

Full Council – 6 July 2026

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Providing Choice to Improve Recycling Rates Across Brent

This Council notes:

- Brent continues to lag behind many London boroughs on household recycling. While residents overwhelmingly support recycling and want to help tackle climate change, the Council's current system does not make recycling easy enough.
- Brent's household recycling rate remains around 30%, well below the Mayor of London's ambition of 50% municipal recycling by 2030 and behind several Liberal Democrat-run councils, including Kingston, Sutton and Richmond, which consistently exceed 45%. Their performance shows that better collection systems, clearer communication and stronger resident engagement can deliver higher recycling rates.
- Brent's blue recycling sacks have not solved this problem. Residents continue to raise concerns about split or disintegrating sacks, litter, storage difficulties and confusion over what can be recycled. Three years after the Brent Liberal Democrats first called for the sacks to be scrapped, they have failed to deliver the improvement promised.
- As Brent seeks to cut carbon emissions, reduce waste disposal costs and create cleaner neighbourhoods, improving recycling must be a key environmental priority.

This Council therefore believes that:

- Brent's recycling performance is not good enough and must improve.
- Blue recycling sacks should no longer be treated as Brent's default recycling model. Any continued use should be justified by clear evidence that sacks are wanted by residents in the relevant area, are practical for those households, and perform better than alternatives in increasing recycling, reducing contamination and keeping streets clean.
- Residents deserve a recycling service that is simple, convenient and encourages maximum participation.

- Targeted education and engagement are essential to improve recycling rates and reduce contamination.
- Brent should learn from the best-performing London boroughs and adopt approaches that work locally.

This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:

- (1) End the blanket reliance on blue recycling sacks as Brent's default collection model and carry out an urgent, evidence-led review of alternative recycling arrangements, with a presumption in favour of replacing sacks with wheelie bins where sacks are causing problems for residents, contributing to litter, reducing participation or failing to improve recycling.
- (2) Ensure any proposal to retain sacks in a particular area, housing type or circumstance is backed by published evidence, including resident feedback, recycling performance, contamination, street cleanliness, accessibility, storage and value for money.
- (3) Undertake an urgent options appraisal of the most effective recycling collection models for Brent, including additional wheelie bins, segregated containers, improved communal recycling and other best-practice systems.
- (4) Offer households who want one the option of an additional wheelie bin for segregated recycling, as first proposed by the Brent Liberal Democrat Group in 2023.
- (5) Develop targeted education and public awareness work with schools, community organisations, housing providers and residents' associations.
- (6) Improve recycling in flats and estates, where participation remains lower than elsewhere.
- (7) Present the review and new recycling strategy to the next Full Council, including a timetable for a more effective, resident-friendly collection model.
- (8) Set ambitious annual targets to increase household recycling, with regular public reporting and clear accountability.

Councillor Krishna Chauhan
Alperton Ward