
1. **Synopsis**

   1.1 This report describes work carried out over the last year to improve recycling in Islington and makes proposals for further service improvement in the future.

2. **Recommendations**

   2.1 To agree the service Aims and Objectives for 2012/13.

   2.2 To note the new emphasis on recycling food waste as part of the compulsory recycling education, encouragement and enforcement process.

   2.3 To note the recycling service changes and improvements for residents on estates and to agree in principle to the further expansion of the food waste recycling service for all residents where practical within three years.

   2.4 To agree that should the outcome of the recycling container pilot scheme demonstrate a sound business case, proposals for wider use of improved containers be considered as part of the 2013/14 budget review process.

   2.5 To note the progress being made in developing opportunities for residents to reuse bulky waste through Bright Sparks and Reuse In Camden and Islington (RICI).

   2.6 To note the bid to the weekly bin fund and its conditions.
3. **Background**

3.1 This report is an annual report presented to the Executive outlining the aims and objectives for the Council’s recycling service going forward and the main achievements of the previous year.

3.2 **Aims and objectives of the service for 2011/12**

3.3 Progress against the agreed aims and objectives for the waste minimization and recycling service for 2011/12 is outlined below:

3.4 **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.

3.5 **Objectives**

3.6 To achieve a household waste recycling rate of 32% for 2011/12:

The unconfirmed recycling rate for 2011/12 was 31.6% compared to 30.4% in 2010/11. The final, audited figure will not be known until later this year. The highest monthly recycling rate for the year was 34.06%.

3.7 To achieve a household waste per household rate of no more than 465 kg during 2011/12:

The audited final figure for household waste not recycled, composted or reused per household for 2011/12 will not be known until later this year but for Quarters 1-3 it stands at a provisional 333.1kg.

3.8 To identify opportunities to implement better quality and more cost effective methods of recycling:

Improvments to the service this year have included:

- Greater distribution of wheeled containers for recycling
- Trialing alternative, more reliable methods of recycling bag distribution
- Increased participation through the introduction of compulsory recycling
- Greater recycling of bulky waste through alternative processing facilities
- New small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) recycling banks

3.9 To support the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) partnership and the implementation of its waste strategy:

Council officers have been fully engaged with the NLWA operations and procurement teams and have been involved in evaluation of waste services and fuel use contract bids, helping to support the NLWA partnership while protecting the best interests of Islington residents.

3.10 **Revised Aims and Objectives for 2012/13**

The following aims and objectives are proposed for 2012/13.

3.11 **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 achieve a household waste recycling rate of 32% for 2012/13
• To achieve a household waste (not recycled) per household rate of no more than 459kg during 2012/13
• To identify opportunities to implement better quality and more cost effective methods of recycling
• To support the NLWA partnership and the implementation of its waste strategy

Service priorities

To achieve these objectives, we will be focusing on the following:

• Improved recycling services for residents on estates
• Reduce contamination, particularly from communal collection points
• Improve participation in street level food waste recycling
• Provide improved containers for street level properties
• Provide better opportunities for residents to reuse waste
• Deliver targeted, more effective communications

3.12 Recommendation: to agree the service Aims and Objectives for 2012/13.

4. Proposals for Service improvements

4.1 Further improvements in recycling services in Islington need to be made for the following reasons:

• To support the Council’s overarching priorities of making Islington a fairer place;
• Meeting the challenges presented to the Council through the comprehensive spending review, and;
• Ensuring we fulfil our obligations as part of the NLWA partnership.

4.2 Compulsory recycling policy

4.3 The compulsory recycling waste policy was introduced in Islington on 4th April 2011. The policy applies to all recycling services and to all residents who receive those services. An update report was provided to the Executive on 15 September 2011.

The priority has been on education and encouragement, and most residents who have been contacted by our Street Management Officers have started to recycle.

To date, 12 Section 46 notices have been issued to residents who persistently did not recycle. Failure to comply with the terms of a S46 notice could lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

4.4 The focus of monitoring has been on whether residents are recycling their dry recyclable waste. However, the majority of residents, particularly in street level properties, are now recycling. Despite convenient food waste recycling services being provided to all street level properties, approximately 60% of householders do not regularly use their food waste recycling service. Food waste makes up around 25% of the household waste stream. It is estimated that around 10% of this is currently recycled.

Recycling food waste reduced waste disposal costs, reduces vermin and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The monitoring process from initial monitoring visit to the potential issuing of a fixed penalty notice can take up to 12 weeks.

It is proposed to focus resources more clearly on the recycling of food waste, with communications being clearer and more concise, enabling the monitoring process to be shortened.
4.5 Recommendation: to note the new emphasis on recycling food waste as part of the compulsory recycling education, encouragement and enforcement process.

4.6 **Estate recycling services**

4.7 As a result of new fire safety guidance issued by the government, door to door recycling services on a number of estates have been withdrawn and replaced with convenient and more cost effective communal recycling sites. Only those properties directly affected by the guidance have been subject to service changes.

4.8 We have worked hard to ensure that residents on estates receive better recycling services as a result of these changes. We are therefore in the process of introducing some 700 new recycling containers on estates and new chute recycling services.

4.9 During the last three years, communal food waste collection points have been provided to 20,000 households on estates, bringing service provision in line with residents in street level properties. It is proposed to continue this service expansion with effect from 2013/14 to a further 10,000 households with aim of providing all residents with a food waste recycling service where practical over the next three years (will require a modest financial allocation to support bin purchases and increased revenue costs).

Provision of food waste to 10,000 households would cost approximately £60k per annum, with a waste disposal cost saving of approximately £37k once menu pricing is introduced in 2016.

4.10 Recommendation: to note the recycling service changes and improvements for residents on estates and to agree in principle to the further expansion of the food waste recycling service for all residents where practical within three years.

4.11 **Recycling containers**

4.12 For many residents, the green recycling box is too small and limits levels of recycling. Residents in street level properties are now offered a wheelie bin as an alternative to the green box subject to certain criteria. However, improved containerisation may be needed on a wider scale to encourage more recycling.

4.13 Officers are currently evaluating the results of a pilot scheme to trial the use of wheelie bins and single use plastic sacks in Islington, to see which method has the greatest impact on recycling rates and is the most practical, cost effective and acceptable method of collecting recycling.

It is estimated that provision of plastic sacks to residents on the door to door recycling service would cost an additional £120k per annum (purchase and distribution), while providing wheelie bins to suitable properties would be a one off purchase cost of approximately £750k. A 20% increase in the amount collected for recycling would result in an annual disposal cost saving of approximately £136k once menu pricing is introduced.

It is proposed to feed the results of this pilot into budget proposals for 2012/13, enabling a move to a new, improved form to recycling containment for street level properties in 2013/14 if the pilot scheme demonstrates a sound business case.

4.14 Recommendation: to agree that should the outcome of the recycling container pilot scheme demonstrate a sound business case, proposals for wider use of improved containers be considered as part of the 2013/14 budget review process.

4.15 **Bulky Waste**

4.16 Officers are working hard to provide more opportunities for residents to reuse their waste where possible.
Bright Sparks continues to operate a shop on Seven Sisters Road and has recently entered into an agreement with the Council’s Housing Operations Department to manage the bulky waste collected from Council Housing void properties. Reusable and recyclable items are separated from other waste items at a new workshop facility on the Andover Estate.

Officers are also working with the London Reuse Network to develop a new furniture reuse organisation, known as ‘Reuse in Camden and Islington’ (RICI). The objective is to pass reusable items collected through the bulky waste collection service to RICI for refurbishment and resale through an Islington located retail outlet.

Both groups are part of the London Reuse Network, a network of social enterprise reuse organisations with the backing of the London Waste and Recycling Board.

Both projects deliver employment and training opportunities for residents in Islington, enable quality goods to be sourced at reasonable prices by residents, and divert waste from disposal.

4.17 Recommendation: to note the progress being made in developing opportunities for residents to reuse bulky waste through Bright Sparks and Reuse in Camden and Islington (RICI).

4.18 **Weekly Bin Fund**

4.19 The Department of Communities and Local Government has made £250m available to support weekly waste collection services. Islington Council has submitted three separate applications to this fund. The applications are for:

- Communal food waste collections to a further 10,000 households on estates
- Provision of improved recycling containerisation to street level properties
- The retention of weekly residual waste collections for street level properties

The three bids total some £2.7m over three years. A decision on applications will be made in October 2012.

All three bids require a commitment to the retention of a weekly residual waste collection service for five years. Council will need to publish this commitment widely to residents for example via the council website, waste information literature and its annual report as part of the condition for accepting the money from the fund.

4.20 Recommendation: to note the bid and its conditions.

4.21 **WRAP recycling commitments**

4.22 WRAP, in partnership with DEFRA, have developed two waste and recycling collection commitments which aim to set minimum standards for the provision of household and business waste and recycling collection services.

The Council already meets the criteria of the household commitment and many of the business commitments. Boroughs can decide which of the different elements of the commitments they wish to commit to.

WRAP encourages Councils to support the commitments when funding applications are made to WRAP for support services and direct funding.

It is proposed to sign to Household Waste Commitment and the Business Recycling and Waste Services Commitments.
4.23 **North London Waste Authority (NLWA)**

4.24 The Council continues to support the NLWA procurement process and operations. The Council has now agreed the Inter Authority Agreement which will constitute a binding agreement between the eight NLWA partners and commits constituent Boroughs to waste flow tonnages for the duration of the NLWA contract. Our recycling targets are therefore defined by this agreement.

At a meeting of the Executive on 21 October 2010, Members agreed to align recycling targets to the IAA. Consequently, our recycling targets through to 2020/21 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>31.20% (propose increasing target to 2011/12 level of 32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>32.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>33.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>34.46%</td>
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<td>2016/17</td>
<td>35.20%</td>
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<td>35.63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>36.09%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>37.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>37.09% (an artefact of the modelling used)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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4.25 NLWA are now at the ‘Invitation to Submit Final Bids’ stage for both its waste services contract and its fuel use contract. Evaluation of these bids will commence later this year with financial close expected in June 2013.

4.26 **Communications**

4.27 Regular effective communications are necessary to get the most out of our recycling services. Residents need regular reminders about what can be recycled and new residents need new service information. While most residents are recycling some of their waste, a great deal that could be recycled is not being recycled.

Officers are exploring ways of targeting limited communications resources as effectively as possible. External funding options, such as Recycle for London are also being exploited, and the seven NLWA constituent Boroughs are exploring options for joint communications.

4.28 Technology is being used to gather information on the amount of recyclables collected in streets in Islington. This information is being used to monitor the effectiveness of service changes and trials. It is also able to identify areas of the Borough where recycling per household is higher or lower than average, enabling communications to be targeted more effectively.

Officers aim to make more use of such technology in the future.

5. **Implications**

5.1 **Financial implications**

The new financial arrangements with NLWA will introduce menu pricing at the commencement of the contract for waste disposal, expected to be April 2016. Under menu pricing, recycling is a cheaper option than residual waste and therefore any diversion from residual waste will save money.

All other costs are planned to be contained within existing budgets or funded from external resources already secured. Any additional savings made will be built into the medium term financial strategy.

Depending upon the outcome of consultations on changes to the recycling service there may be some additional revenue and capital financing implications which will need to be assessed as part of the budget setting process for 2013/14 onwards.
The grant to support weekly waste collection, if approved, will be for 3 years only and amounts to £2.7m in total. The commitment to weekly collection will be for 5 years. It is unclear if further funds will be available at the end of the 3 year period.

5.2 Legal Implications

As a waste collection authority, the Council may adopt a waste recycling action plan setting out its aims and objectives for recycling waste (section 1 Localism Act 2011 (General Power of Competence)). Increasing the amount of waste recycled and reducing waste going to landfill will be important in the context of NLWA’s procurement of a new waste disposal contract. The supporting inter authority agreement will introduce differential pricing for dealing with recyclates and residual waste which will apply when the new facilities are provided under the NLWA contract.

The Council has used its existing statutory power (Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990) to introduce a compulsory recycling policy, and if necessary, enforce that policy. That section enables the council as the waste collection authority to specify (subject to the serving of a notice) the number, size and type of receptacles provided and the type of household waste allowed in each type of waste receptacle. Accordingly the council may require separate receptacles or compartments of receptacles to be used for waste which is to be recycled and waste which is not. The council may issue fixed penalty notices to persons who contravene these requirements (Section 47ZA of the 1990 Act).

Defra undertook a consultation on ‘Amending the powers of local authorities regarding presentation of waste for collection’ earlier this year. In the consultation document the government’s preferred option is to abolish the criminal offence in section 46 and replace it with a civil sanction. Local authorities would continue to be able to issue penalty notices but only in limited circumstances and if a ‘harm to local amenity’ test is satisfied. The aim of the proposed test would be to ensure that penalties are targeted at those whose behaviour reduces the quality of their neighbour’s surroundings. The Government proposes that penalties might be appropriate if bags containing waste are left out for several days but not if waste is put in the wrong receptacle. Defra’s response to the outcome of the consultation is currently awaited.

5.3 Environmental Implications

An environmental impact scoping exercise has been carried out and it was identified that the proposals in this report would have no adverse environmental impacts.

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

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.

An Equality Impact Assessment in respect of refuse and recycling services (including those on estates) was completed in June 2009. The EIA identified that there would be no differential impacts.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out in relation to the provision of improved recycling containers should this be progressed.
6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

6.1 The reasons for the recommendations are:

- To support the Council’s over-arching priorities of making Islington a fairer place;
- Meeting the challenges presented to the Council through the comprehensive spending review, and;
- Ensuring we fulfil our obligations as part of the NLWA partnership.

Appendices – none

Background papers

- The Household Waste Collection Commitment: http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/household-waste-collection-commitment-0
- Inter Authority Agreement: upon request

Final report clearance:

Signed by: Paul Smith 18.6.12

Executive Member for Environment Date

Received by:

Head of Democratic Services Date

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