

## Commercial Waste and General Waste Services

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| Committee name     | Residents' Services Select Committee          |
| Officer reporting  | Jordan Groves, Head of Waste and Green Spaces |
| Papers with report | None  |
| Ward               | All   |

## HEADLINES

This report provides the Residents' Services Select Committee with an overview of the Council's commercial waste service performance and an update on borough-wide waste and recycling services for the 2025/26 financial year. It includes key operational data, service changes linked to Simpler Recycling reforms, performance indicators, resident impacts, and ongoing improvement initiatives across Waste Services, Recycling, Trade Waste, Street Cleansing and Civil Amenities

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Residents' Services Select Committee:**

- 1. Notes the update in the report.**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Commercial Waste Service Performance (Trade Waste)

To date in the 2025/26 financial year, the service has secured 79 new contracts generating £198,301.90 in income. Over the same period, 98 contracts have ended, representing a loss of £138,913.84. This results in a net positive income position of £59,388.06, despite operating within a highly competitive and challenging commercial environment.

The primary reasons for contract cessation are price sensitivity within the market and non-payment of invoices. Of the contracts lost, 43 accounts were terminated specifically due to non-payment. The service is currently working with Corporate Recovery to determine appropriate next steps regarding unpaid debts, including escalation to external debt collection agencies or legal processes where necessary. In addition, there have been 11 cancellations relating to pricing and 30 instances where businesses have either ceased trading or relocated outside the borough boundary.

The service has continued to focus on service optimisation and upselling opportunities with existing customers. As part of this, the service has successfully increased recycling and food waste capacity where appropriate and has upsold 76 additional 140-litre food waste containers and 36 additional recycling bins. The service has also seen an uplift in general waste collections

from existing customers whose waste generation has increased.

Overall, while the total number of contracts has decreased, income remains on an upward trajectory. This is due to enhanced service uptake among existing customers and the higher value of new contracts compared to those lost. Without the recent increase in non-paying customers, the service would have recorded a net gain in both contract numbers and income.

Furthermore, the service continues to review the Council's existing trade waste agreements identifying potential and working with businesses to ensure they are compliant with waste legislation, in particular ensuring they have a valid waste disposal contract in place. Where non-compliance is identified and not remedied officers are working increasingly with the enforcement team to ensure they do become compliant and not impede on residents' experience of the Borough.

### **General Waste Update**

The service remains unchanged from previous years with the exception of Garden Waste becoming a paid for service halfway through 2025. The Service operates a weekly sack collection model with the exception of properties that require bulk bins or those that present a kerbside food waste container.

Garden waste has a current subscription base of 23,240 with the new subscription period due to open in April. The income generated from the subscription in this financial year was £1.62m which is a strong contribution to the operating costs of the waste service. For the current financial year, the garden waste service collected 10,126 tonnes of green waste which contributes to the Council's recycling rate. Over the Christmas period the garden waste service continued to operate, and residents were also offered a free kerbside Christmas tree collection. There were some issues with this service as residents who did not have a garden waste permit were unable to report misses in the system or identify what their scheduled collection day would be over the fortnight available.

December and early January were a busy time of year for the Waste collection teams with the Christmas period one of the busiest in the year due to the 3 bank holidays that impact on the regular waste collection schedules for residents. This most recent Christmas the service was "pulled forward" which means that instead of working a day behind the normal collection schedule the schedule was instead worked a day in advance beginning with Monday 22 December being rescheduled to Saturday 20 December. These changes were communicated ahead of time by the Council; however, this change resulted in a large number of residents not having their waste collected as they presented on their normal days. This had an impact on the service which then experienced a large number of missed collection reports which it reacted to and cleared well but it did result in the service being under pressure for the period as it reacted to these.

The service is currently experiencing some challenges with an aging fleet of vehicles which will require replacing via a capital programme in the current years and the procurement team will support the service in acquiring these. Some changes to the vehicle layout and design may be required as the existing fleet profile, particularly cab capacity, is being phased out by suppliers which may have an impact on the way the service operates some of its rounds.

The service is also aware that there have been a number of reported issues with the recycling and food waste sacks supplied to residents. In the previous financial year, the contract for sacks

was expiring and a procurement exercise was undertaken which was awarded to a new supplier. The service has conducted an investigation into the sacks provided to the Council and has identified that these are not to the standard required. Officers are currently working through remedial actions with the supplier to address these quality concerns.

Alongside this, a mobile waste collection pilot has been established, with eight “drop and go” events planned across the Borough, beginning with the first event at Charville Community Centre on Saturday 31 January from 10am to 2pm. Efforts to reduce contamination continue to show progress: at kerbside, a structured three step education process is being applied using crew reports to target persistent issues; while in communal settings, trials of reverse lidded recycling bins at high contamination sites have shown significant improvements, and work is underway to assess the feasibility of a boroughwide roll out. A step education process is being applied using crew reports to target persistent issues. Lidded recycling bins at high contamination sites have shown significant improvements, and work is underway to assess the feasibility of a boroughwide rollout. -step education process is being applied using crew reports to target persistent issues-lidded recycling bins at high-contamination sites have shown significant improvements, and work is underway to assess the feasibility of a borough-wide rollout

### **Simpler Recycling**

Implementation of the Simpler Recycling programme is progressing to schedule across all housing types. For Flats Above Shops (FLASH), surveying has been completed on time and database updates are now being finalised to accurately define collection points, with communication letters due to be issued imminently. All required stock has been secured to support the rollout, which commenced in the first week of February to provide new food waste and recycling containers to a further 2,200 properties. For private blocks, 17,000 information letters have been printed and delivered to the depot, and the rollout - initiated on 19 January - is expected to conclude within six weeks, bringing an additional 17,000 properties into the food waste service.

## **PERFORMANCE DATA**

A summary of key service performance indicators:

- Commercial waste income: **£2.1m turnover**.
- Monthly trade users: **1,414**.
- Harefield CA diversion rate: **increased to 74%**. (Diversion means waste diverted from incineration or landfill)
- Additional food waste properties delivered (2025/26): **19,200+** across FLASH and private blocks.
- Recycling contamination: Improvements evidenced in trial blocks through reverse-lidded bins.

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

- Expanded food waste and recycling services improve sustainability, reduce landfill dependency and prepare residents for statutory national requirements.

- Drop & go events provide safe alternatives to waste dumping and reduce fly-tipping.
- Enhanced contamination reduction work improves recycling quality and reduces disposal costs.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- Commercial Waste contributes £2.1m income towards service costs.
- Debt recovery work is ongoing to mitigate risk from unpaid trade waste accounts.
- Harefield CA site trade income reached £1.16m by December 2025.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- The Council must comply with national Simpler Recycling legislation requiring separate collection of core recyclable materials.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil.