

Report for: Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel

Item number:

Title: Reducing Waste

Report authorised by : Stephen McDonnell, Assistant Director Environmental Services & Community Safety

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Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The panel has requested a report to consider actions to change behaviour to reduce the amount of waste (including fly tipping) requiring disposal, including the balance between enforcement and encouragement.
- 1.2 This report outlines several inter-related areas of activity that contribute to waste reduction and how these are currently delivered.
- 1.3 Reducing waste has a number of positive outcomes in addition to the obvious environmental and carbon benefits that come with less waste being generated, transported and processed in one form or another, and consequent conservation of natural resources; it saves residents and businesses money, reduces the costs of collection and disposal, which are significant, and engenders greater civic responsibility through behaviour change and awareness.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 We must raise the profile of the cost of waste to the taxpayer. This is an ongoing job, the importance of which only increases in the current climate of massively reduced budgets that will go down further.
- 2.2 In the case of flytipping, more joined up working between engagement and enforcement is required to increase awareness of the risks of being caught and the willingness on the part of the council to impose sanctions on those who cause a blight on their own and others' neighbourhoods. To this end, the enforcement regime has to engage and secure a contribution from across the community, including the social and private rented housing sectors.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The report is for noting.

4. Reasons for decision

N/A

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

6.1 Waste reduction activity in the context of this scrutiny can be divided into several inter-related areas of activity:

1) Reducing the amount of waste generated in the first place

Referred to as 'waste prevention' and defined as the measures taken before a material or product becomes waste, that reduces the absolute volume of the waste stream. It is wide ranging in nature, taking in consumer behaviour/shopping habits, retailer packaging, extension of the product life span and associated policy/regulation.

Local authorities have limited control over the factors that drive waste generation – eg. economic conditions that drive consumption, packaging regulations and associated industry practices. We do however have a role in educating and engaging residents and business to challenge the 'throw-away' culture and bring about longer term behaviour change.

At a local authority level, activity includes encouraging greater levels of reuse such as donations to charity shops, home composting and reducing the amount of waste that is generated in the first place, such as through awareness campaigns about food waste reduction. The key outcome is that less material ends up as waste that has to be dealt with by the local authority, with the associated avoided costs of disposal.

This activity is currently delivered on a north London wide basis. The North London Waste Authority (NLWA), in partnership with the constituent boroughs, coordinates and delivers 2-year waste prevention plans. These are short term plans which implement the waste prevention objectives included in the North London Joint Waste Strategy, a document which provides the strategic vision for how the seven north London boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington) and NLWA will work together to manage waste in north London between 2004 – 2020.

Details of what the North London Waste Prevention Programme delivered in the first year of the current plan, 2014-15, are contained in Appendix 1 and can be found by visiting <http://www.nlwa.gov.uk/about/authority-strategies>

2) 'Squeezing' residual waste capacity – of the waste that is generated, this refers to policies and procedures to limit the amount that is disposed of as residual waste, generally by maximising the proportion that is recycled and deferring the point at which items have to be managed as waste, through reuse.

Whilst the outcome is less about reducing the absolute quantity of waste, such policies can be drivers for wider behaviour change over time.

A policy of weekly collections of recycling, food and green waste, with everything that cannot be recycled collected every two weeks (as implemented by the Council in 2012/13) is generally recognised as the single biggest policy lever available to local authorities in this regard. Other options include smaller residual waste bins/limits on permitted waste capacity, bans on 'side waste', or 'compulsory' recycling policies (which have been made extremely difficult to enforce with the advent of the Deregulation Bill this year). Consideration of these areas forms part of the Recycling Action Plan workstream with Veolia, given the close links with recycling rate performance.

3) Making sure the 'polluter pays' – this is about ensuring that where waste is generated it is managed and paid for by the appropriate party, in line with the 'polluter pays' principle.

The current level of flytipping in Haringey results in the local authority bearing the cost of collection and disposal for waste that should properly be managed and paid for elsewhere eg. traders without waste contracts, HMOs/rented properties dumping waste on the streets where landlords should be making arrangements for disposal. If implemented effectively, this in turn has the potential to drive an overall reduction in waste in the interests of businesses/individual seeking to save money.

The strategies required to effectively counter this issue involve a combination of policies and procedures which are much wider than waste – for example, licensing and planning - as well as a coherent set of waste policies (such as on permitted waste capacity), effective engagement and education, backed up by a robust enforcement policy. These are the subject of a review of flytipping strategy currently being undertaken.

An element of the response to flytipping, however, will result in the diversion of waste from being dumped to legitimate collection routes which will not in itself reduce the total amount of waste, eg, correct usage of waste and recycling bins, availability/ease of use and take-up of bulky waste services and Reuse & Recycling Centres (Civic Amenity sites).

6.2 A comprehensive strategy for reducing waste therefore requires a coordinated approach that addresses the causes of the various facets of waste generation and recognises the inter-dependencies between consumption (as influenced by population, housing and economic growth) and waste generation, the take-up of recycling/other legitimate waste services (eg. for bulky waste) and flytipping. A multi-agency response is required to tackle much of this - housing, planning, regeneration, communications and enforcement are as much a part of solutions as waste services. A forthcoming review of the council's overall waste strategy is planned and it is essential that this is framed in the terms set out in this paragraph.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 The benefits of delivering an effective strategy are manifold – reduced collection and disposal costs, greater reuse and recycling performance, reduced carbon impact, improved cleanliness of streets and estates, improved satisfaction and perception, and greater civic responsibility.

7.2 In this way waste reduction contributes to Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan (improved environment and clean streets) and is consistent with the Plan’s key themes, prioritising as it does prevention/early intervention, value for money and working with our communities.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Finance: The actions taken as part of the North London Waste Prevention Plan are contained within the NLWA levy cost to boroughs. Other actions outlined in this report are met from existing approved budgets.

8.2 Legal: The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report and advises that there are no specific legal issues.

8.3 Equalities: Comprehensive waste, recycling and bulky waste collection services are available across Haringey, with all residents having the opportunity to use wheeled bins, single-use sacks or communal banks.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of North London Waste Prevention Programme 2014-15

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

North London Waste Prevention Plan 2014-16
<http://www.nlwa.gov.uk/about/authority-strategies>