

Decision Maker: Environment PDS Committee

Date: 29 September 2016

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: PETITION - GREEN GARDEN WASTE

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

Ward: Biggin Hill;

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme, if petitioners are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition they can present their case to the relevant PDS Committee, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 250 signatures. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes.
- 1.2 A petition with over 400 signatures has been received from Carol Jonas on behalf of residents in Biggin Hill and surrounding areas calling for the Council to reconsider the decision to discontinue the Green Garden Waste collection site at Charles Darwin School.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Committee is requested to consider the case made by the petitioners and make recommendations to the Environment Portfolio Holder if appropriate.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Petitions are dealt with in accordance with the Council's agreed Petitions Scheme
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Services
 4. Total current budget for this head: £335,590
 5. Source of funding: 2016/17 Revenue budget
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 8 (7.27fte)
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an executive decision.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council's Petition Scheme allows for petitioners to present their case to a PDS Committee if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 250 signatures. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the relevant PDS Committee for up to five minutes. Once Members have considered the matter, they can choose whether or not to recommend any further action. In this case, should the Committee agree that further action should be taken the recommendation should be made to the Environment Portfolio Holder.
- 3.2 A petition was received on 14th April 2016 from Carol Jonas on behalf of people in Biggin Hill and the surrounding areas in support of the Green Garden Waste collection site at Charles Darwin School, calling for the decision to close the site to be reconsidered. The Environment Portfolio Holder responded to the petition on 20th April 2016, but the petitioners were not satisfied and wished to exercise their right to a hearing before Members. The petition has over 400 signatures and the full prayer of the petition is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 A similar petition, though with more signatures, has been received from residents in Cray Valley West. This is due to be considered by Members at the full Council meeting on 26th September 2016.
- 3.4 The decision to change the Green Garden Waste collection service was made by the Environment Portfolio Holder following consideration of the attached report to the Environment PDS Committee on 24th November 2015 (**Appendix 2**).

Non-Applicable Sections:	Impact on Vulnerable Children and Adults/Policy/Financial/legal/Personnel/Procurement)
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Petition documents

We the undersigned residents of Old Tye Avenue, Biggin Hill and the surrounding are writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed ending of the green recycling site from May 2016 based at Charles Darwin School, Jail lane, Biggin Hill. Over the past few years residents have assisted the Council by carrying out recycling tasks, we have reluctantly assimilated the reduction you implemented in waste collections to once a fortnight and we have taken on the disposal of some household waste by taking it to recycling sites. Previously garden waste was included in the general household waste. We now learn that you are closing the green waste sites in all areas except Green Street Green. We believe that this is a reduction in services too far.

The recycling site in Jail Lane is valued by the local residents as we are now forced to take on the Council's task of green waste disposal and it has been extensively used since its inception. We were under the impression that Bromley Council has at its heart its "green" credentials. The closure of the green waste recycling site will have a detrimental environmental impact as residents will have to make individual car or van journeys to and from Bromley's remaining sites, either to Green Street Green, which we understand is to remain open, or to the main Council site at Waldo Road. Not only will harmful emissions be produced but the increased volume of traffic will also be an issue, particularly in the already congested Homesdale Road area. Indeed, you are aware that the Waldo Road and Churchfields Road sites are busy to the point of causing traffic flow problems as you advise the use of your on-line webcam before setting out. There are traffic signs in Homesdale Road stating that if the queue for Waldo Road extends beyond the sign then drivers should abandon their trip and try again another time. This situation adds to the environmental impact of the closure of local green waste sites as users have to make additional journeys due to the inconvenient placement of busy commercial recycling plants in crowded residential and business areas.

These additional environmental and traffic flow issues would be negated by the reinstatement of the green garden waste services at Biggin Hill, St Paul's Cray, Norman Park and Beckenham as only one vehicle would be used from each area instead of multiple vehicles if the sites are closed.

We also wish to point out that many of the Council Tax payers who use the green garden waste service in Biggin Hill do not have access to private cars or vans but take their garden waste to Charles Darwin School using various methods of transportation, including wheel barrows, refuse skips, plastic sacks and carrier bags. Many of these same residents, and also of those residents with cars, cannot afford to pay the council an extra £60 per annum for a single wheelie bin to be emptied once a fortnight, not to mention the cost of £60 per annum for each additional wheelie bin if a single bin has insufficient capacity for the amount of garden waste created by their gardens. The Council benefits from the waste given them by residents as it is turned into compost which is sold to the public, thus creating income for the Council. We contest that there should be a charge for the collection service if you stop the weekly green waste sites in the borough and we believe that the service should be free to residents.

We believe that the closure of the local waste sites will add to the amount of fly tipping in our area, which will be costly for the Council as it is the Council who will be responsible for clearing the dumped garden waste.

We also believe that the closure of local waste sites will greatly increase the incidents of householders burning of garden waste, thus adding to the environmental impact of the closure of the sites. The smoke from bonfires will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the area. We understand that Bromley already discourages the use of bonfires by having strict rules around permitted timing and types of materials being burned but the closure of the waste sites will encourage their use.

We concede that it is reasonable to reduce the green waste service to one session per weekend at each site as residents can accommodate their use of the site to one morning a week. We do not agree that the service should be axed at all but one site in the Borough. We require you to explain the reason that Bromley has kept the Green Street Green site whilst making the decision to close the other sites.

In conclusion, we require the London Borough of Bromley to exercise its duty towards environmental issues by continuing the green garden waste recycling site at Charles Darwin School, Jail Lane, Biggin Hill, once a week for the period until 29th October 2016 and for years to come, in line with the service which remains in place for Green Street Green residents. We require you to take into account the environmental impact the closure of our site will have, both in respect of global warming and also upon traffic conditions in the centre of town. We believe our village will become increasingly polluted by fly tipping and bonfire smoke if you go ahead with the proposed closure and that many of our residents who cannot afford to participate in your very expensive Green Waste collections service will be socially disadvantaged.