

OSC – 27 July 2010 – Item 12 – Quarterly Council Performance Exceptions Report & Quarterly Council Budget Monitoring Exceptions Report

Action no 43.2:

The Committee asked to be informed of the reasons why the household waste target for reuse, recycling and composting had been lowered. (action no 43.2)

The Committee received the above information on 5th May 2011 and a member requested further information on the “outside influences” which affected Haringey’s recycling rates. Please find this information below.

The external factors that affected the recycling rate are summarised below.

1. Household / Non-Household Waste Split Methodology

The greatest single effect on Haringey’s recycling rate was caused by the change in the methodology for assessing the amount of 'household' waste in the total municipal residual waste stream (i.e. all the waste the Council collects, consisting of both 'household' waste and 'non-household' waste from commercial collections), as the rate (NI 192) is a measure of the amount of 'household' waste recycled.

Prior to 2008/09 different systems were used by the seven constituent boroughs that make up the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), based on surveys undertaken on behalf of NLWA in 1995 and 2005. However, the NLWA deemed that there needed to be consistency in the systems being used by the constituent boroughs. This resulted in a revised system being proposed at the NLWA meeting in September 2007, which was adopted on a majority decision (despite Haringey objecting) for implementation from 2008/9 onwards.

The new system was based on estimating the 'non-household' waste element based on the number of trade waste contracts declared, and assumes any waste not formally declared as non-household waste is 'household' waste. In reality this resulted in uncontracted (illegal) trade waste and flytipping being counted in the 'household' waste stream. This is in contrast to the former system used by Haringey which sought to directly identify an actual measure of the tonnage of 'household' waste. The new system gave a household / non-household waste split for Haringey of around 80:20 in 2008/09. This compares to a split of 72:28 under the former system used, thus adding a significant amount of residual waste to the household stream and therefore causing the recycling rate to drop.

2. Bulky Waste and Hardcore Apportionment

The NLWA, through its contractor London Waste Ltd (LWL), undertakes sorting work to reclaim recyclable materials and hardcore from bulky residual waste that is delivered to its facilities by the constituent boroughs. The total tonnage of material that has been reclaimed is then apportioned to the boroughs by the NLWA. The apportionment of recycling is counted towards the total recycling tonnage, whilst the hardcore is deducted from the residual waste total, both of which are used in the calculation of NI 192.

From 2008/09 Haringey received a significantly lower apportionment of reclaimed bulky waste compared to 2006/07 (when the Stretch Target was set) and 2007/08.

3. Contamination Rate

Commingled recycling is sorted at materials recovery facilities (MRFs), where the individual material streams are extracted for recycling. A certain proportion of the items passing through a MRF will not be suitable for recycling, for example because they are made of a non-

recyclable material (such as plastic wrapping). The tonnage of material rejected (called contamination) is worked out as a percentage of the total amount delivered to the MRF to give the facility's 'contamination rate'. As each MRF receives recycling from a number of sources, all authorities had to use the same contamination rate.

Haringey sends its commingled recycling to the NLWA, which has contracts in place with MRF operators for the sorting of the material. From 2008/09 Haringey was required by the NLWA to use an average of the contamination rates being reported by its contracted sorting facilities, which, at 9%, was significantly higher than the 3% rate being used up until 2007/08, reducing the amount of recycling and increasing the amount of residual waste used in the calculation of the recycling rate. NLWA (and its constituent councils) continuously look to deliver improved performance through its contractual arrangements and new MRF contracts are now in place, with facilities able to sort a wider range of materials for recycling and delivering a contamination rate of around 5%.