

Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	08/07/2026
Report Title	Annual performance report for waste collection and street cleansing service 2025/26
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regenerations and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Kelly Mehmet, Environmental Contract Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To discuss the contents and approve publication of the report on the council website.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the second Swale Borough Council annual waste collection and street cleansing report covering the service performance from April 2025 to March 2026. The report provides an evaluation of the performance and identifies strengths and weaknesses which will provide a focus on where resources should be directed for the year ahead.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 The current waste and street cleansing contract started in March 2024 in partnership with Ashford Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council. The contract covers waste collections for all three councils and street cleansing in Ashford and Swale Boroughs.
- 2.2 Following a difficult first year which resulted in poor performance, officers focussed on making improvements to the waste collections as a priority. As the service settled the second year of the contract has allowed officers to focus on making improvements to the street cleansing service.
- 2.3 Officers have taken Members feedback into account following the first annual performance report and subsequent mid-year update and have produced the Annual Performance Report for 2025/26 (see appendix I)
- 2.4 Suez have produced their own annual report for the Mid Kent contract (see appendix II) along with a Social Values report for 2025/26 (see appendix III)

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To discuss the contents and approve publication of the report on the council website.

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 The first annual performance report was presented to Members in July 2025 and a mid-year update provided in November 2025. Members provided comments which have been considered for the 2025/26 annual performance report.

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 streets element of the contract is circa £2.4m and the waste collection element is circa £4.9m. Garden waste income for 25/26 was £1,204,973 and Bulky waste income for 25/26 was £126,265. In 2025/26, £2.31M was received as Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility payments. DEFRA suggest that similar payments will be made in 26/27, but it is not clear what the future beyond 26/27 will be and if any other funding streams will be affected as a result of the pEPR payments.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The council are legally required to provide waste collection and street cleansing services.
Crime and Disorder	The street cleansing element of the contract includes removal of fly tipping, litter, graffiti and fly posting which helps to prevent further offences and keep the borough clean.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Refuse Collection Vehicles have electric bin lifts and are Euro VI compliant to reduce emissions. There are also 2 fully electric caged vehicles used for street cleansing. Street cleansing zoning for an AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) in Sittingbourne has been upgraded to provide more frequent sweeping in order to improve the air quality in the area. Officers continue to work with

	Suez to review options for the use of Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a fuel for vehicles across the Mid Kent Partnership.
Health and Wellbeing	The waste and street cleansing contract creates a cleaner, safer and more attractive environment which can help to support both physical and mental wellbeing across the community.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Waste collection routes have been designed to ensure peak times around schools are avoided. Particular attention is paid to assisted collections and clinical collections in order to support vulnerable residents.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Key operational risks such as manual handling, vehicle movements, hazardous waste exposure and interactions with the public are systematically identified, assessed and controlled through safe systems of work. All operatives receive comprehensive training, and strict procedures are in place for handling hazardous or clinical waste. The contract promotes a proactive safety culture, encouraging staff engagement, near-miss reporting and ongoing communication.
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 'assisted collections' 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.
Local Government Reorganisation	Possible challenges around transition, governance and service alignment. Mid Kent partners have aligned their services under the one contract. Other potential LGR partners deliver different service models and methodologies. There is a potential to deliver more efficient, resilient and environmentally sustainable services at scale. However, significant changes would be required to do so. The current contract does not expire until 2032.

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Annual Waste and Street Cleansing Report 2025/26
- Appendix II: Suez Mid Kent Annual Report 2025/26
- Appendix III: Social Values Report 2025/26

8 Background Papers

The 2024/25 Annual performance report can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee, 10/07/2025 19:00](#)