

7 February 2019		ITEM: 7
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Refuse Collections Update		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Report for noting	
Report of: Claire Harvey, Strategic Lead – Waste Services		
Accountable Assistant Director: Daren Spring, Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director Environment and Highways		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the performance of domestic waste collections, development of the commercial and business collection service and expansion of refuse collection services expected over the next year to accommodate forthcoming growth in the borough.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock Council as a Unitary Authority has a statutory obligation under the Environmental Act 1990 to arrange for the collection and disposal of waste. The Council discharges these obligations by operating a weekly, in-house waste collection service for all streams for domestic collections. Trade waste is collected predominantly by two separate crews, with some domestic waste and recycling included.

2.2 The table below indicates the number of bin collections and tonnages disposed of in the last two years:

Function	2017/18 Output	2018/19 Output (YTD)
No of domestic bin collections per year	10,422,828	7,907,679
Annual household tonnage disposed (includes kerbside collections, Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and some street cleansing waste)	77612.30 tonnes	59678.98 tonnes

- 2.3 Disposal of household waste is managed through a range of contracts including Dry recycling, Composting and Energy from Waste. The combined annual disposal cost to the Council is circa £7.5million.
- 2.4 The Council has two options in managing the cost of disposal. The first is to reduce the overall volume of waste generated by each household and the second is to increase levels of recycling, re-use and composting. The table below details the current variations in gate fees for the three streams of kerbside collections:

Collection Stream	Cost per tonne*
Residual Waste (grey/green bins)	£100.38
Dry Recycling (blue bins)	£71.23
Kitchen and Garden Waste (brown bins)	£59.50

**Gate fees listed above are indicative only. There are a variety of factors that influence the costs paid for disposal, particularly dry recycling, including commodity value and level of contamination.*

3. Current Performance

- 3.1 The waste collection service has overcome a number of challenges this year which have impacted on performance levels. The service has implemented a number of mitigations to remedy the challenges faced, but despite doing so are still falling below the 98.5% target of collections made as scheduled.
- 3.2 For the last quarter of 17/18 and the first quarter of 18/19 the standard of performance was affected by balloted industrial action which was successfully mitigated. Other factors that have had impact on the collection service were difficulties in securing agency HGV drivers to cover annual leave etc., particularly over the summer periods, a trend seen nationally. The growth in the borough, higher than forecast when rounds were optimised in May 2017, has seen an increase in the number of properties being absorbed into existing rounds. Further development in the borough means that in 2019/20 additional collection resources may be required.

3.3 The table below indicates the comparative percentages of collections completed over the last two years:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bins to be collected 2018- 19	851,596	892,148	851,596	892,148	932,701	811,044	932,701	892,148	851,596
% Of Collections Made (target = 98.5%) 2017/2018	97.9%	99.5%	96.9%	98.6%	97.3%	95.4%	98.3%	98.9%	99.6%
% of Collections Made (target = 98.5%) 2018/2019	94.23%	98.29%	98.00%	93.67%	97.13%	98.24%	99.67%	99.16%	99.6%
2018/2019 - YTD/Cumulative figure	94.23%	96.31%	96.86%	96.05%	96.28%	96.58%	97.05%	97.32%	97.52%

The figures for the first six months of the year are not to the standard our residents expect, however mitigation is proving to be effective as can be seen from the above target performances in quarter 3.

3.4 The greatest impact was experienced by residents receiving a Friday collection. To address this issue, the service has reapportioned workload to provide a greater balance and achievable workload across each waste stream. The reintroduction of the Late crew came into effect in September to support any missed collections due to operational difficulties experienced during the normal working day, however this continues to be a challenge due to borough growth, particularly in the west side of Thurrock. The Waste Service continues to review and re-balance rounds to mitigate this.

3.5 The other area of focus for the service is communal bin stores, which bring challenges in relation to excess waste, fly tipping, blocked access and contamination. The service has been engaging with managing agents to address these concerns and the service is in the process of recruiting a Waste Services Engagement and Education Officer, for one year to concentrate efforts and focus on recycling, but will also support this work. Work is already underway with two local managing agents on a pilot project to improve collections and recycling.

3.6 In order to actively improve collection services, a number of new initiatives are being implemented, these include:

- The creation and recruitment of a bank team of rapid response HGV drivers
- A number of drivers from all services have been cross service trained to enable them to support waste collection as needed
- A pilot of two night Shunter drivers who transport the recycling to London is in progress, this has reduced the impact on recycling rounds
- Continued regular review and re-optimising rounds, without direct impact to residents, ensuring that resources are sufficient and balanced
- An additional refuse round has been added to the service to support service and growth
- A Late Crew has been added to the service to support all three streams with mopping up collections as required.
- Implementation of 'Blocked Access' postcards to raise awareness to residents about inconsiderate parking and impact on collections.

- Forthcoming implementation of the Bartec system.
- 3.7 Since the implementation of the above initiatives, there has been a significant improvement in performance in quarter 3 with KPI's being exceeded.
- 3.8 Further success has been seen over the last year with the increased growth of the commercial waste service which has been delivering over and above the forecasted business plans. Commercial waste collections are carried out in combination with domestic collections. Due to the success and significant growth in this service area an additional round was introduced in January 2018. The table below shows that the number of commercial waste customers has more than doubled over the last two years, and book value of the service is increased by approximately 300k.

Year	No of Customers
April 2017	347
April 2018	602
To date (January 2019)	713

4. Issues for consideration

- 4.1 With the increase in growth of the borough over the last year an additional refuse round has been introduced to manage demand. Growth in the borough is anticipated to be 32,000 additional properties over a twenty year period, which means an additional 96,000 collections per week. It is imperative that the service continually review growth in year and forecast future years to ensure appropriate resources are deployed to manage demand.
- 4.2 The introduction of the two night shunter drivers has positively impacted on missed bin collection performance and provided support to the recycling service. This is currently under review, along with the option of a further recycling round. Either option will support the service going forward and provide assurances of continued above target performance.

5. Summary

- 5.1 Whilst there have been a number of operational challenges this year, the service has reacted and reviewed and is currently performing well and above performance target. Continuous review and future planning will take place, giving consideration to key messages from the new "Waste, our resources: A Strategy for England" document released in December, to ensure the quality of service is maintained.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 6.1 This report is an update on the waste collections service. No consultation was required or undertaken.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 The implications of the recommendations in this report may require a review of local policies and procedures.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Management Accountant (Environment and Highways)

There are no financial implications relating to this report

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Assistant Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications relating to this report

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development Officer

There are no specific equality and diversity implications relating to this report.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

N/A

9. 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):

There are no background papers used in preparing this report.

10. Appendices to the report

None

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