

**“WE’VE GOT SOMETHING
YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE”**

Policy decisions - bins



Policy decisions

To implement fortnightly recycling there are some supporting policy decisions to be made:

- what additional capacity should be available
- which residents to receive the additional capacity
- additional side recycling
- residents with 140l recycling bins

Benchmarking – Hertfordshire Councils Bin Policy and Additional Recycling

- Overall, 8 out of 10 Herts councils accept additional recycling (including Watford).
- 2 of the 10 have boxes instead of bins for collections – Broxbourne and Stevenage. The following benchmarking excludes them.
- 4 of the 8 have an additional box for paper and card – East Herts, North Herts, St Albans and Welwyn.
- 4 of the 8 offer a larger (360l) recycling bin. Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and TRDC.
- Watford currently offer an additional 240l recycling bin which is offered to residents who are assessed as needing it (283).
- Of the councils who offer a larger bin:
 - Dacorum – have no policy
 - TRDC – have no policy
 - Hertsmere - have a policy of 5 or more with proof
 - St Albans – have a policy of 6 or more
- All 8 of the councils with fortnightly collections have always been fortnightly since recycling was introduced.

Lessons Learnt from Waste & Recycling Service Change 2020

- Residents have initial shocks/concerns to the information but move to accept the change over time ('change curve').
- Preconceptions don't become fact! The number of households with a larger 240 litre refuse bin in 2019 was 3,940 this is now 4,200. (We anticipated a larger increase in 2020)
- Notable increase in contact from residents in advance of the change (complaints and Mayor's Office contact) which drop off within a couple of months of implementation.
- Direct Line One (DL1) comms important in giving the 'It's coming message' and helping residents prepare for the change.
- Giving residents the 'tools' to support them with the change e.g. the right bin capacity for their needs.
- Measured approach to policy decisions balancing service costs, future service demands and risks.

Future considerations

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is due to start in 2025.
- Placing more responsibility on the producer to pay for the disposal of the packaging they produce.
- Expected that it will encourage producers to reduce the amount of packaging they use and that volumes of packaging will reduce overall.
- The deposit return scheme may result in reduced volumes of packaging being collected at the kerbside.
- Soft plastics are to be included in kerbside collections from 2027

The issues

By going fortnightly some residents may struggle to contain all their recycling in the current bin and may have extra.

There are various reasons for this:

- 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*

Some reasons can be tackled with education through a robust comms plan, others we want to support with the option of additional capacity

Operational Considerations and Risks

- Rounds must remain efficient
- Adding in too many bin collections could result in no round reductions
- In 2027 soft plastics must be included (volume/space)
- Side/loose recycling is operationally inefficient and can cause litter
- Side recycling in sacks which aren't clear can increase contamination at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)
- How to log contamination if one bin is contaminated and other isn't
- Veolia assessed a sample of households - around 70% of households were filling their bins at least half full
- Delivery of bins needs to be efficient

Options around additional capacity – who to receive it

	Bin policy description	Policy	Pros	cons	Recommendation
1	No residents are allowed additional capacity	No residents are allowed additional bin capacity	1. No cost attached	1. Larger households will struggle with capacity 2. Keen recyclers won't have additional opportunity to recycle 3. Removes flexibility 4. Reduces the opportunity to maximise the recycling rate 5. Could result in extra side recycling 6. Won't be a popular decision with the public	No
2	Only residents in households of 5 or more are entitled to additional capacity	Any house or low-rise property (5 flats or more) with 5 or more permanent residents can have additional recycling capacity. Available on application.	1. Limits the number of additional bins/bin swaps (saves cost) 2. Allows additional capacity for those who need it most 3. Additional bin capacity is more efficient operationally than extra side recycling 4. Policy aligns with the policy on refuse and is currently used by Hertsmere	1. No additional capacity for residents with smaller households who want to recycle more	Possibility
3	Only residents in households of 4 or more are entitled to additional capacity	Any house or low-rise property (5 flats or more) with 4 or more permanent residents can have additional recycling capacity. Available on application.	Limits the number of additional bins 2. Allowing extra recycling capacity helps with the recycling rate 3. Allows additional capacity for many households 4. Additional bin capacity is preferred operationally to extra side recycling 5. Has a level of restriction	1. No additional capacity for residents with smaller households who want to recycle more 2. BAU may have additional bin requests which could impact container delivery capacity/resourcing	Yes
4	All residents are allowed additional capacity	Any house or low-rise property (5 flats or less) is encouraged to squash and flatten their recycling. If they still feel they need extra recycling capacity this is available on request.	1. Allowing maximum recycling capacity helps with the recycling rate 2. Allows additional capacity for all 3. Additional bin capacity is preferred operationally to extra side recycling	1. No limit to the number of additional bins, Could be unaffordable 2. Would result in the most additional bins making collections inefficient 3. Could result in no reduction of collection rounds 4. Counterproductive to introducing fortnightly recycling. 5. No restrictions 6. Too hard to plan rounds as too much potential for additional, inefficient collections	Possibility



Recommendation

Who

option 3

- Any house or low-rise property with **4 or more permanent residents** can have additional capacity. Available on application.
 - Ability to use discretion to give additional bins to keen recyclers in smaller households upon Veolia assessment. Outside of policy.

Options around additional capacity – how much residents should receive (bins)

Bin policy description	Policy	Pros	cons	Recommendation
Additional bin size				
a Additional 240l bin	Qualifying households in low rise properties (houses and flats in a block of 5 or less) to receive an additional 240l recycling bin. Available on application.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nearly half the bin purchase price of a 360l bin 2. No wastage of old bins 3. Old bins would not need to be collected in 4. Allowing maximum recycling capacity helps with the recycling rate 5. 240l bins are the standard size and allow for more flexibility in ordering quantities 6. Additional bin capacity is preferred operationally to extra side recycling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 bins takes up a lot of space (larger footprint than a 360l bin) 2. Additional bins take longer to collect than 1 and could affect round efficiency 	Yes
b Replace current 240l bin with a 360l bin	Qualifying households in low rise properties (houses and flats in a block of 5 or less) to swap their 240l recycling for a larger 360l bin. Available on application.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Households still have 1 bin not 2 2. Swapping for 360l bins is widely offered in other Herts councils 4. Keeping to one is more efficient with collections 5. Additional bin capacity is preferred operationally to extra side recycling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larger bins cost nearly double the price of 240l bins 2. Need to be more accurate with the ordering quantities as 360l bins aren't used for anything else. 3. Need to recycle the old bins which are being swapped 	No

Recommendation bin size option a

- **Additional 240l recycling bin.**
 - Qualifying criteria applies.
 - Un-publicised option to have a 360l, bin swap if resident doesn't want the additional 240l bin, offered as result of conversation.
 - Purchase small stock of 360l bins, Veolia to allocate at discretion. Outside of policy

Options for 140l bins swaps

	Bin policy description	Policy	Pros	cons	Recommendation
6	Swap 140l bin for a 240l bin				
a	Replace current 140l bin with a 240l bin	Every resident who currently has a 140l recycling bin is entitled to swap it for a 240l recycling bin. Available on request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allows residents with small bins the options to swap for a standard sized bin - in keeping with the rest of the town 2. Fair 3. Residents with a small recycling bin may struggle with their capacity 4. Additional bin capacity is preferred operationally to extra side recycling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost attached to the swap (delivery and purchase of bins) 	Yes
b	Do not allow replacements of 140l bins	Residents with 140l recycling bins are not allowed to swap for a 240l bin.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No cost attached 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents with small bins will not have adequate capacity 2. It is un fair 3. It is not in keeping with the rest of the town 4. Could result in extra side recycling 5. Won't be a popular decision with the public 	No

Recommendation - option 6a

- Every resident who currently has a 140l recycling bin is entitled to swap it for a 240l recycling bin.
- Collect old 140l bin when deliver new 240l bin.
- Only available to those eligible.
- Recycle old 140l bins.
- Available on application, informed through DL1

Options around excess side recycling

	Bin policy description	Policy	Pros	cons	Recommendation
5	Excess side recycling				
a	No side recycling allowed	No side/extra recycling is allowed and won't be collected	1. Efficient operationally	1. No flexibility for residents 2. Unpopular with residents 3. May result in more costly bin orders 4. Additional fly tipping	No
b	Side recycling allowed at Christmas only	All residents are allowed to put out additional recycling for their first collection after Christmas	1. Gives extra capacity to all at a time of year where recycling is maximised 2. Efficient operationally	1. Only allows flexibility for residents at Christmas, not the rest of the year 2. Unpopular with residents for the rest of the year 3. May result in more costly bin orders 4. Additional fly tipping for the rest of the year	No
c	Limited side recycling allowed for all residents all year	All residents are allowed to put out additional side recycling if clearly marked or in a clear sack all year-round including Christmas	1. Gives residents flexibility for occasional extra recycling 2. Stops residents from ordering additional/larger bins when not really needed 3. Low costs attached if numbers remain low	1. Not efficient operationally 2. Can cause street scene mess with rubbish blowing away before collection 3. Less efficient operationally 4. Can cause contamination issues	Yes

Recommendation - option 5c

- **All residents** are allowed to put out additional side recycling if *clearly marked or in a clear sack* all year-round
 - Limit to 3 consecutive collections of extra recycling then move to additional bin/outreach advice.
 - Soft messaging.
 - Could limit side waste to being in paid for excess waste sacks at affordable price to reduce the contamination issues. Or limit the number of side waste.

Recommendations are based on

- Implementation costs
- Ongoing revenue costs
- Operational efficiency
- Optimising recycling rates
- Flexibility for residents

Policy agreement

- The IG have approved the following:
 - Entitlement to extra bin capacity – Option 3: 4 or more permanent residents
 - Bin size – Option A: 240l additional bin
 - 140l bin swaps – Option 6a: swap 140l for a 240l bin
 - Excess side recycling – Option 5c: allow limited side recycling for all

Bin Data and assumptions

	Current data provided by Veolia		Recommended option of families of 4, additional 240l bin		
Recycling bin data	Number of households	% of households	Maximum potential uptake (number of households) low-rise properties	Estimated percentage uptake	Estimated uptake (number of households)
	44,000				
140 litre bin	3,205	7%	3,205	80%	2564
Additional recycling bins	283	0.60%	8,365	35%	2,928
Excess recycling	697	1.60%	30,980	5.00%	1,549
1100 litre communal (flats)	13,020	30%	Out of scope	Out of scope	Out of scope

- Only houses/low rise properties are in scope (30980).
- Around 60% of households with a 140l bin may want to swap it for a 240l bin ($3205 * 80\% = \mathbf{2564}$).
- Census 2021 data shows that 25% of households in Watford have 4 or more permanent residents. Excluding flats takes away a higher proportion of smaller households so 27% has been applied to low rise properties to account for this. ($30980 * 27\% = 8365$).
- It is estimated that around 35% of these households may request an additional bin ($8365 * 35\% = \mathbf{2928}$).
- The uptake % of excess recycling is expected to increase with the reduction in frequency. This does not affect the number of bins we are purchasing but will affect round collections efficiency

Other recommendations

- Apply for additional bins/swaps after Direct Line of communications 1 (DL1) around June (date TBC).
- Delivery (free to residents) before go live.
- After go live date, resident to pay for delivery of bin or collect from depot for free (in line with current policy).

Thank you
Any questions?