



Barnet UNISON initial response to end of Task and Finish

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Barnet UNISON is responding to the consultation on Waste & Recycling start and finish arrangements, issued 17 August 2026 under the Trade Union Engagement Framework (TUEF).

The consultation document commits the Council to reasonable and meaningful consultation with staff and trade unions on this proposal (Section 2.5, Section 3.10) and invites alternative suggestions that achieve the same health and safety objectives (Section 3.10).

Under TUEF clause 3.4, the Council has committed to reasonable, meaningful consultation on matters of joint interest, and to setting out its rationale where a proposal cannot be modified in line with trade union feedback. Health and safety matters specifically are directed to the Area Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee — Health & Safety (TUEF clause 6.1), whose functions include considering health and safety policies and safe systems of work, and studying health and safety statistics and accident/incident trends (TUEF clauses 6.2.1 and 6.2.3).

We cannot meaningfully respond to this consultation, and the Council cannot demonstrate it has met these commitments, without the operational data the proposal is based on.

This is not a request outside the scope of a health and safety consultation — the proposal's own safety case rests on staffing levels, round design and workload (Section 3), and the document itself invites alternative proposals that we cannot properly evaluate without the same operational picture that informed the Council's initial view.

We therefore request the following:

Staffing and rounds

1. Current establishment: number of drivers
2. Current establishment: number of loaders
3. Number of vacancies, by role
4. Number of rounds per day, broken down by time and waste stream (refuse, recycling, garden waste, etc.)
5. Headcount for the Food Waste service specifically, to allow a genuine per-head comparison against the incident figures used to justify the proposal
6. How many loaders currently choose to start at the depot versus meeting the driver en route, so the actual scale of the change — and who is affected — can be assessed

Incident and safety data

7. Number of accidents in the last 12 months
8. Number of RIDDOR reports
9. Underlying detail on the 8 running/rushing incidents referenced in Section 3.2 and the separate serious injury incident: dates, depot/round, role, and whether

the investigation(s) identified remote start/finish as a causal factor or whether that link has been assumed

10. Underlying detail on the 59 PPE incidents referenced in Section 3.3: date, role, depot and root cause where recorded
11. The joint review of incidents with senior management and the SHaW team referenced in Section 3.2 — minutes, findings or the report itself
12. Current health and safety training records and provision
13. Current safe system of work for the service
14. The current and “updated” round risk assessments referenced in the EqIA

Vehicle Maintenance and Equipment

15. The Council has identified health and safety as a key concern in implementing task and finish. How will vehicle maintenance and equipment be managed to ensure vehicles are properly emptied and cleaned after shifts, with no rubbish left overnight that could create fire or other health and safety hazards?

Training and Refresher Training

16. Will up-to-date training and refresher training be provided to both Council employees and agency staff, to ensure they are competent and able to use the Bartec equipment safely and correctly when carrying out collections?

Alternatives and monitoring

17. The Council's assessment of the alternative options referenced in Section 5 (retaining current arrangements; increased remote supervision; increased monitoring; training/communication without changing attendance) — the document states these were considered, but we would like to see that analysis, not just the conclusion
18. What data the existing Bartec in-cab system and GPS/telematics referenced in Section 3.5 already capture on start/finish times, location and round progress, and whether this was assessed as a lower-impact alternative to depot attendance

Wider impact evidence

19. Sickness absence and turnover data for the service over the last 2-3 years
20. Reasons for sickness absence over the same period
21. Number of staff taking Ill-health Retirement in the service over the last 2-3 years
22. Number of staff leaving the service after going through the Sickness Procedure over the last 2-3 years
23. Number of staff leaving the service after going through the Capability Procedure, due to health reasons if known, over the last 2-3 years
24. Number of staff leaving the service due to ill health over the last 2-3 years

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25. Number of staff with declared secondary employment, referenced in the EqIA's socio-economic section
 26. Minutes or papers already produced on this proposal for the Environment JNCC, referenced in Section 4.3

Workday Model

27. Details of the tasks staff are to do between arriving at the Depot after their rounds and signing off
28. What arrangements for rest and meal breaks will be in place for staff arriving at the Depot after their rounds and before signing off

Overtime

29. If overtime is available during the working week, would it start within contracted hours of work, or only after contracted hours have been completed?

Breaks

30. Would the proposed break be mandatory/enforceable, or optional?

Attendance Monitoring

31. What method would be used for staff to clock in and clock out?
32. Under the proposed changes, if an employee finishes their round early, would they be permitted to leave the site before signing out?
33. What system or process would be in place to record and log when an employee has completed their round and wishes to leave the depot early?

Personal Circumstances

34. Who should employees speak to if the proposed changes have a personal impact on them?
35. Where an arrangement is made due to an employee's personal circumstances, would this be a temporary or ongoing arrangement?
36. How would such arrangements be managed to ensure consistency and avoid potential abuse?

Amenities

37. The proposed change will see an increase in staff at the Depot during the latter part of the working day. Has the impact of this on the availability and suitability of amenities (toilets, washrooms, rest and meal area space) been assessed?

Parking

38. The proposed change is likely to have an impact on parking space availability. Has this been assessed?

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39. When the Colindale Office Space Remedial Works begin, non-Street Scene Council staff may be using the Depot Office spaces for work. Has the potential impact of this on amenities and parking been considered?

Process

40. Section 2.5 states this consultation is run under the Restructuring and Change Management Procedure, while also stating the changes “are not a service restructure.” Please clarify which procedure the Council considers itself bound by, and why.

We would welcome sight of this information as soon as possible given the consultation timetable and reserve the right to comment further once it has been received.

End.