

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	24 th May 2022
Subject:	Bulky Waste Collection – Consideration of free collection service
Key Decision:	No .
Responsible Officer:	Dipti Patel - Corporate Director of Place; Tony Galloway – Director of Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anjana Patel - Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Safety
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out a summary of the Council's current bulky waste collection services and proposes the development of options for introducing a free collection service for households.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Instruct officers to undertake a feasibility study into offering Harrow households an appropriate free bulky waste service and report to a future Cabinet on the options.

Reasons: Due to recent increases in global living costs the council wants to support its residents in reduce the costs of services where appropriate. The measure will also improve Harrow's environment by reducing incidences of fly tipping.

Section 2 – Report

Background

Harrow's bulky waste collection is a special waste removal service that allows for the removal of large and bulky household items from domestic, residential and commercial properties.

Before 2015 the Waste and Recycling department had a collection scheme called 'special collections'. The aim was to collect white goods and bulky waste separately from the residual waste stream and reduce fly-tipping. The service operated once a week with an average of 5-10 collections.

Since then the service offer has expanded to meet demand. Currently the bulky waste service is used by of Harrow residents, businesses, and schools, through an online booking system with a daily collection of 15 slots and 3 premium collection slots.

A list of what is collected by the service can be seen in appendix A.

Items are collected between 6:30am and 3pm from the curb side, Monday to Friday. Customers can choose a next day collection for an extra £28.80.

The Government has proposed banning local authorities from charging for the disposal of DIY waste from households. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) argues that this would help reduce the number of fly-tipping incidents. A technical consultation is now underway and is due to end in July 2022.

Charges

The current charges for the service are:

Collection fees if you are a resident:

Bulky waste item	Collection fee
Mattress	£17.40
Up to 4 items	£51.00
Up to 8 items	£75.00
Up to 12 items	£99.00

Charges for landlords and HMOs differ slightly (An HMO is any property housing three or more tenants who make up more than one household (i.e. not related) and share toilet and kitchen facilities).

Collection fees if you are a landlord

Bulky waste item	Collection fee
Mattress	£17.40
Up to 4 items	£64.60
Up to 8 items	£87.60
Up to 12 items	£138.00

Breakdown of bookings by number of items per household/year

The table below shows the number and percentage of bookings with less / more than 3 items per booking (note the Council currently charge in batches of 4 items to ensure the service income breaks even with the cost of service at least).

Booking yr.	Total No. of bookings	4 or more items	% of bookings	3 or less items	% of bookings
2019/20	3895	1791	46%	2104	54%
2020/21	3806	1883	49%	1923	51%
2021/22	3008	1396	46%	1612	54%
Yearly Ave.	3570	1690	47%	1880	53%

Initial feasibility Options for a free collection service

Option 1 – One free item collection per annum

Based on the table above it is evident that 54% of households, who currently use the service, want three items or less collected.

By estimating that a third of these require at least one item collected the resulting loss of income to the council would be circa £24K.

It has also been assumed that there will be a rise in demand for this service if it is offered on a free basis of at least 20% leading to increase disposal cost of circa £14K as illustrated in the Financial Implications section below. However, there is a risk that demand, and therefore costs, could be higher.

Some costs associated with disposal of fly tipping have also been assumed to reduce in this scenario although this is thought to be minimal and hence these costs have not been offset against the above figures.

The total cost of this option is circa £38K.

Option 2 – Two free items collection per annum

Again using the figure that 54% of households, who currently use the service, want three items or less collected and by estimating that two thirds of these require two or more items of bulky waste collected the resulting loss of income to the council would be circa £48K.

The rise in demand for the service has been estimated also to be approximately 20% leading to increase disposal cost of circa £14K as illustrated in the Financial Implications section.

Some costs associated with disposal of fly tipping could be assumed to reduce in this scenario although this is thought to be minimal and hence these costs have not been offset against the above figures.

Total cost of this option £62K.

Option 3 - Three free items collection per annum

As already indicated, 54% of collections were for three items or less. If the council introduced a free collection service for three items income would reduce by £72k per year.

It is estimated that with a service that allows three free collections per year per resident the costs would rise somewhat as demand would increase approximately 30% (best estimate) for this service – circa £22K on disposal costs.

Some costs associated with disposal of fly tipping could be assumed to reduce in this scenario although this is thought to be minimal and hence these costs have not been offset against the above figures.

The total cost for this option would be circa £94K.

West London Council Bulky Waste Collections

Council	Service Provided	Cost	Concessions
Ealing	Charged for service https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/2017/request_a_bulky_items_collection	Up to 8 items - £40 and £25 per fridge or freezer There is no limit or restrictions on the number of collections booked within a year.	No concessions

Hounslow	Charged for service and concessions https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20002/recycling_and_rubbish/30/tidy_town_bulky_waste_collection	Up to 5 items - £40 with any additional items charged at £8. Landlords – Up to 5 items - £70 with additional items charged at £14. You can use the service as many times as you want.	Residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction are eligible for the discounted rate of £15 for up to 5 items, with any additional items charged at £3 per item.
Hillingdon	Charged for service and concessions https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/bulkywaste	Up to 6 items - £30 for residents, £55 for landlords. Residents can book up to one collection slot per day.	Residents aged over 65 and those in receipt of Personal Independence Payment can book 1 free collection every 3 months.
Richmond	Charged for service and concessions https://www.richmond.gov.uk/book_a_bulky_item_collection	Up to 5 items - £64.00 Additional Item (Per 1) - £7.50 No limit on maximum collections per financial year	Residents aged over 60 - £21.20 per collection for up to 5 items Additional Item (Per 1) - £6.00 Maximum 5 collections per financial year. Additional collections are charged at full price. Residents on low income - Free up to 5 items Additional Items (Per 1) - £6.00 Maximum 2 collections per financial year

London councils that offer a free bulky waste collection service

Enfield – Residents can ask the council to collect furniture and other non-electrical bulky items from their home, free of charge. Collections are made on the same day as the rubbish, recycling or garden waste collection. Alternatively, they can choose a day that suits them, but the council will charge a fee of £15

<https://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/rubbish-and-recycling/bulky-rubbish>

Waltham Forest - collect up to 5 items free of charge

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/household-bin-collections/book-large-item-collection>

Lewisham - provides free mattress recycling

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myserVICES/wasterecycle/dispose-of>

Tower Hamlets - offer 2 free collections per year for household waste from a resident's own property only. The resident must be living in the property at the time of booking and collection. Up to 5 items can be taken away per collection.

Environmental Implications

The introduction of a bulky waste collection service that allows households to access free collections for a number of items is likely to have an affect reducing fly tipping across the borough.

Financial Implications

Bulky waste collection service is provided by a crew of two driver operatives and a dedicated vehicle, and an administrative support in the back office. The total cost is around £110k per annum. The waste disposal cost associated with this is variable, dependent on the actual tonnage collected. Based on 2021/22 data, around 500 tonnes were collected at a disposal cost of £70k. These costs are currently met from the Waste Services budget.

The service has an income budget of £130k per annum. Actual income achieved in the last two financial years is broadly in line with the budget level.

	Actual income	Total bookings	Average income per booking
2020/21	-£139,729	3,806	-£36.71
2021/22	-£132,500	3,008	-£44.05
2-year average	-£136,115	3,407	-£40.38

The historical booking data suggests that around half of the collections were for 3 items or less.

Should a free collection of items be introduced, it is anticipated that there would be a reduction in income. The sensitivity analysis in the table below shows a potential loss of income. This ranges from £14k for 10% reduction in paid bookings to £69k for 50% reduction in paid bookings.

Scenario	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
Reduction in paid bookings	341	681	1,022	1,363	1,704
Potential loss of income	-£13,760	-£27,520	-£41,270	-£55,030	-£68,790

In addition to the loss of income, there is also an anticipated increase in waste disposal cost arising from the bulky waste service because the demand is likely to increase when this is changed to a free collection of items service. The table below shows a range of potential increase in disposal costs, from £7k for 10% increase in tonnage increasing to £36k for 50% increase in tonnage.

Increase in waste tonnage	Additional Disposal costs
10%	£7,190
20%	£14,370
30%	£21,560

40%	£28,750
50%	£35,940

The introduction of free bulky waste collection may have a positive impact on flytipping, meaning that the current disposal cost associated with flytipped waste could reduce. However, it is not possible to quantify this at this stage.

This report has not identified if the cost of disposal will increase as a result of offering this free collection service. The feasibility study will test the sensitivity of such costs

Following the feasibility work, the cost of free collection service will be appropriately costed and must be affordable within the budget and MTFS which will be reported back to Cabinet.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jessie Mann

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 17th May 2022

Statutory Officer: Hugh Peart

Signed off by the Monitoring Officer

Date: 17th May 2022

Chief Officer: Dipti Patel

Signed off by Corporate Director Place

Date: 17th May 2022

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Andrew Elkington, Interim Head of Strategy, Development and Performance, andrew.elkington@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Appendix A

Current items collected by Harrow Council's bulky waste service

Bags of rubbish (3 tied black refuse sacks count as 1 item. max weight 10kg)
Fridges/Freezers
Cookers
Microwaves
Washing Machines/Tumble Dryers
Boilers
Electric/Gas Fires
Radiators/Storage Heaters
Hi-fi Systems
Toasters
Kettles
TVs
Beds/Mattresses
Sofas
Tables
Chest of Drawers
Vinyl flooring/Floor tiles/Linoleum
Kitchen units (max dimensions 1.2m)
Storage units (max dimensions 1.2m)
Sideboards
Wardrobes/Cupboards
Chairs
Garden Furniture
Fence panels (1 panel counts as 1 item)
Sheds

The Service does not collect the following items:

Bathtubs/Sinks/Toilets
Car parts/Tyres
Clinical Waste
Oil drums/Gas cannisters
Soil/Rubble/Building Waste
Asbestos or any hazardous waste