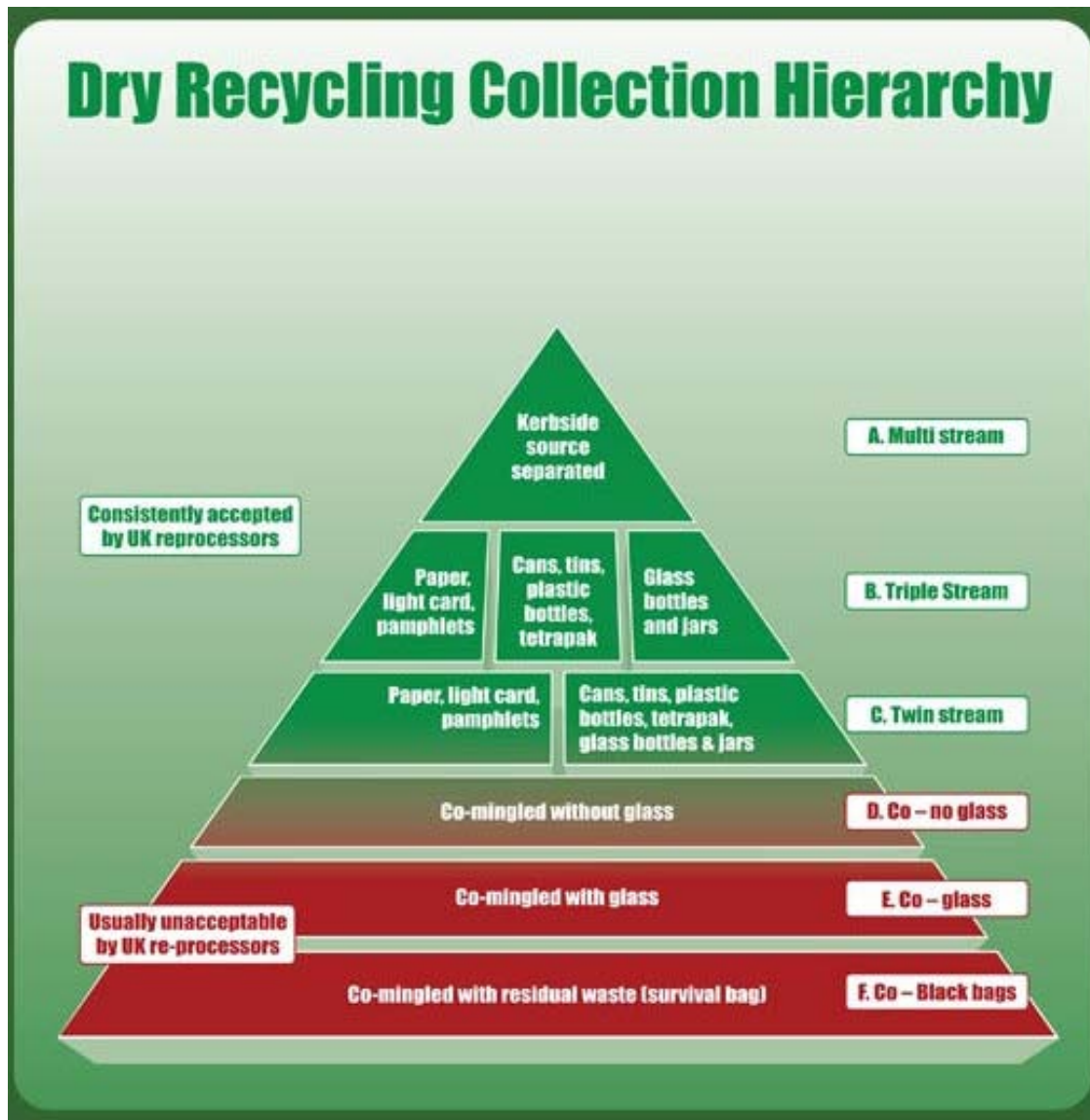
5.2 Recycling and Refuse Collections

5.2.1 The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 stipulates that a minimum of two materials are to be collected from every property by 2010. The Council is currently exceeding this target.

5.2.2 There are a number of different kerbside collection systems, the most popular arrangements are set out below:

- A kerbside sort which involves the sorting of materials into different compartments of a specialist collection vehicle;
- A single stream co-mingled collection which involves the materials being put in a single compartment vehicle with the sorting occurring at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF); or
- A two or three stream co-mingled collection where residents are provided with two or three recycling containers and are asked to place different materials in each container, typically paper/card in one and plastics, glass and cans (containers) in the other. These materials are kept separate but collected on one vehicle which has two chambers.

5.2.3 These recycling methods are shown on the diagram over the page. The hierarchy provides guidance on what the materials re-processing industries consider the best and worst collection systems currently being used.



- 5.2.4 The best multi stream approach is highlighted at the top of the pyramid but the kerbside source separation is also likely to be the most expensive.
- 5.2.5 Maidstone Borough Council began the roll-out of a new kerbside recycling service in 2008. The service is a single stream co-mingled collection (shown as D on the diagram above) which includes the following materials; paper, card, cans and some plastics, which it delivers to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Allington where it is sorted and sold on for reprocessing.
- 5.2.6 The first phase of the new dry recyclable service was delivered to 21,000 properties in February 2008; as a result an average of 17kg per household per month was delivered to the MRF. Then phase 2 was delivered to 5,000 rural properties in March 2009 and phase 3 to the remaining 36,000 households in May this year. The current average collection of recycled

waste per household is 16 kg per household per month, a total yield of almost 12,000 tonnes per year.

- 5.2.7 At the same time, residual waste arisings have decreased by around 8% in the first quarter of 2009/10 compared with the same period last year.
- 5.2.8 As is shown on the recycling collection hierarchy earlier, the current co-mingled system operated by the Council is neither the best nor the worst of those currently in use and the current collection service has moved on from the former co-mingled with glass system which the Council previously operated.
- 5.2.9 Co-mingled recycling collections, particularly the single stream collections, face quality problems from three sources
 - (a) householders putting the 'wrong' materials into the collection;
 - (b) the technical capacity of the MRF to separate the materials; and
 - (c) the physical capacity of the MRF to separate the volumes delivered to them.
- 5.2.10 A comprehensive waste audit (looking at what residents put in their bins) has been carried out in Kent during the past six months. The audit of 100 tonnes of Maidstone residents' recyclables revealed only an 8% rejection rate at the sorting facility.
- 5.2.11 To tackle issues of contamination where this is observed in recycling bins, red and yellow stickers are used to alert residents as to the reason for the missed bin.
- 5.2.12 Yellow is used for incidences of light contamination. If the crew can put the contaminated items in the grey bin they will do so. It would be inappropriate for them to rummage through whole bin, so the crew uses stickers to say what is wrong and to give the contact details for the Council.
- 5.2.13 Red stickers are used for a larger amount of contamination, usually because bags have been used to collect recyclables so the crew cannot see what materials are in the bin. The Waste Collection Team details are given on the red sticker and officers will visit to explain why the bin was rejected.
- 5.2.14 However, at present there is not a direct link from the collection vehicle to the Council so there is no real time information to monitor performance or deal with telephone calls or emails.
- 5.2.15 More is covered on the issue of contamination in the public views chapter of this report.

- 5.2.16 Based on the hierarchy, the ideal situation would be for the Council to operate a kerbside sort as operated by other Councils nationally, the benefits include:
- Increased revenue from the sale of materials as they are higher quality;
 - A reduced carbon footprint – recycling into like for like materials within the UK or Europe reduces greenhouse gas emissions;
 - It provides more flexible and additional markets such as batteries, textiles, which can easily be added to the range collected; and
 - Better public relations - people have greater confidence that source separated waste will be recycled efficiently.
- 5.2.17 According to the results of the waste and recycling survey 43 per cent of people would consider a recycling collection which would enable the collection of a wider range of materials and 57 per cent would be encouraged to recycle more if more was collected from the doorstep, which this system would allow.
- 5.2.18 However, there are concerns in relation to this system as the market for recyclable materials is very volatile so is a risk in terms of the net cost. The key benefit of the kerbside sort system is the quality of the recyclable material that is collected, in order that it can be recycled on into a like to like material.
- 5.2.19 The co-mingled collections also have a range of benefits in comparison to the kerbside sort, they are:
- Simpler for recyclers to use;
 - Encourage higher participation;
 - Are more inexpensive in the short term; and
 - Are easier and potentially safer to operate.
- 5.2.20 It should also be noted that co-mingling is better suited to built up urban areas whereas the kerbside sort system will operate more effectively in suburban and rural areas. The urban/rural mix in Maidstone means that a more sophisticated system would probably be required to ensure that the recycling collection operates effectively. But should the opportunity arise in the future a kerbside sorting arrangement may become the optimum solution in the rural areas.
- 5.2.21 It is therefore recommended that the collection system is reviewed in advance of the renewal of the waste and recycling collection contract in 2013. This would allow the Council to analyse a couple of years worth of comparative data on contamination rates, recycling participation rates and

variations in the market on recyclable goods, in order to make an informed decision on the type of system that would be most beneficial to local residents in advance of a new contract.

- 5.2.22 The Council could choose to operate a twin or triple stream co-mingled collection system as an interim method as this would give some measure of separating items into more related materials. However, given that the Council has recently rolled out a new service which has not yet been operating borough wide for a year this could be confusing to residents and would at this stage appear to offer no clear benefits.
- 5.2.23 There are two key materials that the Council is currently not recycling; these are glass and some plastics. A vast majority (85%) of respondents to the waste and recycling survey stated that they would like the Council to collect more materials for recycling. When asked ***'If you would like the Council to collect more materials for recycling, what would you like the Council to collect'***, 68% of residents stated that they would like glass collected and 60% said all plastics.

Glass

- 5.2.24 A glass kerbside collection was offered to approximately 14,000 properties in Maidstone prior to the introduction of the new kerbside recycling scheme in 2008.
- 5.2.25 The glass that was collected at the kerbside by the Council was not sorted at the MRF and it was deemed illogical to continue to collect glass for recycling when glass disposed in residual waste was also achieving the same use, namely road aggregate, when incinerated.
- 5.2.26 Now any glass collected in the residual waste is taken to the Allington energy-from-waste plant, and is retrieved after the burning process and also re-used for road aggregate.
- 5.2.27 At the time the Cabinet decision was taken it was stated that there was little difference in terms of environmental sustainability in collecting the glass separately and collecting it with residual waste. Therefore in order to fund the new dry recycling collection while retaining a weekly refuse collection, it was agreed that the glass collection service would be discontinued.
- 5.2.28 It was also considered better environmentally for residents to take their glass to bottle banks and sort it by colour so that it could be recycled to make new glass containers.
- 5.2.29 Further more, the decision also recommended that officers investigate the possibility of expanding the number of bring sites from the 28 bring sites

in existence. However, this has not yet been undertaken and needs to be addressed.

- 5.2.30 The recycling of glass via 'bring' banks is discussed in more detail in the Disposal section of this report.

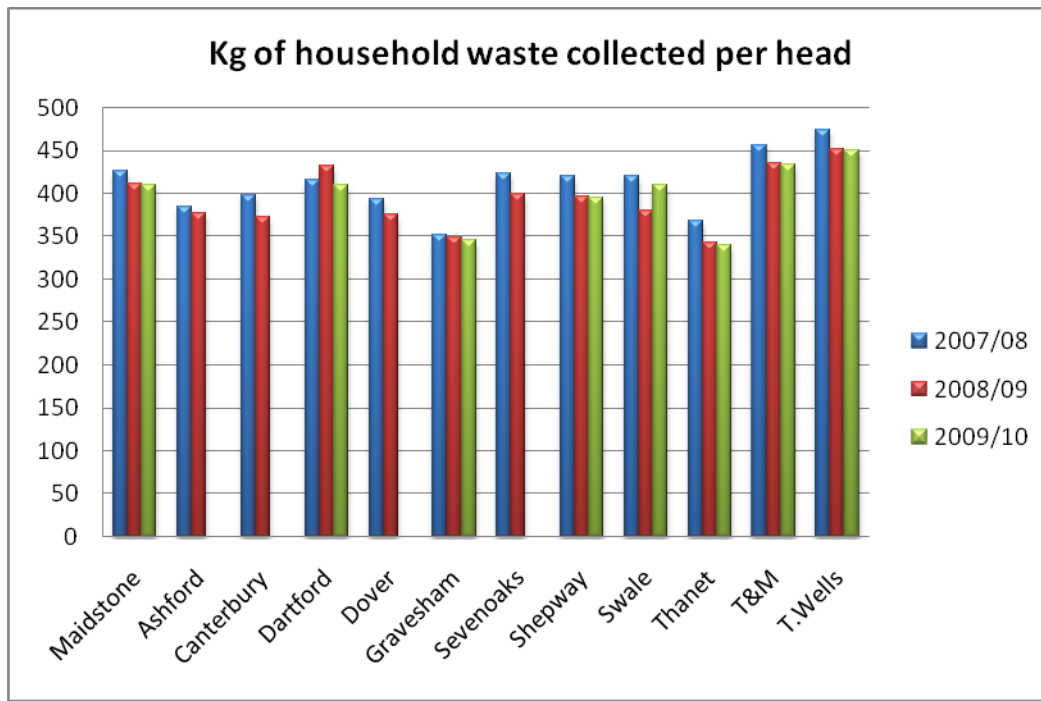
Plastics

- 5.2.31 It is very confusing for residents to understand the type of plastics that are and are not recycled. The Council has tried to clarify the position and also produced a range of additional information including on the website.
- 5.2.32 Kent County Council will not accept all the plastic types at Allington for recycling as there are only limited markets and this would also slow down the sorting arrangements. Discussions have taken place at an officer level and member level but the position is unlikely to change.
- 5.2.33 One possible option is to introduce some types of plastic collection at the bring sites which would be managed by a separate company to Kent County Council. A pilot is currently taking place in Tonbridge and Malling and this may be something that the Council would consider providing if it offered value for money and a suitable service provider could be found.

Waste generated per head of population

- 5.2.34 The Council currently provides a weekly collection of residual waste from either wheeled bins or, where properties are not suitable for such bins, black sacks. Wheeled bins were introduced in 1999, but there are approximately 4,500 properties that remain on sack collections.
- 5.2.35 The wheeled bins are provided in three sizes;
- 140 litres for those who live alone or do not produce much rubbish;
 - 190 litres for standard households; and
 - 240 litres for exceptionally large families.
- 5.2.36 Since the dry recyclable service was introduced a significant number of residents have asked for a different sized bin and a number have now moved to the smaller bins. There are now 2,921 households with smaller bins. The Council has not been able to meet all these requests with limited availability, there have also been some delays when new stock has been required, however, residents have been forewarned of this.
- 5.2.37 Domestic rubbish bags, black sacks and recycling bins (and boxes) are provided to local residents free of charge.

5.2.38 The graph below shows the figures for the kilograms of waste collected per head of population for each Kent district in 2007/08, 2008/09 and the projected figures for 2009/10 (four authorities in Kent did not provide projected figures for 2008/09). Maidstone produces the third highest kg per head in the County and is reducing this rate at a slower pace¹.



5.2.39 In December 2008 a waste audit was conducted by Wasteworks on behalf of the Kent Waste Partnership. The audit demonstrated that the average residual waste arisings for Maidstone were 12kg per household per week compared to a Kent average of 9kg per household.

5.2.40 There is no clear reason why Maidstone has higher waste arisings and it is recommended that further analysis is undertaken a year on from the full roll out of the new dry recyclables scheme if waste levels continue to be high. Levels of waste arisings are perceived to be related to the size of the household, followed by the age of the individual occupants and finally the household composition (e.g. single occupant household). Other factors, for example job status, life stage, ethnicity and occupation grouping of individuals seem to have less correlation with the amount of avoidable waste.

5.2.41 The diagram over the page shows an overview of the current composition of Maidstone resident's residual waste bin. The breakdown was broadly comparative to what was produced in Kent overall.

¹ Please note that the predictions for 2009/10 were undertaken prior to the full roll out of the scheme



5.2.42 Work is currently being undertaken in Kent on identifying different groups of residents based on a range of social and economic measures. The MOSAIC classifications should enable authorities to plan services more effectively and identify patterns in service delivery and demand. Maidstone will shortly be getting the information for the whole borough but the Waste audit undertook samples of waste from Mosaic groups A, B, C, D and H.

- A-Symbols of success
- B-Happy families
- C-Suburban Comfort
- D-Ties of Community
- H-Blue Collar Enterprise

5.2.43 Mosaic groups D and H have the lowest recycling belief of all the sample groups. However, Mosaic group D produced the lowest amount of waste and H the highest, suggesting that there is little linkage between the amount of waste produced and how strongly people believe in recycling.

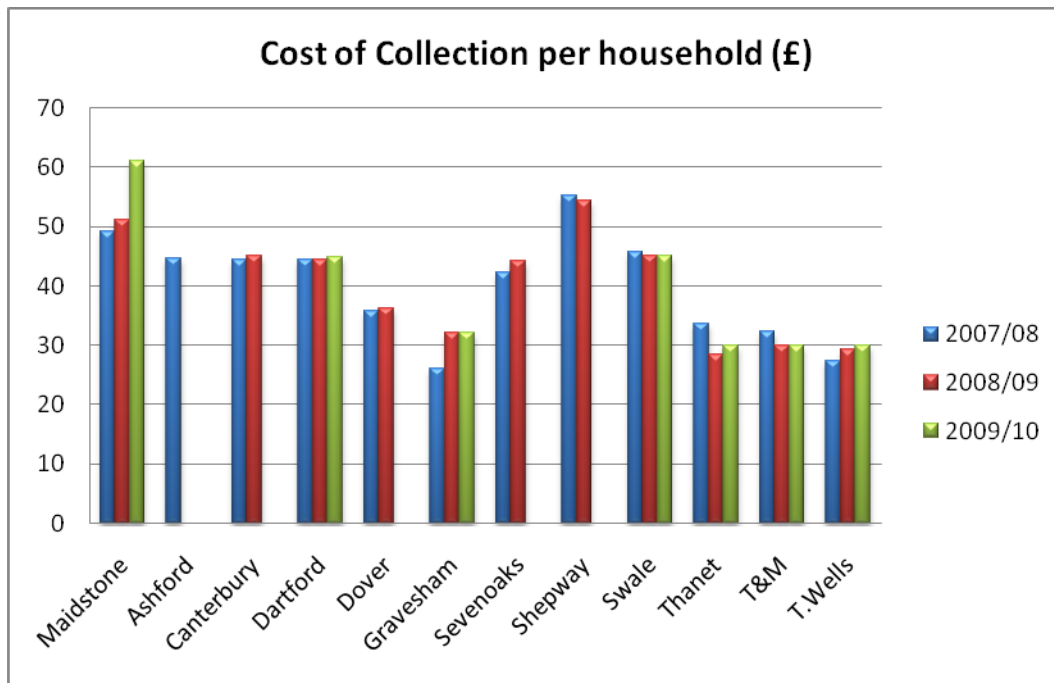
5.2.44 The waste audit carried out in December 2008 also measured how full the waste bin was, 55% of bins were between 75% and 100%+ full. As part of the Waste and Recycling survey carried out in September 2009 residents were asked **'How full is your bin when collected?'** Nearly half of the residents (49%) responded that their bin was now 'half full', 37

percent still said that their bin was 'completely full' and a further 11 per cent said it was 'hardly full at all'.

5.2.45 Therefore, 55% of bins were full or nearly full before the dry recyclable scheme was completely rolled out, but only 37% of people said their bin was completely full after the recycling scheme roll out. This is a possible 18% reduction in the number of full bins following the enhanced recycling roll out.

Cost of collection

5.2.46 The graph below shows that the cost of the waste and recycling collection across Kent. Maidstone is the second highest in Kent and cost will increase further in 2009/10 as a result of the new recycling scheme. It should be noted that it is hard to compare the projected cost of the service for 2009/10 as five authorities in Kent did not provide this information and, as highlighted previously, several get significant levels of recycling credits from Kent County Council.



5.2.47 There are three main ways that the Council could seek to reduce the cost per household:

- Reduce the amount the Council recycles;
- Move to a fortnightly collection service; or
- Move to an alternate week collection service.

Reducing recycling

- 5.2.48 Reducing the amount the Council recycles is an unrealistic decision for the Council to take. The Council has a statutory duty to collect two materials by 2010 and has just rolled out a new recycling scheme. Reducing the service would only allow for the removal of several items from its current collection, thus not yielding any real savings, unless other recycling services such as green waste were also removed. There would be a significant impact on customer satisfaction (which based on the Place Survey results is already low in comparison to other districts) and also on the Council's recycling performance results (which again has been low in comparison to other districts) although these have begun to increase following the roll out of the new dry recyclable scheme.

Fortnightly Collection

- 5.2.49 Fortnightly collections of waste and recycling would involve a week when nothing was collected and both waste and recycling being collected on the following week, probably on the same day. There are no fortnightly collections in operation currently although some authorities are looking at the option. Despite the significant savings that such a scheme could achieve there are several negative implications of such a scheme, including the need for additional vehicles.
- 5.2.50 This scheme offers residents no additional incentive to recycle as both collections are made on same day. It is also likely to lead to lower levels of satisfaction for both waste and recycling; only nine per cent of residents on the waste and recycling survey said they would consider this type of collection system.

Alternate Week Collections

- 5.2.51 Alternate Week Collection (AWC) is a scheme where one type of material, for example, recyclables is collected one week and another type of material, for example, residual waste the following week. Residents continue to receive a weekly collection service but a different bin is collected each week.
- 5.2.52 Moving to an alternate weekly collection system has a number of benefits.
- Increases the likelihood that residents will use the recycling service;
 - Maximises the positive environmental impact; and
 - Reduces the existing contract costs for providing a waste and recycling service.

- 5.2.53 As part of the Contractor Health check (Appendix C) the potential savings of moving to an alternate weekly collection system were calculated and it is estimated at between £266,000 and £399,000 per annum could be saved, depending on the number of vehicle routes that could be rationalised. This is based on the scheme being operated on only those households with wheelie bins approximately 60,000 households. Those households who currently have black sack collections would continue with a weekly collection, though alternatives would be explored.
- 5.2.54 This would include undertaking an assessment of all high density areas to assess the available space and could include entering into an agreement with the management company or housing association if this was relevant. There are a number of schemes that are currently being trialled in other authorities and the Council would seek to learn any lessons that emerge from them.
- 5.2.55 Currently other authorities only offer an alternate weekly collection to high density areas where residents can prove there is space available to store the waste and recycling longer than a week.
- 5.2.56 A key concern for local residents is whether there are any health issues relating to alternate weekly collections. A recent study (August 2009) conducted by Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP) and the Chartered Institution of Waste Management (CIWN) has found that there is no evidence that there are any increased health risks or nuisance for householders as long as good practice is applied by councils. The full report can be found at **Appendix G**.
- 5.2.57 Despite this concern, a quarter of residents said they would consider an alternate weekly collection, however, 16 percent of residents were not sure about what changes they would consider and suggested that more work is required to explain the type of collection service and the benefits.
- 5.2.58 Besides reducing the cost of collection the other key benefit of an alternate weekly collection service is that it encourages residents to recycle more.
- 5.2.59 These benefits are evidenced by the comparative work that was undertaken across Kent. Six out of the nine councils that responded to our enquiries operate an alternate weekly collection system.
- The three councils with the lowest cost per head of waste and recycling collections all operate alternate weekly collection; and
 - The three councils with the highest rate of waste arisings sent for recycling all operate alternate weekly collection.
- 5.2.60 Members were concerned that deprivation would also be a factor in the success of an alternate weekly collection as Maidstone has three wards

that are in the top twenty per cent of the highest deprived wards in the country. Consideration has been given to how successful alternate weekly collections would be implemented in these areas. Discussions were held with other boroughs operating alternate weekly collections, including those with more deprived areas. This was not identified as an area of concern by these councils when rolling out the scheme. Also, none of these authorities had seen negative effects following the roll out of alternate weekly collections, such as an increase in litter or fly tipping. The one issue that was identified is the higher turnover of residents in these areas and therefore more educational activity and support is required.

- 5.2.61 It is envisaged that if an alternate weekly collection was progressed the planned cost of the promotion of the scheme would be in the region of £60,000 which as the additional amount for the dry recyclable scheme.
- 5.2.62 The table over the page sets out the top ten councils for recycling (for 2008/09) and the scores that they recently achieved in the Place Survey for:
- Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things;
 - Value For Money;
 - Refuse collection;
 - Recycling collection; and
 - Keeping land clear of litter and refuse.
- 5.2.63 The results that Maidstone Borough Council achieved have also been included for comparative purposes. Where the Council has achieved a top quartile performance the score has been shown in bold.
- 5.2.64 The table over the page shows the authorities with the highest recycling rates in England. Nine of the ten councils are operating an alternate weekly collection. This shows a clear link between high recycling rates, alternate weekly collections, overall satisfaction with the Council and value for money.

Place Survey results for the top ten councils with the highest recycling rates						
	Authority	the way Council runs things	Value For Money	the Council's Refuse Collection Service	the Council's Recycling Service	Keeping the land clear of litter and refuse
1	East Lindsey	41.8%	33.4%	81.7%	78.6%	62.0%
2	South Hams	56.8%	39.3%	78.2%	77.1%	68.9%
3	Northern Kesteven	53.3%	44.5%	83.4%	79.6%	66.1%
4	Teignbridge	57.5%	42.5%	82.6%	82.8%	70.2%
5	Huntingdonshire	50.4%	39.3%	82.5%	80.7%	66.6%
6	Uttlesford	48.7%	36.0%	77.8%	73.2%	64.5%
7	South Cambs	43.5%	33.1%	78.3%	79.3%	61.2%
8	South Staffordshire Moorlands	46.2%	39.1%	79.0%	82.0%	59.6%
9	Rushcliffe	65.7%	52.2%	84.3%	75.3%	72.8%
10	South ² Shropshire	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Maidstone	44.0%	32.0%	85.5%	51.3%	59.5%

5.2.65 Although a majority of these Councils are not achieving top quartile scores on their satisfaction with waste collection, it is important to note that six out of the ten are achieving top quartile positioning on

- Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things overall; and
- Value for Money.

5.2.66 It is also significant to note that seven out of the ten councils had higher satisfaction ratings on their refuse collection than on their recycling.

² Place Survey results are not available for South Shropshire as they have now formed a unitary Council

5.3 Green Waste Collection

- 5.3.1 The Council currently offers a charged for collection of garden waste which is available borough wide and which is currently used by approximately 32,000 properties.
- 5.3.2 Garden waste is collected as part of a fortnightly collection service, but only where the waste is presented in either a garden waste bin or special sacks. There is a charge for the purchase of the green waste sacks at a cost of £2.50 for five which are available from council receptions and a network of authorised retailers. Alternatively, residents can hire a garden waste bin from the council at an annual charge of £30.
- 5.3.3 The charge is applied in order to help pay for the service, and in theory only residents who use the service are charged for the green waste collection. However, the income received from sales of sacks and bin rental only covers around 50% of the cost of providing the service.
- 5.3.4 Across the other Kent districts who replied to the survey on these questions:
- Four provide bin only collection services;
 - Two provide food and green waste collection services;
 - Two provide bin or bag collection services; and
 - Two provide no green waste collection service at all.
- 5.3.5 Of the six councils providing a green waste only service:
- All provide a fortnightly service;
 - Five councils charge for the service;
 - Four apply a higher charge than Maidstone for the service;
 - Two provide a reduced winter service; and
 - Two charge an initial charge for joining the scheme in addition to the annual fee.
- 5.3.6 When asked as part of the waste and recycling survey ***'what is the usual way that you dispose of your garden waste?'*** 35% of respondents said that they used the Councils green bags, 18% said they use the green waste wheeled bins and 16% said they took the green waste to the tip.
- 5.3.7 The survey went on to ask ***'If you don't use the Council's green bin or bag collection service why do you not use this service?'*** A surprising 27 per cent of respondents stated that they didn't know about it and a further 22 per cent stated that they didn't have a garden.
- 5.3.8 An extremely small percentage of just over ten per cent of residents stated that the barrier of using the service was cost or issues with obtaining the bins or sacks.

- 5.3.9 Further analysis of those respondents who did not know about the service shows that they were spread across the whole of Maidstone and were not isolated to any particular areas.
- 5.3.10 It is therefore recommended that in the in advance of spring when most residents are likely to start work on their gardens a promotional drive is undertaken.
- 5.3.11 The table below shows the cost of potential options for the future of the garden waste collection service, based on the take up by residents. This also includes the use of biodegradable garden sacks as at the moment the plastic sacks are ripped up when they are emptied.

Options on Varying Take Up	Levels of Take-Up				
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
1) Current scheme	£209,107	£209,107	£209,107	£209,107	£209,107
2) Wheelie Bins Only	£460,283	£449,673	£439,051	£428,419	£417,774
3) Wheelie Bins Only; Additional Purchase Fee in Year 1	£451,802	£444,296	£436,788	£421,763	£406,726
4) Bio Sacks Only	£222,946	£194,254	£165,562	£154,085	£136,870
5) Mixed Model - Bio and Chargeable Wheelie Bins	£138,371	£130,844	£119,535	£113,873	£100,640

- 5.3.12 The projected costs for options two and three which are for wheeled garden waste bins only are significantly more expensive than the other options. This is primarily due to the fact that it is assumed that there are a large number of residents who purchase sacks on a 'casual' basis.
- 5.3.13 The risk identified with the wheeled bin only scenarios is that a move to the use of wheeled bins only may take away the current garden waste bag users who would need to be generating the equivalent of 60 bags of garden waste (12 rolls) in order to justify the cost of a wheeled bin. Therefore the above scenarios assume a loss in income.
- 5.3.14 The table on the following page sets out the potential savings from each scenario.

Options - Varying Take Up	Costs		Savings			Savings p.a.
	Av. Cost p.a.	Av. Cost (3 Yr.)	Income Generation	Direct Cost	Indirect Cost	
1) Current scheme	£209,107	£627,320	£0	£0	£0	£0
2) Wheelie Bins Only	£439,051	£1,317,154	-£220,373	-£8,103	-£1,468	-£229,945
3) Wheelie Bins Only; Additional Purchase Fee in Year 1	£436,788	£1,310,363	-£223,481	-£4,052	-£149	-£227,681
4) Bio Sacks Only	£165,562	£496,686	£1,837	£11,270	£30,438	£43,545
5) Mixed Model - Bio and Chargeable Wheelie Bins	£119,535	£358,606	£89,081	-£780	£1,270	£89,571

- 5.3.15 In the longer term wheeled bins are a more cost effective option than sacks as bin customers generate income for the Council, whereas the average sack customer does not fully cover the fixed cost of operating the service. However, it is important to note that there is likely to be a maximum saturation point for wheeled bin users, therefore despite the longer term savings, options two and three are not recommended.
- 5.3.16 Model five builds on the current arrangements with several key differences; that the bags be replaced with biodegradable bags, that the cost of bags be increased to take account of an increase in price of using biodegradable bags and that an initial additional charge is made for delivery of the bin of £23. This model is in line with several other districts in Kent and would mean the service would not be operating at a loss.
- 5.3.17 In addition, the Council should seek to maximise the number of customers using the wheelie bin service.
- 5.3.18 The Council could also look to vary the service by time of year as an analysis of the volumes of green waste shows that residents collect the greatest amount of waste in spring and summer and usage drops off significantly between December and February. A collection once every four weeks during these months is likely to be much more reflective of the service required by local residents.

- 5.3.19 The Council has also historically promoted home composting as the best environmental option for dealing with garden waste. This remains the case, however, the national subsidised schemes that provided composters at reduced prices and which were previously funded by WRAP (Waste Resource Action Programme), ended in March 2009. As part of this review officers investigated other schemes both nationally and at other councils but none were being offered.
- 5.3.20 There is real value in promoting home composting as this reduces the level of waste generated, is good for the environment and increases the recycling rate by reducing the overall tonnage. It is recommended as part of this review that the Council investigate future home composting schemes including partnerships with local garden centres to increase participation in home composting.
- 5.4 Food Waste Collection
- 5.4.1 Food waste represents over 30% of the arisings in the kerbside residual waste produced within the Kent Waste Partnership authorities. In 2007/8 this amounted to some 117,475 tonnes, estimated food waste arisings are between 3.0 kgs and 4.6 kgs per household per week.
- 5.4.2 This is supported by a county-wide residual waste audit conducted in October 2007 and further field work carried out in December 2008. Details for each of the districts are set out over the page.

Estimated proportion of food waste in kerbside residual waste			
District	MEL study, 2007	WastesWork study, 2008	Average
Gravesham	39.5%	38.5%	39.0%
Canterbury	35.1%	39.0%	37.1%
Sevenoaks	38.1%	34.7%	36.4%
Thanet	33.8%	38.8%	36.3%
Swale	35.5%	36.5%	36.0%
Shepway	36.0%	34.6%	35.3%
Dover	31.8%	37.0%	34.4%
Tonbridge and Malling	24.2%	32.1%	33.1%
Maidstone	32.7%	31.6%	32.2%
Tunbridge Wells	32.6%	30.3%	31.5%
Ashford	32.3%	29.8%	31.1%
Dartford	29.1%	No data	29.1%

- 5.4.3 The proportion of overall waste in the residual waste collection which was food was found to be an average of 32 per cent for Maidstone over the two studies. Which was lower than average across the Kent districts.
- 5.4.4 However the research in 2007/08 found that Maidstone produced the highest amount of kerbside waste so even though the percentage of food waste was lower the actual quantity amounted to over 13,500 tonnes.
- 5.4.5 Further analysis has been undertaken to estimate how these figures breakdown per household. This shows that households in Maidstone produce the third highest kilograms of food waste per week.
- 5.4.6 Following this analysis it is therefore clear to see that operating a food waste collection service could allow the Council to:
- Contribute to the targets for diverting biodegradable waste from landfill;
 - Improve recycling rates;
 - Reduce waste disposal costs as landfill cost increase; and
 - Reduce environmental impacts associated with landfill.
- 5.4.7 If the Council was considering moving to a fortnightly or alternate weekly collection, a food waste collection service could complement this by removing the food waste on a fortnightly or weekly basis.
- 5.4.8 Currently only two boroughs in Kent collect food waste: Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells. Both Councils collect residents' food waste with their green waste on a fortnightly basis.
- 5.4.9 Thanet DC also gave an indication that they considered the next step of the Council is to give consideration to food waste collection once their new recycling service was embedded.
- 5.4.10 The Council is in the process of submitting a bid to WRAP to take part in a Food Waste Collection trial and although there was interest from several authorities initially these did not materialise and therefore the Council was the only borough to bid for this sort of initiative.
- 5.4.11 The trial will be for a food waste collection only and if the bid is successful the trials are likely to begin in autumn 2010. The scheme will run until 2013 to provide operational experience and data to take account of any significant seasonal variations and will form part of the strategy for the next contract. Costs are being investigated at this time for the provision of this scheme across the borough.
- 5.4.12 Between January 2007 and March 2009 WRAP provided funding and technical support to 19 local authorities in England and two local authorities in Northern Ireland to carry out trials of collecting food waste

separate to refuse (residual waste) and to garden waste for centralised treatment.

- 5.4.13 The average food waste yields per household as served per week was 2.1 kg; this is also equivalent to each household avoiding the equivalent of between 0.11 kg and 0.94 kg of CO₂ each week. Three authorities have retained a food waste collection following this pilot initiative.
- 5.4.14 Blaise Farm now has the capacity to process approximately 10,000 more tonnes of organic waste, and the Kent Waste Partnership wishes to utilise this. Therefore, should the Council wish to develop its organic waste services there is now capacity to do this, providing this can offer value for money.
- 5.4.15 However, the impact of any food waste collection service is unknown at this stage and there will no doubt be, for example, reductions in the level of food waste and residual waste generated within the borough.
- 5.4.16 As part of the waste and recycling survey conducted in August, residents were presented with four options for the disposal of food waste and were asked ***'If the Council introduced a separate food waste or food and garden waste collection service would you...?'***
- Use the food and garden waste collection service;
 - Use the food waste collection only;
 - Still put in with normal waste collection; or
 - Don't know.
- 5.4.17 Of the total respondents 63 per cent stated that they would use one of the food waste collection services if they were available with the majority of respondents preferring to use the food and garden waste collection service.
- 5.4.18 Although residents seemed to favour the food and green waste collection service, the fortnightly collection service offered by Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling has shown the capture rates for food waste to be low, as in practice residents do not like the mix of food and green waste.
- 5.4.19 It is for this reason that the WRAP bid is for food waste only. The service will provide residents with both a kitchen caddy and a kerbside bin (smaller than recycling and waste bins).
- 5.4.20 If the bid is successful those residents within scheme areas will be surveyed on the outcome of the scheme and their preferred method of food waste collection.

5.5 Clinical Waste Collection

5.5.1 Any local residents treating a medical condition in their own home are responsible for any medical waste that is produced. Where this waste has been identified as a particular risk by a healthcare professional, the Council has a legal duty to collect the waste separately when requested to do, a charge may be applied to cover the cost of collection, however the Council does not currently apply a charge.

5.5.2 Clinical waste is defined by the Controlled Waste Regulations (1992) as:

Any waste which consists wholly or partly of:

- Human or animal tissue;
- Blood or other body fluids;
- Excretions;
- Drugs or other pharmaceutical products;
- Swabs or dressings;
- Syringes, needles or other sharp instruments; which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming into contact with it; and:
- Any other waste arising from medical, nursing, dental, veterinary, pharmaceutical or similar practice, investigation, treatment, care, teaching or research, or the collection of blood for transfusion, being waste which may cause infection to any person coming into contact with it.

5.5.3 The free collection of clinical waste is operated from homes on the request of a GP or district nurse. A number of residents require a weekly collection, but the majority of people registered for the service only require a collection every few months, and contact the Council on an ad-hoc basis.

5.5.4 A separate waste vehicle makes collections once every week and can make a maximum of 50 collections. The collection points are evenly split between residents who are on a regular collection cycle and those residents who receive ad hoc collections.

5.5.5 In the course of the review, it became apparent that there is an issue with the growth in the demand for the service and waiting times. This is a particular issue for those ad hoc users who would now be required to wait approximately three to four weeks for a collection from the Council. It is therefore recommended that the Council explores the opportunities for increasing the service as a matter of priority.

- 5.5.6 The current cost to the Council of providing this service is £9,000 per year. Some doctors' surgeries do accept clinical waste but it is generally felt that the council service is better as it is collected from residents door step for free. Although the Council could apply a charge it would be doing so to people in a vulnerable situation and so this is not an area where it is considered appropriate to find efficiencies.
- 5.5.7 The Kent Waste Partnership is looking at partnership opportunities across the county in the provision of this service. It is therefore suggested that the Council pursue this avenue as an alternative to placing a charge on residents. In addition, it is suggested that discussion takes place with the various health suppliers and Kent County Council as more people are now being supported in the community rather than residential or nursing care.
- 5.6 Trade Waste Collection
- 5.6.1 The Council currently has no formal Trade Waste collection although it does organise the distribution of waste on behalf of Council run buildings such as the Museum and Hazlitt Theatre. The Council is also currently investigating the possibility of collecting paper recycling from schools and local charities as part of the Council's ongoing paper recycling programme.
- 5.6.2 The Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Centre for Local Authorities (BREW) surveyed all local authorities across England to investigate the trade waste and recycling arrangements in place, the results are shown in the table below.

Total local authority trade waste provision in England by region³			
Region	Total number of local authorities	Total number of local authorities providing trade waste service Feb 2009	Total number of local authorities providing recycling services Feb 2009
North East	25	19	7
North West	48	33	20
Yorkshire and Humber	22	18	11
East Midlands	45	30	13
West Midlands	38	21	10
East of England	53	32	25
London	37	30	23
South East	75	25	17
South West	51	22	22

³ Including all unitary, collection and disposal authorities

Total	394	230	148
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- 5.6.3 This demonstrates that trade waste collections are operated widely across the country but are substantially less likely to be operated in the South and particularly the South East.
- 5.6.4 Recycling collections are less likely to be available to businesses but BREW has indicated that these are increasing across the country.
- 5.6.5 Within Kent four of the district Councils collect trade waste, these are:
- Canterbury;
 - Sevenoaks;
 - Dover; and
 - Gravesham.
- 5.6.6 Canterbury operates a recycling scheme in addition to the trade waste collection, and Sevenoaks also collects just beyond its borough boundaries.
- 5.6.7 There are several key benefits to operating a trade waste and recycling service these are:
- Diverting as much waste, particularly biodegradable waste, as possible from landfill;
 - Increasing environmental awareness and responsibility among businesses; and
 - Ensuring a consistent message is delivered to all stakeholders in the Borough.
- 5.6.8 The BREW has collated the results of surveys conducted by local authorities on business across England, the key findings are that:
- The greatest weight of material in the trade waste stream is paper and cardboard;
 - Food waste, plastics, wood and glass are the main items identified for commercial recycling in addition to paper and cardboard;
 - The barriers to waste reduction are: lack of collection and/or bring facilities, cost and time; and
 - The preferred frequency of collection is on a weekly basis.
- 5.6.9 At a local borough level it could also reduce the number of waste vehicles entering Maidstone to collect waste from the range of business across the borough and potentially also assist smaller businesses that may not have the critical mass to warrant a specialist provider.

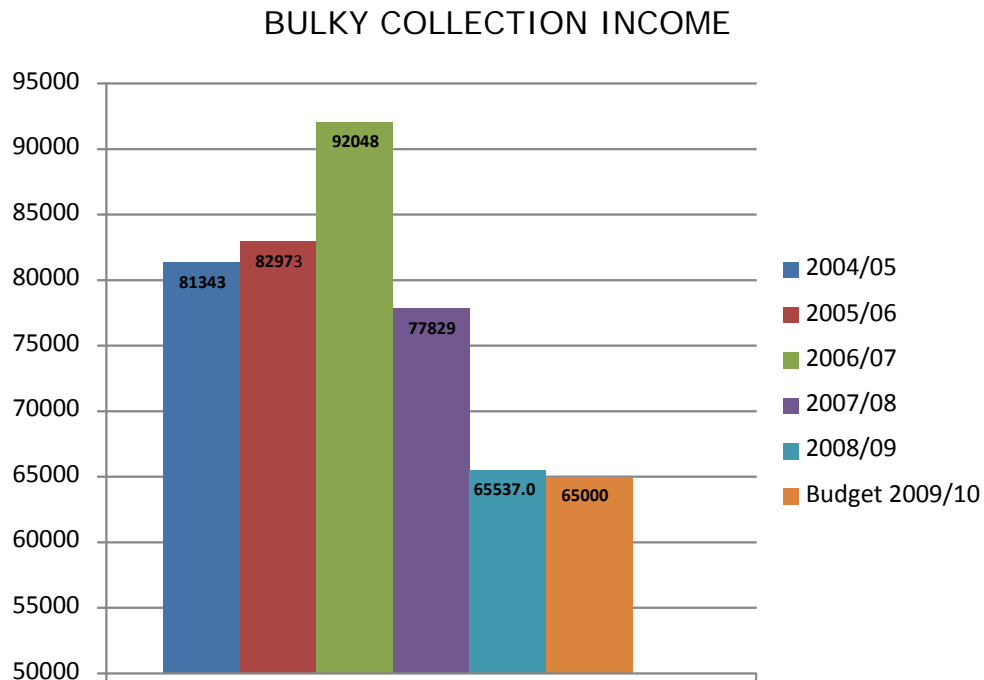
- 5.6.10 As part of the review the Council undertook a survey of approximately 25 per cent of businesses in the borough and asked them what their current waste and recycling arrangements were. A 17 per cent response rate was received from those businesses surveyed. Although the overall response rate was lower than the resident survey the results reflect the national results.
- 5.6.11 An overview of the results is set out below and the full results can be found at **Appendix I**.
- 5.6.12 Reflecting the key points set out by BREW, 72 per cent of the businesses surveyed have a weekly waste collection, with those who have a recycling collection receiving this less frequently.
- 5.6.13 A total of 28 different companies were used by the businesses surveyed to collect their waste. Four waste collection companies were used by the vast majority of the businesses surveyed.
- 5.6.14 Just over half the businesses that responded have a separate recycling collections, and half of these have it collected by the same company who collect their general waste.
- 5.6.15 Of those businesses that do not have a recycling collection, 61 per cent responded positively to the idea of having a recycling service.
- 5.6.16 A trade waste and recycling collection is certainly worth investigating, particularly with reference to the arrangement in Canterbury. However, the provision of a trade waste and recycling service is a costly commitment to the Council despite the benefits. There are alternatives to providing a direct service that the Council could investigate which could potentially provide some of the benefits without the same commitment of resources that would be required. These are:
- 1) Procurement of company to provide waste and recycling collection on behalf of a compendium of businesses;
 - 2) Facilitate a partnership between several businesses to achieve savings on the cost of collection; or
 - 3) Collect waste and recycling as part of existing domestic waste and recycling collection.
- 5.6.17 However there are still risks attached to these options, particularly option three which could potentially impact upon on the Council's performance on the national indicators and also on the recycling credits received from Kent County Council. However, it could assist the County with any spare capacity at Allington and agreement would have to be reached with the County Council over disposal.

5.7 The Bulky Waste and Freighter Collection

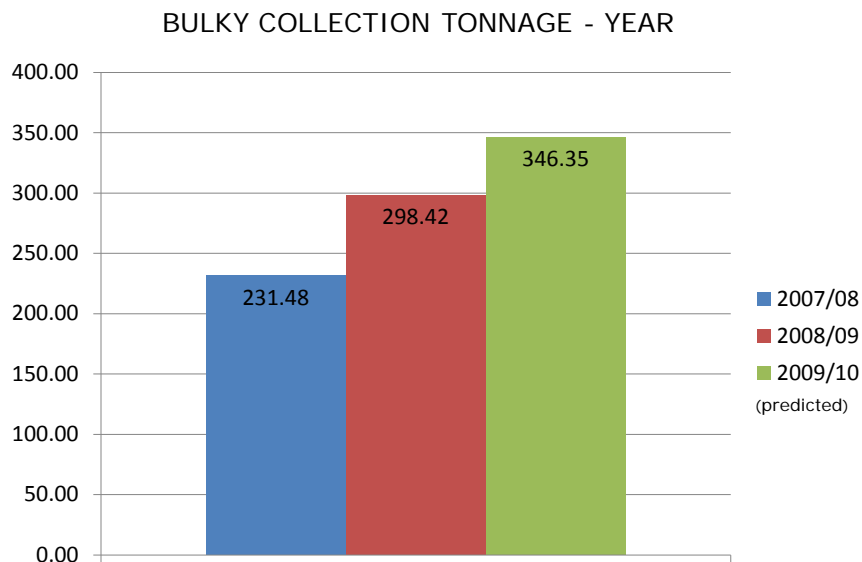
5.7.1 A bulky rubbish collection is provided on a booking only basis Monday to Friday and all the items go to landfill. The 2008/09 charges for the service are set out below.

	1-6 items	7-12 items	13-18 items
Standard Collection Items normally arising from moving home (e.g. sofas, beds)	£17.50	£30.00	£42.50
Premier Collection Items normally arising from moving home plus any garden waste.	£27.50	£50.00	£75.00
Premier Plus Collection Items arising from home DIY (e.g. kitchen units and bathroom sinks), collection within 48hrs.	£55.00	£85.00	£120.00

5.7.2 The total income received from this service in 2008/09 amounted to £65,000, which equates to 3,745 collections during the year or 14 collections per day. The table below sets out the income from the bulky collection service since 2004/05. Income from this service has dropped dramatically in recent years but is expected to level off this year.



- 5.7.3 The contract cost of service for 2008/09 was £134,000 which has increased to £142,000 in 2009/10. The service costs are in line with other Kent authorities; however, the Council only recoups approximately 50% of the operating costs.
- 5.7.4 Currently the net cost of one bulky collection is £18.42. Based on the projected costs for 2009/10 the net cost to the Council will increase to £20.78 per collection.
- 5.7.5 This bulky rubbish service is monitored on a monthly basis via an internal customer satisfaction survey. The service regularly receives a high level of satisfaction.
- 5.7.6 As part of the resident survey 50 per cent of residents said they had never used the bulky collection service, with only 17 per cent having used it in the last year.
- 5.7.7 Collected items from the bulky waste service are not monitored, however the tonnage collected is set out in the graph below. As can be seen below the tonnage collected through the bulky collection has increased between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and is predicted to increase in 2009/10 despite income levels decreasing. This could be because residents are choosing to use the bulky service for larger and heavier items or because they are taking advantage of the current pricing structure which allows them to dispose of several items for a set price.



- 5.7.8 The waste and recycling survey showed that the bulky collection most commonly used to collect the following:
- Old furniture – 63%
 - White goods – 39%
 - Remains of household improvements – 23%
- 5.7.9 A weekend freighter service is also supplied at no additional cost to local residents of Maidstone Borough to collect bulky or larger items of rubbish that cannot be put out with the weekly refuse collection. However, this does have some synergies with the bulky waste collection. The weekend freighter is operated on a timetable of 99 different locations over an eight weekend period. Although the tonnage of waste has declined over recent years there is no opportunity to reuse items.
- 5.7.10 When surveyed, 43 per cent of respondents had used the freighter service, with 22 per cent having used the service in the past year. This was surprising as anecdotally the freighter service is perceived as a popular Council service, but this demonstrates that only a quarter of all respondents to this survey have used the freighter service in the past year.
- 5.7.11 There has also been no formal audit of what items are disposed of on the freighter, or whether some of them could be reused rather than going to landfill. It should be noted that due to contamination in the freighter vehicle the items collected will not be suitable for reuse. There are also some items (e.g. car batteries, plasterboard) that neither the freighter service nor the bulky rubbish collection can remove; these items need to be disposed of at the KCC household waste recycling centres.
- 5.7.12 The waste and recycling service asked those respondents who had used the freighter what had the service been used for, the top responses were:
- Old furniture – 58%;
 - Remains of household improvements – 53%; and
 - Garden waste – 30%.
- 5.7.13 Therefore this indicates some residents are avoiding composting material, using green sacks or a green bin by using the freighter service to dispose of their green waste.
- 5.7.14 Anecdotally has been suggested that there is a relationship between the bulky collection vehicles and fly tipping and where these vehicles are not available increased incidences of fly tipping do and will occur. As part of the review analysis of the both the bulky and weekend freighter collection service locations was undertaken to assess whether this is in fact true and whether there is any preventative action that can be undertaken.

- 5.7.15 **Appendix J** shows GIS mapping of fly tipping locations, freighter stops and bulky collections. This shows that no clear relationship exists between the three, based on data set from June and July 2009.
- 5.7.16 The location of fly tipping, bulky waste collections and freighter can be seen to occur at the same locations. Incidences of fly tipping have been monitored following the reduction in freighter service and no increase has been seen. The enforcement team also look at areas of flytipping and put in place arrangements to catch people illegally dumping waste.
- 5.7.17 The Council could also look to provide SmartWater to local residents at a reduced cost. If looking to dispose of waste, householders should follow the "Duty of Care" legislation. SmartWater is a forensic marking system, most commonly used by householders to mark their belongings which can then be identified as belonging to them if stolen and then recovered. Once marked, any SmartWatered waste that has not been disposed of properly can be traced back to its owner and to the person charged with its proper disposal. The risk management model that SmartWater has created has already led to successful convictions in Sussex and Kent which will act as a major deterrent to other would-be offenders operating locally. Other Councils currently providing SmartWater are charging approximately £15-£20 for providing a pack, the approximate retail price is £40.
- 5.7.18 The Clean Kent Campaign, co-ordinated by Kent County Council has introduced SmartWater to householders in trial locations in Kent. The aim of the project is to further protect householders against rogue traders and to discourage fly tipping by sending a serious warning to potential and existing fly tippers. It is recommended that the Council follows the success of this trial and considers whether to introduce it at a subsidised price.
- 5.7.19 What the GIS map also shows, is that there are also many occurrences of bulky collections and freighter picks up at similar locations during the same month. This is supported by the results of the waste and recycling survey which demonstrates when asked '**what do you with the items that the Council doesn't collect?**' that:
- 12% more residents use the tip than either the freighter or bulky collections for the disposal of large bulky items;
 - 26% more residents use the tip than either the freighter or bulky collection service for the disposal of white goods e.g. fridges; and
 - 37% more residents use the tip than either the freighter or bulky collection service for the disposal of other electrical items.
- 5.7.20 This shows that despite providing two services for the collection and disposal of large household items, residents are still more likely to use the Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

- 5.7.21 All items collected by the bulky waste and freighter service are disposed of at landfill sites, which the lowest disposal method in the waste hierarchy. Alternative disposal arrangements to the weekend freighter and bulky waste collection service are covered under the Disposal stream of this report.
- 5.7.22 All districts in Kent operate a bulky waste collection service. A number charge for time taken to collect the item. Ashford operates a points score for each item, with a minimum charge of £20. An online calculator is available to residents to receive an estimate of the cost of the service. A number of Local Authorities in Kent provide a free service to those residents on income based benefits. Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling are the only authority in Kent to offer a separate free service (the freighter) in addition to a paid for service.
- 5.7.23 The table below shows the cost of potential options for the future of the weekend freighter and bulky waste collection service, based on the take up by residents.

Options - Varying Take-Up	Take-up				
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
1) Status Quo	£166,730	£163,205	£159,539	£156,154	£152,629
2) Charge for Weekend Freighters; Turn Up and Pay Service	£159,073	£144,711	£129,750	£99,829	£99,829
3) Charge for Weekend Freighters; Pre-book Service	£159,641	£155,183	£151,831	£147,342	£144,350
4) Reduce Freighters Use; Only in Areas far from Tip	£102,611	£114,639	£127,243	£138,050	£148,856
5) Reduce Freighters Use; Only in Areas far from Tip & Charge for Freighters	£102,012	£99,788	£97,878	£93,722	£89,566
6) Reduce Bulky Vehicles to One; Continue to Operate Weekend Freighters	£110,471	£106,875	£104,477	£103,280	£101,482
7) No Freighters	£102,035	£100,237	£98,439	£96,641	£94,844

- 5.7.24 The current scheme is the most costly of the options presented and compared to the vast majority of scenarios this will continue to be the case. This is predominantly due to the fact that the weekend freighter does not generate any income.

- 5.7.25 The second and third scenarios presented would be to continue to provide the freighter service but at a charge. Scenario two introduces a smaller charge on a 'turn up and pay' basis, and scenario three introduces a pre-book service similar to the current bulky collection arrangement. Both these scenarios would be one way to compensate for the cost of providing the weekend freighter service.
- 5.7.26 The figures shown above are based on a current average of seven bulky collections per day per vehicle. Assuming that the demand for weekend collections remains the same or a little higher, operating a pre book service would still not cover the cost. Even if the Council was to offer the weekend service at a slightly higher charge this is still unlikely to generate significantly high revenue to render this worthwhile.
- 5.7.27 Offering a smaller charge on 'turn up and pay' has the potential to generate a higher income than a weekend collection service, as far higher numbers of customers will be able to use this service. However, this is a higher risk as this relies on the fact that customers will be willing to pay a charge to use the freighter and even at medium take up levels this option is still less viable than some of the scenarios. If this option was selected consideration would also have to be given to how the cash would be collected at the freighter stop site which would increase the level of risk.
- 5.7.28 Scenarios four and five suggest reducing the freighter to operate only in those areas that are not near to the Household Waste and Recycling site in Tovil. This could potentially generate savings, if it is possible to reduce the contract costs in line with the reduction in service: in other words if the freighter service is reduced by 50 per cent then so are the costs. Similarly, doing the same and introducing a charge for the service has potential to generate savings. However, it should be noted that the less the service is reduced the cost of this option increases. This option would only be viable if at least a 50 per cent reduction in costs of the freighter were achievable.
- 5.7.29 Scenario six suggests reducing the number of bulky collection vehicles in operation to maximise the use of the weekend freighter service. This suggestion is based upon the analysis that the cost of the bulky waste is greater per customer using the service and therefore reducing the number of collection vehicles would produce greater savings. This scenario again relies on the pre requisite of reducing the cost directly in line with the number of vehicles in order to achieve these savings.
- 5.7.30 Presently the vehicles are operating at 75 per cent capacity each, therefore reducing the number of vehicles should raise the capacity of the remaining vehicles to closer to 100 per cent. Savings will be achieved as the drop in operating cost will be larger than the loss of bulky income

through decreased capacity. In addition an initial analysis of the bulky waste service elsewhere seems to show greater levels of activity per day.

5.7.31 Scenario seven, which is to withdraw the freighter service altogether, equally generates the same cost as Option five.

5.7.32 However as the table shows when in terms of savings option seven will generate the greatest direct saving and is the option which has the least risk attached to it.

Options Medium Take-Up	Variable Change (%)		Costs		Savings			
	Bulky	Freighter	Av. Cost p.a.	Av. Cost (3 Yr.)	Income	Direct	Indirect	Total p.a.
1) Status Quo	1%	1%	£170,539	£511,616	£0	£0	£0	£0
2) Charge for Weekend Freighter; Turn Up and Pay Service	0%	-50%	£140,750	£422,250	£28,759	£733	£296	£29,788
3) Charge for Weekend Freighter; Pre-book Service	1%	-98%	£162,831	£488,492	£6,301	£1,407	£0	£7,708
4) Reduce Freighter Use; Only in Areas far from Tip	10%	-50%	£132,743	£398,230	£5,432	£35,025	-£2,662	£37,795
5) Reduce Freighter Use; Only in Areas far from Tip & Charge for Freighter	10%	-75%	£100,628	£301,885	£20,040	£52,532	-£2,662	£69,910
6) Reduce Bulky Vehicles to One; Continue to Operate Weekend Freighter	-33%	1%	£115,477	£346,431	-£22,433	£67,340	£10,154	£55,062
7) No Freighter	10%	-100%	£98,439	£295,317	£4,722	£70,040	-£2,662	£72,099

5.7.33 The above table does not take into account any changes to a re-structure of the bulky waste pricing framework. Further analysis of the waste and

recycling survey has shown that there are several key areas where both the bulky and freighter service has been used in the past six months.

- 5.7.34 There are also areas where less than half of respondents have said they have never used it, demonstrating that there is a trend in the type of user. It is recommended that further analysis is undertaken on bulky waste collection users in advance of a restructure of the pricing framework in order to ensure that it strikes the right balance between funding the service and providing the right scheme for users. In addition it is recommended that consideration is given to the effect of these schemes on the Council's contribution to landfill.

5.8 Approach to Collection Options and Recommendations

- 5.8.1 As a result of the work on the collection section of the review several options have emerged, the recommended options are set out below:

- 1) **Given the high cost and levels of waste generated, to consider moving to an alternate weekly collection service for waste.**
- 2) **To progress the pilot scheme for a separate food collection service.**
- 3) **To remove the freighter service as its usage does not reflect its cost, and the Council is doubling up on its provision to residents. If the service is not removed, to look at possible ways of reusing items where appropriate rather than disposing of them on the freighter.**
- 4) **Undertake a wider review on the options for a trade waste collection service and in particular the arrangements in Canterbury.**
- 5) **The green waste service should be revised with the frequency of collection in the winter (December to February) reduced.**
- 6) **Investigate to see if the council can develop a partnership with garden centres or providers for a subsidised arrangement for composters for spring next year.**

Recycling and Refuse Collection

- 1) To retain the current co-mingled waste collection arrangements.
- 2) To review the potential for a kerbside sorting system (particularly in rural areas) with the introduction of the new waste collection contract.
- 3) To look at working arrangements with the SITA Team and improve feedback on the issues experienced by the operatives.

- 4) To look at closer working with local groups and schools over recycling, initially in relation to paper and card.

Green Waste Collection

- 5) Undertake a promotion of the garden waste service in the New Year.
- 6) To raise awareness of the green waste service.
- 7) Investigate to see if the Council can develop a partnership with garden centres or providers for a subsidised arrangement for composters for spring next year.
- 8) Investigate a move to biodegradable sacks in line with new Garden Waste Service and the locations where they are sold.

Clinical Waste

- 9) To investigate the increasing demand on the service and how this can be resourced.

Bulky and Freighter service

- 10) Undertake further analysis on the bulky waste service and simplify the pricing framework to make it easier for people to understand, to reflect the cost of the service and to reflect the range of bulky waste users.
- 11) To look at ways of reusing items collected as part of the bulky waste service.

6 Disposal

- 6.1.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Part II) states waste must be disposed of without endangering human health; without processes or methods which could harm the environment; without risk to waste, air, soil, plants or animals; without causing nuisance through noise or odour; without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.
- 6.1.2 The Landfill Directive was adopted in 1999, the EU Landfill Directive 1999 was transposed into UK law through the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 and requires a reduction of biodegradable waste sent to Landfill;
- 75% of the 1995 level by 2010;
 - 50% of the 1995 level by 2013; and
 - 35% of the 1995 level by 2020.
- 6.1.3 The Finance Act and Landfill Tax Regulations 1996 places a charge for each tonne of waste disposed at landfill. The rate was set at £32 in 2008 at an £8 per tonne increase per year until at least 2010/11.
- 6.1.4 The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 introduced a Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS), which sets out restrictions for disposal by each local authority in England with the aim of reducing biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill down to 50% of 1995 levels by 2009 to 35% by 2016. The LATS:
- Permit each waste disposal authority (WDA) to sell its yearly quota of landfill space to other WDAs;
 - Create financial incentives for good performance;
 - Encourage WDAs to maximize alternatives to landfill; and
 - Apply fixed penalties of £150 per tonne if a WDA breaches its landfill allowance target.
- 6.1.5 The Council currently delivers household waste to the Materials Recycling Facility plant at Allington. This has enabled the Council to introduce a wider recycling collection service of co-mingled plastics, cans, card and paper but there are some limitations, particularly in relation to plastic material.
- 6.1.6 The reliability of this plant has also been a problem and the regular closures have affected the effectiveness of the Council's collection arrangements. The gate fee for materials is also relatively high.
- 6.1.7 The County Council directs districts to the various disposal points in order to meet the terms of their contracts but does have a long commitment at Allington.

6.2 Bring Sites

6.2.1 Recycling 'bring' centres have been part of the recycling industry in the UK for nearly 30 years. The first facilities introduced were 'bottle banks' which were followed by banks for the collection of paper and cans. As time has gone on and the pressure to increase recycling has grown, bring banks for every type of recyclable waste have developed.

6.2.2 There are 28 sites around the borough that have at least one bring bank located on them. There are eight key sites with banks for the recycling of several materials (Grove Green, Marden, Parkwood, Penenden Heath, Sutton Road, Staplehurst, Tovil and Yalding) but not every site has banks for each material. Throughout the borough the following items can be recycled:

- Glass (bottles and jars);
- Cans;
- Paper;
- Card;
- Textiles;
- Shoes; and
- Books.

6.2.3 The 28 sites vary in the range of recycling facilities available. The facilities for paper, card, cans and glass are controlled by Maidstone Council. The facilities for textiles, shoes and books are run by various charities.

6.2.4 The waste and recycling survey at Appendix E shows the result of resident consultation on bring sites. Residents were asked for feedback on these sites which is summarised below:

- 89% knew the location of their nearest recycling point;
- 85% knew what could be recycled there;
- 59% felt the range of items that could be disposed of there was sufficient; and
- 53% felt the area around the recycling point was tidy enough.

6.2.5 These results suggest that people are strongly aware of the bring sites but are less satisfied with both the appearance and the offer that they provide. The figure on the appearance of the area surrounding the bring sites is particularly disappointing as approximately one in three people did not feel the area surrounding the recycling point was tidy enough. This could be a key factor influencing whether local residents would use the banks or not.

6.2.6 Those who felt that there was not a sufficient range of materials that could be disposed of where asked to suggest what they would like to be able to recycle at the sites. Over 300 suggestions were made and additional

analysis was undertaken and the suggestions collated into 12 categories. This showed that 39 percent of people wanted to be able to recycle plastic, with the next highest majority being 14 percent wanting somewhere for small electrical items and batteries.

6.2.7 Residents were asked as part of the review to state what they had used their local recycling point for in the last 6 months, the top three responses were:

- Glass – 71%;
- Clothes – 44%; and
- Paper – 39%.

6.2.8 Maidstone's bring sites have been mapped and are attached at **Appendix K**. This shows that recycling banks are dispersed largely in the urban areas with less dispersion across rural areas. Neighbouring authorities are partly shown on this map and also indicate that they have dispersed more bring sites in rural areas compared to Maidstone. It also shows only three town centre recycling bank locations, two on the outskirts of the town centre.

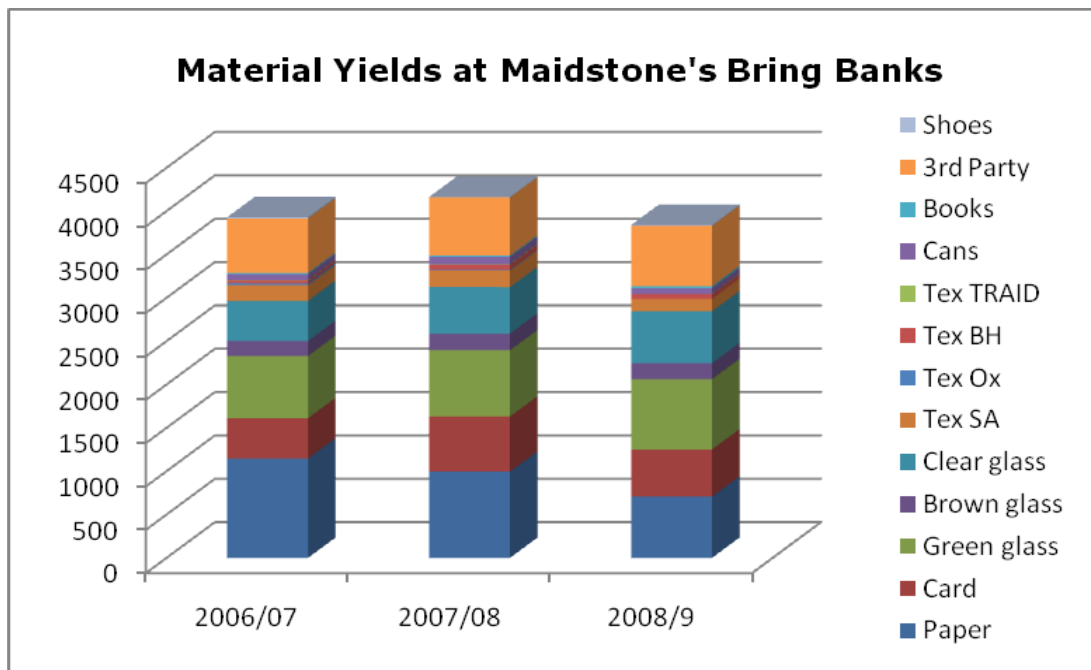
6.2.9 Bring site locations are determined by operational factors such as vehicle clearance, good access and egress and vicinity to residents. However, when the dry recyclables scheme was introduced, the number of bring sites was to be expanded and this has not happened to date. It is recommended that this is progressed as part of the Implementation Plan.

6.2.10 The Council claims recycling credits from Kent County Council for all of the recycling collected via the Council owned bring sites. Income is also claimed from Aylesford Newsprint for the paper collected at the banks, and this is delivered straight to them.

6.2.11 Paper is also collected via the kerbside recycling service, which perhaps negates the need for the bring sites, however at this stage 39 percent of residents are still using the sites and the estimated income for this year is £450,000, therefore it is not proposed at this stage that these bring sites are removed. It is however strongly suggested that the income achieved is monitored alongside usage of sites, and on the basis of the results the recommendation is reviewed.

6.2.12 The operation of the can, card and glass banks is currently running at a net cost to the Council due to the current economic downturn, and resultant decrease in income that was being received for the various materials.

6.2.13 The graph below shows the material yields at Maidstone's bring banks over the past three years. The table above shows that paper, textiles and combined glass achieve the highest yields across Maidstone's bring banks.



6.2.14 Last year 19% of all material recycled in Maidstone was collected from bring sites. This consisted of:

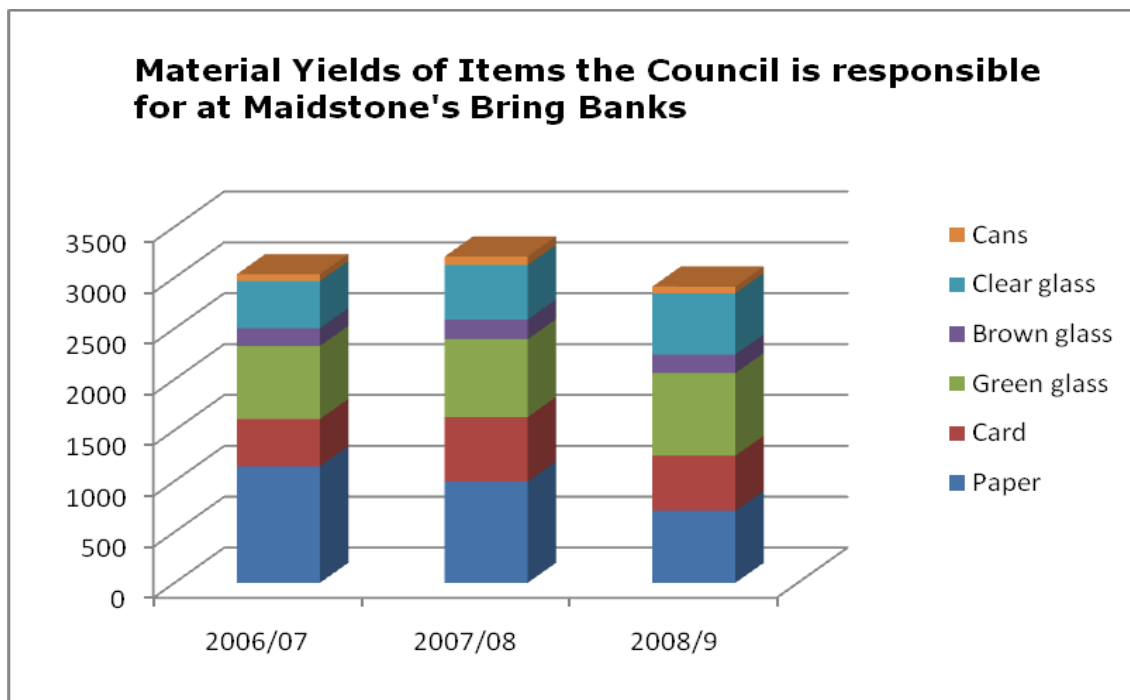
- 5% paper;
- 5% green glass;
- 4% clear glass;
- 3% card;
- 1% brown glass; and
- 1% textiles.

6.2.15 The Council's 'can' bring sites currently operate at a net cost to the Council of £25,000 per year. Following the complete roll out of the new recycling scheme in May, there is no requirement for the Council to still operate the can facilities. This is evidenced by the fact that in the Waste and Recycling survey 84 percent of respondents stated that they were recycling cans in the kerbside collection.

6.2.16 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council currently have 10 plastic bring bank locations across their borough. Grosvenor Waste Management Limited was appointed to manage their new service. The contractor collects and sorts the bottles from the banks at least twice a week and forwards them for recycling. All plastic bottles marked with a 1, 2 or 3 recycling symbol can be placed in the recycling banks.

6.2.17 It is recommended that the Council now investigates the potential for plastic recycling banks in the borough.

6.2.18 The table below shows that glass achieves the highest yields across Maidstone's bring banks, compared to cans achieving the lowest yields. The tonnage for materials collected at Maidstone bring banks that Maidstone is responsible for remains at a consistent level of around 3,000 tonnes.



6.2.19 Mapping of Maidstone's bring site locations has been undertaken and is attached at **Appendix K**. The map shows a shortage in recycling bring sites and therefore additional locations should be explored.

6.2.20 There are strong arguments in favour of recycling glass to make new glass containers. The production of 'new' glass uses very large quantities of heat energy, in addition to the energy needed to quarry and transport the raw materials to the glass works. The use of recycled glass as a raw material gives significant energy and cost savings. The recycled glass has to be re-melted which requires heat, but the amount is significantly less than that needed when working from the raw materials.

6.2.21 The national network of bottle banks was established to provide recycled glass of the required quality.

6.2.22 The following table shows an analysis of Maidstone's population per bring sites and per glass bring site in comparison to the other local authorities in Kent. This shows that Maidstone is in the bottom quartile of number of bring sites per head of population, with 5,193 people per bring site location and 5,816 residents per glass site location.

Council	Number of Bring Site Centres	Number with glass collections	Population Estimate 2008	Number of head of population per bring site	Number of head of population per glass bring site	Ranking according to glass site
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	56	50	117,100	2091	2342	1
Ashford Borough Council	78	47	113,500	1455	2415	2
Shepway District Council	43	41	100,100	2328	2441	3
Swale Borough Council	54	52	131,900	2443	2537	4
Sevenoaks District Council	45	45	114,700	2549	2549	5
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	52	36	107,400	2065	2983	6
Canterbury City Council	46	42	149,700	3254	3564	7
Dover District Council	30	25	106,900	3563	4276	8
Dartford Borough Council	17	17	92,000	5412	5412	9
Maidstone Borough Council	28	25	145,400	5193	5816	10
Thanet District Council	30	22	129,900	4330	5905	11
Gravesham Borough Council	18	16	98,000	5444	6125	12

6.2.23 Therefore consideration should be given to increasing the number of bring sites, for example, to reach the number in Canterbury levels would have to be virtually doubled.

6.3 Household Waste and Recycling Centres

- 6.3.1 The Council has no real control over the disposal site for its household waste collections which is controlled by Kent County Council as the waste disposal authority. The County Council directs districts to the various disposal points in order to meet the terms of their contracts.
- 6.3.2 Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) are only licensed for domestic waste. Waste is checked and vehicles carrying business waste or weighing over 3500 kilograms are refused entry.
- 6.3.3 The majority of local authorities in Kent have one HWRC (7 of 12 or 58%). A third of Kent's local authorities have two or more centres: Dover has four, Swale three, Canterbury two and Sevenoaks two. Tonbridge and Malling do not have any HWRCs.
- 6.3.4 Despite being one of seven authorities in Kent with only one HWRC, the Council has the sixth lowest resident satisfaction rate in Kent on the Place Survey for this provision. This may be that the public feel that the tip is frequently busy, experience long queues or have to drive some distance to Tovill but is worth further investigation.
- 6.3.5 There has been ongoing discussion with Kent County Council over a number of years on setting up a new HWRC in Maidstone, but when last discussed the County had not yet found a location. It is recommended that the Council raises this again.
- 6.3.6 Based on the map it would also be worthwhile reminding residents that they can use any HWRC in Kent providing they have their pass, and improving the information on the website regarding alternative sites on the boundaries of neighbouring districts as some of these may well be more convenient than the site in Tovil.

6.4 Re-use

- 6.4.1 The waste and recycling survey asked residents what they did with unwanted items and the following results were given:
- Give unwanted items away to charity – 73%;
 - Give or sell unwanted furniture – 42%;
 - Give or sell unwanted electrical items – 28%;
 - Use websites like eBay to sell items 13%; and
 - Use freecycle – 6%
- 6.4.2 This suggests there is a great deal of support from respondents to donating unwanted items.

6.4.3 There are a number of ways in which the Council could consider diverting more waste from landfill and encourage reuse amongst residents. In many urban areas, there are Furniture Re-use Organisations (FRO) working to re-use waste furniture and pass it on to those in need. There are a number in Maidstone that the Council could develop partnerships with and therefore make better use of the community sector's expertise in this area. The table below sets out the different type of partnerships that the Council could pursue with re-use organisations.

Type	Details
Working alongside	Call centre refers callers with items for re-use directly to FRO. Often also joint publicity. Sometimes formal recognition through a service level agreement.
Cherry Picking	The Council sorts items from collections and delivers FRO or FRO clears/cherry picks collected goods at the depot.
Re-use Stream	FRO picks up all re-usable bulky items, working closely with the Council. This usually involves one joint booking system. The FRO is acknowledged through a contract or SLA, and usually payment.
One or more Waste stream(s)	FRO picks up one or more waste stream(s) (e.g. fridges or wood), and may also pick up re-usable bulky items. This option represents a change from the FRO dealing solely with re-usable items, to dealing with waste. The various types of waste licences (e.g. waste carrier's licence, waste management licence) therefore need to be considered
All bulky waste	FRO picks up ALL bulky waste

6.4.4 Some work has already begun in establishing contact with FROs, but more is required to establish what type of partnership would be feasible for both the Council and for the organisation(s) involved.

6.4.5 Alternatively the Council could look to branch out into the re-use and recycling of these items themselves. There would be several beneficial reasons for starting up a re-use system as part of the bulky waste collection service, which includes:

- It supports the waste hierarchy, which places re-use above recycling;
- there will be a reduction in landfill costs;
- there will be some reduction in LATS costs (much of re-usable furniture is made out of wood, a biodegradable waste); and
- There is some evidence that re-use schemes can act to improve recycling rates, possibly through a heightened public awareness of waste diversion in general.

6.4.6 The table below sets out three different options that the Council could investigate for pursuing a bulky waste collection service either independently or with a partner(s).

Scheme	Advantages	Disadvantages
Partnerships between local authorities (districts/counties; neighbouring unitary authorities)	Shared facilities Efficiencies of scale Larger recycling/re-use impact Districts will need county councils to agree free waste disposal for re-use organisations	Takes time commitment on a long-term basis
Partnerships between the Council and waste contractors	In most cases a necessary contact the partnership is already well developed	May be difficult to introduce changes under the current contract May be difficult to motivate contractor if it is not in their financial interest
Partnerships between the Council, housing association(s) and social services	May be able to get a bulky waste scheme value from a different point of view (i.e. to include the wider benefits, such as social/housing benefits)	Takes time & commitment

6.4.7 Before any of the above options are considered a waste audit would need to be carried out on the bulky waste stream to establish whether the bulky collections were producing any potentially useable waste.

6.4.8 Any decision regarding a potential re-use collection would need to be made in line with other options on the bulky and freighter service set out under the collection work stream.

6.4.9 Kent County Council

6.4.10 Meetings were held with Paul Vanston, Programmes & Projects Manager of the Kent Waste Partnership and Sue Barton, Acting Head of Waste Services at Kent County Council to discuss the partnership, and how this could progress in the future. It is hoped that through the work on the WRAP bid and some of the changes the Council is proposing will be of interest to the County Council as part of the council's wider aspirations for the county as a whole.

6.4.11 There is still the possibility that the County could direct the Council to send all its waste to Allington for disposal rather than the current voluntary arrangement, but it is hoped that the proposals will still be acceptable and

that the Council will be able to secure additional waste recycling credits (or whatever replaces them) in the future.

6.4.12 Clearly there will be implications for the level of waste disposal if the collection arrangements are expanded in the borough and this will need to be further explored with the County.

6.4.13 A copy of the draft report was shared with colleagues at Kent County Council.

6.5 Disposal Options and Recommendations

6.5.1 Disposal Options

6.5.2 As a result of the work on the disposal section of the review several options have emerged, the recommended options are set out below:

- 1) Plans for an additional household waste recycling centre have been discussed with the County Council in the past and it recommended this is revisited. Further steps will also be taken to highlight to residents the facilities in neighbouring boroughs. It is envisaged that Kent County Council would fund the cost of the additional centre;**
- 2) To expand the number of bring sites – particularly for glass, consider piloting plastic recycling units and reduce the number of can banks.**

6.5.3 Disposal Recommendations

6.5.4 As a result of the work on the disposal section of the review several recommendations have emerged and these are set out below:

- 1) To expand the number of bring sites – particularly for glass, consider piloting plastic recycling units and reduce the number of can banks.
- 2) To increase the information available to residents on the alternative Household Waste and Recycling Centres and bring banks in neighbouring boroughs which may be located nearer to their property.
- 3) To look at the opportunity to work with a furniture reuse company to deal with bulky waste.
- 4) To have further discussions with Kent County Council on the future disposal arrangements.
- 5) Include information on the website on how to reduce packaging.

7 Public Views and Engagement

7.1 There are many key aspects to working with the public, these include their engagement in the recycling service and their thoughts about waste collection, providing information to assist residents, dealing with complaints, overall education as well as through specific initiatives in schools. In addition to this, questionnaires are also undertaken locally or as part of the national satisfaction surveys and presentations made to a range of groups including parish councils.

7.2 The responses to the various survey questions have been included throughout the report rather than in a separate section. The latest results can be seen in Appendix E.

7.3 Promotion and Education

7.3.1 There is a small budget of £15,000 for promotional activities and education, which excludes the salary of staff. The main aim is to reinforce the Council's approach to recycling. A key way this is operated is through a pilot school at East Farleigh. The education officer is also trained as an eco green school flag assessor, which is used as a motivational tool to encourage schools to get involved. Promotion is undertaken at a number of key events such as the Mela and Green Week as well as at supermarkets, although historically the supermarkets only provide the space.

7.3.2 Perhaps the best way of getting the message out to people about reducing waste and contamination is by undertaking personal visits. The education officer has in the past gone out with the collection crews to visit homes to explain about the new recycling programme. However, this is very resource intensive and not necessarily a cost effective method of getting the Council's message out to local residents.

7.3.3 It is difficult to measure behaviour changes as a result of promotion and education and currently impact assessments are not undertaken. It is therefore very difficult to assess whether the resources invested are providing value for money and having a significant impact on local residents' perception and behaviour in relation to waste and recycling.

7.3.4 WRAP believes that the schools programme influences 10% of households positively and with the targeted approach that the team is going to undertake as part of the new recycling service, impact assessments could be easily implemented. This will also involve working more closely with Kent County Council.

- 7.3.5 However, impact assessments will only be effective as part of a targeting a certain groups or areas. This is where the MOSAIC information will be very useful in terms of identifying the best way to engage people within certain areas and where targeted initiatives and investment is likely to yield the greatest results.
- 7.3.6 In the resident survey 79 per cent of respondents were satisfied about the information provided both on the waste and recycling service, which although high was the area with the lowest satisfaction rating.
- 7.3.7 Equally when the waste and recycling survey asked residents to state how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement '***I know what I can recycle as the Council provides good information on its collection service***' although 81 per cent of people supported this statement further analysis showed that one in five respondents living in the town centre area of the borough disagreed that the Council provided good information on the collection service.
- 7.3.8 These results show that there is still room for improvement in the information and promotion work that is undertaken. It is recommended that more analysis is undertaken following this review to establish whether there is an issue in the quality of information provided in this area. This should include ensuring that information is available in a range of formats and not just on the website and, where information is distributed in a hardcopy format, that the Council makes good use of the existing publications that are available.
- 7.3.9 Following the completion of the final phase of the recycling rollout the Council also needs to focus on those areas of the borough where recycling is lowest and contamination rates are highest. The majority of this work will be undertaken next year when a year's worth of participation data is available, though some initial work is being undertaken on areas of contamination based on intelligence from SITA.
- 7.3.10 As the final phase of the roll out was only in May 2009 there is currently only limited data on the recycling participation rates, which also makes it difficult to assess the success of the promotion activity that was undertaken.

Kent Waste Audit Partnership Results

- 7.3.11 In October 2008 the Kent Waste Partnership did commission a waste analysis of household residual waste. A total of 11 Kent district authorities participated and a number of sample areas were identified in each authority. Some work was also done analysing the results using MOSAIC groups to see if there were any differences between different types of households. Now that the roll-out of the new enhanced recycling service

has been completed, it is recommended that the Waste and Recycling team assess information on participation and contamination rates and concentrate on specific areas of the borough.

- 7.3.12 The surveys carried out by the Kent Waste Partnership (KWP) Public Engagement Team in target wards, participation rates in dry recycling schemes were measured. In Maidstone's target ward, Shepway North, participation rates stood at 84%, which could be considered to be high compared with some other districts. However, this ward is one where high levels of rejected materials are found, so although many residents are placing their containers out for recycling on a regular basis, the service is not capturing high levels of good quality accepted materials. In other areas participation levels are lower, but there are lower levels of rejection – that is, residents are placing out the right thing but less frequently. However, it is important to note that in the latest study in Kent there were very low levels of contamination in the recycling coming from the borough generally and when compared to other districts.
- 7.3.13 Having access to MOSAIC and the extra information to be provided as part of this project means the Council will be able to target those groups who generally do not recycle as much or are not recycling the right things and will be able to tailor the message given and how it is given to those groups to ensure it has the greatest positive impact on their behaviour.
- 7.3.14 For example, one type of household might be concerned about the environment and may prefer to be contacted by email. Therefore, sending them letters about recycling is unlikely to have the greatest impact on their behaviour. However, sending emails encouraging them to recycle more because of the benefits to the environment would be more likely to change their recycling behaviour. In other socio-demographic groups, their interest in an environmental issue may be lower, but their concerns may be around financial issues. MOSAIC will allow the council to identify those groups and tailor material to their specific interests, for example the "Love Food Hate Waste" campaign which focuses on how much money can be saved by reducing food waste.

7.4 Local Surveys

- 7.4.1 Since the roll-out of the dry recyclable scheme was completed, detailed records have been maintained on the number of containers which the collection crews are rejecting due to the presence of contamination. In July, this amounted to a weekly average of over 360 bins or boxes not being collected as recycle. This means that a certain amount of potentially recyclable material is still being collected as residual waste. An analysis of the areas with the highest number of rejected containers has highlighted a number of trends:

- In certain areas the most common cause of rejection is unaccepted plastics;
- In other areas the most common cause is that the recycling container is being used as a second refuse bin; and
- In some areas glass is the most common contaminant, and in others food waste.

7.4.2 It should be noted that 360 contaminated bins or boxes is well within the national average and Maidstone is performing strongly in Kent.

7.4.3 The Kent Waste Partnership has been conducting a doorstep exercise across Kent to educate residents on what should and shouldn't be recycled. Unfortunately, there have been examples and concerns that contradictory messages have been given to some Maidstone residents. Clarification is due to go into the next Borough Update to try and reduce any confusion but this does highlight the need to get the information right first time.

7.4.4 The Council did work with the KWP in advance of this initiative but something still went wrong and did result in further work for the Council.

7.5 Contact by Phone

7.5.1 As was outlined in the scoping report the Council does not currently separate the calls for Environmental Services, which covers a number of services including waste and recycling, flytipping and street cleansing, with all the calls coming in on one number. It is therefore impossible to know how many calls come in total to the waste and recycling service.

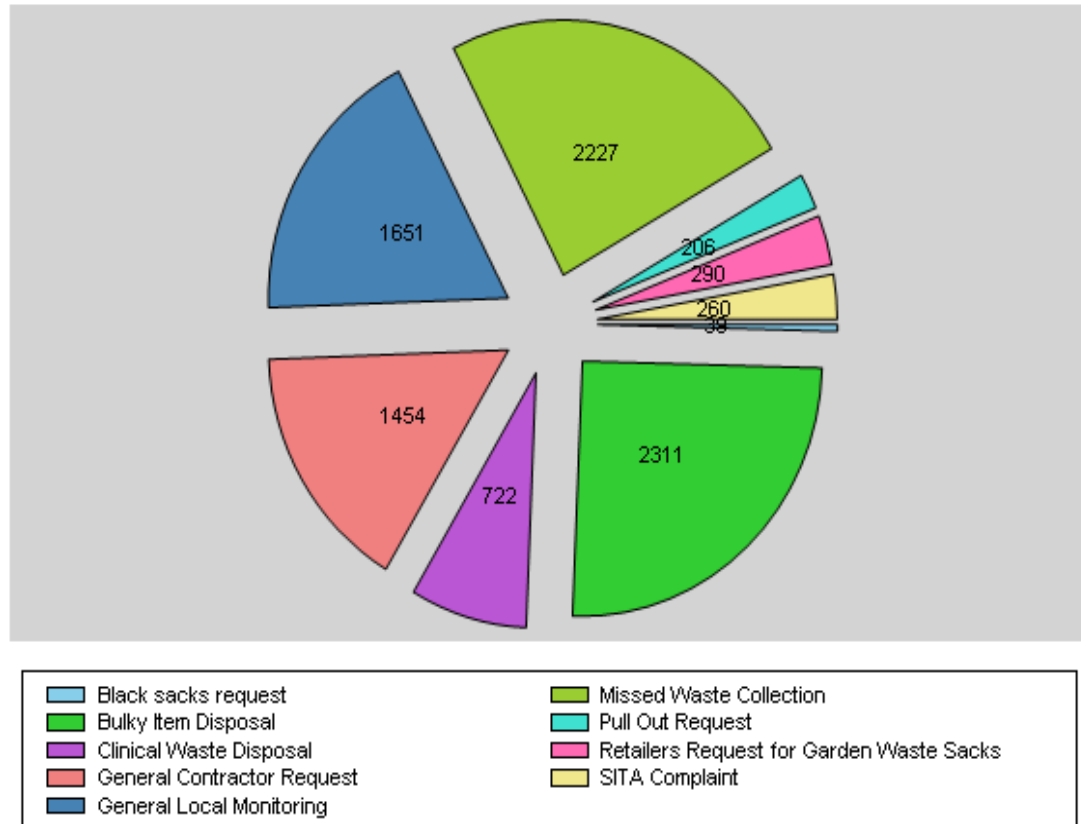
7.5.2 However, the contact team can say that over 50 per cent of calls to Environmental Services that result in a process (where the contact team need to take an action) are waste and recycling related. On this basis it is fair to surmise that approximately 50 per cent of total calls for Environmental Services that come into the contact centre are related to waste and recycling.

7.5.3 There were also a number of repeat calls which not only create additional work but means that some residents have not had their initial enquiry resolved. Possible options include looking at a separate number or option to account for all waste and recycling calls, dealing with more enquiries through the website or to undertake random surveys those people who had contacted the Council. Failure to respond quickly will not only impact on satisfaction levels but may also impact on the willingness of residents to engage in recycling.

7.5.4 The average cost of a call to the Environmental Services team is £3.72. This is slightly higher than the average call to the contact centre due to the extended length of the call.

7.5.5 The chart below shows the number of processes that have been logged from the beginning of January 2009 to end of August 2009. This only includes cases where a CRM process was completed. It doesn't include follow-up/repeat calls or calls where a CRM process was not required. It is also important to note that one phone call may produce more than one process.

Waste Management Logged Cases



7.5.6 The table on the next page⁴ shows where the Council experience the majority of these calls, and the approximated cost of dealing with these calls in the contact centre. Additional costs are likely in the Team and with the contractor in terms of dealing with the issue.

⁴ Please note these are not representative of the service overall as the roll out of the dry recyclables was still underway during this period.

Subject of Call	Number received between January 09-August 09	Approximate cost of dealing with the all calls.
Bulky collection	2311	£8,597
Missed collection	2227	£8,285
General local monitoring	1651	£6,142
General contractor request	1454	£5,410
Arranging clinical waste collections	722	£2,685

7.5.7 In terms of the general contractor requests:

- Around 40% related to a request to empty recycling/both bins as normal waste;
- Around 20% related to another special request, including extra recycling and side waste;
- Around 15% related to yellow sacks request or clinical waste collection;
- Around 10% related to missed collections; and
- Around 5% were requesting a delivery of black sacks.

7.5.8 Some of these calls, for example black sack requests, could be removed by improving the website which will be discussed later in this section. Other calls relating to side waste and bin collections could be removed by improving the way information is provided to residents.

7.5.9 Requests for yellow sacks as part of the clinical waste collection could be removed by improving the availability of these sacks, for example at doctors' surgeries and pharmacies, and by increasing the number that are delivered at the point of residents requesting the clinical service. It is recommended that this is investigated further.

7.5.10 Anecdotal evidence suggests that the calls relating to the bulky waste service are longer than those relating to missed bins but missed bins may require a call back, dependent on the nature of the call. For example, whether the missed bin has a label or not (indicating that the bin was contaminated) or whether it has been highlighted as not being on the

boundary may have to be checked with the contractor. It is hoped that through better information and on board technology this element can be reduced and this will be discussed with SITA.

- 7.5.11 Missed bins are reported through the website or through the contact centre. These notifications are then redirected back to SITA. Missed bins can generate significant additional work and with the contractor steps are being taken to reduce the number but contamination is also a key issue on disposal.
- 7.5.12 The Council could pass its missed bin enquiries directly to the contractor. This is the practice at Canterbury Council and would not only reduce a quarter of the calls to the contact centre but could potentially improve the service by offering real time information to the contractor.
- 7.5.13 Real time services would provide immediate information direct to the Council on a range of missed bin and contamination information including:
- Vehicle attended property;
 - Bin Not Out;
 - Contamination;
 - Excess Waste / Overloaded Bin;
 - Bin Damaged;
 - Bin Lost In Compactor;
 - Recycling Visit Requested;
 - Assisted Collection no longer required; and
 - 'Illegal' or additional bins presented.
- 7.5.14 The system can be very tightly integrated with the Council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and all messages and events are automatically linked to a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN). This creates a near-real-time link into the council contact centre. When a resident phones in with any enquiry all the relevant information would be on screen without an extensive investigation trail back to the depot and / or vehicle. A decision can then be made on the spot whether the crew should return to collect the missed bins. There are some key benefits to having this information:
- Improve call resolution;
 - Process missed bins more quickly;

- Reduce paper work; and
- Allow profiling of contamination and missed bin incidences.

7.5.15 There are a number of authorities throughout England already using this technology. It is recommended that the Council pursue the opportunity to pilot this system with SITA.

7.6 Face to Face Contact

7.6.1 The following numbers of visitors have visited the Gateway about an issue regarding waste and recycling between January and August 2009. By far the most common visit has been about bulky refuse, with the most common reason for visits as follows:

- Bulky Refuse - 201;
- Recycling Enquiry – 116; and
- Missed bins - 69.

7.6.2 It is likely that the number of recycling enquiries will have reduced in recent months as the roll out of the new dry recyclable service has been completed.

7.6.3 Bulky refuse queries could be reduced through improved website transactions and simplifying the scheme.

7.7 Letters

7.7.1 A small number of letters are handled by the waste and recycling department, 301 letters were recorded on the Anite system between May 2008 and August 2009. Most of these letters (73%) are from medical practitioners requesting the clinical waste service. It is possible that these could be reduced if this service could be accessed through a secure link on the website.

7.8 SMS messaging

7.8.1 The Council is currently exploring the use of SMS text messaging for a range of services. This could be used for residents to notify the Council regarding missed bins, or in turn could be sent directly to the waste and recycling crews in order that they could attend directly and report back or to the resident. This could potentially achieve some indirect savings and would provide swifter customer service. This is currently under development and there are no costs at present for this service.

7.9 Website

7.9.1 The Council's website has been enhanced in recent years and in particular the use of terminology for dealing with waste and rubbish. However,

compared to other authorities the interactive nature of the site could be further improved as well as the information that is made available to the public.

7.9.2 The website is currently being redesigned, offering an opportunity for changes to be incorporate into the new waste and recycling pages. This is particularly significant for the waste and recycling service as one of the reasons for the website redesign is to extend the number of services that can be accessed and paid for on-line rather than requiring residents to phone or visit the Council.

7.9.3 An overall review of the pages was undertaken, looking at the way the pages appeared, were structured and the quality of information that was provided. The following key features and issues for the new pages were identified:

- Waste and Recycling is hidden under environmental services;
- Service standards should be on the first page;
- Links like 'were you looking for.....'
- There should be a separate page for trade waste;
- Separate page on waste and recycling;
- Page on bulky collection;
- Page to promote waste minimisation;
- A page on promotion and education;
- Increase information on reuse and repair services;
- Links to other Household Waste and Recycling Centres; and
- Frequently asked questions.

7.9.4 These changes will be undertaken as part of the Council website update but in the interim, some of the above changes have already been made.

7.9.5 The review also identified a number of aspects of the overall waste and recycling service where it may be possible to offer transactional services, these are:

- Searching for freighter times and dates;
- Searching for details on the green waste collections;
- Booking and paying for bulky collection;
- Ordering replacement bins and boxes;
- Renting a green bin or buying green bags;
- Online forms for arranging clinical waste collections (for GPs and nurses);
- Online forms for requesting a clinical waste collection or clinical waste bag;
- Requesting assisted collection (online form) either for oneself or on behalf of someone;
- Checking collection days for waste and recycling (an improved method); and

- Checking where recycling banks are (improved method) or searching by type of material to be recycled.

7.9.6 Linked with the review of the contact centre calls, these improvements could potentially reduce a large number of calls and the recharge to the waste and recycling team by approximately 20%, thus making a number of indirect savings.

7.9.7 Opportunities to use more examples on the website or links to material that is available at a regional or national level need to be explored. Members suggested a DVD to clarify what can and cannot be recycled, but it may be that something can be produced in conjunction with Kent County Council.

7.10 Satisfaction Levels

7.10.1 At the end of 2008 an independent survey (The Place Survey) was undertaken on the Council's behalf in line with all local authorities in England. It asked residents to rate how satisfied they were with a number of council services including waste collection, the recycling service and the local tips/household waste recycling management centres.

7.10.2 Maidstone is in the top 25% of all authorities in England for satisfaction with the refuse collection service provided. The highest scoring authority in Kent was Sevenoaks with 90% satisfaction and the highest in England was Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council with 92.9% satisfaction.

7.10.3 Satisfaction with the recycling service was also measured. However, the Place Survey was carried out prior to the final stage of the roll-out of the new recycling service. Maidstone is currently in the bottom 25% of all English authorities. Out of the 12 Kent districts Maidstone came 11th with a result of 51.3%. Tunbridge Wells was the lowest scoring Kent district with 43.2% and Dartford was the highest achieving Kent authority with 81.2% of people satisfied. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council again had the highest satisfaction in England with 89.9%.

7.10.4 Maidstone's satisfaction rating for local tips and household waste recycling management centres was also in the bottom 25% of all authorities and 10th out of the 12 Kent districts. Sedgemoor District Council had the highest levels of satisfaction with 86.5% and within Kent Dartford had the highest satisfaction with 78.5%. Therefore there appears to be some issues with the way the local tip operates and this will need to be investigated in further detail.

7.10.5 Comparisons within Kent suggest that:

- Waste and recycling is one of the top ten most important issues for residents of the borough;
- 86% of respondents are satisfied with their refuse collection; but
- Only 51% of respondents were satisfied with their doorstep recycling service, which was one of the areas of lowest satisfaction; and
- 28% of respondents were dissatisfied with the doorstep recycling service. This was the service with the highest level of dissatisfaction.

7.10.6 Further analysis of the Place Survey results by ward suggests that the satisfaction with doorstep recycling service was lower in areas where the full doorstep recycling service had not yet been introduced. It was suggested that satisfaction levels would increase in these areas once the enhanced service had been introduced.

7.10.7 Attached at Appendix E are the results of the further waste and recycling survey undertaken this year as part of the review. This again was managed by a company on the Council's behalf.

7.10.8 On the question of ***'How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current recycling collection service'?***

7.10.9 Over 84 per cent of residents who answered the survey were very satisfied or satisfied with the recycling service provided overall. This compares to 51 per cent in the 2008 Place Survey.

7.10.10 On the question ***of 'How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current waste collection service'?***

7.10.11 Over 92 per cent of residents who answered the survey were very satisfied/satisfied with the waste service overall which compares to 86 per cent in Place Survey.

7.10.12 The pattern overall for satisfaction with both services is very similar though it should be noted that there is generally a slightly lower level of satisfaction with the recycling service and lower numbers of respondents being 'very satisfied' with recycling.

7.11 Public Views and Engagement Options and Recommendations

7.11.1 Public Views and Engagement Options

7.11.2 As a result of the work on this section of the review several options have emerged the recommended option are set out below:

- 1) **The public feedback suggested that a number of residents were not aware of the facilities and services that were available from the Council and it is recommended that these are promoted more extensively. This will be progressed with the Communications Team and within existing budgets.**
- 2) **Robust monitoring arrangements need to be established with a greater focus on the outcomes achieved and feedback from the public. Levels of contamination remain high in some areas which affect missed bins, resident satisfaction and the performance of the contractor.**

7.11.3 Public Views and Engagement Recommendations

As a result of the work on this section of the review several recommendations have emerged and these are set out below:

Promotion and Education

- 1) Undertake a review of the education and promotion action plan.
- 2) To develop a range of impact measures for the targeted intervention.
- 3) To use the Mosaic information to develop to improve promotion and education activities.
- 4) With the Kent Waste Partnership give consideration to the development of a DVD which shows the full lifecycle of waste.

Contact Centre

- 5) Explore options to reduce the number of calls through better public information.
- 6) Undertake random sampling of the calls received for Environmental Services.
- 7) Investigating whether waste and recycling calls can be given a separate option when callers contact the Council.
- 8) To investigate passing the missed bins reports directly to the contractor and/or to pilot a real time reporting system on bin collections

Website recommendations

- 9) Establish a wider range of waste and recycling transactions.
- 10) Improving the navigation and ensuring terms and guidance are clearly explained.

8 Partnerships

- 8.1 Partnership working on waste is a recognised way of achieving more effective service delivery, as well as significant efficiencies and environmental benefits. By working together partners can achieve economies of scale, share important specialist skills - such as marketing and procurement, and best practice for the good of all partners. Partnership working can deliver improved waste prevention and minimisation initiatives and increase recycling rates.
- 8.2 Evidence suggests that savings of between 5% and 15% are possible when waste collection arrangements are brought together, and that further significant savings are possible where collection and disposal, and back office functions, are integrated.
- 8.3 The Council has a number of partnerships based around different aspects of the service. For the purpose of this aspect of the review, the following partnerships have been reviewed.
- The Kent Waste Partnership;
 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council provision of cardboard bank collection services;
 - Work with third sector parties to deliver and promote recycling services; and
 - SITA.
- 8.4 The above partnerships have been assessed using the Partnership Pyramid. The assessment benchmarks the partnership against a range of questions set out under four key areas that a good partnership needs; leadership, trust, learning and managing performance assigning the partnership a level between one and five as are set out below.
1. Co-existence: You stay in your area and I will stay in mine
 2. Co-operation: I will lend a hand when I can
 3. Co-ordination: We will adjust what we do to avoid overlap
 4. Collaboration: Together we work on this and manage risks
 5. Co-ownership: All have respect and feel totally responsible
- 8.5 The Kent Waste Partnership has been discussed in some detail already in the strategy chapter of this review. The partners are all twelve districts in Kent plus the County Council. Medway Council is not involved in the Partnership.
- 8.6 The Kent Waste Partnership has been assessed at a Level 3 Co-ordination. The Partnership has achieved a number of things in the past few years and has been particularly strong in tackling behavioural change. Public

Engagement Activities have been targeted at particular wards in each district where the most potential benefit could be achieved. The Partnership has gained a national reputation for achievement in this area and in influencing the national waste agenda.

- 8.7 Although there are still a range of issues across the Partnership the East Kent joint working project is expected to achieve significant levels of savings in terms of potential disposal costs, as well as the adoption of a Nominal Optimum Option for refuse and recycling collection services. If successful, this project could rival that of other partnerships such as Somerset in terms of affordability, joint procurement and joint ownership of waste services. However, there is a great deal still to be achieved elsewhere in the County.
- 8.8 Significant progress has also been made in making the funding support from the County Council to districts more transparent. However, arriving at a suitable solution which achieves best value for the tax payers is a complex issue. However, a way forward in East Kent has been agreed, and it is likely that this could be used as the model for Mid/West Kent partners.
- 8.9 The system of working groups dealing with the delivery of various aspects of the Kent Waste Strategy has been productive, and ensures that each work stream is progressed, using shared resources across all partners.
- 8.10 The model for joint procurement adopted for East Kent partners needs to be reviewed following its implementation in order to identify the potential for adoption across other areas. Co-terminus contracts in 2013 and in 2015 offer opportunities for the adoption of a Nominal Optimum method of refuse & recycling collections in Mid Kent and initial discussions have taken place with Ashford BC and Swale BC over new contracting arrangements. However, the potential savings on disposal costs may be less than in East Kent due to the Allington facility already enabling Kent County Council to avoid LATS fines.
- 8.11 The ownership of refuse and street services gives district authorities a high profile with the Kent tax payer. Further development of various work streams under the Strategy heading may include reviewing levels of sovereignty amongst district partners. However, the overall aim should still be to achieve best value for the Kent tax payer, and this may require additional costs for some partners and further investment by the County Council to improve service provision.
- 8.12 Joint Borough Initiatives
- 8.12.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council jointly operate the provision of cardboard bank collection services. This partnership has been assessed at a Level 4 - co-ownership achievement. The partnership arrangement has achieved good value for

money and continues to operate successfully even though Sevenoaks District Council has now withdrawn from the arrangement.

- 8.12.2 Key issues this partnership are now forces outside the control of partners, such as the reduction in material income due to the economic downturn which has led to consideration of withdrawing the service completely. However, alternative suppliers are currently being investigated.
- 8.12.3 During the review it has also become apparent that Tonbridge and Malling DC also operate a plastic collection service at some of their sites and this should be investigated further to see if there are any opportunities for partnership working.

8.13 Working with Third Sector Partners

- 8.13.1 Work with third sector parties to deliver and promote recycling services has been assessed as a level 2 co-operation. This work involves a high number of partners who are involved on a one to one basis these are:

- Age Concern
- Allington PCC
- Barming Scout & Guide Group
- Barnardos
- Beacon Church
- Bearsted & Thurnham Women's Institute
- Boughton Monchelsea Scouts
- Bower Grove Scouts
- British Heart Foundation
- Loose Swiss Scouts
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Maidstone Grammar Parents' Association
- Maidstone Rotary Club
- Oxfam
- PDSA
- St Francis Parish
- Salvation Army
- Save Stockbury Church
- Save the Children
- Sutton Scouts

- 8.13.2 The partnerships occur across a wide section of community and charity organisations, ranging from international concerns such as Oxfam and the Salvation Army to small local organisations such as Save Stockbury Church. The partnerships earn income for all of the third sector partners through Third Party Payment scheme, claimed on their behalf by the Council from Kent County Council. Almost 700 tonnes of material was collected by third parties in 2008/09, generating over £35,000 in income for charities and not-for-profit organisations.

- 8.13.3 When rolling out the new kerbside service in Loose and Barming, the Council also worked in partnership with the respective scout groups in order to promote the scout groups' monthly collection services as well as the Council's.
- 8.13.4 Improved co-ordination needs to take place in order to maximise the synergies between the Council's services and those provided by the third sector. A recent review of the potential for bulky item reuse and recycling concluded that the current third sector infrastructure within the borough did not lend itself to a development in this field. One solution would be the availability of pump-priming funding for third sector organisations to improve their infrastructure and support the Council's overall strategy for dealing with waste.
- 8.13.5 In addition, there may be opportunities for the Council to assist these organisations in attracting external funding to support their environmental schemes.

8.14 SITA

- 8.14.1 The Council's Partnership Contract with SITA for the provision of refuse & recycling collection services has been assessed at a Level 4 – Collaboration. The contract itself will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this report.
- 8.14.2 Partnership is ingrained within the contract management teams of both parties in order to work together to achieve the best result. This was particularly well demonstrated during the implementation of the new recycling service. The recent health check review has highlighted that the contract offers good value for money for the services being provided which may not have been achieved through a traditional "Client v Contractor" arrangement. Both partners take co-ownership of reporting performance and both parties are proactive in addressing poor performance and ensuring measures are put in place to improve.
- 8.14.3 However, the Council has been more proactive than the contractor in setting up contract monitoring systems, and this needs to be improved. For example, the Innovation Forum aspect of the partnering arrangement has not yet been fully implemented. There is now an opportunity, in the latter half of the contract, to make the most effective use of the Forum, particularly when implementing the recommendations of the Best Value Review.
- 8.14.4 The contractor will be encouraged to be more proactive in identifying potential service improvements and efficiencies, although the Council must

also accept that any efficiency made may result in loss of income for the contractor.

- 8.14.5 In addition the move to the new depot in December will also put SITA staff alongside the Council's recycling team, which should also significantly improve communication and enable issues to be addressed more easily.

8.15 Joint Waste Authorities

- 8.15.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced new powers to allow the Secretary of State to create Joint Waste Authorities (JWAs) where a group of one or more authorities made a request. This new measure, which was requested by local authorities, provides another option for partnership working for those authorities that wish to put joint working on waste on a statutory footing. A JWA will be a new legal entity able to sign contracts and employ staff.

- 8.15.2 Groups of authorities will be able to voluntarily request, by submitting a proposal to the Secretary of State, the creation of a JWA in order to enable stronger partnership working. A JWA would take on the powers and responsibilities of its constituent authorities relating to one or more of its waste functions: waste disposal, waste collection, and/or street cleansing. It is for groups of authorities to propose exactly which services a JWA should cover. The Government will then work with authorities to determine the structure, constitution and funding of their partnerships.

- 8.15.3 The most recent date for expressions of interest was July 2009. It will be important to follow the progress of the smaller groups of JWAs such as those in Hampshire particularly in light of the work that is being undertaken in East Kent.

8.16 Other partnership opportunities

- 8.16.1 As highlighted with the upcoming bid for funding for the food waste trial there are funding opportunities for the Council but given the limitations on the strategy side the Council is not currently in a strong position to access these.

- 8.16.2 It is envisaged that this position will change and consideration will need to be given as to how funding opportunities can be identified at an early stage and successful bids submitted in the future.

8.17 Partnership recommendations

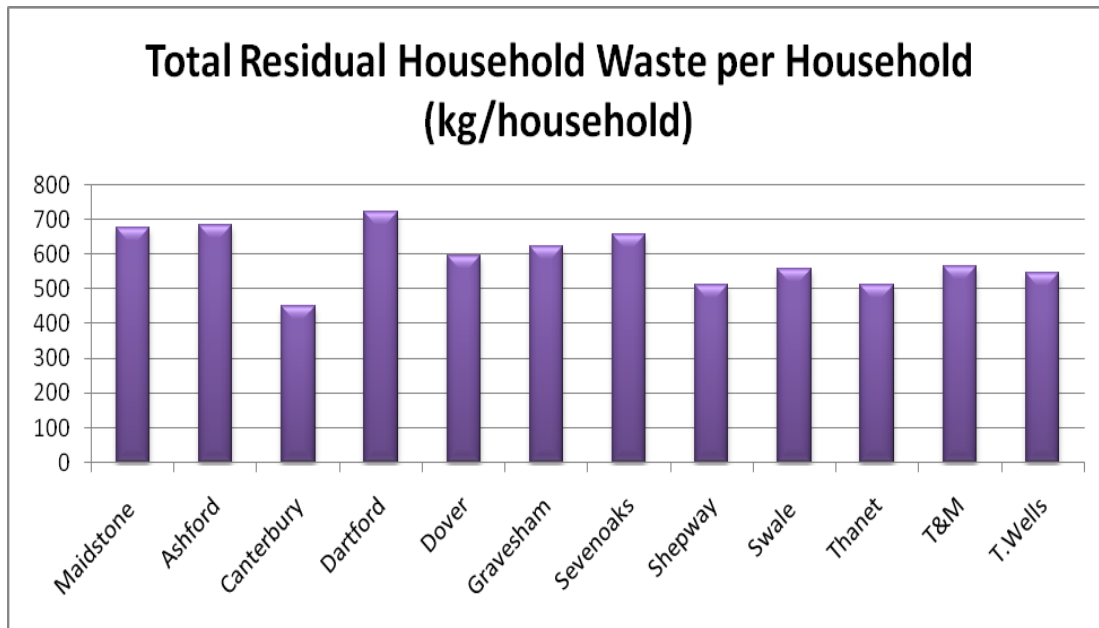
8.17.1 As a result of the work on this section of the review several recommendations have emerged and these are set out below:

- 1) To improve the relationships within the partnership pyramid and particularly the organisations highlighted in the report.
- 2) To review the cardboard and plastic services in Tonbridge and Malling.
- 3) To monitor the progress of the new Joint Waste Authorities as well as the East Kent Project.
- 4) Engage with and monitor developments within the Joint Waste Partnership.
- 5) Encourage SITA to be more proactive in identifying potential service improvements and efficiencies.
- 6) To work with SITA to encourage the implementation of the Innovation Forum.
- 7) To meet with the third sector parties to assess the opportunities for greater working, particularly to investigate alternatives to bulky furniture collections.
- 8) To review how the council identifies future funding and piloting opportunities.

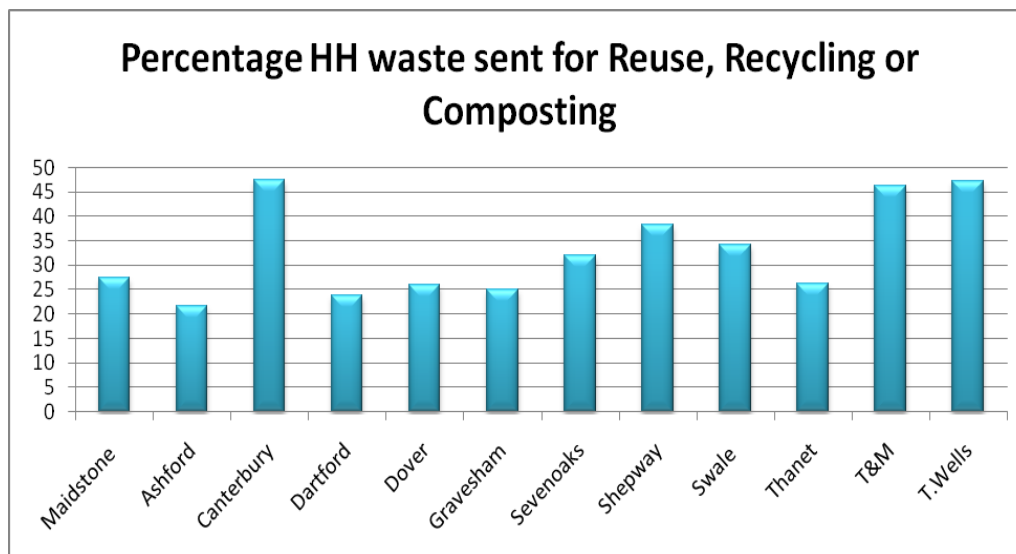
9 Performance and Value for Money

- 9.1 The performance of the waste and recycling service is assessed on value for money, expenditure, satisfaction, performance indicators and feedback from the public. The following section assesses the current performance and looks at areas for further improvement.
- 9.2 The Performance of the SITA contract.
- 9.2.1 A health check review by Waste Consulting was commissioned by the Council as part of the Best Value Review and the full health check report can be found at **Appendix C**.
- 9.2.2 The current forecast for 2009/10 for the core contract of providing the service is £3,524,000. The health check indicates that overall the SITA contract offers value for money and presents a good basis from which to pursue higher levels of service performance.
- 9.2.3 The health check does however identify that it would be possible to reduce the cost of the service by reducing the number of routes undertaken by two or three for the residual collection. This has already been anticipated and has been discussed with SITA.
- 9.2.4 Waste Consulting noted that the Council operates four dry recycling and seven residual routes in the town areas, and that on the basis of this estimated savings of moving to an alternate weekly collection service costs could potentially reduce by £266,000 (2 routes) to £399,000 (3 routes).
- 9.2.5 The health check highlighted that the contract cost for 2009/10 is expected to increase more than was previously expected. At present the contract uses a weighted formula taking into account the National Joint Council pay award, fuel (DTI Derv), the plant and the retail price index applied year on year to the previous years cost. There is no action that the Council can take at this time to rectify this; however, it is recommended that the Council reviews this measure as part of the tendering for a new contract in 2013.
- 9.2.6 Waste Consulting raised as a potential concern that the Council received lower income from the recycle markets, which they determined was largely due to the end of the separated kerbside paper collections, and because of the migration of paper tonnage from bring banks as the mixed dry recycling service takes effect. This supports earlier recommendations of removing the existing can banks and installing additional glass banks as this is the key recyclable material that the Council does not collect from properties. This also highlights the need for equitable support from KCC for all districts across Kent.

- 9.2.7 For refuse collection the contract performance standard for missed bins is no more than 21 per 100,000 collections. A standard of 17 per 100,000 has been adopted in order to improve performance still further.
- 9.2.8 Complaints regarding the service provided by SITA are not logged on the Council system. SITA quality assures their letters and is good at responding. The Council does however make courtesy calls to residents following up on SITA complaints. No major issues have been identified as a result of this process.
- 9.2.9 However, since the contract was signed several significant changes have been put in place, which have increased the actual cost of the service to the Council. To ensure that the Council gets the maximum value out of the tendering service in 2013 absolute clarity on the service and standards will be required.
- 9.3 Performance Indicators
- 9.3.1 A table of all the indicators used to monitor the Waste and Recycling service can be found at **Appendix L**. The table includes the outturns since 2006/07, top quartile positioning for all England, the targets for 2009/10 and the first quarter's performance for 2009/10.
- 9.3.2 In addition to the current indicators the table also includes the former Best Value Performance Indicators which have in part now been replaced by the new National Indicators.
- 9.3.3 In addition to the two statutory indicators the waste and recycling service have four local performance indicators
- **PI 7**- The cost of collection per household;
 - **PI 8** – The satisfaction with refuse collection;
 - **C11** – The number of missed bins per 100,000; and
 - **C12**– The percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting.
- 9.3.4 The national indicator NI191 is the key external measure and is the total residual household waste per household (kg/ household). As highlighted previously in the report this is an area where the results for Maidstone are not very good.
- 9.3.5 The graph over the page shows the Council's performance for 2008/09. Maidstone produces the third highest amount of kg of waste per household with only Ashford and Dartford producing higher amounts of waste. It should be noted that those Councils with the lower production of waste per household are all on Alternate Weekly Collections, which is a major contributory factor to their performance levels.



9.3.6 Another national indicator NI192 is the percentage of household waste sent to reuse, recycling and composting. The graph below shows the Councils performance for 2008/09. The Council was the seventh highest amongst the Kent districts although it is envisaged that the new kerbside recycling service will significantly improve the figures for 2009/10 to around 36%.



9.3.7 It is recommended that Maidstone's waste collection and recycling per household is further reviewed in conjunction with SITA to see where more can be done in terms of materials, volumes and education.

9.4 Kent Agreement 2

9.4.1 It is still not totally clear how the performance in each of the districts will be aggregated to deliver the targets that have been set for the County on waste reduction. Levels of recycling have improved significantly in Maidstone since the original KA2 targets were set and it is also expected that volumes of waste generated will also have reduced.

9.4.2 These KA2 targets are due to be reviewed by the Government in autumn 2009. It is very likely that from 2009/10 the performance in Maidstone will make a significant impact on the results for the County.

9.5 Benchmarking

9.5.1 Maidstone Borough Council has been working with the APSE benchmarking group for nearly 5 years, looking at refuse collection services. Membership has ensured that the Council effectively monitors performance as well as learns from other authorities to improve services. This work was a useful exercise as the new recycling scheme was developed.

9.5.2 Clinical collections and the weekend freighter service are not directly looked at in benchmarking exercises and this is something that the Council could look to initiate particularly as part of the partnership with APSE and possibly through a South East Benchmarking group.

9.5.3 In 2008 the Council was instrumental in developing the Price Book in Kent. This indicated that the net waste costs were high in Maidstone and performance on the key national indicators was only average. The Revenues and Benefits Manager was asked to give an external perspective on the service and made a range of recommendations. Some of these have been implemented but there is still room for further improvement.

9.5.4 The Price Book exercise will be repeated again this year so further comparisons will shortly be available. As highlighted in the report there are certainly lessons to be learnt within Kent as well as from looking outside the County through for example APSE. However, the waste credit amounts will also need to be considered as based on the latest figures from Kent County Council these have distorted the net costs.

9.6 CO₂ Emissions

9.6.1 The waste service also has a significant impact on NI185 which measures the percentage of CO₂ reduction from local authority operations. Over half of the total vehicle emissions produced by the Council are from the waste collection service.

9.6.2 The Council has given a commitment to an annual 3% reduction in CO₂ emissions year on year and to achieve a 20% reduction by 2015.

9.6.3 There are several ways in which a change in the waste service could reduce the amount of CO₂ produced:

- Currently SITA has 12 vehicles operating on a weekly residual collection so any efficiencies in the collection arrangements could reduce the number of waste collection vehicles on the road each week;
- Four vehicles are used for green waste fortnightly in the borough. A reduction in the green waste collection to a seasonal service would also reduce the number of vehicle journeys in winter;
- The options outlined within the review of trade waste could see a wider reduction the number of waste collection vehicles entering the borough. There are currently a minimum of 28 waste collection vehicles being used by businesses in the borough. If the Council decided to pursue one of the options outlined earlier, consideration should be given to the option that would be most effective in reducing this number.
- An alternate weekly collection arrangement would significantly reduce the levels of CO₂ generated by the service;
- Removal or reduction of the freighter; and/or
- Reduction of the bulky waste service.
- Encouraging greater recycling of glass at glass banks (through the improved distribution of banks across the borough) will result in wider CO₂ savings due to the way the glass is processed in manufacture.

9.6.4 A longer term option would be to explore the use of alternative fuels in the collection vehicles. There are a wider number of fuels available now and the technology is developing rapidly. However, their contribution to reducing CO₂ can vary widely depending on where the fuels are sourced and how they are manufactured.

- 9.6.5 The London Borough of Southwark currently has a fleet which comprises around 340 vehicles, of these:
- over 150 are fuelled with LPG85 and run on a 20% blend of bio-diesel with diesel;
 - a further 6 refuse collection vehicles are being trialled with 20% bio diesel; and
 - one vehicle is being trialled which runs on 100% pure plant oil, tests will move on to a further four vehicles.
- 9.6.6 It is estimated that the annual use of bio diesel, at around 300,000 litres/year has resulted in a reduction of 160 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Local air quality in Southwark will also be improved with a reduction in key pollutants - particulates reduced by 10%, carbon monoxide by 13% and unburnt hydrocarbons by 21%.
- 9.6.7 In addition Southwark council has provided all HGV drivers with intensive training regarding environmental impact and awareness and all HGVs are fitted with live time tracking and two way communication to reduce unnecessary journeys for missed collections.
- 9.6.8 SITA has also started work with the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea this year in launching a truck that uses a mix of fuel made from landfill gas (compressed bio methane (CBM) and diesel, which aims to reduce diesel consumption by around 65 percent.
- 9.6.9 This truck will be trialled for six months and is the first vehicle of its kind to collect household recycling in the United Kingdom. In addition to aiming to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 14 percent the vehicle is expected to be up to three decibels quieter than a normal collection vehicle.
- 9.6.10 Given the potential for more efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles it is recommended that the above case studies and any further emerging trials are monitored in order that the Council can look to include this as part of the new contract in 2013.
- 9.6.11 Performance and Value for Money Recommendations
- 1) To review future targets in line with the development of the service and the contribution that the Council can make towards the Kent targets in the LAA 2.
 - 2) Consider the environmental aspects and costs associated with continuing the current operation and in particular the CO₂ levels.

- 3) To monitor the development of alternative fuels and explore the opportunities for trialling alternative fuels now with SITA and including this in the new contract.

10 Financial Considerations

10.1 There are several options given in the report and the initial financial estimates associated with each of these areas are as follows:

10.2 Recommended option - Option 1

Option number	Option	Financial implication
a	Waste Strategy	Additional costs to be within existing budget
b	Waste credits	Potential for additional revenue contribution
c	Alternate Weekly Collection	Between £266,000 and £399,000 reduction in costs
d	Food Waste Collection	The costs of a borough wide scheme will need to be clarified if the pilot is successful. The pilot will be fully funded externally and discussions held over future long term support with KCC
e	Bring Sites	£25,000 saving on the removal of can banks, some of this savings will be reinvested in the redistribution/installation of additional can banks and the potential installation of plastic banks
f	Partnerships with third party over reuse of items	Partnerships will be sought within existing working practices and any additional costs incurred will be funded within existing budget
g	Home Composting	There may be a requirement to provide an additional subsidy to fund a partnership with a third party provider
h	Withdrawal of freighter service	Approximately £60,000 savings and potential income through the bulky waste service.
i	Improved promotion of services	Any improvements to the promotion of services will to be made within existing budgets but could lead to an increase in income of services such as the green waste and bulky services
j	Improve of Household waste facilities	The Household waste to recycling centre is KCC operated and will have not direct cost to the Council, however increase usage may impact upon the bulky and green collection services

k	Commercial waste collection opportunities	There are no cost implications to the Council at this time as it is envisaged that the cost of researching potential opportunities will be resourced internally using existing staff time.
l	Improved monitoring of facilities	Improved monitoring of the service can be built into existing resources though this may require initial work this will not have any financial implications
m	Reduced green waste service during winter months	Approximate reduction in cost of £66,000

10.3 Option 2 - as with option 1 but the following alternatives

Option number	Option	Financial implication
c1	Continue with existing collection service	Contract costs will remain as they currently stand at £1,648,040
d1	Not to pursue food waste collection pilot	There will be no direct financial impact of this decision
e1	Maintain number of existing bring sites	Existing cost of running these sites will continue with an estimated costs of TBC and estimated income of TBC
g1	Withdraw the garden bin service	Estimated direct reduction in cost of service of £43,545
h1	Retain the freighter service	The cost to the Council of maintaining this service is approximately £60,000
k1	Smaller scale commercial venture	There are no cost implications to the Council at this time as it is envisaged that the cost of researching potential opportunities will be resourced internally using existing staff time.

10.4 Option 3 - as with option one but the following alternatives

Option number	Option	Financial implication
c2	Reduce the levels of materials recycled in the borough	These would need to be confirmed but there are a range of statutory requirements and reputational risks.

d2	Reduce the number of bring sites in the borough	The bring sites are estimated to bring in £18,851 in income in 2008/09. A reduction in sites would lose the Council this income plus lead to a drop in recycling credits from KCC.
g2	Withdraw the garden waste service	This would probably result in a saving to the Council, but the approximate amount needs to be clarified. The cost of running the service is around £620,000. However, the sale of bags and hire of bins bring an income to the Council and it would also see a loss of recycling credits of an estimated £42,500. There may also be a cost of increasing the number of rounds if the amount of residual waste increases as a result.
h2	Charge for the use of the freighter service	Potential savings and increase of income of approximately between £7,700 and £29,700

11 Conclusion

- 11.1.1 The new dry recyclable scheme has been well received, however, the waste and recycling service will need further significant change if the Council is to meet future national targets. This includes embracing technology, streamlining customer services, expanding and developing partnerships and looking at more innovative working practices. There has not been a clear strategy for the borough in the past and the objectives for the service need to be clarified.
- 11.1.2 Where the service is working in partnership, these are generally successful but partnerships are not fully developed. This is an area the service should focus on, as nationally waste and recycling services are now being delivered in this way.
- 11.1.3 External validation and assessment by Waste Consulting and the Environment And Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee has highlighted some of the key areas where the service can look to further improve in advance of the next tender which will need to be prepared by 2012.
- 11.1.4 Resident feedback suggests there is support for further change but the Council needs to ensure that this will offer value for money for taxpayers. The review recommends that the Council adopts a strategic direction based on the waste hierarchy that encourages higher waste minimisation,

which would ultimately positively impact upon the environment the cost of the service to the Council and customer satisfaction.

12 **Next Steps**

- 12.1 Following the options report an implementation plan will be developed and presented to Cabinet in January 2010. The implementation plan will set out the actions that the Council will undertake the over the next three years including planning for the new procurement of the collection contract in 2013.
- 12.2 The Plan will include the timescale for the implementation of the agreed options and recommendations and responsible officers.

13 **Alternative Action and why not Recommended**

- 13.1 Three packages of options have been set out. Cabinet could choose an alternative package to that which has been recommended, or alternatively Cabinet could choose their own package of recommendations from those that have been provided. However, the recommended package has been developed and recommended because officers believe it provides the best balance for the Council in terms of delivering a cost effective service, maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction, encouraging greater reduce and reuse of materials and helping to reduce CO₂ emissions in the borough.

14 **Impact on Corporate Objectives**

- 14.1 The purpose of Best Value Review is to improve the efficiency of all Council Services and to ensure value or money.
- 14.2 The vision for Maidstone is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. To support this vision and ensure the objectives for Maidstone are delivered the Council has identified five priority themes. This review supports two of these priorities in particular and these are as follows:
- A place which is clean and green; and
 - A place with effective and efficient public services.
 -

15 **Risk Management**

- 15.1 The Council has to meet challenging targets in relation to waste collection and as a collection authority has to work closely with partners in order to ensure that both collection and disposal are achieved effectively.
- 15.2 Waste collection and the review of waste collection services forms part of the strategic risk register and is set out in more detail within its individual action plan.

15.2.1 Other Implications

15.2.2

1. Financial	X
2. Staffing	X
3. Legal	X
4. Social Inclusion	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	X
9. Asset Management	

Financial

15.2.3 The financial considerations of the options presented to Cabinet have been set out at section 11. The report sets out a range of additional costs and potential savings.

Staffing

15.2.4 The options set out in this report will require staffing time in order to implement. The level of staffing resources has not been assessed as part of this review. All agreed options will be presented to Cabinet in January as part of the Implementation Plan.

Legal

15.2.5 The Council has a legal duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect household waste from all domestic properties across the borough. The review makes no recommendation which will impact upon this legal duty.

15.2.6 From 2010 the Council will have a duty to collect two recyclable materials from households. The review highlights that the Council could reduce or

remove the recycling service but highlights there will be statutory implications if this was progressed.

Environmental/sustainable development

15.2.7 The area of waste and recycling is heavily linked to sustainability. The options within this review have been assessed in line with the opportunities to reduce CO₂ emissions and to encourage reduce and reuse in line with the waste hierarchy.

15.2.8 Background Documents

- Best Value Review Scoping Paper
- The Kent Price Book
- The National Waste and Recycling Strategy
- The Kent Joint Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? __October 2009

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency