

Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Executive	Date: 29.9.16	Ward(s): All
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SUBJECT: Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan 2016/17**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 Recycling is vitally important to Islington. It's better for the environment, and because it costs a lot less than throwing rubbish away, it saves money that can be spent on 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 2016/17.
- 1.3 The report highlights the comprehensive range of recycling services available to residents in Islington 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 2016/17 as set out in paragraph 4 below.
- 2.2 To note the outcome of the recycling pilot carried out in Tollington (and neighbouring) Wards as set out in paragraph 5.1.
- 2.3 To note that the proposed changes to food and garden waste recycling collections would not deliver the level of savings originally anticipated.
- 2.4 To agree not to implement the proposed changes to food and garden waste recycling collections, as other ways of achieving the savings have been identified, including re-phasing the delivery of savings across the department and also from optimising refuse and recycling rounds.
- 2.5 To agree to implement optimised refuse and recycling collection rounds for properties with door to door collections based on a village principle (area based teams).

2.6 To note that changes to the estate door to door recycling service have been completed.

3. Background

3.1 Review of progress against agreed aims and objectives for 2015/16

3.2 Recycling Performance for 2015/16

Islington's recycling rate for 15/16 has just been confirmed as 29.4%, compared to the NLWA agreed target of 34.5%, and down on the 32.8% figure in 14/15. The recycling rates of all NLWA boroughs dropped in 15/16 (and by an average of 1.6% points) and this is mainly attributed to tighter industry-wide regulatory controls around contamination levels. Contaminated loads is mainly a problem for Islington in respect of communal bins, though why the overall impact on our local rate is somewhat higher than the average will need further investigation and it is likely that there are a number of factors at play.

The underlying dry recyclables rate (excluding compostable material, which varies widely across inner and outer London boroughs) stands at 22.1% and is above the average for both London (21.0%) and also the NLWA constituent Boroughs (21.6%).

Average residual (non-recycled) waste per household in 15/16 was 412kg, exceeding the target of 422 kg, though not as good as in 14/15. Residual household waste generated per household is the second lowest (best) in London and remains the lowest of the NLWA constituent Boroughs.

3.3 Improving the quality of recycling

As indicated above, the recycling rate has been adversely affected by tighter controls on the quality of recycling being collected following the introduction of new legislation around recycling facilities. Globally, recyclers are requiring higher qualities of materials for recycling, and the value of some materials has declined. Measures are being taken to reduce levels of contamination in public recycling bins.

While this is a challenge for Islington, the problem is a national one with Local Authorities across London and the country experiencing similar difficulties in maintaining the quality of collected recyclables. A range of actions to tackle the problem have been drawn up by officers working together across the Council.

Officers work closely with front line staff to identify the most problematic sites. This 'priority list' is being tackled with a comprehensive range of actions to deal with the specific problems at that site. Front-line staff are being consulted with on how best to resolve the issues and to confirm progress, and staff have reported significant improvements at a number of sites following these interventions. As a last resort, consideration may be given to relocating or removing the site, following an assessment of the impact on local residents.

3.4 Services for residents and businesses

A comprehensive range of recycling services continues to be provided to residents to enable 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 residents on and off estates
- 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

3.5 Improving efficiency

A range of work has been undertaken to improve the efficiency of the service, including:

- Changes to estate recycling services
- Door to door recycling pilot scheme
- Optimisation of door to door collection routes
- Trialling of bin sensors and 'smart bin'
- Trialling mobile technology for front line staff
- Waste minimisation activities and communication

3.6 Apprentices and communications

Ten apprentices were recruited in July and in September 2015, to work as 'Recycling Communications Apprentices'. Their main role was to speak to residents on estates to encourage them to recycle, to find out what barriers there were to recycling, to resolve these issues and then to let residents know of the improvements that had been carried out.

Nearly 5,000 households on estates in Islington have been visited.

Apprentices have also helped with other communications work, site visits and monitoring, and 'back office' work, as well as receiving valuable training, experience and qualifications. Their manager, Janice Grant, was shortlisted for 'Local Authority Champion of the Year' at the 'Awards for Excellence in Waste and Recycling' for her work in managing and mentoring this team of apprentices.

3.7 Working in partnership with North London Waste Authority

Officers continue to work closely with NLWA in implementing both its joint waste minimisation strategy and on joint communications work.

The Council has negotiated a new way of paying for what Islington disposes of. Through an inter-authority agreement with the North London Waste Authority and the six other constituent Boroughs, a system of 'menu pricing' has been introduced, meaning that the Council pays a price for each tonne of waste or recycling produced by Islington residents. The price paid for recycling is lower than the waste price paid for waste, which means that every tonne of waste recycled or avoided saves money.

This is an excellent new deal for the Council that will reduce its overall waste disposal fees and incentivise more recycling and waste minimisation.

4. Aims and Objectives for 2016/7

Proposed aims, objectives and service priorities for 2016/17 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 identify opportunities to implement better quality and more cost effective methods of recycling
- 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
- To achieve a household waste (not recycled) rate of no more than 413kg during 2016/17
- To support the NLWA partnership and the implementation of its waste strategy

To achieve these objectives, we will:

- Implement more efficient collection rounds based on a village principle for properties with door to door collections
- Introduce new, cleaner collection vehicles, fitted with bin-weighing technology
- Improve communal and estate recycling points
- Work with landlords to ensure all residents in the private and social rented sector have access to good recycling services
- Work with management companies of apartment blocks to ensure all these residents have access to good recycling services
- Encourage residents to reduce waste through direct engagement and through partnership working with the North London Waste Authority
- Provide all residents receiving a door to door collection with a free delivery of clear recycling sacks
- Trial smaller recycling sacks for estate residents
- Provide regular and effective communications to residents about recycling service and waste minimisation
- Continue to introduce smart technology, such as bin sensors, to improve service quality and efficiency

5. Service Updates and Changes

5.1 Recycling for properties with door to door collections

As part of the 2015/16 budget proposals , Members agreed to;

- Introduce the 'village principle' into Street Environment Services by creating area-based teams.
- Reduce the number of refuse collection vehicles by, following pilots, moving towards communal kitchen waste and green waste collection.

Services are being planned around six 'villages', providing geographically based local services for local residents. This means dedicated resources will be deployed in localised areas, giving the collection staff and managers responsibility for refuse and recycling services in these localised areas. At present, each crew operates in different parts of the Borough throughout the week.

A detailed analysis of the current service and an assessment of the resources required to deliver a more efficient service has been carried out. The outcome of this work is a village principle proposal that delivers much of the required savings without changing the service-offer to residents. Though the day and time of collections may change, the proposal also provides front line staff with a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

During 2015 in an area based around Tollington Ward, a pilot scheme was carried out to trial new collection arrangements for the communal collection of food and garden waste to see if there was potential to develop a more efficient way of recycling food and garden waste in Islington. The active participation of local residents meant that the amount of food and garden waste collected was comparable to recycling levels from door-to-door collections.

Following the pilot, a detailed analysis was carried out to see if communal food and garden recycling could be extended across Islington to reduce the cost of the service. This analysis concluded that the savings made by a change to communal food and garden waste collections would not be as substantial as first projected. In particular, a communal system would require more vehicles than originally

anticipated, significantly reducing savings.

Residents in the pilot area reverted back to door to door collections for food and garden waste from 5th September, with communal food and garden waste containers being removed.

New greener vehicles will be purchased to support the proposed collection arrangements, leading to a cleaner, more effective service.

A full **communications campaign** will support the service changes with residents being given clear guidance on any changes to collection days, as well as what can and cannot be recycled.

Clear recycling sacks for residents with door to door collections

To further encourage residents to recycle more following these changes, a **free pack of clear recycling sacks** will be delivered to households with a door to door collection. These have proved popular with residents in the past and provide residents with additional capacity for putting out extra recycling. These sacks are available to any resident free of charge from libraries, should they want to continue to use them.

5.2 Service changes on estates

As part of the budget proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17, Members also agreed to

- Review recycling points on estates to make them more accessible and, following pilots, move to communal recycling on the estates where doorstep recycling is currently still offered.

Following a comprehensive consultation process with residents and stakeholders, including TRA meetings and other site visits, those residents previously receiving a door to door recycling services now receive either:

- A door to door recycling service where they have an equivalent door to door refuse collection service (mainly ground floor street-facing properties), or;
- A communal recycling site service located on their estate or at their block, or;
- In a few instances, the service remains, pending further localised consultation and site improvements.

5.3 Communal recycling service improvements

Recycling site improvements

To underpin the above changes to recycling services for estate flats, members agreed a capital budget for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 period to improve the appearance of all types of communal recycling sites and to reduce contamination and fly-tipping. These improvements will include:

- Bespoke enclosures or screens to improve the visual appearance of the site;
- Replaced or refurbishment of containers;
- New signs giving clearer information on what can and cannot be recycled and warning against dumping at recycling sites;
- New container and lid designs as a direct result of officers discussions with bin manufacturers;
- 'See through' recycling bins;
- Electronic information screens located at recycling site, some with inbuilt cameras;
- The use of the Council's CCTV network where necessary;
- All of this is in addition to our ongoing communications activities.

Clear recycling sacks for residents with communal recycling sites

Clear recycling sacks are a popular option for many residents but aren't suitable for putting into communal recycling bins due to their size. We will trial the delivery of smaller clear sacks specifically for use by residents at communal recycling sites, to see whether these are a cost effective way of making

recycling for residents in flats and apartments easier and encouraging them to recycle more.

Engaging with landlords

Estate landlords can play a key role in ensuring socially responsible behaviour of their tenants. We will continue to work with landlords, including Islington's own housing department, social landlords and private landlords to ensure that their tenants have access to good quality recycling services, and fully informed of how to recycle and understand that recycling remains compulsory in Islington.

Recycling services for apartment blocks

It is a priority for the Council that residents living in apartment blocks need to have access to recycling facilities that are as convenient as possible. The Council is committed to providing these facilities and helping residents in apartments to recycle as much of their waste as possible. To do this we will:

- Carry out an audit to ensure all residents in apartment blocks have access to a convenient recycling facility
- Ensure a fair share of the recycling site improvement programme is focussed on apartment blocks
- Ensure that private or socially managed apartment blocks are included in the small clear recycling sack pilot
- Engage with landlords and management companies to ensure appropriate facilities are provided

5.4 Smart recycling bins

Sensors have been fitted to some recycling containers that give fill level readings and provide alerts when the bins need emptying. The system also generates 'smart plans', dynamic collection rounds which take the collection crew to the full containers along an optimised collection round.

Sensors have also been fitted to some food bins and waste bins as part of the pilot.

The system is being evaluated to see if it can deliver efficiencies, as well as improved customer service.

The collection crew have had to adapt to a completely new way of working as part of this pilot and were shortlisted for 'Recycling Crew of the Year' at the prestigious 'Awards for Excellence in Waste and Recycling'. The driver was Jacinto Carvalho, and the two loaders were Ian Watson and Bob Jones.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy has a target of £100k of efficiency savings to be delivered in the 16/17 financial year with the potential of a further £100k delivered in 17/18.

5.5 Waste Minimisation

Officers work in close partnership with the North London Waste Authority to deliver a waste prevention plan.

The plan focusses on three priority waste streams: food waste, textiles and furniture reuse and is backed up with a full action plan, including:

- Food waste advice stalls at large festivals and fairs, supermarkets, farmers markets and shopping centres
- Community and schools engagement
- Cookery sessions with residents
- Library displays
- Work with 'ambassador families' to promote food waste reduction
- Give and take events
- Community repair workshops
- Clothing exchange days and 'swishing' events

- Waste education programme
- Promotion of reusable bags
- Action on unwanted marketing material ('junk mail')
- Real nappy support

The Waste Prevention Action Plan can be viewed at www.nlwa.gov.uk.

5.6 Recycling targets

The Council, along with the other six constituency Boroughs of the NLWA, have agreed an Inter Authority Agreement which commits us to supporting the NLWA's own recycling target of 50% by 2020. It is understood that among the seven constituency Boroughs, the opportunity for contributing to this recycling target varies with the quantity of and ease of collecting recyclable materials.

5.7 Communications

Regular communications are essential in encouraging residents to continue to recycle and to reduce their waste. Communications will be delivered in a number of ways during the coming year, including:

- To residents with door to door collections when optimised routes are implemented;
- To the same residents through the delivery of clear recycling sacks;
- Targeted communications to residents on estates based on their local recycling facility and, where data exists, based on performance at the site;
- Communications to residents in the private and social rented sector through engagement with landlords;
- Engagement with the community at events, including give and take days, 'jumble trails', and electrical repair workshops;
- Higher level, regional communications in partnership with NLWA;
- Improved content on the Council's new mobile friendly website and through the 'Wise up to waste' website.

6. Implications

Financial implications:

- 6.1 The service changes detailed in this report were planned to deliver £2 million of savings over the 2015-17 financial period. The revised proposals detailed in this report alter the timing and level of savings and these changes have been reflected in revised Medium Term Financial Strategy targets as part of the 2017-18 budget setting process. The new menu pricing arrangements with North London Waste Authority are expected to deliver savings in the corporate levy payment over the medium term, with the level of savings dependent upon the relative tonnages of the future waste streams.

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). Those cases are currently prescribed by the Collection and Disposal of Waste Regulations 1988, regulation 5 and Schedule 2 and include the collection of garden waste. Accordingly the Council has discretion as to whether it charges for the home collection of garden waste or provides a free service.

In addition to the above duty, 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 Council may by notice require household waste and recyclates to be placed for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified. Such receptacles may be provided by the council free of charge or at a cost (if the occupier agrees) or by the occupier (section 46).

With effect from 15 June 2015 the Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the criminal offence in section 46 EPA and replaced it with a civil sanction. Local authorities will still be able to issue penalty notices but only in limited circumstances and if a 'detriment to the amenities of the locality' test is satisfied. The aim of the proposed test is to ensure that penalties are targeted at those whose behaviour reduces the quality of their neighbours' surroundings.

Environmental Implications

- 4.3 There are no significant environmental implications as the recommendations are to retain the existing services for street properties, though organising collections around a village principle may reduce unnecessary vehicle movements.

Resident Impact Assessment:

- 4.4 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.

A Resident Impact Assessment is not required as the recommendations relate to keeping the current recycling service for street properties.

5. Reasons for the recommendations / decision:

- 5.1 The recommendations are needed to enable the service to become more efficient and to deliver the MTFs savings targets for the service.

Signed by:

Signed



19.9.16

Executive Member for Environment and Transport Date

Appendices

- None.

Background papers:

- None.

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