



Cabinet
21 July 2014

**Strategic Director, Environment and
Neighbourhoods**

Wards affected:
ALL

Changes to Recycling and Green Waste Collections

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a proposal to reduce the amount of waste generated by Brent residents and to deliver £378,000 financial savings. This will be done by increasing the frequency of the dry recycling service and by extending the coverage of the weekly separate food waste collection service. It is intended these improvements will be made possible by implementing a new 'opt in' chargeable garden waste collection service. These proposals will improve and extend the council's recycling offer and reduce the amount of waste generated overall. They would also abide by the national waste hierarchy, which recognises prevention of all waste and the recycling of food waste as having the best environmental impacts with regard to waste management.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves increasing the frequency of the dry recycling service to a weekly service.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet approves the extension of the separate food waste collection service to all street level properties.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet approves the introduction of a chargeable garden waste collection service as the means of facilitating these improvements as set out and detailed in section 4 of this report."
- 2.4 That the Cabinet note the financial and non-financial benefits that will accrue from these changes.
- 2.5 That the Cabinet agrees the amendment to the Public Realm Contract and the minor changes to the contract targets to allow these proposals to go ahead.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The UK's waste hierarchy sets out five steps for dealing with waste ranked according to environmental impact. Waste prevention (reduction), which offers the best outcomes for the environment, is at the top of the hierarchy followed by re-use and then recycling. The EU's revised Waste Framework Directive creates a legal imperative for Councils to take account of the waste hierarchy, having been transposed into UK law through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Public Realm contract is specifically engineered to focus on reducing waste.



1

- 3.1.3 In addition to these environmental imperatives, Brent Council, like many local authorities faces a serious financial situation. The council's position is such that it faces a budget shortfall of £53m by 2016-17. It is imperative that the council facilitates better waste reduction and improves recycling in ways that are financially sustainable and to an extent that achieves financial savings.

3.2 Current situation

- 3.2.1 The council currently provides an alternate weekly collection of dry recycling and refuse. This means dry recycling is collected every two weeks. The council has provided a free weekly garden waste collection service to around 60,000 households since 2005. The service is provided by Veolia using 240L wheeled bins for the mixed collection of garden waste and food waste.
- 3.2.2 In addition, and in order to encourage waste reduction, householders can currently benefit from heavily subsidised home compost bins, priced at £19.98 plus £5.49 for delivery of a 220 litre bin and £22.98 plus £5.49 delivery for a 330 litre bin. This compares to £40 plus £5 for delivery for a 330 litre bin at

¹ www.wrap.org.uk

B&Q. Residents can also take garden waste free of charge to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the borough free of charge.

3.3 **New proposals for managing recycling and green waste**

3.3.1 Taking into account the need to deliver financial savings, to reduce the overall amount of waste produced in Brent and to encourage environmentally sustainable behaviour, the proposal is to increase the frequency of dry recycling collections and to extend separate food waste recycling collections to all street level properties. This will be made possible by changing the garden waste service to a paid for/opt in service. These changes would take effect from March 2015. The new weekly dry recycling and food waste collections would start from then. The new chargeable garden waste service would run fortnightly from 1 March to 30 November and monthly from 1 December to 28 February, as much less green waste is produced at that time of year. The collection days for garden waste may change and this will be communicated to those residents that sign up.

3.3.2 The main improvements that are proposed are set out below:

- The alternate weekly co-mingled dry recycling service will be replaced with a better, weekly service, using the 240L blue-lidded bins already in place. This will encourage additional recycling. The day of the collection will remain the same as it is currently – but on a weekly basis. Houses on the North Circular Road will be provided with hessian sacks that will be emptied weekly.
- The food waste service will remain weekly but will be made available to all street level households. Each household will be supplied with a 23L caddy to present for collection each week. The day of the collection will remain the same.
- New vehicles with split compartments will collect both dry recycling and food waste at the same time, meaning fewer vehicles are needed overall.
- Residual waste collections will be unaffected and the day of the collection will remain the same.
- The existing green waste collection service will have food waste removed and will be for garden waste only. It will become an opt in, chargeable service.
- The council's waste policy would be amended to exclude garden waste from the residual waste bin. This would need to be strictly enforced by Veolia and the Council's Waste Enforcement Team.
- More frequent waste collections are also likely to reduce the amount of waste that is fly-tipped in Brent.

4.0 **Garden Waste Charging**

4.1 These improvements to the recycling services can only be made possible by ensuring separate provision for food waste and by introducing a new charge for the garden waste-only service. Officers have investigated how charging for garden waste can be implemented.

4.2 30 of the 32 London Boroughs provide a garden waste collection service. Of these, 17 fully or partly charge for the service. Thirteen make no charge. A survey of these boroughs highlighted a range of charges for a garden waste service from £35 to £75 for a 240L wheeled bin per year (for detail, see Appendix 2). Bearing in mind the results of this and the Equalities Impact Assessment, it is suggested that the fee is set at the lower end of the range - £40 a year per household which equates to less than 80p a week. The charge of £40 a year is in line with the charge in Ealing. The service will be discounted by 20% for those in receipt of means tested benefits including housing or council tax benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Pension Credit. Residents will be able to pay online and by phone

4.3 To make it happen, Veolia would manage the new chargeable garden waste service according to the following parameters:

- Residents may share bins for garden waste (where a primary address to invoice is agreed).
- Residents may opt to have more than one garden waste bin, at an additional cost. Garden waste will only be taken if it presented in the bin. We will not take 'side waste'.
- If residents lose their bin it will be charged in accordance with the current arrangements for residual waste bins, where the resident pays £46.08 for a new bin and delivery.
- The service will be administrated by Veolia who will be responsible for billing and payment collection and managing the participant database to ensure that collections are made only from those households that subscribe.
- Residents who would prefer not to subscribe will have their 240L bin removed.

5.0 Timetable for service changes

5.1 The timetable has been planned to minimise any unnecessary inconvenience to residents. The timetable below means that residents will continue to receive a green waste service during the peak months of 2014 and Veolia will be able to remove the unwanted garden waste bins during the least productive months. The proposed timelines for the service change are as follows:

- Extensive communication with residents will start in July 2014. This will explain the new service improvements and will promote the council's subsidised home composting bin and the option of using the council's Recycling Centre at Abbey Road, where garden waste can be deposited free of charge.
- Residents are asked to sign up and pay for the new garden waste service by 30 November 2014. The payment will cover the year starting on 3 March 2015, so the period from 1 December-28 February is free of charge.
- The current mixed green and food collections will be phased out during that period and where a household doesn't sign up by 30 November, their 240L garden bins will be collected and a new food waste container will be delivered at the same time.

- All food waste containers will be issued to all street level households before March.
- If a resident decides they want to join the service after their bin has been removed they will need to pay for a new bin.
- The weekly dry recycling collection service starts on 3 March 2015
- The new separate food waste service starts on 3 March 2015
- The chargeable garden waste service starts formally on 3 March 2015.

6.0 Impact on Waste Tonnages and Recycling

6.1 It is anticipated that these service changes and the enhanced promotion of home composting will see the amount of green waste collected reduce by 43% by weight, and that of that 43% reduction, 40% will divert to home composting, 25% to the Recycling Centre (free of charge) and 35% will no longer be produced. It is anticipated that implementing these changes will have no significant impact on the council's recycling rate. This is because the amount of dry recycling that is collected by the more convenient weekly service will remain the same and, whilst the amount of collected organic waste will reduce, this waste will be mainly displaced to home composting or to the council's Recycling Centre at Abbey Road, where it can be deposited free of charge.

6.2 This is line with evidence from a number of boroughs where chargeable garden waste schemes have already been introduced. This generally shows that whilst some garden waste tonnage might be 'lost', significant negative impact on the recycling rate is unlikely. Indeed, the existing free garden waste collection actually draws in material that could be composted at home, meaning that the total amount of waste collected is actually inflated. Whilst free garden waste services are an easy way to increase recycling rates, there is no environmental benefit, as the extra material needs to be moved and processed. In line with the waste hierarchy it is better to avoid the need for this waste to be collected and treated in the first place.

6.3 A more frequent collection of dry recycling will be more convenient for residents and may see less waste illegally fly-tipped on streets and pavements.

7.0 Impact on contract targets

7.1 The implications of these service changes for two of the four key targets set out in the Public Realm Contract are as follows:

1. The CO₂ emissions would be slightly worse as Veolia would operate fewer vehicles but the vehicles to be used (twin packs) would be less fuel efficient. The exact change will be negotiated with Veolia if this proposal is agreed by the Cabinet.
2. Customer satisfaction with waste collection may reduce in 2015/2016 but would then increase again in 2016/17.

Year	Waste Collection (CSw)	Notes

2014/15	80	No change
2015/16	70	Reduced from 82
2016/17	85	No change

8.0 Summary of Benefits

8.1 The main benefits of the proposed scheme are, therefore, as follows:

- A new, weekly dry recycling service.
- A separate food waste collection service made available to all street level properties.
- A significant operational cost saving that will help sustain these new service improvements.
- Enhanced promotion of waste reduction and home composting.
- A reduction in the tonnes of waste needed that must be disposed of - without significant negative impact on the council's recycling rate.
- Potentially, less fly-tipping.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 In year 1 there is a £260,000 cost to be paid to Veolia which includes £230,000 for the mobilisation of the new services. From year 2 onwards this is reduced to £22,000. The total annual net benefit of implementing these proposals would be £140k in Year 1 (to account for set up costs) and £378k in each year thereafter (see table below). This fully accounts for the cost of increasing the frequency of the dry recycling service and of extending the food waste service.

9.2 Veolia will be responsible for collecting the service charge from customers and will pass on all income received from customers to the council and make up any difference fully to a guaranteed annual amount offered of £400,000. Veolia will retain any income collected over and above £400,000. If the full cost of the service in any Contract Year is significantly greater than expected and if the Contractor reasonably believes that such variance is resulting in the Contractor being obliged to pass on income to the Council over and above that which it is receiving from customers, such variance shall be subject to the agreement of the Parties (acting reasonably).

9.3 As the service commences in March 2015 it is proposed that the charging schedule be amended from the start of the 2015/16 financial year. In 2015/16 there is a £260,000 cost to be paid for Veolia which includes £230,000 for the mobilisation. From 2016/17 onwards this reduces to £22,000. The total annual net benefit of implementing these proposals would be £140k in 2015/16 (to account for set up costs) and £378k in each year thereafter (see table below).

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Net operating efficiency	-£47,000	-£47,000	-£47,000	-£47,000
Annual administration	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Caddies	£112,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Caddy repay charge	-£98,000	£14,000	£14,000	£14,000

Mobilisation	£178,000	£0	£0	£0
Start up administration	£50,000	£0	£0	£0
Communications	£15,000	£0	£0	£0
Total cost	£260,000	£22,000	£22,000	£22,000
Income	-£400,000	-£400,000	-£400,000	-£400,000
Net saving	-£140,000	-£378,000	-£378,000	-£378,000

9.4 There is an open opportunity to discuss potential alternatives to the current priced option for the service with Veolia. The pricing and the schedule of fees could be subject to review at any time if it was established that further benefits may be possible. Officers have asked Veolia to maintain an on-going evaluation of prices so that alternative levels of charging could be considered if necessary.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The Council has a duty under section 45(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange for the collection of household waste. Generally, no charge can be levied for collection of household waste except in cases set out in section 45(3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and paragraph 4 of Schedule 1 of the Controlled Waste Regulations of 2012 and these statutory provisions allow a Council to charge for the collection of garden waste. Section 45(3) allows councils to recover a reasonable charge for the collection of such waste.

10.2 The introduction of a chargeable green waste service will require a variation to the Public Realm Contract. Schedule 14 of the Public Realm Contract (Change Protocol) sets out the principles to be applied in the event that the Contract is subject to a Variation or any other change.

10.3 In agreeing the recommendations, regard should be had to the equality and diversity matters detailed in Section 12.

11.0 Diversity Implications

11.1 It is expected that a weekly collection of dry recycling will be more convenient for all residents and will ensure any existing pressures households may face with regards to waste storage will be reduced and overcome.

11.2 Extended food waste provision will also ensure more residents have access to this important service.

11.3 A detailed Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix 1) to establish the implications of the garden waste charge. The outcomes of the assessments demonstrate that there will be little impact for residents, apart from those older residents on low incomes or those with a disability on a low income. The council will continue to support residents who may have difficulty accessing our services, by way of assisted collection schemes and/or direct support from officers, where necessary. Residents in receipt of means tested

benefits including housing or council tax benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Pension Credit will receive a 20% discount.

- 11.4 In addition, a subscription scheme may actually ensure a fairer distribution of service provision. For example, in Exeter, feedback from residents suggested a chargeable garden waste service was the fairest option for that city because many houses had small or no gardens, meaning that many residents were subsidising others. Such circumstances equally apply to Brent.

Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.5 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the 2010 Act, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
- 11.6 The “protected characteristics” are: age, disability, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination.
- 11.7 Having “due regard” to the need to “advance equality of opportunity” between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by them. Due regard must also be had to the need to take steps to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and to encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons include steps to take account of the persons’ disabilities. Having due regard to “fostering good relations” involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 11.8 The Council’s duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have “due regard” to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions on the introduction of additional licensing for the area of Brent and the introduction of selective licensing. Due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations must form an integral part of the decision making process. When the decision comes before the Cabinet, Members of the Cabinet must consider the effect that implementing such a particular decision will have in relation to equality before making a decision. An Equality Impact Assessment will assist with this.
- 11.9 There is no prescribed manner in which the equality duty must be exercised, though producing an Equality Impact Assessment is the most usual method. The Council must have an adequate evidence base for its decision making.
- 11.10 The Equality Impact Assessment is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

12.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

12.1 There are no staffing or accommodation implications for council staff as a consequence of this report.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Charging Arrangements Elsewhere

Contact Officers

Chris Whyte, Head of Service, Recycling and Waste, Extension 5342

SUE HARPER

Strategic Director Environment and Neighbourhoods