

## **Committee: Sustainable Communities Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019**

Wards: All

### **Subject: Waste and street cleansing service performance report**

Lead officer: John Bosley - Assistant Director Public Space

Lead member: Cllr Tobin Byers - Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

Contact officer: Charles Baker – Commissioning Manger Public Space

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#### **Recommendations:**

- A. Members are asked to note the content of the report and provide officers with any comments regarding their experience, or reports they have received relating to the waste, recycling and street cleaning services.
  - B.
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#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report is intended to provide Members with an update on the performance of the waste, recycling and street-cleaning service since Veolia assumed responsibility for the service in April 2017 and especially following the role out of the new collection service in October 2018.
- 1.2. The contract is managed through the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) team. The Authorised Officer for the contract is the SLWP Strategic Partnership Manager and there is a separate Contract Manager for the Veolia contract within the partnership team. These roles are responsible for the management of the contract across all four of the partner authorities, LB Merton, LB Sutton, LB Croydon and RB Kingston. They are directed by the Management Group which consists of the appropriate Assistant Directors from each borough. Regular contract management meetings are held between SLWP, representatives from each of the boroughs and the contractor in order to oversee and progress the delivery of the contract.
- 1.3. The operational performance of the contract is overseen and managed in a number of different ways in order to maintain and improve performance for the benefit of our residents. Our Neighbourhood Client Team, consisting of three experienced Neighbourhood Client Officers (NCOs), monitor the contract through site visits and daily interaction with the contractors' Neighbourhood Environmental Managers, residents, stakeholders and local Members. They respond to customer requests, queries

and complaints in order to resolve waste/ recycling collection, street cleaning or green space issues.

- 1.4. The Neighbourhood Client Team also gather business intelligence, performance information and analyse data held in the Council's customer management system. In addition, they have access to the contractor's operational business management systems in order to determine what resources are being used in order to deliver the services and when. Through their work they are developing strong relationships with key stakeholders as well as intricate knowledge of the wards for which they are responsible. This should enable them to pre-empt problems and resolve issues to minimise disruption and inconvenience to our residents. The regular outcomes of their data analysis and in-field reports provide the basis of the council's improvement focus points during the formal SLWP contract meeting and our local monthly operational meeting.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. The new waste collection service which was introduced in October 2018 impacted on every household in the borough and was one of the biggest changes in waste collection our residents have experienced in recent history with approximately 75% of households experiencing a change in the day of collection.
- 2.2. Following the initial period of disruption following the introduction of the new service, performance levels are now comparable to those achieved prior to the service change. Overall the mobilisation of the collection service has now settled down with only limited disruption for the vast majority of residents and customers. (See appendix A)
- 2.3. In summary, the new waste collection service provides Households with a weekly collections, with two collections (food and recycling) one week and three collections (food, recycling and general waste) on alternate weeks. Each household has been provided with, one wheelie bin for non-recyclable household waste along with a wheelie bin for paper and card; they will continue to use their existing recycling box for plastics, glass and cans. (See Appendix B)
- 2.4. There are currently c.68, 000 kerbside properties which receive the new waste collection service resulting in an average of 680,000 collections per month (excluding garden waste). In addition to this there are c.16, 000 flats, each receiving a weekly communal collection amounting to 128,000 collections per month.

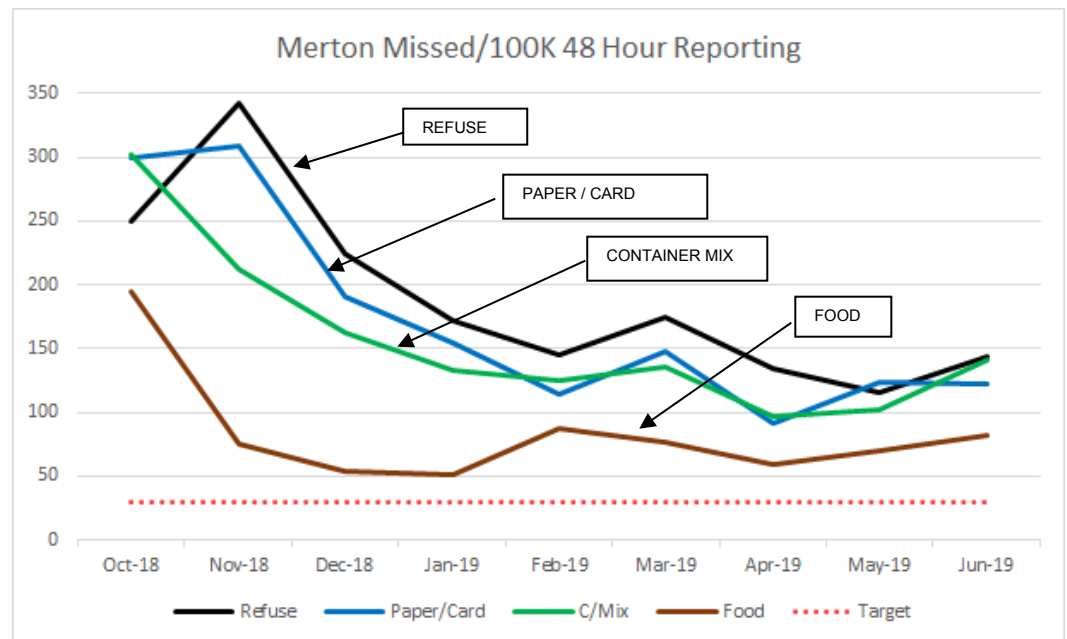
### **Waste collection service performance**

- 2.5. Since the service change in October 2018 the response to missed refuse collections has been steadily improving, although the current service level remains too high. Also, the substantial changes to routes, rounds and collection methodologies had affected our contractor's ability to respond to missed collection reports within

the 24-hour service level agreement (SLA) requirement of the contract.

- 2.6. The current level of missed collections does not meet our requirements and the performance and reliability of the collection crews needs to be improved and is being addressed through the regular client management meetings. It is noted that the contractor has stated that collection service personnel resource has been stretched due to staff turnover, especial HGV drivers which is a national issue.
- 2.7. The revised recycling service has been received well by our residents and the service has seen an increase in the level of participation by our residents , however the service continues to come under added pressure from some residents attempting to use their blue lidded recycling container as a second refuse bin. We are continuing to work with Veolia and have implemented a new contamination process which will see contaminated bins tagged and the residents advised on why the collection was not undertaken as scheduled.
- 2.8. In November 2018 we implemented the 'no side waste policy' and only waste which is presented correctly in the correct container is collected. This has benefited local areas through the reduction in street blown litter arising from uncontained waste. However, there are locations where volumes of waste generated by households are still significant. In order to address this operationally we have instructed our service provider to clear all waste in these areas and have committed additional resource in the waste collection service on Wednesday and part of Thursday's collections. This is at an additional cost to the Council on a temporary basis
- 2.9. The Neighbourhood Client team routinely monitors the performance of the individual collection crews and the custom of some of the collection crews using transfer bins has been identified. We have escalated these observations with Veolia and where practical Veolia have removed the transfer bins from the service. This is with the exception of food waste and dry mix recycling which will continue to utilise the transfer bin for operational efficiencies.
- 2.10. We are aware of a number of operational challenges and the current behaviour of some of the collection crews in not returning the wheelie bins back to the property. In order to address this behaviour our contact centre is able to record these incidents and this information is shared with our service provider in order to identify the individual crews and monitor / amend their performance.
- 2.11. Following the service change in October 2018 the trend for the number of missed collections /per 100K have fallen steadily on all collection streams. Veolia acknowledges that this improvement is not fast enough and the local management teams at all depots are continuously working on solutions to achieve the targets.

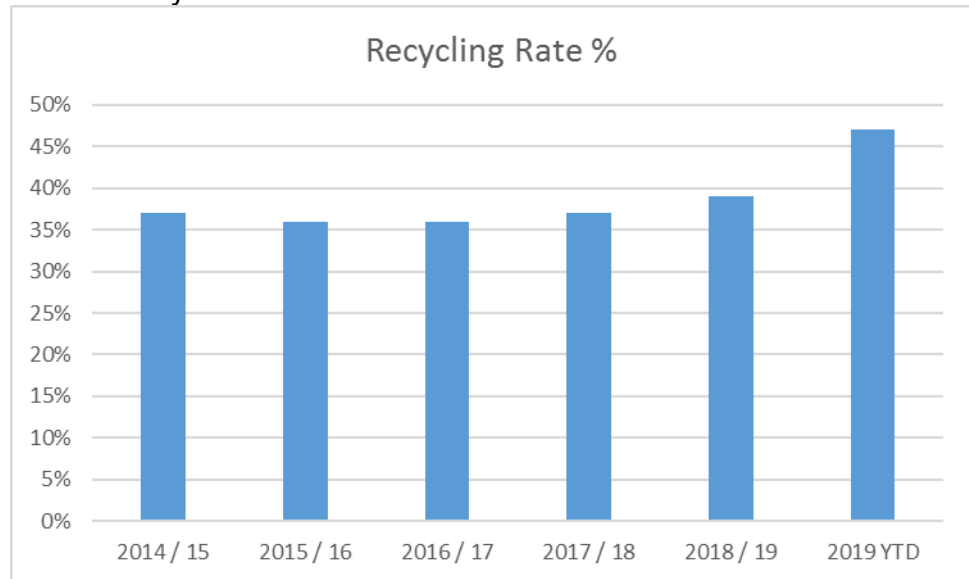
- 2.12. The graph below illustrates the number of missed collections per 100,000 collections reported within 48hrs of the scheduled collection.



### Recycling – contract performance

- 2.13. Following the introduction of the new wheelie bins we have seen a significant reduction in the volume of general refuse being collected and disposed of through our Energy Waste Facility at Beddington mitigating the need for landfill. Over this period we have seen a 12% reduction in refuse, which equates to a monthly average reduction of over 480 tonnes.
- 2.14. Over the first nine month of the new service we have seen a continued improvement in the level of recycling being achieved.
- 2.15. The main contributor to this success is the increase in food waste participation which has seen an increase of over 70% or 191 tonnes per month and continues to increase.
- 2.16. The Garden waste service remains popular with our residents and our customer base continues to grow. We currently have over 9,000 customers compared to 7,500 last year. Over the last nine months, we have collected an average of an additional 60 tonnes per month compared to the same period last year.
- 2.17. The net impact of these changes has resulted in a current recycling rate of 47% in June, a record for the borough. The level of recycling will fluctuate over the year due to seasonal trends in garden waste, however we remain confident that providing the current increase in our recycling performance continues to improve, the full year effect (2019/20) will hopefully see us achieve our stretched target of 48% recycling performance and position us in the top quartile of all London boroughs.

- 2.18. The table below illustrates the historic static level of recycling over the last six years.

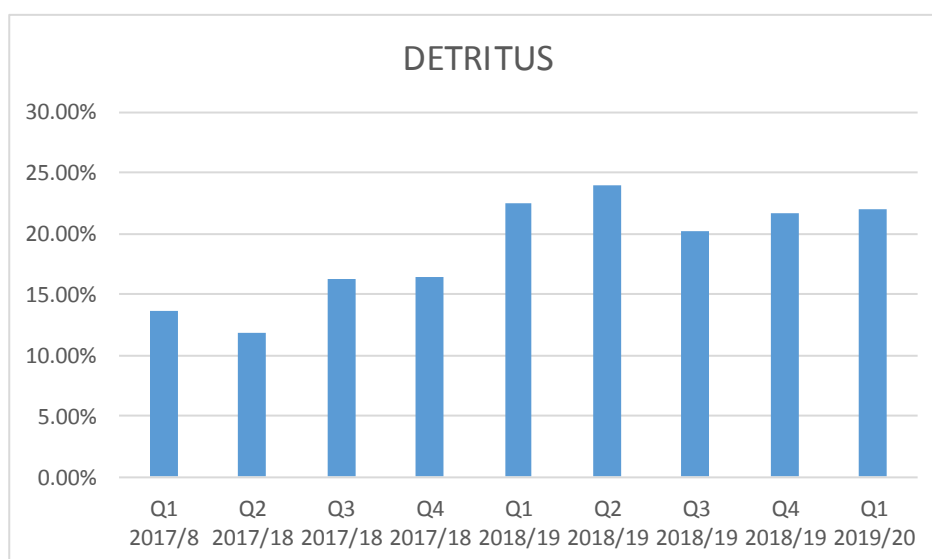
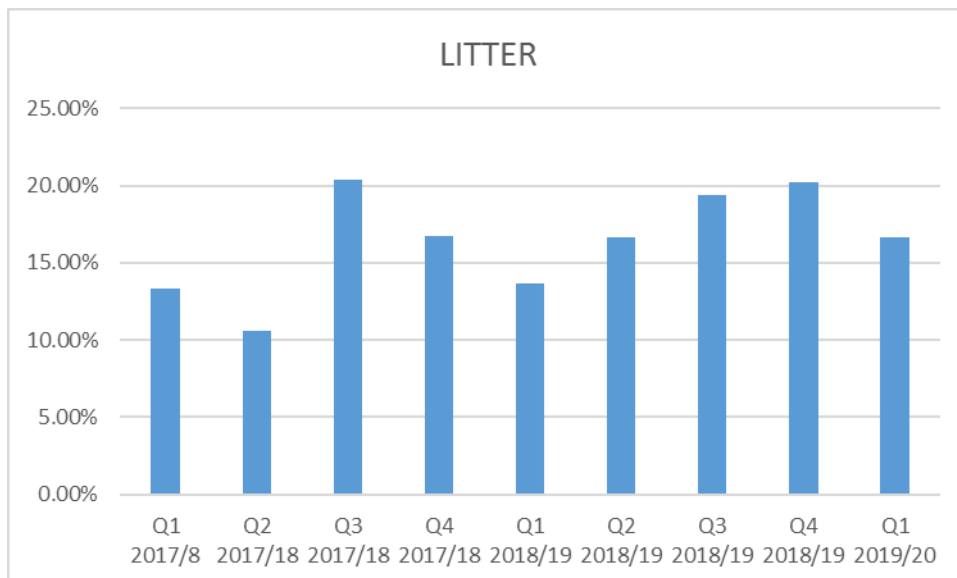


### Street Cleaning

- 2.19. Street cleansing continues to be an area of concern for our Client team, Veolia and residents.
- 2.20. The current service being delivered is consistently below the required standard, which is only being achieved on average 67% of the time over the last 3 years based on inspections undertaken by the service
- 2.21. The table below illustrates the current decline in performance (street litter and detritus combined) over the last 3 years when compared to the previous service delivered by the council in 2016, prior to the award of contract to Veolia in April 2017.

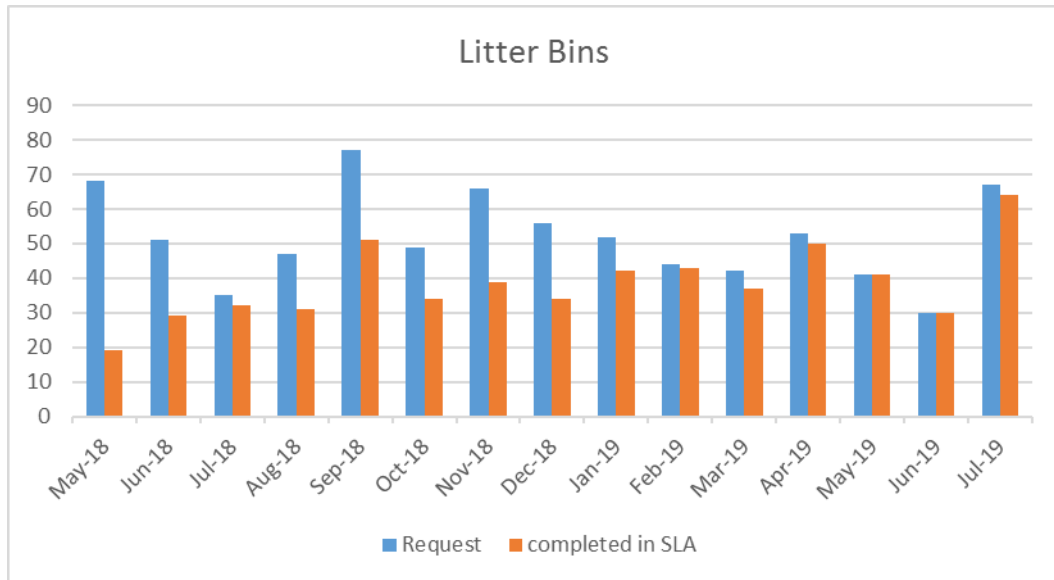
	A	B+	B	B-	C	C-	D
2016/17	0%	0%	82%	16%	1%	0%	0%
2017/18	0%	0%	66%	30%	3%	0%	0%
2018/19	0%	0%	68%	29%	3%	0%	0%
2019/20	0%	0%	67%	29%	4%	0%	0%

- 2.22.
- 2.23. LBM's performance monitoring officer continue to undertake both monthly and quarterly inspections at random sites across the borough to assess the level of litter and detritus separately. The data from these inspections provides an insight into the street cleanliness of Merton's roads over time. Anything graded B- or above is within the acceptable limits of the contract. The graphs below compare the results of these inspections over time. The scores are based on the former Defra National Indicator 195 for street cleanliness; LBM's performance target is less than 8% for litter and less than 10% for detritus; both of which are stricter targets than previous years.



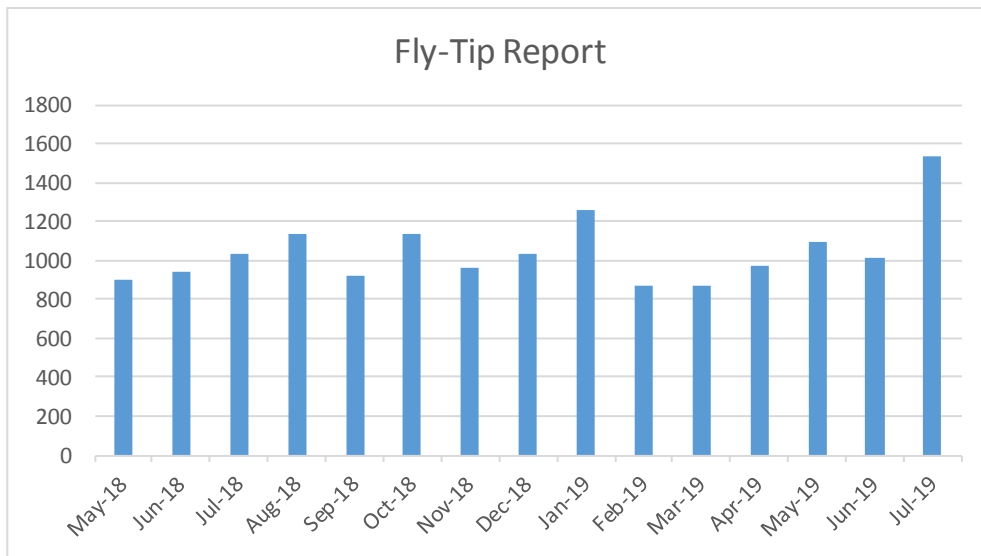
- 2.24. Over the first nine months of the new service, the full benefit of containerisation was not realised. Veolia’s performance in maintaining the cleanliness of our streets has decreased since it assumed responsibility in April 2017. Throughout October and November we continued to accept side waste, which resulted in spillage from the collection process, along with incorrectly presented waste sacks which have continued to be torn open by the wildlife.
- 2.25. Over the last twelve months we have received 592 reports of overflowing litterbins of which 78% were rectified within the required time scale. Over the last 3 months we have seen significant improvements and between April 2019 – June 2019 100% of all reported litter bins were cleared within the SLA.
- 2.26. Overflowing litter bins undermine residents' ability and commitment to disposing of their litter responsibly and bring down the overall condition of an area. It is disappointing therefore when

the bins are not emptied frequently enough to avoid this occurring. Unfortunately, there have been incidents when bins have been overflowing. This remains a focus for improvement. We will shortly be conducting a review of all street litter bins which Members will be invited to comment on to see whether any require more frequent collections, increased capacity or removing altogether.

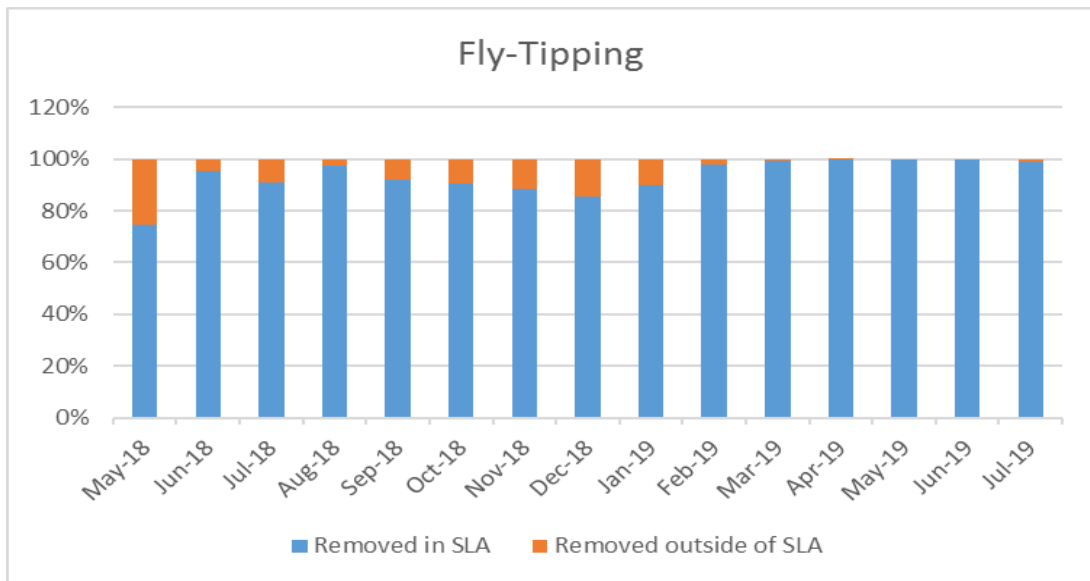


### Fly-tipping

- 2.27. Keeping our borough and streets clean is a priority for our residents as shown by the last residents' survey. Sadly, the amount of fly-tipping we see around the borough means that keeping our streets and roads clear of fly tips continue to be a challenge
- 2.28. Our contractor's role in relation to fly-tipping is to remove all reported fly tips on public land within the SLA time frame. The table below illustrates Veolia's performance improvement since April 18 and the impact of the service change in Oct 18 and their ability to respond within 24hrs. In order to maintain the level of service required Veolia has supplied additional resource, including two additional response teams, to assist in dealing with the increase in volume of fly-tipping. In the three month period April – June 2019 Veolia has responded to 100% of 3,093 fly-tips within SLA (24hours of reporting).
- 2.29. We continue to see a significant increase in the number of reported fly tips and abandoned waste within the borough. Over the last 12 months there have been 12,337 reported fly-tips. The table below demonstrates the number of public reported fly tips since May 2018.



2.30. The challenge we now face is to reduce the overall number of fly-tips and to prevent the re-occurrence of the fly-tipping, through the education awareness raising and increasing enforcement. This is what the Councils fly-tipping strategy seeks to achieve.



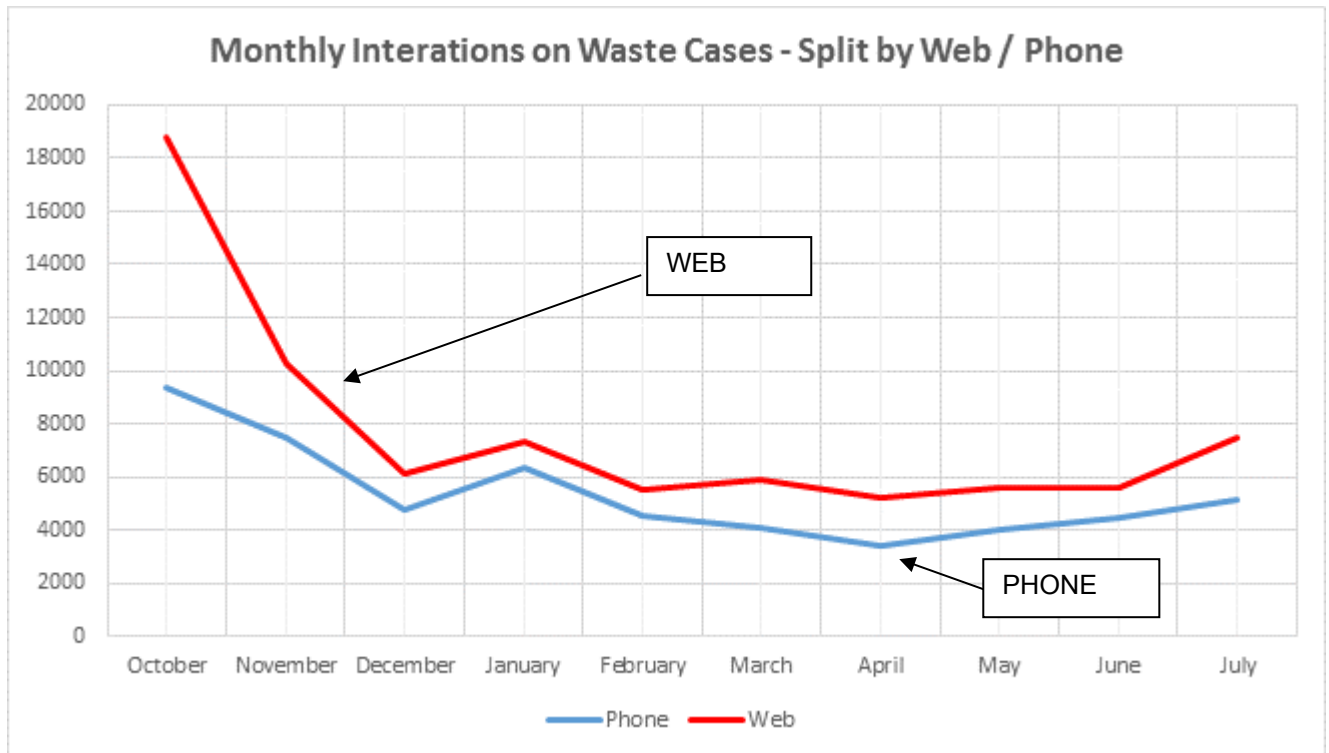
### Customer Contact

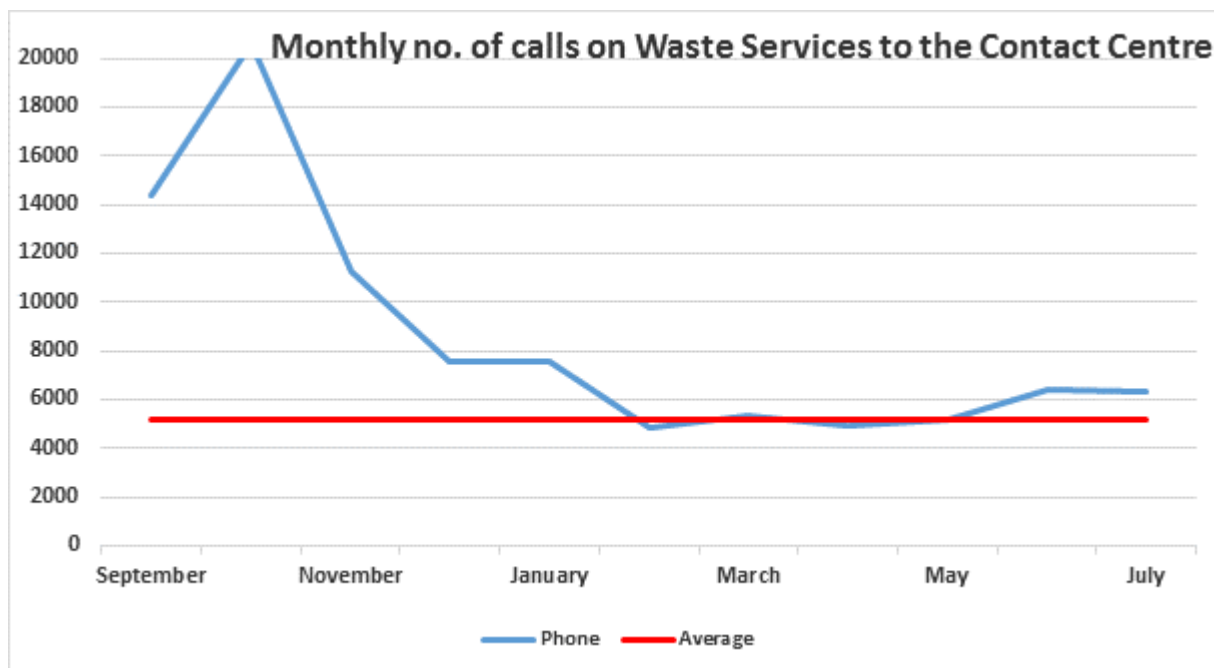
2.31. The Council continues to provide a number of different mechanisms for reporting issues within the Waste Service including online via the Council's website, other third party online channels such as Love Clean Streets/Fix My Street and by telephone



through the Council's contact centre. This in addition to written complaints and reports of service issues from Members.

- 2.32. The additional provision of agency staff was gradually reduced in line with the decrease in telephone calls from January through to the end of March 2019. We ceased all agency staff with effect from 1st April, the increase in demand June/July was due to the annual garden waste renewals and we provided additional agency resource to meet the expected increase in demand,
- 2.33. The Council acknowledges that there remain areas where the online facility can be improved. The Council is undertaking a programme of work to enhance and improve existing online transactions, refine and increase the resilience of the technical functionality implemented, and deliver additional online transactions
- 2.34. The two tables below illustrate the continual reduction in the volume of calls taken by the call centre and web interactions for waste related request since the peak in October 2018





### 3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None, for the purposes of this report

### 4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. The assessment of the street cleansing standards delivered by the Council's service provider, Veolia, is best judged by the satisfaction of the service users and the recent resident's survey suggests a marked decrease in the satisfaction of the service being delivered. However, it is noted the timing of the survey coincided with the largest single service change to the waste collection service, with this service and street cleanliness often viewed collectively by residents

4.2. Following the roll out of the new waste collection service in Oct 2018 we commissioned West Co to undertake an independent survey to ask our residents about the new recycling and rubbish collection service.

4.3. Based on their experience of the service delivered by our service provider (Veolia) 71% of residents felt satisfied with the collection service, however 40% of households confirmed that they had experienced a service related issue such as missed collection or non-deliver of containers.

4.4. This level of satisfaction over the last 6 months has continued to increase and based on their experience now 82% of our residents have expressed satisfaction with the level of service they receive supported by 84% expressing that they have had no issues regarding the service.

### 5 TIMETABLE

5.1. The time table is contained within the report

**6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. None, for the purposes of this report

**7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are no legal and statutory implications as a result of this report.

**8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

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

**9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications as a result of this report

**10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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

**11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

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**12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1. None

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