

Part A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 18 November 2021

Report author: Head of Leisure & Environmental Services

Title: Review of the Impact of the Changes to the Waste and Recycling Service (Phase 1 – Houses) - Year 1 (2020 - 2021)

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides information to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members on the impact of the changes to the kerbside waste collection service introduced from 1 September 2020 as part of the wider Waste Streets and Parks Year 1 (September 2020 - July 2021) service.

1.2 Members will recall that prior to agreeing the service changes a Member and Officer Implementation Group was set up to direct the service change project. The group was chaired by Mayor Taylor and supported by the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services. The agreed project plan and specific tasks were produced and delivered by jointly by the council and Veolia. The council also benefited from the previous experience and expertise of our waste contactor Veolia who had carried out similar projects for other local authorities in recent years.

2.0 Risks

2.1 The table below details the risk that were identified as part of the project plan and subsequently mitigated during the implementation of the service changes.

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Reputational risk to the council linked to service changes.	Failure to understand the reasons for the change linked to the need to improve recycling rates, reduce waste sent for disposal and	Effective and robust communications to explain the changes to residents and ensure responsive and timely responses to any	Treat	Treat Unlikely (3) x High (3) = rating of 9

	landfill (particularly food waste) and secure the council's financial model by ensuring the waste and recycling service is affordable.	resident enquiry or issue.		
The contractors do not deliver contract and service specification outlined in the contract.	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use	Regular contract monitoring by the council to review the contract and KPI'S requirement are being met by the contractor .	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Contractor organisation goes into administration.	As above	As above. Regular review of contractor's accounts.	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Contractor merges with another provider or is taken over by another company/ charity.	Could have no impact on the service. Or New company tries to alter the contract/SLA and KPIs which impacts on the programme or service.	As above. Option to terminate the contract early.	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Death or injury to a customer/user or member of staff.	Distress to injured parties. Reputational risk to council and contractor in failings in health and safety compliance is identified.	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the contractor.	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6

Another wave of Covid 19 and future local lockdowns.	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use.	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the contractor.	Tolerate	Unlikely (3) x High (3) = rating of 9
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3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 To review the report and supporting information and consider whether any further action is required.

Further information:

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Report approved by: Alan Gough Group Head of Community & Environmental Services

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 The original waste, recycling, streets and parks contract was awarded on a 7 years + 8 years basis starting from 1 July 2013, with Veolia being the successful company. The detailed proposals behind the approved service changes are as set out in the approved Cabinet report on 6 January 2020. These service changes to the waste and recycling services have been introduced for the benefit of the environment, encouraging recycling and reducing the disposal of non-recyclable waste.
- 4.2 The changes to the kerbside collection service in Phase 1 which formed part of the contract extension agreed with Veolia are detailed below:
1. The introduction of a weekly food waste collection service (small brown bins)
 2. Continue with the weekly collection of recycling (blue lidded bins)
 3. A change from weekly to fortnightly collections of the general waste service (black bins) for those residents living in houses (flats and apartments are part of Phase 2)
 4. The introduction of a chargeable fortnightly garden waste service (green bins) all formed part of the contract extension agreement between WBC and Veolia. (Appendix 1 – Why your bin collection service has changed and Appendix 2 details the prices for Hertfordshire Council garden waste services)

‘Making recycling your bin of choice’

4.3 The changes to the collection service were communicated to residents via the dedicated website www.watfordrecycles.com

4.4 The impact of the service changes are:

- The 2020/2021 recycling rate grew to 50.2% from 45.3% in the previous financial year.
- This is a year on year increase of 4.9%
- We are currently in Q3 of the 2021/2022 financial year and the recycling rate is tracking at 4% above the same period last year.
- In 2020/2021 we collected 238 less tonnes of general waste.
- In 2020/2021 we collected 1015 additional tonnes of food waste which was sent for anaerobic digestion and turned into green electricity.
- To date, 2142 tonnes of separately collected food waste has been recycled - this is enough to power 237 homes for a year, or 86,451 homes for a day or 10,011,708 kettles. We currently have 14,121 customers signed up to the garden waste service.
- With the introduction of a chargeable garden waste service in 2020/2021 we still saw an increase of 253 tonnes of mixed garden and food waste being collected.

Note: The financial year runs from April to March. The service change came into effect in September 2020 so a full financial year of results will not be declared until after April 2022. Statistics are recorded in Waste Data Flow producing the official annual recycling rate. The pandemic has meant more people are now at home therefore it is nationally recognised that more waste and recycling is generally being collected from the kerbside since the start of the pandemic.

4.5 Appendix 3 details the local authority league table comparison of Herts LAs for the financial year 2020/2021. In this year Watford has moved ranking position from 7th to 6th (out of 10 councils) following the introduction of the service change in September 2020. Watford's recycling rate % increase was the highest in the county at 4.9% with Dacorum in second position with an increase of 1.7% (a difference of 3.2%).

4.6 The Garden Waste Collection Service commenced from 1 September 2020 with the first year running to 31 August 2021. Each service year follows the same date pattern renewing on 1 September annually. The current charges for the fortnightly collection of garden waste are 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.

The table below details the current prices:

- Standard annual charge of £40.00 (per bin)
- Customers in receipt of certain income based benefits will be entitled to a concessionary rate of £35 (per bin)
- Additional charge per bin - £40 (per bin)

Appendix 2 – details the other Hertfordshire Council who charge for garden waste

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there is likely to be shortfall in the income projected for 2020/21 which will be picked up through the budget monitoring process. Implementation in 1 September 2020, will however, be significant in ensuring that income targets for 2021/22 can be met. *(Extract from the 4 May 2020 Cabinet report)*

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 An EIA was included in the original report and formed part of the comprehensive documents considered by cabinet when making its original decisions.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 The introduction of a chargeable garden waste service required an additional member staff to manage these arrangements. This has been factored into the estimated net income from the garden waste service.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 There are no accommodation issues arising from this report

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 There are no community safety/crime and disorder issues arising from this report

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 The introduction of a weekly food waste collection and the encouragement to make the recycling bin the bin of choice can only be beneficial for the environment.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Why your bin collection service has changed (Extract from the website)
- Appendix 2 – Fees and charges for Hertfordshire LA garden waste services
- Appendix 3 – Hertfordshire councils recycling comparison table

- Appendix 4 - Local Authority recycling comparison table
- Appendix 5 – Outputs from Severn Trent Green Power

Background papers

- 4 May 2020 Cabinet report
- 6 January 2020 Cabinet report