

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE:

WASTE PREVENTION UPDATE

REPORT OF:

MANAGING DIRECTOR

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE:

10 December 2015

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

Preventing waste is a priority for European, national and regional government, it is also included as a priority in the North London Joint Waste Strategy agreed by NLWA and the seven north London boroughs. As a result of this strategic prioritisation, NLWA has been delivering a waste prevention programme since 2007 with the aim of reducing the amount of waste that needs to be managed. The current waste prevention plan and associated delivery programme is coming to an end on 31 March 2016. This report sets out two options for the proposed strategic direction and budget for a further two-year waste prevention programme. The report is presented in advance of the budget consideration in February in order to enable preparatory work and further discussion with borough officers and the Members Recycling Working Group to take place with the aim of presenting a more detailed programme of work in February 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to:

- i) Instruct officers to develop a further Waste Prevention Plan for the Authority for 2016-18;
- ii) Approve in principle either:
 - a) a two-year budget of £931,153 (which is broadly in line with the level of funding and activity delivered in previous years as set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 divided between the two financial years as follows: £461,100 in 2016-17 and £470,053 in 2017-18; or
 - b) a two-year budget of half this amount £465,576 for waste prevention activity for the next two years
so this amount can be incorporated into budget preparation for February with detail subject to further consideration in February;
- iii) Note the likely differences in strategic priorities and implementation that would occur between a programme for a budgeted amount of £931,153 over two years and a programme which costs half that amount.

SIGNED:... Managing Director

DATE:1 December 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Preventing waste is a priority for European, national and regional government, it is also included as a priority in the North London Joint Waste Strategy agreed by NLWA and the seven north London boroughs. Waste prevention is at the top of the waste hierarchy i.e. the most preferable action that can happen to waste, in preference to recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill disposal. As a result of this strategic prioritisation, NLWA has been delivering a waste prevention programme since 2007 with the aim of reducing the amount of waste that needs to be managed.
- 1.2 The Authority's current (2014-16) waste prevention plan and associated delivery programme is coming to an end on 31 March 2016 so it is now appropriate to consider what a successor plan should look like, in terms of strategic direction and level of budget to be allocated. In particular, given the discretionary nature of this work and the financial challenges being faced by the constituent boroughs this report sets out two budget options: one for a level of budget which is similar to the present and second a reduced level of budget equivalent to 50% of the current programme budget.
- 1.3 The table below sets out what the programme has delivered since 2012, the first year that NLWA expanded the programme in order to deliver outreach work across the NLWA area.

Table 1. Deliverables of the NLWA Waste Prevention Programme 2012 – 2015

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Annual Budget	£465,000	£431,200	£440,300	£450,200
Tonnage diverted from the collected waste stream and therefore required management	9,000	8,000	8,000	9,000
Cost of delivering activity per tonne diverted	£51.67	£53.90	£55.04	£50.02

Note: that the 'cost of delivering the activity' above includes personnel costs for contract staff directly associated with the delivery of events (currently one full-time post and largely seasonal part-time temporary agency staff) but excludes the cost of NLWA permanent staff and associated overheads. Anticipated future costs per tonne are included in paragraph 5.1 both inclusive and exclusive of permanent staff and associated overhead costs.

- 1.4 Over the past four years, a significant part of the programme has been face-to-face engagement with residents through outreach work. These events make an important contribution to the tonnage diverted but additionally act as visible presence for the programme and visitors pass on the knowledge they have gained to others as well.

Table 2: Outreach activity 2012-1015

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (April to November 2015)
Number of events	203	184	142	115
Number of residents engaged	14,280	11,032	11,357	12,899

2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The current programme is focussed upon reducing the amount of waste in three priority waste streams namely, food, furniture and textiles. These are prioritised for the following reasons:

Food waste – is still one of the largest components of the waste stream from north London households, most of which is ‘avoidable’ so it is a key priority for action. Food waste reduction also has the potential to save households up to £60 per month so is financially attractive for action.

Furniture reuse - is a second focal area due to its high tonnage diversion potential. The purchase or free supply of second-hand/previously owned furniture through second-hand shops, charities and give-and-take days for example also provides the next users of furniture with a financial benefit too.

Textile waste – is the third priority area of the current plan because of the potential tonnage diversion clothing reuse can achieve (an estimated £100 million worth (based on 2015 prices) or around 350,000 tonnes of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year) as well as the relatively high carbon savings gained by extending the life of existing clothing. Clothing has particularly high relative carbon impact because of the impact of material production and the relatively short time that clothes are kept for. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) estimates that extending the average life of clothes by just three months of active use would lead to a 5-10% reduction in each of the carbon, water and waste footprints. (Source: Reference 9 at the end of this report).

3. BUDGETARY OPTIONS

- 3.1 The policy framework within which NLWA’s programme of activity is operating has not changed in the past two years so officers recommend a continued focus on the priority waste streams above; however, in the light of financial pressures on the constituent boroughs and therefore NLWA, officers consider it appropriate to provide two different options for the extent of a future two-year programme.

- 3.2 The first budget option is to continue in line with our previous level of activity, agreeing a two year budget of £931,153 (which is broadly in line with the level of funding of the current plan (plus inflation) - £461,100 in 2016-17 and £470,053 in 2017-18. This would mean that the level and range of activity would be similar to now with activity on the priority waste streams listed above and a potential diversion from the collected waste stream of c20,000 tonnes over the two years.
- 3.3 The second budget option is to halve the budget to £465,576 over the two years (2016-18) which would result in a reduction in the level and range of activity that could be delivered. The table below sets out the broad differences between the two options. It is anticipated that a reduced level programme would divert half the amount of waste from the collected waste stream compared to the current programme so approximately 10,000 tonnes over two years.

Table 3. Resource options for a new Waste Prevention Programme 2016-18

Programme element	Budget option 1 of £931,153 for two years – potential deliverables	Budget option 2 of £465,576 for two years – potential deliverables
Priority waste streams	Food, furniture and textiles	Food, furniture and textiles
Activities to encourage food waste reduction	Demonstrations, event delivery, specially organised events plus outreach tools and materials	Reduced number of demonstrations, event delivery, specially organised events plus outreach tools and materials
	Work with community groups	Reduced amount of work with community groups
	Work with educational establishments	NOT POSSIBLE
	Annual Waste Prevention Conference	NOT POSSIBLE
	Food waste challenge	NOT POSSIBLE
	Waste Less, Lunch Free events	NOT POSSIBLE
	Pumpkin festival	NOT POSSIBLE
	Printed and outdoor advertising	Reduced amount of printed and outdoor advertising
	Cinema advertising	NOT POSSIBLE
	Annual attitudinal survey	Annual attitudinal survey
	Quantitative indicators and research	NOT POSSIBLE
Activities to encourage furniture reuse	Community exchange events	Community exchange events
	Community repair workshops	NOT POSSIBLE
	Work with local 3 rd sector organisations on repair and reuse	NOT POSSIBLE
Activities to encourage textile reuse	Support existing networks and promote the services they offer	Support existing networks and promote the services they offer
	Production and promotion of the swishing pack to north London residents	Production and promotion of the swishing pack to north London residents
	Swishing (clothing exchange) events	NOT POSSIBLE
	Textile repair workshops	NOT POSSIBLE
Other activities	Work with local retailers for the reduction of single use plastic bags	NOT POSSIBLE
	Work on promoting a reduction in unwanted mail	NOT POSSIBLE
	Waste prevention guide for businesses	NOT POSSIBLE
	Waste prevention guide for households	NOT POSSIBLE
	Recycling outreach and reusable nappy subsidies	Recycling outreach and reusable nappy subsidies

4. PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Whichever approach and associated budget is approved by Members it is proposed that work continues on developing a sequential Waste Prevention Plan for 2016-18 the detail of which will be presented for consideration and approval to the February 2016 Authority meeting, subject to in principle approval at this meeting.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the preparation of the 2016-18 Plan will be guided by consultation with NLWA Members through the Authority Chair and Members' Recycling Working Group and key stakeholders, namely: constituent borough officers including senior staff and community partners and delivery agencies such as London Community Resource Network, EcoACTIVE, Keep Britain Tidy, LondonWaste Ltd and Association for Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resource Use (ACR+) between now and February.
- 4.3 The conclusions of an NLWA commissioned review carried out by Resource Futures of the impact and evaluation regime of the current Plan will also be considered in developing the new Plan. This independent review concluded that the evaluation methods used are appropriate for the type of activity, i.e. where material is being handled by NLWA or its contractor such as at a Give and Take Day, the material is being counted and average weight data being used to determine the tonnage diverted as a result, on the day of the activity. Where this type of measurement or physical weighing of waste would be difficult or impossible survey methods are used for activities as an alternative.
- 4.4 For the development of the new Plan, legislative changes such as the 5p plastic bag charge introduced by the Government in October 2015 will also be taken into account.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In coming to a conclusion about the strategic focus and level of support for a future programme of work Members may additionally wish to consider the following points:
- The average cost per tonne diverted from the collected waste stream for the current waste prevention programme in 2015/16 is £50.02/tonne. (Including contract personnel costs directly associated with the delivery of events but excluding the cost of NLWA permanent staff and associated overheads) The anticipated equivalent cost per tonne for 2016/17 is £46.10 based upon an anticipated diversion of 10,000 tonnes.
 - **Inclusive** of the cost of NLWA permanent staff and associated overheads the 2016/17 cost is £66.26/tonne diverted from the collected waste stream which compares to the current forecast for chargeable residual waste for 2016/17 of £100.61 per tonne, which is the Authority's marginal cost of residual waste disposal used elsewhere on this Authority agenda.

- The new circular economy package anticipated from the EU shortly could result in a requirement for food waste collections. A focus on food waste prevention communications would be complementary to any messaging on food waste collection. It may therefore be possible to secure economies of scale and value-added benefits through complementary messaging on food waste.
- A waste prevention budget maintained at the current level as outlined in paragraph 3.2 would still only represent 0.67% of the Authority's budgeted net expenditure for 2016-17 and a very similar anticipated amount (0.69%) for the year following.
- At a time when the Authority is seeking approval for a replacement residual waste facility, the North London Heat and Power project, it is appropriate to maintain a continued focus on the top end of the waste hierarchy as well as investment at the bottom.
- The metrics for waste prevention measurement are continuing to develop and whilst it is not always possible to measure the amount of waste avoided on a weighbridge if Members wished it would be possible to focus future action upon those activities with the most robust measurement in place or activities where the cost per tonne diverted is the lowest. These considerations have been taken into account in Table 3 above. This is something that could be brought to the February 2016 meeting of the Authority and Members are asked to comment.
- A considerable wealth of knowledge and contacts has been built up over the last few years of delivering a waste prevention programme of activity - resident groups and event organisers now regularly contact the team to ask if they will attend events and activities. A reduction in activity could result in a loss of contacts and goodwill which would be difficult to redevelop again in the future if the more extensive programme was to be re-instated to the current level of investment and activity.

6. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

The Legal Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to add.

7. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

The Financial Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to add.

Local Government Act 1972 - Access to Information

Documents used:

1. North London Waste Prevention Plan, April 2014 – March 2016
2. Waste Prevention Programme for England, Defra 2013

3. Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011
4. A Circular Economy Vision for a Competitive Europe, Ellen Mc Arthur Foundation, 2015
5. General guidelines for integrated circular economy strategies at local and regional level, Circular Europe Network, 2015
6. EU Capital Cities Waste Management Benchmarking, ACR+, 2015
7. Counting the Cost of Food Waste: EU Food Waste Prevention, House of Lords, 2014
8. UK food waste – Historical changes and how amounts might be influenced in the future, WRAP, 2014
9. Valuing our clothes – the true cost of how we design, use and dispose of clothing in the UK, WRAP, 2012
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/valuing-our-clothes>
10. WRAP Annual Conference SCAP (Sustainable Clothing Action Plan) 2020 Commitment, 5 November 2015
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/scap-2020-commitment>

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