

Opposition Priority Business

Wheeled bin waste collection service

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Waste Collection is a local government core service.
- 1.2 The current collection service for those with wheeled bins is:
 - weekly refuse (black bin)
 - weekly dry recycling (blue bin)
 - fortnightly garden and food mixed (green bin)
- 1.3 The Labour Administration has consulted on changing the service with the most drastic collection option being:
 - fortnightly refuse and dry recycling
 - weekly food and
 - paid for garden waste collection £65
- 1.4 The Opposition believes that an extensive alteration to the wheeled bin waste collection service will have a detrimental impact on the street scene of our borough.
- 1.5 This OPB paper includes 7 recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Maintain the current service provision of weekly refuse and dry recycling bin collection.
- 2.2 Separate the mixed food and garden waste collection service.
- 2.3 Deliver a weekly food collection service in line with the Mayor's Environment and Defra's Resources and Waste Strategies.
- 2.4 Continue with a fortnightly garden waste collection service.
- 2.5 Provide more bin stores on council estates to encourage higher levels of recycling.
- 2.6 Improved communication with residents to drive up recycling rates not just via the kerbside service but on estates and through our commercial service.
- 2.7 Deliver a "Together We Are Enfield" approach to encourage more people to recycle.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The original wheeled bin waste collection service was as follows
 - Weekly refuse
 - Weekly dry recycling
 - Weekly mixed garden and food

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- 3.2 The Labour Administration made the decision to move the weekly combined garden and food waste collection service to fortnightly in October 2016.
- 3.3 On 31st May 2018, The Mayor's Environment Strategy was published¹. It contains the target of delivering a separate weekly kerbside food waste collection service.² The council was aware that this policy decision would be made as it was contained within the original draft Environment Strategy published on 11th August 2017³. The Leader of the Opposition even raised this issue at the February 2018 Budget Full Council meeting. The Opposition put forward amendments to the budget which included £998,000 for the roll out of a separate kerbside, weekly food collection service⁴ as it was surprised that funding had not been set aside to deliver this policy.
- 3.4 On 29th October 2018, the Labour Administration decided to consult on potentially reducing the wheeled bin collection service.
- 3.5 At the time of submission, Enfield residents await the outcome of the consultation.

4.0 Recycling rates

- 4.1 Recycling rates have plateaued in recent years in London.⁵
- 4.2 In July 2018, Enfield's recycling rate was 36.9%. This is a 2.2% reduction in waste being recycled in comparison to the same period last year.⁶
- 4.3 There has been a reduction in the recycling rate over the last year. In 2016/17 when the fortnightly garden waste service was introduced there was a communications strategy put in place to advise residents of the change, this resulted in increased participation. In 2017/18 as the service imbedded itself and the communications and engagement with residents reduced we have seen that the tonnages have begun to decline to a similar rate seen in 2015/16.⁷

¹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/london-environment-strategy>

² https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_environment_strategy_0.pdf Page 313

³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/help-make-london-worlds-first-national-park-city>

⁴ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s67899/Alternative%20Budget%20and%20Amendment%20to%20Recommendation%202.1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables>

⁶ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s72000/Cabinet%20Q2%20Performance%20Report%20Final%20002.pdf> Page 7

⁷ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s72000/Cabinet%20Q2%20Performance%20Report%20Final%20002.pdf> Page 7

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4.4 Overall, the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting over the last three years is as follows:

- 2017/18: 35.9% (-1.3%)
- 2016/17: 37.2% (+1.3%)
- 2015/16: 35.9% (+2.6%)⁸

4.5 The Administration said in its recent Quarterly Corporate Performance Report that when a communications strategy was delivered to support the change to fortnightly collection for the green bin service recycling improved but once that stopped levels reduced. Therefore, there is a concern that it could be mirrored if the service moves to fortnightly for refuse and dry recycling.

5.0 Decision to consult to potentially alter the current service

5.1 The decision was published in October 2018.

5.2 The report contained 8 collection options:

1. Current service
2. Weekly refuse, weekly dry, weekly separate food and charged for garden - £65
3. Weekly refuse, fortnightly dry, fortnightly mixed food and garden – no charge
4. Weekly refuse, fortnightly dry, weekly separate food and charged for garden fortnightly - £65
5. Fortnightly refuse, weekly dry, fortnightly mixed food and garden waste – no charge
6. Fortnightly refuse, weekly dry, weekly separate food and charged for garden waste - £65
7. Fortnightly refuse, fortnightly dry, fortnightly mixed food and garden – no charge
8. Fortnightly refuse, fortnightly dry, weekly separate food and charged for garden - £65⁹

5.3 Waste disposal is the fifth highest cost to the council. The rationale for the proposals was to make savings through driving up recycling to reduce disposal costs. You will see from the above that recycling has lowered in recent years.

5.4 Three of the options failed to comply with the Mayor's Environment Strategy which stated that every borough should deliver a separate kerbside weekly food waste collection service. This created doubt that those three options

⁸<https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s72000/Cabinet%20Q2%20Performance%20Report%20Final%20002.pdf> Page 7

⁹ Approval to undertake a public consultation for potential changes to the waste collection service, KD: 4703, Page 10

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would ever be chosen due to the fact that Enfield has a general conformity duty when it comes to mayoral policies.

- 5.5 The Environment Department at the Greater London Authority was unaware that Enfield Council was about to start a consultation with non-compliant service options.
- 5.6 The decision to go out to consultation was called in by the Leader of the Opposition.
- 5.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the statutory scrutiny panel of Enfield Council. The committee voted in favour of the decision being referred back to the Cabinet Member so that he could consider the issues raised at the meeting including the issue that three of the options being consulted upon were unlikely to be deliverable.¹⁰
- 5.8 Three days after the OSC meeting without amending any of the original decision, the Cabinet Member said the decision would proceed unchanged. The Cabinet Member clearly believed three days was an appropriate length of time to truly consider and get underneath the critical issues raised at OSC about a core council service.
- 5.9 The consultation started less than a week after the OSC meeting took place.

6.0 Concerns

- 6.1 The concerns mentioned on social media platforms and during the recent by-election include:
- Increased fly-tipping and more litter on the streets
 - Dirtier streets by changing the service could attract crime, deteriorate communities and have an impact on public health
 - Reduced levels in recycling especially garden waste
 - A rise in contaminated waste
- 6.2 There is unease that any saving gained by changing the service will not be realised due to the potential need to spend more on keeping our streets clean. Enfield Council already spends nearly £1million a year on fly-tip clean-up costs.
- 6.3 There was anxiety that a reduced street scene could go much further than just spoiling the aesthetics of an area. It was felt that fly-tipping and dirty streets could have social implications such as the deterioration of communities. There was also a view that areas that have a bad street scene are more likely to attract crime. This is backed up by Defra because in 2015 it published a survey that found more crime in streets with rubbish, graffiti and fly-tipping,

¹⁰ <http://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/g12764/Printed%20minutes%2023rd-Oct-2018%2019.30%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1> Page 6

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and less in cleaner areas. When an area becomes a focal point for fly-tipping it encourages others to use that location as a regular place to dump rubbish. In contrast, people are more reluctant to fly-tip or litter in cleaner areas. It is well known that if places are dirty and look 'unloved', this can adversely impact upon health and wellbeing.¹¹

- 6.4 A charge for garden waste collection service was viewed as a negative to recycling. People mentioned that they might not wish to continue recycling their garden waste due to the cost which would mean further increases in residual waste.
- 6.5 There is potential for more contaminated recycling loads if there are lengthy periods of time between collections as people may choose to dispose of their waste in the bin with the largest capacity and most frequently emptied.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 A corporate objective of Enfield Council is to keep our borough clean, safe and tidy¹².
- 7.2 An alteration to the wheeled bin waste service puts that objective at risk due to the delays residents will experience between collections.
- 7.3 The result of the Bush Hill Park by-election shows that people do not want fortnightly collection as it was an issue raised on the doorstep.
- 7.4 The recommendations reflect the views of residents whilst recognising policy decisions made by the Mayor of London and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/13/dirty-streets-crime-link>

¹² <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s70894/finalCorp.plan.draft12.18.08.29.option1cover%2012092018%20Cabinet.pdf> Page 6