

## **Scrutiny Update 18 April 2018 – Recycling rates in the Borough**

Members previously discussed recycling rates in the Borough following sight of a corporate performance report and wanted to know the detail behind what affects the rate and how this links with communications messages.

During this Scrutiny meeting, officers will present information on the national and regional picture, the current structure of the Swale waste and recycling contract, detail the changes in recycling rates over the last few years, compare with other local district neighbours and outline current and future campaigns.

There is a large national focus on recycling at the moment given the recent television programme Blue Planet. The government is driving a number of new initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling.

There are a number of organisations involved in the county operation of waste and recycling. The County Council is responsible for waste disposal, whilst districts and Borough are responsible for waste collection both at the kerbside and through street cleansing. The Kent Resource Partnership consists of all Districts and Boroughs along with Kent County Council. The private sector also play important roles in collection and disposal.

Swale Borough Council is part of a waste partnership with Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils and Kent County Council (the Mid Kent Joint Waste Partnership). The three lower tier authorities have a joint contract with Biffa to undertake their waste collection service.

A number of changes to the service when the contract started in 2013 have brought about positive improvements and recycling rates have seen a steady increase. However Swale has a lower rate than some other Kent authorities and there is more work to be done in order to meet the 2020 targets laid out by government.

Education on recycling is an on-going requirement. The Council has undertaken large communications campaigns since 2013. Officers are currently drafting a Waste Communications Strategy which will drive forward our efforts to continue the increase in recycling in the Borough over the next few years.