

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD**

**03 September 2019**

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

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT**

**Summary**

**This report updates Members on the new Waste Services Contract which started on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, with the new and improved recycling services due to commence later this month on 30<sup>th</sup> September. The report also highlights the proposed timeframe for the implementation of the revised bring bank sites and arrangements for communal bins.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The Council's Waste Services Contract has been retendered in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Urbaser was appointed as the successful contractor by Cabinet on the advice of this Board, and commenced the delivery of the new contract on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

In summary:-

- the contract covers the collection of household refuse and the cleansing of streets across the boroughs of Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells [in Tonbridge and Malling this involves circa 54,580 households];
- between 1<sup>st</sup> March – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the contract generally matches the service delivery arrangements in the previous contract;
- from the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the new improved household recycling collection service will be introduced, including weekly food waste; plastic bottles, trays, pots and tubs; glass bottles and jars; tins, cans & foil; paper and card/cardboard; household batteries, small electrical appliances and textiles;
- the new Service also includes the change to an opt-in garden waste service for which there is a separate annual charge.

1.1.2 A separate Member Group has been established by this Council to help oversee the implementation of the new contract, and at the last meeting of this Board Member representation on the Group was agreed. The Group last met on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and focussed on the implementation of the new service arrangements, the revised bring bank site arrangements and ongoing marketing and communication.

## 1.2 Contractor Performance

1.2.1 At the last meeting of this Board Members were advised that Key Monthly Performance Indicators to monitor the performance of the contractor were being finalised by the Partnership Manager, and these will be included in future reports to this Board.

1.2.2 Attached at **Annex 1** to this report are a number of the Key Performance Indicators for the first 3 months of the financial year, ie. April to June 2019 inclusive. Members will note from **Annex 1** that generally performance has improved significantly when compared with the previous contractor's performance during the same period last year. In particular it is pleasing to note a 25% reduction in the total number of complaints (KPI 6) and a 77% reduction in the number of actual missed collections (KPI 3). However, performance will continue to be monitored on a monthly basis and further improvements will be sought in partnership with Urbaser.

## 1.3 New Service Provision

1.3.1 The new service arrangements will be implemented in accordance with the phased approach previously agreed by this Board:-

### i) Phase 1

- for subscribers to the opt-in garden waste service, new brown garden waste bins are being delivered by a specialist sub-contractor before the service starts on 30<sup>th</sup> September. This is being undertaken in phases and Members will be given a verbal update on progress at the Board;
- food waste container delivery started on 12<sup>th</sup> August and every property (apart from those using communal bins) will have received its food waste containers before the new service starts on 30<sup>th</sup> September;

### ii) Phase 2

- collection of residual waste and recycling commencing from 30<sup>th</sup> September;
- the new bring bank service will commence once the new kerbside service has bedded in, with 10 key strategic bring bank sites being retained. The

arrangements for the new bring bank service are covered later in this report.

- 1.3.2 With regard to the opt-in garden waste service the 'Early Bird Scheme' went live on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May and closed on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019. The Early Bird scheme offered residents a reduced price of £35 p.a. for the service (guaranteed for the first 2 years), and also ensured their new garden waste bin would be delivered and available for use in accordance with the aforementioned Implementation Plan. For all those applying for the garden waste service after 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019, the full charge for the service is being applied (£40 p.a.), and the resident will be added to a waiting list and their new bin will be delivered as soon as is practicable.
- 1.3.3 At the time of writing it is extremely pleasing to report that residents are engaging positively with the new garden waste service, with 21,788 households subscribing and 23,791 garden waste bins ordered in total (households can have up to 3 bins). 73% of subscriptions have been self-service direct through the Council's website and around 25% have signed up for direct debit in the future. 40% of households in the borough signed up to the new scheme within the four months since subscriptions opened and this represents by far the highest take-up of opt-in garden waste services in Kent. The original estimate for the take-up rate was 30%.
- 1.3.4 Members will be aware that although it is the Borough Council's responsibility for the collection of household waste, it is Kent County Council's responsibility for disposal. As such we have been working closely with Kent County Council prior to, and throughout the tender & mobilisations processes to ensure that collected material can be disposed of appropriately. In order to facilitate this, KCC had to go out to tender for an additional Materials Recycling Facility contract. The reason for this is that the new kerbside model for the collection of plastics, cans, glass and cartons differs to the recycle mixes able to be processed by KCC's current Provider (i.e. paper and card are now removed from the mix).
- 1.3.5 Market Engagement was undertaken by KCC where only one bidder responded. The Provider specified that the plant is unable to process Tetrapak as such, this is not a target material at their MRF. Tetrapak is comprised of wood, aluminium and plastic which affects its ability to be recycled. There are tolerance levels for contamination within the contract, so if small quantities of tetrapak are disposed of, it would be treated as a contaminant and would be subject to the contractual tolerance levels.
- 1.3.6 Going out to tender again is unlikely to result in any more providers coming forward – MRF infrastructure is limited across the UK. As such, a joint decision has been taken to exclude such cartons from the new collection services. This is clearly disappointing, although the situation with reprocessing markets for cartons may change in future in line with the Government defining its resources and waste

strategy. The Borough Council will now ensure all future marketing material reflects this position.

- 1.3.7 I am sure Members will appreciate that a change in service delivery arrangements to almost 55,000 households represents a major challenge both in terms of logistics and communications. Officers have been working closely with staff from Urbaser to enable the changeover to proceed as smoothly as possible. The introduction of the new round schedules will involve a significant number of residents having their collection day changed and the changes may take residents some time to get used to. To support residents, every household will receive a detailed Recycling Service Guide, posted direct to their home prior to 30<sup>th</sup> September, and can also be kept informed via the website. A review has also been undertaken of those properties currently on weekly refuse collections as, with the introduction of weekly food waste collection and the other improved services, this does allow consideration of residual waste to be collected every two weeks from suitable properties.

## **1.4 Communal Bins**

- 1.4.1 There are approximately 450 communal bins stores across the borough that support the disposal of waste from flats and other communal buildings. It is the intention to offer these residents the same new opportunities for recycling as other borough residents though this may be restricted by individual circumstances including the physical space available within each bin store.
- 1.4.2 A review has been undertaken of each bin store to assess opportunities available and subsequently new bins have been ordered to support the new service arrangements. The roll-out of the new bins will, however, need to be phased given the scale of the task and it is proposed that this will commence from October 2019 and will be completed by the end of the calendar year. Residents will be kept informed during the roll-out.

## **1.5 Bring Bank Service**

- 1.5.1 Members will have noted from sub-section 1.3.1 that following the introduction of the new service arrangements, the number of bring bank sites will be reduced to 10, located strategically across the Borough. The strategic bring bank sites, previously agreed by this Board, are as follows:-

- Tesco Car Park – Larkfield
- Station Approach – Borough Green
- Rocford Road Car Park – Snodland
- Sovereign Way Car Park – Tonbridge
- Asda Car Park – Kings Hill
- Morrisons Car Park – Larkfield
- Bailey Bridge Car Park – Aylesford
- Hadlow College – Hadlow
- High Street Car Park – West Malling

- Village Hall Car Park – Burham

[N.B. The large bring bank site at Sainsburys in Aylesford is run independently by the supermarket retailer and will remain available to the general public].

- 1.5.2 The strategic bring bank sites will be serviced by Urbaser, and the cost of this is already included in the company's tender. The banks will collect the same material mix that is being collected from the kerbside. In order to enable Urbaser to initially focus fully on the new kerbside service arrangements it is proposed to re-programme the implementation of the new bring site arrangements to mid-January 2020. This will also allow continuity of service to those residents served by communal bins (see 1.4 above).
- 1.5.3 Urbaser will install new banks into the 10 strategic locations and the other sites will have the banks removed. The removal of the banks will be undertaken by a local company with the banks being dismantled so that the plastic and metal parts can be recycled.
- 1.5.4 The Council's two recycling vehicles, purchased over 11 years ago, are in very poor condition, need regular repair and servicing and are a number of years beyond their predicted operational life. Finding someone willing to buy or take the vehicles has proved difficult, although prices are currently being sought from a number of external parties including Urbaser. It is proposed that any income received through the sale of the vehicles assists in offsetting the cost of the bring bank removal.
- 1.5.5 A number of charities also have a presence at the recycling sites providing their own bins and collection services. Following the reduction of the Council's Bring Bank sites charities will still be offered the opportunity to locate services at the 10 strategic sites though will have to liaise direct with the respective landowners of the other sites to discuss continuation of their presence.

## 1.6 Marketing/Communications

- 1.6.1 At the February 2019 meeting of this Board Members approved an Operational Marketing Plan developed in liaison with the Member Group and a marketing consultant employed directly by Urbaser. The Plan was developed to ensure information reached as many residents as possible, was cost effective and utilised both traditional and modern marketing techniques.
- 1.6.2 I have attached at **Annex 2** a copy of the Marketing Plan, including an update on each of the approved actions. Members will note that since the last meeting of this Board in June 2019 the following actions have been progressed:-
- a new Recycling Service Guide is being posted out to all residents;
  - stickers are being attached to bins advising what each bin is for;

- bin hangers were placed on each residents wheeled bin in mid-July 2019 advising that the early bird discount would finish shortly;
- the waste and recycling website [www.tmbc.gov.uk/recycleforall](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk/recycleforall) has been continually updated;
- a digital marketing campaign on the new service arrangements is being progressed, including a digital animation video;
- further individual presentations have been made to Parish/Town Councils bringing the total number of presentations to 14;
- additional roadshows have taken place, bringing the total number of roadshows to 8;
- presentations have been made to 7 community groups; and
- presentations have been made to meetings of the Parish Partnership Panel and Tonbridge Forum.

1.6.3 Copies of the Recycling Service Guide, leaflets & stickers will be available for Members at the meeting.

1.6.4 The new waste and recycling website continues to be popular with 72,767 visitors to the site since its launch on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The website includes a promotional video, frequently asked questions, pictures of the new containers and a whole host of helpful information.

## **1.7 Legal Implications**

1.7.1 The Council has a legal duty to provide waste and street cleansing services. The new Waste Services Contract was undertaken in compliance with all current legislation, including Public Contract Regulations.

1.7.2 The introduction of the new service arrangements is considered to assist the Council in meeting its requirements under the Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011, which are to provide separate collections where necessary to achieve high quality recycling.

## **1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.8.1 At the November 2018 meeting of this Board Members received a detailed financial appraisal of the new Waste Services Contract, and the financial implications have been reflected in the 2019/20 revenue budget. The total expenditure on the contract in 2019/20 is £4.1m.

1.8.2 The annual gross level of income for the opt-in garden waste service is forecast to be £550,000, which is based on a take up rate of 30%. To date, income of £808,825 has been achieved. For medium term financial planning purposes as

mentioned in the report to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on 9 January 2019, it is assumed the inflationary increase in the contract sum over and above CPI is negated by a gradual increase in both the charge and the take-up of the garden waste service.

- 1.8.3 The Council's Capital Plan incorporates £600,000 to reflect the need to purchase new garden waste bins and internal and external food caddies. Due to the high take-up of the garden waste service, it is anticipated that the capital budget will be exceeded, with the budget updated later in the year at revised estimate time. A revenue budget of £100,000 has been approved by Council to fulfil the Operational Marketing Plan, funded in full from the Invest to Save earmarked Reserve.

## **1.9 Risk Assessment**

- 1.9.1 A Project Steering Group has been established by this Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council to oversee the implementation and ongoing management of the Waste Services Contract. The Steering Group is being managed in accordance with a formal Joint Working Agreement agreed by each of the Partners.
- 1.9.2 This authority is represented on the Group by the Head of Street Scene & Leisure. The Contract Partnership Manager reports regularly to the Steering Group on progress and any key issues are addressed.
- 1.9.3 Weekly meetings are being undertaken with Urbaser to ensure good levels of communication are maintained, and the Operational Marketing Plan will ensure residents are kept fully informed and encouraged to embrace the new service arrangements.

## **1.10 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.10.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has previously been reported to this Board and its recommendations have been implemented.

## **1.11 Policy Considerations**

- 1.11.1 Communications
- 1.11.2 Community
- 1.11.3 Customer Contact
- 1.11.4 Procurement

## **1.12 Recommendations**

- 1.12.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:-

- i) progress made in the implementation of the new waste contract be noted;
- ii) Members be updated on the mobilisation of the new service arrangements at the next meeting of this Board on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019;
- iii) the proposed approach to the roll-out of communal bins be approved; and
- iv) the proposed timeframe for the implementation of the revised bring bank site arrangements be approved.

The Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

Robert Styles

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