

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

11 February 2019

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1. WASTE & STREET SCENE SERVICES UPDATE

Summary

This report highlights a number of issues & initiatives managed by the Waste & Street Scene Services team since the last meeting of this Board.

1.1 Pest Control – Extension of contract

- 1.1.1 The Pest Control Contract procured jointly in 2013 with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) was due to end in November 2018, with an option to extend by a 24 month period should all parties agree. TWBC is the lead authority in procuring and managing the contract which is delivered by Monitor Pest Control. Most of the works carried out by Monitor on this contract are from referrals via TMBC's & TWBC's Customer Services teams. Only those works for households in receipt of Council Tax Rebate are recharged to the Partner Authorities, and the current TMBC budget for these works is £2,000 per annum. In addition, TMBC receives a referral payment from Monitor each year of £2,000.
- 1.1.2 The contract achieves very good value for money, and Monitor has provided a high level of customer service, both to its customers and to the Partner Authorities, with no formal complaints being received since the contract started in 2013. The current financial arrangement is not expected to be improved as a result of retendering, given the experience of a number of other local authorities which have retendered recently. Following discussion with TWBC and Monitor, it has been agreed to extend the contract for the full 24 month period allowed for within the original contract. The Partners have received written confirmation of this extension and a Record of Officer Decision has been published for TMBC. The contract will, however, need to be retendered during 2020 in time to have a new contract in place for November of that year.

1.2 KRP Waste Strategy Refresh

- 1.2.1 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy has been developed by the 13 local authorities in the Kent Resource Partnership (KCC and the twelve District Councils). The Strategy sets out how the Kent Resource Partnership intends to manage household waste across Kent, and was first adopted in 2007/08. The Strategy was refreshed in 2012/13 with targets set up to 2020, and again during 2018/19. The latest version has been provided in full at **Annex 1** to this report for Members awareness and information.
- 1.2.2 Although the overall objectives of the Strategy are still to manage Kent's household waste in the most environmentally effective way whilst trying to achieve best value for the Kent council tax payer, this latest version aims to provide some key performance measures, and also to reflect the achievements of the various partnership contract arrangements in place across Kent. Members will note that the joint contract with TWBC is highlighted within the Strategy due to its potential efficiencies in service delivery and in potential disposal cost avoidance to our residents. Officers from other areas of Kent are keen to learn from our recent experience in order to inform their own upcoming retendering arrangements and service configurations.

1.3 Improvements at Bring Sites

- 1.3.1 Currently, collections from this Council's recycling bring sites for glass & cans are undertaken by Veolia, utilising two collection vehicles that are owned and maintained by the Borough Council. Following an increase in glass recycling the pressure on the bring sites has increased, as has public expectations for the Council to keep the sites clear to encourage more recycling in general. This additional pressure has impacted on our collection vehicles that have now operated beyond their anticipated operational life, and as such are increasingly prone to maintenance and repair that has led to issues with service provision. These vehicles will also be used by our new incoming contractor, Urbaser, to deliver the 'As Is' service from 1 March 2019 until the roll out of the new bring site services after October 2019. At that time there will be a programmed reduction in the number of recycling sites across the borough, which will result in the utilisation of new collection banks which will be emptied by new vehicles that will be supplied by Urbaser. There will also be a significant reduction in use of the recycling sites following the introduction of the new kerbside recycling collections.
- 1.3.2 Until the rationalisation of the recycling sites is complete, service provision will primarily be reliant on the existing vehicles and so a number of measures have been implemented to maintain service levels to residents. This has included the designation of additional resources to clear overspills from the ground at sites; liaison with Medway Council to utilise its own recycling vehicle (when available); and the provision of additional bins at key sites. Cabinet has also approved additional funding of £30,000 to engage a separate external specialist contractor, Lucy & Martin Recycling Ltd, to undertake additional collections. The additional

collections are now taking place twice a week at key sites across the borough and support the work undertaken by our own existing vehicles and contract with Veolia. Since the above measures have been in place service levels have improved and the number of complaints has reduced.

1.4 Christmas Collections

- 1.4.1 Members will be aware that due to the way in which Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day fell, the Council once again had to suspend green-lidded bin collections, this year for Tuesday properties. In order to prevent those properties going more than 15 days without a scheduled black bin collection, half of those properties had to have their green-lidded bins suspended for two cycles, and the other half for one cycle. In practice, that did mean that a number of households had their last green-lidded bin collections on 4th December, with their next one on 15 January. However, their green box collections were maintained throughout.
- 1.4.2 Information was again provided via bin hangers which were delivered prior to the changes taking place. It was also published on our website, via social media channels, and via automatic email alerts to residents who subscribe to the My Account service. Although the vast majority of households placed the correct bins out throughout the Christmas period, a small number of properties did not, with some residents claiming not to have received the information. A number of residents who contacted the Council confirmed that they had received their bin hangers but simply didn't read them as they assumed they only referred to collections during Christmas week, rather than the changes that took place earlier in December 2018.
- 1.4.3 Residents' experiences & comments will inform future communications and operational changes, and Officers will consider further what improvements can be made in time for next year's Christmas collection arrangements. One example would be not to refer to "Christmas collections" on the hangers/leaflets, but to make it even clearer that the changes start in early December. The Council will also continue to promote the My Account service so that residents can receive automatic updates as and when changes are taking place. Officers will also work with our new contractor, Urbaser, in the development of further IT solutions such as the use of phone apps to provide service update information and to deal with residents' queries.

1.5 Allington planned closure in March

- 1.5.1 Members will be aware that since the Allington Energy-from-Waste plant came online, it has had to close on occasion for short-term planned maintenance works, as well as a few unplanned emergency works. The latest scheduled works are due to start on 9 March 2019 and will last for up to three weeks. Works being carried out during this period are expected to assist in preventing any further long-term maintenance closures for around ten years. This is of great benefit given this

Council's reliance on the Material Transfer Station at Allington being available for the new recycling service due to start in late September.

- 1.5.2 The latest closure has been in the planning for almost two years, and cannot be delayed further due to the nature of the works required and availability of resources & staff required. The closure will unfortunately be implemented just over one week after the start of our new contract with Urbaser. In line with other similar closures, KCC will be providing alternative disposal points for our residual waste, which is normally delivered direct to the Energy-from-Waste plant. This means a likely diversion to Dunbrik Transfer Station near Sevenoaks, and to North Farm Transfer Station in Tunbridge Wells.
- 1.5.3 Previous closures have resulted in little or no disruption to residents' experiences of collection services, other than some collections taking place earlier or later than normal on the usual collection day. The Council will remind residents via its website, social media accounts and via the My Account service to have their bins & boxes out by 7am on collection day in case of any change to normal collection times during the closure. Officers are also working with our new contractor, Urbaser, in order to mitigate any risks to collection services caused by this closure, which unfortunately occurs so close to the start of their contract and takeover from Veolia.

1.6 Brexit Preparedness/Potential Impacts on Collections

- 1.6.1 Members will be aware of recent publicity regarding considerations being given by KCC and other local authorities to the potential impact of the results of the current Brexit negotiations. A report was considered at the recent meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee on this issue. The current focus is on the possible impacts of traffic disruption to the local motorway & road networks caused by increased checks at Kent & French ports, the resultant management of freight traffic and associated disruption in areas adjacent to the arterial routes to the coast. KCC has approached every waste collection authority in Kent asking Councils to consider what mitigations may need to be put in place in the event of such disruption, given the likely impact on their ability to transport waste from their transfer stations and disposal points to the ongoing reprocessors. For example, not only would traffic problems around the A20/M20 junction at Allington impact significantly on our collection vehicles trying to deliver waste, KCC would also have trouble with haulage of waste materials from their network of transfer stations that would normally go to Allington. As such, this could cause backlogs at those sites, thus reducing any contingency we might have available to us.
- 1.6.2 Early discussions have taken place with Urbaser and they have been tasked with addressing mitigations in their Business Continuity Plan. The Head of Technical Services has also briefed Urbaser and a number of other contractors on Kent Resilience Forum's current thinking regarding the potential impact of Brexit on transport networks and the supply chain.

1.6.3 The Council will continue to work with its contractor, KCC and TWBC in order to try to mitigate the risks of any disruption, and will provide appropriate communications with our residents as and when appropriate. Although the outcome of the current Brexit process remains unclear, and such disruption may not indeed take place, I wish to assure Members that planning is in place to address any impact and Officers will work with partners to try to minimise any disruption to the service received by our residents.

1.7 Legal Implications

1.7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide refuse and recycling collection services. The extension of the existing Pest Control contract is in accordance with contract conditions.

1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.8.1 None.

1.9 Risk Assessment

1.9.1 Careful planning, good communication with residents and coordinated arrangements for collections, help to ensure minimal disruption and effective delivery of these high profile services.

1.10 Policy Considerations

1.10.1 Communications

1.10.2 Community

1.10.3 Customer Contact

Background papers:

Nil

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