

DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING – HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

General

The Council has 45,000 domestic properties, 9,000 of which are flats. We currently collect refuse weekly and recycling fortnightly from all properties. 6,000 properties have opted-in to our charged fortnightly garden waste collection service. Houses are provided with individual wheeled bins, flats share communal wheeled bins. Whilst our recycling rate for 2016/17 was 26%, only 1% of our waste was sent to landfill and the rest was sent to an Energy from Waste plant.

Our collection services were originally contracted to Amey LG Ltd until 30 June 2015 but this was extended to 30 June 2019. Doing so harmonised contract dates with Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC to create the opportunity for a joint contract in the future with the aim of improving services and obtaining economies of scale. The Council has been developing this option with the other two authorities for the past three years and it is intended that a joint tender will be let in December 2017.

Tenderers will be invited to submit prices for two collection service options, the first will be for our current service and the second will be for a Nominal Optimal Service (NOM). The proposed NOM is weekly food waste collection, fortnightly refuse collection, fortnightly recycling collection and fortnightly charged opt-in garden waste collection. The NOM is one of WRAP's three consistency services as approved by Defra. If we move to the NOM it is anticipated that our recycling rate will increase to 45%.

The political leadership of the Council feel strongly that the Council should provide the services that residents want. The Council has previously sought residents' views on our collection services via two "Big Bin Votes". Both returned an overwhelming majority for retaining a weekly refuse collection. The Council will be carrying out a third vote this year which will ask residents whether they wish to retain the current service or move to the NOM. If we retain our current service we will look at other ways of improving our performance such as increasing our garden waste customer base.

Specifics

What's working well?

- Our kerbside co-mingled recycling service works well and is popular with our residents.
- The Council has a good working relationship with its WDA (Kent County Council) who have reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill from Kent to under 1%.
- The introduction a few years ago of smaller wheeled bins for domestic waste together with a "no side waste" policy.

Are there particular reasons affecting waste and recycling locally to you?

- The Council was successful with its bid to the DCLG's Weekly Refuse Collection fund and committed to weekly refuse collection until at least November 2017.
- The wish of residents to keep weekly refuse collections as expressed in our first and second Big Bin Votes.

Are there obstacles outside your authority's control that may affect your recycling rate?

- The local waste transfer and disposal infrastructure struggles to cope with the current quantities of waste and recycling collected and will cope even less with increased quantities as a result of the rapidly increasing number of new properties.

Over the longer term, what are the biggest challenges and opportunities you see in driving recycling improvements locally?

- Challenge - The expected continuing wishes of residents to keep weekly refuse collection (to be tested shortly in our third Big Bin Vote).
- Challenge - Dealing with contamination of communal recycling bins at flats.
- Challenge - The time and money it will take to improve the local waste transfer and disposal infrastructure.
- Challenge - Finding the capital funding that will be required to implement the NOM should residents vote for it (about £300,000 will be needed to fund new food waste and other recycling containers).
- Challenge – Increasing the number of residents who sign up to our garden waste collection service
- Opportunity - Joint working with Tonbridge & Malling BC and Tunbridge Wells BC on our next contract.
- Opportunity – Working as part of the Kent Resource Partnership to promote and develop sustainable waste management in Dartford and across Kent.

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Dartford Borough Council

August 2017