

Report Title:	Resident Scrutiny Suggestion – Weekly Bin Collections
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Meeting and Date:	Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 12 June 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Naomi Markham – Environmental Services Manager Alysse Strachan – Head of Neighbourhood Services
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

The report outlines a suggested topic submitted by a resident for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Topics can be suggested by residents and then considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration (criteria outlined in paragraph 1.1.) Residents are able to access the criteria on the [council's website](#).

Details of the resident who has submitted this topic have been anonymised.

The suggested topic received as follows: “In such hot weather surely waste bins should be collected every week as rats are everywhere in broad daylight. Rats are everywhere; outside the library, my garden, my mum's garden and Alexander Gardens.”

It is recommended that this topic is considered by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and does not recommend a further consideration of seasonal changes to the frequency of waste collections.

2. CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT FOR SUGGESTED TOPICS RECEIVED BY RESIDENTS

2.1 Residents should only submit topics that relate to **a service, event or issue** which affects the social, environmental or economic wellbeing of a group or community of people in the Borough.

2.2 What makes a good scrutiny topic?

- **Scope** – is it an issue of concern to our local communities and other associated organisations?

- **Significance** – could a review of this issue improve the Council’s (or other organisations) processes or performance and make a positive difference to the lives of our residents?
- **Appropriate** – is this review timely and does it avoid duplicating other work?

2.3 Items that will not be considered include:

- Individual service complaints for which there is a corporate complaints procedure (please click [here](#) for more details)
- Topics outside of the remit of the council or where the council has no powers or influence to change an outcome
- Issues which scrutiny has considered in the last 12 months
- Areas relating to quasi-judicial functions e.g. planning, licensing and standards

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED TOPIC

Scope:

Waste collections were moved to fortnightly on a permanent basis in October 2021 for all street level properties. Properties using communal bins or those where 50% or more of properties on a street are on a sack collection remain on weekly bin collections. Recycling and food waste are collected weekly from all properties. Any change to the frequency of waste collections would impact on the majority of households in the borough.

Significance:

Any change to the frequency of waste collections would result in significant disruption to the service. A move to make a seasonal change to the frequency of collections would be costly, difficult to manage with a need for seasonal staff to bolster the collection crews and seasonal hiring of additional waste vehicles.

Appropriate:

Since the move to fortnightly waste collections the number of missed collection has been very low, at 20 or less per 100,000 collections over the last twelve months.

Residents are provided with a weekly food waste collection, which collects all food waste including fruit and vegetable peelings and cores; uneaten food; meat and fish bones; bread and bakery products and dairy products. These items should be disposed of through the food waste collection which helps to prevent anything in the residual waste bins from being attractive to rats.

The recycling bins are also collected weekly from all properties. The average household can place 80% of what they dispose of in the food waste, recycling or garden waste bins.

Rubbish should be kept contained in the bins, which also prevents pests, such as rats, being attracted to any rubbish.

Rats are widely distributed and common in Britain, occurring in both the countryside and urban areas. Rats feed on a wide variety of foods, including growing, stored fruits and vegetables and discarded food waste. Rats can make their homes underground or in compost heaps, in buildings, greenhouses, sheds or drains.

Prevention is the most effective method in discouraging rats, including removing accessible food sources (including when feeding wildlife such as birds), storing refuse in lidded waste receptacles, removing harbourage that would encourage nesting and preventing rodent entry to buildings.

Environmental Health are responsible for enforcing a range of public health-related legislation, including enforcing pest control requirements on owner/occupiers (where rats are found in substantial numbers on their land), on landlords and on food business operators in relation to commercial food businesses.

The Council provide a pest control service with its partner, SDK Environmental. There are concessionary rates for residents on qualifying benefits. SDK Environmental provide additional services to the Council including undertaking rodenticide treatment in public car parks.

There have been complaints about an increase in rat activity in the Windsor area, where this scrutiny suggestion originates from. However, this appears to be associated with food waste businesses in the town centre and how trade waste is disposed of, rather than with the domestic waste collections. A number of actions have been taken to tackle this issue, including:

- checks on how businesses are disposing of their waste to ensure they are meeting their duty of care for disposing of their waste responsibly;
- Commercial Services Environmental Health Officers have visited the commercial food premises along the High St and adjacent to Bachelor's Acre to discuss the rodent issue and advise on food waste management so as not provide an attraction to pests;
- pest control measures in parks and open spaces have been reviewed and areas where litter may be hidden, such as within shrub beds have been tackled.

Unfortunately, rats are present in urban areas, particularly areas like Windsor with a river frontage, large numbers of food waste premises and green space within the town centre.

Across the country, where over two thirds of all local authorities have waste collection frequencies of fortnightly or more, there is not significant evidence that this contributes to an increase in the rat population. Waste should be kept in bins and the food waste collections used to help reduce this risk.

A change to the collection frequency on a seasonal basis would not be an effective use of resources or deliver best value for money.

4. CORPORATE PRIORITY AREAS

When assessing a topic it is important to understand whether this item would fall under one of the key objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-2026, which has the overarching vision of 'Creating a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation'. It has been assessed that this topic would fall under the following objectives and priorities:

- **Inspiring Places:** Supporting the borough's future prosperity and sustainability.
- Quality infrastructure that connects neighbourhoods and businesses and allows them to prosper.
- Make the most effective use of resources - delivering the best value for money.

5. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place Services
Naomi Markham	Environmental Services Manager
Alysse Strachan	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Tracy Hendren	Head of Housing Environmental Health and Trading Standards
Obi Oranu	Environmental Health Service Manager

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For the Panel to consider if further scrutiny is required.	No	Yes

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