

## Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

04 March 2026

### Part 1 - Public

#### Matters for Information



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Cabinet Member	Cllr Martin Coffin – Finance, Waste & Technical Services
Responsible Officer	Robert Styles – Director of Street, Scene, Leisure and Technical Services
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#### Cabinet Member Portfolio Update

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Cabinet Member update on Waste & Technical Services activities undertaken over the past 12 months and sets out some headline initiatives for the coming year.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 'Efficient & Effective Council' and 'Caring for the Environment'
- 2.2 Delivering services innovatively and in the most cost-effective & efficient way; Improving levels of waste reduction & recycling; tackling sources of pollution.

##### 3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The update of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Waste & Technical services includes details of various projects and initiatives covering waste, recycling, street scene, enforcement, parking, engineering and emergency planning. The report also answers a number of parking related questions raised to the Chairman by Cllr Pilgrim.

##### 4 Cabinet Member Update

##### 4.1 Waste Contract Tender Project

4.1.1 Members will recall that the current Waste Contract ends in March 2027. Over the past twelve months, as approved by Members, Officers have been working in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) to procure a new 12-year contract that will run from April 2027. This project has involved a significant amount of work which has included Legal, Finance and Operational staff as well as the Mid-Kent Procurement Team. It has also required input from other service areas such as Health & Safety and Sustainability Officers. The procurement process and the recommendations for Contract Award are detailed in a separate report in these papers.

## 4.2 **Food Waste Roll Out**

4.2.1 The roll out of food waste collections continued over the past 12 months, with the majority of properties using communal bin stores now receiving the service. There remain a small number of 'difficult' bin stores where there is no/limited room for additional bins, or where historic use of recycling bins has proved challenging due to misuse. As new developments are completed, they are being provided with the full range of recycling services, including communal bin facilities where there is adequate capacity for the containers.

## 4.3 **KRP Waste Composition Analysis project**

4.3.1 The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) has carried out two waste audits from properties within this borough. These audits identify what materials are contained within a sample of residual waste & food waste bins. This data is then used to target key materials which could be recycled and need to be diverted out of the residual waste bins. Samples of the food waste bins help to identify any potential increase in food waste diversion, such as targeting packaged food waste. This information is essential in order to help reduce disposal costs through promotional & other initiatives.

4.3.2 Early data from the residual waste audits identifies that around one third of the contents consisted of food waste which could be recycled using our kerbside service. As such, a targeted food waste campaign took place last autumn in order to try to achieve behaviour change and encourage residents not to use their black bin for food waste. This involved placing stickers on residual waste bins and delivering explanatory leaflets and sample rolls of indoor caddy liners. Data received so far indicates that, during the campaign, 2,000 additional food waste bins were requested, and food waste tonnages increased by 19% (110 tonnes) compared with the same period in the previous year.

## 4.4 **KRP Communal bin store project**

4.4.1 The KRP ran a project to try to identify best practice for providing recycling services to properties using communal bin stores. TMBC were held up as an example of good practice and our Waste Contract Officer, Ali Sollis, was invited to present case studies at a Kent-wide workshop. The next stage of this project is a

conference to engage with social & private housing providers in order to encourage them to consider their current waste collection provision in order to improve the services that councils can provide to their residents.

#### 4.5 **Waste Marketing Plan 2025/26**

4.5.1 A Waste Marketing Plan was developed for 2025/26, working closely with colleagues in the Media team, in order to prioritise and programme a range of initiatives to help reduce overall waste arisings, increase recycling and raise awareness of the services provided. Activities to date have included:

- Revamp of the Council's waste & recycling pages (<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/waste>);
- Food waste campaign – see 4.3.2 above;
- Events – including VE Day 80, East Maling Picnic in the Park, Tonbridge Food Festival and Tonbridge Christmas Market;
- Development of 'Shake It Out' campaign to encourage residents to put recycling loose into the green-lidded bins, rather than in bags;
- Development of carton recycling campaign;
- Making the temporary Waste Contract Officer post permanent as approved by General Purposes in January.

#### 4.6 **Contract performance**

4.6.1 Over the past twelve months the performance of the current Waste Contractor, FCC, has been consistent and service levels acceptable. Key Performance Indicators are regularly reviewed and any required actions put in place and monitored to assess areas for improvement. A number of these KPIs are included within the Annual Service Delivery Plan which is reported to Members quarterly. These include:

- Individual missed collections – currently 0.07% against target of 0.10%
- Waste collection rounds completed to schedule – currently 100% against target of 100%
- A key current focus is on street cleansing. Schedules have now been included in the Whitespace system, which is the IT System used by both the Contractor and the Council to monitor the progression of works on a daily basis and to highlight any areas for concern.

#### 4.7 **Enforcement Contract**

4.7.1 Since March last year, Kingdom have been employed as our third-party enforcement contractor for waste-related offences. Up to the end of December, they had issued 785 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). Of these 578 were for littering offences and 207 were for fly tipping and other waste-related offences. Currently their payment rate for FPNs issued is around 77% against a KPI level of 65%. It is

the intention to bring a report to the next meeting of this Committee to report on the performance of the contract

4.8 In terms of planning for the next 12 months, the following are key activities:

- 4.8.1 **Waste Contract Mobilisation** – preparation for the new Contract start date of 1 April 2027 has commenced and will be progressed subject to Members’ approval of the recommendations made in the separate report to this Committee meeting, and subsequent approval by Cabinet and Council. This will involve a significant amount of work over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition to the new contract, including reviews of existing collection & cleansing schedules, preparation for Simpler Recycling compliance and any required IT system updates/reconfigurations.
- 4.8.2 **Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) Strategy** – the final version of the KRP Strategy for 2026 to 2031 is currently being taken through the respective Kent councils’ democratic processes. This strategy comes at a pivotal moment for Kent as it sets out how Kent Councils “*will respond to the most significant changes in waste policy for a generation, alongside preparations for local government reorganisation, while continuing to deliver services that protect our environment and provide best value for Kent residents*”. It will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee in May for consideration & endorsement.
- 4.8.3 **Waste Marketing Plan** – a new plan for 2026/27 will be developed and reported to this Committee on 20 May 2026.

## 5 Parking Update - Past 12 months

### 5.1 Hildenborough Parking Review

Following an extensive consultation process that initially started in 2019, the parking review was conducted in Hildenborough. This had to be substantially adapted following Covid and the changes to the parking patterns. Members supported the final proposals at the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 meeting of the Joint Transportation Board. The new restrictions were implemented in Jan 2026.

### 5.2 Informal and formal consultation on Phase 15 of the Parking Action Plan

Informal consultation, review by the Joint Transportation Board and formal consultation on locations forming Phase 15 of the Parking Action Plan were carried out.

### 5.3 New areas for parking charges

Following the review of parking charges in 2024, we introduced the agreed on-street parking charges in West Malling High Street and Swan Street in March 2025, whilst retaining 1-hour free parking to assist short-stay parking and maintain parking turnover.

5.3.1 In May 2025 charges and Season Tickets were also introduced into Martin Square, Larkfield aimed at increasing footfall at local businesses and deterring long-stay parking that reduced parking opportunities.

5.3.2 In November 2025 parking charges and Season Tickets were introduced to the Bailey Bridge (East) and (West) car parks to again deter non-resident long-stay parking and to prevent the ongoing problem related to the long-term storage of vehicles.

#### 5.4 **Changes to on-street Traffic Regulation Orders**

In April 2025 the Council's on-street Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were converted and consolidated into Kent County Council's online ParkMap system – a graphical representation of TROs that is web accessible for the public.

#### 5.5 **Staff turnover and training**

The Parking Service has been under increased pressure due to staffing changes associated with the departure of some key staff members in the Technical Services team and the Parking Office. There have been significant challenges associated with trying to recruit into the vacant positions.

- The Parking Enforcement Team has expanded, and new CEOs are being put through training, and the CEO Supervisors have undergone higher level training.
- As part of the review of parking charges in 2024 it was agreed that the Parking Enforcement team should be increased from 2 shifts to 3, raising Civil Enforcement staff from 10 to 15.
- It is worth noting that this has been a challenging recruitment process and we currently still have vacancies.

#### 5.6 **Sunday parking enforcement**

As part of the introduction of Sunday charging and new charging areas, Members decided to expand the enforcement team to facilitate enforcement on Sundays. This has recently been rolled out and with staff enforcing around the Borough.

### 6 **Parking Performance**

#### 6.1 **PCNs issued 24/25 (23/24)**

16,874 (17,197) Parking Penalty Charge Notices

#### 6.2 **Parking income 24/25 (23/24)**

£3,849,501 (£3,351.323) from PCNs, P&D, parking permits etc.

### 7 **Parking Update - Next 12 months**

#### 7.1 **Implementation of Phase 15 Parking Action Plan**

Following completion of the formal consultation, the Service will move to

processing the new Traffic Regulation Orders along with the physical installation of signs and lines.

**7.2 Review of on-street impact following the introduction of Sunday charging and new charging locations.**

Following the delivery of Sunday charging and new charging locations, Members recognised the need to review the impact of any displacement of parking into residential areas. We will start to review impacts associated with this work and will bring forward proposals to future meetings of the Joint Transportation Board.

**7.3 Trial of ANPR and payment card services for parking**

The development of the schemes for both Sovereign Way North and Bradford Street Car Park had been initially scoped and will be proceeding with implementation anticipated this Summer 2026.

**7.4 Aylesford Car Park**

The Planning permission for the car park will be considered at full Council in July this year. It is anticipated that this will be delivered in the 2026/27 financial year.

**8 Questions raised by Cllr Pilgrim following the review and introduction of new parking charges**

**8.1 Feasibility of increasing the 30 mins free parking in Tonbridge to 1 hour**

8.1.1 The parking changes introduced in August 2024 included elements of free 30 minute short-stay parking in 6 car parks around Tonbridge Town Centre.

8.1.2 The car parks that offer 30 minutes free parking are: River Lawn Road car park, Lamberts Yard car park, Kinnings Row car park, Castle Grounds car park, Upper Castle Field car park and Bradford Street Car Park.

8.1.3 Financial year figures for 24/25 are incomplete, as are 2025/6, but taking the calendar year 2025, the reports from Pay & Display machines show that there were 96,708 free 30-minute parking sessions used. If the free parking concession had not been in place this would have produced an income of around £77,000 (including VAT),

8.1.4 This should be considered against the 23,427 paid 1-hour parking sessions in the same car parks in the same period.

8.1.5 It has been suggested by Cllr Pilgrim that the Council consider extending the free 30-minute parking period to 1 hour – this would infer a potential loss of income of circa £37,000 (including VAT).

8.1.6 It also has to be recognised that there are contractual arrangements in the Council's largest car parks in Tonbridge, serving Sainsbury, Waitrose and Iceland, where a refund of parking "through the till" occurs, meaning that we are unable to offer a free 1 hour parking concession in those car parks.

8.1.7 If the free parking period in the short-stay car parks was extended to 1 hour this could have a significant consequence on the operation of the Angel and Botany car parks.

## 8.2 **Feasibility of Introducing a single fee for all-day parking on Sundays, based on the first hour rate for that car park on other days**

8.2.1 Sunday is seen as a normal shopping day alongside Saturday, though the shopping visits are affected by the requirement of retail establishments to adhere to Sunday trading hours. This places more pressure on parking spaces as the number of visitors are “compressed” by the shopping times.

8.2.2 Usage across the car parks is very good and we generate good turnover of spaces to support those wishing to park. Members took the hard decision to introduce charges on Sundays along with establishing Sunday enforcement. The introduction of an all-day charge is not seen as an improvement to the current system, as the need for short-stay parking space turnover is important. An all-day charge effectively designates all car parks as “long stay” and this could be detrimental to footfall.

## 8.3 **Feasibility of allowing 2 days of free parking over the Christmas period**

8.3.1 From a parking management perspective, free parking at Christmas is not seen as a positive approach. Parking charges are an important tool for maintaining parking turnover. The first thing that happens is that staff and workers that would perhaps either park further away from their place of employment or use sustainable transport, park in the most convenient short stay space as close as possible. This effectively removes those spaces from more general shopper use so reducing capacity.

8.3.2 The most critical point for shoppers at Christmas is the ability to find space when they want. This is particularly relevant as the period just before Christmas is when the parking demand is highest.

8.3.3 On days that are free the turnover of spaces is much slower so therefore again damaging the flow of customers to the shopping facilities. Some customers may well stay longer but the main customer demand is to be able to park when they enter a car park and the charging regime does generate regular and reasonable levels of turnover.

## 8.4 **Review of impacts on parking areas affected by the introduction of Sunday charging and charges until 8pm**

8.4.1 In addition to the questions raised by Cllr Pilgrim we will also be reviewing the impact of Sunday charging in particular reviewing the impact on nearby areas. Areas that we are aware of are as follows:

- The Slade
- Avebury Ave area

8.4.2 The requests for reviews are linked to the displacement of parking from areas and times that were free in car parks to nearby residential areas and may consider introducing Sunday and evening restrictions to those residential areas.

## **9 Engineering Team - Past 12 months**

### **9.1 Refurbishment of Angel East Car Park**

The refurbishment of the Angel East car park has been undertaken in partnership with Sainsburys in a number of phases since 2020. In the last year we carried out phase 6, these works included replacing drainage channels and the re-surfacing.

### **9.2 Continued roll-out of Connected Kerb EV charging facilities**

We continue to work with Connected Kerb to ensure delivery of their commitments for operational EV charging points in a number of Council car parks across the Borough. We currently have a total of 56 charging units that have been installed and commissioned with a further 14 to be completed in the next few weeks.

### **9.3 Christmas Lights**

The Council provides the Christmas lights in Tonbridge Town Centre and these include 8 cross-street decorations, spanning the High Street from buildings on either side. The anchor points are checked for security and structural stability annually

### **9.4 Shallows Bridge, Haysden Country Park**

Following an inspection from a Structural Engineer the Shallows Bridge was closed last year. The initial plan has been to remove the existing structure to allow the review of the bridge abutments using a large crane. Due to the proximity to the railway, Network Rail need to give consent for us to use the size of crane required to remove the bridge. This has delayed the removal of the bridge as we have yet to receive consent.

9.4.1 We have continued to work with the structural engineer to review other possible methods for removing the bridge without the use of a crane. We hope to have a viable method developed and costed to allow removal in the next few months.

## **10 Engineering Performance**

### **10.1 Parking restriction lines and signs**

10.1.1 Distance replaced – in the region of 13,000 meters Double Yellow lines plus 2 car parks relined.

10.1.2 52 new on-street parking posts and signs installed

10.1.3 28 on-street posts replaced

## 10.2 **Street nameplates**

10.2.1 128 replaced

## 10.3 **CCTV**

10.3.1 Camera replacement

10.3.2 Installed CCTV into Martin Square car park

## 10.4 **Car park lighting**

10.4.1 Improved by replacing old obsolete lanterns with 136 standard LED lanterns and 22 heritage LED lanterns.

## 10.5 **P&D machines installed**

10.5.1 13 new machines installed

## 11 **Engineering Team - Next 12 months**

### 11.1 **Refurbishment of Angel East Car Park**

11.1.1 A further phase (no.7) of works to continue replacement and updating of drainage channels and surfacing, to be carried out once Sainsbury have completed their store refurbishment process.

### 11.2 **Refurbishment of Angel West Car Park**

11.2.1 The surfacing in the Angel West Car Park has now reached the end of its serviceable life. With this in mind we will start a phased process of refurbishment to improve drainage and surfacing.

### 11.3 **Testing of lamp columns in car parks**

11.3.1 We will be carrying out the next round of lamp column testing (3-year cycle) for structural soundness and programmed replacement for lighting columns in all TMBC car parks. This will include getting our car park lighting electrically tested this year (5-year cycle).

## 12 **Emergency Planning**

### 12.1 **Recruitment of new resilience officer**

12.1.1 Following the phased retirement of the previous Resilience Officer the post was reviewed and extended from 2 days per week to 4 days per week. A new Resilience Officer was appointed, Roshana Irutharayaj, and has settled in well.

## 12.2 Major Emergency Plan

12.2.1 The Borough Councils Major Emergency Plan was reviewed and has been updated with the next review due in 2028.

## 12.3 Emergency Planning Exercise

12.3.1 The duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act require that we plan for emergencies and that we exercise our plans to ensure they are fit for purpose.

12.3.2 In October 2025, we took part in a Kent based exercise, looking at the failure of Bough Beech reservoir up stream of Tonbridge. We fully participated with resilience partners including testing our Duty Officer/Duty Emergency Coordinator alerting. We deployed Incident Liaison Officers to site (Bough Beech Reservoir) and fully activated the Borough Emergency Centre. This involved establishing our teams and included live briefings to the Management Team.

12.3.3 We have identified a number of lessons learned which will further allows us to improve our readiness and capabilities.

## 12.4 Business Continuity Exercise

12.4.1 We will be conduction a Business Continuity Exercise in April 2026 to enable us to fully test and validate plans. This will also enable the opportunity to review and revise Service Level Business Continuity Plans.

## 13 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

13.1 All services & initiatives detailed above are delivered within the Council's budgetary framework.

## 14 Risk Assessment

14.1 None associated with this report

## 15 Legal Implications

15.1 None associated with this report. All comply with the Council's statutory & discretionary obligations and relevant legislation.

## 16 Consultation and Communications

16.1 The Cabinet Member update is provided to ensure that all Members are aware of the work undertaken within the relevant service areas and how the initiatives assist in delivering the Council's Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Delivery Plan.

## 17 Implementation

17.1 The initiatives detailed above are delivered with the assistance of a number of Council departments, such as Legal Services and the Media team, to try to maximise efficiency & effectiveness, whilst delivering on the Council's statutory duties.

## 18 Cross Cutting Issues

18.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

18.1.1 A number of the initiatives detailed above help to deliver on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan

18.1.2 Climate change advice has been sought in the preparation of the Waste Contract Tender process

18.2 Equalities and Diversity

18.2.1 The initiatives detailed in this report have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. The work undertaken, specifically relating to the Waste Contract procurement process will make a positive contribution in supporting protected characteristics.

18.3 Other If Relevant

- Procurement
- Business Continuity / Resilience
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection

Background Papers	None
Annexes	None