

Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	10/07/25
Report Title	Annual performance report for waste collection and street cleansing service 2024/25
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment & Leisure
Lead Officer	Alister Andrews, Environment Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To discuss the contents and approve publication of the report on the council website. 2. It is recommended that the Waste Member Working Group set up for mobilisation of the new service is ended.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the first Swale Borough Council annual waste collection and street cleansing report. It covers the service performance from April 2024 to March 2025 and delivers against one of the recent Waste and Street Cleansing Scrutiny review recommendations (an annual report). A further mid-year report will be submitted for discussion at Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee later in the year. This will be a *'lighter touch'* update on service performance.

2 Background

- 2.1 Suez were awarded the contract for Mid Kent in 2023. The Mid Kent Waste Partnership includes Ashford Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Swale Borough Council. Suez undertake bin collections for all councils and street cleansing for Ashford and Swale only.
- 2.2 The mobilisation of a contract of this size was complex and various changes were required to meet the corporate priorities set by Members. Amongst other changes, a new fleet of vehicles was procured by the council; a full re-route of collections was undertaken; and new software and hardware was introduced to meet environmental and financial requirements.
- 2.3 The changes impacted service significantly and poor performance led to the creation of a cross-party Member working group to investigate and review the

reasons behind the performance. This group discussed their report and published their findings in January 2025.

- 2.4 The contract is an eight-year contract that started in March 2024.
- 2.5 Suez have recently produced their own annual report for the Mid Kent contract (see appendix II).
- 2.6 The Council's report does not only cover the contract with Suez, it details related activity undertaken by the Council's own Contracts team and Environmental enforcement team.
- 2.7 As it is the first report of its kind, officer's welcome input from Members on what they would like to see in future iterations.
- 2.8 During the tender and mobilisation periods of the new service, a cross-party Member working group was created to oversee project - streamlining officer updates, giving a forum to seek informal Member viewpoints and to help inform reports for formal decision at Committee. The working group also oversaw recovery from the period of disruption. With the final strands of mobilisation virtually complete, Members are asked to consider the future of the working group.
- 2.9 This coincides with changes to the administration structures, where new committee briefings will be implemented. As a result, one of the recommendations in this report is to end the Waste Member Working Group that was set up for mobilisation of the new service. It is intended that as part of the new committee reporting process, there will be more opportunities for members to comment on the service.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To discuss the contents of the annual report and approve publication on the council's website.
- 3.2 To discuss ending the Waste Member Working Group meetings that were originally set up for contract mobilisation.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Do nothing - The council are not statutorily obliged to produce an annual report.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As part of the 2024/25 Member Scrutiny review, the cross-party Member working group carried out a range of workshops and interviews with staff from both the

council and Suez, and reviewed feedback from more than 2,000 responses to the public survey. This work led to 23 recommendations from the group, which were discussed and agreed by the Environment and Climate Change Committee at a meeting on Wednesday 15 January 2025.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The waste collection and street cleansing contract is the council's largest contract and it impacts every resident in the borough. Therefore, it is relevant to many of the corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	The costs of this contract will be reported in the end of year financial reports. The new fleet cost just over £7M for Swale (excluding annual fleet financing costs). The streets element of the contract is circa £2.2M and the waste collection element is circa £5.7M. There are also some services which are payable by residents. In 24/25 garden waste subscriptions generated £1,184,169 and bulky waste services generated £108,138 to offset costs against the overall service price.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The council are legally required to provide waste collection and street cleansing services. The contract procurement process was compliant with the relevant legislation.
Crime and Disorder	The swift removal of litter and fly tipping assists in reducing the 'broken window' effect and keeps the borough clean.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	This was fully discussed throughout the contract award as it was a key priority for Members. The new fleet have electric bin lifts and are Euro VI compliant which reduces emissions. The full round re-routes for collections reduced mileage of vehicles, thus reducing vehicle emissions.
Health and Wellbeing	Adequate street cleansing reduces litter, detritus and dusts building up on roads and becoming airborne.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The re-routes have been developed to avoid busy areas like schools at the busiest times of the day. The impact of disrupted services can affect vulnerable residents more, so specific attention is paid to assisted and clinical collections.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The delivery of the new waste service was a key risk in the Council's corporate risk register in the run up to the change. Service was unsatisfactory at the start of the contract. However, improvements were consistently made as the year went on and service ended in a much better position – which can be seen in the report.

Equality and Diversity	The service provides for every resident in the borough. Additional measures have been implemented to ensure all residents have access to the waste collection service. For example, residents can request ' <i>assisted collections</i> ' if they are unable to put bins out themselves. The contractor also collects clinical waste and sharps from residents on prescribed medication.
Privacy and Data Protection	None.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I: Swale Annual Performance Report for the Waste Collection & Street Cleansing Service 2024/25

Appendix II: Suez Mid Kent Annual Report

8 Background Papers

The full waste scrutiny report by the cross party member group can be found here <https://news.swale.gov.uk/news/waste-scrutiny-review#:~:text=The%20review%20worked%20to%20identify,responses%20to%20the%20public%20survey.>