

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held in Committee Room No. 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th October 2023**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chair),

Cllrs. Bartlett, Feacey, Joseph, Ledger, McGeever, Shilton, C. Suddards.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c), Cllr McGeever attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Michael.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Arnold, Chilton, Meaden, Michael.

In attendance:

Cllr. Campkin

Director of Place, Space and Leisure, Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation, Head Of Policy and Performance, Commercial Projects and Recreation Manager, Member Services Officer.

Also in Attendance (virtually)

Cllrs. Barrett, Walder.

Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager

163 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 12th September 2023 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

164 Waste Contract Implementation

The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation gave a presentation to the Committee, which covered in detail the following areas:

- Methodology
- Arrival at tender bid
- Street cleansing, and the role of the Litter Authority
- Update following the third round of competitive dialogue
- Improving service delivery
- What you will see (Vehicles)
- 3rd sector partner (Demelza)

- Costs, and Risks
- Local wider picture
- Kent Resource Partnership aims
- The national picture on changing legislation
- Changing kerbside materials, and recycling rate
- What happens next (for contract implementation) and how Members can assist

The presentation was opened up to the Committee and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- Staff employed by the existing refuse company Biffa would have the opportunity to transfer to Suez, the new company.
- There would be changes to routes (for efficiency and improved resilience) and collection day changes. This would be widely communicated with residents and with plenty of notice. The reasons for these changes were to help balance out capacity issues at the transfer station and improve the missed bin service.
- Garden waste charges to the customer were anticipated to rise from £45 to £60 (to be confirmed at a future Cabinet meeting) owing to increasing costs for delivering the service. This would bring Ashford in line with neighbouring Local Authorities for garden waste collections. The Director of Place, Space and Leisure explained that Biffa had introduced the collections at a discounted price. The risk of residents putting garden waste into their household waste was considered. The Committee were reminded that the garden waste collection was not a statutory service.
- Funding from Central Government for changing legislative requirements were expected to become clearer in the next financial year. The recycling rate for the Council was a percentage of the overall tonnage of waste collected from households.
- Some of the issues with collecting small electrical items with the household waste, was that the cage beneath the refuse collection vehicles for the items had limited capacity, and so once that cage was full it meant that subsequent items had to be left behind. Small electrical items in the future could be dropped at one of six sites around the Borough, in the form of a pop up project. Opportunities to repair items and upskill residents would be available. Additionally, small electrical items could still be taken to the KCC Waste and Recycling centre in Ashford. More details on the pop up projects would follow, once confirmed.
- Stickers for the wheelie bins to clearly explain what could be put in each bin would be considered as part of the Communications programme.
- Tonnage reviews and manual checks (lifting the bin lid) would enable the crew to identify which roads/routes were frequently bringing in contaminated loads to the transfer station, and subsequently provide more communication to that area.

- Contaminated waste did have a detrimental impact on the target figures. Multipurpose litterbins were being piloted in the Town Centre. An assessment would be undertaken to review whether this had been successful, and waste had been separated correctly.
- Broken and lost wheelie bins could still be reported, although a charge would apply. Repairs to bins would be a consideration for the future. A charge had already been introduced for replacement of the larger external food caddies, since people were using them and other bins, for alternative purposes when they were previously free of charge.
- Assisted collections for the elderly and immobile residents would continue where required.
- Comms, IT and partnership working would play a pivotal part in ensuring the transition to the new contractor was a success.

Resolved:

That the Presentation be received and noted.

165 Budget Scrutiny Task Group Membership

The Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager introduced this item to formally agree the Membership for Budget Scrutiny Task Group. Councillors Bell, Chilton, Bartlett, Ledger and Michael were confirmed as the Task Group members.

166 Cabinet Schedule of Key Decisions

Resolved:

That the Schedule be received and noted.

167 O&S Tracker 2023 to 2024

The Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager introduced the report. SE Water would be attending the next O&S Meeting on 14th November and all Members were invited to provide constructive questions in advance.

The 'Using Information and Developing Effective Questioning skills' training scheduled for Tuesday 17th October would be a hybrid session, so Members did have the option to join remotely.

Resolved:

That the Report Tracker be received and noted.

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