

Communities, Housing and Environment

12th April 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Review of Waste Strategy 2014-2019

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Director or Head of Service	Head of Environment & Public Realm
Lead Officer and Report Author	Waste Management Officer
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. Notes progress made so far against the objectives set out in the Waste Strategy 2014 – 2019 (Appendix A)
2. Revises the target for recycling, reuse and composting to 55% by 2020; and
3. Agrees a new target to be included in the Waste Strategy of achieving less than 8% contamination of recycling; and
4. Agrees the action plan to support the waste strategy, included in Appendix D

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Great Place - Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – the strategy supports improvements to the waste and recycling service, ensuring waste is managed in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Corporate Leadership Team	5 April 2016
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	12 April 2016

Review of Waste Strategy 2014-19

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report reviews the performance of our current waste strategy (Appendix A); and
 - 1.2 Identifies areas for targeting work and focusing areas for improvement as highlighted in a recent waste composition analysis
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council initially adopted a 5 year waste strategy in order to provide a focused and target driven approach to managing waste in Maidstone. This strategy set a number of targets including a recycling rate of 50% and a reduction in total waste by 2015.
- 2.2 The Strategy followed the waste hierarchy by identifying actions which would reduce, reuse and recycle waste where possible, including the introduction of weekly food waste collections alongside fortnightly refuse collections in 2011.
- 2.3 During this time, the new Mid Kent Waste Contract was implemented in partnership with Ashford and Swale Borough Councils and Kent County Council. This contract saved Maidstone Borough Council over £1 million per year and significantly improved the recycling services, including enhanced kerbside recycling collections of glass, textiles and small electrical items.
- 2.4 These actions resulted in the Council achieving the targets with the Strategy a year early, with the recycling rate rising from 34% to peaking at over 50% in the final quarter of 2013/14.
- 2.5 In 2014, a new 5 year waste strategy was adopted which set more ambitious targets of 60% recycling by 2019 and zero waste to landfill by 2015/16, building upon the successes of the previous waste strategy.
- 2.6 The Strategy was set against a backdrop of uncertainty within the industry with the new Waste Framework Directive coming into force from 1 January 2015, requiring Councils to provide separate recycling collections of paper, plastic, metals and glass.
- 2.7 In 2014, the Council carried out a Necessity and Technically, Economically and Environmentally Practicable (TEEP) test to determine whether the Council's existing commingled recycling service met the requirements under the Directive.
- 2.8 Whilst the results of the Necessity Test deemed that the Council's service met the requirements of the Directive and it was not necessary to make changes to the Service, a number of actions were identified which have been implemented as part of the 2014-19 Waste Strategy.

- 2.9 One key focus of the Necessity and TEEP assessment is with the quality of recycle. Currently Maidstone's contamination rate averages around 9.5% and so working to decrease the percentage of contamination will improve our recycling rate and the quality of materials sent for reprocessing.

Achievements

- 2.10 Over the past 2 years, the focus of the service has been on behavioural change as opposed to the large service changes previously implemented:
- 2.11 **The Big Maidstone Food Waste Challenge Incentive Scheme** – The Council was successfully awarded funding from the DCLG to offer a residents' incentive scheme to encourage and reward use of the weekly food collection service. The uptake of this has been fairly slow despite incentives including shopping vouchers and free swims.
- 2.12 **Flats weekly food waste collections** – The Council has extended the weekly food waste recycling service to flats which have been assessed as suitable for the service and altered their refuse and recycling collection frequency to alternate fortnightly collections. New recycling containers with different apertures and reusable bags have also been piloted to determine their success at encouraging recycling.
- 2.13 **Door-knocking** – A door-knocking campaign was implemented to identify and address residents' barriers to using the service as well as providing information about the final destination of their food waste and recycling.
- 2.14 **Composition analysis** – Analysis of the waste thrown away by residents has not been undertaken since 2008, prior to the significant service changes implemented and therefore it was considered necessary to understand what residents are throwing away in order to deliver behavioural change. Analysis of the contents of the refuse, recycling and food waste bins of different ACORN socio-demographics was carried out in November 2015. A summary of the results is included in Appendix B.
- 2.15 **Design a Dustcart Competition** - a competition to design livery for one dustcart was run for primary schools within the Borough. The aim of this was to engage children with recycling and asked them to provide a design which showed why they felt recycling was important. Assemblies and workshops were also carried out in some schools to support the understanding of recycling. This has formed part of the wider communication campaign which has included roadshows, adverts, press releases and improvements to the website.
- 2.16 **Refreshed vehicle livery** – the images on the sides of the refuse and recycling vehicles have been refreshed to support the wider campaign to encourage residents to recycle specific items including kitchen and bathroom items such as detergent bottles and cereal boxes.

- 2.17 **Kent-wide Communications** – the Council has worked with the Kent Resource Partnership to deliver Kent-wide messages about recycling kitchen and bathroom products and Metal Matters, a metal recycling campaign. Leaflets have been delivered to all households to increase awareness of what can be recycled and to increase the capture of recyclable materials including plastics, metals and cardboard packaging.
- 2.18 **Informational Leaflet** – a new recycling leaflet has been designed and is due to be delivered to all households in the next few weeks. This has been designed to improve awareness of the services provided and remind residents about what can be recycled as well as the benefits of recycling.
- 2.19 **Street sweeping recycling** – work has been undertaken to secure an outlet for street sweepings to enable them to be recycled. This is due to start in the next month.

Results

- 2.20 The actions taken to increase awareness and change recycling behaviours to capture more recycling has had the following impact on the objectives:

- 2.21 **Objective 1:** *To maintain low levels of total household waste and recycling at the levels achieved in 2011/12 of 813kg per household*

The Service is continuing to work towards this target through the promotion of waste minimisation and reduction initiatives and increased engagement with residents. In 2014/15, the Borough achieved 833kg per household. Nationally, trends have shown levels of waste increasing and is likely to be, in part, a result of the improving financial climate.

- 2.22 **Objective 2:** *To increase the amount of household waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting to 60%*

Despite significant focus on improving awareness of the services, recycling levels have plateaued just below 50%. National trends have shown reductions in recycling rates of high performing Councils, which in many cases has been attributed to the waste minimisation measures employed by major retailers to reduce the packaging content of their products. An example of this is the reduction of plastic in fizzy drinks bottles creating light weight products. Whilst this supports the waste hierarchy and Maidstone's objective to reduce waste, as the majority of these items are recycled, it is having a negative impact on recycling rates. Compared with other authorities across Kent, Maidstone's recycling rate has remained stable and continued to increase marginally. The majority of other Kent authorities have experienced decreases in recycling rates over the past 12 months. Appendix C shows the comparison of recycling rates across Kent.

In addition, the waste compositional analysis has highlighted increases in garden waste being thrown away in the refuse bin along with the type of food waste which is not being captured by the food waste recycling service. This has highlighted that the service has become uninteresting and residents need to be

re-engaged with the benefits of recycling. The incentive scheme is an example of one approach of exploring how to encourage residents to re-engage with recycling.

2.23 Objective 3: *To achieve zero waste to landfill by 2015/16*

Recently published information for Maidstone shows that for 2014/15 only 0.3% of Maidstone's waste was sent to landfill. The only waste sent to landfill is bulky waste and waste collected by the Saturday Freighter, which has now been discontinued. With the withdrawal of the Saturday Freighter service and planned activities to work with 3rd sector reuse organisations, we expect this low figure to continue to be minimised. Whilst the Strategy target is zero to landfill, this was considered aspirational and therefore the level achieved is exceptionally low.

2.24 Objective 4: *To maintain value for money of the waste collection service and achieve a cost per household below £40 per year.*

For 2014/15 the cost per household of the waste collection service was £37.41. The current joint waste collection contract has delivered savings in excess of £1 million per annum for Maidstone and by continuing to increase recycling further the Council may benefit from a share of any additional waste disposal savings. The Council is committed to work with the Partnership and Kent County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority, to maximise the value obtained from recyclates through effective procurement and improving the quality of recycling collected.

2.25 Objective 5: *To improve residents' satisfaction with Maidstone Borough Council's waste and recycling services.*

Recent satisfaction results show that overall satisfaction with the service remains the same as the last survey complete in 2013, however there was an increase of 3% in those 'very satisfied' with the service. The current satisfaction levels are 82% satisfied with the refuse and recycling collection service.

2.26 Objective 6: *To support the Council's objective of 3% annual carbon reduction by 2015 and to continue to contribute to the Council's Carbon Management Plan in order to meet the targets set out in the Kent Environment Strategy*

2.27 By continuing to follow the principles of the waste hierarchy we can promote waste prevention and minimisation, including home composting, which will reduce the transportation requirements and subsequent carbon footprint of the service. Since the start of the new contract, there has been a significant reduction in the number of vehicles being used for the service. The Council is also working with Kent County Council, the waste disposal authority, to minimise the distance waste travels and to identify reproprocessors and recycling outlets within Kent and the UK.

Conclusion

- 2.28 This report outlines the progress being made against the targets set in the approved 5 year Waste Strategy, which has provided focus and helps to ensure that decisions are taken which will support the Service's vision and the waste hierarchy.
- 2.29 Having a clear direction for the Service also ensures other stakeholders, including Kent County Council have a clear understanding of how services are likely to integrate and enable more effective planning of waste flows.
- 2.30 However it is important that the Strategy reflects the national and local landscape and whilst remaining ambitious, it should drive performance rather than provide an aspiration horizon.
- 2.31 The report sets out the reasons for revising the recycling target from 60% by 2019 to a more realistic target of 55% by 2020, based on progress to date, national trends in recycling and waste prevention measures being employed across the Country. The new target will remain above the EU target of 50% by 2020 and continue to contribute to the longer term EU target of 65% recycling by 2030.
- 2.32 The recommendation that a new target is included in the Waste Strategy to achieve a contamination rate of less than 8% is intended to ensure that the Service focuses on maximising the quality of the recycling collected through the elimination of contaminants.
- 2.33 The annual action plan, set out in Appendix D, has been designed to achieve the strategic objectives through targeting the waste streams identified in the waste compositional analysis, direct engagement and further educational work with children of all ages. The Action Plan will be monitored against recycling performance in order to determine the effectiveness of various approaches to increase capture rates, reduce contamination and increase recycling levels.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could agree the recommendations outlined on page one of this report, specifically:
- Notes progress made so far against the objectives set out in the Waste Strategy 2014 – 2019 (Appendix A)
 - Revises the target for recycling, reuse and composting to 55% by 2020; and
 - Agrees a new target to be included in the Waste Strategy of achieving less than 8% contamination of recycling; and
 - Agrees the action plan to support the waste strategy, included in Appendix D

- 3.2 Alternatively the Committee could reject the recommendations made within this report and propose alternative actions are explored.
- 3.3 The Committee could decide to reject the recommendations and decide that the existing waste strategy should be retained.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is to implement the recommendations contained within the report. These actions have been identified to support the Council's continued commitment to delivering cost effective and sustainable waste and recycling services and takes into account recent EU targets and waste legislation.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Results from the residents satisfaction survey recently completed that broadly, satisfaction across the demographic areas for refuse and recycling collections is similar to that of 2013. The age profile of those surveyed is similar to that seen in 2013. The 25 to 34 years age group have the lowest levels of satisfaction and the over 75's have the highest rate. Satisfaction improved for four age groups, the greatest being the 45 to 54 year olds group which had a 5% increase in satisfaction. The results also showed an increase of 3% in those 'very satisfied' with the service.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Waste Strategy will be updated to reflect the amended recycling target and will continue to be promoted through the website.
- 6.2 The Action Plan contained in Appendix D will be implemented.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – the proposals support this priority by continuing to encourage and support responsible waste disposal and reuse and recycling.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Risk Management	Failure to communicate how to use the service could result in residents not engaging and not manage their	Head of Environment and Public

	<p>waste correctly.</p> <p>Failure to meet the EU target of 50% recycling of household waste by 2020 may result in financial penalties.</p> <p>Recycling performance will continue to be monitored monthly to determine the effectiveness of the actions.</p>	Realm
Financial	Finances required to provide the actions set out will be covered by the existing recycling budget and the external funding awarded to the Council for the incentive scheme by the Department for Government and Local Communities (DLCG)	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Staffing	The activities highlighted in the action plan can be carried out with the current staff structure. Where additional staff are required, for example to complete a door knocking campaign, this will be funded through the existing service budget and the DCLG incentive funding.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	The council has a duty to provide a household waste collection service.	Head of Legal
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	None – there is no proposal to change the services provided	
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The waste strategy and proposed action plan offer the most sustainable service to Maidstone tax payers and focus on reducing the Council's impact on the environment through waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and recycling.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Community Safety	None	
Human Rights Act	None	
Procurement	None	
Asset Management	None	

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A – Waste Strategy 2014 - 2019

- Appendix B - Summary of Compositional Analysis
 - Appendix C – Comparison of recycling performance across Kent
 - Appendix D – Action Plan
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS