

<b>Environment Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	30 June 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	Handover Report: Executive Model to Committee System
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	The committee is asked to <b>note</b> the contents of the report.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is intended to ensure that all Environment committee members share a common understanding of the committee's remit, including the services it has oversight of, and of current issues and major pieces of work relevant to that remit. Similar reports have been or will be provided to all of the new service committees.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Council agreed unanimously in October 2021 to move to a committee system of governance from the 2022/23 municipal year, and the new constitution was adopted in April 2022. The constitution establishes five politically-balanced service committees to undertake the decision-making on what would previously have been executive matters.

- 2.2 The Environment committee has a number of areas of responsibility on which it is able to make decisions under delegation from Council. These are set out in the constitution as follows:

- refuse collection and recycling
- street cleansing
- climate and ecological emergency
- environmental response, including fly-tipping, contaminated land, animal welfare, pollution control, littering and illegal encampments
- environmental health, including management of public health and safety risks
- air quality
- green spaces, open spaces and grounds maintenance
- flooding, sea defences and coastal protection
- active travel and
- public conveniences

- 2.3. The majority of these functions are delivered by the Environment and Leisure service, although environmental health is part of a shared service with Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and active travel sits within the Property and Regeneration service.

- 2.4. The Environment and Leisure service also delivers some functions which are within the remit of other Committees but have a crossover with Environment, such as cemeteries, which sits in Policy and Resources; Churchyards, Play, Indoor and Outdoor sport which sit in Community committee. Seafronts and Harbours also sit within the Regeneration and Property committee.
- 2.5. Key management contacts are shown below:
- Martyn Cassell – Head of Environment and Leisure
  - Alister Andrews – Environmental Services Manager
  - Jay Jenkins – Leisure and Technical Services Manager
  - Janet Hill, Climate Change Officer
  - Tracey Beattie – Mid Kent Environmental Health Manager
  - Lyn Newton – Destination and Place Manager (active travel lead)
- 2.6. The ‘Proposals’ section below provides background information on the committee’s areas of responsibility.

### **3 Proposals**

#### **Corporate plan objectives**

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2020-2023, which was adopted by Council in October 2020, includes 20 strategic objectives grouped under four priorities. The Environment Committee will support a number of the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023 objectives. The most relevant of these are in priority 2:
- 2.1 *Develop a coherent strategy to address the climate and ecological emergencies, aiming for carbon neutrality in the council’s own operations by 2025 and in the whole borough by 2030, and pursue all opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the borough.*
  - 2.2 *Encourage active travel and reduced car use, including through the permeability of new developments, and work with partners to address air quality issues.*
  - 2.3 *Establish a special projects fund to provide much-needed capital investment in the borough’s public realm and open spaces.*
  - 2.5 *Work towards a cleaner borough where recycling remains a focus and ensure that the council acts as an exemplar environmental steward, making space for nature wherever possible.*

#### **Key Policies and Strategies**

- 3.2 One of the ways in which the committee system differs from the executive model is the absence of individual member decision-making and the need -

which to some extent flows from that - for members to direct the activities of the organisation by means of policies and strategies. While it will be for the Policy and Resources Committee to adopt all of the council's policies and strategies which are not reserved to Full Council, the Environment Committee will take a particular interest in those policies and strategies which relate to matters within its own remit, including but not limited to:

- Open Spaces and Play Strategy
- Electric Vehicle Strategy
- Environmental Enforcement Policy
- Tree Maintenance Policy
- Cemetery and Burial Regulations (shared with P+R)
- Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan
- Air Quality Action Plan

### **Current issues and large pieces of work**

#### **3.3 Recent highlights include:**

- New grounds maintenance contract and arboriculture contract – enhanced specification with improved climate advantages such as electric vehicles, hand tools and reduced use of pesticides.
- Tree planting - over 5,000 new trees planted with 2<sup>nd</sup> phase due this autumn with another 6,000.
- Completion of the Faversham Recreation ground improvements and opening of new facilities.
- New toilet blocks at Minster Leas and Milton Creek country park.
- Replacement of Barton's Point bridge.
- Retention of Green Flags at our country parks.
- 3 Blue Flags retained for our resort beaches.
- Our Climate and Ecological Emergency action plan was rated in the top 20 nationally.
- Introduction of a new electric fleet for Council operations.
- Creation and delivery of Environment grants scheme.
- New food waste collection trials for marine Town residents.
- Implementation of anti-idling campaign and legislation.
- Delivery of public and environmental health asks from Government during the pandemic.
- Successful application for Government funding of 10 additional EV charging units across the Borough.
- Multi agency work and signage for illegal shellfish harvesting.
- Monitoring and declaration of AQMA for particulates.
- Development of Air Quality and Planning Technical Guidance document

#### **3.4 Current workload includes:**

- New Waste and Street Cleansing contract preparation – October 2023
- Contract Management of existing waste and street cleansing contract

- Waste and Recycling education and improvement
- Public conveniences – day to day management and future refurbishment plans
- Delivery of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan – multiple actions across all departments
- Management of grounds maintenance contract and tree maintenance contract
- Open space asset management (trees, pathways, furniture etc)
- Parks improvement
- Coastal management including cliff erosion
- Countryside management (woodland, coastal parks, watercourses)
- Air quality improvement projects
- Review of Air Quality Action Plan 2023 -28
- SBC owned Street Lighting LED Upgrade Project
- Environmental health – implementing the FSA Food Inspection Recovery Plan, working with partners to address illegal shellfish harvesting

3.5. Significant issues include:

- Challenging circumstances for major contracts following pandemic
- Rising costs of products and services
- Changing Government policy – particularly waste legislation
- Ongoing environmental crime across the Borough
- Air quality management areas
- Cliff erosion on Sheppey

## **4 Alternative Options**

4.1 As the report is for noting only, there are no alternative options.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 As the report is for noting only, no consultation has been undertaken or is proposed.

## **6 Implications**

6.1 As the report is for noting only, there are no implications arising from the recommendations.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 There are no appendices.