

London Borough of Enfield

Portfolio Report

Report of: Doug Wilkinson – Director of Environment & Operational Services

Subject: Bulky Waste Collection Service

Cabinet Member: Cllr. Jewell

Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Ward: All

Key Decision: 4810

Purpose of Report

- 1 As the country moves into the recovery phase from the Covid pandemic, this report sets out what further changes to waste services are required to adapt to the impacts of the pandemic, new environment and changed behaviours of people. The purpose of the report is to seek authorisation to introduce a free bulky waste collection service for all residents in the borough.

Proposal(s)

- 2 To introduce a free bulky waste collection service for all residents within the borough as soon as is practicable.
- 3 The free service would replace the current paid for service and is in response to the impacts of Covid as we move through the recovery phase and into a new norm. The free service will include all general bulky items with the exclusion of 'White Goods' electrical items which would require a charge for collection.
- 4 The free service would be delivered via the existing booking system and collections will be on an area basis, as it is now, giving each area of the borough a dedicated day when collections can be booked via the Council website. There will be an option for a premium service, where residents can choose a specific day for the collection of their bulky waste, if this service is requested a charge will be applied.
- 5 The free collection would apply to those items currently collected as part of the paid for service and will include (but not be limited to) furniture, beds, mattresses, tables, chairs etc. Items not currently collected, for example building materials, rubble and tyres etc. will continue to be outside of the

scope of the free bulky waste collection service as these tend to be building/ commercial activities and alternative arrangements should be made. A full list of the items that will be collected as part of the free service and those excluded are listed in Appendix 1.

- 6 Additional capacity will be created within the service to manage the anticipated increased demand once the free service is launched.
- 7 Residents will be able to book the free service an unlimited number of times per year, but the number of items that will be permitted for each collection will remain at six items. To ensure there is no abuse of the system, e.g. those undertaking regular house clearances, the service will monitor individual usage. Residents will be able to book the collection of any unwanted large electricals ('white goods') for a fee.
- 8 Residents will continue to be signposted towards the free electrical collections provided by Clearabee and the furniture collection provided by British Heart Foundation.
- 9 There will be no impact on the ability for residents to continue to use Barrowell Green recycling centre.

Reason for Proposal(s)

- 10 The Council currently provides residents with a chargeable kerbside bulky waste collection service that can be booked and paid for via the Council's website. Charges currently range from £42.20 for one item rising to £65.20 for six items.
- 11 As the country moves into the recovery phase from the Covid pandemic further changes to waste services are required in response to the impacts of the pandemic. It is acknowledged that many people have now changed their behaviours and way of working, with many more people working from home. Over the last 15 months or so, people have made changes to their homes to adapt to home working often purchasing larger furniture items. Additionally, more people are staying at home not going away for their holiday and as a result there has been an increase in home improvements and renewing of larger household items.
- 11 For some residents the charges for bulky waste collections are unaffordable and consequently the service is not accessible all residents. Disposal of bulky waste is free at Barrowell Green Recycling Centre, but not all residents have a means of transporting their waste to the recycling centre. These circumstances may disproportionately affect the some of the most vulnerable residents who are also the most likely to be affected by ongoing financial uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 12 A free service would benefit residents in several ways, including:
 - The service would be accessible to all residents irrespective of their financial circumstances;

- The service would help those most affected by the pandemic including those who continue to isolate due to the fear of catching the virus;
- A free collection would benefit those who cannot transport their bulky waste to Barrowell Green Recycling Centre;
- It would provide a service comparable to some of the neighbouring boroughs such as Waltham Forest who offer a free service.

13 A free service would also help to alleviate any pressure at Barrowell Green Recycling Centre, which can get busier at peak times.

Relevance to the Council's Corporate Plan

14 Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods

The proposal to move to a free bulky waste collection service will support the Council's Corporate Plan aspirations of creating thriving, affordable neighbourhoods. A free service would help to maintain the borough's position as a great place to live, and the wider strategic objectives of adding value to housing and facilitating inward investment.

15 Sustain strong and healthy communities

Uncollected items left in front gardens or illegally disposed bulky waste can harbour pests, which can pose a risk to public health. A free service will allow all residents to dispose of their bulky waste without the fear of discrimination or judgement by those that can afford the service against those that could previously not.

16 Build our local economy to create a thriving place

The cost of disposing obsolete and/or unwanted bulky items may be unaffordable but necessary for some residents. The savings made through disposal via a free service may result in residents spending more in the local economy because they do not need to factor the cost of disposal when choosing whether to buy a new bed, sofa or table and chairs.

Background

17 Enfield Council currently offer two methods of disposing of bulky waste; either for free at Barrowell Green recycling facility or via the kerbside service which is chargeable. The Council also signposts residents to free third-party household collections for electrical waste via Clearabee and British Heart Foundation who collect some bulky items.

18 Whilst the service offer is comparable with some other London Local Authorities, the most vulnerable residents are not always able to access the bulky waste collection service because:

- They may not have the means to transport bulky waste items to Barrowell Green Recycling Centre;
- They may not be able to afford the paid-for service;

- British Heart Foundation's free service only collects specific items of good quality furniture and not all forms of bulky waste.
- 19 Consequently, the most vulnerable may be in a situation where they are unable to buy new furniture because they have not got the means or transport dispose of their old items at Barrow Green Recycling Centre or because they cannot afford the charge for a bulky collection.
- 20 To address this barrier for some residents, officers have appraised the existing paid-for service against a free service for all residents. A free service would be available to all and would also help those that have been disproportionately financially affected by the Coronavirus pandemic accessing the service.
- 21 Currently the service is chargeable with fees ranging from £42.20 for one item rising to £65.20 for six items. The current service operates five days a week Monday to Friday with all areas of the borough covered on a zonal basis, one zone each day of the five days that the service is operational. There is a premium service, with an additional cost of £11.10, for those residents that want to choose a different day to their allocated collection day.
- 22 Collections are currently made by one dedicated team that combine bulky waste collections with other waste operations. It is anticipated that a move to a free service would result in increased demand and the need for additional resources.
- 23 Under the proposals outlined within this report, the bulky waste collection service would become a free service, whilst the White Goods/ electrical collection and the premium service would remain chargeable. Charging for White Goods aligns with the objectives within the environmental legislation relating to the principle of 'producer pays' and 'extended producer responsibilities'. This approach is also in line with our neighbouring borough of Waltham Forest.
- 24 Subject to the approval of the proposals outlined within this report, a free service would have a financial impact of £127k per annum (including electrical goods). The proposal is to retain the current charge for White Goods/ electrical items and a premium service (£15 charge). This is estimated to generate an income of £32k p.a., resulting in a net full year income loss of circa £95k (part year equivalent circa £55k based on a 1 September implementation). The number of free collections requested is likely to be a much higher number than the 3134 currently received under the charged service model. This will also result in the removal of many more items which may have been dumped on the highway as fly tipping. It is expected that an outcome of moving to a free service will result in and improvement in the appearance and cleanliness of the borough.
- 25 Bulky waste collections can be booked either via a customer services advisor or via an electronic booking form on the Council's website. Should the decisions be taken to introduce a free collection then some changes

will be required to ensure residents are only charged for electrical collections and the premium service.

Main Considerations for the Council

- 26 The main consideration for the Council are:
- To move from a chargeable service to a free bulky collection service for all residents of the borough.
 - Whether sufficient resources can be secured to meet the expected increase in demand for the service;
 - Whether the risks outlined in paragraph 32 will materialise e.g. availability of HGV drivers, and whether the risks can be mitigated;

Safeguarding Implications

- 27 It is not believed that there are any safeguarding implications from the proposals set out within this report.

Public Health Implications

- 28 It is not believed that there are significant public health implications from the proposals outlined within this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 29 It is not believed that there are any equalities implications from the proposals set out within this report. A free service would enable the service to be utilised by more residents within the borough who cannot afford to access the current paid for service, or those that do not have means to transport bulky items to Barrowell Green Recycling Centre.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

- 30 A free service will enable more residents to access the service from their homes and it is expected that this will reduce the number of journeys to Barrowell Green Recycling Centre. This will reduce the emissions and journeys in the Winchmore Hill area, reducing congestion in the local area at busy times. Subject to approval of the proposals set out within this report, there may be the need to obtain an additional collection vehicle. If this is required then the Council will look to procure a modern low emissions vehicle.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

- 31 Given the challenging financial conditions currently affecting the Country, there is a risk moving forward that fewer people will be able to access a paid for service. This risk will be mitigated by the Council introducing a widely accessible free service for all residents.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

- 32 A risk that may arise from the introduction of a free bulky waste collection is that demand is likely to increase. This will be mitigated by the creation of additional capacity being built into the service and a booking system with limits on the number of items. A further risk identified is workforce capacity and the availability of qualified heavy goods vehicle drivers. Due to lost drivers from Brexit and a backlog of potential drivers awaiting to take to their tests due to COVID, the availability of drivers is currently low. This could pose a risk to the launch of the free service, but should not be seen as barrier to the implementation of the proposals outlined within this report. Officers are currently working with HR to ensure an adequate supply of drivers. Longer term a programme of training will be delivered to provided extra resilience.

Financial Implications

- 33 The Council currently provides residents with a chargeable kerbside bulky waste collection service that can be booked and paid for via the Council's website. Charges currently range from £42.20 for one item rising to £65.20 for six items.
- 34 Currently the income currently generated from the Bulky Waste Collection Service is £127k per annum (including electrical goods). The proposal to retain a charge for white goods/ electrical items and a £15 premium service is estimated to generate an income of £32k p.a., resulting in a net full year income loss of about £95k (part year equivalent circa £55k based on a 1 September implementation). The number of free collections requested is likely to be a much higher number than the 3134 currently received under the charged service model. This will also result in the removal of many more items, which will require additional staff to collect.
- 35 The current cost for staff and vehicles to collect as a charged bulky waste service (3134 collections) is £158k p.a. The service currently operates two days a week (circa 0.4 of a crew per week). In moving to a free service, demand is likely to increase significantly, it is estimated that to cope with the increase in demand additional resources will be required. Officers estimate that the service will require two crews per week, consequently the staffing and vehicle costs will increase by circa £168k p.a. There will also be increase in waste disposal costs estimated at £79k p.a. (part year equivalent increase is circa £97k and £46k respectively based on a 1 September implementation).
- 36 The costs to implement the free bulky waste collection service for this current year 2021-22 will be funded from the Covid grant fund with future years costs being considered as part of the MTFP process.

Legal Implications

- 37 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 permits the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do provided it is not prohibited by legislation and subject to public law principles.

- 38 The decision to introduce a free bulky waste collection service is a Key Decision and the Council must comply with its governance process in respect of Key Decisions.
- 39 The report for the Council's 2021/22 budget approved the delegation of authority to Executive Directors and Directors to negotiate discounts and make in year amendments, where appropriate, for the Council's fees and charges. The delegation of these powers allows the amendment to the current fees and charges relating to bulky waste by the Director of Environment and Operational Services.

Workforce Implications

- 40 The proposals set out within this report may lead to an increase in the size of the service and result in additional employment opportunities for local people or the existing workforce.

Property Implications

- 41 There are no property implications from the proposals outlined within this report.

Other Implications

- 42 There are possible procurement implications via the purchase of a second vehicle for the service. However, having consulted with the Fleet Service it has been agreed that the necessary vehicle would be obtained via a lease arrangement. This is because the current lead in times for the purchase of a vehicle are significant and there is better flexibility offered via a lease agreement.

Options Considered

- 43 Several options have been considered as set out within the table below:

Option	Decision	Rationale
(A) Do nothing, current service offer retained as it is.	Discounted	Retaining the service as it currently is does not provide customers with a better service, which is the primary aim of this proposed service change. Consequently, this option has been discounted. Continuing with a charged service means that some residents will not have the means to access the service or be able to use Barrowell Green for their bulky waste.
(B) Free bulky waste collection service, charged White Goods / electrical and premium service retained. No increase in the number	Discounted	This option has been discounted because it is expected that there will be increased demand for the service. If the demand cannot be facilitated, then residents could lose confidence in the

of appointments available to resident and no change to resources.		service and the Council will not achieve the aspiration of an improved service offer. This option poses a reputational risk to the Council.
(C) Free bulky waste collection service, charged White Goods / electrical and premium service retained. 50% increase in resources available. Limit of four collections per year per household.	Discounted	This option has been discounted due to the additional cost and administration burden of developing the appointment booking system to cap the number collections that each resident can access.
(D) Free bulky waste collection service, limited number of items, unlimited number of bookings per household (monitored to stop abuse of the system), charged White Goods / electrical and premium service retained. Increase in resources to a full additional crew to meet expected demand.	Recommended	This option is recommended because it provides the improved service that this service change aims to achieve, whilst also building sufficient capacity to meet expected demand. Should demand be lower than expected then resources could be scaled back in the future or redeployed as appropriate

Conclusions

- 44 This report proposes the introduction, as soon as is practicable, of free bulky waste collection service would deliver a range of benefits for the residents of the borough. It is acknowledged that many people have now changed their behaviours and way of working, with many more people working from home. Over the last 15 months or so, people have made changes to their homes to adapt to home working often purchasing larger furniture items. Additionally, more people are staying at home not going away for their holiday and as a result there has been an increase in home improvements and renewing of larger household items. Furthermore, many residents face ongoing financial challenges within the borough caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, the move to a free service would enable all residents especially the most vulnerable residents with a means of disposing their bulky waste easily and legally.
- 45 The proposals outlined within this report will deliver an improved service offer for all the residents of the borough. It will ensure that all residents can dispose of their bulky waste easily and consistently. It will mean that residents do not need to store unwanted items because they cannot afford the collection costs of a chargeable service and are not tempted to dump them illegally.
- 46 Whilst the introduction of a free service will result in additional expenditure to the waste service, it is considered that a free service would bring about a range of benefits and improvements for the borough and its residents.

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Background Papers

None

Appendix 1

Items that will be collected for free:

- Furniture
- Bicycles
- Garden furniture
- Other portable household items
- Armchairs, sofas and futons
- Bathroom furniture (plastic or ceramic only)
- Beds (bed base, mattress and headboard are counted as one item)
- Carpets and rugs (put them in bags for collection)
- Doors
- Dustbins
- Fence panels (must be tied into manageable bundles with all nails removed)
- Mirrors
- Plastic water tanks
- Rotary washing lines
- Satellite dishes
- Storage heaters (without bricks)
- Tables and chairs
- Trampolines (taken apart)
- Up to 30 black rubbish bags (five black bags will be counted as one item)
- Wood flooring (must be tied into manageable bundles with all nails removed)

Items that will be excluded from the free collection service:

- Bricks
- Building material
- Electrical items
- Gas bottles
- Glass
- Large fluid containers
- Rubble and soil
- Tree trunks and thick branches
- Tyres
- Greenhouses
- Boilers