
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Second Floor Conference Room, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Monday, 3 October 2022 from 7.00 pm - 7.42 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart (Substitute for Councillor Ann Hampshire), Steve Davey, James Hall, Peter Marchington (Substitute for Councillor Nicholas Hampshire), Pete Neal, Julian Saunders (Chair), David Simmons, Sarah Stephen, Eddie Thomas, Tim Valentine (Vice-Chair), Mike Whiting (Substitute for Councillor Oliver Eakin), Tony Winckless and Corrie Woodford.

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillor Richard Darby.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell and Kellie MacKenzie.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Alister Andrews and Billy Attaway.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillor Tim Gibson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Oliver Eakin, Ann Hampshire, Nicholas Hampshire and Denise Knights.

348 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

349 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

350 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2022 (Minute Nos. 153 – 164) and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 12 August 2022 (Minute Nos 235 - 240) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

351 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The Chair introduced the Forward Decisions Plan.

The Head of Environment and Leisure thanked the Committee for approving the recommendations regarding the Levelling-up Parks Fund bid which following the cancelled meeting, allowed an emergency decision to be taken by the Chief Executive. He reported that this had now been submitted for Barton's Point and thanked members for their support.

The Chair invited Members to make comments.

A Member asked that full committee dates be included in the third column. The Head of Environment and Leisure agreed to update.

In response to a question about the Air Quality Action Plan item, the Head of Environment and Leisure advised that it would be considered prior to going to consultation and then again before March 2023.

Resolved:

(1) That the Forward Decisions Plan be noted.

352 **Waste and Street Cleansing Contract Update**

The Head of Environment and Leisure introduced the report which detailed the Waste and Street Cleansing Contract tender process to-date. It also sought approval for further Member briefings on the Waste and Street Cleansing Contract. He reminded Members that at the Extraordinary Environment Committee meeting on 12 August 2022 Members had agreed to the extend the current contract until March 2024 due to issues securing the specific vehicles required and confirmed this had now been agreed by the current contractors.

The Head of Environment and Leisure stated that the waste contract was the Council's largest and most complicated contract. He stated that officers recognised the importance of the contract which was why Member briefings were recommended.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions, and points raised included:

- Welcomed the briefings and asked that they be held remotely;
- why were small electrical equipment, textiles or batteries being collected at kerbside collections being removed as set-out in paragraph 2.7 of the report? Concerned that residents would put them in their green bin which would affect the Council's recycling;
- important to consider the impact of rising inflation;
- would the waste collection vehicles be leased or bought outright?;
- would the electric waste vehicle be more expensive than petrol?; and
- as a joint Mid-Kent contract there should be more cross-boundary cooperation.

In response the Head of Environment and Leisure explained that the current waste vehicles did not have capacity to collect kerbside waste electrical items and textiles and a clearer process for those items was being explored. He explained that the intention of the new contract was those items could be added to the bulky waste collections free of charge. The quantity of such items put out for recycling was low with most residents already taking-up the alternative ways of recycling mentioned in the report.

The Head of Environment and Leisure explained that inflation had been a key consideration during the tender dialogue and one of the reasons that we expected the new contract to cost more.

The Head of Environment and Leisure explained the procurement of waste vehicles all bidders were comfortable with the Council purchasing the vehicles. Leasing was not the preferred option for the core fleet due to price and availability of the right vehicles. Owning the vehicles also gave more flexibility at the end of a contact.

The Head of Environment and Leisure spoke about the trialling of the electric waste vehicles and that the bidders had been asked to put forward environmental initiatives but were not solely focussed on electric vehicles. The Environmental Services Manager explained that there had been positive feedback and they were much quieter which made them safer to operate for the drivers.

In response to requests from Members, the Head of Environment and Leisure agreed to forward any Committee Member the current contract documents for review should they wish. He explained that there would be a massive communications campaign for residents when awarding the contract and to highlight any changes during the transition phase.

There was some discussion about holding the proposed briefings remotely and the Head of Environment and Leisure agreed to ensure they were as accessible as possible.

Councillor Tim Valentine proposed the recommendations, and they were seconded by Councillor Steve Davey.

Recommended:

- (1) That an all-member briefing on the Waste and Street Cleansing future contract be held.***
- (2) That a recorded version of the briefing be made available to all Councillors.***

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel