

## Appendix 4 - Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance

### Veolia

Veolia previously provided Brent with a holistic service for waste, recycling, street cleansing, winter and grounds maintenance service up March 2023.

As part of the Borough's Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme which aimed to have:

- **A specialist contract approach for outsourced services**
- **Improved contract management and monitoring for contracted services**
- **An intelligence-led approach to the deployment of resources**
- **Better digital customer interface with real-time information and issue reporting**
- **A neighbourhood approach to managing local issues to meet the needs of local areas**

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out reviewing the arrangements in place under the old Veolia contract and ensuring the tender process brought in some efficiency savings whilst maintaining similar levels of service. At the time it was deemed that the Council could benefit by splitting up the core components from the previous Veolia contract and procure these services with other providers. As a result, the Council now has one main contract and several small contracts in place in partnership with West London Waste Authority (WLWA) to manage its waste, recycling, street cleansing and winter maintenance services. The new **Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance** contract commenced on 1 April 2023 as an 8-year contract with Veolia Environmental Services, with a potential for extension for another 8 years. The other small contracts related to waste are listed below:

Provider	Contract	Commencement Date
WLWA (N+P)	Recyclates reprocessing	01 April 2024
WLWA (Edwards)	Paper and Card reprocessing	01 October 2024
WLWA (AnyJunk)	Bulky Waste collections	01 April 2024

Despite having several core services still sitting with Veolia as part of these changes, with so many new contracts and contractors to onboard, it was a very busy first 6 months of mobilisation. Not only was the transition between providers challenging, but we also had several big service changes to introduce. The mobilisation and introduction of services changes went well and we are now in a position where we can start seeing some of the benefits of those changes.

As part of the new contract with Veolia, different strategies were investigated to keep the new contract within budget whilst delivering a good service to our residents. One key area identified for change and to maximise efficiency was to our street cleaning offering from a traditional service to an intelligence led approach. We wanted to have cleaner streets, at less cost, with a much more flexible and problem-solving orientated approach.

The new street cleansing schedule commenced on 3 July 2023, which incorporated changes to the street cleaning frequencies. We introduced six rapid response teams covering the five Brent connects area. Using these crews as part of the intelligence led approach, our data shows that we have been able to keep up with the standards our resident's demand and in most cases, excel in the performance of the old street cleaning regime. To demonstrate this success, you can see in Table 8.1 of Appendix 4b there were a total 7,122 proactive jobs completed by Veolia of which 1,284 is Hotspot Sweeping, 2,162 Fly tip clearance and 3,664 Proactive jobs.

In addition to the intelligence led street cleansing approach, Veolia crews are proactively clearing fly tips with 75% cleared within 24hrs. You can see from Table 7; fly tip volumes have reduced by 24% compared with the previous year.

We are actively monitoring the success of the intelligence led Street Cleansing change. Neighbourhood Managers undertake weekly "proactive inspections" to assess street cleansing standards and flag up any areas that need improvement. To help facilitate the Intelligence led street cleansing approach, we also introduced a new reporting tool called Fix My Street (replacing Love Clean Streets). Whilst initial uptake was low (due to residents still using Love Clean Street's), you can see (Table 9) that over the past few months, residents are utilising this tool to report a variety of issues, including street cleaning requests.

Based on the information being received through Fix My Street reports and from the proactive inspections, the cleansing schedule is reviewed regularly to target hot spot areas to ensure the Borough is being serviced to a high standard.

Overall, the new street cleansing service is working well and we now have a system of data capture that enables us to look at the streets most reported on Fix My Street for littering and fly tipping and so directs the efficient use of street cleansing resource. The introduction of Rapid Response Teams allows for a more flexible, proactive, and rapid response to addressing a problem and resolving issues which wasn't available previously.

Another key change introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, was that to our recycling service. The first major change was the switch in our recycling processor from Veolia's Southwark Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to N+P MRF. Another key change was the introduction of twin stream fibre recycling from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, which involved the segregation of paper & card from the rest of the recyclable materials residents were putting in their recycling bins. To facilitate the separate collections of these materials, the blue sacks were introduced as a cost-effective container solution. The rationale behind this change was that if the Council could extract cleaner paper & card from the waste stream, we would have the opportunity to get more income from the on sell of the material. There were initial challenges with the introduction of blue sacks with a high volume of queries/complaints received on sacks and there were reports on sacks either missing or not delivered. Equally, some residents had difficulties in adapting to this new change. We carried out a huge communications and marketing campaign with publicity in Brent Magazine, social media, newsletters and our waste officers door knocked, attended community meetings, distributed literature, set up stalls in public places to educate our residents on the new service changes and its

benefits. Since the start of the service until now we have seen a significant decline in the numbers of queries and complaints received regarding the blue sacks. And at the same time our participation levels have gone up and we have seen improvement in tonnage for paper and card.

In addition to twin stream fibre recycling, we also introduced small items recycling collection service at the same time. This service is a free bookable service allowing our residents to recycle batteries, small electrical items and textiles to be collected from their doorsteps. From the start of the service in October 2023, over 1000 bookings have been received by Veolia. We aim to push the publicity of this service in our next communications campaign to raise recycling awareness and improve take-up of this service.

As with any change in service, there are going to be groups resistant to change without understanding the necessity behind the decision making. We hope that the new service changes would reduce the overall cost of the service provision thus allowing us to deliver the service within budget.

When assessing the effectiveness of the new contracts and the services changes, one must factor in that its not "like for like" when compared to the previous year. This year's data will form the baseline for the new contract with Veolia over the next seven years of the contract.

During the first year of contract monitoring, one of the key things that was noticed is that we are extracting less recycling from our collections than in previous years (See Table 4). Whilst it would be easy to relate this to the contract / service changes, it should be noted that there are other factors to consider - first and foremost, the cost-of-living crisis which we are all experiencing currently. This means people are spending less, buying less and therefore generating less packaging which is a common theme across all waste streams (Table 1 & 2). The impact on recyclable materials can be further quantified by the analysis that our contractor, N+P provided in which they observed that this year alone, they have processed 10% less recyclable material than last year and that is across all their contracts. So, this would suggest there is a general trend. Also to consider, is the fact that producers are being more environmentally conscious and selling their goods with less packaging.

Another key change that impacted on our recycling rates was the switch from Veolia's MRF to N+P's MRF. The two MRF's operate on a different set of acceptance criteria, and this has meant that that more of our recycling with N+P has been rejected before it goes through the processing stage. This is largely due N+P's acceptance criteria being stricter than Veolia's MRF. This has been accentuated somewhat with the paper and card removed from the total recyclable material presented to N+P, therefore making the contaminants within the recycling become more apparent as the paper and card made up a significant percentage of the tonnage. To counter this, we asked Veolia to split the communal collections from the kerbside collections as the bulk of the contamination comes from communal rounds. We have acknowledged this, and we have an active program in place with our behaviour change team to work on communal rounds to improve recycling rates.

Also, with the cleaner paper and card going to an alternative specialist re-processor (Edwards), we can mitigate for any additional costs incurred from higher rejected loads. As residents start to get used to the twin stream service, we can see a rise in yields (Table 5) being received by Edwards with hardly any of the material rejected thus bringing the council a higher rebate value than if it were to go through a regular MRF.

As part of the new contract with Veolia, we are also exploring a program to electrify the whole fleet used to service the waste collections. If the programme materialises, this would be a first for Veolia amongst their other contracts throughout the UK.

Another service change introduced in April 2024 was the Bulky waste service which was outsourced to AnyJunk (via WLWA). As you can see from the initial data (Table 6), there have been more paid collections taking place than in the previous year. The service delivery is self sufficient with the cost of providing the collection element of the service paying for itself.

In summary, the contractual changes / service changes have taken some time to bed in. It was a colossal undertaking with so many contractors to onboard / mobilise and all the work that needed to be done to bring about the service change whilst maintaining a seamless transition for our residents. However, since the turn of the year, there have been some really encouraging signs that we are on the right trajectory to meeting our performance and financial targets. This can be partially seen when looking at Veolia's performance against some of their Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) (Table 10).

We are confident that we have the right partners in place and can build on the relationships we have fostered to enable us to deliver effective and efficient services to our residents during these challenging times.