

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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KEEPING IT WEEKLY

Weekly household waste collections will continue in the Wokingham Borough from April 2012 as part of the new partnership with Veolia Environmental Services, the UK's leading recycling and waste management company.

As part of the new partnership, residents in the Wokingham Borough will be able to recycle more of their household waste with kerbside recycling collections every week. It is expected that, as a result of the weekly recycling collections, combined with the restriction on residual waste, the total dry materials collected for recycling will increase from a predicted 7,000 tonnes this year to around 8,000 tonnes in 2012/13 - the extra 1,000 tonnes is equivalent to 240 elephants. This would also increase recycling rates to 45 per cent – saving nearly £1million every year.

The garden waste scheme will be extended to cover the whole borough, meaning a further 10,000 homes will be able to opt into this chargeable service.

Cllr Gary Cowan, executive member for environment, said: "As a council, we have pledged to retain a weekly waste collection but we have to reduce the amount of waste that we send to landfill. If we don't, we face big financial penalties – potentially £150 per tonne – from central government, which ultimately costs you the local tax payer and diverts money away from front-line services. Any penalties we would receive would be on top of the landfill tax we currently pay (£64 per tonne).

"We therefore have to do something to reduce the amount of waste that we throw away. We are pleased to be working in partnership with Veolia Environmental Services to deliver an improved waste collection service for all our residents. The new service will offer more opportunities to recycle and the green waste scheme will be extended to the whole borough for the first time, which will now benefit 10,000 residents who currently do not get the service."

Ian Williams, regional operations director at Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Plc, said: "As a result of this new contract, we look forward to working closely with Wokingham Borough Council to further improve recycling rates and turn more waste into a resource. Our goal will be to help residents across the borough make recycling their first priority, with black bag waste a distant second so maximising the savings from landfill diversion." **-MORE-**

Under the new service, residents will continue to have their household rubbish collected every week. However, to encourage residents to put more in the recycling bin and less in the rubbish sack, the council will provide households with 80 official blue sacks every year. Only these 80-litre official sacks, large enough to line a dustbin, will be collected each week.

Arrangements will be made for large households (more than four residents) to apply for more bags. For example, a family of five can get 100 and a family of six and above 120. The council will deliver the free 80 official sacks to households in March 2012.

There will also be weekly collections of recycling using the existing black boxes. Residents will be able to continue to recycle all food and drink cans, mixed paper/card, plastic bottles and aerosols using the black boxes. There's no limit on the amount residents can recycle as long as only these items are put in the black boxes.

And residents don't have to wait until April 2012 to join the kerbside recycling scheme – they can join now for free. Residents can email their name, address, and number of boxes required to: wokinghamdirect@wokingham.gov.uk. Alternatively they can call (0118) 974 6000.

From April 2012, residents will also be able to opt into the fortnightly garden waste scheme. For an annual charge of £60, residents will be provided with a 240-litre-wheeled bin for their garden waste. Alternatively they can buy 75-litre compostable sacks for about £1 each. Both will be collected every fortnight. For those residents who choose not to join the scheme, they can either compost at home or take garden rubbish to the household waste recycling centres in Bracknell or Reading for free.

The seven year contract with Veolia Environmental Services will start on Monday April 2, 2012.

Under the new contract, there will be a strong focus on high levels of customer service especially in promoting help for people who may have trouble carrying their bins or boxes for instance older people or people with a disability. There will be an emphasis on ensuring all litter caused as a result of collection day is cleared up; all reusable containers are returned from where they are collected to without causing damage and that residents are not disturbed prior to 6.30am. Crews will not stockpile rubbish ahead of collections and will take a more flexible approach to collecting cardboard on the kerbside recycling scheme. An incentive scheme to encourage recycling will also be introduced.

Residents will receive a range of information about the new arrangements over the coming months.

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

- 1. In November, the council published a notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) to invite expressions of interest to provide the waste collection service in the Wokingham Borough from April 2012. Following the tender process, Veolia Environmental Services was selected using strict criteria on the basis of delivering the service changes.**
- 2. More from Cllr Gary Cowan, executive member for environment, on (0118) 976 0281 and Martin Curtois, group communications manager from Veolia Environmental Services, on 0207 812 5034.**

