

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: The Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm
Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 22nd July 2024

Subject: Update on Waste and Recycling Service Developments

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Responsible Director: Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm

SUMMARY

The report sets out the progress made in our waste and recycling services through the roll-out of food waste recycling, introduction of wheeled bins and garden waste recycling and other service developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The new services provide a modern waste collection service, meeting the demands of residents and providing the associated benefits of a cleaner environment where businesses want to invest and opportunities for local jobs.
Creating a compassionate council	The new services place great emphasis on engagement, compassion and providing a bespoke flexible service that accommodates needs of residents.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Rather than using available legislative powers (s46 Environmental Protection Act 1990) to carry out a blanket imposition of containers on residents, we have designed the roll out of the service to ensure that we can work with residents to identify the bins that best

	suit their property type and waste requirements. We initially ran a prototype of the service to allow residents to experience and comment on how the new service operates.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The new services reduce the council's waste disposal costs, by reducing waste and diverting more material for recycling
Taking pride in H&F	The new services collect household waste and recycling in containers rather than bags where possible, reducing litter spillage and keeping our streets cleaner.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The new services enable residents to recycle more and reduce the amount of waste that is sent for waste disposal.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

BACKGROUND

1. The single best thing we can do with our waste is to avoid producing it in the first place, and on this measure, LBHF is a very high performing borough, with only 227.6 kg of household waste per head collected each year. This is exceptional performance and places us 3rd best in the country.
2. In managing the waste that we do collect from households, the best thing we can do is to recycle that material. Looking at the materials we collect for recycling (paper, cardboard, metal tins and cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic bottles etc), we are the 9th best in London but for overall recycling, which includes food and garden waste, we are in the bottom quartile of performance across London, with a recycling rate that has been sitting at around 25-27% for several years.
3. As a result, we are introducing a number of service changes to help to boost our recycling rate. This is not just good for the environment, but also helps save money: a tonne of recycling costs on average over £100 less to process than a tonne of waste sent for disposal.
4. We ran a prototype service, delivering wheeled bins (where suitable) and food waste recycling to approximately 5,000 homes across the borough from the autumn of 2020. We reported on this work to PAC in November 2022 and a summary of the feedback we received from the prototype areas is set out in table 1 below:

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>I am happy with the service</i>	<i>90% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>I find the service easy to use</i>	<i>95% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>I have enough space in my bins each week</i>	<i>88% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>I recycle more</i>	<i>64% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>My streets are cleaner</i>	<i>58% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>How important are the following benefits of the prototype service?</i>	
<i>Being able to recycle more</i>	<i>87% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>Having cleaner streets</i>	<i>92% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>Being able to safely contain and store waste and recycling outside</i>	<i>90% strongly agreed/agreed</i>
<i>Reducing injuries to collection crews</i>	<i>86% strongly agreed/agreed</i>

Food waste recycling and introduction of wheeled bins

5. The borough wide roll-out of the food waste recycling service to street-based properties began in November 2023. A wide range of activities were undertaken to ensure that the implementation of the new service went smoothly, including:
 - Information was sent to all households to give advance notice of the upcoming changes.
 - Container deliveries operated over five phases, usually aligning to waste collection days. Homes included in each phase received a letter prior to the deliveries and ward councillors also received details of deliveries in their ward in advance of this.
 - We have engaged with resident associations and groups.
 - Local drop-in sessions were held for residents in the early part of each delivery phase to provide information face-to-face and respond to any queries.
 - At the time of deliveries, managers from both Veolia and the Council have been on hand to oversee the work and help resolve any issues.
 - Additional resources were put in place both by Veolia and the Council to help ensure the service has been very responsive to any queries or concerns received about the new bins.
 - The speed of the roll out has been determined by the amount of engagement needed in each area to ensure we have been able to be as responsive as possible while working within the resources available.

6. Nearly all kerbside properties will have had space to receive the new food waste recycling service. To use this service, residents present their food waste each week in a small, pest-proof 23 litre caddy. Homes eligible for a wheeled bin have received one 140 litre general refuse bin and one 240 litre recycling bin as standard, with different sizes of bins available for those who need it.

Some properties may find they require a larger or smaller bin as the scheme develops, and we will continue to work with residents to accommodate their needs as far as possible. Some homes have preferred to share bins with neighbours, particularly when houses are split into flats with limited outdoor space at the front of the property.

7. At the time of writing the roll-out is in its final stages. To date, including the initial prototype work, we have delivered approximately 43,000 23litre food waste caddies and we estimate a further 4,000 homes are sharing an out-door food caddie.
8. Of the 43,000 locations with the food waste service, approximately 20,000 now also have wheeled bins. As above, in many places, especially those living in houses that are split into flats, two or three households may be sharing bins depending on the amount of space and resident preference.
9. As well as making different sizes of bins available, we have also offered a free collection service if residents would like to recycle any old bins which will no longer be used. In total, around 3,000 residents asked to swap bin sizes and over 6,000 took up the old bin collection offer.
10. Throughout the roll-out, we have asked people to try the containers wherever they have suitable space but where residents have not been willing to do this we have not insisted that they use the bins. Approximately 300 homes across the whole borough have refused to use the bins so far. The vast majority of engagement we have had with residents on street during the delivery work has been positive and we have had some really great feedback from residents, including:

"The new bins have been absolutely brilliant! Congratulations on this initiative."

"I wanted to arrange collection of my old bins for recycling and get a reference number. It was straightforward and simple. No problems at all"

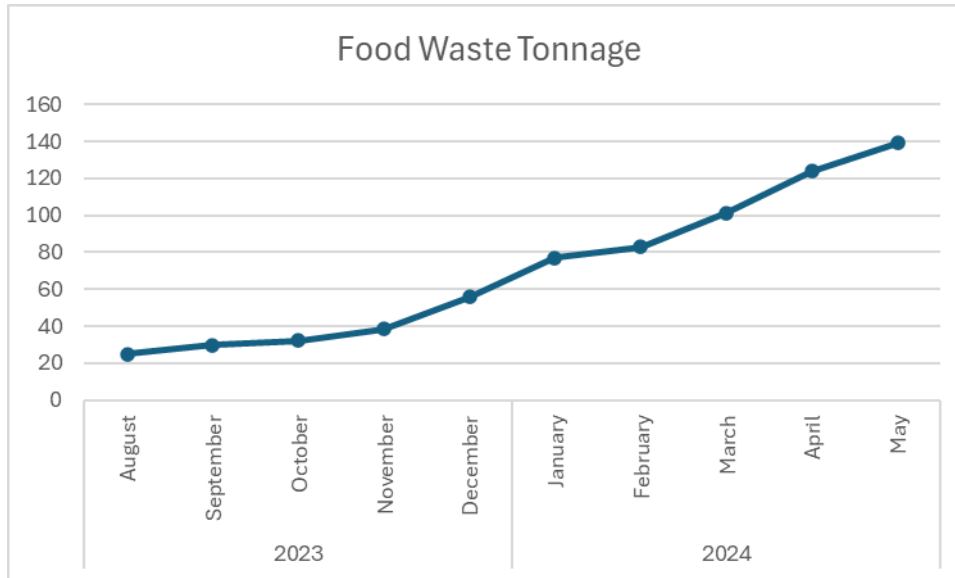
"We are so happy with the bins! You guys are amazing! Many thanks for the bins! 😊"

"Thanks for the food waste bin, I love it and it is reducing how much waste is going into the black bin. I am really supportive of this move to these new bins and really believe that they will reduce waste and stop rubbish being spread across the road"

"I would like to take this opportunity to compliment the team who attended a recent advisory meeting at the Community Centre... as well as the distributors of the new bins last Thursday. Their polite professionalism was most impressive."

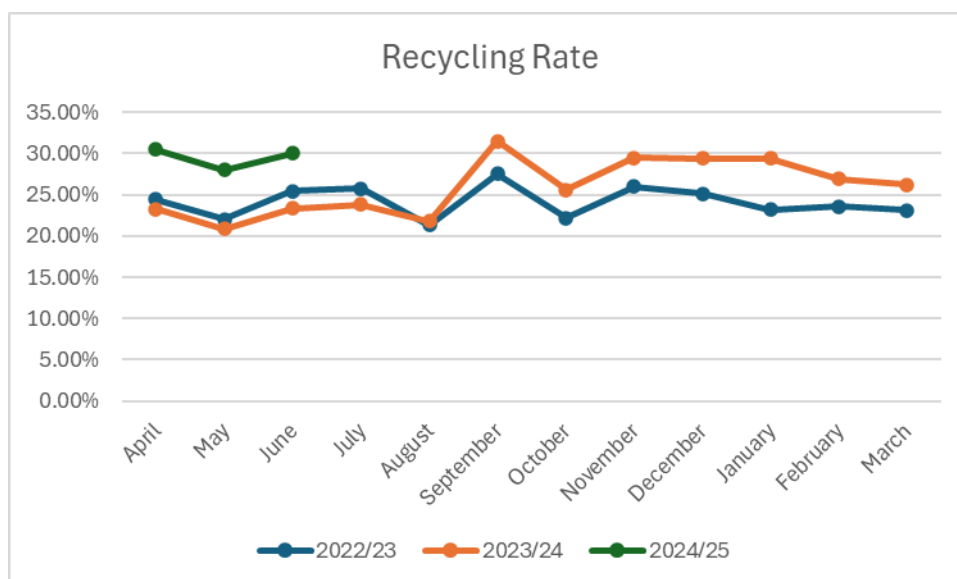
Impact on recycling performance to date

11. Figure 1 below shows the impact of the roll-out on food waste tonnage (noting that the service roll-out began in November 2023):



The increase in food waste tonnage collected for recycling over this period shows an increase of around 120 tonnes per month of waste which is now removed from the general waste stream and being recycled instead. We expect this to continue to grow into the summer as the full effect of the roll-out becomes evident. There is likely to be some reduction in tonnage when people are away on holiday over the summer and we know that separating food waste and seeing its quantity will lead some people to adjust their food purchases, minimising the food waste they produce. While these two factors will lead to a reduction in food waste, this is through reduction of waste rather than food waste being sent for disposal and may also be counter balanced in the overall figures as even more residents begin to use the service over time.

12. Figure 2 below shows the impact on our recycling rate to date:



The most recent recycling figures are provisional (as some tonnage data is yet to be received from third parties) but the positive impact of the new services is already very clear. The increased recycling rate as a result of the new waste collection service rollout is expected to add between 5-7 percentage points to our recycling rate.

Further improvements – next steps

13. Improving recycling service use and uptake

As the new services bed-in, we will be revisiting each area and checking how the bins are being used and the level of participation in the recycling schemes including checking for contamination and working with residents to drive up participation and quality of recycling.

14. Food waste collections for homes with communal bin stores

The current roll-out has delivered food waste recycling services to street-based properties, and once this is complete, we will begin to offer the service to homes with communal bin stores starting later in 2024. As properties with communal bin stores are unlikely to be able to accommodate a 23-litre outdoor food waste caddy for each household, officers are developing proposals for an alternative storage and collection methodology which will enable residents to participate and are already consulting colleagues in Housing on how this might be achieved.

15. Flats above shops

We are running a pilot in Askew Road to test how we can offer food waste collections to those living in flats above shops, with no outdoor space to leave a collection caddy. So far, the collections are working well operationally and not creating any issues on street although the amount of material we are collecting is still quite low.

16. Food waste recycling for schools and businesses

Now that food waste is collected from households across the borough, we are working with schools to introduce food waste collections here too. So far 16 schools are recycling their food waste and we have plans to extend this across the borough. We will also be introducing food recycling collections for businesses this year.

Garden waste recycling service

17. From this month (July 2024) we are implementing a new garden waste recycling service. This will be an easy-to-use weekly subscription service, costing £90 for 12 months. This will mean that the costs will not be met by the many residents who live in the borough but do not have a garden or who already compost their garden waste at home (which is free and the most environmentally friendly option for garden waste).

18. The service will be a convenient, good value (at approximately £1.84 per collection) service that makes it easy to recycle, without disincentivising home composting, and reduces the amount of waste we have to send for disposal. It will help residents with garden waste to recycle more and prevent as much waste from our borough having to be incinerated.
19. The following points outline how the service will work:
 - Garden waste will be a subscription service, costing £90 a year (to cover a rolling 12-month period from date of first collection).
 - Each subscribing household will receive two re-usable 90 litre garden waste bags. Garden waste will be collected every week (with a short break around the Christmas period)
 - Households who want more capacity will be able to subscribe more than once, 2 bags will be provided per subscription.
 - Garden waste will no longer be accepted as part of the general waste collection.
 - Payment will be taken as a single annual payment. Collections will be provided for a year from the anniversary of each resident's first collection.

Green fleet

20. Alongside the work set out above to improve the recycling rate, we are exploring several ways to make the service as green as possible. This includes using electric vehicles where we already can, for example, the vans used in running the service are now electric and we have introduced electric bikes for our street cleaning services. Refuse Collection Vehicles are heavy vehicles and also need extra energy to compact the waste they collect as they travel, so moving to electric-powered vehicles presents a significant challenge as we need sufficient space and time (many vehicles work a double or even triple shift) to charge them. We have begun in depth feasibility work to look at what we can deliver at our depot including the potential to invest in a new or upgraded substation.

Community engagement and social value

21. Doing things with residents and not to them is at the heart of all our services and this has been exemplified in our recent service change work. We are also committed to achieving high levels of social value with our waste and cleansing contractor, Veolia. So far, the following outcomes have been achieved:
 - 25 FTE local employees hired.
 - 2 armed forces veteran FTE hired
 - 2 homeless FTE hired.
 - 1 NEET FTE hired.
 - 1 ex-offender FTE hired.

- 82 hours of career support in prisons.
- 2 apprentices hired.
- 294 hours of career support in education settings.
- 11 weeks of meaningful work experience placements.
- 63 hours of school assemblies delivered.
- EDI training delivered to all contract staff.
- 32 hours of mental health first aider training undertaken.
- £15,000 donated to local community projects via Sustainability Fund
- 2500l compost provided free to community garden project.
- 121 staff volunteering hours for H&F projects.

22. These outcomes have been achieved by the groundwork laid down in the first year of the contract, through forming partnerships and developing tailored events for target groups to support employment and engagement. These partnerships include:

- Employment support agencies such as H&F Works, Shaw Trust, Job Centre Plus.
- Homeless charity St Mungos West London.
- HMP Wandsworth, and prison charities including A Fairer Chance, Stand Out, and Bounce Back.
- Resurgo, a local youth employment partner.
- Hammersmith Community Gardens Association
- Schools and education providers across the borough.

Partnerships such as these will enable Veolia to continue to consistently and continually deliver social value through the length of the contract.

23. We are really pleased with the strong start on social value that Veolia have made. To date, at less than 18 months into our new contract, the proxy value of this work is well over £1million.

LIST OF APPENDICES

None