

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD**

**31 August 2021**

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

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 WASTE SERVICES UPDATE REPORT**

**Summary**

**This report updates on a number of issues and initiatives managed by the Waste & Street Scene Services team, including service performance, fly tipping & enforcement, and the recycling bin pilot to flats in Tonbridge.**

**1.1 Service Performance**

- 1.1.1 At the last meeting of this Board in June, Officers reported on the ongoing performance issues relating to the Urbaser contract. At that point, with national Covid restriction measures easing, it was intended that consideration be given to future service delivery. Officers continue to monitor staffing and resource levels on a daily basis in liaison with Urbaser and - if required - prioritise key services in accordance with our Business Continuity Plan.
- 1.1.2 Since that report was written, the impact of the national shortage of HGV drivers has had further significant impacts on service delivery, with driver shortages leading to disruption to collection services across the borough. Members will be aware that this is an issue that is not isolated to Tonbridge and Malling and the impact of the shortage is being seen across Kent and nationwide. In June, recycling collections became so far behind that the service was suspended for two collection cycles. In order to get recycling collections reinstated, the difficult decision was made, in conjunction with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, to suspend garden waste services for a four-week period during August. This would then allow Urbaser to focus on the core refuse, food waste & recycling collections. All garden waste subscription renewal dates have been extended by one month so that customers are not paying for the service during this period of suspension.
- 1.1.3 As a result, refuse & food waste collections are – at time of writing – on schedule with recycling collections running two to three days behind. It is currently anticipated that recycling collections, with the support of those staff that would normally have been deployed to garden waste, will be back on schedule during

week commencing 16 August. A verbal update will be provided at this Board meeting.

- 1.1.4 Following the last meeting of this Board, an all-Members meeting was held to provide a detailed presentation on the current issues affecting collections, as well as the ongoing work to help improve overall service provision on this contract. It was agreed at the meeting that weekly updates would be provided each Friday to all Members, as well as to Parish & Town Councils and KALC. These updates include the latest position on disruption to collections services; measures being implemented by Urbaser to address the ongoing impact of driver shortages; waste & haulage industry updates; and responses to specific questions raised by Members during the week where it is considered that the response would be helpful for all Members and Parish & Town Councils.
- 1.1.5 Members will be aware that there continues to be issues with the quality of service provision, such as spillages not being cleared by the crews; bin placements; missed collections and delays in container deliveries. These have been ongoing issues for many months but have been exacerbated by the current heavy reliance on new & agency staff to provide the collection services. This has also clearly impacted on Urbaser's abilities to deliver the service level agreements which form part of the original contract specification, which are monitored through a set of Key Performance Indicators:

KPI	Description	2019/20 Avg. per month	2020/21 Avg. per month
1	Total No. of <b>MISSED COLLECTION REPORTS</b>	1,263	1,530
3	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - ( 24 hrs) - <b>ACTUAL MISSED COLLECTIONS</b>	47%	98%
4	Intents & formal complaints - <b>REFUSE &amp; RECYCLING</b>	84	93
5	Intents & formal complaints - <b>STREET CLEANSING</b>	31	38
6	Total number of <b>COMPLAINTS</b> (inc Missed Collections)	862	1,472
7	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - ( 5 w/days) - <b>GREEN BOX DELIVERIES</b>	28%	44%
8	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - <b>BIN ORDERS</b> (inc Repair/Replace)	53%	77%
9	Total No. of jobs - <b>FLYTIPPING</b> (Paid)	22	45

10	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - <b>FLYTIPPING (Paid)</b>	10%	23%
11	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - <b>WORKS ORDERS</b>	18%	65%
12	% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - <b>BULKY &amp; FRIDGE COLLECTIONS</b>	5%	9%

1.1.6 When issues are not rectified within timescales as instructed by the Client team, default points are issued which, when reaching levels specified within the contract documents, result in financial deductions from Urbaser's monthly invoices. This continues to be monitored and managed through the regular Partnership Steering Group meetings and close liaison with the staff at the depot.

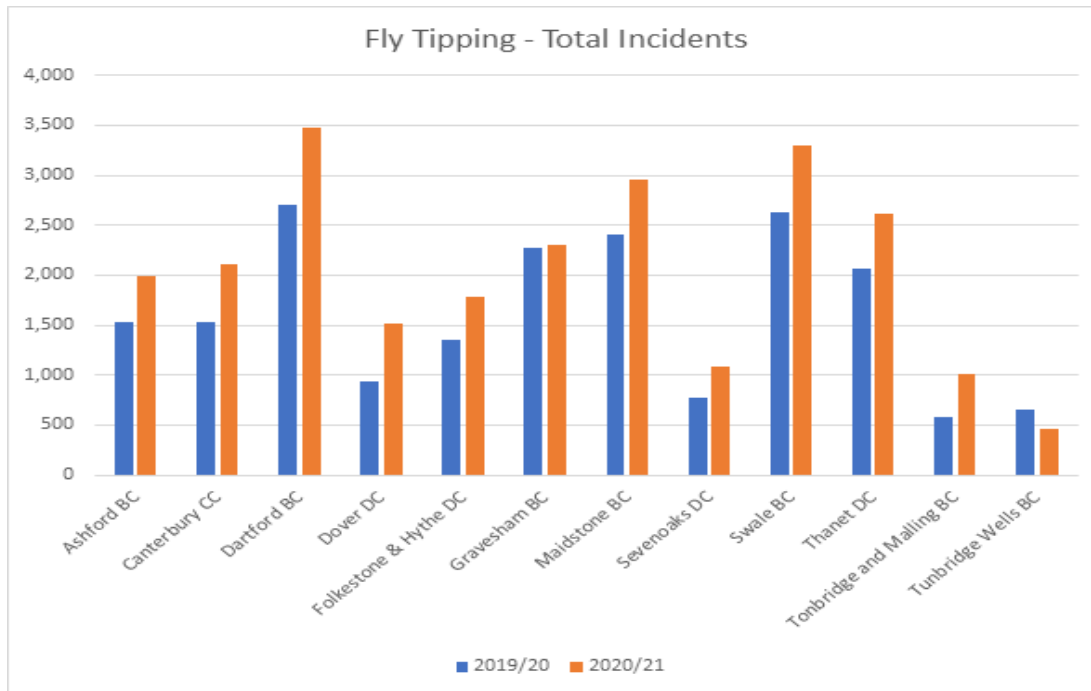
1.1.7 In addition, a joint Partnership Group has now been established (inaugural meeting 12 August), which consists of the Leaders, Deputy Leaders, and Portfolio Holders for Waste and Finance from the respective Partnership councils, as well as Chief Executives, Directors, 151 Officers, Heads of Service and Legal leads from each council. The Group's purpose is to oversee improvements in the waste & recycling service and to provide an agreed direction to Officers on matters of strategic importance to the Partnership. The Group is an informal working group of both Councils with no delegated decision-making powers.

1.1.8 The Group will:

- review the operation of the waste & recycling contract with a focus on performance improvement;
- scrutinise Urbaser's detailed plans to achieve a reliable and sustainable delivery of service standards in full compliance with the contract specification and the contractor's tender submission;
- consider the strategic Partnership response(s) to working with Urbaser in delivering the terms of the contract service standards;
- agree joint business continuity arrangements; and
- agree a shared communications strategy.

## 1.2 Fly Tipping

1.2.1 In the past twelve months, levels of reports of fly tips have significantly increased in Tonbridge & Malling, as well as across the rest of Kent and the South East. Although still amongst the lowest levels for Kent districts, second only to Tunbridge Wells, this is clearly concerning.



- 1.2.2 Analysis of the types of waste being fly tipped indicates that the majority consist of larger items of furniture and building/construction waste. The highest rise in the size of fly tips is in the categories of small van & transit van loads. This would indicate that rather than individual householders fly tipping, it is more likely to be unregistered waste carriers, or registered carriers tipping illegally.
- 1.2.3 An additional staff member has recently been recruited to support the team with investigation & enforcement activities. The recruitment has been successful, with the appointed person starting on 10 August. They will now undergo the relevant induction & training so that they can start to coordinate the fly tip reporting process, feedback to residents as to what action is being taken, including timescales, to clear fly tips, and to also carry out initial investigations into any evidence which may be available. They will also closely liaise with KCC's Intel Unit so that relevant information can be shared and followed up for investigation where possible. Officers are also aware of the desire of the new administration to increase this staffing resource further.
- 1.2.4 The new Cabinet Member for Community Services has requested a meeting be organised with the relevant officers from KCC to explain what support they are able to provide to TMBC officers in terms of investigation & prevention of fly tipping. This support has helped to achieve some successes in other Kent districts with enforcement activity, including prosecutions. If the meeting takes place prior to the meeting of this Board, a verbal update will be provided.
- 1.2.5 The Cabinet Member is also keen to explore opportunities for joint working between the Waste team, the local Community Safety Partnership and KCC in order to achieve results tackling anti-social behaviour & organised crime (including illegal waste dumping) through smarter ways of working and sharing of resources.

This will include the further exploration of the use of CCTV, both covert & overt as appropriate, at fly tipping hot spots.

### **1.3 New Service Arrangements to Flats and Communal Properties**

- 1.3.1 As reported to Members of this Advisory Board on 8 June, Officers have been continuing to have ongoing discussions with Urbaser regarding the roll out of the kerbside recycling services to flats that share communal bin stores. In order to assess the impact of adding these properties to existing recycling rounds and potential associated issues such as container capacity, vehicle volumes, levels of contamination of materials, etc, it has been agreed that a pilot will be run, so that any issues arising can be identified & resolved prior to a wider roll out across the Borough.
- 1.3.2 As such, around 500 flats in central Tonbridge will be included in this pilot, with communications being sent out to those residents during week commencing 23 August. Bin stores will be reconfigured on the weekend of the 4 September with new bins supplied to reflect the new services provided. The first recycling collections will then commence on 11 September, with fortnightly recycling collections alternating with fortnightly refuse collections. Local Members had been consulted on the detailed plans.
- 1.3.3 Officers will then closely monitor volumes, contamination, levels of enquiries, etc prior to the service being rolled out to flats in the rest of the Borough. It is suggested that the pilot be monitored for a period of at least 3 months, and given the busy Christmas period, it is proposed that the full boroughwide roll out commences in early 2022. Any lessons learnt from the pilot will help to ensure a smoother roll out to the rest of flats with communal bins.

### **1.4 Kent Resource Partnership – National Waste Strategy Consultations**

- 1.4.1 Members will recall from June's Board meeting, that as part of the development of the National Waste Strategy, DEFRA were carrying out consultations on three elements which require changes to legislation and to associated regulations.
- 1.4.2 The first of the current consultations sought views on proposals to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environment/consultation-on-introducing-a-drs/> It referred solely to deposit return schemes, explicitly for drinks containers.
- 1.4.3 The second of the consultations covered proposals for reforms to the packaging waste regulations: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/extended-producer-responsibility/extended-producer-responsibility-for-packaging/> The current system of producer responsibility for packaging has been in place since 1997 but is considered to need reform. One of the key governing principles for packaging EPR is for payments to local authorities to be fair and transparent and should include the cost of collecting packaging waste in the residual waste stream.

- 1.4.4 The third consultation was concerned with having consistent recycling collections to improve the quantity and quality of municipal waste recycled in England and to achieve a national recycling rate of 65% by 2035: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/> . Members will be aware that our current kerbside collection services comply with this proposal, with the exception of plastic films, which under current reprocessing capacity – which is lacking – and contractual arrangements with KCC’s existing disposal facilities, it is not possible to collect at present.
- 1.4.5 TMBC officers have responded to all three consultations, both with our own responses and those collated by the Kent Resource Partnership. Officers now await the next stages of the progress of these initiatives through Defra, and will continue to update this Board of any developments.

## 1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The statutory framework governing the response to the pandemic is evolving and changing on a frequent basis, both in the restrictions placed upon individuals and upon the responsibility of local authorities. Specific proposals or changes brought forward will be assessed at the appropriate time in liaison with Legal Services to ensure they are lawful.
- 1.5.2 The responses to the various Defra consultations outlined at 1.4 above will hopefully influence the legislation being brought forward. However, the final legislation & associated regulations will need to be fully reviewed and any measures required, such as changes to service delivery, implemented to ensure compliance.

## 1.6 Financial Implications

- 1.6.1 None

## 1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 The Operational Risk Assessment for Street Scene Leisure and Technical Services has been updated and is being revised on an ongoing basis as government guidance on Covid-19 changes.

## 1.8 Policy considerations

- 1.8.1 Community, Customer Contact, Health and Safety

Background papers:

Nil

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