

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 February 2017

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

Yes

## Report of the Recycling/Household Waste Contract Task and Finish Group

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Councillor Ronen Basu, Sustainability Portfolio Holder
<b>Lead Director</b>	Jonathan MacDonald, Director of Planning and Development
<b>Head of Service</b>	Gary Stevenson, Head of Waste and Street Scene
<b>Lead Officer/Report Author</b>	Nick Peeters, Scrutiny and Performance Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the findings of the Task and Finish Group and support the following recommendations:

1. That the new household recycling and waste collection service due to start in March 2019 should:
  - a) achieve a recycling rate of at least 50 percent
  - b) provide a separate weekly collection of food waste
  - c) provide a kerbside collection for glass bottles and jars
  - d) be supported by a comprehensive promotional campaign to inform residents of the benefits of recycling and minimising waste, and encourage an increase in the quantity of material that they recycle;
2. That the option of developing and procuring a new household, recycling and waste collection contract in partnership with Dartford and Tonbridge and Malling Councils be pursued, with appropriate safeguards incorporated to protect the interests of the Council;
3. That the Task and Finish Group be reformed in 2018 to assist in the assessment of tender submission for the new household recycling and waste collection service;
4. That Kent County Council, Ashford borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council be approached to discuss the feasibility of providing a Household Waste and Recycling Site to serve areas of each borough; and
5. That the Overview and Scrutiny committee consider the current review of the Civic Amenity Vehicle service after input from the Parish Chairmen's Meeting and subject to the progress of discussions resulting from recommendation 4.

**This report relates to the following Five Year Plan Key Objectives:**

A Greener Borough – By 2019, the Council will have encouraged a reduction in household waste and an increase in the borough recycling and compost rate.

**Timetable**

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	13 February 2016

## **Report of the Recycling/Household Waste Contract Task and Finish Group**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report summarises the work of the Recycling/Household Waste Task and Finish Group and provides conclusions and recommendations for the Committee to consider.

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

2.1 On 15 August 2016, following discussion on items included in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme, Councillors Chapelard, Dawlings, Hill and Rankin were appointed to a task and finish group to review the process leading up to the renewal in 2018 of the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Collection Contract to start in March 2019. It was agreed that, with support from officers from Environment and Street Scene, the Group would look at what was likely to be involved in the negotiation for a new contract and where possible, draw conclusions or make recommendations that would assist the Council during those negotiations to improve the Council's recycling rate and reduce the overall cost of collection and disposal.

2.2 The Council negotiated its current Household Waste contract in 2008 and awarded a ten year contract starting in March 2009. The annual value of the contract is £1.7m which is subject to annual adjustment in line with an inflation index. Combined with the street cleansing contract, it is the largest area of service-spend for the Council. There are a number of considerations for the Council prior to negotiation of the contract such as an opportunity to redesign the service to improve performance and consider options for partnership working.

### **3. INFORMATION GATHERING**

3.1 The Task and Finish Group met on four occasions and talked to the following Stakeholders: Kent Recourse Partnership, Maidstone Borough Council's Head of Environment and Waste and Biffa Waste Services (responsible for operational collection of Waste). During the meetings the Task and Finish Group considered the following issues:

**3.2 The Council's role as the waste collection authority (WCA)** - as the WCA, the Council is responsible for collecting municipal waste from 48,424 households across the borough. The Council currently collects food, garden waste and recyclables, with bring-bank sites available in Council car parks for residents to dispose of glass. Residents are provided with a green bin for general household and any waste that cannot be recycled (including hard plastics) and a brown bin for food and garden waste. The Council provides a civic amenity vehicle collection service in partnership with a number of local parish councils. Additionally, the Council has a chargeable, bulky waste collection service. Kent County Council (KCC) is the waste disposal authority (WDA) and operates the North Farm waste recycling centre. KCC has a long term contract with the Allington waste to energy facility (11 of the 12 district councils in Kent send their municipal solid waste to Allington) and the use of the Allington facility has significantly reduced levels of landfill. Food and green waste from Tunbridge Wells Borough is also sent to the Blaise Farm site in Offham for composting. The relationship between the County Council as the WDA and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council as WCA involves a discussion at the start of any contract negotiation to ensure that the residents of Tunbridge Wells Borough receive a value for money service in terms of waste collection, whilst avoiding a county-wide impact on waste disposal costs. Collection and disposal of waste and recycling is the third highest cost service for English local authorities and as part of the 2018 contract the two authorities will again arrive at a joint view on what will provide the best value for the borough's residents.

**3.3 Recycling** – the cultural changes in management of recycling and household waste – in particular the concept of waste as a potential resource and the pressure on WDA's to continue reductions in landfill and meet recycling targets, means that local authorities are continually looking to shape their services to provide best value to residents and also to meet national targets - which are 50 percent. Tunbridge Wells recycling rate is currently at 46 percent (note: European Union ambitions are for 70 percent of municipal waste to be recycled by 2030). The European Union is also promoting a circular, or zero waste economy, which is supported more locally by the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP). The plans centre on reusing, then recycling and then recovering energy from waste material and optimising the quality of all recyclates. This places an emphasis on: the consumer when choosing products with packaging; the consumer industry when designing product packaging; and policy makers who are able to influence the business sector to produce less packaging in the first instance. Local authorities have a part to play by ensuring that, through education and processes, residents identify recyclates and that those recyclates have minimal contamination - thus retaining their value (the more degraded recyclates are, the higher the cost of recycling). The Council's residual waste and recycling rates take account of the collection of kerbside waste and recycling, bring-sites, litter bins and street cleansing. A recent initiative allows material from mechanical street-sweepers to be recycled rather than having to be disposed of as waste.

**3.4 The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP)** - KRP works with the 13 local authorities (including Medway) in Kent, as well as Kent County Council, to improve waste management by reducing costs, to negotiate on behalf of local authorities with the government and private sector, and to help secure funding. The Partnership has a focus on how waste and recyclables will be managed in the future and how local

authorities can adapt to any changes, and incorporate them into existing or future services. Kent County Council's aim is to have zero landfill through improvements to recycling processes and waste management. The Group would like to continue working with the Partnership to ensure that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is positioned to benefit from projects promoted by the Partnership in West Kent, and additionally, is provided with a high level of representation when regional and government policy on recycling and waste management is decided.

**3.5 Waste recycling centres in the borough** –the North Farm household waste and recycling centre is operated by Kent County Council. It is available for public use and acts as a waste transfer station for the household waste and recyclables collected by the Council across the borough. The civic amenity vehicles provide a weekend collection facility for a number of parishes in the borough. The Task and Finish Group notes that a review of household waste and recycling centres in Kent was included as part of the County Council's recent waste strategy consultation, and believe there is enough public interest and potential demand for an investigation into the provision of a new recycling site, to serve the east of the borough. The Group would like to see discussions held between Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils (whose residents would also benefit from an additional site) and Kent County Council to further this proposal.

**3.6 The Council's current Household Waste and Recycling Collection** – the current contract was awarded by the Cabinet in 2008 and implemented from March 2009 for a period of ten years, with Cory Environmental Municipal Services as the successful contractor. The contract was scrutinised by a select committee in 2008 and a number of recommendations from the Select Committee were accepted by the Cabinet. In 2016, Biffa waste Services purchased Cory's environmental municipal services with no material impact on the Council's existing service. The Council is preparing to go through a procurement process during 2017 and 2018 to award the new contract for the Recycling/Household Waste Service from 2019.

**3.7 Partnership working** – the opportunity for partnership working within the new contract is evident. The current waste collection contracts for Dartford and Tonbridge and Malling Councils also run until 2019 and discussions are taking place, together with KCC, to enable a joint procurement process to be undertaken. The Task and Finish Group is mindful that, whilst looking at the options available and accepting that some standardisation of a service across a partnership is inevitable, retaining sovereignty over the design and management of a new service, and maintaining the high quality of the existing service is essential - as very few complaints are received about the standard currently provided. There is a risk attached to the potential equalisation of differing collection costs across those authorities in a partnership but there are also opportunities for efficiencies that can be shared and for a reduction in disposal costs from increased recycling rates which can also be shared.

**3.8 The Civic Amenity Vehicle** – the Civic Amenity Vehicle Service is part of the current Household Waste and Recycling Collection contract and in 2015/2016 work by the Council and those parish councils using the service was undertaken with the intention of reducing the level of funding provided by the Council and improving the environmental impact of the service. The frequency of the Service

has been reduced and arrangements made to collect rubbish and garden waste at separate visits to allow the garden waste to be sent for composting. The Task and Finish Group notes that, following the implementation of the changes, the tonnage collected by the vehicles has reduced significantly, from 750 tonnes between August 2015 and December 2015 to less than 240 tonnes, with 62 tonnes of compostable material being recycled. The Group also notes that there has been no increase in recorded fly-tipping following the changes. The Civic Amenity Vehicle Service modifications will be reviewed and reported back to the Parish Chairman's Forum in March 2017 and the Group recommends that the review itself be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its 10 April meeting.

**3.9 Kerbside recycling and glass collection** – there is potential within the new contract to include the kerbside collection of glass. Glass is currently collected at a number of bring-bank sites around the borough. Kerbside collection will remove the requirement for the bring-bank sites - producing a saving to contribute to kerbside collection costs and freeing up space at the sites which tend to be in car parks. It should be noted, however, that the use of the bring-bank sites allows the glass to be sorted by colour at source, by residents, providing a high quality recyclate. The Task and Finish Group would like to see the kerbside collection of glass included as part of a new contract but it also notes that there are no local, high-tech facilities for the colour sorting of the glass which will limit the available uses of the material collected. The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, as amended in 2012 requires waste collection authorities to separately collect paper, plastics, glass and metals. The collection of these materials either co-mingled or two-stream may be compliant only if it can be demonstrated that separate collection is not necessary to achieve good quality recyclables, or is not technically, environmentally or economically practical (TEEP) The current service, where paper and card and plastics and cans are collected as two separate streams and glass separately via the bring service is considered to meet the TEEP test. Any new service will need to be assessed against the requirements of the legislation.

**3.10 Food and garden waste collections** – the current service allows food waste to be disposed of in either the residual (green bin) waste or the garden (brown bin) waste. WRAP's "A framework for greater consistency in household recycling in England" recommends a weekly separate collection of food waste to help increase recycling rates and to save money on disposal costs. The separate collection of garden waste is a discretionary service that can be charged for. All but one of the councils in Kent now offer a chargeable opt in garden waste collection service and with the introduction of a separate food waste collection service the option of a chargeable garden waste service is available to the Council. The revenue generated can offset the cost of collection and enhancements to the recycling service.

**3.11 Communication** – in 2016, 10,000 properties, across five areas of the borough were provided with a bin audit. The audit looked at what was left in bins and recycling leaflets were delivered. As a result of the bin audit, 1300 additional recycling boxes were requested. There will be a further audit in September 2017 and the Task and Finish Group recognises that communication with residents in various forms of media is necessary to increase recycling rates. The Group also

recognises that in order to minimise the impact of a new contract on residents, communication of any changes is key element. The Task and Finish Group considers that an ongoing programme of messages and education around recycling and waste minimisation is necessary.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Task and Finish Group, having spoken to a number of stakeholders and gained information from a number of sources on how waste and recyclables are currently managed, have formed a view of how a recycling/household waste service may operate over the next eight to ten years with increased recycling and better cost effectiveness. The Group's work will assist in the development of the service specification that will be put out to tender. The Group would also like to assist the Council in 2018 with the evaluation of the tenders submitted - which may contain alternative service options proposed by the bidders, in the build up to negotiations of the new contract. The Group makes a number of recommendations and these are detailed on page one of this report.

#### 5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the findings of the Group and endorse the recommendations.

#### 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's decision will be reflected in the published minutes of the meeting. This information will be available on the Council's website.

#### 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off (name of officer and date)
<b>Legal</b> including Human Rights Act	There are no direct legal or human rights implications as a result of the recommendations in the report.	Estelle Culligan Interim Head of Legal Partnership, Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Finance</b> and other resources	There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations in the report	Jane Fineman, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Staffing establishment</b>	There are no direct staffing implications as a result of the recommendations in the report	Nicky Carter, Head of HR and Customer Services (Dated 01/02/17)

<p><b>Equalities</b></p>	<p>Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users. When renewing the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Contract, there is an opportunity to advance equality of opportunity by considering how the needs of people with protected characteristics can be met. In particular, there is an opportunity to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The assisted collection service, for residents who may have a disability and are unable to bring their refuse and recycling to the kerbside.</li> <li>– Whether kerbside collection of glass will improve the accessibility of recycling options for people with disabilities.</li> <li>– Whether the Civic Amenity Vehicle is used by, and meeting any particular needs of, residents with protected characteristics.</li> </ul>	<p>Sarah Lavallie, Equalities Officer (Dated 01/02/17)</p>
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**8. REPORT APPENDICES - none**

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

House of Commons briefing paper - [Household Recycling in the UK](#)

WRAP Consistency Framework - [Greater Consistency in Household Recycling in England](#)