

<b>Committee(s):</b> Port Health and Environmental Services – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 29 November 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Garden waste recycling collection trial	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	4, 11
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Joe Kingston, Gardens and Cleansing, City Operations	

### Summary

In March 2022, a trial to collect garden waste commenced at the Barbican Estate, the Golden Lane estate and Tudor Rose Court. The trial was conducted to determine the feasibility of making the service permanent. Despite a comprehensive communication campaign, the service received high amounts of contamination and low participation and was a significant additional cost. Therefore, it is proposed that we do not continue providing the seasonal garden waste service but investigate alternative options for residents to recycle garden waste.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Agree that officers pursue alternative methods for residents to recycle their garden waste instead of introducing a permanent garden waste collection service.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London Corporation provides comprehensive household waste and recycling services to all residential properties within the City. This includes dry mixed recycling, food waste, textiles, low energy light bulb and battery recycling services.
2. In 2018 the Cleansing Team conducted a trial to collect garden waste from the Barbican Estate. Because the overall tonnage from this for the period of the trial (March to September) was low at 4.8 tonnes. In addition to this a new service provider (Veolia) was due to start in April 2019 it was agreed that a further trial would commence in March 2020 so that resources could be aligned with those provided by the new contractor.

3. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown which commenced on 23 March 2020, the garden waste collection trial was suspended until it was safe and operationally viable to re-introduce a garden waste trial.

### **Current Position**

4. The Cleansing Team reintroduced a garden waste collection trial which took place from 14 March 2022 until 16 November 2022, a total of 35 weeks.
5. Residents were contacted in January 2022 and requested to register their interest in participating in the trial; 145 responses were received from the Barbican estate (from 2,014 properties), 18 responses from Golden Lane estates (from 558 properties) and three responses from Tudor Rose Court (from 36 properties). This equates to approximately 6% of residents in the selected locations registering to participate in the trial.
6. Those residents who registered their interest in the trial were provided with reusable bags which could be used to transport garden waste to the collection points on the estates.
7. The Garden waste scheme required residents to transport their garden waste to dedicated collection points on the estates where it would be collected on a weekly basis by crews and transported to a facility for composting.
8. There were a total of nine collection points for residents to dispose of their garden waste; six on Barbican estate, two on Golden Lane estate and a single bin located at Tudor Rose Court. This was an increase of three bins and two additional addresses to the 2018 trial, meaning that more residents in more locations had more opportunities and more locations to recycle their garden waste.
9. Whilst residents were requested to register to participate in the trial this was only to ascertain interest and to facilitate the distribution of reusable garden waste sacks. The service was available for all residents to use, and anecdotal feedback indicates that more residents were using the garden waste bins than those who had registered to participate in the trial.
10. Garden waste messaging was distributed estate-wide, including hand delivered leaflets to capture all residents who may use the bins but had not registered.
11. Items which would cause contamination in the Garden Waste stream such as soil and plastic bags were outlined in all communications in the form of letter drops, email circulars and on the bins themselves. Despite this, feedback from the collection crews and the processing centre indicated high levels of contamination, to the extent that several loads had to be disposed of as general waste at an additional cost.

12. To overcome contamination issues, the Cleansing Team communicated with residents via social media, estate communication channels, letters and posters around the estates and in the bin areas throughout the period of the trial.
13. The garden waste trial finished on 16 November 2022. The trial resulted in the collection of 3.5 tonnes of garden waste being recycled. This has added 0.2% to the Corporation's overall recycling rate for 2022/2023 taking it from 28.4% to 28.6%.
14. The cost of operating the 2022 trial was an additional £10,500 on top of the existing contract costs.
15. Although registration rates from the three trial locations indicated that there was low interest in the trial, those residents who did register had generally positive comments and appreciated the additional opportunities to recycle this waste stream.

## Options

16. Option 1 – Discontinue the seasonal garden waste collection service, due to the low participation rates combined with high contamination levels during the trial and the relatively high cost. **This option is recommended.**
17. If the seasonal garden waste collection service is discontinued, the Cleansing Team will consider alternative options for residents to dispose of their garden waste in an environmentally friendly way.
18. Option 2 - Continue to provide a seasonal garden waste collection service at an additional cost to the service of £10,500 which is not currently budgeted for. To fund this on an ongoing basis, compensatory savings would have to be made from other areas of the service. **This option is not recommended.**

## Proposals

19. Due to the high cost of the service compared to the low levels of garden waste collected, Officers recommend not to continue with the seasonal garden waste collection service. Alternative options for disposing of garden waste which would be more environmentally friendly, align with Circular Economy principles and are cost effective will be investigated and promoted.
20. The recent Target Operating Model resulted in the formation of the new Gardens and Cleansing Team which could provide options for recycling garden waste within the department.
21. This would include working with Gardens colleagues to assess options, liaising with estate gardening clubs / allotments, use of compost heaps, research into provision and viability of large-scale composters on estates and monitoring food waste collection service for any changes to acceptance of garden waste in food waste service.

22. The Corporation also has an agreement with Tower Hamlets Reuse and Recycling Centre, whereby City residents can use the recycling facilities including for the recycling of garden waste if convenient. Is this a free service?

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

23. Strategic implications – in looking for alternative ways to provide garden waste recycling to City residents we are supporting outcomes four and eleven of the Corporate Plan, that communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need, and that we have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.

24. Financial implications – none, however if Members choose to continue with a garden waste collection service, funding will need to be offset against other available budgets within cleansing services.

25. Resource implications - none

26. Legal implications - none

27. Risk implications – none

28. Equalities implications – A Test of Relevance has been carried out for this project which concluded that a full Equalities Impact Assessment would be required should members decide to introduce a seasonal garden waste collection service on a permanent basis. Is there any cost implications?

29. Climate implications – Due the low level of garden waste collected and the transport and processing associated with it, the carbon savings and climate implications are relatively minimal for both options. The Climate Action team have been consulted and agree with this approach.

30. Security implications – none

### **Conclusion**

31. As a result of the low levels of participation and resultant tonnages, alongside high contamination levels and the relatively high cost, it is recommended that the seasonal garden waste collection service is not made permanent. Instead, Officers will investigate alternative possibilities for residents to dispose of the Garden Waste which support circular economy principles and mitigate the need for additional collection and processing.

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background Papers**

- Garden waste recycling trial on the Barbican estate, 27 November 2018
- Garden waste recycling trial on the Barbican and Golden Lane estates, 3 March 2020

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