

<b>8 September 2022</b>		<b>ITEM: 9</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener, and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Flats Recycling Update</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Report of:</b> David Bloomfield, Recycling Project Officer		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Marcelle Puttergill – Performance and Support Manager, Environment and Highways		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Julie Rogers – Director of Public Realm		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## **Executive Summary**

A new recycling scheme for flats is being rolled out to properties in Thurrock which comprises of a resident's information pack (including reusable recycling bag and guide), new recycling bins with a specially designed restrictor plate to reduce contamination and improved signage.

The project has been divided into several phases, the first phase, which included council housing locations, was completed in 2020. The second phase, which started in August 2021, is to roll out this scheme to all private flats. This phase is approximately 75% complete and due to conclude in September this year. After these two phases, properties that have been identified as 'challenging' mostly because they are above shops and do not have a dedicated bin area with enough space for recycling bins, will be targeted. It is expected that the project will complete in October 2022.

This document is intended as an update to the report which was presented to the Committee in December 2019.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee review this report as an update on the Flats Recycling Project.**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

**2.1** As part of Thurrock Council's commitment to ensure all its residents have access to recycling facilities and therefore can contribute to reducing the

human impact on the global environment, a new recycling scheme was developed for all flatted properties in the borough.

2.2 The objectives of the new scheme are to:

- Ensure that there is equal access to the recycling service for all residents within the borough and to decrease the amount of contamination presented in recycling bins.
- Educate residents about recycling in our borough.

2.3 A small pilot was conducted in 2019 across 3 locations in Thurrock (The Echoes, Worthing Close and St. Leonards Close) to compare the effectiveness of the new recycling scheme to the original scheme and concluded that the new scheme reduced contamination and generally received a positive response from residents (Reference CGS Report 5 Dec 2019 Recycling for Communal Buildings).

2.4 The new scheme draws significantly upon guidance and tools made available from Resource London and comprises of:

- A new style of communal bin with a restrictor plate to prevent contamination with bulky items and black rubbish bags. The main lid is fitted with locks that will automatically lock itself when the lid is closed.
- Improved image-based signage for the bin stores which carry information on what can be recycled and what should be done with bulky waste. For many residents, English may not be their first language and therefore these signs make extensive use of pictures.
- Recycling Welcome Pack which includes a recycling guide, a fridge magnet to attach the recycling guide to their fridge, a letter explaining the new scheme and a reusable recycling bag. The recycling bag can be hung on a door handle, placed on the kitchen floor or in a cabinet under the sink. The bag has been designed so that it will not fall over when filled up with recyclables.

2.5 Following the pilot, the new scheme was rolled out to Thurrock owned flats. Phase 1 completed in 2020.

2.6 Due to delays relating to COVID, rollout out of the scheme to private owned properties (Phase 2) started in Aug 2021.

2.7 Project Metrics

Phase 1 – Number of bin stores:144

Phase 2 – Number of bin stores: 610 (this includes private flats with communal bins, flats above shops and assisted living).

Phase 2 – Approx. number of Managing Agents: 76 (however, typically there are multiple managers covering allocated blocks).

Phase 2 – Approx. number of 1100 L Recycling Bins: 800 (this is still an estimate as all the reviews are not yet complete).

## 2.8 Key Challenges

	Challenge	Response
1.	Lack of response from Managing Agents	Initially the approach was to meet and discuss recycling with all the managing agents (MA). However, in many cases their responses were slow or evasive. As a result, the project changed to a communication approach to inform MAs of our proposal and intention to implement and then to invite a response.
2	Identifying the correct Managing Agent	Identifying the correct MA can be difficult and time consuming as there is significant churn and often tenants cannot identify their MA.
3.	Managing Agents declining the recycling service – siting mainly cost implications as the key barrier	<p>Recycling in Thurrock is mandatory wherever practicable. Most managing agents are willing to discuss options and possibilities. However, a few, have refused any dialogue with the local authority.</p> <p>Mitigation actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal advice was sought and established that sections 45 and 46 of the EPA does require occupiers to present their recycling as specified by the council and therefore the council can insist.</li> </ol> <p>Whilst rare, on occasion this legal advice has been utilised to persuade the MA and has resulted in the successful placement of the recycling bins.</p>
4.	Lack of bin store volume/fly tipping	Notwithstanding that recycling should be made available for all residents, in a few instances, we have agreed with MAs not to deploy recycling because it is not practicable to do so. For example, in Grays, some bin stores were too small to accommodate recycling bins and leaving them outside was likely to cause fly tipping issues.
5.	Problems emptying reverse lidded bins	<p>The design of the original recycling bins was chosen to restrict fly-tips and inappropriate items being placed in the bin. The bin apertures were becoming blocked where they had been overfilled and where there were large deposits of cardboard.</p> <p>Recognising the learning from Phase 1 and the issues being experienced, at the beginning of phase 2, the recycling bin was changed to a 'lid in lid' design which avoids this issue. The project</p>

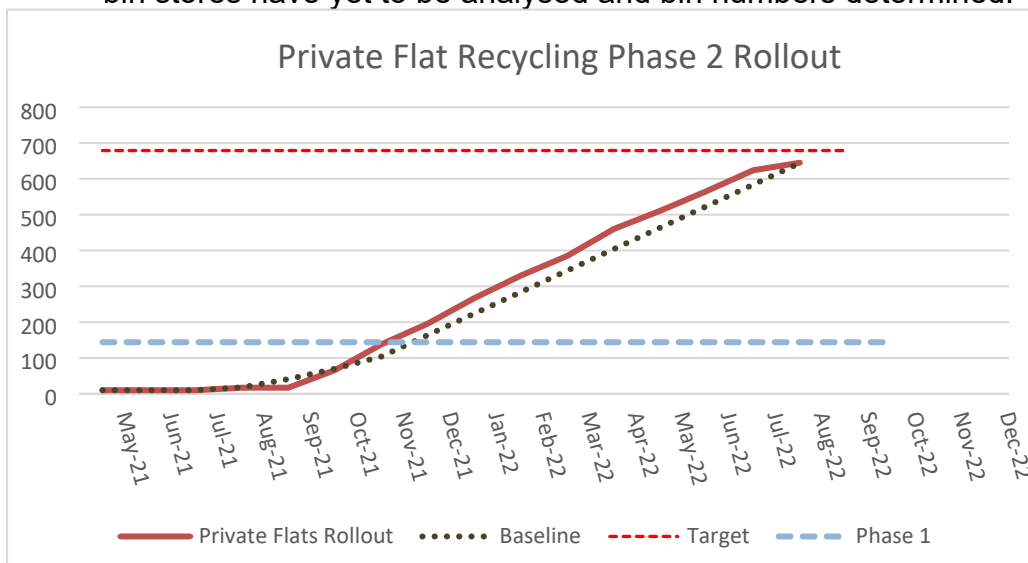
		has also undertaken an exercise to retrofit all the existing reverse lidded bins delivered in phase 1 with a 'lid in lid' design.
6.	Bin deliveries from suppliers were delayed	Issues with delayed delivery of bins, which was exacerbated by Covid/petrol shortage/driver shortages impacted the project. These issues were discussed with the contractor to remind them of the importance of their service delivery and contractual obligations.
7.	Business as usual	As the project completes, a business-as-usual strategy is being developed to ensure that new flats that come on board are following the parameters of the project.

## 2.9 Phase 2 Approach and Status

At the outset of this phase of the project, officers assumed delivery speed of 60 bins per month, this increased to 65 as further experience was acquired.

The graph below is driven directly from the data in the list of bin stores and shows the rollout progression by month since the start of phase 2. The dotted blue line is the original rollout base line, the brown line is the progress (actual and planned) delivery rate, the dashed red line represents complete, and the dashed blue line is the equivalent number of deliveries in phase 1 (for comparison).

The progress line doesn't intersect the completion line as the final tranches of bin stores have yet to be analysed and bin numbers determined.



### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 This report is for information only.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 This report is for information only.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 Not Applicable.

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 This will have a positive impact on recycling performance with increasing recycling tonnage and reduced contamination

### **7. Implications**

#### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**  
**Interim Senior Management Accountant**

The project is being delivered within the agreed budget

#### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Mark Bowen**  
**Acting Head of Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from this report

#### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project  
Monitoring Officer**

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report

All information regarding Community Equality Impact Assessments can be found here: <https://intranet.thurrock.gov.uk/services/diversity-and-equality/ceia/>

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

Not Applicable

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Not Applicable

9. **Appendices to the report**

Not Applicable

**Report Author:**

David Bloomfield

Project Officer