City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Port Health and Environmental Services – For decision	**Dated:** 03/11/2026
Subject: Residential Garden Waste Collection - Pricing	**Public report:** For Decision
This proposal: • **Provides statutory duties**	Simpler Recycling Legislation Compliance Leading Sustainable Environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
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Summary

As part of the Environment Act 2021, the government has introduced "Simpler Recycling" across England to make recycling services more consistent and easier for residents to use. To support compliance with these requirements, local authorities must provide a separate collection service for garden waste. This service may be delivered on request and can be chargeable.

The Simpler Recycling Briefing Report presented to the Committee on the 3rd of March 2026 proposed the introduction of a six-month trial garden waste collection service. This was to be provided free of charge to residents with a subsequent review of the service and any potential charging arrangements to be considered by Members. The trial commenced on the 1st of April 2026.

This report provides an update on the outcomes of the trial, including service usage, operational performance and areas for improvement. It also presents options for the future cost of the service to determine whether collections should continue to be provided free of charge or become a chargeable discretionary service.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the outcomes of the six-month garden waste collection trial undertaken since April 2026.

- **Approve** the way forward regarding the chargeability of a permanent residential garden waste collection service. Our recommendation is for the service to continue free of charge.

Main Report

Background

1. Under Simpler Recycling legislation, local authorities must provide a segregated collection of garden waste. The legislation allows local authorities the option to charge for the collection of garden waste.
2. In March 2026, Members received a report outlining the requirements of Simpler Recycling and the proposed approach to introducing a garden waste collection service within the City.
3. At that meeting, Members agreed that the service should be introduced on a trial basis and provided free of charge for six months, with a further report to be brought back to Committee to review the outcomes and consider future charging arrangements.
4. The trial commenced on the 1st of April 2026 and is currently ongoing.

Current Position

5. Garden waste collections are currently available to all City of London residents free of charge and on request. The service has been promoted through resident newsletters, social media, the City of London website, libraries and estate offices. Residents can obtain garden waste sacks from their local library or estate office and arrange a collection through the existing bulky waste booking process.
6. Several collection methods were considered prior to implementation of the trial. The use of wheeled bins was discounted due to operational and logistical constraints, including the requirement for an additional collection vehicle. The

adopted sack-based collection model, integrated with the existing bulky waste service, was identified as the most practical and cost-effective solution.

7. Garden waste is collected separately from other waste streams on the vehicle that is also collecting bulky waste. It is sent for composting, ensuring that the material is recycled rather than disposed of through the residual waste stream.
8. The service was designed to make use of existing resources and collection arrangements rather than introducing dedicated garden waste bins and collection vehicles.
9. The waste is weighed, then collected from Walbrook Wharf and taken with our wider Parks and Gardens green waste to the transfer station. Due to such minimal tonnages, disposal does not have a significant cost implication.
10. Benchmarking shows that charging arrangements vary between local authorities. Some neighbouring boroughs, including Westminster, Greenwich and Tower Hamlets, currently provide garden waste collections free of charge, whilst others operate annual subscription-based charging models with frequent scheduled collections ranging from £79-99.

Trial outcomes

11. Since the introduction of the service, only **seven** garden waste collections have been completed, collecting approximately **135.7kg** of material from **five** different residential properties.
12. The trial has demonstrated that there is very little demand for a garden waste collection service within the City, despite widespread communications.
13. The service was introduced using existing bulky waste collection infrastructure, avoiding the need for dedicated vehicles, collection crews or additional equipment, this has proven to be effective both from a resourcing and fiscal perspective.
14. The sack-based collection model has proven to be the most practical approach for the City's residential environment, overcoming challenges associated with wheeled bins, including storage constraints, contamination risks experienced in previous trials and vehicle requirements.
15. A small number of operational issues, including missed collections, were experienced during the initial implementation period. Following a review with Veolia and the City’s Contact Centre, collection processes were refined and these issues have now been resolved.
16. The trial has confirmed that a garden waste collection service can be delivered effectively within existing operational arrangements with no additional cost while supporting the City Corporation's environmental objectives through the composting of collected material.

Options

17. Three different charging models have been proposed for the Committee to review and decide:

Option 1: Continue Free of Charge (Recommended)

- No charge to residents.
- Maximises accessibility and encourages participation.
- No additional revenue costs as the service utilises existing resources and infrastructure.

Option 2: Pay-As-You-Go

- £5 per collection request.
- Reflects the current ad-hoc nature of the service.
- Allows residents to access the service only when required and avoids an annual commitment.
- Ensures a degree of commitment from residents for the collection to go ahead but could also deter residents from using the service.

Option 3: Annual Subscription

- £70 annual subscription per household.
- Provides unlimited access to the service throughout the year.
- Creates a stable customer base and greater certainty when planning service delivery.
- Could deter residents from using the service and does not match the current delivery model.

Proposals

18. If members approve the recommendation to continue to provide the service free of charge, the booking and collection system will remain the same as the trial and requires no change of messaging to residents. The Gardens team are happy to continue to take the waste to the transfer station as long as tonnages remain at the level the trial has identified. This service does not place any additional pressures on revenue budgets and can be incorporated into current service provisions. The income generated from imposing a service charge is minimal, as shown in the financial implications.
19. An update can be brought to this committee as part of the fees and charges report to indicate the usage of the service throughout the year so an annual review can be made.

Key Data

20. It can be seen from the data sets that the use of the garden waste service is minimal, with little tonnage across the Square Mile available and therefore collected. This tonnage updated to the date this Briefing Report was written.

Month 2026	Kilograms of garden waste collected	Number of collections
June	6.8	1
July	27.3	2
August	66.5	2
September	7.9	1
October	27.1	1
Total:	**135.7**	**7**

21. When benchmarking with other local authorities, the most common approach is an annual subscription charge.

Local Authority	Collection frequency	Price per year	Average per collection
Tower Hamlets	1x per week	Free	Free
Greenwich	1x per week	Free	Free
Westminster	On request	Free	Free
Lambeth	1x per week	£99	£1.90
Merton	Fortnightly	£99	£3.81
RBKC	Fortnightly	£79.70	£3.07

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

The implementation of Simpler Recycling directly contributes to achieving the Leading Sustainable Environment action of the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 along with supporting the ambitions of the Circular Economy Framework and the wider Climate Action Strategy.

Financial implications

The profit from each proposed option has been calculated below. This is based on a year projection using the data collected from the 6-month trial.

Option	Workings	Annual income
No charge	N/A	£0
£5 pay-as-you-go	Estimated 14 collections per year.	£70

£70 annual charge	Estimated 10 subscribed households per year.	£700

The only potential future cost implication would be the purchasing of garden waste bags for resident use. Due to the high minimum order quantity from our bag supplier, and the low number of bags needed, free garden waste bags have been obtained from other local authority surplus stock. This is the proposed method of obtaining bags to continue the service permanently. If this became a non-viable option for obtaining bags, the minimum order would cost £130.00 per 1000 bags.

Resource implications

No additional resources are required. Due to low service participation and quantities of waste, Veolia have capacity to incorporate this into the current service.

Legal implications

This work ensures legal compliance with Simpler Recycling legislation which forms a part of the Environment Act 2020.

Risk implications

This work reduces risk of legislative non-compliance and mitigates climate risk through delivery of CE framework and CAS.

Equalities implications

These changes are an extension of the current services therefore a change in the Equality Impact Assessment is not required and a review and update of all services will be completed in line with contractual requirements.

Climate implications

These changes reduce the climate risk and positively support the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy.

Security implications

None.

Conclusion

1. The six-month trial has demonstrated that a garden waste collection service can be successfully delivered within the City of London using existing collection arrangements.
2. Whilst demand has been low, the service provides residents with an opportunity to recycle garden waste which the City Corporation is legally obliged to provide under Simpler Recycling legislation.
3. Members are now invited to determine whether the service should continue as a free service or whether a charge should be introduced to support delivery costs.
4. To encourage service participation and considering the lack of associated service costs to the Corporation, Officers recommend continuing to provide the service free of charge.

Appendices

- None

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