

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

05 October 2020

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 Contract – Retendering

- 1.1.1 The current Pest Control Contract, procured in 2013, was due to end on 31 October 2018, with an option to extend by one period of 24 months. Due to the fact that the contractor, Monitor, was performing well with an exceptionally low level of complaints received, the contract extension was agreed and the contract is now due to end on 31 October this year.
- 1.1.2 The contract was let in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and was originally procured by their procurement team. The contract operates on a referral basis, with all customers being put through to Monitor who will then deal with the report, take payments, and book & carry out any treatments, including follow up visits as required. Residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction are entitled to a free treatment (for a limited range of health-related pest issues). In these cases, TMBC staff check their entitlement before passing the customer through to Monitor. Monitor then invoice TMBC monthly for these subsidised cases, which amounts to an average of £300 per month. Monitor also pay a one-off annual referral fee to TMBC of £2,000 for those non-subsidised cases referred to them. The contract also allows for optional services to be provided for TMBC's own estates such as the council offices and country parks. This arrangement has worked particularly well since Monitor took over the contract, and the net cost to TMBC is around £1,500 per year.
- 1.1.3 Due to EU & UK Procurement Legislation, with the potential costs of the new contract being an unknown, it was decided to go out to open tender for the new contract which will start in November. Again, this is being carried out in partnership with TWBC, with their procurement team leading on the project. The tender specification stipulates that a similar arrangement to that we currently have

with Monitor is provided. Tender documents were issued on 24 August, with a closing submission date of 21 September. As of that deadline six submissions have been received, two of which were non-compliant. The remaining four are being evaluated during w/c 21 September.

- 1.1.4 The evaluation criteria is based on Price at 60%, Quality of submission at 35%, and the final 5% will be based on performance at interview. Interviews will be held during w/c 29 September, with contract award due to be announced w/c 5 October. As such a verbal update is likely to be available for this Board meeting.

1.2 Dog Warden Contract – Retendering

- 1.2.1 The current Dog Warden contract, also procured in 2013, was due to end on 28 February 2020, with an option to extend by one 12 month period. Due to the fact that the contractor, Ward Security, was performing well with an exceptionally low level of complaints received, the contract extension was agreed and the contract is now due to end on 28 February 2021.
- 1.2.2 The current budget for this contract is £73,450, which includes around £25,000 per year in kennelling fees. The service assists the Council in not only delivering its statutory duties relating to stray dogs, but also with the investigation of other dog-related issues such as noise, fouling, dangerous dogs, dog control & behavioural issues, micro-chipping, and proactive educational initiatives such as Bag & Flag events & signage. This contract also provides the necessary van & equipment to deliver these services, as well as cover when the regular dog warden is on leave, off sick or otherwise absent.
- 1.2.3 The Council has a statutory duty to deal with stray dogs, including their safe kennelling until either claimed or rehomed. The current arrangement with Ward Security limits the liability for these kennelling fees to seven days, after which time the responsibility for kennelling costs passes to their sub-contractor, Viking Oak Kennels. This is of great benefit as other dog warden service arrangements mean that the council bears the burden of all kennelling costs until such time a dog can be rehomed, or in the rarer case of aggressive behavioural issues, put to sleep. The contract also provides a stray dog collection service out of normal office hours, and this is currently particularly busy at evenings and over weekends.
- 1.2.4 Due to EU & UK Procurement Legislation, and given the current & potential costs of the new contract being an unknown, it was decided to go out to open tender year for the new contract which will start on 1 March 2021. It is expected that this process will be assisted by Dartford Borough Council's procurement team, who have ably assisted with many other tender processes for TMBC in the past. Further details of this procurement process will be brought to a future meeting of this Board.

1.3 Household Waste Recycling Centre – KCC Update

- 1.3.1 Within the geographical county of Kent, Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs or “tips”) are provided and managed by the relevant Waste Disposal Authority for their residents. Medway’s HWRCs are run by Medway Council for their residents, and Kent’s HWRCs by Kent County Council. There has been a reciprocal arrangement in place for a number of years whereby KCC pay Medway County Council an annual amount so that KCC residents who live nearer to Medway’s HWRCs can use them rather than having to travel further to a KCC site. This has meant that residents towards the north of the Borough have been able to use Medway’s facility at Cuxton.
- 1.3.2 For many years TMBC have made representation to KCC to provide a HWRC facility within the borough, as the nearest alternatives for our residents are the HWRCs at North Farm (Tunbridge Wells), Tovil (Maidstone), Dunbrik (Sevenoaks) or Medway’s sites at Cuxton & Capstone. We reported to an earlier meeting of this Board that KCC had identified suitable locations for such a facility and that they had started progressing the procurement process for it.
- 1.3.3 A procurement process has now taken place, and a facility at Allington, next to the existing energy-from-waste plant, is being progressed. At the most recent Parish Partnership Panel on 3 September, Cllr Hohler of KCC gave the following update:
- “On 15th July members of KCC’s Planning Committee unanimously approved the proposal by FCC Environment (UK) Ltd to establish a Household Waste and Recycling Centre on Laverstoke Road, Allington. The proposed HWRC will be a split-level facility with 22 recycling container bays with 25 car spaces, including one accessibility space. The lower level will include a two-storey office and shop with 33 parking spaces for members of staff and visitors to the re-use shop. A new access junction will be constructed off Laverstoke Road to the north of the existing priority junction for the Allington waste incinerator.”*
- 1.3.4 Once we have further details from KCC regarding an estimated opening date for this facility, we will update this Board accordingly.

1.4 Kent Resource Partnership – Fly Tipping Initiatives

- 1.4.1 Kent County Council has provided £250,000 in funding for this financial year to help support the district and borough councils to tackle fly tipping. Working with the Kent Environmental Crime Practitioner’s Working Group (membership includes KCC, all 12 district/ borough councils, Kent Police, the Environment Agency and the National Farmers Union, ideas have been sought from all parties as to the best way to utilise the funding to help tackle this illegal activity. Some of the key plans for this financial year include:
- Further significant investment into technology and equipment – for example deployment of covert cameras to fly tipping ‘hotspots’

TMBC have provided a list of “hot spot” locations where fly tipping occurs repeatedly, often before the initial tip can be cleared. Ten locations have

been shortlisted for camera deployment by KCC's Intel Unit, and a start has already been made on installing them

- Continuing to work with Kent Police to deliver 'Days of Action' across the County, supported by intelligence packages, to target known fly tipping offenders and make vehicle stops and seizures for those carrying waste without the correct licenses

TMBC officers are to shadow an upcoming action day so that they can see what is involved and what action can be taken by each of the parties attending. This will ensure a consistent approach across Kent in terms of enforcement action taken. Once that has taken place, the Intel Unit will set dates for TMBC's area

- Building on the communication campaign delivered in 2019/20 regarding residents and business Duty of Care in relation to waste disposal – the focus is on those rogue traders and groups, collecting waste for small amounts of money and subsequently fly tipping the waste – further information videos to be released shortly regarding the 'victims of fly tipping'

TMBC have previously run our own "Duty of Care" campaign, and have guidance & a form available on our website for householders to download so they can easily check if the person they're using to take waste away is a registered waste carrier and has reliable disposal facilities available to them. We have also shared previous educational & publicity materials via social media channels, and have obtained additional signage to place at fly tipping "hot spots". These new materials will also be broadcast once available.

- Building on the small business waste courses delivered last year (pre-Covid), to provide information to small businesses regarding their responsibilities for waste collection and disposal – with the potential to consider an e-learning package to offer to businesses

A course for TMBC small businesses was originally booked for May but was cancelled due to the Covid lockdown & associated guidance on training course attendance. The e-learning package will be accessible to far more businesses once developed (only 15 were able to attend each course session, with only one per council area provided), and we will work with Kent & KRP colleagues to ensure this is made available as soon as possible.

- Engaging with the courts through Magistrates Associations last in order to raise the issue of the low level of fines & costs being awarded to offenders, even when they have been previously fined or prosecuted.

Often the court fines are lower than the level of the £400 Fixed Penalty Notices councils are able to issue for lower level offences, and costs

awarded lower than the actual clear up costs. Other county-wide partnerships have asked to join the KRP's representations, which may assist in this issue being treated seriously not just across Kent but nationally.

1.5 Great British Spring Clean 2020

- 1.5.1 The Great British Spring Clean is a national initiative launched several years ago by Keep Britain Tidy, the national campaign organisation which aims to raise awareness of litter and its impact on the natural & built environment.
- 1.5.2 The 2020 Spring Clean was due to take place in March, but was understandably cancelled due to the Covid lockdown and Government guidance on gatherings outside of the home. As such, Keep Britain Tidy postponed the event until September and have issued further guidance on the organisation of community litter picks whilst adhering to latest government guidance on gatherings & events outside of the home. The nationwide event is running from 11 to 27 September, and we will be able to provide an update to the next Board meeting regarding activities that are taking place within the Borough during September.

1.6 Christmas Collection Arrangements 2020/21

- 1.6.1 Although it may seem a little early to be mentioning Christmas and New Year collection arrangements, there are ongoing discussions with Urbaser and with KCC as the Waste Disposal Authority regarding the most efficient schedule for collections over the holiday period taking into account restricted disposal outlet availability on the Bank Holidays and at weekends. Final details of the arrangements will be presented to this Board in November.
- 1.6.2 In previous years, we have provided advance notification to residents via bin hangers on the lead up to the Christmas period. However, due to the significant impact of Covid on the Council's budgets and the ongoing policy of approving essential spending only, it has been decided not to issue the bin hangers this year. The cost of last year's hangers was around £12K including delivery.
- 1.6.3 Earlier this year, we took a similar decision with the new annual recycling calendar which would have normally been distributed in June. Instead of printing & delivering 55,000 calendars at a cost of around £10K, we instead had a small supply of hard copied printed which were then made available on request. A downloadable leaflet was posted on our website & a link to it posted via social media channels. We have received no complaints from residents as a result, and only a very small amount of hard copy requests to be posted out.
- 1.6.4 As such, we intend to communicate the Christmas arrangements in the same way. There is not due to be any suspension of services, which in previous years would have caused a lot of confusion without the bin hangers, and details will be publicised on our website & social media channels, as well as via our telephone message system.

1.7 Legal Implications

- 1.7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide refuse and recycling collection services. The retendering of the Pest Control and Dog Warden contracts are in accordance with contract conditions and relevant procurement regulations.

1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.8.1 The two tendering processes detailed above may result in an increase – or decrease – in the Council’s costs for providing those two services. Although this impact is as yet unknown, Finance colleagues will be informed as to the potentially successful tender bids in order for them to be able to assess any potential impact both on this financial year’s budget estimates and on the Councils’ MTFS. The initiative detailed at 1.6 above will contribute towards the Council’s savings, and the current policy on essential spending.

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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