
Decision Maker: ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Date: Wednesday 1 September 2021

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: FUTURE OF FOOTWAY RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE

Contact Officer: Amy Harris, Waste Strategy Manager
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Chief Officer: Director of Environment and Public Protection

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the footway recycling collection pilot and the proposals for the future of this service.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holder:

- 2.1 Agrees to cease the footway recycling collection service pilot and communicate the end of this pilot and the locations of the nearest recycling sites to households within pilot areas.
- 2.2 Consider alternative options for recycling provision at Chatsworth Parade.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Footway Recycling Collection Pilot will affect those households in the pilot area. The households impacted may include those with vulnerable adults and children. To mitigate the impact LBB will work closely with Veolia to ensure that communications about the end of the pilot are clear.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council Quality Environment
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Waste Services
 4. Total current budget for this head: £18.3m
 5. Source of funding: Not applicable
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Existing Neighbourhood Management staff within their current business as usual roles.
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: As above
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: None. The contract was awarded based on a specification and method statements, which set out the expectation of the proposed changes. Agreed changes will be implemented via the Change Control procedure specified within the Contract.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 209 households that are currently part of the footway recycling collection pilot. 1,517 total households that have been identified as footway properties.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: None received at the time of report publication.

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 Footway collections are those that are offered to flats above shops and houses that open directly onto a Transport for London red route or High Street. These households have a weekly non-recyclable refuse collection and are asked to take their recycling to one of the 41 On Street Recycling banks in Bromley.
- 3.2 The Council's Reduction and Recycling Plan agreed by the Environment and Community Services (ESC) Portfolio Holder in March 2020 includes an action to consider the introduction of a recycling collection to properties that receive footway collections. The Footway Recycling Collection Pilot was agreed following scrutiny by the ECS Portfolio Decision Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2020 (Report Number: ES20025) to provide additional information about the practical feasibility of providing a recycling collection to footway properties and the benefits of the service.
- 3.3 Penge High Street and Queensway/ Chatsworth Parade in Petts Wood were selected for the pilot due to their high concentration of footway collections and variety of property types. Appendix A is a visual representation of the pilot areas.
- 3.4 Households within the pilot were provided with separate sacks for recycling: one for paper and card, and the other for plastics, cans, and glass. These sacks were delivered in flat packets of 26, which could be posted through the letterbox.
- 3.5 In terms of the logistics, the Street Cleaning crews collected the recycling sacks alongside black sacks and transported them to Waldo Road Waste Transfer Station. At Waldo Road, the sacks were sorted according to type and those that contained recycling were split open and placed with the recycling collected from kerbside properties. Plastic bags are not accepted by the Paper Sorting Facility or the Material Recycling Facility that Bromley's recycling is taken to.
- 3.6 Communications were key to the success of the pilot, and the following communications have been used to inform households in the pilot area of the pilot and how to use it:
- A 'coming soon' leaflet.
 - Detailed leaflets alongside the recycling sacks with information about how to participate.
 - Information on the recycling sacks regarding what can and cannot be recycled.
 - Face-to-face from the Veolia Communications Team in September 2020 to answer questions about the pilot and encourage residents to take part and again in May 2021 to encourage participation in the scheme.
 - Cortex posters for communal areas and the local street lampposts.
 - Letters sent to local businesses to raise awareness of the pilot of responsible waste disposal.
 - A dedicated webpage on Bromley's website; and,
 - Regular letters to thank residents for recycling and to encourage further participation.
- 3.7 The pilot commenced on 18 September 2020 in Petts Wood and on 20 September 2020 in Penge. Monitoring of the waste and recycling presented by residents in the pilot area took place before and six times during the trial to enable the Council to assess whether the pilot had been a success.
- 3.8 Originally it had been planned to decide whether to extend the footway recycling collection pilot in February 2021. However, the monitoring information available at this stage in the pilot did not provide conclusive results and as such a Portfolio Holder Decision (ECS 21002ID) was made to extend the pilot for a further six-months until September 2021.

Results – Set Out Rate

- 3.7 Across the two pilot areas, on average 20% of the residents offered a footway recycling collection as part of the pilot set out their recycling on the scheduled collection day.
- 3.9 The average set-out rate in Penge High Street was 21% but it ranged from 16% to 27% during the monitoring exercise. The average set-out rate in Chatsworth Parade was 16%, it remained relatively even throughout the trial period.
- 3.10 The set-out rate in the Penge High Street increased by 5% between January 2021 and June 2021, this may have been due to the face-to face-engagement in May 2021. Whereas in contrast the set-out rate in the Chatsworth Parade area decreased slightly. Feedback received during the face-to-face engagement exercise in this area indicated that this may have been because residents that participated ran out of recycling bags and did not understand how to order more. The average set out for the two areas increased from 18% in January 2021 to 20% in June 2021.
- 3.11 Challenges faced when monitoring the number of households that set out their recycling for collection included recycling sacks being presented on non-collection days and the difficulty of attributing bags to a specific household when placed by a litter bin and sacks being placed within communal or trade refuse bins or in other unexpected locations.

Results - Weights

- 3.12 The weights of refuse bags presented by households in the pilot area were measured for two weeks before and then during the trial there the weights were measured five times in September 2020, January 2021, April 2021, May 2021, and June 2021. The weights of the recycling sacks were also measured. In Penge High Street, weight monitoring took place every day for a week to capture the weights of sacks presented for collection on non-collection days whereas in Chatsworth Parade monitoring only occurred on collection day.
- 3.12 The amount of refuse presented per household in Penge High Street each week increased by 0.4kg (3%) during the trial. This increase was not expected, however, the annual household non-recyclable refuse produced across all properties types in Bromley in 2020/21 was 4% higher than it was in 2019/20. Therefore, it is possible that even though the pilot began six months after the start of the pandemic that the results were still influenced by it. In addition, some of the difficulties in monitoring bags set out by footway property residents may have had an impact on the results.
- 3.13 The amount of refuse presented per household in Chatsworth Parade was 3kg (20%) lower than it was before the pilot. This is a positive result as it indicates that some recycling that was being placed in the refuse each week is being recycled because of the pilot.
- 3.14 The total amount of recycling produced per participating household each week, was 4.1kg in Penge High Street and 3.13kg in Chatsworth Parade. Table 1 below presents the average weights for the plastics, cans and glass recycling, paper and card recycling and the reduction in non-recyclable refuse presented by households within the two pilot areas.

Table 1 – Summary of the average recycling results across the two pilot areas

	Weight (kg)
Average fortnightly weight of PCG recycling per participating household	2.3
Average fortnightly weight of paper recycling per participating household	1.3

- 3.15 Extrapolating the recycling weight data for participating households, indicates that if the footway recycling pilot was expanded to the 1,517 footway properties, there is the potential to

divert around 28.3 tonnes of recyclable materials away from disposal each year. This would contribute to an additional 0.02% to Bromley's recycling rate.

Costs

- 3.16 The 2021/22 annual cost of the providing a recycling service and recycling bags to the pilot properties is £11k.
- 3.17 The total annual cost of providing an alternative weekly collection of plastics, cans and glass recycling paper and card recycling collection for all footway properties is £64k based on 2021/22 prices. The provision of recycling bags to all these properties would cost around £10k and therefore the total cost for this service would be £74k.
- 3.18 By diverting 28.3 tonnes of recyclable materials from non-recyclable refuse and instead recycling it, the cost saving achieved in terms of disposal would be £3k. This saving includes the income gained through the Waste Collection Contract for recycling.
- 3.19 Therefore, to provide a recycling collection service to all footway properties is expected to be a net annual cost of £71k based on 2021/22 prices and the results of the pilot.
- 3.20 Participation in the recycling scheme as well as the weights in general increased during the pilot period. Therefore, it is likely that the tonnes of recyclable material could be increased as could the financial saving over time. It is however unlikely that even with increased savings a footway recycling service would be cost neutral.

Results – Other Information

- 3.21 An online survey was provided for households in the pilot area to feedback on their views about the recycling collection. Only 13 households responded to this survey. But of those that responded over 90% had participated in the pilot and found that the communications provided were useful.
- 3.22 Just 15% found separating paper and card from other recycling difficult. In May 2021, Veolia's Communication Manager engaged with residents in the pilot areas to encourage them to participate and to find out their views on the service. 31 residents responded to questions about the service and the key results were:
- 64% of respondents wanted the recycling collection service to continue.
 - 27% of respondents said they do not use the recycling service; with 62% of these residents saying the main obstacle is the lack of space or because they ran out of recycling bags, it is worth noting instructions about how to order more bags were provided on the leaflet and on the Council's website.
 - 64% of respondents in Petts Wood said they would prefer recycling bins to bags.
- 3.23 20% of the recycling bags set out for collection were set out on a non-collection day. This is not unusual, with non-recyclable refuse sacks often being left on the street on non-collection days in these areas.
- 3.24 The amount of fly-tipping reports in both pilot areas were lower during October 2020 with the recycling scheme in operation, than they were during October 2019. Fly-tipping reports were 83% lower in Penge. In Petts Wood, there were no fly-tipping reports recorded since the beginning of the trial.

- 3.25 There have been some operational challenges during the pilot, which have included:
- Recycling outlets not accepting plastic bags, which has meant that an operative has emptied the recycling bags at Waldo Road Waste Transfer Station into the relevant recycling stream.
 - Residents particularly in Petts Wood placing recycling sacks in refuse bins, which has meant that it was more difficult to locate them and ensure they were collected for recycling.
 - A proportion of the recycling bags collected in Penge High Street were contaminated.
 - Differentiating between fly-tipped black bags and refuse bags set out by residents.

Future National Waste Policy Proposals

- 3.26 On 7 May 2021, the detailed consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Collections for England and Wales was launched. This consultation reiterated the Governments proposals that were originally set within the Resource and Waste Strategy and are to become embedded within legislation through the Environment Bill.
- 3.27 Proposals aim to provide greater consistency in the materials collected for recycling and how these materials are collected, with research indicating that consistency could improve recycling rates and the quality of recycling collected. The proposals around household recycling include the collection of a core set of recycling materials from all households including footway properties from 2023/24. These materials include paper, card, cans, glass, plastic bottles, and cans as well as at the later date of 2026/27, plastic film.
- 3.28 The Government has confirmed that any additional services that local authorities are required to provide as part of the Consistency in Household and Business Collections agenda will be funded through the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme or new burdens funding. The methodology for calculating the funding requirement for additional services including footway property recycling collection services has not been clearly defined at this stage.

Potential Developments

- 3.29 Following feedback from the residents in the Chatsworth Parade pilot area who generally use bins to store and present their non-recyclable refuse, a recommendation is to investigate whether it is actually possible to provide communal bins to deliver a recycling collection service. Whilst there is a larger capital cost in terms of the provision of recycling bins, the revenue costs would be lower. There would be value to exploring this as it may be something that can be applied to other areas of the borough with footway properties.

Conclusion

- 3.30 From a financial perspective, the footway recycling collection service is not viable since its implementation would cost the Council an additional £71k when the Council is facing continuing budgetary pressures. Therefore, it is recommended that the pilot is not extended.
- 3.31 With Government proposals on the horizon that will require all local authorities to provide a minimum core recycling collection service to footway properties, the pilot has assisted the Council in demonstrating what the cost requirements would be. However, there is no further value in continuing the pilot as the Council has the information required and as such the recommendation is to cease the pilot.
- 3.32 Communications will be sent to all households in the pilot area to inform them of the end of the recycling collection pilot and how they can recycle in Bromley.

4 IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- 4.1 Footway Recycling Collection Pilot will affect those households in the pilot area. The households impacted may include those with vulnerable adults and children. To mitigate the impact LBB will work closely with Veolia to ensure that communications about the end of the pilot are clear.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The “Building a Better Bromley” objective of being an Excellent Council refers to the Council’s intention to provide efficient and effective services and value for money to our residents.
- 5.2 The Footway Recycling Collection pilot assisted the Council in considering service changes required to meet Priority 2 (Minimising waste and maximising recycling) within the Environment Portfolio Plan 2020-21 (the Council’s environmental service aims and objectives).
- 5.3 The Footway Recycling Collection Pilot contributed to the delivery of the actions set out in Bromley’s Reuse and Recycling Plan for 2020/21 and in demonstrating our general conformity with the Mayor of London’s London Environment Strategy.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The annual cost of continuing to provide footway recycling collections to properties in the pilot areas is £11k, with minimal savings because of diverting recyclable materials from non-recyclable refuse. As a result of dealing with increased volumes of residential waste since April 2020, it has not been possible to absorb this cost with the existing revenue budget and continuing with the pilot would result in an overspend.
- 6.2 Roll-out of the footway recycling service across the Borough would cost an estimated £71k and therefore result in an increased unbudgeted cost.
- 6.3 The Government has confirmed that any additional services that local authorities are required to provide as part of the Consistency in Household and Business Collections agenda will be funded through the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme or new burdens funding. However, it is not yet known how each authority’s funding requirement will be calculated and therefore the potential financial impact for Bromley is currently unknown and needs to be kept under review.

7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.2 There are no personnel implications, with existing Neighbourhood Management staff overseeing the end of the footway recycling collection service in the pilot areas as part of their current business as usual roles.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has the power to receive and spend any Government Grant outlined in this report. The Council has various legal duties and powers under ‘The Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012)’, the ‘Children and Families Act (2014)’ and the ‘Carers Act (2014)’, to ensure the health, wellbeing, achievement and safeguarding of vulnerable children and families. This is also echoed generally under the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 2004. The Local Policies such as ‘Building a Better Bromley Objective’, ‘The Footway Recycling Collection pilot’ and ‘The Footway Recycling Collection Pilot’ as mentioned specifically at clauses 5.1-5.3 of the Report, also emphasize the Council’s efficient and effective service towards the community and the environment. In furtherance of these powers, the Council has the legal power to oversee the future of the footway recycling collection service via the implementation of the footway recycling collection pilot and to work in conjunction with the proposals involved and may also provide and commission through the contract, the services outlined in this report.
- 8.2 This Report summarises the footway recycling collection pilot scheme and its future proposals. The Contract has already been awarded based on the Specification and method statements which outline the proposed changes. The Council will also work in conjunction with Veolia to ensure that communications about the end of the pilot are clear. The overall cost of the Proposal

is £11k, with additional annual revenue costs of providing continuing recycling collections to properties in pilot areas.

- 8.3 The decisions to cease the footway recycling collection service pilot scheme and to also end the locations of the nearest recycling sites to households within pilot areas, lies with the agreement of the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holder, who is also to consider alternative options for recycling at Chatsworth Parade. In accordance with CPR 2.1.2, Officers must take all necessary professional advice.
- 8.4 The Contract must be applied via the appropriate Change of Control Notice, or similar method signed by both parties, as specified in the contract.
- 8.5 The Contract can be awarded in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Officers should ensure they comply with all Grant conditions.

9 PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None, the option of providing a recycling collection and the costs for this service were included within the Waste Collection Method Statements as accepted through contract award, which took place on 28th November 2018.
- 9.2 The changes proposed within this report will be implemented via the change of control notice procedure

Non-Applicable Sections:	[List non-applicable sections here]
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]