



**Executive**  
**18 June 2012**

**Report from the Director of  
Environment and Neighbourhood  
Services**

For Decision

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**The Weekly Collection Support Scheme**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1. The Weekly Collection Support Scheme is a government challenge fund designed to support local authorities to introduce, retain or reinstate a weekly collection of residual waste and/or recycling (for example food waste).
- 1.2. This report explains the Brent context, describes a bid that has been submitted by officers and seeks Member's agreement to the submission of a full bid and acceptance of any grant offered.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Executive notes the purpose of the Weekly Collection Support Scheme.
- 2.2 That the Executive endorses the outline bid submitted by officers and agrees that officers should proceed to the submission of a full bid.
- 2.3 That the Executive agrees that should an offer of grant be made, that the Council should accept it.
- 2.4 That the Executive notes that this will commit the Council to continuing the services funded by the bid for a period of five years in total (ie two years beyond the funding provided by the bid).

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1 In September last year the government announced its intention to introduce a new Weekly Collection Support Scheme for councils that retain or reinstate weekly collections of refuse and recycling.

The aim of the scheme is to support local authorities to:

- introduce, retain or reinstate a weekly collection of residual household waste. In addition, these collections must be supplemented by a separate recyclables collection at least once a fortnight; or
- propose improvements to an existing waste service which is already centred around a weekly residual collection, for example by improving environmental performance, increasing the affordability or sustainability of that service; or
- add a weekly food waste (or organic waste) service to an existing fortnightly collection of residual household waste, where an authority can credibly demonstrate that this represents the preference of local people. This additional service will reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, and reduce the amount of biodegradable food waste that has to be stored in or around the home.

### **3.2 Funding**

The Department for Communities and Local Government has made available up to £250 million to English local authorities over three years; £50 million in 2012/13, £100 million in 2013/14 and £100 million in 2014/15. Local Authorities that successfully bid for funding will be offered a Section 31 grant payment that they can use for either revenue or capital expenditure. There is therefore no threshold or cap on the amount of funding an authority can bid for. Local authorities may bid for up to 100% of costs or an element of the funding required to kick start a project. Local authorities may bid for a lump sum or to spread the bid over the three years of the scheme.

### **3.3 Eligibility**

Any local authority in England can lead a bid – whether they are a collection or disposal authority. Each bid can be for funding for an individual local authority, a group of authorities, or a consortium that includes businesses/third parties. Examples of the type of projects the Scheme might support include: recycling schemes that divert more waste from landfill; reward schemes for householders that recycle more; equipment to increase collection capacity; investment in technologies like Mechanical Biological Treatment facilities, Materials Recovery Facilities, Composting or Anaerobic Digestion; and awareness raising campaigns.

### **3.4 A minimum five year commitment to weekly collections**

The Scheme will award funding to local authorities that commit to weekly collections for (a minimum of) five years from 2012/13 (or the first year of the bid).

### **3.5 Expressions of interest were requested by 16 March 2012. The bidding timetable is as follows:**

- Outline bids to be submitted by 11 May 2012.
- Feedback to local authorities on outline bids by 22 June 2012.
- Final bids should be submitted by 17 August 2012.
- The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will announce successful bids in October 2012.

### **4.0 Brent Context**

Brent adopted its Household Waste Collection Strategy (2010-14) in December 2010. This introduced a new waste collection service for both street level properties and blocks of flats whereby:

- alternate weekly collections of refuse and recycling were introduced at street level properties.
- weekly collections of garden and food waste were retained at street level properties.
- weekly collections of refuse and recycling were retained at flats (flats do not currently receive food waste collections).

4.1 The performance of the new waste collection service (October 2011 – March 2012) compares very well to the performance of the previous service (April 2011 – September 2011):

- the average recycling and composting rate increased from 33.8% to 42.4%
- the tonnage collected with the new dry recycling service increased by 74%
- the tonnage of landfill waste decreased by 24%
- the tonnage collected with the organics service decreased by 17%

The Strategy sets a clear ambition to recycle 50% by 2015, with the current Administration's goal even more ambitious, seeking to reach 60% by 2014.

4.2 Officers appraised the main bidding opportunities as follows:

Re-instating weekly collections of recycling and refuse would not be helpful in meeting the council's short and long-term objectives, nor would it be cost-effective or practical. The new service has helped save over £600k in disposal costs in its first six months of operation. It is designed to deliver £1m savings annually (a £5m saving over 5 years). A return to weekly collections would not only compromise that saving but would also require extra investment in new collection vehicles. It would also fundamentally confuse residents. It is unlikely the council would receive funding at a level that would fully compensate.

Officers are convinced the most beneficial option – and the one most likely to secure funding – involves improving current arrangements for the weekly collection of food waste; both from flats (where no service is currently made available) and from street level properties. A two-part bid has, therefore, been devised.

## 5.0 **Two-part Bid**

### 5.1 **Flats**

**To introduce a new food waste collection service at 326 blocks of flats (8,600 households) during the first quarter of 2013/14.**

Policy 3 (Action 11) of Brent's Household Waste Collection Strategy outlines the council's intention to introduce communal food waste collections from suitable blocks of flats. The introduction of food waste collections at blocks of flats is also recognised as a key environmental priority in London. This desirable improvement is not, at present funded and the WCSS provides an opportunity to implement this element of the existing Waste Strategy.

***Eligibility: Improvement to an existing waste service which is already centred around a weekly residual collection by improving environmental performance and increasing the sustainability of that service.***

## **5.2 Street level properties**

**To carry out annual distributions of caddy liners to residents to ensure participation and capture rates are sustained and increased over time.**

Policy 2 (Action 9) of the Household Waste Collection Strategy outlines that council's plans to expand the food waste collection service to all street level properties. Food waste is a key waste stream targeted by waste policy initiatives as its diversion from landfill delivers key environmental outcomes. The service was introduced in October 2011. Until recently, residents could not use biodegradable liners due to concerns raised by the reprocessing plant. These concerns have now been overcome and suitable liners have been identified. The council will distribute a starter pack of caddy liners to all residents during the first quarter of 2012/13. The bid would provide funding to maintain this pattern of distribution for a further three years. Residents would receive caddy liners and service information on annual basis. This would serve to maximise participation and capture rates.

***Eligibility: Improvement to a weekly food waste (or organic waste) service that is aligned to an existing fortnightly collection of residual household waste. Officers can credibly demonstrate that this represents the preference of local people, will reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, and will reduce the amount of biodegradable food waste that has to be stored in or around the home.***

5.3 The bid seeks £312,638 (over three years) to provide:

- containers (kitchen caddies)
- caddy liners (procurement and distribution)
- site improvement (food waste housing)
- installation works
- professional fees (temporary project support)

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Level of grant sought</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>£160,128</b>
<b>2013/14</b>	<b>£92,850</b>
<b>2014/15</b>	<b>£59,660</b>

5.5 The bid will demonstrate that the funding would support new activity rather than activity that would progress anyway.

5.6 Officers recognise the environmental and financial advantages of diverting food waste from landfill. The proposed funding would allow the council to target this key waste stream to further improve recycling rates. It is estimated that the proposed scheme would lead to a saving of 20,891t in CO<sub>2e</sub> emissions over a five-year period.

- 5.7 The bid proposal demonstrates value for money because the current gate fee at the in-vessel composting facility is set at £37 (2012/13). This compares to £97 landfill tax (2012/13).
- 5.8 Officers submitted an Expression of Interest on 16 March. An outline bid was submitted in advance of the 11 May deadline.
- 5.9 Officers understand that UK-wide expressions of interest already amount to around £500m, i.e. double the amount available. The likelihood of the council being awarded funding should be considered in that context.
- 5.10 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will announce successful bids in October 2012. The money for projects receiving funding within Year 1 will be made available within two months of the announcement of successful bids. Work to implement the service changes will commence soon after. Officers will advise Members as soon as a decision is made known.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The financial advantages of diverting food waste from landfill are clear-cut. The bid proposal demonstrates value for money because the current gate fee at the in-vessel composting facility is set at £37 (2012/13). This compares to £97 landfill tax (2012/13). This represents a £60 saving for every tonne collected for composting. The diversion of an extra 3,000 tonnes per year will generate an annual saving of £180,000, for example. The council is not required to provide match funding and the new services can be wholly aligned to existing collection arrangements.
- 6.2 The Council would be committed to continuing the weekly collection of food waste from the relevant properties for five years from the start of the scheme. The capital costs of the containers for the food waste collections from flats would be met in the first year of the funding. Officers anticipate that the increased collection of recyclable waste will allow the scheme to be funded from the reduced waste disposal costs for the two years following the funding, and would expect this to become a permanent part of the Council's recycling and composting arrangements. The same is expected to be true of the provision of caddy liners for those households which already have food waste collections.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government ('DCLG') proposes to award section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 grant funding to Local Authorities that bid successfully under the Weekly Collection Support Scheme. The grant funding will be provided to local authorities for a period of 3 years although authorities' must commit to the scheme, as part of the grant conditions, for 5 years to ensure local authorities are committed to putting customer service and residents needs first when configuring local waste services.
- 7.2 Under the scheme, it is expected that the s.151 Officer (currently, the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources) will sign off the bid application to ensure it meets due diligence and the s.151 Officer shall be accountable to DCLG for the grant funding to ensure it is spent responsibly.

- 7.3 Should the Council's bid for funding be successful; Officers must ensure that any subsequent changes in the delivery of the waste collection services shall be recorded as a deed of variation to the existing waste services contract, on advice from Legal Services to ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations with regards to amending the current waste contract.
- 7.4 Moreover, Officers shall ensure that if the Council's bid is successful that it can adhere to the 5 year commitment considering the current waste services contract has 2 years remaining.
- 7.5 Further, Officers must ensure that any procurement of goods and services undertaken as part of the process stated at section 5.3 of this report, complies (as applicable) with the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

## **8.0 Diversity Implications**

- 8.1 The proposals in this Report have been subject to screening by officers, who consider that there are no specific diversity implications. The introduction food waste collections from flats will further widen the range of recycling services that are made available to all of Brent's residents.

## **9.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

- 9.1 There are no staffing or accommodation issues arising from the recommendations in this Report.

## **10.0 Environmental Implications**

- 10.1 These proposals will directly support the Council's Household Waste Collection Strategy. The introduction of food waste collections at blocks of flats is recognised as a key environmental priority in London. Improving organic waste collections from street level properties will maximise participation and capture rates. Food waste is a key waste stream targeted by waste policy initiatives because its diversion from landfill delivers key environmental outcomes.

## **11.0 Background Papers**

- 11.1 Appendix 1

### **Weekly Collection Support Scheme Frequently Asked Questions (DCLG)**

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