

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Review Report on Coastal Waste Collection Practices

Cabinet	16 June 2022
Report Author	Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bob Bayford, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Special Projects
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Previously Considered by	Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 19 April 2022
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

This is a covering report to introduce the report by the Coastal Waste Scrutiny Review Working Party after their investigations that started in October 2021, into how the Council could develop practices for keeping the district's beaches, promenades and the coastline clean and welcoming for visitors and the local communities. The review led to findings and proposals being presented and adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Cabinet was then asked to consider those recommendations.

Recommendation(s):

To consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel contained within the Coastal Waste Scrutiny Panel and decide which of those recommendations they wish to accept.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The report recommends the prioritising of resources for coastal waste activities. Due to the council's limited resources any prioritisation for these activities would most likely require the council to consider what other activities would need to be deprioritised in order to release and reallocate funding.

In other words, the council would need to reduce funding on other service areas or activities (via savings or service reductions) to provide the funding to pay for increased spending on Coastal Waste, if the council so wished.

As per recommendation 2, the need to reduce funding in other areas could be avoided if a broader range of income sources could be secured to fund these income. However, it would

be necessary for the council to have assurance that any income estimates were robust, reliable and sustainable before they could be included in the budget.

Legal

The role of scrutiny is set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000. The council must also have regard to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny from the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government when exercising its functions.

Risk Management

Adoption of the recommendations in this report and as detailed in Annex 1 to the cabinet report, Cabinet would need to be aware of the financial implications which would arise. This is with particular reference to the need to identify additional resources to fund the implementation of those recommendations. The recommendations would also be best implemented through an action plan which would provide a better structure for carrying out the work. An action plan would also make it easier to monitor progress and measure the impact of the work done.

Corporate

This report is a result of the work undertaken by a working party that was tasked by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel to conduct an investigation into how best the Council could keep the district coastline and beaches clean. Findings from that piece of scrutiny work is now being shared with Cabinet to consider and make a decision.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -
(Delete as appropriate)

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

No implications arise directly but the Council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.

It is important to be aware of the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration has been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by Council.

Corporate Priorities

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Growth
- Environment
- Communities

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 This paper introduces the report by the Coastal Waste Scrutiny Review Working Party after their investigations that started in October 2021, into how the Council could develop practices for keeping the district's beaches, promenades and the coastline clean and welcoming for visitors and the local communities. The review led to findings and proposals being presented and adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Cabinet was then asked to consider those recommendations.

2.0 The Scrutiny Review Process

2.1 At the meeting on 26 August 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel set up a five member Coastal Waste Review Working party to conduct a scrutiny review of coastal waste collection practices in the district. The review topic was picked out of a list of topics that were identified by the Panel and that list forms part of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel work Programme.

2.2 The working party was given specific terms of reference as follows:

- a. To review how the Council ensures that its promenades and beaches are kept clear of rubbish and litter, compare this with other coastal authorities and make any recommendations that the panel feel will improve the service;
- b. To review the current replacement waste/dog bin process at Thanet Council, compare this with other local authorities and to make any recommendations that the Panel feel will improve the service.

2.3 The scrutiny review findings and recommendations were considered adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 April 2022. Members agreed to forward all of the recommendations contained to Cabinet for final decision.

3.0 Options

3.1 Cabinet could decide to agree as a whole or in part, the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel as detailed in the Scrutiny Panel report attached as Annex 1 to the cabinet report. Below is a summary of the twenty recommendations:

1. Thanet District Council should re-evaluate its corporate priorities to better reflect that beaches and coastlines are fundamental to the identity of Thanet as a tourism destination and as a result funding for their preservation and cleanliness should be prioritised;
2. To expand our resource base to enable Recommendation 1, we should explore a broader range of funding options, partnerships and models of delivery;
3. We should consider introducing bylaws and/or licensing conditions to control use of polystyrene containers, cardboard chip boxes & other frequently littered items;
4. TDC should look to promote a plastic free regime in Thanet;
5. TDC should develop flexible staff roles for beaches and the coastline;
6. TDC should consider approaching voluntary litter picking groups first when recruiting extra seasonal staff;
7. An annual litter bin survey should be carried out with the help of parish & Town Councils (and volunteer groups if appropriate);
8. Current work on modernising our bins - phasing out dog waste bins, reducing aperture size when bins are replaced, fitting the size of the bin to the location and making all bins 'smart', for example - should be progressed with all speed;
9. TDC should monitor use and effectiveness of dog waste bag stations;
10. TDC should set and publicise challenging performance indicators for beach & coastal cleanliness and establish a schedule of Council & public reporting on these;
11. TDC should adopt stronger public messaging on litter;
12. We should set up '2 minute beach clean' stations during peak visitor periods to encourage individuals and families to help, supported by paid Rangers;
13. TDC Operational Services should meet at least annually with coastal/seafront businesses to address issues relating to keeping seafront areas clean;
14. We should explore introducing bylaws and/or licensing conditions to require all businesses selling food to provide & service their own bins outside their premises;
15. TDC should conduct regular and spot checks on Commercial Waste contracts and publicise that this happens;
16. TDC should prioritise building mutually supportive relationships with Town & Parish Councils to collaborate on litter & waste eg via regular focused meetings;
17. TDC should acknowledge, support & celebrate the work of litter picking volunteers e.g. by providing bags/ equipment, helping with insurance/ health & safety advice, offering funding where possible and hosting an annual 'Thank You' event.
18. TDC should consider establishing a Thanet-wide Litter Forum involving voluntary groups and where appropriate Town/ Parish Councils;

19. TDC should establish a hotline/ single point of contact for litter groups to call for action eg to arrange pickup of bags, request supplies etc;
20. TDC should invest in the “Fix My Street” app again.

or

- 3.2 Cabinet could decide to reject the Overview and Scrutiny Panel report.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 If Cabinet is minded to agree all or part of the recommendations, officers will then structure these recommendations into an action plan for implementation of the agreed recommendations.
- 4.2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, could then be able to keep a watching brief of the progress regarding the implementation of the action palan.
- 4.3 Some of the recommendations would require an identification of the budget in order to allocate resources for carrying out the work required by those recommendations.

Contact Officer: *(Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer)*

Reporting to: *(Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager)*

Annex List

Annex 1: Coastal Waste Scrutiny Review Report

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: *Chris Blundell (Director of Finance)*

Legal: *(Insert name and job title)*