

EMBARGOED TO MIDDAY, THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2014

£60 million net benefit to Kent taxpayers via partnership working

At the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) Annual Conference in Canterbury on 13 March 2014, Councillor Paul Barrington-King, Chairman announced a £60 million net financial benefit to Kent taxpayers as a result of the KRP's two major projects over the next decade: the 'East Kent Project' and the 'Mid Kent Project'.

Both projects set-out to reduce the costs of delivering local recycling and waste services, whilst raising recycling performance to near 50%. In addition to the £60 million net benefit over the period 2010/11 to 2022/23, £7 million has been spent on new recycling and waste bins for customers. That was made possible as Kent County Council's avoided costs enabled it to fund the district councils' new kerbside bin costs.

To date, a £2.3 million net benefit has already been achieved whilst simultaneously raising recycling performance. Whilst England's recycling rate is flat lining, the KRP's rate went from 41% in 2012/13 to almost 45% for 2013/14 (to December).

ClIr Barrington-King, KRP Chair said, 'The KRP exists to serve the interests of Kent taxpayers. Today's announcement is a 'win win' of effective financial oversight along with strong environmental performance. £60 million is equivalent to £146 per household across East and Mid Kent. I am delighted district and County councillors and colleagues took forward the hard decisions to deliver these creditable achievements.'

ClIr David Brazier, KRP Vice-Chair said, 'The KRP's performance is increasing at a time when national performance is flatlining. Through our projects the KRP recycling rate increased from 41% in 2012/13 to 44.9% in 2013/14 to date. That's a remarkable testament to the joint working across Kent'.

Defra Resource Management Minister Dan Rogerson welcomed the announcement and said: 'This is a great initiative that has helped boost recycling in the local area. KRP's actions have not only made it easier for people to recycle, but also helped achieve both financial and environmental benefits for the community.'

Validation of the KRP's approach to securing financial and environmental benefits was gained at the iESE Improvement and Efficiency Awards held in London on 4th March 2014. The 'Mid Kent Project' won the 'Transformation in Environment & Waste' award at this prestigious event in London.

ClIr Paul Bettison, Chairman of iESE said, 'The KRP is among the local authority resource and waste partnerships which set agendas based on taxpayers' interests especially on costs. Having that focus helps to get past the traditional obstacles inherent in two-tier working between councils. The significant service improvements and substantial savings for council tax payers that this work brings is a credit to local government which is why iESE awarded this partnership with the gold award for Transformation in Waste and Environment. Allowing the work to be showcased on a national platform will help share this fantastic achievement with other councils across the UK as we look for new and innovative ways of improving services for residents.'

Editors Notes (1 to 9 below)

1. The period in scope is 2010/11 to 2022/23. This fits with the optimum service models for East and Mid Kent and the implementation of new contracts, or in-house services, to deliver the models.
2. The major factors delivering the efficiency benefits were hard choices taken by the Kent councils between 2009 and 2013 on: -
 - Optimising the types of collections provided to residents. The benefits are high performance at reduced costs comparable to the services that existed before. Councils were clear that householders' convenience and ease of taking part in the new services were major aspects of consideration, which also optimised the number of bins residents were asked to use.
 - Joint contracts between councils, instead of individual contracts as before, enabled major efficiencies to be delivered to the benefit of taxpayers. Cross-boundary working as a result of joint contracts has also provided financial and service dividends to the councils.
3. The KRP's ambition for efficiency benefits for the period up to 2022/23 is £67 million from the East and Mid Kent projects. This figure takes into account that Dover and Shepway DCs began optimum services in 2010, and Canterbury CC and Thanet DC in 2013 – these four forming the East Kent project along with Kent County Council (KCC). The figure also takes into account Ashford, Maidstone and Swale BCs starting their optimum services in 2013 – these three forming the Mid Kent project along with KCC.
4. Whilst these service changes are set to create an efficiency benefit of £67 million, an upfront spend of £7 million on new containment (bins and food caddies etc) for East and Mid Kent has taken place. Thus, the net efficiency benefit from the East and Mid Kent projects is predicted to be £60 million up to 2022/23. That equates to an efficiency benefit of £156 per household for the 382,792 households in East and Mid Kent (63% of the total number of Kent households – based on 2011 census figures).
5. For the period 2010/11 to 2012/13, actual efficiency benefits are calculated as £2.3 million and show the overall ambition for efficiency savings is on target at this point in the overall period up to 2022/23.
6. However, there are many factors that are outside of councils' control when projecting future costs and budgets. These include (but are not limited to) day-to-day fuel costs for vehicle fleets; revenue from the sales of recyclates in a volatile market place; gate fee costs to recycling and waste processors that also have a history of volatility; and increases in government taxes including the Landfill Tax. As this update is early within the overall period up to 2022/23, the KRP remains committed to delivering the ambition of £65 million efficiency benefits but recognises the factors listed have the potential to reduce that level.
7. The KRP represents the interests of the 13 Kent councils in respect to their functions for waste collection, waste disposal and street cleansing. The 13 Kent councils are: Ashford Borough Council (BC), Canterbury City Council, Dartford BC, Dover District Council (DC), Gravesham BC, Kent County Council, Maidstone BC, Sevenoaks DC, Shepway DC, Swale BC, Thanet DC, Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC.
8. **About iESE** - Set up by a network of councils continually searching for radically new and better value ways of working, The Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise supports the sector to deliver improved services at lower cost and implement new income generating solutions. iESE assisted the KRP with the East Kent Project and the subsequent contractual documents informed the specifications of iESE's 'Waste Management Services Framework'. www.iese.gov.uk
9. For further information, please initially contact Paul Vanston, KRP Manager at paul.vanston@kent.gov.uk