

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE:

NORTH LONDON WASTE PREVENTION PLAN 2014-15

REPORT OF:

HEAD OF OPERATIONS

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE:

12 December 2013

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report outlines actions towards implementing the waste prevention objectives outlined in the North London Joint Waste Strategy. These objectives are translated into shorter term actions which are currently included in the 2012-14 North London Waste Prevention Plan. As the current plan ends on 31 March 2014, a new draft waste prevention plan is being developed which will succeed the 2012-14 plan approved by the Authority in February 2012. This report provides an update on progress with developing the new plan and seeks approval for the proposed themes and resource requirements associated with the new plan. If the themes and resources are approved then the new plan will be prepared in detail, for submission for approval at the next Authority meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to:

- (i) approve the proposed themes and resource requirements of the draft 2014–16 North London Waste Prevention Plan that is currently being developed and if approved; and
- (ii) note that a fully developed 2014-16 North London Waste Prevention Plan will be prepared for the February 2014 Authority meeting.

SIGNED: **Head of Operations**

DATE: 3 December 2013

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on progress with developing the Waste Prevention Plan 2014-16 and includes the following:

- Progress on the implementation of the current Waste Prevention Plan;
- Consultation process of the new plan;
- Proposed priority waste streams of the new plan, namely food waste, furniture and textiles;
- Policy priorities of the new plan such as informational and promotional activity;
- Current levels of resource proposed to be maintained; and
- Full successor of the two-year plan to be submitted for approval at the February Authority meeting.

2.0 CURRENT NORTH LONDON WASTE PREVENTION PLAN

2.1 The North London Joint Waste Strategy sets out a series of strategy implementation actions which the eight Partners have agreed in order to achieve the waste growth reduction targets. As these strategy implementation actions are high-level, the Waste Prevention Plan is developed biennially to identify the shorter term, practical actions that are needed to achieve these high-level aims.

2.2 The current North London Waste Prevention Plan, which was approved by the Authority in February 2012, was developed following internal workshops, consultations with Members and Senior Officers and an assessment of developments and publications in the waste sector. The current waste prevention plan covers the period between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2014 and will expire at the end of this financial year.

2.3 Notable successes of the 2012-14 waste prevention programme include achievement of a 'Gold' Zero Waste Award by LetsRecycle.com for showing commitment and innovation in reducing waste. The Authority was also one of three finalists for the LARAC awards for Best Waste Minimisation or Prevention Project in both 2012-13 and 2013-14. The Authority's waste prevention programme was also shortlisted for the "Local Authority Waste Hierarchy" award at the CIWM awards in 2013.

2.4 The work programme for 2012-14 included:

- Delivery of an intensive, *large scale and high profile food waste programme* across all seven constituent boroughs with public facing events and direct engagement with the north London community.
- To increase the amount of *furniture re-use*, the Authority worked with the London Community Resource Network (LCRN) to develop partnerships and broker contracts between local re-use organisations and housing associations and also increase the level of re-use of bulky waste for people living in more temporary accommodation, such as in university halls of residence.

- The *packaging reduction* message was highlighted by the Authority in its engagement work with the public, and by contacting 31 prominent grocery manufacturers and retailers asking them to respond with information about the steps they have taken to reduce packaging waste.
- Community exchange events were held to encourage *re-use of large and small household items* by giving local people the opportunity to donate unwanted items and/or collect donated items. Give and Take days were delivered to encourage re-use amongst housing association residents, either for free or through “yard sale” or jumble sale type activities.
- In November 2012 and 2013, the Authority participated in the *European Week for Waste Reduction*. The priority waste streams targeted through the project were food waste, furniture, packaging and textiles.
- *Textile re-use* was promoted by the development of a ‘Swishing’ Pack for residents and students. A series of seven public swishing events were held in November 2013 as well as a Super Swish to coincide with the European Week for Waste Reduction.
- A ‘say NO to junk mail’ action pack was produced and promoted across north London, which includes information and advice on how residents can reduce the amount of junk mail they receive.
- To help local businesses reduce the amount of waste they produce, the waste *prevention guide for businesses* was updated with easy-to-read information about how business owners can make big savings by reducing waste and reusing materials.
- To encourage residents to use their food and garden waste to make their own free compost, a series of *compost bin giveaway events* were held. In Hackney, a community based composting scheme was implemented at Samuel Lewis Estate.
- *An intensive waste education project* was delivered in one primary school in each of the seven boroughs. Performances of the ‘compost crusaders’ show were held in primary schools across north London in partnership with the Circus Takeaway educational theatre group.
- The Authority worked alongside producer compliance scheme DHL Envirosolutions to increase the *diversion of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)* disposal through re-use and recycling.
- The Authority supports *reusable nappy schemes* by paying a subsidy of up to £54.15 per baby to parents in north London who use reusable nappies rather than disposable ones. The level of subsidy reflects the saving to the Authority of not having to dispose of the baby’s disposable nappies.

- 2.5 Every project was supported by a business case and a projected cost per tonne in the 2012-2014 Waste Prevention Plan to justify expenditure, and upon completion it was evaluated in quantitative terms. Through the Authority's waste prevention activity it is estimated that in 2014-16 approximately 20,000 tonnes will be diverted from disposal and will help the Authority area move towards a more sustainable economy. In order to assist with the monitoring of the activities impact is based on a number of assumptions¹, but the projected cost per tonne of this programme of activity as per 2012-14 waste prevention plan is £21/tonne overall.
- 2.6 Waste prevention activity is regularly reported to Members through monthly waste prevention updates, which have been designed to provide Members with the most recent news and activities relating to the Authority's waste prevention programme, and a list of forthcoming local events.

3.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE NEW WASTE PREVENTION PLAN

- 3.1 Work has already commenced on developing the Waste Prevention Plan for 2014-16 which will be brought forward in full and final form to the February Authority meeting for consideration and approval.
- 3.2 The plan preparation process to date has been guided by various developments in the waste sector and consultation with key stakeholders, namely:
- Consultation with the Authority Chair;
 - Consultation with the Members' Recycling Working Group;
 - The results of three independently facilitated stakeholder consultation workshops with:
 - constituent Borough Officers including senior staff;
 - community Partners and delivery agencies; and finally
 - Authority Officers.
- 3.3 The preparation of the plan was also developed in the context of priorities and guidance set out in:
- The draft Waste Prevention Programme for England 2013;
 - The Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011; and
 - A number of reports produced by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the European Commission and the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+).

¹ At this stage, as the financial year is incomplete the estimates of tonnage diversion also include some assumptions about the number of planned future activities.

- 3.4 The Authority was seen as a good example of an organisation which already uses evidence to identify an issue, explore options to tackle it, pilot the project and then expand it. Projects which also added more intangible social value benefits were also highly valued.
- 3.5 Following the consultation process, particular issues, aspirations and priorities surrounding waste prevention were discussed. An analysis of the current situation was initially carried out which involved critical review of existing data showing waste generation across north London and exploration of the opportunities to reduce its production. As a result, three priority waste streams emerged with a very high degree of consensus. These are the principal areas of proposed activity for the 2014-16 Plan and are highlighted below so that Members can indicate any strategic preferences they may have before the final draft plan is presented to the next meeting of the Authority in February 2014.

4.0 PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

- 4.1 **Food waste** is still one of the largest components of the waste stream from north London households, much of which is 'avoidable'. To reduce the overall generation of household food waste it is proposed that the new Plan is heavily focused on promotion of food waste reduction messages. The Authority approach will be developed using the '4Es' behavioural change model; enabling people to make a change, encouraging actions, engaging with the community and exemplifying what is being done by others. Based on national research, which shows that money savings are the main motivator in encouraging consumers to reduce waste, the core message will remain the financial savings of food waste reduction to the consumer.
- 4.2 **Furniture re-use** is proposed as a second focal area of the new plan due to its high tonnage diversion potential, its recent increase in visibility, and consequent opportunity for increasing levels of participation, and the opportunity work in this area provides to complement the development of the London Reuse Network (LRN²). Work on furniture re-use can divert a significant amount of valuable products from disposal, which is where the Authority's business case lies, as well as support the social agenda by helping combat joblessness and alleviating poverty. Furthermore, public participation in community exchange events where furniture is exchanged can benefit residents through the direct financial savings achieved by avoiding purchase of more expensive new items. Furniture re-use encourages re-use within the local community, thus helping preserve valuable resources and diverting a significant amount of reusable items from disposal.

² LRN is a not-for-profit social purpose company which was funded by the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB), a partnership between the Mayor of London and the London Boroughs, and to date has brought together 31 different re-use organisations across London.

- 4.3 **Textiles** - Apart from its significance in terms of waste diversion, textile re-use can assist in reducing adverse impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, energy demand and resource depletion, and can also assist with job creation and other financial impacts that occur in the supply chain. Textile re-use extends product life and reduces the speed with which textiles become waste, and where re-use displaces the purchase of a new item, it reduces the amount of waste produced. Swishing has been proven to be a powerful tool to promote textile re-use, divert waste from disposal and contribute to positive change in consumer behaviour, whilst recognising the economic value of textiles and promoting direct money-saving benefits to north London residents. The activity also facilitates partnership work with third sector organisations, who can partner with the Authority for the delivery of events.
- 4.4 The Authority priorities match those within the draft Waste Prevention Plan for England. Even though it is proposed that the focus is on the three waste streams listed above, it is proposed that the new waste prevention plan will continue to be complemented by routinely undertaken, smaller scale initiatives which will promote reduction of other waste streams such as unwanted mail, plastic bags, WEEE and packaging.

5.0 POLICY PRIORITIES

- 5.1 Policy priorities were also explored during the preparatory work for the new waste prevention plan and suggestions were captured and discussed with Authority Officers and Members. The themes that emerged are as follows:
- *Consistency*: Providing consistent services provides opportunities for economies of scale and makes communication much simpler and more cost-effective.
 - *Commitment*: Key priorities should be consistent at a high Authority board level with early buy-in and commitment to large projects.
 - *Tailoring*: It was noted that individual messages calling people to action need tailoring for lifestyles, ages, type of house etc.
 - *Measuring and evaluation based on evidence*: Tonnage diversion was noted as an excellent metric, but it could be accompanied by recording of the more intangible social value elements of projects.
 - *Messages*: During the workshops and consultation process it was proposed that the new waste prevention plan should consider adding recycling messages as secondary messages to waste prevention activity when appropriate, without overshadowing the waste prevention message.
 - *Duration*: It was felt that reviewing the detailed work programme and committing resources on a two-year cycle remained appropriate within the context of the longer term strategy and the financial constraints of local authorities.
 - *Successful projects* were identified as those which were innovative, simple to understand and communicate consistently, replicable and measurable and which delivered value for money.

- 5.2 It is proposed that the north London Waste Prevention Plan includes more action-oriented activities encompassing all the above elements and focusing on informational, educational and promotional initiatives that can be applied on a local level on the basis that regulatory and legislative strategies are occurring on a national level.
- 5.3 The plan will be thoroughly reviewed and assessed during its first year to ensure that aims and objectives are met and a detailed activity plan will be devised for the second year.
- 5.4 It is anticipated that drawing attention to waste prevention will result in a significantly raised profile for the Authority and thereby contribute to a reduction in total waste arisings. All actions proposed in the next Waste Prevention Plan 2014-16 will be supported by a cost–benefit analysis and evaluation methodology.

6.0 RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

- 6.1 Waste generation is from a historical point of view closely related to economic growth and to decouple waste generation from economic growth, policy instruments need to be introduced to steer households towards less waste-intensive behaviour.
- 6.2 Further work at the top of waste hierarchy and emphasis on waste prevention is needed to decouple waste generation from economic growth. This includes a combination of policy measures and active engagement as will be outlined in the detailed implementation plan. Therefore, promotion of behavioural change messages on a larger scale is something that the Authority could beneficially continue to undertake. Such work at the top of the waste hierarchy is essential and can be undertaken more cost-effectively on an Authority-wide basis rather than at the level of individual boroughs.
- 6.3 It is therefore proposed that the Authority retains the same level of financial provision for waste prevention activity as for the Waste Prevention Plan 2012-14 in order to uphold waste prevention behaviours in the coming years. This way the Authority can capitalise on the work that has been delivered to date, increase the utilisation of resources already held and extend the reach and impact of its waste prevention messages.
- 6.4 National research has shown that food waste campaigns of a similar nature and level of investment to that carried in north London in 2012-13 and 2013-14 can decrease the amount of avoidable food waste by 14% and that for every £1 invested, up to £8 can be saved on disposal costs and savings to consumers. Therefore, considerable savings can be made at a local level by replicating work carried out elsewhere and by maintaining the same level of activity and investment to that carried out in 2012-2014 Waste Prevention Plan.

- 6.5 The budget and medium term forecast reported elsewhere on this agenda therefore provides an equivalent budget for 2014-15 and later years. In 2014-15 this amounts to £315,500 for the three priority waste streams, £63,300 for the core activity and £62,000 for reusable nappy subsidies. The budget proposed for waste prevention work in 2014-15 would represent 0.9% of the Authority's annual net budget for waste services.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- (i) approve the proposed themes and resource requirements of the draft 2014–16 North London Waste Prevention Plan that is currently being developed and if approved; and
- (ii) note that a fully developed 2014-16 North London Waste Prevention Plan will be prepared for the February 2014 Authority meeting.

8.0 COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

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

9.0 COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

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

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to information

Documents used: Waste Prevention Programme for England, Call for Evidence, Defra 2013
Waste Prevention Programme for England Consultation, Defra 2013
The Impact of Love Food Hate Waste, WRAP, 2013
Decoupling of Waste and Economic Indicators, WRAP, 2012
Sustainable Clothing Roadmap, Defra, 2011
Attitudes of Europeans towards Resource efficiency, European Commission, 2011
Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011, Defra 2011
A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, European Commission 2010
North London Waste Prevention Plan, April 2012 – March 2014

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