



GMB@Barnet



Response to; Waste and Street Scene Services: Outline Business Case

Recommendations;

- 1. The GMB welcomes the decision to recommend further developing the in house services and utilise the vast amounts of in-house knowledge and experience.**
 - 2. Opportunities for 'economies of scale' to be explored with Local Authorities nationwide. This could be achieved by sharing knowledge and experience and procuring plant and technological innovation collectively, while retaining services in-house, therefore reaping the full benefits of any efficiencies.**
 - 3. Begin a programme of meaningful consultation with staff in the Waste and Street Scene Services to tap into knowledge and experience of how to improve current services and how to increase income from Trade Waste, recycling, street cleansing and horticultural services.**
 - 4. Utilise the knowledge and experience of the staff from these services to promote and improve recycling rates while improving the feelings of 'ownership' for the local environment, in the residents. This would also improve morale and feelings of 'ownership' among staff. This could include exploring how current initiatives such as friends groups and 'Adopt a Street' can work more closely with staff and develop future ideas of resident involvement through staff workgroups and joint resident/ staff workshops.**
 - 5. Ensure that staff feel valued for the work they do in delivering these vital services. Encourage involvement and ownership in the service by recognising and rewarding the provision of excellent services.**
- 1.1 Due to workload and the limited time to respond, combined with the reports being embargoed the GMB are not able to give a detailed response to these Options Appraisals and Business Cases. We will submit a more detailed response once the embargo has been lifted.

1.2 The “in House with Stretch” option scored higher than the “Shared Outsource” on all criteria other than;

- a **Relentless Drive for Efficiency :Price**
- a **Relentless Drive for Efficiency : Investment**
- a **New Relationship with Citizens: Performance,**

we will therefore address our initial concerns on these points briefly.

2.0 Relentless Drive for Efficiency: Price

- 2.1 GMB are pleased at the decision to recommend the in-house option as a rush to outsource will result in the council missing out on a lot of already identified potential “quick wins” e.g. increased income for mixed waste recycling, increases to income by bringing recycling in house, efficiencies of area based working between Street Cleansing and Parks. Bringing the recycling service in-house will mean any income from this service will return in full to the council.
- 2.2 Many other potential quick wins that could be discovered through working with front-line staff will be gained. This is true of the current in-house service and recycling.
- 2.3 There is an unexplored potential for economies of scale in relation to procurement of heavy plant. We could explore joint procurement of fleet vehicles with other neighbouring boroughs or national Local Authorities. With 433 Local Authorities in England the potential for discounts on bulk orders is huge and should place us all in a better position than any national or multi-national company. Similar economies of scale could be explored in buying Information Technology and many other procurements.
- 2.4 Performance Management can be improved in-house with a stronger feeling of ownership in staff.

3.0 Relentless Drive for Efficiency: Investment

- 3.1 Investment into behaviour change can be made in-house and is already carried out internally. Further using the expertise of those who collect the waste to explain to residents the impact recycling has will empower staff and residents simultaneously.
- 3.2 Parks staff working closely with Friends groups and other resident or council initiated ‘ownership projects’ will improve staff morale and improve relationships with residents. Closer working of staff in street cleansing with

initiatives such as 'Adopt a Street' will increase the feeling of shared ownership.

4.0 New Relationship with Citizens: Performance

- 4.1 Barnet already has relatively high ratings for Refuse and Street Cleansing. These can be improved in-house and a change in recycling collection practices will help to improve this – this is something that would be much easier than with a contracted-out service but should be achievable with this service if it is delivered and controlled internally. As it becomes easier to recycle through co-mingling, satisfaction should increase after a short bedding in period. The different collection method for recycling will also speed up the process, reducing frustration of narrow streets being 'blocked' by recycling vehicles, and should be more adaptable going forward .
- 4.2 Changing provider of services at the same time as changing method would lead to greater customer dissatisfaction. Bringing recycling in-house means greater opportunities to increase resident satisfaction.
- 4.3 Previous experience in Barnet has also shown that outsourcing Refuse and Parks is not an easy option and has previously gone horribly wrong at the expense of the taxpayer.
- 4.4 The work carried out by these departments during periods of heavy snow both in the continued delivery of their own services and the assistance to the wider community have demonstrated the staffs commitment to a 'One Public Sector Approach' and a flexibility that a contracted-out service does not offer.
- 4.5 If the morale of staff is lowered, as it almost certainly would be if outsourced, the good will of the staff may be lost. This is a front facing service, the most visible and relied upon by residents. This area is key to building and maintaining a new relationship with citizens. This resource may well have been lost if profit was put before service.