

**ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO
PRIORITIES 2013-2014**

The new waste and recycling contract for 3 authorities in Mid Kent, Ashford, Maidstone and Swale has already commenced in Ashford. It is due to commence in early August in Maidstone and will provide improved recycling opportunities for residents by allowing glass and all plastics to be put in the recycling bin. In addition small electrical items and textiles can also be put out separately for collection. The new service will improve the carbon footprint by providing split vehicles and will result in a changes to collection days. Communications have been prepared and are going through the testing process.

The new commercial waste scheme continues to attract new customers and provides a real opportunity for small businesses to recycle their waste. The business plan is on target and the scheme will continue to develop over the next year.

The zero tolerance to littering is continuing with enforcement against litterers and dog fouling. New campaigns will be launched with the aim of prosecuting those who commit offences. These will be high profile with a high level of officer visibility.

I am aware that certain areas in private ownership but open to the public are not being maintained to the standards the Council and the residents would expect. I am working closely with these land owners and expect to see improvement, however if necessary legal powers will be used to ensure the standards are met.

Street cleansing changes to area-based working has continued successfully with anecdotal evidence being positive and targeting those areas with lower satisfaction.

The Air Quality Management Area Action Plan is being implemented and will continue with current projects from grants received from DEFRA; this will allow more detailed analysis of hotspot areas. Grants to support this work will be pursued. The partnership with KCC Public Health will be prioritised.

The change from "scores on the doors" to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme for restaurants has been successfully implemented and work will continue with the aim of raising standards across the borough. Some restaurants are still going through the transition.

There has been a positive reduction in carbon emissions and the Council's aim to reduce emissions by 3% year on year until 2015 is on target. There are a number of projects being considered at the crematorium and in the waste contract to support this.

Options for a shared Environmental Health service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells are being considered and a report will be coming to Cabinet shortly.

The crematorium has continued to develop and over the next year the focus will be on achieving even higher customer service and broadening the customer range.

The Maidstone Safety Advisory Group is continuing to monitor large scale public events. It is hoped to increase the number of these events in the future.