

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25 July 2024

Report of Cabinet – 8 July 2024

Cabinet met on 8 July 2024. The minutes have been published on the council’s website.

The following were present at the meeting:

Present: Mayor Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Dychton (Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Community)
Councillor Pattinson (Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing)
(for minute numbers 12 to 17 and 20 to 21)
Councillor Rodrigues (Portfolio Holder for Property and Resources)
Councillor G Saffery (Portfolio Holder for Planning)
Councillor Stotesbury (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability)
Councillor Williams (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services)

Also present: Councillor Bell, Opposition Group Leader

Officers: Chief Executive
Chief Finance Officer
Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services and Monitoring
Officer
Associate Director of Environment (for minute numbers 12 to 16)
Associate Director of Housing and Wellbeing
Waste Recycling and Venues Lead (LA) (for minute numbers 12 to 16)
Environmental Health Manager – Environment
Housing Enabling and Development Manager
Democratic Services Manager

The following item has been called in:

16. Fortnightly recycling proposal and supporting policy

It was noted that this item had been deferred from the previous meeting due to the Parliamentary election being called following the publication of the agenda for the June meeting.

Cabinet received a report of the Waste and Recycling Service Delivery Leads, which set out the option to move from a weekly collection of dry recycling to fortnightly.

The Mayor invited Councillor Williams to introduce the report.

Councillor Williams explained that it was with a heavy heart he introduced this report. However, due to the sustained underfunding of local government it was

necessary to review all possibilities to save expenditure. This had included the services provided by Veolia. He informed members that the move from weekly to fortnightly collections of dry recyclables would produce a saving of £110,000 each year. He advised that eight out of 10 councils within Hertfordshire already collected dry recyclables on a fortnightly basis. Watford was one of the last in the county to change to fortnightly collections. Some councils were changing other waste collections to every three weeks. This decision would align the council with 80% of other councils. He noted that collections had been monitored and it had been recorded that 70% of collections were less than 50% full. If any residents were concerned there would be options available including requesting a larger bin and, in some cases a second one.

The Waste, Recycling and Venues Lead informed members that the government had provided councils with additional funding to roll-out food waste collection further. All new blocks of flats were being given food waste recycling caddies from the start. The funding would also cover the extension of food waste recycling to all flats by 2026.

Councillor Williams assured members that the decision to make this recommendation had not been taken lightly. He thanked the council's officers and the Veolia team for compiling the detailed report before Cabinet.

The Mayor echoed his thanks to the teams for their work on this matter. The Mayor invited Councillor Bell to ask questions.

Councillor Bell noted that Councillor Williams had referred to an annual saving of £110,000. He asked whether any other options had been considered that may save a similar amount. He added that it was necessary to make sure that those living in flats had access to recycling facilities.

The Mayor stated that every aspect of council expenditure had been reviewed. He commented that the main issue for flats was food waste.

Councillor Williams responded that those residents living in high rise flats would continue to receive weekly collections. It was only the low-level flats that would be affected by this decision. He added that 25% of residual waste was food waste. The level of residual waste could be reduced if food waste was disposed of in the correct way. Further communication with residents was required.

The Mayor invited Cabinet to vote on the recommendations contained in the report.

Resolved –

1. that the frequency of recycling collections be moved to fortnightly effective from October 2024. To affect low rise properties (houses and flat blocks of 5 or less) only.
2. that the decision on the implementation of fortnightly recycling and any changes to the garden waste collection policy and terms and conditions be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and the Mayor in consultation with the Associate Director for Environment and Communities.
3. that blocks of 6 or more flats to continue to receive a weekly collection of dry recycling.
4. that an Implementation Group, comprising the Mayor, Portfolio Holder, WBC Officers from the Service, Communications, and Veolia, be established to oversee the service change.
5. that the service change to be supported by the Enterprise Programme Management Office (EPMO).
6. that the change 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.