



Merton Centre for Independent Living
Room 22
Wandle Valley Resource Centre
Church Road
Mitcham, CR4 3BE

Date: 27/07/2016

Re: South London Waste Partnership call-in meeting

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for inviting us to the call-in meeting, which we are unfortunately unable to attend. We are a user-led disabled people's organisation run by disabled people, for disabled people in Merton.

We have previously raised concerns about a possible move to Wheelie Bin Collection and have had some assurances on a number of points which we would like to reiterate.

A key area of concern is the effect wheelie bins and other boxes may have on cluttering up the street, which is particularly hazardous for disabled people who may have reduced mobility or vision.

We have been assured that collection and return of receptacles will be inside the property edge. Our understanding is that the current collection method is also inside the property edge and yet, frequently find bags and boxes blocking the pavement on collection day. This is especially the case for properties with a step or gate to their front garden.

We look for reassurance that residents and waste crews are properly informed of the need to keep waste and containers inside property boundaries, and that there is a system in place for reporting blocked pavements, and penalising the contractor if pavements are blocked after collection.

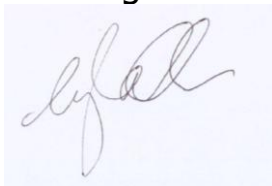
We have been assured that assisted collections will be retained, however, we would like to ensure that local disabled people have an opportunity to shape what the assisted collection service looks like. For example, is it properly publicised, how much assistance is available, who is eligible, and how is assistance requested?

In terms of eligibility for assistance, our concern would be that this is linked to receipt of benefits or social services support. Actually such an approach would miss out a large number of people who might need assistance and who without it will end up penalised because of contaminated waste or other collection issues resulting from that lack of assistance. In particular, the complexity of weekly collection but for different items each week may be confusing for some residents.

We note the move towards an online system managing waste queries, and have been assured that a telephone line will be retained, as a third of disabled people are not online.

Assuming the above provisions to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged, will be met, we welcome the opportunity for the Council to find savings as stated in the Officers' response to the Call-in. In particular we note that when Cabinet met in December 2015, the Leader of the Council, Stephen Alambritis, asked Council Officers to identify any large sums of money available to support Adult Social Care and reduce the scale of the cuts (£5mn in 2016-17). Merton CIL calls on the Leader to now re-commit to allocating any savings achieved through implementing wheelie bins, to Adult Social Care, as he has previously said he would.

Kind regards



Lyla Adwan-Kamara
CEO, Merton CIL