

**Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	23 November 2017	All

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**SUBJECT: Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan 2017/18**
**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 Recycling and reducing waste is vitally important to Islington. It's better for the environment, and because recycling costs a lot less than throwing rubbish away, it saves money that can be spent on other services for residents. The Council strongly supports recycling and we regularly review the ways we recycle.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on recycling progress over the last year and sets out priorities and service initiatives for 2017/18, including proposals developing a medium term strategy to drive further improvements in service quality and performance.
- 1.3 The report highlights the comprehensive range of recycling services available to residents and the work being undertaken to improve the quality of recyclables being collected and to make the service more efficient and better for residents.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree the Waste Minimisation and Recycling service Aims and Objectives for 2017/18 as set out in section 4 below, including the recycling target for the current year of 35.6%.
- 2.2 To note the work that has been carried out to achieve the Council's recycling and waste minimisation objectives, in particular in providing effective recycling services and encouraging residents living in flats to recycle more, as set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.7.
- 2.3 To note the programme of ongoing and proposed work to increase recycling as set out in section 5, and in particular to note the proposed actions to reduce plastics waste as outlined in paragraph 5.5.

**3. Background**

3.1 A Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan report is presented to the Executive each year. The report recommends aims and objectives for the recycling and waste minimisation service for the year, with certain specific recommendations. The report also sets out progress against the aims, objectives and recommendations from the previous year's report.

3.2 **Review of progress against agreed aims and objectives for 2016/17**

This section provides an update on progress against previously agreed aims, objectives and actions.

3.3 **To build awareness for the need to recycle/re-use through effective communication**

A comprehensive communications programme was delivered as part the move to new neighbourhood based collection schedules. This included letters and leaflets, bus stop posters and communications through numerous other channels.

The recycling pages of the Council's website have been completely revamped, with a greater emphasis on enabling residents to find out about the recycling services available to them at home. The site continues to be reviewed and amended taking on board user feedback.

In line with our Better Recycling Sites programme, improving the appearance and usability of recycling sites helps in itself to promote recycling. More than 300 new signs have been installed at recycling sites and a new branding for recycling and rubbish containers has been introduced to provide greater distinction between the two. Islington's network of electronic screens on its housing estates have also been used to good effect, providing information and advice on recycling to residents.

Funding was secured in 16/17 to subsequently deliver a food waste campaign in Islington (a partnership with Resource London and eight other London Boroughs under the banner heading 'Trifocal'), to encourage healthier eating, reduction of avoidable food waste and an increase in unavoidable food waste. Additional funding was also secured for a door knocking campaign during this year's National Recycling Week (25 September to 1 October).

A comprehensive programme of communications and engagements has been delivered in partnership with NLWA, including a school's education program, clothes exchange days, 'real nappy' promotional events and stalls at community events. In addition, a major new recycling campaign was launched under the heading 'save our stuff'. The campaign is delivered mainly through digital media such as digital TV and social media.

3.4 **To identify opportunities to implement better quality and more cost effective methods of recycling**

New neighbourhood based waste and recycling collection schedules for street properties were introduced in February. Neighbourhood working means dedicated recycling and rubbish collection crews working in local neighbourhoods. The changes affected some 54,000 households and has resulted in a more efficient service and improved performance, despite some initial teething problems.

There has been a continued focus on improving recycling facilities for residents on estates and in the private rented sector. Capital investment led to 46 new enclosures being installed at 20 public and estate recycling sites, as well as fifty new enclosures being installed at communal food waste recycling points on estates. This funded programme of improvement continues through to 2018/19.

Reported levels of contamination have also reduced as a result of better targeted communications, new enclosures, CCTV and enforcement, securing recycling bin lids to make dumping inside bins harder and better signs and labels at recycling sites.

The use of bin sensors on some recycling sites is assisting with preventing over-flow of public recycling sites by providing fill level data and enabling the site to be serviced before it becomes over-full.

A new fleet of refuse and recycling vehicles are being delivered, providing greater efficiency and lower emissions.

### **Services for residents and businesses**

A comprehensive range of recycling services has continued to be provided to residents to enable to them to conveniently recycle their waste. These include:

- Door to door weekly collections of mixed dry recycling, food and garden waste for 50,000 street properties
- Approximately 600 public and estate communal recycling points for mixed dry recycling for residents on and off estates
- A network of recycling points for textiles, shoes and small electrical items
- A nightly recycling collection service for residents in flats above shops
- Approximately 280 communal food waste collection points for residents on estates
- A household reuse and recycling centre with a recycling rate of over 70%, open 363 days per year
- Free clear recycling sacks and compostable food waste bags available for all residents from libraries and the Council's Municipal Offices in Upper Street
- A bulky reuse collection service providing quality items to Islington's reuse organisation, Bright Sparks
- Reduced price home composting bins and real nappy vouchers
- A range of communications activities at events, workshops for schools, give and take days, swishing (clothes swapping) events and real nappy workshops
- Low cost commercial waste recycling services to businesses
- Free recycling services to schools and charities with a residual waste collection arrangement with the Council

A recycling service is in principle offered to all of Islington's residents. However, there are likely to be isolated properties, particularly new blocks of flats, where services have not yet been available. An audit of all Islington's domestic properties is currently underway, with the objective of identifying any properties without a recycling service for mixed dry recycling, and of providing one.

The audit is expected to be completed by the end of the current financial year.

#### **3.5 To seek to achieve a 2016/17 recycling rate for waste from households of 35.2% and that supports the NLWA recycling target of 50% by 2020**

Islington's recycling rate for 2016/17 was 31.6%, an increase over the previous year's (revised) figure of 30.6%.

The recycling rate is made up of two elements: dry recycling (papers, cans, bottles and so on) and organics material (food and garden waste). While many local authorities with large garden areas are able to contribute significant organics recycling tonnages, resulting in higher overall performance, Islington's dry recycling rate is the highest of all the inner city London local authorities and above average for London as a whole.

Nevertheless, significantly increasing the amount of household waste that is recycled is proving to be a significant challenge for all local authorities, and especially those that have a high proportion of purpose built block of flats.

#### **3.6 To achieve a household waste (not recycled) rate of no more than 413kg during 2016/17**

Islington's revised household waste (not recycled) figure for 2016/17 was 403kg, exceeding the target, and demonstrating our ongoing achievement in minimising domestic waste overall.

#### **3.7 To support the NLWA partnership and the implementation of its waste strategy**

Officers continue to work closely with NLWA in implementing both its joint waste minimisation strategy and on joint communications work, as well as being key partners on technical service related matters.

The North London Waste Authority, in partnership with the seven constituent Boroughs, delivers a programme of outreach and engagement focused on reducing waste. The work involves attending summer fairs, colleges and community centres and holding supermarket stalls. In addition, the programme has involved a 'food waste challenge', whereby households have been challenged to measure and reduce the amount of food waste they produce, communications work during 'Recycling Week', an online recycling game, 'Waste Less, Lunch Free' events, Halloween focussed communications and events and a range of other initiatives.

## **4. Aims and Objectives for 2017/18**

Proposed aims, objectives and service priorities for 2017/18 are set out below. They reflect previous aims and objectives with updated targets and actions.

### **Aim**

- To provide quality recycling services that meet the needs of residents and to reduce the amounts of municipal waste sent for disposal via landfill or incineration.

### **Objectives**

- To build awareness for the need to recycle/re-use through effective communication
- To target specific recycling and waste minimisation attention on purpose built flats and apartments in the private rented sector, housing associations and other social rented housing sectors
- To identify opportunities to implement better quality and more cost effective methods of recycling
- To seek to achieve a 2017/18 recycling rate for waste from households of 35.6% in support of the agreed NLWA recycling target of 50% by 2020
- To achieve a household waste (not recycled) rate of no more than 407kg during 2017/18
- To support the NLWA partnership and the implementation of its waste strategy

More details on specific proposals are provided below.

## **5. Service updates and proposals**

### **5.1 Environment Scrutiny Review of recycling**

The Council's Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee have undertaken to review the recycling services offered to households. The purpose of the review is 'To reduce the amount of waste going to incineration or landfill by increasing the amount of domestic recycling'. The review is intended to conclude with recommendations by April 2018.

### **5.2 Recycling for flats and the rented sector**

A recent report commissioned and published by Resource London explored issues relating to waste management in the private rented sector and made a series of recommendations, relating to the relationship between landlords and tenants, the Local Authority and landlords, and the Local Authority and tenants. Using this to inform our recycling programme in Islington, the following actions are proposed, to improve recycling within this sector:

- Better communications with new tenants, through working directly with letting agencies and landlords, to provide clear information on recycling collection arrangements and waste management responsibilities;
- Better communications with landlords regarding services for their residents and landlord

responsibilities;

- Better partnership working between departments within the Council to share information and deliver joint initiatives for targeting tenants, landlords and letting agents;
- Develop better partnerships with larger letting agents and private landlords to achieve better outcomes;
- Encourage the use of standard clauses relating to recycling in Assured Tenancy Agreements;
- Improved licencing requirements relating to waste and recycling for HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) landlords that are subject to Islington's two private landlord HMO licencing schemes
- Clear information to landlords and tenants on their legal obligations in relation to waste and recycling and the penalties arising from non-compliance;

#### **In addition, we will also**

- Complete the current audit to ensure 100% of properties are receiving a recycling service and work with landlords, particularly housing associations and other social housing providers, to ensure information is effectively provided to residents on recycling services
- Continue to improve communal recycling and food waste sites through the Better Recycling Site programme

#### **Housing and caretakers**

For residents living on the Council's housing estates, caretakers are a key point of contact with the Council. Caretakers perform a vital role, both in maintaining the estate and in communicating with residents. Our Recycling Team work closely with colleagues in Housing and will continue to develop closer and more effective partnerships to provide them with the information and tools they need to be recycling ambassadors on their estates.

#### **Mini-sack trial**

Residents on estates generally use communal recycling bins located on the estate. Residents in other properties are provided with green recycling boxes or clear recycling sacks, but neither of these are practical for use with communal recycling bins. Therefore we are trialling the provisions of smaller 'minisacks' which can be conveniently placed through the hole in a recycling bin lid, helping residents to recycle on the go. The pilot will be reviewed to see if it increases recycling, if it is popular with residents and if it is affordable.

### **5.3 Better Recycling Sites**

In order to deliver an improved recycling service to residents using either public or estate communal recycling points Members agreed a capital budget for the three-year (2016/17 to 2018/19) to improve the appearance and usability of all types of communal recycling sites and to reduce contamination and fly-tipping.

The second year of this programme will see continued investment in Islington's recycling sites, including:

- New enclosures installed for up around 25 separate recycling sites
- New enclosures for around 50 communal food waste recycling points
- New signage at 300 recycling sites
- Up to 300 new or refurbished recycling containers
- Introduction of a new 'reverse lid' design for recycling sites

Officers have been working closely with leading recycling container manufacturers to design a new type of recycling lid which will reduce contamination and wear and tear on the front of the bin. These will be introduced in Islington during the next six months. This simple design change has the potential to dramatically improve the visual appearance of recycling bins and reduce contamination and are as a result of innovative and proactive thinking from officers within the Council and their efforts to drive change with partners in the private sector.

As well as the Council's CCTV network, five mobile CCTV camera systems have been deployed at recycling sites around the Borough. Working closely with the Compliance Team, enforcement action has been taken at a number of sites where rubbish has been illegally fly-tipped.

Fly-tipping is illegal and we will continue to take firm action against residents and businesses who dispose of their rubbish irresponsibly.

#### 5.4 **Smart recycling bins**

Islington has been at the forefront of trialling new technology through its partnership with a leading supplier of bin sensors. These are small sensors fitted inside the lid of recycling sites that can detect how full the container is, and enables schedule frequencies to be optimised. The sensors also provide performance and management data to help services to be managed more effectively.

'Smart routes' have also been trialled. The system can generate daily collection schedules using data collected from sensors to predict which sites need to be emptied on a given day. However, technology shouldn't be used for its own sake, and the benefits and costs of the system continues to be reviewed.

#### 5.5 **Waste Minimisation**

Awareness of the problem of plastic waste, and in particular of its impact on the oceans is increasing. It is estimated that between 5 and 13 million tonnes of plastic ends up into the world's oceans each year. A range of initiatives by major manufacturers, retailers and government organisations are aimed at tackling this problem, while at a local level, initiatives aimed at reducing the use of plastic bottles, straws and other disposable plastic items are taking hold.

The Council already plays its part through the responsible management of plastic waste in the recycling and residual waste streams. However, we can do more to encourage the reduction of plastic waste. As part of our efforts to reduce plastic waste, we will

- Promote and encourage the use of Apps that help reduce plastic waste (such as those providing information on where you can refill water bottles)
- Encourage the government to follow the lead of the devolved Scottish Government and many European governments in considering a Deposit Return Scheme for plastic bottles
- Encourage bars and cafes to stop the use of plastic straws
- Raise awareness of the issue of plastic waste among residents through our communications channels and social media
- Respond fully to the recent consultation entitled 'Call for evidence on voluntary and economic incentives to reduce littering of drinks containers and promote recycling' issued by DEFRA on 2 October 2017

More broadly in term of waste minimisation, we will continue to work with the NLWA to help deliver their Waste Prevention Action Plan, and continue to offer composting bins at reduced prices and encourage the use of washable cloth nappies through the voucher scheme.

#### 5.6 **Communicating with residents**

##### **Better Recycling Sites**

Planned improvements to communal recycling sites will be supported with associated communications activities, including use of the Council's network of electronic screens, promotion of the improvements themselves through social media and other outlets and communications targeted around specific sites where improvements have been undertaken. The presence of improved recycling sites themselves delivers a powerful communications message.

##### **TRiFOCAL food waste campaign**

The Council is one of nine London Boroughs awarded £50k European Union Life funding through a

collaboration with London Resource. The project will target households, schools, community groups, hospitality and food services businesses as well as large businesses in the boroughs through an integrated communications campaign. This will focus on raising awareness about the value of food – combining messaging about avoiding wasting food, healthy and sustainable eating and increasing recycling rates for unavoidable food waste both in the home and when eating out. There will also be London wide activity including engagement with large employers to raise awareness and a London harvest festival to celebrate the value of food.

Details of specific campaign activities are being finalised.

### **Recycling Week 2017**

The Council also successfully applied for £4.5k funding to deliver a communications campaign during Recycling Week 2017 (commencing 25 September). The project was delivered with Keep Britain Tidy and consisted of door knocking of approximately 1,500 estate properties to promote recycling.

### **‘Just One Thing’**

Independent research shows that there are many residents who have recycling services and are aware of the importance of recycling, but do not for a variety of reasons. ‘Just one thing’ aims to encourage these residents to commit to start recycling by recycling ‘just one thing’, such as glass bottles, or food cans. The concept was included in the Recycling Week door knocking programme.

### **Other communications activities will include:**

- A recycling quiz and supporting material to increase knowledge of recycling and reduce confusion about what can and can’t be recycled
- Providing resources to support estate residents to be recycling champions
- Review of the Flats above Shops service to improve communications and awareness of time banding (restrictions on set out and collection times)
- Ongoing resident communications with residents through the Joint Recycling Communications campaign with NLWA
- Outreach at the Cally Festival, Angel Canal festival and other events
- New branding and recycling messages on the new recycling and waste vehicles fleet
- Ongoing review and update of Islington’s recycling web pages. The recycling home page receives around 1,000 page views per week

Finally, as detailed elsewhere in this report, we will actively work with landlords and letting agents to ensure that residents in the rented sector have both efficient recycling services but also are fully aware of and engaged in those services. We expect landlords in particular to take on their full responsibilities in playing their part in this important communications campaign.

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial implications:**

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications as the recommendations are substantially for noting.

### **Legal Implications:**

- 6.2 The Council has a duty to collect household waste. No charge may be made for its collection except in prescribed cases (section 45 Environment Protection Act 1990). In addition, the Council is under a separate duty to collect at least two types of recyclable or compostable household waste either co-mingled or individually separated from the rest of the household waste. Government guidance states that the following materials count as a type of recyclable waste: batteries; garden waste; glass; hazardous waste liquids; catering waste; metals; paper products; plastics; textiles and shoes; waste electrical and electronic equipment; and, wood. The duty to collect recyclates applies unless the Council is satisfied that the cost of doing so would be unreasonably high (on an individual premises basis) or comparable alternative arrangements are available (section 45A of the 1990 Act).

The EU framework directive on waste requires member states to achieve 50% recycling of household waste by 2020. However, in the UK, local authorities have not been set individual recycling targets.

The Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan 2017/18 is intended to facilitate improvements in the Council's performance within the legal framework which governs the Council as a waste collection authority

### **Environmental Implications**

- 6.3 Improved recycling rates alongside waste minimisation will continue to have positive environmental impacts for all residents.

### **Resident Impact Assessment:**

- 6.4 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

No adverse impacts for any residents have been identified as a result of the proposals in this report, whilst improved recycling rates alongside waste minimisation will have positive impacts for all residents in terms of a more efficient use of Council resources.

## **7. Reasons for the recommendations / decision:**

- 7.1 This report provides an update on recycling progress over the last year and sets out priorities and service initiatives for 2017/18 to drive further improvements in service quality, performance and efficiency.

**Appendices and Background Papers:** None.

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



Executive Member for Environment and Transport    Date: 10 November 2017

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