

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	28 July 2021
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Allison Gwynne – Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ian Saxon – Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>A REVIEW OF WASTE SERVICES</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To detail a proposed pilot scheme to evaluate the viability of adjusting the collections frequency of the paper and cardboard (blue) and co-mingled (black) recycling bins from two weekly to three weekly. To outline a consultation process alongside the pilot to enable a thorough evaluation of the scheme before a potential wider rollout. To review the wider Waste Services offer to residents, via the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy, including the proposal to charge for wheeled bins.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>That Executive Cabinet be recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Approve the chosen areas for the pilot scheme as detailed in section 2. The collections frequency of the paper and cardboard (blue) and co-mingled (black) recycling bins in these areas will be adjusted from two weekly to three weekly collections for a duration of 12 weeks. The impact and viability of the trial will then be reviewed.</li> <li>(ii) Note that a future report evaluating the pilot scheme's suitability for a wider rollout across the borough will be presented to Members at a later date.</li> <li>(iii) Approve the commencement of a consultation process that will run in parallel with the 12 week trial pilot period; to review the wider Waste Services offer to residents, via the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy, which includes the charging for all wheeled bins and the potential collection frequency change for blue and black bins across the borough.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	The proposals support the 'Modern Infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations' strand of the Corporate Plan.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The pilot scheme and consultation process will enable a thorough evaluation of the collection frequency adjustment that can be used to inform the service before any wider-rollout. The Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy will be reviewed and updated following a decision on any wider roll-out of the scheme.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>The Operations and Neighbourhoods directorate has identified savings proposals of £1.823m in 2021/22 increasing to £2.415m by 2025/26. The change in collection frequency of blue and black bins has a combined 2021/22 part year estimated cost reduction of £0.26m (£0.13m per bin type). This increases to an estimated combined annual cost reduction of £0.53m from 2022/23 (£0.265m per bin type).</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the part year 2021/22 combined</p>

cost reduction has a revised estimate of £ 0.12m if implemented from 1 December 2021 subject to evaluation of the pilot scheme.

The estimated value of savings that may not be realised in 2021/22 of £0.14m due to delayed implementation will need to be mitigated via savings elsewhere within the Directorate. It is estimated that the cost recovery of wheeled bins issued will equate to £ 0.19m from 2021/22 and on an annual basis thereafter.

However as implementation has been delayed from 1 April 2021 it is envisaged that there will be an estimated value of £0.13m of expenditure not recovered in 2021/22. This is clearly dependent on the volume of wheeled bins issued and is therefore estimated at this stage. Again, the estimated reduced value of savings not realised will need to be mitigated via savings elsewhere within the Directorate. Mitigation proposals will need to be approved and implemented at the earliest opportunity in 2021/22 to ensure a balanced budget is delivered by the end of the financial year. This may include the delayed recruitment to budgeted vacant posts across the Directorate. The related financial implications of both proposals will be evaluated and reported to Members once the outcome of the pilot and consultation is known.

**Legal Implications:  
(Authorised by the  
Borough Solicitor)**

The Council has a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect household waste. The Council also has a number of other statutory duties in relation to waste generally in order to address littering and environmental issues. As set out in the main body of the report this proposal is aimed at testing the possibility of delivering savings and also reducing the 'contamination' of waste by the use of incorrect bins.

Changes to waste collection schemes can provoke strong reactions and a variety of factors need to be considered to ensure that any changes are fair to residents and proportionate.

Therefore a combination of consultation and a pilot scheme is ideal so that residents, members and officers are all well informed as to the issues and how best to address them. Engagement and consultation will also be key to ensuring that there is ample information for decision makers to reflect on when considering this project and its potential further roll out together with an equality impact assessment. It will be critical that an Equality Impact assessment is undertaken of both the consultation process and the proposals to be implemented together with any potential variations.

**Risk Management:**

Changes to service provision can be disruptive and challenging to residents, however the Communications Plan will ensure that residents in the pilot areas are well informed of the adjustment to their paper and cardboard (blue) and co-mingled (black) bins collection frequency. Further, the consultation process will ensure that residents are engaged and can provide invaluable feedback to inform any longer-term changes. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed, and a full EIA will be developed prior to any further roll-out of the scheme. Any Nationally mandated changes can have an impact locally.

**Background Information:**

Appendix 1a – Ridge Hill – Pilot Area Map

Appendix 1b – Hyde Central - Pilot Area map

Appendix 1c – Houghton Green – Pilot Area map  
Appendix 1d – Richmond Park and Dukinfield Pilot Area  
Appendix 2 – EIA Waste Strategy and Enforcement Policy  
Appendix 3 – Exceptional Circumstances Policy  
Appendix 4 – Delivery Plan  
Appendix 5 – Letter to Residents  
Appendix 6 – Letter 2 Open Survey  
Appendix 7 – Proposed Waste Policy Changes Survey  
Appendix 7a – Recycling Bin Collection Adjustment Pilot Survey  
Appendix 8 – Waste and Enforcement Policy

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Garry Parker, Head of Waste Management and Fleet Services:



Telephone: 0161 342 3684



e-mail: [garry.parker@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:garry.parker@tameside.gov.uk)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The past year has seen significant financial challenges, both as a result of cuts to funding and the Covid-19 pandemic, reducing the Council's income and increasing demand for services. Services across the Council are required to increase efficiencies and deliver services in innovative ways to ensure that the Council "builds back better" following the pandemic, whilst delivering a balanced budget for future financial years.
- 1.2 The Waste Services team have reviewed the options to increase efficiencies based on previous changes, changes to operational factors such as the purchasing/disposal habits of service users, tonnage of waste presented, presentation rates of the bins, service standards and size and property counts on the existing rounds. Having reviewed the information the team concluded that options for changes were centred on the black (comingled waste) and blue (paper and cardboard) bins only.
- 1.3 The service currently provides a disposal capacity of 140 litres per cycle or 70 litres per week for the general waste bins, (green bins). This is in line with all other Greater Manchester authorities and it is the opinion of the service that this is currently correct for service user's requirements and could not sustain a change in collection frequency.
- 1.4 The service currently provides a disposal capacity of 240 litres on a weekly basis, for food and garden waste; terraced properties use a 23 litre container on a weekly basis. Whilst this has capacity for some change, the delivery of waste for this disposal route is not linear and sees changes throughout the different seasons. Tonnage and presentation rates peak during the growing season and tests the service with the amount of waste presented; this then dies off in the winter months and the levels of tonnage and presentation drop off. It also offers a weekly disposal route for waste that quickly becomes odorous and putrid, particularly in the warmer months. The service concluded that the weekly removal of food and garden waste, particularly the food, should not be altered.
- 1.5 As part of the efficiency savings work being considered by the Operations and Neighbourhoods directorate, a report was presented to Board in February 2021 proposing efficiencies that could be achieved from Waste Services. The report included the proposed implementation of a pilot scheme adjusting the frequency of the blue (paper and cardboard) and black (co-mingled bottles and cans, glass and plastic) recycling bins from two weekly to three weekly collections.
- 1.6 In the February 2021 Board report, it was evidenced that the total tonnage presented for the blue bins (paper and cardboard) has been in decline since 2017/18, with presentation rates typically around 80% per year. The presentation rate for the black bins (co-mingled-bottles and cans, glass and plastic) is also approximately around 80% per year, although the pandemic has led to increased overall tonnage presented in 2020/2021. Overall, changes seen in recent years indicate that the recycling needs of residents could be met by adjusting the collection frequency of the blue and black bins from two weekly to three weekly collections. It should also be noted that the blue bin collection was a three weekly collection as recently as 2016.
- 1.7 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed plan of the pilot scheme, and corresponding consultation process, and to seek approval for its commencement. Alongside invaluable information that would be gained from the consultation process, the pilot areas will enable a thorough evaluation of the viability of a wider roll-out of the scheme. The evaluation of the pilot scheme will be presented in a report for the consideration of Members at a later date.
- 1.8 The report introduces an updated Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy and provides details about charging for all wheeled bins supplied by the Waste Services team, which requires consultation.

## 2. PROPOSED PILOT AREAS

2.1 Waste Services have considered the following factors when determining the suggested pilot areas for the scheme:

- Current recycling performance
- Contamination levels
- Housing type
- Ability for the rounds servicing the area to complete the allocated work
- Engagement with the service provided, i.e. are the service users currently using the resources provided.

2.2 The four proposed pilot areas are:

- Ridge Hill – Stalybridge
- Hyde Central – Hyde
- Haughton Green – Denton
- Richmond Park – Dukinfield

(Detailed maps of the rounds listed above can be found in **Appendix 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d**).

2.3 These areas provide a range of housing types representative of the borough, including:

- Mixed social and private housing: terraced, semi-detached and low-rise flats
- High densely populated area: mainly terraced houses.
- Mixed social and private housing: Semi-detached with gardens
- Private Housing estate: Semi-detached with gardens.

2.4 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed to consider if any of the protected characteristic, or other vulnerable, groups would be disproportionately affected by the impact of the scheme. The refuse collection service is a universal service provided for all residents and therefore no specific group will be directly impacted. Please see **Appendix 2** for the full details.

2.5 The EIA indicates that the chosen areas have varied demographics, meaning that specific protected characteristic groups (such as religion or belief, age, sex etc.) may be indirectly impacted by the scheme. However, the operational data and feedback gained from these areas could provide invaluable evidence on whether the collection frequency changes have different impacts on these specific protected characteristic groups. This information can then help determine the suitability of a wider roll-out across the borough.

2.6 Residents in the pilot areas will receive support to ensure that their needs continue to be met. The online survey, doorstep conversations and telephone helpline (detailed in section 3) will help serve to mitigate any potential negative impact experienced by residents in the pilot areas, as they will function as methods of reporting issues, and will add to the learning from the pilot. Any issues that arise will be considered in a full EIA prior to any potential implementation of the program borough-wide, but can also be addressed during the pilot if necessary.

2.7 Consultation will play an integral part of the evaluation of the proposed changes. Service users in the pilot areas will be engaged to capture feedback on their experiences of having lived with the changes in the pilot areas for the trial period. Wider consultation around changes to the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy will also be undertaken, this will include consultation around the change to charging for all wheeled bins ordered from the Council. The results of this consultation will be fed back to Board in a report that evaluates the project and presents the findings and recommendations around next steps.

2.8 The Council's Waste and Recycling Exceptional Circumstances Policy (**Appendix 3**) will continue to be applicable to residents in the pilot areas. This includes provision for additional disposal capacity for large households (6 or more residents) or healthcare circumstances which require more room to store waste. It also includes potential extra capacity for other service users following assessment via waste diaries and waste audits.

### 3. OPERATIONAL PLAN

3.1 A Communications Plan has been developed to ensure that residents in the pilot areas would be fully informed of the adjustments to their bin collection frequency and the purpose of the scheme.

3.2 The Delivery plan, **Appendix 4**, will be implemented following approval of the recommendations in this report.

3.3 The first interaction with the public will be the letter in **Appendix 5**, which explains the reasons for the change, the change that will take place, how we will communicate with the residents in the trial and then goes on to answer some frequently asked questions.

3.4 The communications plan will be targeted to the pilot area and supported by COVID safe physical interaction at the doorstep in the pilot areas.

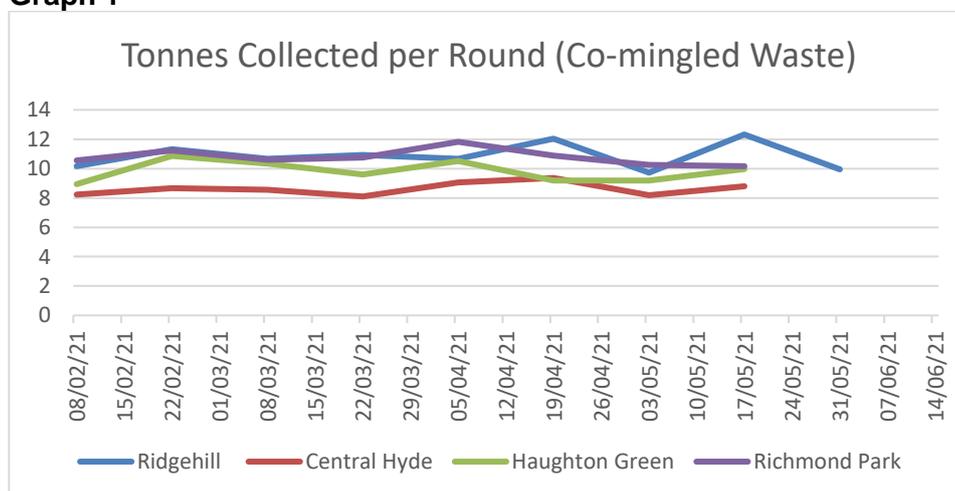
3.5 In preparation for this report the Waste Team have been collating Benchmarking data around the tonnage of material collected and presentation rates of the blue and black bins.

3.6 The Waste Team will be gathering data to measure the viability of expanding the trial. Specific attention will be given to:

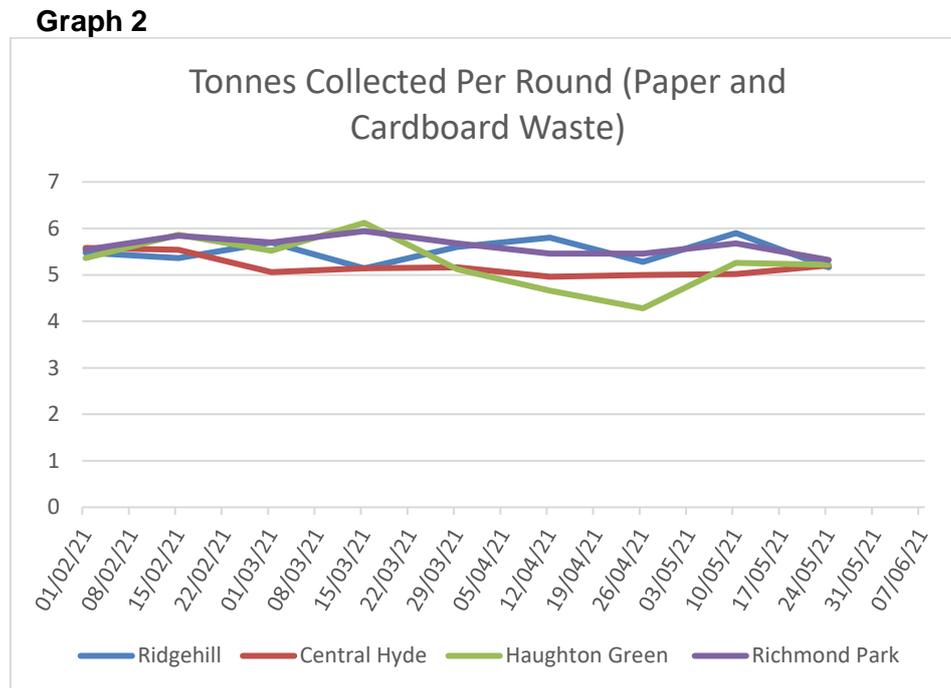
- Service user satisfaction.
- The completion of rounds on the scheduled day, within the crew's standard operating hours.
- Presentation rates within the rounds.
- The capacity available within the bins and is this being unavoidably exceeded
- Levels of contamination of the bins presented and the impact on the quality of the other waste streams.

3.7 **Graph 1** shows the tonnes of co-mingled waste collected each collection cycle (two weekly) for the black bin rounds in the areas selected for the pilot scheme. Following the trial in the pilot area the tonnage data of material collected during the pilot will be overlaid and compared to the tonnage pre-pilot.

**Graph 1**



- 3.8 **Graph 2** shows the tonnes of paper and cardboard waste collected each collection cycle (two weekly) for the blue bin rounds in the areas selected for the pilot scheme. Following the trial in the pilot area the tonnage data of material collected during the pilot will be overlaid and compared to the tonnage pre-pilot.



- 3.9 Briefing sessions/presentations will be provided for Councillors; Contact Centre and Operational Team, prior to the changes taking place to ensure all stakeholders are fully briefed.
- 3.10 Learning from previous projects has shown that strengthening the contact centre team to deal with any increase in demand is prudent. We have seen during previous projects that any direct interaction with service users particularly around service change leads to an increase in contact. It is proposed that staff from across the organisation would be supporting the contact centre team, they could be located in their existing teams, but with an allocation of time set aside to help manage the demand for the contact centre that this type of change can generate. Contact the contact centre will be made via the existing contact number and an additional option, (for example, Option 9 for Service Users in the Frequency Change Pilot Area).
- 3.11 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority will be formally notified of the collection changes to the four pilot areas, so the processing teams can mitigate against any required changes to the reception and processing process that Suez have in place.
- 3.12 Once the last two weekly collections have taken place, there will be a period of three weeks before the next scheduled collection. No additional or propriety collections will be required. We will have capacity to assist in the pilot areas for service user failure. We know from previous projects that service users can present on the wrong day, forget to present or contaminate bins.
- 3.13 The pilot period will be a twelve week period or four cycles of collections on a three weekly basis. During the twelve week cycle benchmarking data, such as tonnage of material presented, along with performance data of the rounds, such as presentation rates and finishing times, will be collected.

- 3.14 During the second to third cycle of collections, service users in the pilot areas will be given access to an online survey. This will be communicated to service users via a second letter that will ask for their opinion, experience and feedback (see **Appendix 6**).
- 3.15 The consultation process will include a survey (please see **Appendix 7 and 7a**) on the proposed changes to the Waste Strategy and Enforcement Policy enabling residents in the pilot areas to provide feedback on the impact of the scheme; whilst at the same time consulting with all service users around all the proposed changes, including charging for all wheeled bins. The survey will be live in the fourth week of the trial period so the pilot area residents will have had some experience of the changes being trialled and the impact it has on their disposal requirements. Doorstep engagement in the pilot areas will also take place towards the end of the trial period to capture the experiences and feedback of the service users to feed into the wider consideration of any further changes to service.
- 3.16 Following the completion of four cycles of collections, over a twelve week period, the data collected and feedback from the consultation process will be collated and reported back to Board. The ideal scenario would be that the data collected supports the further roll out of the frequency change to all areas for black and blue bins; thereby allowing for Waste Services to realise the savings that were detailed in the previous Board report, namely £0.37m per annum for a full year.

#### **4. WASTE POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY**

- 4.1 A revised Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy can be found in **Appendix 8**.
- 4.2 The Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy has been revisited and refreshed since it was last published, in preparation for consultation.
- 4.3 The waste collection element of the document, manages expectation based on the resources restrictions on the Service, by changing the offer from a next day collection for failed collection, where the service has been unable to complete a scheduled collection, to a collection at the earliest operational opportunity.
- 4.4 The table in section 2.4 of the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy, frames the proposed changes from a two weekly collection to a three weekly collection.
- 4.5 The policy sets out the Council's position on the following:
- Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's)
  - Landlords who purchase their own bins
  - Rural waste collections
  - Missed collections
  - Collection points
  - Additional capacity requirements
  - Assisted Collections
  - The provision of waste and recycling bins and the requirement to pay for new or replacement bins and the exemptions to this.
  - Bulky Household Collections
  - Trade Waste

The document then goes on to outline the following:

- The Expectations of Service users
- Excess General Waste – side waste
- Closed lids
- Excess Recycling Waste
- Bins on pavements

- Contamination, and,
- Householder Duty of Care.

4.6 The document then outlines the enforcement framework that will be used to tackle waste related issues.

4.7 The enforcement framework is clear in its legislative requirements and the options available to the Council and the staged approach to enforcement.

## **5. CHARGING FOR WHEELED BINS**

5.1 Tameside Council has utilised wheeled bins since 1988 when they first introduced the collection of general waste. The annual budget for the purchasing of wheeled bins is £241,430.

5.2 It is estimated that there are approximately 400,000 bins across the borough serving 103,000 households. This figure includes all domestic bin types in use and abandoned bins. Waste Services have the operational resources in place to deliver replacement bins across the borough. 9,397 bins were delivered in 2019 and close to 15,000 during 2020.

5.3 On 24 August 2016 an Executive Decision was taken to charge residents for the replacement of general waste bins. The general waste (green) bin includes the waste that cannot be recycled or recovered.

5.4 The approved charging policy was a cost of £25 for a replacement general waste bin.

5.5 The charging policy placed a higher value on for the general waste bin, resulting in greater resident responsibility for the condition of their bin and encouraging responsible use of recycling. The charge also offsets some of the revenue costs incurred and supports the achievement of the Council's recycling targets.

5.6 It is proposed that this is taken further by charging for all replacement bins, specifically the brown, black, blue bins recycling bins and caddies, that are used for the domestic waste collection. In Tameside, the brown bin is for food and garden waste. The black bin is for the recycling and recovery of glass, plastic bottles, cans and tinfoil. The blue bin is for the capture and recovery of paper and cardboard. Caddies are used for capturing food waste.

5.7 There is an existing issue of bins being abandoned across Tameside, which is unsightly and hazardous if not addressed. There are examples of residents ordering recycling bins, filling them with general waste and then abandoning them on the streets. Further abuse of the current system includes households falsely reporting that their general waste bin has been stolen to gain an additional general waste bin, avoiding responsibility for recycling. The cost-free availability of the bins does not create a sense of ownership for residents, as gaining a free replacement bin is an easy option. Addressing this issue requires staffing resources and incurs avoidable costs.

5.8 Tameside would not be the first local authority in the Greater Manchester area to charge for the replacement of a bin, regardless of its designated use. This was outlined in the Service's last report to Board.

5.9 The Waste Services team is now looking to develop a model that offsets some of the costs associated with the delivery of replacement bins, but also has exemptions to the charge within in it.

5.10 The intention is to ensure that bin replacements become a cost-neutral service, and to reduce the demand for replacement bins, which would in turn reduce the associated overheads. Any

loss in the requirement for delivery staff would see those staff members redeployed back into the collections crews, reducing the reliance on agency staff.

- 5.11 It is proposed that a charge of £25.63 remains for the general waste bin and the following charges are implemented:

<b>Bin Type</b>	<b>Cost</b>
140 litre wheeled recycling bin (green/blue)	£25.63
180 litre wheeled recycling bin (brown/black)	£25.63
7 litre food caddy	£3
23 litre food caddy	£5
A full set of bins (specifically green 140l; blue 140l, black 180l and 180l brown), for new properties	£102.52 (plus the cost of either a 7 or 23 litre caddy, as required).

Any qualification for a second green bin will see the second bin delivered without charge as per the current Exceptional Circumstances Policy.

- 5.12 There will be situations where the charge for a new or replacement bin can be waived, including for example:
- The crew whilst collecting waste has damaged a bin.
  - A bin has fallen into the vehicle and the crew has confirmed this.
  - When a bin has been vandalised/damaged/failed and is beyond use.
  - Meeting the conditions of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy, where service users meet the requirements for a second green bin.
  - An individual named as the occupant/householder, who qualifies for means tested benefits and can evidence that position.
  - Justification by a Supervisor or member of the Waste management team.

All free bins issued will be recorded, including the justification for approval and multiple drawdowns of free bins, by a resident, will not be approved.

- 5.13 These changes to the way we issue bins will require a review/refresh of the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy, which is covered earlier in this document.
- 5.14 All bins that have been provided without charge will be recorded for future audit purposes.
- 5.15 As part of a review of the service the above proposed change will form part of the consultation with service users.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The report provides a detailed implementation plan for pilot scheme to adjust the collection frequencies of the blue and black bins from two weekly to three weekly collections. The pilot areas have been chosen as they will provide invaluable information due to the varied housing stock, illustrative of the borough, and varied population demographics. The report seeks the approval to implement the pilot scheme.
- 6.2 Residents will be engaged in the process by way of a public consultation and by the services following a detailed Communications Plan.
- 6.3 Both the operational results from the pilot areas and the feedback from the consultation process will be evaluated to inform the suitability of a wider rollout of the scheme. A further report detailing these findings will be presented for the consideration of Members at a later date.

- 6.4 The report outlines the proposed changes to the Waste Policy and Enforcement Strategy that we plan to consult service users at the same time as the trials in the pilot areas are taking place, as part of the review of waste service. The full document is supplied in **Appendix 8**.
- 6.5 The report outlines the proposal to charge for all wheeled bins and provides details of why that is proposed and what steps are being taken to mitigate against any hardship this could potentially cause. Exemptions to the proposed charges are also provided.

## **7. FINANCE**

- 7.1 The previous report also highlighted that, by moving to a three weekly collection on the black and blue bins, the resources required to complete a full cycle of collections servicing all domestic properties can be reduced by three crews. Specifically, this is a reduction of three refuse collection vehicles and nine operational staff. The reduction in operational staff would be wholly from a reduction in the use of agency staff to the equivalent value and not Council employees. The reduction of vehicle numbers would enable us to sell on the vehicles and avoid the running costs and maintenance of those vehicles.
- 7.2 The Operations and Neighbourhoods directorate has identified savings proposals of £1.823m in 2021/22 increasing to £2.415m by 2025/26.
- 7.3 The change in collection frequency of blue and black bins has a combined 2021/22 part year estimated cost reduction of £0.26m (£0.13m per bin type). This increases to an estimated combined annual cost reduction of £0.53m from 2022/23 (£0.265m per bin type).
- 7.4 However, it should be noted that the part year 2021/22 combined cost reduction has a revised estimate of £ 0.12m if implemented from 1 December 2021 subject to evaluation of the pilot scheme.
- 7.5 The estimated value of savings that may not be realised in 2021/22 of £0.14m due to delayed implementation will need to be mitigated via savings elsewhere within the Directorate.
- 7.6 It is estimated that the cost recovery of wheeled bins issued will equate to £ 0.19m from 2021/22 and on an annual basis thereafter.
- 7.7 However as implementation has been delayed from 1 April 2021 it is envisaged that there will be an estimated value of £0.13m of expenditure not recovered in 2021/22. This is clearly dependent on the volume of wheeled bins issued and is therefore estimated at this stage. Again, the estimated reduced value of savings not realised will need to be mitigated via savings elsewhere within the Directorate.
- 7.8 Mitigation proposals will need to be approved and implemented at the earliest opportunity in 2021/22 to ensure a balanced budget is delivered by the end of the financial year. This may include the delayed recruitment to budgeted vacant posts across the Directorate
- 7.9 The related financial implications of both proposals will be evaluated and reported to Members once the outcome of the pilot and consultation is known.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 As set out at the front of the report.