

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

30 October 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 1st March 2019, with the new and improved recycling services introduced on 30th September 2019. The report also brings forward proposals for the Christmas collection arrangements.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Council's Waste Services Contract was tendered 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 1st 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 54,500 households];
- between 1st March – 29th September 2019 the contract matched the service delivery arrangements in the previous contract;
- on the 30th September 2019 the new improved household recycling collection service was introduced, including weekly food waste, plastic bottles, trays, pots and tubs, glass, bottles and jars, paper and card/cardboard, tins and cans, household batteries, small electrical appliances and textiles;
- the new Service 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 June meeting of this

Board Member representation on the Group was agreed. The Group met in August and its next meeting will focus on an assessment of the new Service arrangements, the revised bring bank site arrangements and future marketing and communication to residents.

1.2 Contractor Performance

- 1.2.1 The new Service arrangements were implemented on 30th September 2019 in accordance with the phased approach previously agreed by this Board.
- 1.2.2 At the time of writing this report the new Service has just entered its second full cycle of collections, with one cycle taking two full weeks. Liaison is being undertaken on a daily basis with our contractor Urbaser to assess current performance, identify issues and implement actions to resolve them.
- 1.2.3 The first two weeks of operation have clearly been challenging. Whilst this was to be expected, following the first cycle of collections it is clear that the roll-out has been successful for the vast majority of residents and this has been noted in a number of tweets, emails and feedback from local Members and Parish/Town Councils. It is also clear that given initial informal feedback on tonnages, residents are fully engaging with the new opportunities to recycle their waste kerbside.
- 1.2.4 It should be noted, however, that for some residents the roll-out has not delivered the services expected, particularly around issues with non-completion of rounds and missed collections. A number of factors have contributed to these issues including crew familiarisation with new rounds, increased waste tonnages and longer than normal tipping times at the disposal sites. In response to these issues Urbaser has deployed additional crews and vehicles to progress non-completed rounds the following day, and 'mop up' crews are in place to complete other missed collections. This has also included additional weekend working. The Council has been working with Urbaser to address the root cause of any issue.
- 1.2.5 With regard to crew familiarisation this will improve with time, and 'hot spot' areas have been drawn up and are being monitored by staff from both Urbaser and the Borough Council. This should reduce the opportunity for repeated missed collections. Increased tonnages of recyclate is also being reported by Urbaser and, whilst this is positive in regard to residents engaging with the new services, it is leading to the requirement for increased tips; particularly in regard to food waste. Whilst there is the potential for the level of recyclate to reduce following the early weeks, liaison is being undertaken with Kent County Council, Urbaser and the operators of Allington and Blaise Farm waste facilities to improve turnaround times and operations.
- 1.2.6 A Senior Manager from Urbaser will be in attendance at the meeting to answer Members questions direct.

1.3 New Service Provision

- 1.3.1 With regard to the opt-in garden waste service the 'Early Bird Scheme' went live on Tuesday 7th May and closed on Friday 2nd August 2019. The Early Bird scheme offered residents a reduced price of £35 p.a. for the service (guaranteed for the first 2 years). For those that signed up to the Early Bird, deliveries were programmed prior to the 30th September (Phase 1 and Phase 2). To date deliveries have been made and any missed deliveries are actioned when the Council receives a report from the resident.
- 1.3.2 For all those applying for the garden waste service after 2nd August 2019 the full charge for the service is being applied (£40 p.a.), and the resident is being added to a waiting list with their new bin being delivered as soon as is practicable. For the majority of people subscribing after 2nd August 2019 their garden waste bin will be delivered by 1st November 2019 (Phase 3). For those later sign-ups delivery will be made prior to the 1st December (Phase 4). Currently Phase 3 Brown Bins are being delivered and are expected to be complete by the 1st November.
- 1.3.3 At the time of writing I am pleased to report that residents have engaged very positively with the new garden waste service, with 24,589 households subscribing and 26,653 garden waste bins ordered in total (households can have up to 3 bins). 73.9% of subscriptions have been self-service direct through the Council's website. 46% of households in the borough have now signed up to the new scheme 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% based on rates achieved by similar local authorities.
- 1.3.4 Food waste container delivery commenced on 12th August to every property, (apart from those with communal bins) with the vast majority being completed by the start of the service on 30th September. Some problems were experienced with the sub-contractor employed to undertake this work with residual deliveries having subsequently been made. The Council is continuing to respond to any missed deliveries as these are reported by residents.
- 1.3.5 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. The relationship with KCC Officers has been excellent and there has been significant partnership work to ensure the new operational arrangements at the disposal sites has worked successfully. Performance data on tonnages of material will be provided, which will enable the authority in the future to analyse recycling rates against previous performance. Members will recall that one of the original objectives of the new Service arrangements was to improve the Borough's recycling rate up to a 50% target.
- 1.3.6 I am sure Members will appreciate that a change in service delivery arrangements to 54,500 households has been a major challenge both in terms

of logistics and communications. Officers have worked closely with staff from Urbaser to enable the changeover to proceed as smoothly as possible, and in overview it is felt the roll out of the new service has been successful. It is also clear that the new arrangements have significantly increased the profile of the benefits of recycling amongst residents, which is a key priority for this authority. The introduction of the new round schedules did involve a significant number of residents having their collection day changed, and understandably this is taking some residents time to get used to. To support residents, every household received a detailed Recycling Service Guide, posted direct to their home prior to 30th September. Residents are also being kept informed via the website and social media posts. Apologies have been given to those residents affected by late/missed collections, and advice has been given to residents to leave any missed bins out until collection, and to manage expectations for response times. 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 bin stores across the borough that support the disposal of waste from flats and other communal buildings. Residents of the flats will receive 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 site 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 is being phased given the scale of the task. As agreed at the last meeting of this Board this commenced in October 2019, and will be completed by the end of the calendar year. Residents are being 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 was agreed at the last meeting of this Board 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, which has been assisting with the delivery of the new garden waste bins, with the banks being dismantled locally so that the plastic and metal parts can be recycled.

1.6 Marketing/Communications

- 1.6.1 A key to the success of the new Service arrangements has been good communication, and Council Members, together with local Parish/Town Councils, have played an important role in this. Social media has also greatly assisted in getting messages to residents and received feedback from the public. It is recognised that in the first 2 weeks it has been challenging to deal with the volume of calls and emails being received. A number of changes have subsequently been made to our reporting forms, website and social media posts. At the time of writing this report we are already noticing a reduction in phone calls, emails and online report forms.
- 1.6.2 At the February 2019 meeting of this Board Members approved an Operational Marketing Plan developed in liaison with the Member Group. The Plan was developed to ensure information reached as many residents as possible, was cost effective and utilised both traditional and modern marketing techniques.
- 1.6.3 I have attached at **Annex 1** a copy of the Plan, including an update on each of the activities. Members will note that the majority of actions have been completed, with a few actions carrying on to the end of the financial year.
- 1.6.4 In order to maintain momentum it is important that the existing Marketing Plan is now updated and extended for a further year. It is essential to continue to increase recycling rates across the Borough, and keep recycling at the forefront of residents' minds. Key issues over the next 12 months which will require marketing support include the new bring site arrangements, spring promotions

for garden waste, encouraging residents to pay by direct debit, introducing food waste to flats, targeting poor performing areas, school visits and new resident packs. It is suggested that a revised Marketing Plan be produced by the end of the calendar year in liaison with the Member Group, and an allocation of £40,000 be made in the 2020/21 revenue budget.

- 1.6.5 The standalone waste and recycling website (www.tmbc.gov.uk/recycleforall) continues to be popular since its launch on 7th 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 Christmas and New Year Collections 2019/20

- 1.7.1 Liaison is currently being undertaken with both Kent County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority, and Urbaser on the detailed arrangements for Christmas collections.
- 1.7.2 It will be the intention to retain full collections throughout the festival period with no suspensions of services. There will inevitably be the requirement for alterations to collections days and these will be relayed to residents via social media, bin hangers, the Council website and through our telephone message system. At the current time the proposed arrangements are shown below, subject to final confirmation by KCC and Urbaser.

<u>Normal Collection Day</u>	<u>Proposed Collection Day in Christmas and New Year Weeks</u>
Tuesday 24 th December	Tuesday 24 th December
Wednesday 25 th December	Friday 27 th December
Thursday 26 th December	Saturday 28 th December
Friday 27 th December	Monday 30 th December
Monday 30 th December	Tuesday 31 st December
Tuesday 31 st December	Thursday 2 nd January
Wednesday 1 st January	Friday 3 rd January
Thursday 2 nd January	Saturday 4 th January
Friday 3 rd January	Sunday 5 th January
Monday 6 th January	Monday 6 th January

- 1.7.3 To enable the collection of waste from all properties over the Christmas and New Year period work is proposed for Saturday 28th December, Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th January. This means that the refuse collection vehicles and crews will not be available to provide the normal Saturday bulky household waste and WEEE in early January.

1.8 Legal Implications

- 1.8.1 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.
- 1.8.2 The introduction of the new service arrangements will 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.

1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.9.1 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 estimated contract sum for the year 2019/20 is £4.1m.
- 1.9.2 The annual gross level of income for the opt-in garden waste service in year one was forecast to be £550,000, which was based on a take up rate of 30%. To date, income of £936,500 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 and will in due course represent budget growth.
- 1.9.3 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, the capital budget will be exceeded, with the budget updated later in the year at revised estimate time. There will also be an additional one-off revenue cost for the extra deliveries of the extra garden waste bins over and above the original estimate. A revenue budget of £100,000 was approved by Council to fulfil the Operational Marketing Plan, funded in full from the Invest to Save earmarked Reserve. Provision of a suitable budget for 2020/21 will be brought forward as part of revised estimates.

1.10 Risk Assessment

- 1.10.1 A Project Steering Group established by this Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council has met regularly 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.

1.10.2 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.

1.10.3 Weekly meetings have also taken place with Urbaser to ensure good levels of communication are maintained, and the Operational Marketing Plan will ensure residents continue to be kept fully informed.

1.11 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.12 Policy Considerations

1.12.1 Communications

1.12.2 Community

1.12.3 Customer Contact

1.12.4 Procurement

1.13 Recommendations

1.13.1 It is RECOMMENDED TO CABINET that:-

- i) progress made with the mobilisation of the new service arrangements be noted;
- ii) the existing Marketing Plan be updated by the end of the calendar year in liaison with the Waste Contract Member Group, and an allocation of £40,000 be made in the 2020/21 revenue budget; and
- iii) the proposed Christmas collection arrangements outlined in the report be noted.

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:

contact: Darren Lanes

Nil

Robert Styles

Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services