

CABINET

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WASTE STRATEGY STOCKTAKE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Phil Filmer, Front Line Services

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

Medway's current waste strategy was published in 2005, which seeks to guide and forecast Medway's progress in its duties, operations and targets through to 2020. This report provides an update on each initiative agreed within Medway's Waste Strategy 2005-2020.

Even though the level of household waste arisings has shown a dramatic and unpredicted decline over the past year or so, both in Medway and nationally, the causes are likely to be multi-faceted. Certainly the economic downturn has played a significant role and therefore cannot be relied upon as a sustained trend - even for the near future.

So, as the waste sector is in continual flux due to changes in consumerism, market conditions, legislation, economic and environmental drivers as well as technological developments, it is timely to review Medway's progress and offer updated or additional advice where it exists. This report achieves that within section 3 by briefly commenting on the progress to date of each initiative originally set out within the 2005 document, whilst section 4 provides advice on future actions.

This report should be read in conjunction with Medway Council's Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2005-2020, which is available upon request or via the Council's website: http://www.medway.gov.uk/medway_waste-4.pdf

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Budgets have been considered in the medium term financial planning process. The Waste Strategy is consistent with the priorities within the Council Plan.
- 1.2 The relevant LAA targets, for the waste collection and disposal contract are:
 - NI.191 "Residual household waste – kg per household (LAA)"
 - NI.192 "Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting"
 - NI. 193 "Municipal waste land filled"
 - NI.195 "Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)".

2. Background

2.1 Waste Services are entering a period of significant change whereby new contracts for all of Medway's major household waste operations come into effect later this year. The following contracts are planned to come into effect at the start of October 2010.

- Collection of kerbside co-mingled dry recycling, co-mingled food/garden waste and residual
- Collection and disposal of clinical waste
- In-vessel processing of mixed food & garden waste
- Processing of co-mingled recyclables
- Processing of residual waste
- The operating of all household waste & recycling centres (HWRCs)

2.2 The cost of landfilling residual waste, as Medway currently does, continues to increase, as does the pressure to achieve government-set targets. The tax on general household waste that is sent to landfill rose to £48 per tonne in April 2010 and will continue to rise by £8 each April until it reaches £80 in 2014. On top of this, the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) only allows a certain amount of biodegradable waste to be landfilled - anything over incurs a penalty of up to £150 per tonne unless the Council acquires additional permits from another local authority. Each year this allowance decreases.

2.3 Summary waste data from Medway is presented in the following three figures:

Fig.1. Waste arisings, recycling rates and LATS allowances

	Total household waste arisings (t)	% recycled/composted	Total Landfill (t)	68% of which is deemed biodegradable (t)	LATS allowance of biodegradable (t)
2005/6	130,107	31.8	88,796	60,381	77,918
2006/7	130,022	32.4	87,641	59,595	73,713
2007/8	131,403	31.7	89,629	60,947	68,107
2008/9	129,272	33.3	82,353	56,000	61,100
2009/10*	est 132,598	target 37	est 82,249	est 55,929	52,691
2010/11	est 134,590	target 40	est 56,092	est 38,143	46,826
2011/12	est 136,518	target 41	est 35,892	est 24,407	40,961
2012/13*	est 139,007	target 42	est 25,978	est 17,665	35,096
2019/20*	est 144,979	target 55	est 16,585	est 11,278	24,558

* LATS target years in which allowances cannot be banked from the previous year or borrowed from the next

Fig.2. Performance against LATS

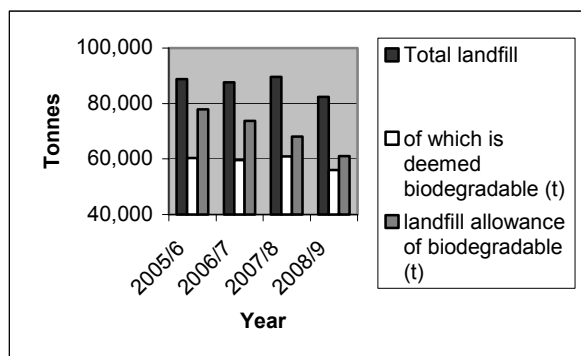
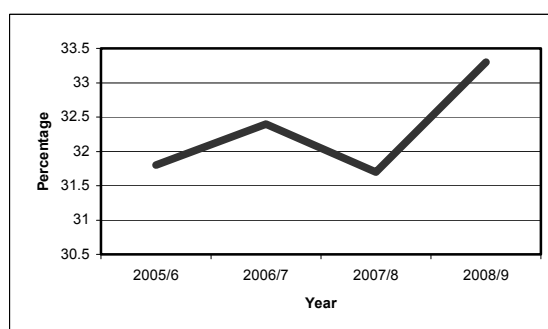


Fig.3. Recycling rates since 2005



Note: Problems with wood recycling were largely responsible for the dip in 2006/7

- 2.4 New key national waste indicators were launched in 2008 and are listed below:
- NI 191: Residual household waste per household (see 2.5)
 - NI 192: Household waste reused, recycled and composted
 - NI 193: Municipal waste land filled
- 2.5 In line with the national and local waste strategy Medway wishes to see a year on year reduction in the amount of residual household waste through a combination of less overall waste and more reuse, recycling and composting. Medway has an important role to play in assisting their residents to reduce waste as well as encouraging sorting of waste for recycling, re-use, home composting.
- 2.6 The NI191 indicator monitors the local authority performance in reducing the amount of waste that is sent to landfill, incineration or other forms of energy recovery.
Figure 4 below shows the trends in residual waste per household.

For Unitary Authorities, NI191 is expressed in kilograms and calculated as follows:

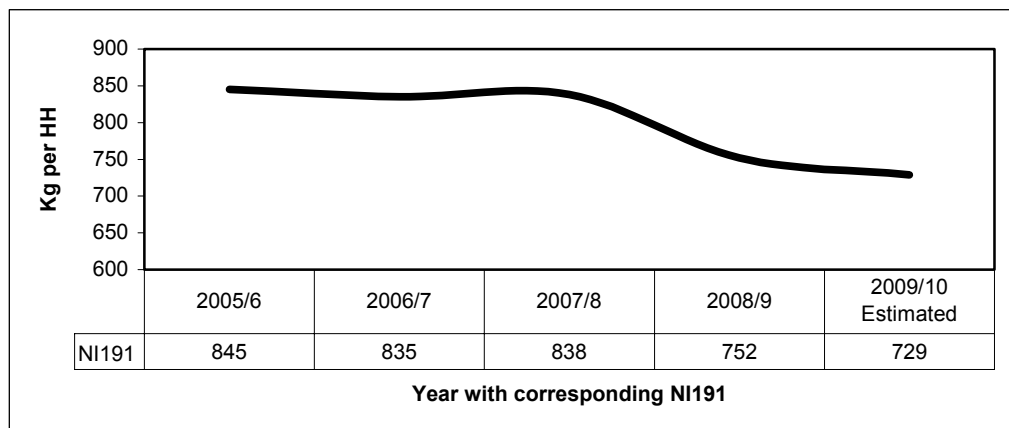
$$((X/Y) * 1,000)$$

where:

X = Total tonnage of household waste arisings collected by the authority minus the tonnage of household waste collected by the authority sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion, as defined by the national indicator NI 192.

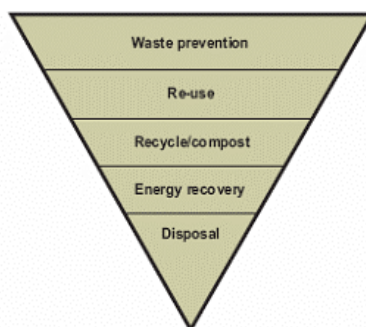
Y = Number of households as given by the dwelling stock figures from the Council Taxbase.

Fig 4. NI191 performance since 2005



- 2.7 New contracts will bring with them new ways of processing many of our waste streams and present our most likely way of avoiding the rises in landfill tax and large penalties under LATS. However, on their own, these new arrangements will not guarantee the Authority achieves its own and national-set recycling targets. It is therefore important that Medway continues to investigate and undertake supplementary initiatives that promote the principles of the waste hierarchy.

Fig.5. The waste hierarchy



2.8 The recycling and composting targets set by Medway’s waste strategy are as follows:

- 40 per cent by 2010
- 45 per cent by 2015
- 55 per cent by 2020

The same targets set nationally are very similar:

- 40 per cent by 2010
- 45 per cent by 2015
- 50 per cent by 2020

In 2008/9 Medway recycled/composted 33.25%, below the national average rate of 37.6%. This is largely due to other authorities having already let new collection and disposal contracts or implementing policies that further encourage recycling (such as alternate weekly collections).

In addition, the National Waste Strategy 2007, set targets for the overall recovery of municipal waste (to include the generation of electricity using waste as a fuel) as follows:

- 53 per cent by 2010
- 67 per cent by 2015
- 75 per cent by 2020

Note: overall recovery targets are likely to be achieved when new disposal contracts come into effect from October 2010

3. Waste Strategy Stocktake

3.1 This section provides an update on the pursuit of each initiative agreed within Medway’s Waste Strategy 2005-2020.

Initiative	Progress
WM1: Waste growth	<p>Estimated figures show that Medway is currently collecting around 468kg per head per year compared with 2005/6 levels of 518kgs.</p> <p>Waste growth across the UK has also seen an unexpected drop. This is thought to be partly due to the economic downturn, national and local waste minimisation promotions and retailers minimising packaging (i.e. light-weighting packaging).</p>

WM2: Waste minimisation at source	For the last three years Medway have helped the Local Government Association and other local authority waste bodies with initiatives to advise retailers and manufacturers on concerns, barriers and issues regarding the reduction of pre and post-production waste as well as the effects of local waste minimisation initiatives.
WM3: Home composting campaign	Total compost bins sold since 2005 = 10,934 Total potential landfill diversion = 1640 tonnes In September 2009 the government-sponsored waste programme, WRAP (Waste Resource Action Programme), ceased funding a scheme that had allowed Medway residents to obtain discounted compost bins. Medway took it upon itself to source its own short term supplier in order to continue the benefit for residents before signing up to a new national framework let by IESE (Improvement Efficiency South East). This has allowed Medway to provide its residents with a range of compost bins and accessories to help them divert biodegradable waste from landfill. The service remains a zero-cost waste minimisation initiative.
WM4: Reusable nappies	Total babies signed to the scheme since 2005 = 391 Total potential landfill diversion = 317 tonnes In 2008 WRAP withdrew from the national real nappy campaign and handed over the running to the Women's Environmental Network. Signing up to this initiative became chargeable and Medway's Waste Minimisation Team felt it could offer a better value service by continuing its own incentive scheme.
WM5: Wood chipping	During January 2009, in partnership with ward councillors, a trial service was offered within a targeted area. The service offered free Christmas tree chipping to local residents with the option of taking the chippings away for mulch or compost. A range of advertising methods, including leaflet drops, was deployed prior to and during the trial period. Following critical evaluation of the costs (£39.03 per tree), it was felt there was no advantage in the council pursuing or funding future schemes, particularly as the existing garden service is equipped and contracted to deal with this waste using environmentally-friendly methods.
WM6: Charity reuse schemes	Since mid 2009, via our EU funded partnership with Remade South East, Medway has been working with a Furniture Reuse Network charity called 'The Neighbourhood Furniture Store'. Customers' booking bulky collections are now vetted by Customer First with suitable items being referred to this organisation for collection. Currently this scheme is diverting around 10 tonnes of waste from landfill each month but is very much in its infancy.
WM7: Waste exchange	In January 2010, Medway supported the Medway Waste Forum – a local community think tank and action group – to deliver a waste exchange day in Gillingham. Residents did exchange some items but the event gained more items than it gave away. Whilst identifying areas that could be improved, without a committed community group to assist and better manage the event voluntarily, additional waste is likely to arise as opposed to achieving the objective of true "Waste Minimisation".

WM8: Bulky waste reduction	The service has seen significant reductions in kerbside bulky arisings without any corresponding rises in fly tipping. This result has been partly attributed to applying charges over and above one free collection every six months, which has reduced the abuse that the service had been under from private landlords and traders. Diversion of some bulkies for reuse, possible increased use of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) by those not wishing to pay and less new furniture being purchased due to the economic downturn are likely also to have influenced the drop in bulky collections.
WM9: Think before you buy	Medway joined the national Love Food Hate Waste campaign, which helps reduce waste by smart shopping and a better understanding of waste. A number of week-long promotional events have been delivered, initially concentrating on the staff of the largest employers in Medway in order gain the largest impact. A number of separate events around Medway are also carried out that are open to everyone, such as NHS healthy days and MHS community days. There is a dedicated web page which covers the changes and progress that manufacturers are making at the public's request to reduce packaging and increase its recyclability.
WM10: Enforcement	The Environment Enforcement team continue to investigate and prosecute fly tippers. Medway does not currently enforce recycling as some other authorities have chosen to do and has not yet needed to use its powers to prosecute anybody for contaminating its kerbside recycling.
WM11: The green procurement code	Procurement of new contracts has adhered to corporate guidelines. All blue bags are made with high percentage (80%) of recycled materials.
WM12: Household waste and recycling centres	Medway recharges Kent County Council (KCC) in full for waste deposited by residents from outside of Medway who use the three HWRC's. These sites are surveyed up to three times a year in order to estimate this usage resulting in KCC paying Medway around £200,000 per year. The recharge system will be reviewed after new HWRC management contracts have been let.
WM13: Food digesters	The local water authority is resistant to encouraging their use. Although the water authority appears to have the technology to deal with macerated food waste, the main obstacle appears to be that the sewer systems are not built to take it. Within our Section 106 applications of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, developers are encouraged to look at waste minimisation options such as compost bins (which is covered in sustainable planning) and sink digesters. To date, there has been one scoping project consisting of up to 180 sink digesters proposed by a developer. Waste services continue to be in dialogue with the water authorities to ensure future development projects are well informed.
R1: Recycling rate	During 2008/9, Medway recycled or composted 33.25% of its household waste. Significant factors that have influenced an upward trend have included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness campaigns, - implementing a scheduled delivery of blue bags to all

	<p>residents and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of kerbside glass recycling.
R2: Containers	<p>a) A borough-wide bin suitability survey has been undertaken and results are currently being uploaded into the Confirm Asset Management software system for full analysis.</p> <p>b) Since the current strategy was written, a further 6,500 garden bins have been issued to those wishing to have them. Further allocation will be possible under new collection contracts (an estimated to 8,000 bins)</p> <p>c) The option of alternate weekly collections is not currently one being pursued by Council.</p> <p>d) In addition to blue boxes, blue bags are regularly delivered to every Medway household with a kerbside collection service. They are also now freely available at all libraries and contact points; some 1.4million bags have been distributed in the past 12months through these outlets.</p>
R3: Schools recycling	<p>In 2009, the Waste Minimisation Team achieved 100% participation in our school's recycling scheme. Where required, we have linked schools to other organisations that can help them recycle/reuse specialist equipment (such as computers). Since the schools' recycling service began, it has diverted nearly 2000 tonnes. Since developing education resources for schools, we have delivered national curriculum-linked "fun" presentations to two thirds of Medway schools.</p>
R4: Awareness campaign	<p>Major campaigns have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A community-partnered All Saint's area door-knocking exercise, - The 'Think Blue not Black' to support the introduction of scheduled blue bag deliveries, - Kerbside glass recycling, - 'Love Food Hate Waste', - Chatham litter campaign and - The Christmas-themed performance feedback initiative. <p>All Waste's web pages now adopt the national iconography and only produce printed media that is designed in the same visual format and to corporate layouts. A new 8-page booklet covering all recycling services is available at all libraries and contact points. An "open out" promotional trailer has been purchased with a video and DVD player to help raise awareness of the services offered.</p>
R5: Targeted communication & awareness raising activities	<p>Twice yearly, recycling officers carry out participation surveys in three control areas in Medway providing invaluable trend and performance data. From this, it has been possible to tailor communications and target areas to return the best use of officer time and money. One of the most recent campaigns run on this data was in December 2009. The aim of the education/promotion campaign was to increase/sustain participation across Medway. This was an incredibly successful campaign and increased participation from 74% to 76% across Medway, which is the equivalent to an additional 328 tonnes per year (double the amount expected).</p>
R6: Bulky waste	<p>Whilst one collection of up to 3 items of bulky waste will be collected per property free of charge within any six-month period, any subsequent collection is now charged at £15.</p>

	<p>This policy has been in place since 2009 and has resulted in a significant drop in collections via this service.</p>
R7: Glass recycling	<p>Adaptation of Veolia's processing facilities allowed this material to be introduced as a blue box/bag co-mingled material in 2008 at no additional cost to the Council. It is currently used as a building aggregate.</p>
R8: Other new materials	<p>Five bring sites had facilities installed for recycling TetraPak-style cartons in 2007 and glass was added to the kerbside recycling mix in 2008 at no additional cost to the council. All HWRCs accept waste electronic and electrical equipment for recycling and two now separately collect plasterboard.</p>
R9: In-vessel composting	<p>This disposal method will be introduced from September 2010 offering Medway the chance to accept food waste within its organic kerbside collection service.</p>
R10: Multiple occupancy dwelling recycling	<p>With the scheduled delivery of blue bags from January 2008, 100% of Medway's residents now have what they need to participate in the kerbside recycling service. Recycling officers have continued to survey and assess flats across Medway to ensure suitable systems are in place to overcome any participation barriers. To date 9,284 flats (75% of flats identified in a borough-wide survey) have been assessed and have had bespoke schemes implemented. All known flats with potential collection issues should be assessed and resolved by the end of 2010. In 2009 our work in this area was recognised by being awarded the national "Green Apple Award" for Environmental best practice. One of our recycling officers is now a best practice national advisor to other authorities looking to increase recycling amongst their own flats housing stock.</p>
R11: Bring sites & household waste recycling centres	<p>National colour and iconography identification has been adopted throughout. Plasterboard recycling has been introduced at two HWRCs. The introduction of glass recycling at the kerbside has prompted a review of the range of materials accepted at bring sites. So far the following have been introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TetraPak-style carton recycling at five sites • Provisions for donating books, music and computer software expanded so that the majority of bring sites are now serviced • Collections of small items of waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE) are being trialled at four sites: Union Street, Rochester, Kestrel Road, Lordswood, Hoo shops car park and Parkwood <p>All these additional schemes have been introduced at zero-cost to the Authority whilst it benefits from increased recycling tonnages.</p>
R12: Waste electronic and electrical equipment	<p>The WEEE Directive has shifted the burden of cost for disposing of such equipment on to the manufacturers. There is little the authority can gain by pursuing specific projects involving commercially sourced WEEE. Medway now has an established collection route via HWRCs and bulky collections, it is also trialling collections of small items at bring sites.</p>

4. Advice and analysis

4.1 This section builds on the previous by reassessing the future objectives of each initiative

Initiative	Updated targets	Date
WM1: Waste growth	Continue to encourage waste minimisation by promoting appropriate schemes and through national and local awareness campaigns. Fully review the Waste Strategy once all new collection/disposal arrangements have been established and their performance can be evaluated.	ongoing 2013
WM2: Waste minimisation at source	Take part in any other relevant consultations, be it government or industry-led.	ongoing
WM3: Home composting campaign	Continue to offer residents discounted compost bins, advise residents where required, support local events and community groups particularly the local composting group, The Medway Mulchers.	ongoing
WM4: Reusable nappies	Continue current arrangements whilst a zero net cost can be demonstrated.	ongoing
WM5: Wood chipping	Trial completed. Not considered viable option.	complete
WM6: Charity reuse schemes	Agree more formal arrangements to enable a third sector reuse group to open at least one sales outlet within Medway.	2011
WM7: Waste exchange	Trial completed. Not considered viable option as a Council-run event. Continue to advertise existing exchange networks.	complete ongoing
WM8: Bulky waste reduction	Continue current charging system. Continue to advertise existing web-based exchange networks.	ongoing
WM9: Think before you buy	Continue involvement in and support of WRAP's 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign with local events and literature.	ongoing
WM10: Enforcement	Continue to investigate and prosecute fly tippers. Carry out joined-up awareness campaigns as required (see R4).	ongoing ongoing
WM11: The green procurement code	Keeping best value in mind, apply ethical and green procurement principles where possible to all purchases. Support local businesses where best value allows.	ongoing
WM12: Household waste and recycling centres	Continue compensation framework.	ongoing

WM13: Food digesters	Continue to investigate opportunities through private sector, not by directly funding any trial.	ongoing
R1: Recycling rate	Maintain high participation of dry recycling (>75%) and monitor by ongoing survey schedule twice a year.	ongoing
	Monitor participation of organic collections.	2011
	Conduct a capture-rate and composition survey of all waste streams.	2012
	Increase recycling at HWRCs.	ongoing
	Fully review the Waste Strategy once all new collection/disposal arrangements have been established and their performance can be evaluated.	2013
R2: Containers	Agree wheeled bin use and allocation policy	2010
	Allocate organics bins to all suitable properties that have not been included so far and give choice of bin or bag to other selected streets	2010
	Track all allocations using Confirm software system	2010
	Trial any new method of containment that may be proposed within new collection contracts	2010
	Trial food waste only collections from flats	2013
	Fully review the Waste Strategy once all new collection/disposal arrangements have been established and their performance can be evaluated	2013
R3: Schools recycling	From Sept 2011, the collection and processing of schools' recycling will be handled within contracts managed by Children and Adults Services, although officers within waste services will still develop and deliver education resources to all Medway children.	ongoing
R4: Awareness campaign	Support all service changes with comprehensive and educational campaigns that adequately engages all relevant residents of Medway	ongoing
	Achieve best value by continuing to support any relevant national and local campaigns.	ongoing
R5: Targeted communication & awareness raising activities	See WM1, WM3, WM4, WM8, WM9, R1, R3, R4	
R6: Bulky waste	Charging system successfully satisfied objective.	complete

R7: Glass recycling	Kerbside glass collections introduced in 2009.	complete
R8: Other new materials	Continue to capitalise on technological developments and service opportunities as and when they can return long-term best value.	ongoing
R9: In-vessel composting	Will be in place from Sept 2010.	complete
R10: Multiple occupancy dwelling recycling	Assess all necessary flats and implement dry recycling schemes in each to meet the obligations of the Household Waste & Recycling Act. Continue to monitor, support and promote these schemes. Trial food waste collections from communal bin stores.	2010 ongoing 2016
R11: Bring sites & household waste recycling centres	Extend provisions of small WEEE banks at bring sites. Agree formal arrangements that will create income from bring site textile collections. Partner organisations that offer an attractive means of collecting new materials (relates to R8). Re-evaluate each household waste site provision and maximise the space, ease of use and potential for reuse, recycling and income generation through commercial sector. Assess feasibility of bringing household waste site operational management back in-house.	2010 2011 ongoing 2017 2014
R12: Waste electronic and electrical equipment	Involvement in commercial sector no longer required. See R11	complete

5. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Contamination of recycling	Currently, there is no problem with the quality of Medway's recycling. However, if there are to be any changes to the kerbside services from September 2010, there may be a greater risk of residents getting it wrong.	Back up all service changes with comprehensive communication campaigns. Ensure residents have sufficient information to use services correctly. Monitor qualities and continue with contamination policy.
Ambiguous legislation	<p>Environmental Protection Act Schedule 2 waste – many LAs feel the current legislation is unfair and open to interpretation. The law currently states that LAs can charge for collection* but not disposal; disposal is the more expensive and currently not budgeted for.</p> <p>*Local Authorities can charge certain organisations for collection including, for example, hospitals, schools and further education establishments.</p>	Public bodies such as schools and hospitals have agreed not to pursue claims under schedule 2. Defra will lead on further consultation before considering to amend current legislation
Changing legislation	<p>Waste legislation in a continually changing field, with many draft directives being discussed at the EU level that will lead to UK legislation. For instance, Defra are currently consulting on the following options for introducing new policy measures to restrict biodegradable and recyclable wastes from landfill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing • Introduce landfill bans either a) on their own or b) accompanied by a requirement to sort • Introduce a sorting or tougher pre-treatment requirement but without a landfill ban • Introduce producer responsibility systems linked to recycling targets <p>The consultation closes in June 2010</p>	Engage in consultation where appropriate and monitor progress. Maximise waste minimisation, recycling, composting opportunities. New disposal arrangements will divert majority of residual waste from landfill.

Financial climate	Due to the economic down turn, the markets for recycle have been volatile.	Contracts have been let that passes the risk to the contractors who are better placed with large international partners to ensure stable end markets can be sourced.
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6. Consultation

- 6.1 The impact of regeneration activity has been considered and embraced within the waste strategy.
- 6.2 Resident consultation should be carried out on issues where it is felt appropriate.
- 6.3 A full DIA assessment of any service changes will be conducted as part of the preparation to fully refresh the Waste Strategy after contract changes have taken place.

7 Waste Contract Task Group – Waste Strategy stocktake

- 7.1 The Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Waste Contract task group to consider this matter as pre-decision scrutiny at its meeting on 18 March 2010.
- 7.2 The task group met on 10 June 2010 and considered a draft version of this report.
- 7.3 Officers gave a brief background to the change in the national indicators in 2007 (after the strategy was written) together with national and local targets to be met. Members were then provided with an update on each initiative agreed within Medway's Waste Strategy 2005.
- 7.4 The task group agreed that it was a comprehensive report fully detailing the achievements accomplished in the last five years (when the strategy was first adopted) and setting out future work and action for the next five years and commended the report and recommendations to Cabinet.

8 Financial and legal implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate financial or legal issues arising from this report although the processing of waste is a very significant cost to Medway and the policies and technologies deployed affect that cost envelope.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That Cabinet notes the report and agrees that a more comprehensive review of the waste strategy along with all waste collection arrangements should be submitted once the performance of new contracts can be fairly evaluated, the outcome and impacts of the

government's consultation on pending legislation and a clearer picture can be formulated on the impacts of the carbon agenda on waste.

10. Suggested Reasons for Decision

- 10.1 This report provides an update on each initiative agreed within Medway's Waste Strategy 2005-2020. A more comprehensive review will ensure that all targets are smart, measurable and realistic as well as being based on necessary outcomes.

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Background papers

Medway Council Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2005-2020.