

Report to: *Cabinet*

Date of meeting: *8th July (deferred from 3rd June) 2024*

Report author: *Service Delivery Leads, Waste & Recycling*

Report sponsor: *Paul Stacey*

Portfolio holder: *Tim Williams*

Report title: *Fortnightly Recycling Proposal and supporting policies*

Nature of report: *Discussion and recommendation for referral to PH/Cabinet or Council for decision*

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the option to move from a weekly collection of dry recycling (blue-lidded bin) to a fortnightly collection of dry recycling for low rise properties and individual flats (in blocks of up to 5), highlighting the potential benefits as well as the risks, issues, and opportunities. This is also against the backdrop of the 'Simpler Recycling' regulations that have recently been issued by the government, the timeline in relation to this is shown in appendix 2.
- 1.2 Officers have been asked to explore this option with Veolia as part of a range of measures that will deliver savings on the cost of the services provided by Veolia and in the context of future pressures on the waste and recycling service. It is anticipated that switching to fortnightly could deliver an annual revenue saving to the council of around £110,000.
- 1.3 The change could also deliver carbon savings to the council (by having one less waste truck on the road). However, this is dependent on the outcome of the procurement for the food and garden disposal contract as discussed below. Any claims made with regards to carbon savings will be reviewed with the Sustainability Team and form part of the communications plan and key messaging for the service change.
- 1.4 Research carried out across Hertfordshire shows that eight councils (of ten) collect recycling fortnightly. (Appendix 1)
- 1.5 Research carried out across England using WRAP's Local Authority portal shows that 78% of councils who collect 'co-mingled' recycling collect it fortnightly. (Appendix 1)
- 1.6 Watford compares favourably with other councils and is currently in the top 20% for recycling performance when compared to similar authorities in the UK. Watford residents are good at recycling and will be encouraged to continue.
- 1.7 Food waste recycling collections have recently been added as an option for flats managing agents to opt into. This successful introduction has

enabled around 18% of flats to now receive weekly food waste collections with very few issues of contamination. This is in preparation for all flats receiving food waste collections as part of the Simpler Recycling guidance, to be introduced by March 2026.

- 1.8 Any revenue savings will need to be balanced against the investment needed to deliver a service change with revenue costs of £66,611 and capital costs of £243,393 which would total around £310,000. Capital investment will be needed for bin swaps/additional bins and revenue costs for communications material, deliveries, and resources. The life of a bin is circa 20 years – so capital cost divided by life equates to £12,170 p/a. In addition, depending on the timing of the change, there may be redundancy costs to be borne by WBC. Veolia have put a freeze on recruitment as a measure to reduce the need for redundancies.
- 1.9 There are multiple factors driving a need to consider a change.
- 1) Financial and the need to find savings on Veolia's contract costs.
 - 2) Potential changes to the way we collect food waste, because of a change to Herts County Council's (HCC) contract.
 - 3) Increased demand for services, linked to both property growth and the impact of Government legislation requiring councils to make changes to waste services starting in 2025 through to 2027
 - 4) the potential change to the way funding to councils for recycling is calculated and distributed because of 'Extended Producer Responsibility'.
 - 5) Opportunity to align waste services in Hertfordshire to ensure services are efficient, cost effective and resilient, whilst still meeting the needs of residents.
- 1.10 The recommendation is to move to fortnightly recycling in October 2024, this is the earliest date achievable to deliver contract savings in accordance with the Council Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.11 To accompany the move to fortnightly recycling a bin policy is being proposed:
1. Households of 4 or more permanent residents are entitled to an additional 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
 2. Households who currently have a 140 litre recycling bin are entitled to swap it for a 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
 3. All residents are allowed to put out additional side recycling if clearly marked or in a clear sack (presented next to their recycling bin on collection day).

4. Extenuating circumstances of applicants who fall outside of the criteria in this policy will be considered at the council's discretion.

Excludes households with access to communal recycling facilities.

Excludes blocks of flats with 6 or more properties.

- 1.12 The new recycling bin policy sits alongside the existing waste and recycling policies which remain unaffected.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To move the frequency of recycling collections to fortnightly effective from October 2024. To effect low rise properties (houses and flat blocks of 5 or less) only.
- 2.2 To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and the Mayor in consultation with the Associate Director for Environment and Communities to make decision on the implementation of fortnightly recycling and any changes to the garden waste collection policy and terms and conditions.
- 2.3 Flats – Flat blocks of 6 or more to continue to receive a weekly collection of dry recycling.
- 2.4 Implementation Group (Mayor, Portfolio Holder, WBC Officers from the Service, Communications, and Veolia) to be established to oversee the service change.
- 2.5 The service change to be supported by the EPMO.
- 2.6 The change to be accompanied by a new bin policy:

Watford Borough Council – Recycling Bin Policy

1. Households of 4 or more permanent residents are entitled to an additional 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
2. Households who currently have a 140 litre recycling bin are entitled to swap it for a 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
3. All residents are allowed to put out additional side recycling if clearly marked or in a clear sack (presented next to their recycling bin on collection day).
4. Extenuating circumstances of applicants who fall outside of the criteria in this policy will be considered at the council's discretion.

Excludes households with access to communal recycling facilities.

Excludes blocks of flats with 6 or more properties.

3.0 Report pathway

3.1 Next review body: *Cabinet*:

3.1.1 Indicative date: 03rd June 2024

3.2 Final review body: *Cabinet*

3.2.1 Indicative date: 03rd June 2024

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Reviewed and signed off by: Paul Stacey
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4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Background

4.2 In September 2020, the council working in partnership with Veolia delivered a change to the waste service, implementing a weekly collection of food waste, a chargeable garden waste service and a change from a weekly collection of residual waste to fortnightly.

4.3 The changes were successful in increasing the recycling rate to over 50% and generating garden waste income of over £700,000 per year.

4.4 Inflationary cost pressures linked to the Veolia contract and wider context of budgetary pressures on the council has driven a need to identify potential service changes that could deliver savings.

4.5 Changing the frequency of the dry-recycling collection from weekly to fortnightly has been selected for consideration (with the recommendations set out in Section 2) as this option has the potential to deliver both financial and carbon savings.

4.6 Analysis of collection schemes across England using WRAP's Local Authority Portal shows that 78% of council's operating a co-mingled scheme collect it fortnightly. (Appendix 1).

4.7 Further analysis of these councils shows that whilst a fortnightly service is offered for the majority of properties there is some differentiation in

service frequencies for properties that require it e.g., high rise blocks of flats or those properties using communal waste facilities.

4.8 To support the assessment of this service change an implementation group has been established to assess options.

4.9 The national, regional, and local context for this change is set out below.

4.10 Statutory Obligations

4.11 Watford Borough Council has a duty under section 45 and 45A (3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, to collect household waste including “at least two types of recyclable waste together or individually separated from the rest of the household waste.” Recyclable waste is defined as “household waste which is capable of being recycled or composted”.

4.12 Section 57 of the Environment Act 2021 contains provision to allow the Government to amend household waste requirements designed to ensure a consistent and simpler approach to recycling. It will allow the Government to make further regulation, a government response on ‘Simpler Recycling’ was released on 21 October, details relating to the impact of these on frequency of recycling collections are given below.

4.13 Simpler recycling

4.14 The government has recently released it’s ‘Simpler Recycling’ guidelines as part of the Resources and Waste Strategy, the timeline of key dates (including contract dates), that will impact Watford are given in Appendix 2. The main objective is to align materials collected across the country, to ensure residents have the same materials collected at home, school and at work and to ‘make it easier for people to do the right thing, maximise use, minimise waste and drive-up recycling rates.’ This will, in the long term make consistent messaging and understanding easier, providing a platform for national messaging.

4.15 Under the new ‘Simpler Recycling’ regulations Local Authorities are mandated to collect a ‘core set’ of materials. These are glass bottles and containers, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, and steel and aluminium tins and cans. Watford are already collecting these materials co-mingled. From 31 March 2027 all councils will also be required to collect flexible and soft plastics (carrier bags and other plastic wrap), this must be considered when setting policy around bin sizes and additional recycling.

- 4.16 Frequency of recycling is not specified but should take into consideration the collection methodology employed, including container capacity. Councils will also be required to include Schools and Places of Worship (Schedule 2) in dry recycling and food waste collections.
- 4.17 Hertfordshire Context**
- 4.18 There are ten local authorities in Hertfordshire. Eight councils in Hertfordshire collect recycling fortnightly, with Watford and Three Rivers collecting recycling weekly. Appendix 1 outlines the bin sizes and frequencies in each council area in Hertfordshire.
- 4.19 St Albans District Council, like Watford has a contract with Veolia to operate its waste services. Dry recycling is collected fortnightly with residents permitted to leave out extra correctly sorted material. St Albans has featured in the top 10 recycling authorities for the last three years.
- 4.20 Herts County Council (HCC) as the disposal authority, have responsibility for the procurement of the new garden and food disposal contract. WBC have fed into this process and have asked for IVC to be retained. Ultimately the outcome will be driven by who bids for the contract and their location either within or outside of Hertfordshire. Procurement is in progress but has already experienced delays; tenders are due to be reviewed in April 2024 with contract award in May 2024. HCC have warned that there could be further delays to this process.
- 4.21 The timing of the service change is key and needs to be considered in conjunction with the outcome of HCC's Garden and food waste procurement and with consideration to adding food waste into flats. All will have budgetary, staffing, operational and communications implications.
- 4.22 Currently, whilst residents receive a separate collection of food waste, the way it is collected and processed each week alternates. One week it is collected and mixed in the same lorry as garden waste and taken to be processed in an In-vessel composting facility (IVC). The following week it is collected on its own and processed in an anaerobic digestion (AD) facility. The decision to operate collections in this way was made prior to the service change in 2020, making the rounds more efficient. It meant that less vehicles and crew were needed as garden waste rounds could collect food waste. As mentioned above, HCC are currently retendering the contracts for the processing of garden waste and food waste. If IVC is no longer a disposal option for mixed garden and food waste, the likely hood is an additional round will be needed to collect food waste separately from April 2025. Moving recycling

collections to a fortnightly service will free up a vehicle and crew to operate the separately collected food waste round (if required) from April 2025.

4.23 Watford's Context

4.24 Housing growth - this has been planned into the contract however needs continuous review and there are trigger points where additional rounds for waste and recycling collections are needed, putting financial pressure on the council.

4.25 Recycling Behaviour – Residents in Watford are used to recycling and are in the habit of doing so, they have been integral in helping Watford achieve a recycling rate of over 50% consistently since 2020. This behaviour and habit will continue despite a change in frequency, if the opportunity is there to enable residents to recycle, residents will do it. The recent findings of WRAP's annual 'Recycling Tracker' survey demonstrated that 'Recycling is an established and normalised behaviour - 90% of UK citizens regularly recycle'. The research also highlighted that there are still improvements to be made this can be done by increasing residents' awareness of the common items that can be recycled and those that should be recycled or dealt with elsewhere to help reduce contamination. This links in with the opportunity to refresh the communications material and messaging to improve residents' knowledge and behaviour. A summary of WRAP's report is provided in Appendix 4.

4.26 Low residual rate per household – Watford has one of the lowest KGs of residual waste in the County. This is encouraging, in that residents are generating less waste overall than other neighbouring councils, this could provide opportunities in the future (subject to further guidelines from Defra) to assess the collection methodology for this waste stream.

4.27 Waste composition – the Waste Compositional Analysis carried out in March 2023 highlighted that there are still opportunities being missed by residents to recycle. Food waste is a good example of this as data from the analysis showed that 24.5% of the residual bin is food waste. Getting this out of the residual stream and recycled can have an impact on the overall recycling rate. Although residents are regularly reminded to recycle their food waste, a service change provides a unique opportunity to refresh the comms material and engage residents with new messaging and focus which will include a reminder of the range of items that can be recycled at the kerbside as well as food waste messaging, and messaging around waste reduction.

4.28 Aligning waste services in South Hertfordshire – Dacorum, Hertsmere and St Albans all collect recycling on a fortnightly basis. Changing the recycling collection frequency in Watford will align us with these

authorities who are in the southern half of the county. With all services being fully aligned by 31 March 2026 (as required by 'Simpler Recycling' regulations) this will open conversations and opportunities for joint waste services in the future.

4.29 Property Growth

4.30 The impact of property growth on the waste and recycling service also needs to be considered. Additional waste and recycling collection rounds will be needed in the future to service the waste needs of new properties. Currently, the estimated cost of an additional round is estimated at £110,000 annual- revenue (staff) plus £250,000 Capital for the purchase of a vehicle. Initial rounds are likely to be needed for recycling and waste but could also be needed for garden and food collections.

4.31 Tonnage capacity for the individual waste streams was built into the round optimisation for the service plan in 2020 when the new RCVs were purchased, however, based on the current future housing trajectory additional rounds may be needed. Since 2020, there have been 1,935 residential completions (2020-2023), which includes 1,714 new build units. The trajectory for future housing delivery (from the Local Plan) is provided in Appendix 3, this gives an idea of expected future housing delivery both by year and cumulatively.

4.32 As part of the contract extension in 2020, a contractual review point was built in to review extra resource requirements once an extra 3,200 properties are reached. Based on the current housing trajectory the review is due in 2024/25. Round optimisation will be carried out as part of the project work and allows us to understand the future need on services in relation to additional rounds.

4.33 Key Risks and Issues

4.34 Whilst changing to a fortnightly dry-recycling service is not without issue, all can be considered and mitigated/overcome as part of a carefully planned implementation programme. Drawing on experience and learnings from other large scale waste services changes undertaken by the council and other authorities will be important.

4.35 Recycling rate – there is a risk that the rate could be impacted. However, it is important to note that of the 'Top ten recycling authorities in England 2020/21', seven operate a fortnightly collection, including St Albans, with six councils mirroring the same service as Watford. This provides a level of confidence that recycling rates over 50% can still be achieved with a fortnightly collection. As the overall recycling rate is comprised of both dry-recycling, garden, and food tonnages any fluctuation in the rate is likely to be minimal and is assessed as a low risk, with mitigating factors put in place.

- 4.36 Communications – communications and messaging to residents will be key in delivering a successful roll out. A communications plan will be developed with the communications team and Veolia ensuring that residents understand the reasons for change, can find answers to questions and feel confident in the service. The team both at WBC and Veolia have a proven track record in delivering successful service changes achieving the objectives of the change with minimal impact and minimal disruption and complaints from residents. The change to a co-mingled service in 2013 and introducing a weekly food, fortnightly Refuse, and chargeable garden waste in 2020 have laid the foundations to deliver service changes with a teamwork approach to ensure the service works operationally and practically, the communications element is the key piece of the puzzle.
- 4.37 Public perception – the public could have an initial negative reaction to the change; however, experience has demonstrated that once the service has settled in, residents’ concerns and complaints tail off. Engaging stake holders at the beginning of the project, to develop clarity of message around the reasons for change will mitigate the risk in this area.
- 4.38 Food waste – if the option of IVC is no longer available to us for the disposal of food waste, it will be important to communicate this to residents to avoid problems of rejected bins, this is particularly important in flats where some residents may have been using the garden waste bin to recycle food. There is the risk of needing to have an additional round to collect the food separately.
- 4.39 Timing of the move to fortnightly recycling is key and any decisions taken, need to take into consideration the budgetary, staffing, redundancy, operational and communications implications. Depending on the timing of the service change it may not deliver a saving but provides the opportunity to offset a future cost by creating capacity.
- 4.40 The earliest a service change could be delivered is October 2024. If IVC is no longer an option for the disposal of food waste, a new round (vehicle and crew) will be needed by March 2025. This would potentially mean that redundancies would be made in October 2024 and new staff hired in 2025.
- 4.41 Equality impacts – the existing EIA for waste and recycling has been reviewed and amended where appropriate and can be seen in appendix 6.

- 4.42 **Rounds, Bin Data and Project Costs**
- 4.43 Veolia estimate that moving recycling from weekly to fortnightly will save £110,000 on contract costs. This is a reduction of one round (1 driver and 2 crew) and is based on a light touch round modelling exercise. More detailed round modelling will be required should fortnightly be implemented, this may include collection day changes within the Borough.
- 4.44 Veolia, however, are confident that the fortnightly recycling service would result in the decrease from 5 current collection rounds to 4 collection rounds. The light touch modelling is based on current tonnage assumptions which are being reviewed in detail as part of round optimisation taking place between March and July. Any additional round modelling changes will be confirmed in July.
- 4.45 The estimated cost for delivering the service change is £310,00, split £243,00 in capital and £67,000 in revenue. The capital costs are for the purchasing of additional bins, these will be required for households that are eligible for and need more capacity due to the change in frequency. This investment will ensure, the service is efficient and sustainable over the longer term. The revenue costs are for the communications material, project resource, bin/communications deliveries and operational aspects.
- 4.46 To estimate project costs and draft policies for a fortnightly collection scenario Veolia were asked to supply bin data based on current resident usage. The data gathered represents one visit per low rise property within the borough. For a more representative sample, the recommendation from Veolia would be to carry out further surveys.
- 4.47 The table below provides the numbers of households by bin type and as a percentage of the overall number of households in Watford.
- 4.48 Table 1 – Bin Data

| Recycling bin data | Number of households (44,000) | % of households |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 140 litre bin | 3,205 | 7% |
| Additional recycling bins | 283 | 0.6% |
| Box collections | 10 | 0.02% |
| Excess recycling | 697 | 1.6% |
| 1100 litre communal (flats) | 13,020 | 30% |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|------|
| 240 litre bin (standard) | 26,785 | 61% |
| Residual bin data | | |
| 240 litre bin | 4,200 | 9.5% |

- 4.49 A sample of households were also assessed for the bin fill rate. Veolia report that at least 70% of households were filling their bins at least half full.
- 4.50 Based on the bin numbers in Table 1, it is anticipated that with 61% of all households (including flats) having a standard size bin, this would be adequate provision for most of the time if switching to a fortnightly collection frequency. This would provide households with a weekly capacity of 120 litres of recycling, with the option of putting out extra correctly sorted recycling.
- 4.51 It is proposed that communal properties would remain on a weekly collection frequency with no impact on the bin capacity per week.
- 4.52 The quantity of bins required has been estimated based on the numbers in Table 1, the accompanying bin policies (detailed in section 4.78 of this report) and an assumption about uptake. More detailed analysis and assumptions would be made as part of the project.
- 4.53 Residents will be encouraged to squash and flatten recycling to fit more into their bin above ordering a new larger bin.
- 4.54 Project Delivery Costs**
- 4.55 Veolia have provided estimated costs to purchase additional bins/bin swaps and to deliver the service change as detailed in the table below.
- 4.56 All costs are indicative at this stage. The requirements of the project would need a full assessment and analysis, including what could be done to reduce the costs.
- 4.57 Table 2 – Capital Costs

| Wheelie bin | Estimate |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Additional bins and bin swaps | £243,393 |

4.58 Table 3 – revenue costs

| Item | Cost |
|---|-----------------|
| service leaflets, Letters, print and delivery | £16,704 |
| Delivery and collection of bins | £32,076 |
| Project officer | £17,831 |
| Total | £66,611 |
| Capital costs | £243,393 |
| Revenue | £66,611 |
| Total | £310,004 |

4.59 **Options Appraisal**

4.60 Five options have been considered and can be seen in appendix 5 – options appraisal.

4.61 The recommended option is to move to fortnightly recycling in autumn 2024 with a go live date of 21st October 2024 (option 2 or 4 in appendix 5).

4.62 A main risk associated with this change is financial – capital investment needed for additional bins and bin swaps, potential redundancies, and a tight time scale for delivery.

4.63 The opportunities it provides are savings on the Veolia contract price, service alignment with Dacorum, St Albans and Hertsmere, being prepared for future service growth and an opportunity to refresh the communications messaging sent directly to residents.

4.64 It is recommended that recycling is moved to fortnightly regardless of the outcome of the outcome of the IVC procurement with HCC.

4.65 If IVC is available, garden and food collections will continue as they are, and fortnightly recycling will deliver the cost saving. If it is not available, moving to fortnightly recycling will offset this additional cost.

4.66 This decision is being made in advance of HCC's procurement outcome.

4.67 The financial implications in relation to Veolia's contract costs are provided in Table 4 below.

4.68 **Table 4 – Estimated revenue contract cost/savings based on a move to fortnightly recycling in October 2024**

| Option | Recycling | Food disposal | 24/25 | 25/26 | 26/27 | 27/28 | Estimated contract saving |
|---|-------------|---------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| Fortnightly recycling with no change to food/garden disposal method | Fortnightly | IVC | £55,000 | £110,000 | £110,000 | £110,000 | £385,000 Saving |
| Fortnightly recycling with additional separate garden and food rounds | Fortnightly | AD | £55,000 | £ | £ | £ | £55,000 |

4.69 **Fortnightly recycling and no change to food/garden disposal method** (IVC retained) –will deliver approximately £110,000 p/a saving and future proof the service preparing for future investment needed in the service e.g. rolling out food waste to flats. It also aligns our service with other councils in the South of Hertfordshire; Dacorum, Hertsmere and St Albans,

4.70 **Fortnightly recycling** implemented in Autumn 2024 **with additional garden and food rounds** implemented in April 2025– depending on the timing, this option could provide a £55,000 revenue saving in the period from October 2024 – April 2025. There are however risks of redundancies and then a rehiring scenario for the food waste round. Communications to residents should cover both recycling information and information about food waste.

4.71 For both scenarios, there will be a net cost in 24/25. Approx. £55k saving, off-set by one of cost of £66,611. Net cost of £11,611 before any redundancy cost.

4.72 There is, a risk, that delivering the service change in October 2024 may incur redundancy costs (3 members of staff), however, this is likely to be mitigated by Veolia enforcing a recruitment freeze and using agency staff as an interim arrangement. If the HCC procurement outcome means we need to move to AD, then an additional round for April 2025 will be required, meaning the hiring of 3 staff. Ideally, we would make these changes at the same time to remove the need for redundancies, but it is recognised that April is not an appropriate time of year to be

making a service change and would also mean 6 months less of revenue savings. we will not know whether IVC is still available until May 2024 at the earliest. If we were to wait until Autumn 2025 this would mean 1 year less of revenue savings at a loss of around £110,000.

4.73 Accompanying bin policy

4.74 Most residents should be able to cope with the collection frequency reduction without any need for additional bin capacity. There are however some residents who may struggle, and we want to support them with a policy to allow them additional capacity.

4.75 There are various reasons why residents may struggle with their recycling capacity:

- larger households
- households who spend a lot of time at home and have a lot of parcels
- smaller 140l bins
- keen recyclers
- occasional/one off extra recycling (party, Christmas, delivery of a large items packaging)
- not using their space efficiently (squashing and crushing)
- not separating their waste and using their recycling bin for refuse

4.76 Some reasons can be tackled with education through a robust communications plan, others need to be supported with additional bin capacity.

4.77 There are risks around allowing too many additional recycling bins/larger bins which could make collections inefficient and reduce the cost savings generated through the reduction of recycling frequency. This needs to be mitigated against by including restrictions around the additional capacity.

4.78 Bin policy proposal

4.79 To support the before mentioned reasons for residents needing additional recycling capacity, the following policy is proposed:

Watford Borough Council – Recycling Bin Policy

1. Households of 4 or more permanent residents are entitled to an additional 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
2. Households who currently have a 140 litre recycling bin are entitled to swap it for a 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
3. Residents are permitted to put out additional side recycling if clearly marked or in a clear sack (presented next to their recycling bin on collection day).

4. Some reasons can be tackled with education through a robust communications plan, others need to be supported with the option of additional capacity.

Excludes households with access to communal recycling facilities.

Excludes blocks of flats with 5 or more properties.

- 4.80 This policy considers the costs to implement the provision of extra recycling bins, the ongoing revenue costs to supply the bins, operational efficiency, optimising recycling rates and flexibility for residents.
- 4.81 It provides additional capacity to those who need it most. Point 1. affects around 25% of residents (based on 2021 census) and point 2 affects 3205 residents (based on Veolia surveys shown in table 1)
- 4.82 The ability to order additional bins/to request 140 litre bin swaps will be promoted through the communication leaflets being sent to all households (not flats) as part of the recycling frequency service change. Bins will be ordered via an online form.
- 4.83 Full details of the new policy will be detailed on the Councils website. The full communications plan supporting the move to fortnightly recycling, including the promotion of the new recycling policy can be seen in appendix 7.
- 4.84 Delivery of these bins will be free to residents if requested before the service change in October 2024. Once the service moves into Business-as-Usual bins will be provided for free, but a delivery charge will apply to residents. Alternatively, they can collect bins free of charge from Wiggenhall Depot on the allotted time/day.
- 4.85 Delivery of the additional recycling bins/bin swaps will take place close to the service change go live date (around September/October TBC).
- 4.86 The adoption and active promotion of a recycling bin policy will address concerns linked with reducing the collection frequency of recycling, helping to keep littering low and the recycling rate high.
- 4.87 Other options were considered and can be viewed in appendix 8 – policy decisions presentation.
- 4.88 The new policy sits alongside the existing waste and recycling policies which remain unaffected and can be seen in appendix 9 – 2024 Service Change Supporting Policies.

- 4.89 Additional side recycling will be monitored by Veolia using the in-cab systems. If a resident presents side recycling for three consecutive weeks, Veolia will contact them via a letter which reminds residents about squashing and crushing recycling to fit into their bin. It also reminds them to recycle food and reduce waste where possible and will offer them the opportunity to apply for an additional bin.
- 4.90 It is estimated that there are around 8,365 households of 4 or more permanent residents (based on data from the 2021 census).
- 4.91 Recent surveys by Veolia show there are currently 3205 residents with smaller 140l bins (table 1).
- 4.92 As part of this proposal, residents will be able to request an additional bin, it isn't expected that everyone who is eligible for a bin will apply.
- 4.93 Costs associated with implementing this bin policy are met within the overall project costs detailed in table 3.
- 4.94 Garden Waste Christmas collections suspension information**
- 4.95 Over the Christmas period, waste tonnages increase by around 30% across recycling, waste and food waste streams. To ease the operational pressure and ensure additional recycling is cleared efficiently and effectively there will be a slight change in the frequency of garden waste collections over the Christmas period.
- 4.96 Garden waste collections will be suspended for two weeks from 23rd December and resumed on 7th January to allow garden waste collection crews to divert to recycling to help collect the additional recycling. This will take place annually to accommodate Christmas recycling collections.
- 4.97 Garden waste customers will be informed in their renewal letter/email in June, and waste collection dates detailed in the annual collection calendar.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer comments that the move to fortnightly recycling will help to offset future cost pressures arising from the introduction of an additional round which is expected around the end of the contract (2028) but may be required sooner due to property and population growth.

5.1.2 In the short term, this will deliver a gross annual revenue saving of £0.110m. In 2024/25 a half year saving will be achieved but will be offset by revenue implementation costs of £0.067m resulting in a net cost of £0.012m. The Council will also need to borrow to finance the capital investment in new bins. The cost of this is estimated to be £0.243m resulting in an annual revenue budget requirement of £0.022m (£0.013m MRP and £0.009m interest). This results in a net annual revenue saving to £0.088m from 2024/25 until the implementation of an additional round. This assumes that there are no redundancy costs.

5.1.3 There is also a risk that the County Council will be unsuccessful in their procurement of the IVC facility. If this occurs, the capacity created by the move to fortnightly recycling can be redeployed to manage the impact. This will prevent the Council from achieving a saving but will reduce the need for additional investment in the contract until an additional round is required due to population growth.

5.2 Legal issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are contained within the body of the report.

6.0 Risks

| Nature of risk | Consequence | Suggested control measure | Response (treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer) | Risk rating (combination of severity and likelihood) |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| Recycling rate drops | Not meeting target KPIs | Robust communications plan to include focus on food waste recycling | Treat | 3 (low) |
| Loss of IVC as a disposal route for food waste | Increased budget pressure | Fortnightly recycling proposed to mitigate impact | Tolerate | 6 (high) |
| Increased fly tipping | Reputational damage | Robust communications plan and outreach | Treat | 3 (low) |
| Public perception | Increased complaints | Robust communications | Treat | 3 (low) |

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | plan and outreach | | |
| Increased demand for additional services related to 'Simpler Recycling' and property growth | Increased budget pressure | Fortnightly recycling proposed to mitigate impact | Treat | 6 (high) |
| Timing of the service change to consider other implications such as loss of IVC and project timeline | Increased budget pressure | Consider as part of project | Treat | 6 (high) |
| Redundancy costs | Increased budget pressure | Consider timing of change in conjunction with all factors e.g. loss of IVC | Treat | 6 (High) |
| Funding uncertainty linked to EPR | Increased budget pressure | Ensure services are efficient and effective | Treat | 6 (High) |
| Risks associated with the bin policy | | | | |
| Nature of risk | Consequence | Suggested control measure | Response (treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer) | Risk rating (combination of severity and likelihood) |
| The maximum number of residents request the additional bin/bin swap | Slows down recycling collections | Limiting those applicable to households of four or more and swaps for those with 140l bins puts a cap on the maximum | Treat | 4 (medium) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------|------------|
| | | number and ensures it is still operationally viable | | |
| Households smaller than 4 residents are unhappy to not be able to request an additional bin | Increased complaints | Implement a robust communications plan to help residents make space in their recycling bin by squashing and crushing | Treat | 4 (medium) |
| Residents don't have space for the 240l additional recycling bin but have too much recycling to fit their current bin | Increased complaints | As the result of a conversation and if residents are using their other bins correctly, they could be offered a 360l bin swap or an additional 140l bin as an alternative. This is as an exception, not the rule | Treat | 4 (medium) |
| Collecting additional recycling bins slows down collections | Reduced collection efficiency | Limiting those who can apply for an additional bin to households of 4 or more | Treat | 4 (medium) |
| Residents aren't aware of the new policies | Increased litter and increased complaints | Robust communications plan and outreach | Treat | 3 (low) |

7.0 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

8.0 Equalities

9.0 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that an EIA is not necessary at this stage, but an EIA is likely to be required if

the decision is taken to change the collection frequency of recycling. This will be factored into the implementation plan.

10.0 Human Rights

11.0 No human rights are affected by this proposal.

12.0 Data Protection Impact Assessment

12.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

13.0 Sustainability

13.1 Fewer vehicles and miles would be needed for 26 collections a year as opposed to 52 – this would reduce carbon emissions, resulting in cleaner and better air quality.

13.1.1 It will help the council in working towards its target to become carbon-neutral by 2030.

14.0 People Implications

14.1 There are no people implications within the council but there are potential redundancies at Veolia. WBC are liable under the partnership contract for the cost of these redundancies. Any redundancies will depend on the recruitment freeze within Veolia and the outcome of the garden waste disposal route.

15.0 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

15.1 This service change may have an impact on crime by creating additional fly tipping. Every effort has been made to mitigate this through policy decisions – additional recycling to be accepted next to the recycling bin on collection day, larger bins for larger families and through clear communications at the time of the change promoting other ways to dispose of waste, recycle and reduce the overall amount of waste produced.

15.2 An additional outreach resource is needed and programmed into the project plan, a key area of this role would be to work in areas known across Watford to have higher levels of environmental crime.

16.0 Property

16.1 There aren't considered to be any property implications linked to this proposal.

17.0 Next steps should recommendations be approved.

17.1 To deliver the service change in October 2024 using EPMO framework.

18.0 Appendices

- 18.1 Appendix 1 – Recycling frequencies (Herts Waste Partnership and neighbouring authorities)
- 18.2 Appendix 2 – Timeline – Simpler Recycling and Key Contract Dates
- 18.3 Appendix 3 – Housing Trajectory
- 18.4 Appendix 4 – WRAP Recycling Tracker Survey
- 18.5 Appendix 5 – Options appraisal
- 18.6 Appendix 6 - Recycling Project Equality impact assessment
- 18.7 Appendix 7 – Communication and Stakeholder Management Plan
- 18.8 Appendix 8 – Policy Decisions Presentation
- 18.9 Appendix 9 – 2024 Service Change Supporting Policies.

19.0 Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.