

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

Decision Made: 11 March 2011

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF WASTE AND RECYCLING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Issue for Decision

To consider the progress that has been made on implementing the actions agreed following the Best Value review of Waste and Recycling.

Decision Made

1. That the progress that has been made against the agreed implementation plan be noted (as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Business Improvement).
2. That the completion dates for the actions in the implementation plan be agreed.
3. That the changes and additions to the implementation plan made since the plan was agreed by Cabinet in February 2010 be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

A Best Value review of the Council's waste and recycling service was carried out in 2009. The review was managed by the Policy and Performance team and supported by work carried out by the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The rationale for undertaking the Best Value review at that time was as follows:

- The Council was a year on from the first phase implementation of the new recycling scheme;
- The Place Survey results showed a mixed picture in satisfaction with recycling across the borough;
- Further opportunities to dispose of waste in a more efficient manner had come on line;
- Performance figures showed there was a high level of waste generation in the borough;
- The Council had average performance on recycling but at a high cost;
- The annual audit letters in 2008 and 2009 included references to the performance and cost of the service; and

- The contract with SITA finishes in 2013 and there was a need to start to consider the best options for the new contract.

The review focused on the following areas:

- Strategy;
- The collection service;
- Disposal arrangements;
- The views of the public;
- The relationship between the Council and its partners; and
- Performance and value for money.

All aspects of the Waste and Recycling collection service were considered, including services that could be offered but currently are not e.g. trade waste:

- Collection Arrangements – weekly, alternate weekly, monthly or possible separate urban/rural arrangements;
- Bulky rubbish Collection & Weekend Freighter Service;
- Trade waste;
- Clinical waste;
- Recycling;
- Food waste; and
- Green waste.

The options and recommendations from the review were agreed by Cabinet in November 2009. The Policy and Performance team worked with the Waste and Recycling team to formulate an implementation plan detailing the actions to be taken to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet. The implementation plan itself was agreed by Cabinet in February 2010 and included actions for a number of elements of the Waste and Recycling service including collection arrangements, food waste collections, clinical waste, green waste and bring sites. The Cabinet report included an undertaking to report progress on the implementation plan to me.

The original implementation plan included planned start dates for the actions but not planned completion dates. These were agreed with the relevant officers and added after Cabinet agreed the plan.

The implementation plan was placed onto the Covalent software system for easier progress monitoring. Relevant officers, mainly from the Waste and Recycling team, update the actions as and when they are completed.

The implementation plan is a live document, so actions can be deleted or changed and new actions have been added where necessary. The Waste and Recycling Strategy led to a number of changes in the implementation plan because of the following:

- The borough-wide roll out of weekly food waste collection scheme rather than trialling the scheme with 7,000 - 10,000 households first; and

- No introduction of a separate paper collection – a paper collection had originally been planned following the Best Value Review.

Therefore, some start and completion dates have been altered because of the extra work required to implement the new food waste scheme. Also, some actions have been added following on from other actions that have been completed, or to replace actions that are no longer relevant. The most significant changes are:

- Changes to BVR 003.01 to BVR 003.11 to reflect the borough wide implementation of the new food waste scheme;
- BVR 004.08 and BVR 004.09 added to action plan as follow on actions to review success of Tetrapak recycling bank pilot and to ensure facilities are available to recycle the right sorts of materials at bring sites;
- Change of planned start date for BVR 009.01 from February 2010 to 1 April 2011 as creating a profile of current commercial waste arrangements in the borough has been delayed due to the new food waste scheme;
- Change of planned start date for BVR 012.04 from April 2010 to November 2010 as development of impact measures for education and promotion work was delayed due to the need for education and promotion work for the new food waste scheme;
- Change of planned start date to BVR 012.07 from 1 November 2010 to 1 October 2011 as creation of the education and promotion plan, and therefore the 6 monthly review of this plan, have been delayed due to the promotion and roll out of the new food waste scheme;
- BVR 013.04 added to implementation plan as Mosaic analysis of waste and recycling contacts is useful to help the service improve;
- BVR 014.03 and BVR 014.04 added to implementation plan following on from relevant funding organisations being identified as part of BVR; and
- BVR 018.10 added to implementation plan to ensure options for kerbside collections of paper and other recyclable materials are considered as part of the new waste and recycling contract.

In the past year excellent progress has been made on the implementation plan. The service has improved and actions taken as a result of the Best Value review and detailed in the implementation plan will result in savings to the Council of approximately £103,000 by 2011/12, although initially this will be required to fund the annual cost of the Food Waste service.

The main changes have been:

- A new Waste and Recycling Strategy giving a vision and longer term targets for the service;
- Introduction of borough-wide weekly food waste collections and changes to the recycling and non-recycling collections, which has so far led to approximately a 22% reduction in the amount of household waste collected in grey bins;
- £500,000 received in grants towards funding the food waste scheme;

- Removal of can banks from bring sites, saving the Council £23,000, and an increase in the number of bring sites and the facilities for recycling a range of materials at bring sites;
- Changes to the weekend freighter service – saving the Council £15,000;
- An increase in purchase of compost bins of 105% in January 2011 when compared to the average monthly sales in the previous quarter;
- Introduction of compostable green waste sacks – which will save the Council £65,000 by the end of 2011/12 and has made the service more environmentally friendly; and
- An increased clinical waste collection service and improved waiting times for this service.

Only four actions are overdue and the majority of these actions have not been completed because of the staff time required to implement the food waste scheme. The overdue actions are as follows:

- BVR 004.04 – Work with the Planning department and interested groups to develop a proforma to identify land appropriate for bring sites
- BVR 005.07 – Introduce a method for improved recording of bulky items
- BVR 007.07 – Increase the number of web-based transactions that can be completed on-line e.g. paying for garden waste bins, reporting missed bins, ordering and paying for bulky collections, ordering garden sacks etc
- BVR 012.06 – Hold a focus group meeting at the end of the first complete year of the dry recyclable scheme

Appendix A to the report of the Head of Business Improvement sets out the objectives (which reflect the recommendations agreed by Cabinet in November 2009) and the actions required to achieve these. For each action the following is shown:

- planned start dates;
- due dates;
- action status i.e. whether action is in progress/assigned, completed or overdue;
- responsible officer; and
- latest note giving more information on the action.

Latest notes are written by the responsible officer when an action is completed or when an update on the implementation plan is due. Latest notes are included for all actions that are completed or that are in progress, but are not included for any actions that have not yet started.

Highlights

The implementation plan gives a good view of progress against the detailed actions. The following paragraphs give a high level view of the main achievements under each recommendation from the Best Value Review agreed by Cabinet.

Create a Council Waste and Recycling Strategy

The Waste and Recycling Strategy has been created and agreed by Cabinet in September 2010. This gives the Council a clear vision and targets for waste and recycling.

Ensure there is a fair distribution of recycling credits within Kent

Through discussions with Kent County Council and national funding bodies over £500,000 in grants has been received towards the food waste scheme.

Consider an alternate weekly waste collection and investigate a separate food waste service

The new food waste collection service has now been introduced for the whole borough. New food waste caddies were delivered to 55,568 households at the end of January and the food waste service from 31 January. In the first week, half of the borough had their first food waste collection and 41 tonnes of food waste was sent for composting. This is over 1.5kg per household. More than 70% of households put their new food waste bins out for collection and in some areas, this was more than 80%. Although the service has only just been introduced initial figures suggest that more than 4,500 tonnes of food per year will be sent for recycling. It is too early to say what the impact has been on the overall volume of waste that is being generated. One of the other aspirations of the scheme was to reduce the volume of waste generated, particularly given the greater awareness the public would have on how much food waste was thrown away.

Expand bring sites and facilities for recycling glass and other recyclable material

Can banks have been removed from recycling bring sites. The can banks had become unnecessary as residents could recycle cans in their doorstep recycling collections following the roll out of the dry recyclables scheme. This has resulted in a saving of around £23,000. New glass banks and music/book banks have been installed at various sites across the borough. Discussions are on-going with Tetrapak to further extend the range of materials that can be recycled at bring sites.

Provide residents with an easy to use bulky collection service with an improved pricing structure

A simplified pricing structure for the bulky waste service was agreed in July 2010 and implemented in August 2010. The changes to the weekend freighter service were also implemented in August 2010. By 2011/12 this

will result in a full year saving of around £15,000. Improvements to the recording of bulky items have been delayed because of the need to make the system used by front-line customer services staff ready to deal with the new food waste scheme. This will be pursued further in March 2011. More options for re-use of bulky items will be pursued over the next six months.

Encourage greater home composting for green waste

The Council has signed up to a national composter scheme which is managed by the Waste Improvement Network (WIN). This provided the best value for money for Maidstone residents. Sales of compost bins have increased since information was included on the recycling calendar, with an increase in purchase of compost bins of 105% in January 2011 when compared to the average monthly sales in the previous quarter. New compostable bags for green waste have been delivered to all retailers. By 2011/12 the introduction of these bags and the change in service this makes the service more environmentally friendly and will produce a saving of around £65,000.

Make better use of technology to enable residents to access information and services and improve reporting

The Waste and Recycling web pages have been improved to give better information to residents. A pilot of real-time technology that records collection issues whilst the collection vehicles are out on their rounds is currently underway. Missed bins can now be reported on-line and the process for ordering new bins has improved. Some processes have been delayed because of the needs to work out how to schedule appointments on-line and because purchase of a payment portal was delayed. The payment portal has now been purchased and is being trialled.

Facilities are promoted more extensively and plans for an additional household waste and recycling centre are pursued with the County Council

Details of Household Waste Recycling Facilities in neighbouring boroughs are provided to residents enquiring about services and details are on the Council's website. The possibility of an additional household waste recycling centre has been discussed with Kent County Council, but there are no plans at present for a new site. The Council will, however, continue to lobby KCC regarding the provision of a new site.

Investigate options for the collection of commercial waste

Work to create a profile of current commercial waste arrangements in the borough has been delayed because of the implementation of the food waste service. However, the other actions to investigate options for trade waste collections are still on target. This is the next big project for the Waste and Recycling team and a business case will be developed following the implementation of the separate weekly food waste collections to take account of any spare capacity for commercial food waste collections and other opportunities.

Robust monitoring arrangements for partnerships are established with a greater focus on the outcomes achieved

A number of actions have been completed or are on-going to make better use of partnerships. As part of the procurement process for the new waste and recycling contract, the need for the contractor to work with the Council to identify service improvements and efficiencies will be highlighted. The revised Kent Waste Partnership waste strategy will focus on the need for achieving and monitoring outcomes.

Review the potential for a kerbside sorting system (particularly in rural areas) with the introduction of the new waste collection contract

The potential for a kerbside sorting system will be addressed as part of the new waste and recycling contract.

Ensure that education and promotion work is targeted with monitorable outcomes

Mosaic Public Sector is being used to inform the education and promotion plan of the new food waste collections and target communications to maximise recycling uptake and minimise household waste. A survey has been designed to measure the effectiveness of educational activities carried out in schools. The results from the survey will be used to identify whether educational workshops should be continued and if so to identify what areas should be focussed on. Also, a new DVD has been developed to reflect the changes to the waste services.

Improve understanding of the profile of calls to the service

There is now a better understanding of the profile of calls being made to the Contact Centre about waste and recycling and a new number specifically for waste and recycling has been introduced. Further information on the types of people who contact the Council about waste and recycling is currently being compiled.

Increase opportunities to access funding and participate in innovative schemes

Applications for funding were successful, resulting in £358,000 from Kent Waste Partnership (KWP) and £170,000 from WRAP.

Review future targets in line with the development of the service and the contribution that the Council can make towards the Kent targets in the Local Area Agreement 3

The total waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting was 24.54% 2007/08 (pre roll out of the mixed dry recycling Phase 1 in 2008/09). The recycling rate increased by 2.93% to 27.47% 2008/09, and by a further 3.16% to 30.63% 2009/10. A total increase of 6.09%. The new food waste service will help boost recycling rates further, helping the Council achieve the target in the Waste and Recycling Strategy of 50% recycling, re-use and composting by 2015.

Ensure that the new waste and recycling contract is environmentally friendly and contributes to reduced levels of Co2

When planning the new food waste collection, the environmental impact was considered and minimised. The reduction of the weekend freighter service and the introduction of compostable garden waste bags have improved the environmental impact of the service. With the new food waste scheme there is also the potential to use food waste to fuel refuse vehicles. This will be considered as part of the new contract for 2013.

Implement a clinical waste service that meets the increasing need of local residents

The clinical waste collection service has been increased and waiting times have improved.

Introduce a paper collection service

A decision has been made not to progress with a separate paper collection at the current time, but options for kerbside collection of paper and materials only currently recyclable at bring sites will be considered as part of the new contract.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

I could decide not to agree the revised dates and the changes to the implementation plan; however, this is not recommended as it is felt these represent the reality of how and when the Waste and Recycling service will be developed and reflect the progress that has been made in a relatively short time period.

Background Papers

Best Value review of Waste and Recycling 2009-10 papers and reports

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 18 March 2011
