

CABINET

6 January 2020

Present: Mayor Taylor (Chair)
Councillors K Collett, S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and
T Williams

Also present: Councillors A Grimston, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

Officers: Managing Director
Group Head of Democracy and Governance
Group Head of Community and Environmental Services
Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Mayor's Political Assistant
Democratic Services Manager

48 **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies.

49 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

50 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 were submitted and signed.

51 **Waste and Recycling contract variations**

Cabinet received a report of the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services setting out proposals, agreed with Veolia, for varying the waste and recycling contract. It would provide a different service delivery model for household recyclable and residual waste, including the introduction of a weekly food waste collection and a subscription service for garden waste.

The Mayor briefly outlined the context that had brought the report to Cabinet. He invited the Portfolio Holder to explain in more detail about the proposals.

Councillor Williams stated that the council was trying to make the borough as environmentally sustainable as possible. Council had passed a climate change emergency motion. The plans included the banning of single use plastics in the town. The proposal would ensure that residents and the town as a whole recycled as much as possible. The Three Rivers scheme for the collection of waste was the same as the one being proposed in the report. Three Rivers and St Albans councils' recycling rates were over 60%. It was necessary to review how this was achieved in Three Rivers and copy their processes. The Government had stipulated that all councils should have a recycling rate of 65% by 2035. The aim would be for Watford to be above that target. The blue and food waste bins would be the bins of choice rather than the residual waste.

Councillor Williams stressed that the council was not doing anything radical compared to other authorities. Many local councils already collected the residual waste on a fortnightly basis or less frequently more. He added that not all local councils offered a garden waste collection service and of those that did offer the service 65% charged an annual fee. The concerns about increased fly tipping had been noted. This would be monitored and any reports would be recorded and the situation reviewed if required. He commented that Three Rivers had not seen any increased problem with fly tipping.

The Mayor invited the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services to provide more information.

The Group Head of Community and Environmental Services said that he wished to highlight the key reasons for the proposed changes. He referred Cabinet to paragraph 5.7.1 of the report and the encouragement to make the recycling bin the bin of choice, which would be beneficial for the environment and reduce the carbon footprint of Watford. An analysis of the waste included in the residual waste bins had found that a reasonable percentage of waste could have been recycled. The new proposal would mirror the scheme run by Three Rivers. He informed Cabinet that the council was not legally obliged to collect garden waste and that the council had to look at ways of ensuring statutory services, like residual waste collection, could continue to be delivered and provided value for money for residents. The garden waste service would be paid for by those residents who wished to use the service. He added that 25% of properties in the borough did not have sole responsibility for a garden. He had noted the comments about fly tipping and said that Watford had a good record at managing fly tipping. The situation would be monitored and plans would be put in place if an issue arose. He highlighted the equality impact analysis done on the proposed changes, which set out the council's public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider proposed changes in light of this duty. Finally he mentioned that the proposal was supported by Veolia.

The Mayor and Portfolio Holder thanked Veolia and the council's officers for all the work they had done over the preceding months in reviewing the current processes.

The councillors, including the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, spoke about the proposals and asked how the new scheme would be communicated to local residents.

The Group Head of Community and Environmental Services responded that a comprehensive communications plan had been prepared. The plan included talks at local schools, road shows in the borough, information made available, much of it would be in a pictorial format. A micro website had been created and would include animation and frequently asked questions.

The Group Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications added that with regard to the translation of material, the council's website could be translated into any language. The microsite could be translated into some of the key languages used in Watford, including Polish, Romanian and Urdu. The local Talking Newspaper recorded About Watford, which would include items about the new scheme. A leaflet/letter would be delivered to all properties during February and March. There were different versions for the different types of properties in the borough.

In response to a question about promoting compost bins, the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services advised that this was already available and would continue.

It was noted that there may be some minor changes to collection days, however any changes were being kept to the minimum.

RESOLVED –

1. That the contract with Veolia be varied with effect from 1 July 2020 in relation to waste and recycling services provided in Watford as set out below:
 - a) The introduction of a weekly collection of food waste (with a new 23 litre kerbside brown bin provided to all households identified)
 - b) Retention of a weekly collection of fully commingled recycling (using a blue-lidded bin)
 - c) The introduction of a fortnightly collection of non-recyclable waste (using existing black bin)

- d) The introduction of a chargeable fortnightly collection of garden waste (using existing green bins), which is accessed via a yearly subscription.
2. That the charges for the fortnightly collection of garden waste is as set out below, the same charges also apply to each additional green bin. Residents are able to have up to a maximum of seven green bins per household:
- Standard annual charge of £45.00
 - Standard annual charge reduced to £40.00 if paid by direct debit
 - Customers in receipt of certain income based benefits will be entitled to a concessionary rate of £35 (no further reduction if paid by direct debit).
3. That agreement of the detailed operational changes required and agreement to the final terms relating to the variation of the contract with Veolia and all other matters arising from this service change be delegated to the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services.

Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.25 pm