

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER 2022

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon, Mrs Blackmore, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Jeffery, Knatchbull, McKenna, T Wilkinson, Brindle and Springett
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33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Brice, Hastie and Hinder.

34. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Brindle was present as Substitute for Councillor Brice.

Councillor Springett was present as Substitute for Councillor Hinder.

35. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items, however the list of working group nominees received from Group Leaders had been circulated separately to the Committee and would be considered alongside Item 14 – Water Management Cycle – Update Report.

36. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

37. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

38. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

39. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 July 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

41. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

42. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members.

44. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

45. THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE WASTE STRATEGY - UPDATE REPORT

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and stated a review into the Council's Performance against the Waste Strategy, with a focus on the waste contract's re-procurement, would not be beneficial as the re-procurement process had progressed into the advanced stages.

The alternative options contained within points 3.1 and 3.2 of the report were outlined, which included reviewing the Waste Strategy ahead of its refresh in 2023.

The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm explained the link between the Waste Strategy and the Waste Contract; the former had contributed to many service changes, including the introduction of weekly food bin collections, adoption of the waste hierarchy and waste production communications. The latter provided for how those services were delivered.

The Council's previous Communities, Housing and Environment Committee had agreed that the contract specification would remain unchanged, and that the Council would remain within the Mid Kent Waste Partnership (MKWP). The procurement process had commenced ten-months ago, with the final decision on the contract's award expected in December 2022. Therefore, it would be difficult for the review to focus on the contract's re-procurement, which if amended would require consideration by the MKWP.

In considering the review's lines of enquiry attached at Appendix 1 to the report, the Committee felt that the communications used to improve recycling rates should be considered within the second line of enquiry. The importance of reducing waste, alongside increasing recycling rates, was questioned, with the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm stating that whilst important, reuse of items and the overall reduction in specific waste, such as good waste, was difficult to measure. However, waste reduction methods and the diversion of waste could be considered as part of the review. The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm further stated that Kent County Council could be consulted, as the relevant waste authority, on where the Council's recycling was distributed to.

The Committee expressed support for reviewing the Council’s Performance against the Waste Strategy, as it was felt that positive improvements could be made ahead of the document’s refresh in 2023.

The Committee would prefer for the review to take place in the evening to better suit Member’s availability.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report be noted; and
2. Option 3.1 of the report, to hold a review into the Council’s Performance against the Waste Strategy, be agreed.

46. WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE - UPDATE REPORT

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report, highlighting the positive responses received from the external stakeholders to be consulted as part of the review. The Council’s Political Group Leaders were asked to put forward up to two Non-Executive Members and one reserve Member, to be considered for the working group’s membership. The list of nominees had been circulated to the Committee.

During the debate, it was noted that an odd membership number would have been preferred. An additional reserve Member was drawn from the Committee, and it was felt that all reserve Members should be able to attend any meeting of the group. The reserve Members would be able to exercise informal voting rights only when a full Member of the Working Group from their political group was unable to attend.

In response to questions, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the Working Group was not subject to the political balance rules as it was not a formal body of the Council. The external stakeholders consulted had confirmed that they would like to partake in the review and were waiting for the group to be appointed, and its meeting’s scheduled.

RESOLVED: That the following Members be appointed to the Water Management Cycle Working Group:

Full Members	Councillors Brice, Cleator, English, Garten, Harwood and Jeffery.
Reserve Members	Councillors Conyard, Springett and D Wilkinson.

47. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.05 p.m.