



Scrutiny Inquiry: Green Waste

1 Purpose of the Inquiry

1.1 The newly formed Connectivity & Sustainability Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed in June 2014 to undertake an inquiry into:

How can the current green waste collection scheme be improved, and what alternatives could be offered to householders?

1.2 The inquiry aimed to assist the Executive in improving the green waste collection scheme and to offer further ideas for managing green waste. The work would also help members of the Committee gain an understanding of the impact of the changes to the green waste collection system to inform the forthcoming inquiry into Household Recycling Centres.

2 The Report

2.1 The opposition Councillors on the Committee remain of the view that the policy to charge for green waste should be reversed and the service revert back to a free collection.

2.2 However, the Executive has made it clear that the policy would not be reversed. Given this, the report focuses on recommendations to improve the scheme as it currently stands.

3 The Policy

3.1 The City Council has offered a doorstep collection of green waste¹ since 2007 (pilots began in 2005). This collection service comprised a fortnightly sack collection.

3.2 In response to the need to make substantial financial savings, a new policy was agreed by Cabinet in September 2013. This introduced an annual charge for green waste collections (under the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012, which provide that a Local Authority can charge for the collection of green waste).

3.3 The main features of the standard scheme are:

- Green waste to be contained in a grey bin with brown lid fitted with a 125 hz RFID (radio frequency identification) chip and 240 litre capacity;
- Fortnightly collection between February and November (40 weeks);

¹ Household green recycling comprises: grass cuttings; hedge, and shrub cuttings; plants and weeds; tree / shrub branch cuttings of less than 2 inch (4.8 cm) diameter; leaves; dead flowers.



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- The price is £35, though an “early bird” discount was available in 2013 (£2) and a discount for ordering on-line was also available (£2)². Half year charges applied (£17.50) if the service was ordered after 31st July;
- Householders are required to place their wheelie bins / sacks out for collection on the pavement at the edge of their property nearest to the road or other notified collection and return point.

- 3.4 Householders are to self-assess against a specified criteria as to whether a wheelie bin is appropriate or whether sacks would be better suited until the completion of the roll out of wheelie bins for residual waste and other recycle. Using the ‘self-assessment’ process, around 85% of all customers receive a wheelie bin collection service and 15% receive a sack collection service.
- 3.5 Householders may choose to share green recycling wheelie bins and associated charges, for example by agreement with a neighbour.
- 3.6 ‘Side waste’, i.e. green recycling presented at the side of the wheelie bin or otherwise in non-authorized sacks or other receptacles, are not permitted, unless scheduled collections have been interrupted, for example through adverse weather, roadworks, etc. and the amount of additional green recycling presented appears reasonable, allowing for the time that has elapsed since the collection was due.
- 3.7 The wheelie bins should remain with the property in the event of the householder moving home. No refunds will be given to those who do move house.
- 3.8 The charges for this service will be reviewed annually through a Fees and Charges Report, with a view to ensuring that the charge covers the full collection costs incurred by the Fleet and Waste Management Service.

4 The Reaction

- 4.1 Collections for chargeable green recycling commenced on Monday 24th February 2014.
- 4.2 Following that there were a number of complaints and comments related to bins not being delivered, green rubbish being left out in the road and confusion about the scheme itself. These concerns were picked up in the press – between August 2013 and June 2014, nearly 250 articles in the local press were published. Around a half of these were negative, with 86 neutral.

5 The Inquiry

- 5.1 Following the number and extent of concerns raised, and the prominence of the coverage, the Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee agreed to hold a short inquiry to address the issues

² This has saved Contact Centre costs, with more than 50% using the web to order the service.



raised by the roll-out of the scheme, and also to look at the options for disposing of/composting green waste that would be an alternative to using the kerbside service.

5.2 Two evidence sessions were held. Appendix 1 lists those that contributed, and we are very grateful for their time and input. In addition, the Chair of the Committee wrote to all Members of the City Council asking for their views. Of the eight responses received, five suggested that the scheme be scrapped whilst the remaining three made suggestions for improving the current scheme. These included:

- Extended opening hours during the summer for our Recycling Centres (earlier closing times in the winter to offset costs);
- Adding an extra collection at the end of the season to make up for lost collections and late delivery of bins. Or a discount next time for those who signed up this year;
- Greater range of payment options, including a standing charge added to the Council Tax Bill, cash and direct debit;
- Improved communications between customer service centre and Fleet & Waste, perhaps a dedicated team and contact number;
- Increased funding for fly tipping teams to cope with the additional workload.

5.3 In addition, three Councillors attended the session on the 5th August 2014: Cllrs Mohammed Aikhlaq (Bordesley Green); Tony Kennedy (Sparkbrook) and Gareth Moore (Erdington); The Committee also received evidence from Richard Burden MP and Steve McCabe MP.

6 Findings: The Introduction of the Scheme

6.1 The Cabinet Member for Green, Smart and Sustainable City attended the evidence gathering session in September and outlined the decision to introduce the charge. She explained that the free collection of kerbside collection of green waste is not a statutory requirement. Choices needed to be made about where services would be reduced or charged for in order to meet the savings requirements, and green waste was chosen as it disadvantaged those people living in flats and maisonette, who did not need the service. It was also pointed out that it is not sustainable to simply pick up everything that people leave out on the street.

6.2 The Cabinet Member also reflected on the introduction of the charge. She told the Committee that the City Council would have preferred not to introduce such a change with the speed that it did. However, the service had to absorb significant cuts to its budget (60% has been removed from the operational budget) and so action had to be taken swiftly.

6.3 Another factor was that the introduction of the charge took place at the same time as the wheelie bin roll-out across the city commenced. This is a major service change which took a lot of time and focus, so it took that time and focus away from the green waste charge introduction.



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6.4 Combined, these circumstances did lead to problems with the roll-out. Because of the speed, testing of the new service was not possible and not all the data was checked appropriately before roll-out.

6.5 However, the Cabinet Member also acknowledged that the problems brought to the fore by the green waste charge roll-out were not confined to green waste collections. In particular, the problems encountered with green waste have highlighted issues with the connections between customer, contact centre and back office.

6.6 These and other issues are explored in more detail below.

The Operation of the Scheme

6.7 A number of complaints were reported back to the Committee. As a snapshot, one MP surveyed his constituents about the green waste collection: over 2,000 responded, 57% of whom had experienced some problems with either missed collections, difficulty paying the charge, and delays to the delivery of green waste bins.

6.8 Members of the Committee considered some of the problems with the scheme that had been reported to them during the evidence gathering:

- Missed collections – a number of the complaints referred to bins not being collected. Appendix 2 sets out the number of missed green collections reported between 24th February and 20th July 2014. This shows that between March and June 2014, the numbers of missed collection ranged between 200 and 400 per week, including each week in May where over 350 were reported per week.³ This then dropped off in July to under 200. There were concerns that some roads/properties were being missed repeatedly;
- Non delivery of bins (or delays of several weeks): by 22nd July 2014, there had been 1,134 calls/emails to the contact centre saying that the bins had not been delivered; and 112 saying that the wrong bin had been delivered. Fleet & Waste Management officers told the Committee that deliveries were running around 2-3 weeks after the order being placed – well within the target four week window. A number of ICT system changes happened at the start of August that decreased delivery times to within two weeks of an order being made;
- Issues with householders' not being able to pay for the green waste service unless they have a debit or credit card;
- Householders who had ordered the wrong item (either bags or a bin) not being permitted to change (officers told the Committee that there was a cost to this, therefore a decisions was made not to allow customers to change part way through the year).

6.9 Overall however, the numbers of householders participating in the scheme demonstrates a level of success, though perhaps the real test will come in 2015, when the numbers of those renewing the

³ It should be noted that these figures will include some double counting as some people reported the same missed collection through different channels (e.g. phone and website)



service are known. In September the Cabinet Member reported that over 50,000 bins or sacks had been sold – that is around one in five households with gardens (though it should be noted that some residents with smaller gardens may be sharing a bin with neighbours, so the number participating could in reality be higher). That compares well with first year take up in other local authority areas.⁴ Appendix 3 sets out sales between September 2013 and July 2014, sales and deliveries up to July 2014 and quantity ordered by ward (up to July 2014).

- 6.10 Improvements therefore are clearly needed in each of the areas above, most notably to have systems in place to ensure that repeat missed collections do not happen and to improve working with customers.
- 6.11 The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that a service improvement plan for the waste management service was being developed. Work was also going on to improve the “end to end” service for the customer, with particular focus on attuning the City Council to managing a paid-for service. She expected there to be measurable improvements.
- 6.12 In addition, the recent decision to move the City Council’s contact centre in-house was made partly on issues of quality, to generate improvements through closer working with council service areas.
- 6.13 Further improvements will be made when the technology used by crews collecting waste are used. In the session, the Cabinet Member gave the commitment that the collection service would not be externalised and so investment could be made. The “slab in the cab” technology will enable the crew to identify where assisted collections are needed and when/where waste is not presented for collection. All wheelie bins have been fitted at the point of manufacture with an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) ‘chip’ which contains a Unique Property Reference Number to allow this to happen.
- 6.14 Another area where improvements will be considered is on the methods by which householders can pay the charge. The cost benefits of these are being considered, at the time of writing, though it is expected that cash payments will be available at the start of the 2015 collection period.
- 6.15 Concerns were raised about the ability of elderly and disabled residents to pay the charge and to get to a Household Recycling Centre. Options for those on low income should be considered.

Conclusions

1. **There were some real operational problems with the green waste collection when the new chargeable service was introduced. Whilst a number of these related to the speed with which the new service was introduced, they also highlighted issues with the connections between customer, contact centre and back office.**

⁴ Appendix 3 sets out the green recycling sales between September 2013 and 20th July 2014, total sales and deliveries as at 22nd July 2014, quantity ordered by ward and sales from Montague Street following the roll out of wheelie bins. The total number of sales ordered by that date was 46,910.



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2. The Committee therefore welcomes the Cabinet Member's intention to bring forward a service improvement plan for the waste management service and the setting up of the waste strategy panel, including councillors from both the Connectivity & Sustainability and Districts & Public Engagement O&S Committees. The plan should be brought back to this Committee in January 2015.
3. The intention to increase the options for payment is also welcomed, as is the commitment to improving the technology to support crews in their work. Progress on both these developments should be reported back to the Committee.

7 Findings: Fly-Tipping

- 7.1 Much of the discussion at the sessions focused on the perceived impact of the charge on the street environment. Evidence from Fleet & Waste Management officers, who contacted other local authorities before introducing the charge, was that most of the Councils that responded reported that they have not seen a major issue with green waste fly-tipping after the introduction of green waste charges. However, this did not appear to be the case in Birmingham.
- 7.2 Pictures of dumped green waste left out and uncollected featured regularly in press articles and were the subject of many of the complaints from householders. As Richard Burden MP told us:

There is little doubt, however, that the issue that has caused most widespread anger amongst my constituents has been the piles of bags that have ended up littering streets, often for long periods.
- 7.3 Committee members enquired as to the make-up of the dumped rubbish: the evidence from the two major "clean-ups" (January and May 2014) showed that of the 240 tonnes collected, 140 tonnes were green waste, the remainder was residual waste. A review of 500 cases of fly-tipping, conducted by the Cabinet Member and officers, showed that only one in five were dumped green waste.
- 7.4 Some of the waste left out was due to householders not knowing about the new scheme, and this highlights the need for good information and education (see below). However, one of the key issues was that any dumped waste tends to attract other dumped waste, making the situation worse.
- 7.5 Officers were also challenged on the speed with which rubbish was cleared, and this exposed the tension between the City Council's responsibility to keep the streets clean and the responsibility of householders to dispose of their waste safely and legally.



- 7.6 On the one hand, residents who have not dumped waste in their road should not have to suffer the inconvenience and distress of fly-tipped rubbish outside their house. However, if the City Council's response was to simply remove green waste as it was left out, this would be of concern to those householders who had paid for a service; it would cost the City Council additional money and it would not encourage those who had dumped it to change their behaviour.
- 7.7 Fly-tipping was discussed at the 5th August 2014 session, and in general terms it was recognised that inner cities generally produce less green waste because of the nature of housing. It was also noted that many of the problems of dumped waste are in areas of social housing. This problem was recognised and a transition strategy was put in place. It is important to note that "dumping" has always happened, not just since the green waste charge, and that there are large parts of the city where fly-tipping is always high (in contrast, take up of the green charge is highest in outer wards – Sutton Coldfield and Edgbaston). The link between fly-tipping and high turnover of residents was noted. The need to work with private landlords to ensure they understood their responsibilities and where to go to for help was also noted. Fly-tipping figures for the past three years are shown in Appendix 4.
- 7.8 Nonetheless, it was made clear in the Committee that so-called "dumped waste" is flytipping – it is anti-social behaviour and it needs to be challenged.

Conclusions

4. **The Committee endorses the view that dumping rubbish is fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and should be challenged.**

8 Findings: Changing the Culture

- 8.1 Challenging the view that it is unacceptable to dump rubbish of any sort in the street starts with good information and education (as discussed in more detail below). However it is also crucial to change the culture of the past few years, which the City Council has encouraged through numerous free collection services, that says that it is the responsibility of the City Council to remove anything that is left out in the street.
- 8.2 Over the past few years, special street collections have been stopped, charges for bulky waste collections have been introduced and street cleansing teams have been reduced. These changes have been made of necessity following budget cuts; however this also offers the opportunity to redress some of the dependencies created and generate more sustainable options.
- 8.3 There are some communities who are taking on this responsibility and Committee members heard from two of them during the evidence-gathering: Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forum and Frankley Street Champions. These show how local people can undertake excellent work caring for their local environment.
- 8.4 The Committee received evidence from Fleet & Waste Management that, on request, the Council will supply any such group with green recycling collection sacks and make appropriate



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arrangements for their collection, free of charge. Requests should be made to the Council through the Waste Minimisation Team. This is an important action the City Council can take to facilitate and encourage this, and so a better publicised pathway to more “joined up” and consistent support across service areas would be welcomed. Consideration should be given to extending this help to residents who clear up leaves from the roads outside their houses.

- 8.5 This approach also requires councillors to support their local communities in both keeping the streets clean and in challenging anti-social behaviour. In previous times, councillor requests for waste to be cleared were responded to quickly but this is not always going to be possible where resources are reduced. Councillors must take more of a role in addressing the underlying behaviour to reduce the amount of rubbish dumped in the streets.
- 8.6 The City Council’s facilitation role is also about information, education and enforcement, which are the key tools to achieving this, and these are discussed in more detail below.

Information and Education

- 8.7 Information and education are the first and most important tools in getting across the message about waste in the city. The City Council undertook to adopt an approach that would offer advice, support and guidance as the first and preferred way to establish the new service. This included:
- A major advertising and promotional campaign from the start of October 2013, utilising a multi-media approach (newspaper adverts, local radio, billboards, posters, leaflets in public buildings and on public transport, out-bound calls, the City Council website, Council Tax leaflet, etc.);
 - (From February 2014) messages focusing on the alternatives, such as using the HRC's and home-composting (information about where to buy a home-composter and how these may be optimised; third sector organisations that can give more detailed advice on usage and related issues);
 - The Waste Prevention Team (WPT) have an on-street presence and talk to residents about the new service, handing out information leaflets, etc;
- 8.8 Fleet & Waste Management officers told the Committee that despite widespread publicity about the new service, including writing to every household as part of the Council Tax billing process in March, it is clear that information and education work needs to continue.
- 8.9 The Cabinet Member also raised communication as an issue, and noted that this is something that the City Council as a whole has not yet got right. This is partly about how the City Council communicates with householders (and the contact centre coming back in-house will form a major part of that), alongside campaigns such as the one about to be launched with Keep Britain Tidy, using the Wombles to encourage more personal responsibility. Further work could be undertaken with organisations such as Digital Birmingham to explore the technology that could support this work.



Enforcement

- 8.10 Enforcement is an effective tool but should be the last resort, to be considered after other avenues have been exhausted. For that reason, there have been no prosecutions as yet, however there are prosecutions pending. Nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence that the message that dumping green waste in the road could ultimately lead to an £80 fine is being heard and is helping to convince people not to leave rubbish out on the street.
- 8.11 Generally, enforcement action may be taken where there is wilful and continued non-compliance in respect of side waste, “overloading” of wheelie bins and contaminated waste. Other offences such as fly-tipping, disposing of waste without a license and lighting bonfires (a statutory nuisance) will also result in action.
- 8.12 The issue of bonfires was raised in the evidence gathering and the Committee wrote to the West Midlands Fire Service to ascertain if they had noted an increase in reported fires since the charge was introduced. Their figures show that there has been little change to the fire related incidents that WMFS are informed of or attend.
- 8.13 In the case of fly-tipping, waste prevention officers have knocked on doors and spoken to residents, an approach which has been successful in getting people to take waste back in and dispose of it properly. At the time of writing there were three prosecutions pending, where people had persistently dumped green waste. Another option is for the City Council to clear the waste and then recover costs from the fly-tipper. However this is difficult to do and is not always the most cost-effective option.
- 8.14 Evidence from the City Council’s Regulatory Services emphasised the need for a targeted, intelligence-led approach. As hotspots become clear, mobile cameras and CCTV can be used to identify perpetrators. This includes developing problem profiles of hotspots (500 have been identified so far), facilitating work with proper controls and interventions, using all the tools in the toolkit to improve cleanliness. This is part of the broader strategy to deal with fly-tipping and is not about green waste alone. It also reflects the reduction in resources available to both Regulatory Services and Fleet & Waste Management.
- 8.15 Overall the Cabinet Member emphasised the need to “put place back into policy” – the problems affecting different areas of the city need different interventions.

Conclusions

- 5. As budgets are reduced, it is no longer enough for officers or Councillors to just react to rubbish left in the streets and other environmental problems. A more pro-active approach should be adopted, and councillors should be supported to take on this role.**
- 6. Community groups who wish to take action in their local area should be encouraged and supported by the City Council. The routes for doing this**



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should be made explicit. Presentations could be made to all ward committees on options for taking local action. Help should also be made available to individuals who undertake work to keep their area clean.

7. Education, information and enforcement are key tools in bringing about the culture change referred to above. Encouraging change through good information and education are the first steps, with enforcement being a last resort.
8. Communication and community engagement is an issue across the City Council and any changes have to be part of a wider change. However, there needs to be ways to incentivise and communicate better with regard to waste disposal.

9 Alternatives to the City Council Collection Scheme

- 9.1 The second part of the Committee's remit was to consider the options for disposing of/composting green waste that would be an alternative to using the doorstep service. This is a key part of enabling people to deal with the green waste in a way that best suits them. The most obvious answer is **home composting** and the Committee also considered **community composting**, which is just getting underway in Birmingham. In the survey conducted by Steve McCabe MP, 53% of constituents backed involving local initiatives to compost green waste.
- 9.2 Looking further ahead, members of the Committee were interested in what were the more ambitious options for disposing of green waste, and we were contacted by one company (Unicorn Power) who were keen to share their experiences.

Home Composting

- 9.3 One of the options for householders who do not wish to purchase the new green recycling service is to compost their green waste at home.
- 9.4 Evidence from Fleet & Waste Management officers stated that, in the first months of the current calendar year the level of home-composter sales has doubled over the previous year with around 1,000 sales recorded through the Council's nominated supplier.
- 9.5 However, many other residents will have purchased home composters directly from DIY / gardening stores, so we cannot be sure of the true number of home composters.
- 9.6 The Committee took evidence from Friends of the Earth, who endorsed the view expressed above that "there should be a move away from the 'put it out for the Council to collect' way of thinking."
- 9.7 The advantages of home composting include reduced costs and better environmental outcomes (as it reduces traffic on the road – whether it be the City Council's collection vehicle or individual trips to the household recycling centre).



- 9.8 However, it was observed that more can be done to help people and educate them, through leaflets, publicity, advice and information, but also perhaps to set up demonstration sites, to see composting in action (e.g. Billesley Lane Allotments).
- 9.9 Further support could be offered for dealing with other materials, such as wood. We were told that, in Birmingham, Alabama, a “city chipper” goes round to residents to chip wood which reduces the volume and turns it into a useful fuel source.

Community Composting

- 9.10 Not everyone has the space or the inclination to compost waste in their own garden. Another alternative would be to have local, community composting sites. We hear that Fleet and Waste Management (FWM) service is considering introducing and supporting a number of community composting schemes, working with the Community Compost Network who can guide organisations and communities through the process of setting up their community composting initiatives.
- 9.11 Community composting is defined as:
- ... the local and sustainable management of biodegradable material, where waste is transformed into a local resource, generating local environmental, social and economic benefits. It is a not-for-profit activity carried out by community groups and social enterprises to collect and compost garden or kitchen waste. The compost can be sold, donated and used to grow local fruit, vegetables and flowers. Projects can range from a group of neighbours running a small site to a social enterprise delivering a kerbside collection.⁵
- 9.12 The benefits are wide ranging, from less transportation required if the waste is not being taken to household recycling centres that may be further away, thus reducing CO² emission; to the benefits of communal activities, working together, and the health benefits this brings. It also enables a wider range of people to compost locally by working together. As with home composting, participants get compost back to use on their own gardens.
- 9.13 There are grants available to start these off: for example Veolia Environmental Services offer environmental grants of up to £1,000. Otherwise there are other sources of funding such as Big Lottery and Landfill Communities Fund. The Partnership, Contract Performance and Third Sector O&S Committee should consider these options as part of their work on the third sector.
- 9.14 Again, such schemes would be an important part of the culture change discussed above, and could act as a “spring board” for other environmental projects, zero waste campaigning, self-sufficiency initiatives such as community orchards, allotments, raising local schools interests in environmental issues etc.

⁵ Briefing Note – Community Composting, Fleet & Waste Management; submitted to the Committee on 5th August 2014



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- 9.15 Community composting will not be right for every area, nor will they necessarily be easy to set up – there are likely to be issues around the size of the site required, planning permission and/or environment licencing. That is why the Cabinet Member’s proposal, that we do not “start from scratch” but work with communities and organisations that already have experience, expertise and enthusiasm for such projects. There are plenty of opportunities – Birmingham has more allotments than most other cities in Europe, so why not use them for composting? Some allotments holders in Kings Heath and Sutton Coldfield have come forward to discuss the options.
- 9.16 The City Council’s proposal is to look at some potential sites in Nechells, Edgbaston and Kings Heath and develop these with local communities. This should also be considered in areas where take up is low but fly-tipping high.
- 9.17 Beyond the issue of site and capacity, it is clear that we need to consider what we want from community composting and what wrap around services are needed to ensure success.

Other Alternatives

- 9.18 One of the questions raised was whether green waste was a potential income stream. The answer was generally, no. The experience of CSV Environment, which ran the Run a Muck scheme where green waste was collected and composted at allotments, bears this out. When funding was ceased, the service also stopped as there is no value in green waste.
- 9.19 However we also received evidence from Unicorn Power, a company that generates electricity from bio-wastes, using smaller containerized power plants. These turn green waste to generate energy and heat and so put a value on the waste. It also reduces the volume of this waste. The technology used is a form of pyrolysis.
- 9.20 This offers both a means of disposing of waste locally and giving green waste a value. As stated in the From Waste to Resources Scrutiny Inquiry, these are the kinds of options that need to be considered in any future waste strategy.

Impact on Recycling Rates

- 9.21 Local, sustainable solutions are the way forward for green waste and benefit both the environment and communities. However, we must bear in mind that there may be some negative consequences for the City Council. The European Commission has announced plans to require local authorities to recycle 70% of household waste and 80% of packaging waste by 2030. The proposals also include a ban on landfilling recyclable waste (including plastics, paper, metals, glass and biodegradable waste) by 2025.⁶
- 9.22 The relevance to this work is that, as the City Council is held to ever higher recycling targets, diverting green waste from the municipal system would have a negative impact on those recycling rates. Home composting could not be quantified and therefore would not be included, regardless

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/frontpage/2014/14_67_en.htm



of the fact that it is in fact a more environmentally friendly solution. This is something that the City Council must take into account in its planning for the service.

Conclusions

9. **Home and community composting should be encouraged as viable local solutions to green waste.**
10. **When developing the future waste strategy, local innovative solutions to waste should form a part of the considerations.**

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 10.1 Prior to 2007, Birmingham did not collect green waste at all as part of its normal refuse collection services. The recent change to a charged service has been a significant one, in particular because of the background of free services for green and bulky waste, and special street collections.
- 10.2 During the evidence gathering the question of whether the charge should be reversed was discussed. There were mixed views from Councillors and MPs. At the 5th August 2014 evidence gathering session it was reported that, at the time of the service introduction, around 30% of other local authorities were charging and this is a growing trend (though some Councils had bucked this trend, including Amber Valley Borough Council and Reading, re-introducing a free service following a chargeable service). Other local authorities, such as Sefton Council, considered introducing charges, but did not.
- 10.3 However, the Cabinet Member's view was clear: this is not the choice that she wants to make, but as cuts to the City Council budget continue, then a free unlimited green waste service – especially when set against children's safeguarding or parks (some of the most inclusive areas we have) – then the option is not there.
- 10.4 Given that, the emphasis should be on getting the service right and dealing with our customers appropriately. There were some real operational problems with the green waste collection when the new chargeable service was introduced. Whilst a number of these related to the speed with which the new service was introduced, they also highlighted issues with the connections between customer, contact centre and back office. The service improvement plan should address these concerns.
- 10.5 Specifically, there were issues raised around payment options and the improved use of technology to help reduce problems such as missed collections. The Committee welcomes the introduction of cash payments for renewal, but options such as direct debit should be considered as should payment via other outlets such as the Post Office.
- 10.6 With regard to fly-tipping, this should be tackled by the "three legged stool" approach of education, information and enforcement. This should be focused on bringing about a culture change where one is needed, to discourage householders from the view that the City Council



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should simply pick up whatever is left on the street. The responsibility for our public spaces is shared.

- 10.7 The Committee endorses the view that dumping rubbish is fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and should be challenged. As budgets are reduced, it is no longer enough for officers or members to just react to rubbish left in the streets and other environmental problems. A more pro-active approach, which involves addressing anti-social behaviour, should be adopted, and councillors should be supported to take on this role. Community groups who wish to take action in their local area should also be encouraged and supported by the City Council. The routes for doing this should be made transparent.
- 10.8 In addition, information should be sent to Councillors on fly-tipping in their area, including prosecutions.
- 10.9 Looking forward, the Committee welcomes the Cabinet Member's plan to develop a new waste strategy through a process of engagement with a number of experts, including members of this and the Districts & Public Engagement O&S Committee. Further updates on this, and areas where the Committee can add value, should be brought to the Committee.
- 10.10 In addition, this Committee will incorporate findings from this inquiry into the inquiry into Household Recycling Centres (on-going at the time of writing). This will address some of the issues raised around capacity and consider whether more local green waste collection points (temporary over the summer) are part of the solution. Services could be locally-commissioned, aligned with local needs with regards to green waste, which will not be the same across the city.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	<p>The Committee welcomes the Cabinet Member's intention to bring forward a service improvement plan for the waste management service. That plan should be brought back to this Committee in January 2015, and should cover the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear policy around fly-tipped green waste (making it clear how the expectations of those who have paid for the service will be balanced with the need to keep streets and public areas clean and tidy); • Use of mobile CCTV to monitor and deter fly-tipping – how can local councillors make applications for use in their area, how can better collaboration between Districts be encouraged, and what action will result from use of mobile CCTV; • How the City Council will encourage and facilitate litter picks etc, both the larger community group clean-ups and smaller scale, perhaps individual, clean-ups. In particular, how can we ensure active citizens are not penalised for clearing up leaves from trees in the highway 	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart and Sustainable City	January 2015



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R02	The intention to increase the options for payment is also welcomed, as is the commitment to improving the technology to support crews in their work. Progress on both these developments should be reported back to the Committee	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart and Sustainable City	January 2015
R03	The Committee also welcomes that the on-line discount will continue, following suggestions from this Committee; and asks that consideration is given to a discount for early ordering of the service. Progress on both these developments should be reported back to the Committee	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart and Sustainable City	January 2015
R04	<p>That guidance is set out to assist citizens, Councillors and community groups to take a more pro-active approach to the street environment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for councillors to work with their residents in keeping the environment clean and tidy e.g. detailed notes on the policy to ensure it is understood; and a standard letter that could be used by councillors and/or officers to inform residents about the collection schemes and the consequences for fly-tipping; • Clear, well publicised support for community groups to engage in clean-up and education / information activity. <p>Councillors should take more of a role in addressing behaviours underlying some of the environmental problems the city faces.</p>	Cabinet Member, Green, Smart and Sustainable City All Councillors	January 2015



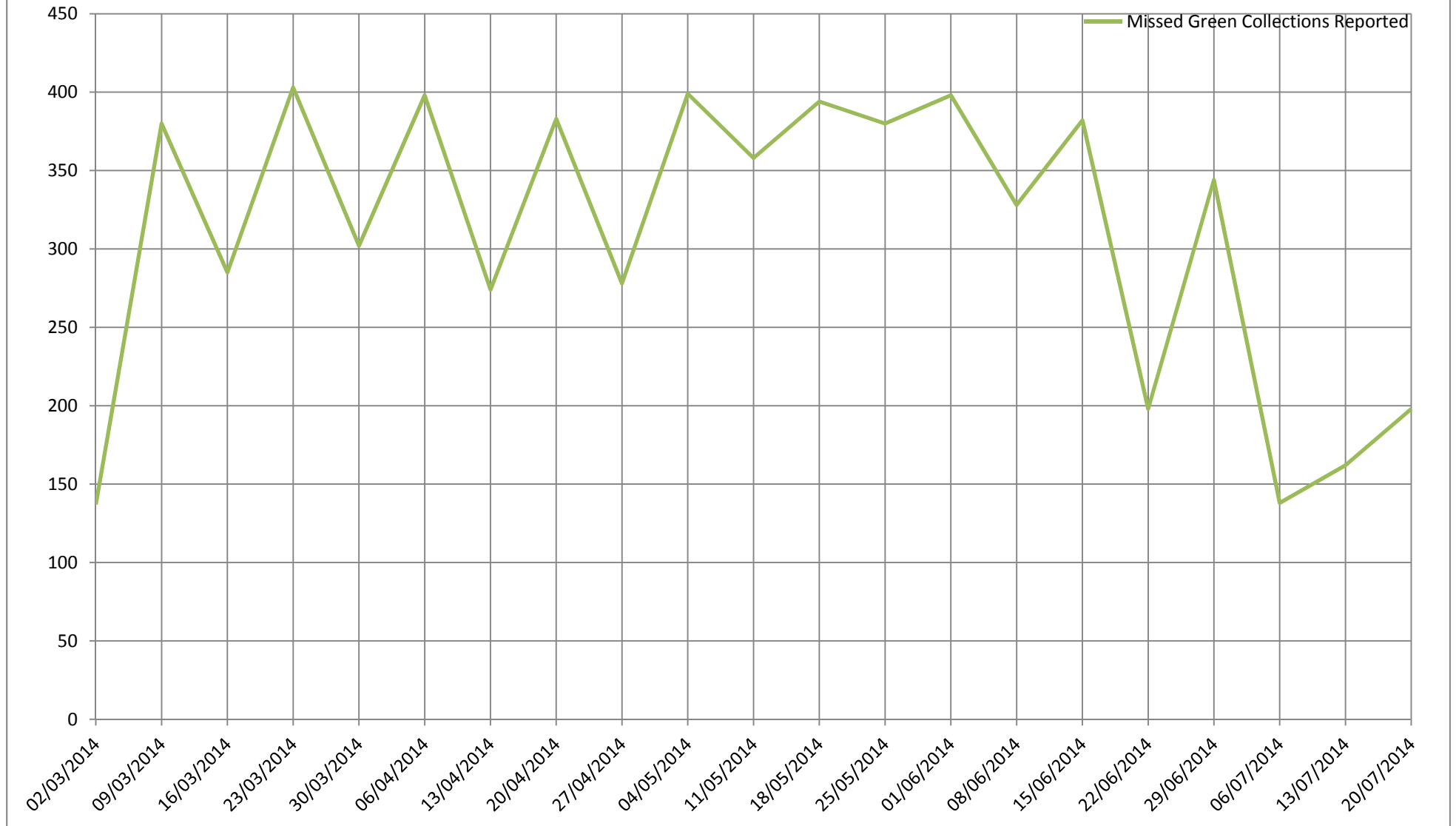
Scrutiny Inquiry: Green Waste

Appendix 1: Contributors

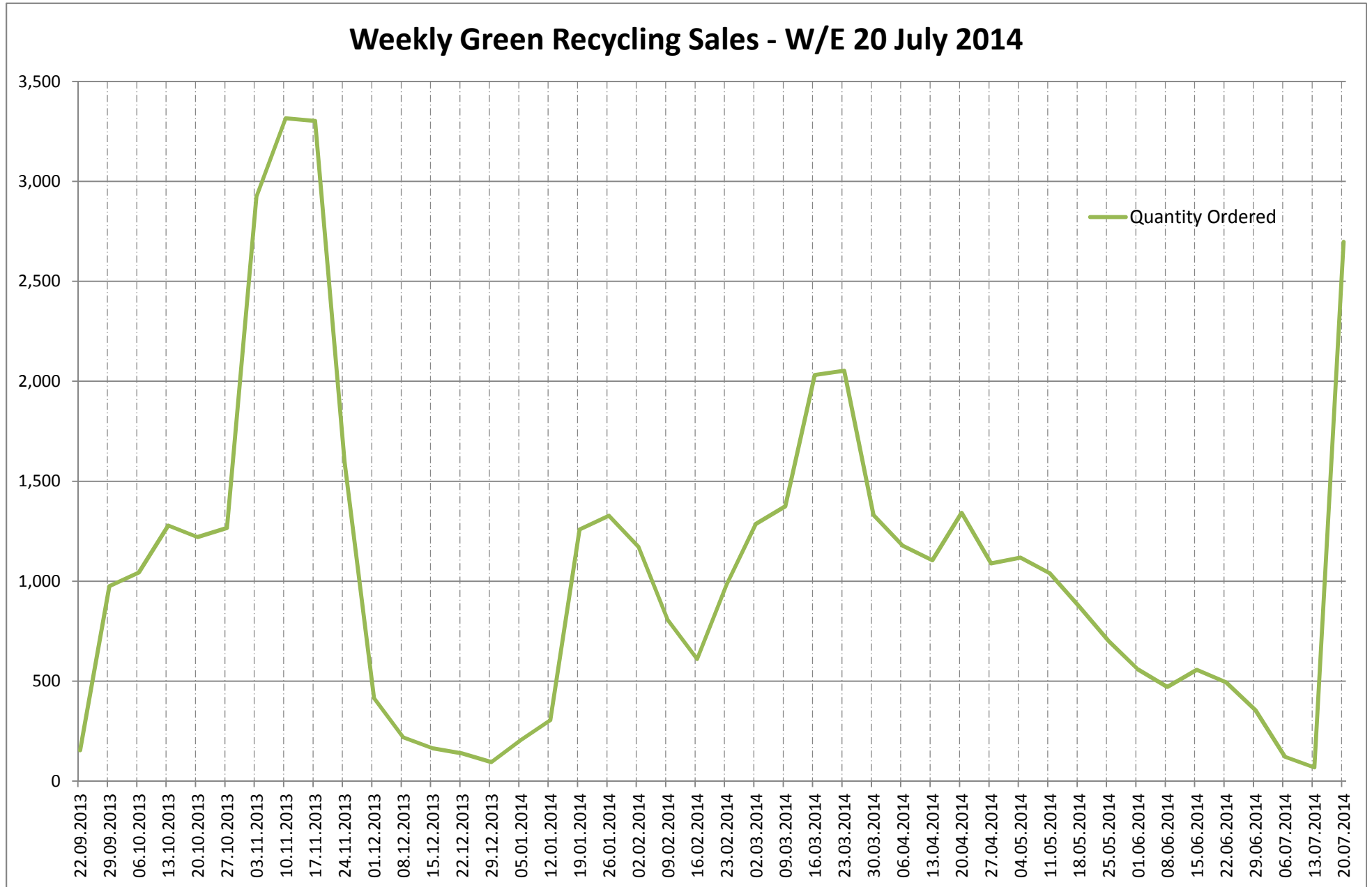
The Committee would like to thank all those who have taken the time to contribute to this inquiry.

Witnesses	
Name	Organisation
Matt Kelly	Assistant Director Fleet & Waste Management, Birmingham City Council
Tommy Wallace	Director Fleet & Waste Management, Birmingham City Council
John Newson	Lead Waste Campaigner, Friends of the Earth
Martin Mizera	Managing Director, Unicorn Power Ltd
Mohammed Ashraf	Management Committee Member, Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forum
Naeem Qureshi	Management Committee Member, Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forum
Ian Bruckshaw	Frankley Street Champions
Bruce Pitt	Frankley Street Champions
Jacqui Kennedy	Service Director – Regulation / Enforcement, Birmingham City Council
Councillors	
Cllr Lisa Trickett	Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Sustainable City
Cllr Barbara Dring	Chair, Public Protection and Licensing Committee
Cllr Mohammed Aikhlaq	Ward Councillor, Bordesley Green
Cllr Tony Kennedy	Ward Councillor, Sparkbrook
Cllr Gareth Moore	Ward Councillor, Erdington
MPs	
Richard Burden	Northfield
Steve McCabe	Selly Oak

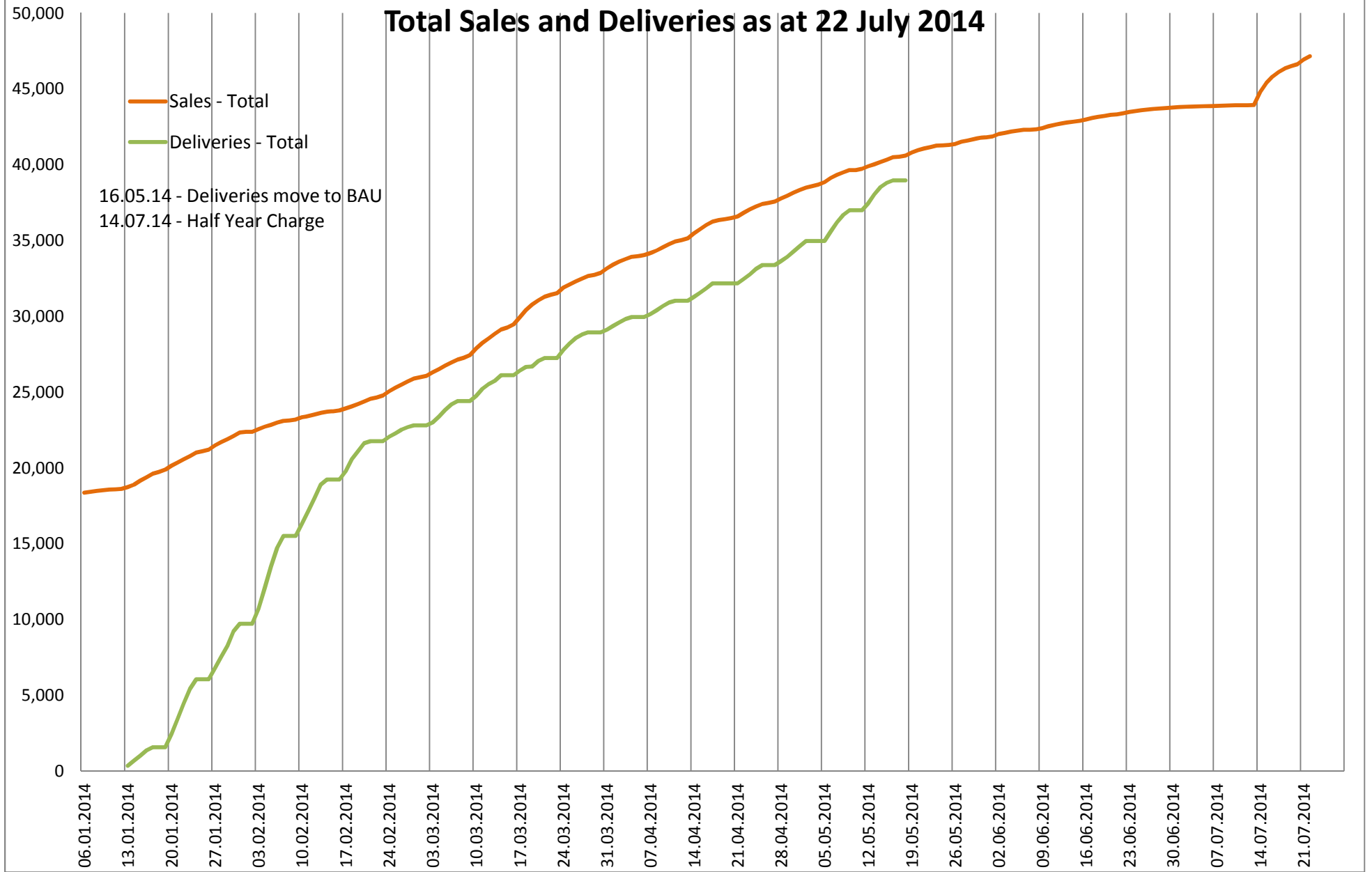
APPENDIX 2: Missed Green Collections Reported between 24/02/14 and 20th July 2014



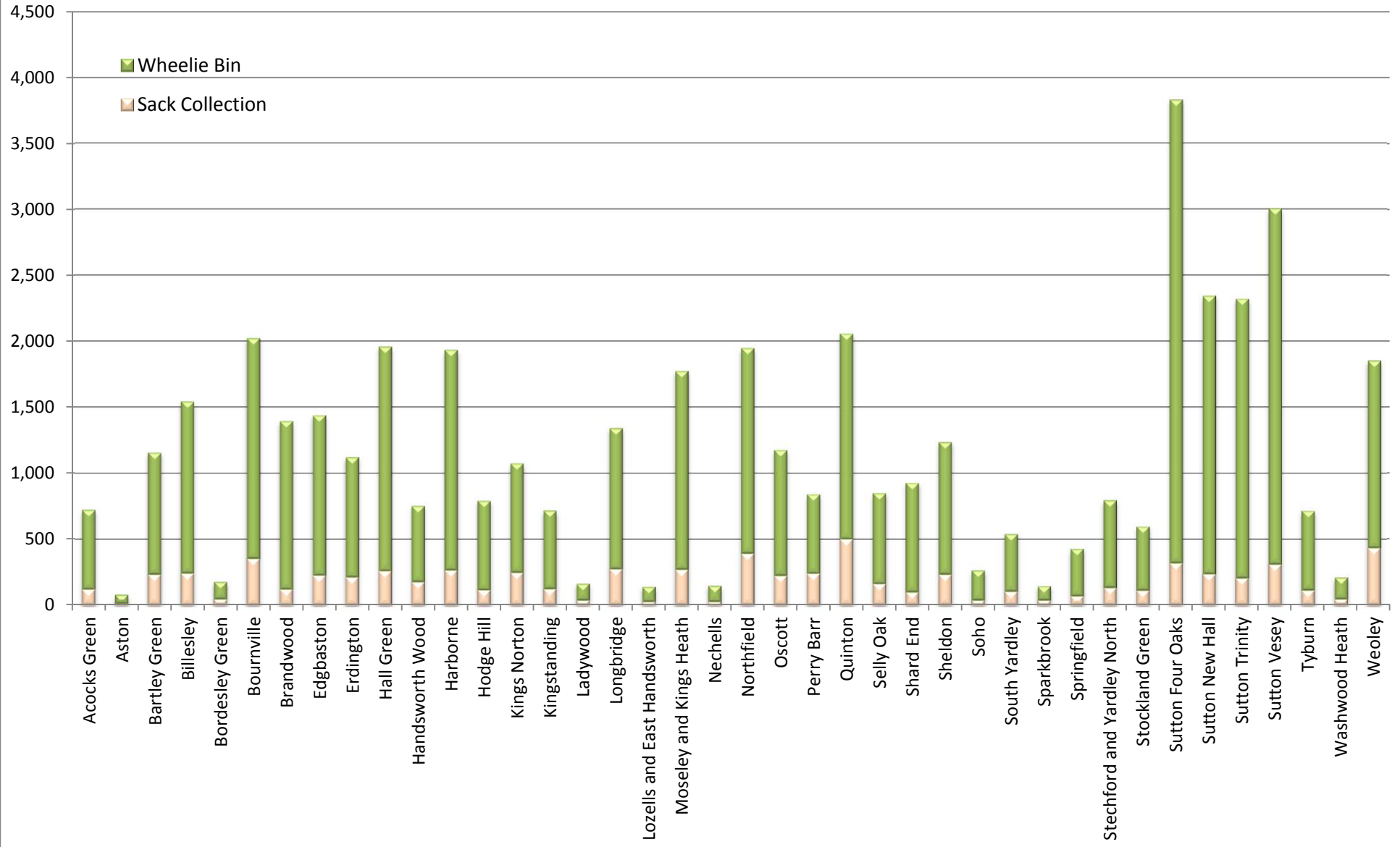
Appendix 3



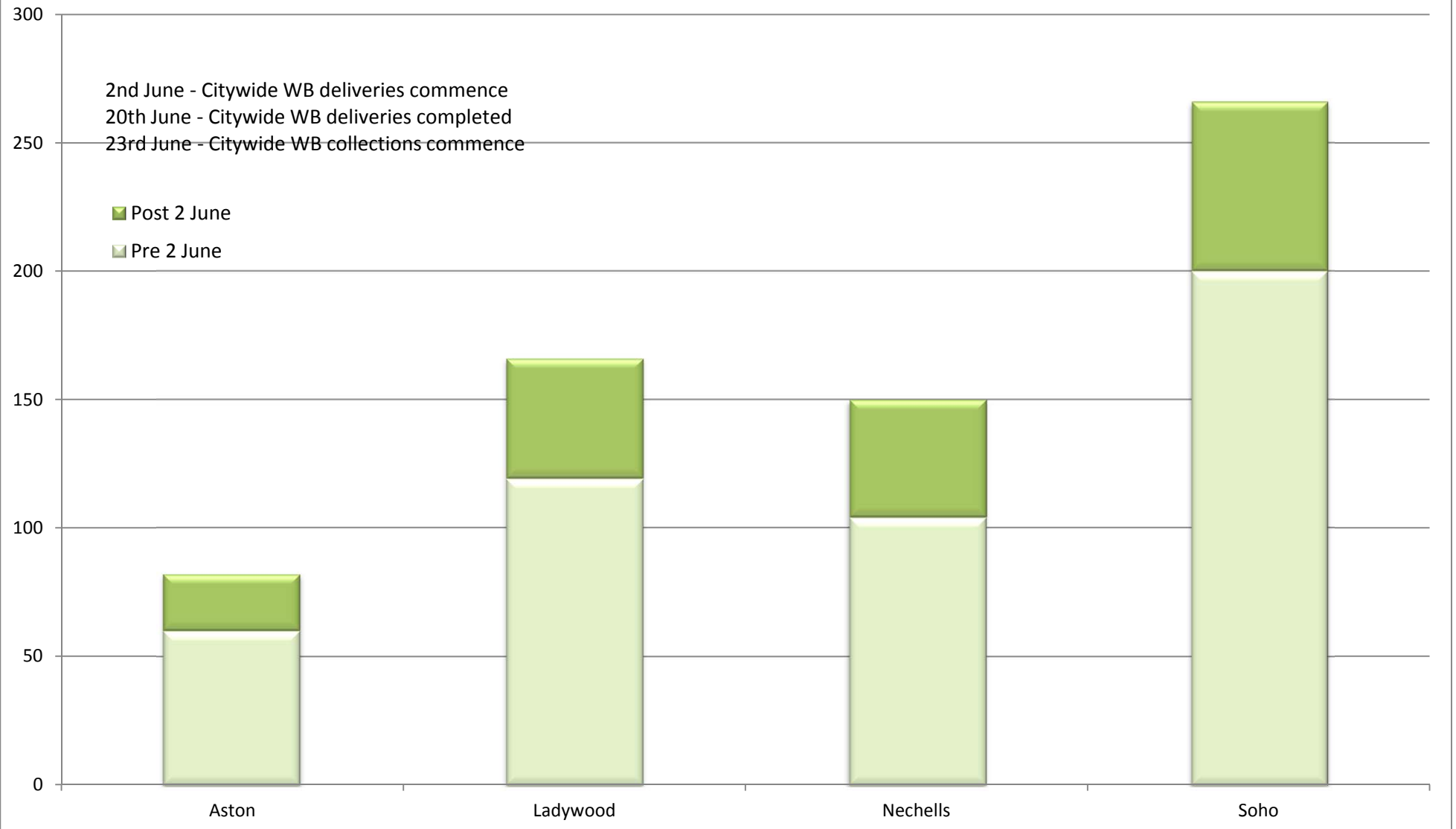
Total Sales and Deliveries as at 22 July 2014



Quantity Ordered By Ward as at W/E 20 July 2014



Green Sales in Montague Street following Citywide WB Delivery As at W/E 20 July 2014



Dumped Rubbish Jobs Recorded in Panorama and MAPSS**2014-15**

WARD	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	YTD TOTAL
ACOCKS GREEN	62	59	57	79	73	47	20	397
ASTON	27	41	52	75	53	70	38	356
BARTLEY GREEN	56	94	77	63	54	34	26	404
BILLESLEY	26	36	28	35	29	27	21	202
BORDESLEY GREEN	36	30	55	76	32	35	26	290
BOURNVILLE	28	19	39	40	30	20	19	195
BRANDWOOD	51	46	58	43	47	31	36	312
EDGBASTON	32	35	41	26	21	18	12	185
ERDINGTON	30	24	47	31	32	17	8	189
HALL GREEN	30	39	39	40	28	24	15	215
HANDSWORTH WOOD	54	69	79	74	50	58	55	439
HARBORNE	85	63	62	97	71	56	34	468
HODGE HILL	61	66	72	73	52	44	50	418
KINGS NORTON	23	39	36	47	26	20	18	209
KINGSTANDING	34	40	51	38	24	29	17	233
LADYWOOD	19	22	39	51	30	40	25	226
LONGBRIDGE	61	57	59	70	29	30	28	334
LOZELLS AND EAST HANDSWORTH	60	61	76	89	51	68	40	445
MOSELEY AND KINGS HEATH	32	35	33	35	39	41	17	232
NECHELLS	49	51	96	113	76	84	53	522
NORTHFIELD	42	45	36	48	29	28	33	261
OSCOTT	18	29	23	22	22	13	9	136
PERRY BARR	33	29	29	34	28	24	16	193
QUINTON	40	37	56	51	47	29	17	277
SELLY OAK	16	17	19	17	24	32	19	144
SHARD END	65	60	52	49	39	34	17	316
SHELDON	30	21	28	33	14	23	10	159
SOHO	64	86	118	151	116	115	85	735
SOUTH YARDLEY	34	31	62	61	47	59	33	327
SPARKBROOK	59	63	129	119	77	74	33	554
SPRINGFIELD	30	46	43	37	34	43	52	285
STECHFORD AND YARDLEY NORTH	26	40	45	49	39	29	26	254
STOCKLAND GREEN	32	43	37	42	32	28	16	230
SUTTON FOUR OAKS	11	12	13	6	13	11	5	71
SUTTON NEW HALL	6	7	13	15	5	4	7	57
SUTTON TRINITY	9	19	18	13	13	9	7	88
SUTTON VESEY	15	16	11	15	12	6	3	78
TYBURN	23	43	88	128	106	94	84	566
WASHWOOD HEATH	60	52	72	118	88	73	79	542
WEOLEY	41	52	53	39	19	28	26	258
TOTAL	1510	1674	2041	2242	1651	1549	1135	11802

2013-14

WARD	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	TOTAL
ACOCKS GREEN	19	28	24	34	39	34	23	201
ASTON	53	58	46	91	37	156	95	536
BARTLEY GREEN	32	28	37	58	38	36	21	250
BILLESLEY	10	8	13	11	13	17	14	86
BORDESLEY GREEN	40	34	51	41	47	51	32	296
BOURNVILLE	6	7	13	11	14	18	11	80
BRANDWOOD	32	18	23	54	24	28	21	200
EDGBASTON	11	15	10	25	13	19	15	108
ERDINGTON	11	9	6	15	18	24	11	94
HALL GREEN	11	5	18	22	17	29	18	120
HANDSWORTH WOOD	34	36	40	61	51	39	35	296
HARBORNE	12	16	34	58	50	20	20	210
HODGE HILL	23	27	27	40	26	15	29	187
KINGS NORTON	12	19	31	37	30	26	10	165
KINGSTANDING	24	20	21	26	27	17	20	155
LADYWOOD	15	22	28	69	12	42	76	264
LONGBRIDGE	24	19	16	26	36	23	9	153
LOZELLS AND EAST HANDSWORTH	29	43	48	68	45	55	34	322
MOSELEY AND KINGS HEATH	17	12	14	36	28	22	19	148
NECHELLS	58	70	73	133	40	91	64	529
NORTHFIELD	10	21	22	23	26	20	13	135
OSCOTT	4	8	7	7	11	7	8	52
PERRY BARR	5	17	16	24	18	18	8	106
QUINTON	21	16	12	31	10	18	16	124
SELLY OAK	9	15	13	27	13	15	16	108
SHARD END	21	19	21	19	30	25	22	157
SHELDON	10	4	8	17	13	19	14	85
SOHO	50	53	60	79	38	83	60	423
SOUTH YARDLEY	23	26	26	33	32	21	33	194
SPARKBROOK	14	37	53	67	50	55	57	333
SPRINGFIELD	30	36	23	28	22	16	15	170
STECHFORD AND YARDLEY NORTH	15	19	23	20	27	29	21	154
STOCKLAND GREEN	13	16	8	22	21	30	17	127
SUTTON FOUR OAKS	4	6	3	9	4	10	5	41
SUTTON NEW HALL	3	1	3	11	8	12	2	40
SUTTON TRINITY	14	11	4	9	7	7	7	59
SUTTON VESEY	4	4	4	8	9	14	8	51
TYBURN	22	14	26	25	19	13	14	133
WASHWOOD HEATH	69	51	72	75	82	59	44	452
WEOLEY	20	22	20	32	29	27	17	167
TOTAL	834	890	997	1482	1074	1260	974	7511

2012-13

WARD	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	TOTAL
ACOCKS GREEN	24	11	13	28	24	20	18	138
ASTON	16	18	15	32	38	40	44	203
BARTLEY GREEN	12	24	24	34	19	30	30	173
BILLESLEY	11	14	14	19	7	9	17	91
BORDESLEY GREEN	18	44	51	43	37	35	41	269
BOURNVILLE	4	4	5	5	6	4	6	34
BRANDWOOD	2	7	18	14	14	21	20	96
EDGBASTON	5	7	10	12	8	14	12	68
ERDINGTON	10	17	11	14	9	10	8	79
HALL GREEN	7	12	14	24	10	8	10	85
HANDSWORTH WOOD	25	19	37	33	29	36	35	214
HARBORNE	8	23	15	13	13	11	20	103
HODGE HILL	18	23	13	14	16	14	17	115
KINGS NORTON	15	13	11	22	25	16	20	122
KINGSTANDING	8	17	13	15	21	17	12	103
LADYWOOD	4	13	25	36	31	27	28	164
LONGBRIDGE	20	32	29	22	14	17	20	154
LOZELLS AND EAST HANDSWORTH	28	24	28	47	30	41	37	235
MOSELEY AND KINGS HEATH	29	34	31	32	35	32	32	225
NECHELLS	34	42	43	70	90	105	97	481
NORTHFIELD	15	13	16	9	18	20	13	104
OSCOTT	6	9	9	14	3	9	8	58
PERRY BARR	9	16	13	10	20	10	13	91
QUINTON	9	18	14	19	14	8	7	89
SELLY OAK	9	11	5	11	9	21	8	74
SHARD END	13	17	20	20	17	15	18	120
SHELDON	8	9	10	12	10	15	12	76
SOHO	32	33	48	74	105	83	141	516
SOUTH YARDLEY	17	24	24	33	31	27	17	173
SPARKBROOK	47	60	39	35	42	27	23	273
SPRINGFIELD	22	15	17	23	29	21	21	148
STECHFORD AND YARDLEY NORTH	13	12	16	27	15	15	16	114
STOCKLAND GREEN	14	17	20	26	23	30	30	160
SUTTON FOUR OAKS	2	3	4	9	2	5	5	30
SUTTON NEW HALL	6	5	5	7	4	5	4	36
SUTTON TRINITY	1	7	10	8	9	9	12	56
SUTTON VESEY	6	7	8	6	4	5	9	45
TYBURN	12	10	11	10	9	7	8	67
WASHWOOD HEATH	29	25	34	27	29	25	23	192
WEOLEY	13	15	13	11	16	17	24	109
TOTAL	581	724	756	920	885	881	936	5683