

**Haringey** Council

## Scrutiny briefing paper

24<sup>th</sup> September 2012

### **Scrutiny briefing**

The council is in the process of rolling out a new waste collection service designed to increase recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions. The first phase was rolled out in the West of the Borough to 22,000 households with the new service commencing from 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The second phase to 44,000 households commenced on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Phase 3 is due to commence on 22nd October 2012 to approximately 13,000 households.

All dry recyclables, food and garden waste are continued to be collected on a weekly basis. In phase 1 and 2 the remaining residual waste is being collected fortnightly. The implementation of the new service is a key component of delivering the waste contract targets of 40% recycling rate and a 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2015.

This briefing sets out some of the lessons learnt and addresses specific issues relating to Veolia's performance in the rollout to date and the actions undertaken to improve performance.

#### **Lessons learnt/Action taken - Rescheduling of Rounds/Waste Collection**

As the collection service moves from one phase into another, all rounds throughout the borough are rescheduled to take account of the increase in recycling tonnage and the move to the fortnightly collection of residual tonnage. The collection day remained the same for phases 1 and 2.

In phase 1 and 2 the rescheduling of the rounds has resulted in an increase in the levels of missed collections as it took time for crews to become familiar with new schedules and for some recycling crews to adapt providing the service using the new collection methodology. Invariably for a period of time the design of the new rounds needed to change as Veolia managers realised the impact of the new schedules by monitoring the tonnage collected by each crew. For some crews on certain days the tonnage was too high and for others too low. Therefore to balance the load evenly across all crews Veolia made adjustments to the scheduled rounds. Ultimately, the scheduled rounds for each crew aimed to reflect what could be collected efficiently and effectively in a normal working day.

In order to address these issues the following actions were implemented prior to the launch of phase 2:

- Crews were given the schedules in advance to comment.
- The schedules were checked by the crews and the client team to ensure no roads had been missed.
- During the initial period following rollout, additional afternoon crews were employed to cover missed collections, whilst Veolia managers rebalanced the rounds. For phase 2, it

was envisaged that two crews would be required but this was recently increased to three crews. The vast majority of collections are now being completed on the scheduled day, nevertheless increased monitoring is being undertaken to ensure that the quality of the service meets requirements.

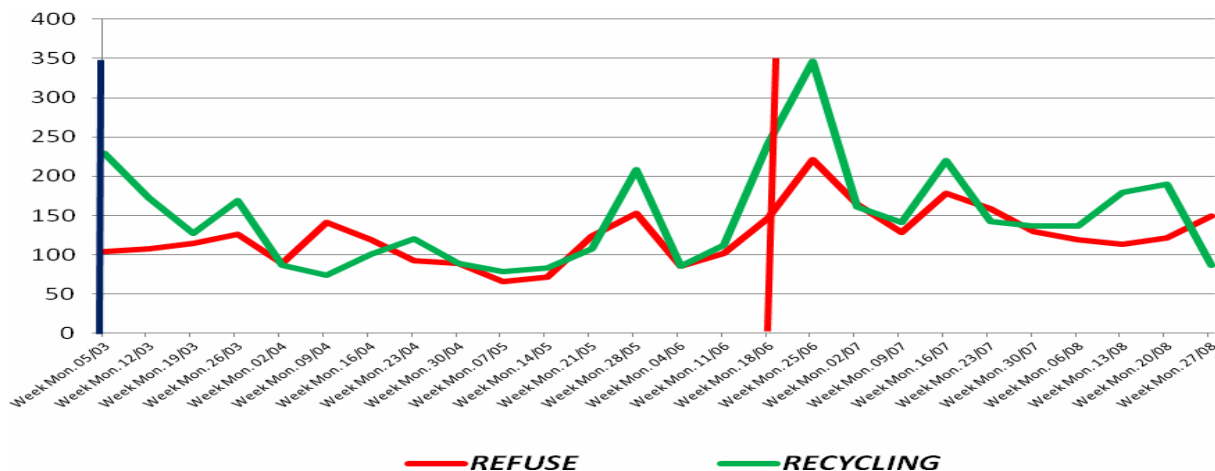
- To ensure that the quality of the service continues to improve and meets the contractual standard it has been agreed for phase 2 that Veolia and the Council increase the level of monitoring contributing a 1 x FTE each. Within the monitoring regime an element of joint monitoring will take place to ensure that both parties have a shared understanding of any issues. Veolia has agreed to fund the Council post until the end of December 2012 to cover phase 3.
- There were technical problems with the recycling narrow access vehicle, which has resulted in a number of breakdowns and delays. This vehicle has now been replaced.

All these measures and others outlined in the briefing paper should reduce the level of reported missed collections and the number of complaints received by Veolia and the Council. Therefore, the need for additional back office support is being kept under review.

During Phase 3 in order to normalise the service and achieve the efficiency and carbon savings, as set out in the contract, Veolia will reschedule all rounds across the borough. This will result in changing the day of collection for 80% of our residents. This change is expected to result in a similar increase in the number of reported missed collections as experienced in phase 1 and 2. It is also anticipated that the time taken for reported missed collections to return to within the contractual target will be between two to three weeks. Lessons learnt from phase 1 and 2 will be applied to minimise the level of disruption. The changes will need to be communicated to all ward councillors and residents and reassurance needs to be given that if their waste is not collected on the scheduled day, it will be collected within 24 hours thereafter. Furthermore, in the event residents do not realise there is a day change where residents report a missed collection Veolia will collect the waste the next day.

For your information please note Graph 1 below which sets out the number of reported missed collections on a weekly basis.

**Graph 1 – Reported Weekly Missed Collections**



Points to note:

- The contractual target for Veolia in this year is 150 missed collections per 100,000 household collections per month. The figures shown are the number of missed collections for the whole borough. The missed collections performance is monitored both annually and monthly against annual and monthly performance targets. When considering monthly operational performance any subsequent deduction is based on Veolia's overall performance over a three month/quarterly period.
- The contractual target was exceeded for recycling collections during the first two weeks following rollout in phase 1 to 22,000 households.
- The contractual target was exceeded for both refuse and recycling during the first two weeks following the rollout to phase 2 to 44,000 households.
- The number of reported missed collections has fallen back under the contractual target totals.
- With reference to experience in other boroughs, following similar changes in the waste collection service in Brent and Southwark there was a period of recovery of between 4-6 weeks before missed collections returned back to within contractual target levels.
- Ongoing joint monitoring is taking place focusing on missed collections and bins/containers not out back.

**Lessons Learnt - Communication/Engagement**

In preparation for phase 1 a number of actions were undertaken to engage with residents and communicate the change in the waste collection service to increase the levels of recycling: This included:

- a letter and leaflet delivered to all households;
- Frequently Asked Questions section on the Council web site;
- Introductory booklet delivered at the same time as the new recycling bin; and
- Attending a cycle of Area Forums, Resident Associations meetings and a meeting with Sustainable Haringey.

In reviewing phase 1 and taking account of the known differences in the property profile for phase 2 a number of changes were made. This included:

- HMO Action Plan- Identified HMOs and undertook pre-visits to explain the new waste collection service. A total of 8,000 households were visited.
- A letter, leaflet and poster has been sent to all registered landlords and letting agents.
- Attendance at the Landlord forum.
- Article in Landlord's newsletter.
- The letter to residents included leaflet title in several languages.

- A separate letter was distributed to blocks of flats in the Phase 2 area to explain changes from a recycling box collection to a wheelie bin collection and that blocks of flats will retain their weekly residual waste collection.
- Targeted engagement with certain locations i.e. Milton Avenue, N6. This included undertaking a consultation to ascertain residents' views on three possible options. Residents were asked to respond via a freepost questionnaire. Officers from the Veolia Outreach Team and Neighbourhood Action Team visited household on three separate occasions to discuss the changes and notify them of the consultation.

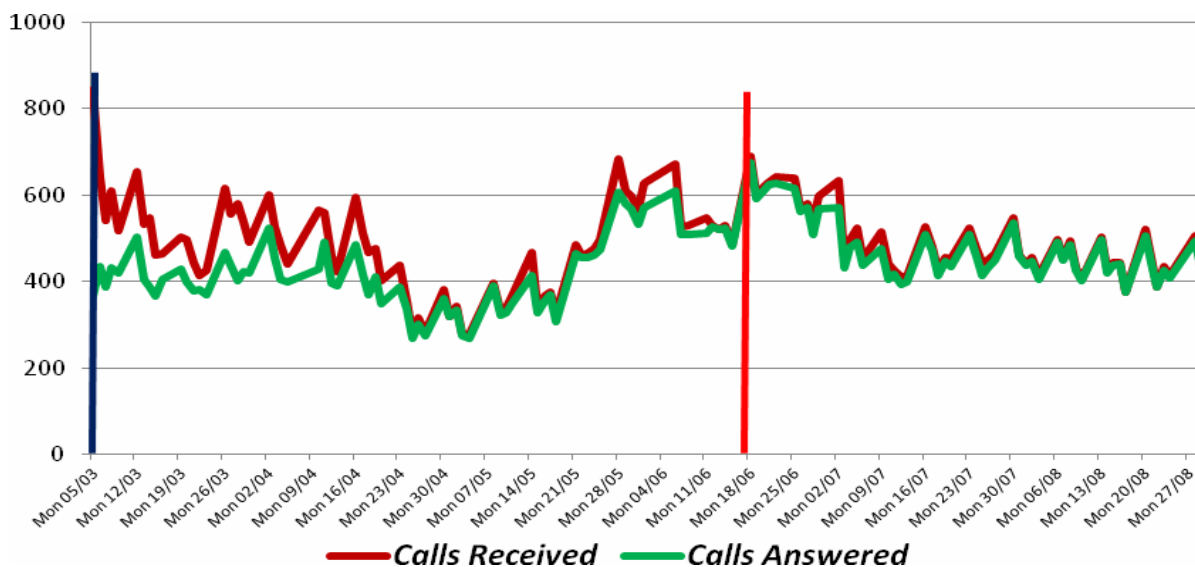
In preparation for phase 3, the following actions and changes will be made:

- Door-knocking 100% of properties in phase 3. Local ward councillors have been invited to join the Outreach Team when door-knocking.
- Letter and leaflet to be sent to all households in phase one and two informing them of the change in collection day. This will include a new 12 month collection calendar.
- Collection of unwanted green boxes has taken place in phase 1 and 2 areas. Green boxes in phase 3 will be collected week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> October.
- The September/October edition of Haringey People includes an advert notifying residents of the change in collection day.
- A new upgraded sticker for the dry recycling wheelie bins will be distributed to every household. This sticker will also portray the new collection day for that particular household.
- Subscribing to Language Line to assist the engagement process.

**Lessons Learnt/Action taken – Veolia Call Centre**

Graph 2 shows the number of calls received and answered by the call centre from October 2011 to August 2012.

**Graph 2 – Number of Calls Received & Answered**



Points to note:

- Following the initial letter that was sent out in February 2012 explaining the new service, the volume of calls increased and the performance in answering calls declined.
- Following the launch of phases 1 and 2 the calls to the Contact Centre has doubled from approximately 5,000 per month to over 10,000.
- The maximum number of calls received in phase 1 occurred in March 2012 with over 10,000 calls, however only 8,000 were answered.
- Since May 2012 the number of calls has increased leading up to and including the rollout of phase 2 in mid June 2012. The number of calls have peaked again at just over 10,000 but this needs to be seen in context with the increased number of households (44,000) rolled out to in phase 2 compared to phase 1 (22,000). During this phase the vast majority of calls have been answered.

To address the underperformance Veolia has undertaken the following actions:

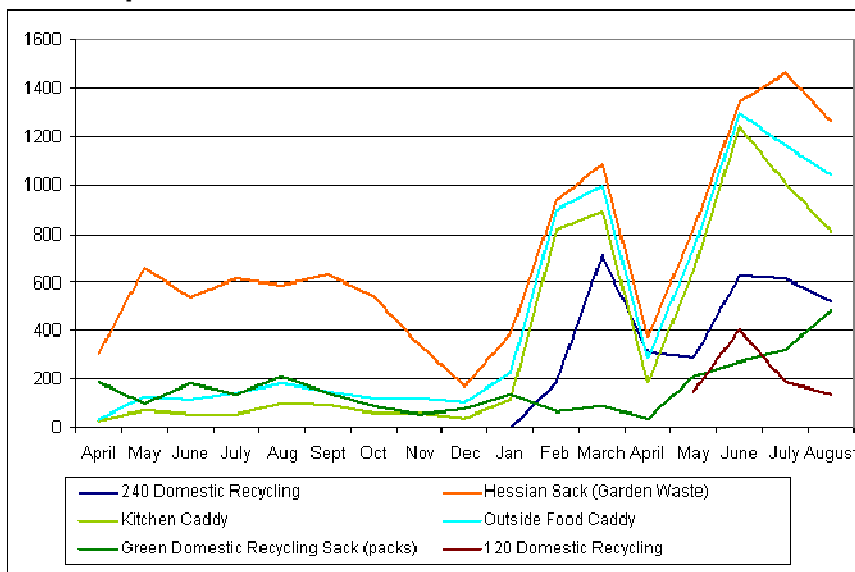
- The number of staff at the call centre was increased from 8 to 12.
- A number of staff worked weekends to deal with the level of emails.
- Their IT infrastructure supporting the call centre was changed to ensure that their customer relationship management software could operate more effectively.

To note, the number of enquires and complaints to the call centre will increase as a result of change of collection day due to some households not reading the letter and leaflet informing them of the change and thus being unaware of the change of waste collection day.

**Lessons Learnt/Action taken – Containers**

Graph 3 below demonstrates the significant number of requests for recycling containers prior to and just after the rollout of phase 1 and phase 2.

**Graph 3 – Container Requests**



Points to note:

- The three main requests since the rollout are for Hessian sacks (green/garden waste), Kitchen Caddy and Outside Food Waste Bin.
- There has been and there still is an ongoing demand for hessian sacks to contain green/garden waste.
- Prior to the commencement of each phase there has been an increase in the number of requests for kitchen caddies and outdoor food waste bins, highlighting that many households intend to start using the food waste collection service,
- In phase 1 (22,000 households) the number of requests for these three types of containers peaked in March 2012 with just under 3,000 requests.
- In phase 2 (44,000 households) the number of requests for these three types of containers peaked in June 2012 with 3,800 requests.

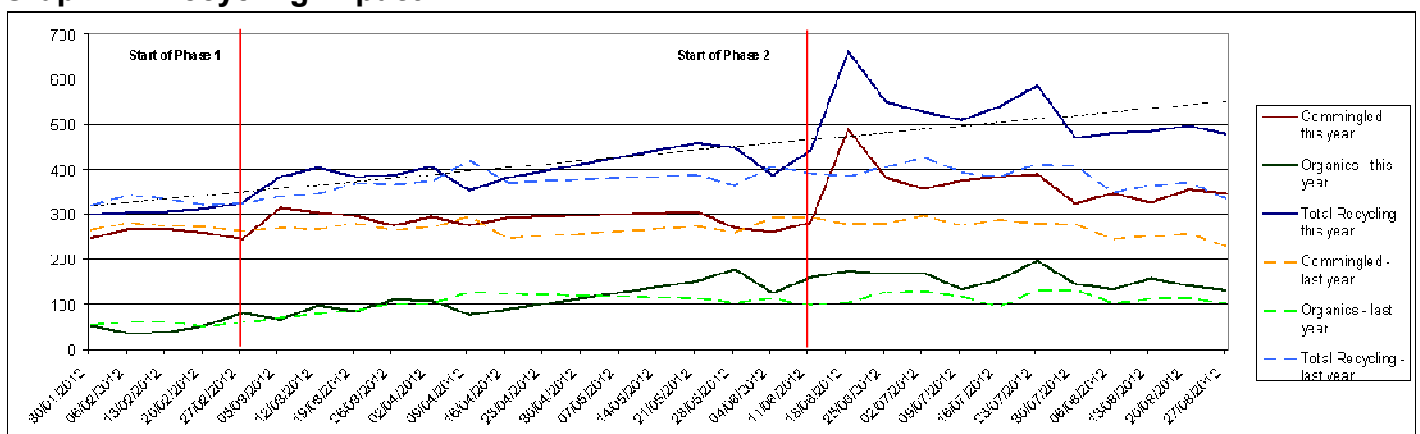
Concerns were highlighted in phase 1 of the time taken to deliver the containers following the initial request. In order to manage this more effectively Veolia undertook the following actions:

- Appointed a dedicated manager to oversee the operation.
- The number of crews delivering the containers increased from two to four.
- Residents can now collect outdoor food waste bins and kitchen caddies from the Reuse and Recycling sites in Hornsey and in Tottenham.
- Prior to the phase 2 rollout all stocks of containers were replenished and maximised.
- Following phase 1 an issue was raised regarding the size of the recycling sacks. As a consequence the sacks for phase 2 were made larger.

### Impact on Recycling

Graph 4 below tracks the increase in dry and organic recycling tonnage since February 2012.

**Graph 4 – Recycling Impact**



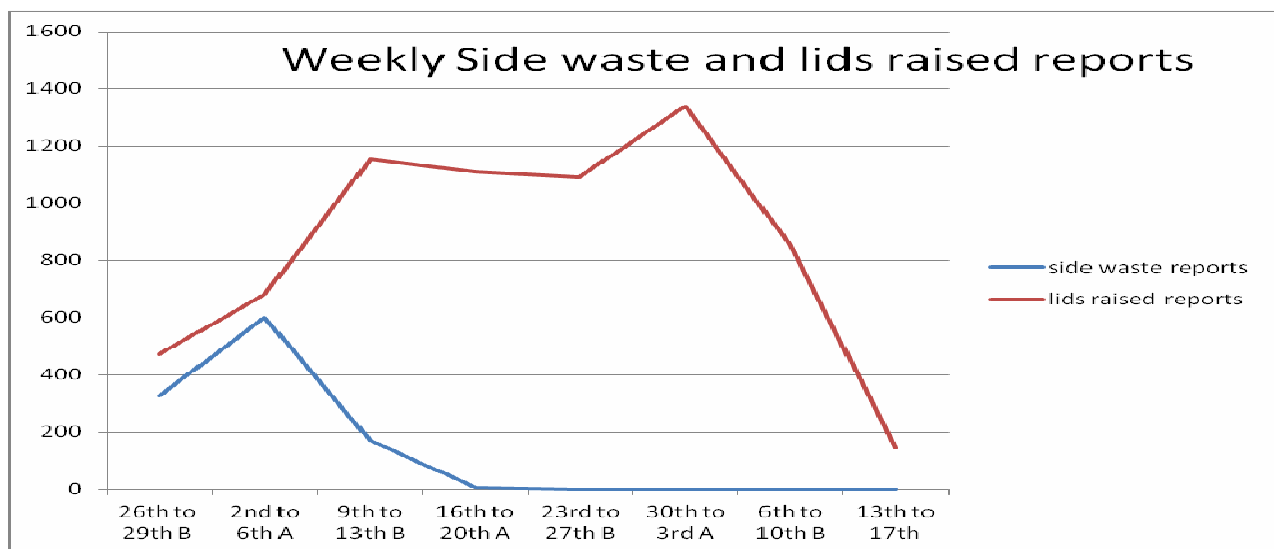
Points to note:

- At present, it is projected that the full year effect of the new waste collection service across the borough will increase recycling rates by 6%. This will place the Council on course to achieve its 40% target by 2015.
- The Council is on target to deliver its 2012/13 target of 31.7%.
- Achieving the 2015 target will result in the Council saving up to £1 Million in avoided landfill disposal cost. Also, it will save 12,000 tonnes CO2 equivalent or for comparison it equates to removing 4,000 vehicles from Haringey roads per annum.

**Side waste**

One of the main concerns before the waste service changes started was that the changes might lead to side waste i.e. overflowing waste bins leading to sacks next to bins and lids raised. Following the introduction of phase 2, prior to each residual waste collection day Veolia has conducted surveys of those properties with overflowing bins and side waste. This information is then passed on to the Outreach Team who would visit these properties the next day. Graph 5 shows the number of incidences of side waste and bins with raised lids.

**Graph 5- Weekly side waste and lids raised (refuse bins) reports**



The information provided has been analysed to identify those hotspots where there is repeatedly a high level of side waste/raised lids and repeat offenders:

- o 418 repeat offenders covering 120 roads.
- o 57% of those properties have been engaged with.
- o The majority of offenders are situated in the N17, N22 and N4 areas.

Instead of visiting properties after the day of collection officers from Veolia’s Outreach Team have targeted the areas in question and will engage with residents on the day before their refuse and recycling is collected. In addition this meant the Outreach Team have been able to monitor the properties where there are problems occurring and visit them at the same time intensifying the engagement action.

Furthermore, where there is a landlord involved we will continue to identify and engage with the landlord too.

With reference to phase 3, the same monitoring and engagement process will be undertaken.

The service is current exploring enforcement options to address those households who fail to contain and manage their waste. It would be helpful if scrutiny could assist and share their views on this subject.