

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

23 November 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 August 2021, Officers reported on the ongoing issues relating to the Urbaser contract. Since that report was written, the impact of the national shortage of HGV drivers continues to have significant impacts on service delivery and Urbaser's ability to recruit & retain staff. The impact of the shortage is being seen across Kent and nationwide.
- 1.1.2 In late July 2021 the Council took the difficult decision to suspend garden waste services. This has allowed Urbaser to focus on the core refuse, food waste & recycling collections. All garden waste subscription renewal dates will be extended by the duration of the suspension, so that residents who subscribe to the service are not paying for the service during this period of suspension.
- 1.1.3 In order to deal with the build-up of garden waste resulting from the suspension, a one-off collection has been arranged to empty all subscribers' garden waste bins. This does not form part of the normal subscription service so is being provided "free of charge" to subscribers. This collection is being carried out in order of the residents' normal collection day, and alternates with TWBC due to the partnership arrangement we have with them. The collection plan is based on the assumption of two collection crews being available, but progress has varied to date as on some days only one crew has been deployed and on some days three crews. Once we have confirmation of when each phase is due to start, those subscribers are emailed advising when to put their brown bins out.
- 1.1.4 At the time of writing, all of both councils' Monday & Tuesday collections will have been completed. A verbal update on progress will be given at this meeting of the

Board, and weekly updates continue to be provided to all Members and Parish & Town Councils each Friday.

1.1.5 As a result, refuse, food waste and recycling collections are – at time of writing – on schedule and weekly updates continue to be provided to all Members and Parish & Town Councils.

1.1.6 Reports on issues with the quality of service provision, bin placements, missed collections and delays in container deliveries have reduced significantly, despite Urbaser’s continued reliance on new and agency staff to provide the collection services. This has impacted on levels of performance which are monitored through a set of Key Performance Indicators:

Description	2020/21 Avg. per month	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021
Total No. of MISSED COLLECTION REPORTS	1,530	1,848	1,212	1,026
% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (24 hrs) - ACTUAL MISSED COLLECTIONS	98%	100%	100%	100%
Intents & formal complaints - REFUSE & RECYCLING	93	73	54	48
Intents & formal complaints - STREET CLEANSING	38	27	25	31
Total number of COMPLAINTS (inc Missed Collections)	1,672	1,909	1,263	1,058
% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5w/days) - GREEN BOX DELIVERIES	44%	80%	17%	10%
% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - BIN ORDERS (inc Repair/Replace)	77%	93%	62%	27%
Total No. of jobs – ADDITIONAL WORKS inc FLYTIPPING (Paid)	45	10	32	10
% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - ADDITIONAL WORKS inc FLYTIPPING (Paid)	23%	90%	88%	50%
% of jobs not actioned within SLA - (5 w/days) - BULKY & FRIDGE COLLECTIONS	9%	6%	4%	2%

- 1.1.7 The monthly number of missed bin reports has reduced over the past three months and although this may be expected given the ongoing suspension of the garden waste services, there has been a reduction in reports for both refuse & recycling collections, which equated in October to around 0.2% of all scheduled collections. However, due to the priority of allocating available staff to frontline services rather than to returning for missed collections, none of these reports were actioned within the Service Level Agreement of 24 hours to rectify.
- 1.1.8 The number of formal complaints and Intents to Default have also reduced over the past three months. These complaints normally consist of reports of bins not being put back repeatedly; mixing of recycling; attitude of crews; etc. The number of street cleaning complaints has risen slightly last month, and this is consistent with the same time in previous years when leaf clearance and potential flooding from blocked gullies becomes a concern.

1.2 New Service Arrangements to Flats and Communal Properties

- 1.2.1 As reported to Members of this Advisory Board on 31 August, the introduction of new recycling services to those 500 properties included within the pilot phase commenced on Saturday 4 September 2021. New recycling bins were delivered, and the communal bin stores reconfigured to reduce some of the residual waste capacity in preparation for moving to alternate weekly collections. All of the bin stores had new containers delivered for the separate collection of card & paper, and of plastics, glass & cans.
- 1.2.2 In order for officers to be able to monitor use of the new service, including tonnages & contamination levels, these collections were moved from a Friday to Saturday collections, as the collections could then take place separately from other properties in that area. This has enabled us to receive separate tonnage data from the disposal sites whilst the pilot area is monitored.
- 1.2.3 The first recycling collections took place 18 September 2021, with fortnightly recycling collections alternating with fortnightly refuse collections from then onwards. Officers have been monitoring the use of the bins on a daily basis and identifying where bins were not being used correctly. They then communicated with those residents and the appropriate management agents in order to reduce the risk of recycling bins being contaminated and rejected by the reprocessors.
- 1.2.4 In the first four cycles of collections, 6.16 tonnes of recycling were collected, and 24.6 tons of refuse. This gives a dry recycling rate of approximately 20%. This compares with the dry recycling rate from the households already receiving the service of 28%. This would indicate that although there is still potential to improve the amount of recycling being separated by these properties, they have generally adapted well to the changes and are embracing the new service positively.
- 1.2.5 Officers will continue to monitor volumes, contamination levels, resident enquiries, etc., prior to the service being rolled out to flats in the rest of the Borough. It is

currently proposed that the pilot be monitored for a period of at least 3 months. Given the busy Christmas period, it is proposed that the full boroughwide roll out commences in early 2022. The pilot has required quite intensive monitoring and regular communication with residents and with management agents, and this approach will be applied to the wider roll out of the service for flats with communal bins. Given experience with the pilot properties, officers intend to roll out from late January through to the end of March, but this will be done on a phased approach and once fully developed the detailed plan will be shared with Members, including which areas/properties will be in which phases.

1.3 Fly Tipping

- 1.3.1 At the last meeting of this Board, officers reported that an additional staff member had been recruited to support the team with investigation and enforcement activities. They have subsequently undergone the relevant induction and training and they have now started 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 for investigation where possible.
- 1.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Community Services has met with an officer of KCC's Trading Standards unit to gain an understanding of what assistance they – and specifically their Intelligence Officer dedicated to Kent Resource Partnership enforcement work - are able to provide to TMBC officers in terms of investigation and prevention of fly tipping. The Intel Officer has arranged a briefing with the Waste Services team on 25 November to explain the systems that they have access to, in order to trace vehicles and individuals that may be suspected of being connected to fly tips and other waste offences, as well as sharing intelligence with other districts.
- 1.3.3 On 10 December, officers are also due to take part in a joint operation – Operation Assist - with the Police, targeting illegal waste carriers. The Police have the powers to stop vehicles which are then checked for tax and insurance and roadworthiness, while council officer's check for waste carrier registrations, waste transfer notes and potential for any licensing breaches for scrap metal collectors. These operations have achieved some success in other areas of Kent as fixed penalty notices can be issued on site, and they deter offenders from operating in the targeted areas. In preparation for this, the Senior Waste & Enforcement Officer has been meeting with enforcement teams from neighbouring districts and has "shadowed" Operation Assist events in Swale & Maidstone.
- 1.3.4 Officers are also liaising with the Licensing team and with the Community Safety Partnership in order to share any useful intelligence and to improve joint working to target offenders who may be known to various service areas. This may also assist with current resource levels, when the key focus of the Waste Services team is prioritised to the management of the Urbaser contract, as detailed above.

1.4 Kent Resource Partnership Update

- 1.4.1 Following the departure of Paldeep Bhatti, the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) Manager, a replacement – Sally Ward - has recently been recruited. Sally has a wide background in waste operations and has an understanding of the needs and requirements of both the Kent districts as Waste Collection Authorities and KCC as the Waste Disposal Authority, as well as experience of working for and with contractors.
- 1.4.2 An initial meeting with Sally has been held, and priorities discussed. Sally is driving forward the resources that will be made available on a new KRP website, which will explain what happens to various materials when they are collected and the performance of each Kent council. Some progress has already been made with this, currently hosted on the KCC site, but Sally is keen for this to be more widely publicised and accessible for Kent residents to help improve transparency for the public as well as increase confidence in and support for collection services across Kent. These resources will then be linked from TMBC's own website.
- 1.4.3 Details of the current KCC-hosted resources were circulated to all Members in the weekly update of 17 September, but are replicated here for ease of reference:
- There's now some useful information on KCC's website with details of where our waste & recycling ends up:
 - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/rubbish-and-recycling/managing-and-reducing-waste/where-our-waste-and-recycling-goes>
 - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/rubbish-and-recycling/managing-and-reducing-waste/reduce-waste-and-recycle-more> (plastic, food waste and recover energy page link from this)
 - The first link particularly might be useful when signposting residents to this information. KCC are still fine-tuning these pages and once completed, there will be links available from the TMBC web pages. It's worth noting that this information is for the fully audited data for 2019/20. As our new recycling services were introduced part-way through that year, the 2020/21 data will show the first full year performance of the new service once KCC have uploaded it later this year.
 - KCC will still publish the annual End Destination Report (<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/partnerships/kent-resource-partnership/governance-documents>) but the other two links are a bit more interactive/engaging.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide refuse and recycling collection services. The proposed arrangements relating to communal recycling services will ensure that the Council complies with that duty.

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:

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Nil

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