

Committee: Sustainable Communities Scrutiny and Overview Panel

Date: 21st February 2018

Wards: All

Subject: New waste collection service

Lead officer: Graeme Kane, Assistant Director of Public Space

Lead member: Cllr Ross Garrod, Cabinet Member for Street cleanliness and Parking

Contact officer: Graeme Kane, Assistant Director of Public Space

Recommendations:

-
1. The Panel note the plans to prepare for the waste collection service change and provide any comments to officers and Veolia
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. In line with the procurement and commencement of the Veolia waste and street-cleaning contract, a new waste collection service will be introduced from 1st October 2018.
- 1.2. This report aims to update Members on the plans to manage the service change.
- 1.3. Plans for the service changes are being developed by Veolia in conjunction with London Borough of Merton (LBM) officers and the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP). The plans include: ordering, delivering and commissioning of new vehicles; ordering and delivery of new bins; and route adjustments and day changes. A crucial work stream is the development of clear and comprehensive communications to residents.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. In line with the procurement and commencement of the Veolia waste and street-cleaning contract, a new waste collection service will be introduced from 1st October 2018. This will consist of the following services:

New wheeled bin for refuse/general waste	Alternate weekly
New wheeled bin for recycling (paper and card)	Alternate weekly
Existing box used for 'container mix' consisting of metal cans, plastic bottles/tubs/trays/ pots and glass bottles/ jars.	Alternate weekly
Existing food waste bin	Weekly
Existing garden waste service (optional for paying customers)	Fortnightly

- 2.2. The service is designed to:
 - encourage greater recycling and reducing general waste;

- keep Merton's streets cleaner;
 - be safer for residents and operatives, and;
 - be cost-effective.
- 2.3. A service change such as this is significant and will represent the biggest change to waste collection in the borough in history, and possible forever. There is a great deal to plan and co-ordinate. In order to minimise disruption as much as possible, Veolia, the SLWP and LBM are working closely to plan the service change.
- 2.4. The service change will undoubtedly increase the demand on the teams and stretch their capacity to deliver a consistent and reliable service. The change will affect the LBM Waste Team and also the Contact Centre, Communications and Corporate Complaints Team, among others. We are expecting the number of calls and on-line requests from residents to increase significantly, and we are preparing for that eventuality. We are analysing the need for additional resource during this period and will make plans accordingly.
- 2.5. The project team is led by Veolia and they are responsible for ensuring the roll-out is successful. They have undertaken similar service changes in other parts of the country and London; they have learnt from this experience.
- 2.6. The Project Team consists of a number of work streams and technical groups:
- Operations
 - ICT
 - Communications
 - Fleet and Depots
- 2.7. The structure of the project governance arrangements are presented in Appendix A.

3 COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1. Communicating the service change to residents is a key work stream. Communication leads from LBM, Veolia and SLWP are working together to pool their expertise and knowledge to ensure the communications are as clear and accessible as possible. The range of communication methods will be varied and are currently being scoped and agreed by the communications team. It is likely it will include leaflets and booklets for residents as well as on-line and social media activity. Residents will be provided with calendars to ensure they know their collection day and which bin to present each week. Residents are currently able to check their collection day on the LBM website; this data will be updated when the new service goes live. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/collection-days-and-times>

4 SURVEYING COLLECTION POINTS

- 4.1. In some circumstances alternative collection arrangements will be provided to residents. This will be based on an assessment of their properties. For instance, where a property has no outdoor areas at the front of the property to store bins nor any side access to move a bin from the back to the front of the property, the property is likely to be more suitable to present their waste/ recycling in bags.

This would include flats above shops which will remain on a bag collection service.

- 4.2. In order to determine whether properties are unsuitable for the standard collection method, Veolia will carry out two types of audit. The first is a desk top exercise that utilises the experience of managers, supervisors and the Council's Neighbourhood Client Team to identify streets or individual properties that are not suited to the standard container solution. These irregular collection sites will be subject to a second audit during which a site visit which will determine a suitable solution. A hierarchy of container types and commodity combinations has been agreed with the SLWP and will form the framework for determining the most appropriate collection service for that property. The hierarchy prioritises the weekly collection of food waste and the containment of refuse within the wheeled bin to maintain street cleanliness.

5 LEARNING FROM OTHER AUTHORITIES

- 5.1. The service change in London Borough of Sutton (LBS) did not go as smoothly as intended. There were specific reasons for this relating to the circumstances at the time, principally that the service change was implemented at the same time as the new contract was introduced in Sutton and Merton and followed a very short mobilisation period.
- 5.2. Following the service change in Sutton, a Member-led Scrutiny Task Group undertook a thorough investigation into the reasons why the service change had not gone to plan. The findings of this group have been shared with other members of the SLWP and analysed by the officer and Member team in Merton. This is useful to inform us about how to manage some of the challenges experienced in Sutton. Officers and Veolia fully appreciate that it is important we learn from the experience in Sutton. The findings of the Task Group are presented in Appendix B together with the actions Veolia and LBM have put in place to address them. Given the contract has been operational in Merton since April 2018, there is a considerably longer period to prepare for the service change and to embed systems, vehicles and behaviour within the operation. Therefore, many of the circumstances that faced Sutton and presented significant challenges will not exist in Merton.
- 5.3. In addition, a senior officer from LBS attends the Service Change Board meetings to advise the team on their experiences and how to avoid or reduce the problems that occurred. Furthermore, the contact centre and communications teams in LBS and LBM are exchanging knowledge and experience in order to ensure LBM is as prepared as possible for the change.

6 TIMELINES

- 6.1. There are some key date which are fundamental to the introduction of the new service, they include:

Bin Audits	January to February 2018
Reorganised collection rounds developed for future rollout	February to April 2018
Delivery of new collection vehicles	February to May 2018
Leaflet on bin changes delivered to	From 21 st May 2018

each property	
Receive containers/bins to depot	May to August 2018
Installation of ECHO on-board new vehicles	February – May 2018
Delivery of containers/ bins to residents	30 th of July to 21 st September 2018 (21 st to the 28 th of September, a week for swapping bins, and managing irregular collections)
Service information pack delivered with bins	30 th of July to 21 st September 2018 (21 st to the 28 th of September, a week for swapping bins, and managing irregular collections)
ECHO on-board training for crews	3 rd April 2017 to 21 st September 2018
Call centre briefings and information materials	September 2018
Annual sack delivery to flats above shops	September 2018
Merton collections begin	1 st October 2018

Note: these dates are based on the current project plan and may be subject to change. The timeframes have included some contingency to allow the team to respond to unexpected delays throughout the project.

- 6.2. There are a number of key dependencies within the project. These are listed below together with a brief comment on the management of these elements to ensure they do not disrupt the smooth introduction of the new service:

Realignment and changes to the collection rounds.	The analysis of the rounds will start in February and will be complete in May; this provides plenty of time for careful scrutiny of the rounds to ensure they operate effectively. The collection days will remain from Monday to Friday, which avoids the risk posed by introducing Saturday collections. Changes have already been made to the communal collection rounds which reduce the amount of change that will occur in October thus reducing the scale of disruption.
Appropriate training of the crews	The crews have been operating under Veolia's procedures and practices since April 2017; this helps them prepare for the service change. They will also have the opportunity to experience operating the service in neighbouring boroughs (mainly Kingston) where this collection service already operates. The crews also have time to familiarise themselves with the new

	vehicles and ECHO system before the service change occurs.
Installation and uploading of data on the ECHO on-board system	ECHO is already in place and in use in LBM. The drivers, crews and back office teams are therefore familiar with it. The data has been improved since the beginning of the contract to make the service more reliable and robust to service disruption and change. The new vehicles will arrive in plenty of time to install and upload the ECHO systems. The main risk remains uploading the new collection rounds to ECHO ahead of the service change; this will be kept under close review by the Project Team.
Delivery and commissioning of the new collection vehicles	The new vehicles have already started to arrive and will all be commissioned by May 2018. This provides plenty of time to address any problems with the vehicles and to ensure they are ready for use. The crews and drivers will also have the opportunity to operate them ahead of the service change.
Clear communications	A joint communications team are working on a wide range of communications for residents. The communication materials in Sutton were assessed by the LBS Scrutiny Task Group and resident feedback as generally effective; similar materials will be used in LBM. Information will be distributed in a number of ways and at a variety of times in the lead up to the service change.
Delivery and distribution of containers/bins	The bins and containers have been ordered to ensure there is plenty of time to receive and distribute the bins to residents. An experienced sub-contractor has been commissioned by Veolia to undertake the deliveries. They have undertaken similar large-scale deliveries in other authorities. The delivery of the bins is a significant undertaking and challenge in an urban environment such as Merton. This will present a challenge and will be closely monitored by Veolia and LBM teams. An additional week has been included in the delivery programme to provide flexibility and resource to deal with issues that arise.
ICT integration between LBM and Veolia systems	The vast majority of the reporting processes have been created and integrated between LBM's website, customer relationship

	management system and Veolia's ECHO system. This system has been operating well for many months and been tested by officers and residents.
--	--

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. The Panel are asked to note and provide feedback on this report, and the discussion with Veolia at the Panel meeting.
- 7.2. The Panel may wish to ask for a further update at a future meeting.

8 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 8.1. The Service Change has been informed throughout its development by resident feedback and views expressed by community groups and residents in various forums.

9 TIMETABLE

- 9.1. Key dates from the implementation timetable are included in the report.

10 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. It is anticipated that additional short-term capacity may be required in the run up to and delivery of the service change, and work is underway with estimating the additional resource required. However, it is too early at this stage to quantify the revenue impact of this, or the source of funding.
- 10.2. Capital: The approved Capital Programme 2017-21 contains £2.674 million in 2018/19 for the purchase of Waste Bins.

11 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no legal or statutory implications as a result of this report.

11.2. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.3. There are no human rights, equalities or community cohesion implications as a result of this report.

11.4. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.5. There are no crime or disorder implications as a result of this report.

11.6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.7. There are no risk management or health and safety implications as a result of this report.

11.8. APPENDICES - THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- 11.9. Appendix A: Project Team structure
Appendix B: Recommendations from LBS Scrutiny Task Group

11.10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.11. N/A