

**NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY**

**REPORT TITLE:** SERVICES UPDATE

**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF STRATEGY AND SERVICES

**FOR SUBMISSION TO:** AUTHORITY MEETING

**DATE:** 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report informs Members about the latest operational activities, including tonnages of various waste streams managed, destinations for the Authority's recycling and specialist recycling initiatives and performance and efforts to increase the range of materials which are recycled in north London.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Authority is recommended to note the operational, performance and recycling updates provided.

**Signed:** .....  ..... Head of Strategy and Services

**Date:** 18 September 2024

## 1. BACKGROUND

1.1. This report provides Members with an update of service delivery performance in the first months of 2024/25. Data covers the period April to July unless otherwise specified.

## 2. ABOUT NLWA'S SERVICES

2.1. North London Waste Authority (NLWA) provides disposal services for municipal residual waste and recycling for all seven of its constituent boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest). Waste disposal services are mainly delivered through a contract with LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL), which is owned by NLWA, with Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) being treated locally under contract with Biffa.

2.2. The constituent boroughs collect just over 750,000 tonnes of waste and recycling a year, of which circa 675,000 tonnes is from households (HH) and 75,000 is non-household (NHH). NLWA's aim is to preserve the resources and the environment today and for future generations. NLWA is committed to innovation and careful planning to ensure waste resources are managed effectively and sustainably.

## 3. WASTE PERFORMANCE

### Residual Waste (excluding RRC's)

|                                                          | (A)<br>2023/24<br>Actual<br>YTD | (B)<br>2024/25<br>Budget<br>YTD | (C)<br>2024/25<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(T) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(%) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(T) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Barnet                                                   | 35348                           | 35277                           | 36702                                        | 1425                                                      | 4.04%                                                     | 1354                                                   | 3.83%                                                  |
| Camden                                                   | 23195                           | 23247                           | 23460                                        | 213                                                       | 0.92%                                                     | 265                                                    | 1.14%                                                  |
| Enfield                                                  | 30536                           | 30551                           | 30727                                        | 176                                                       | 0.58%                                                     | 191                                                    | 0.63%                                                  |
| Hackney                                                  | 28763                           | 28765                           | 33132                                        | 4367                                                      | 15.18%                                                    | 4369                                                   | 15.19%                                                 |
| Haringey                                                 | 23554                           | 23257                           | 23667                                        | 410                                                       | 1.76%                                                     | 113                                                    | 0.48%                                                  |
| Islington                                                | 22506                           | 22585                           | 23054                                        | 469                                                       | 2.08%                                                     | 548                                                    | 2.43%                                                  |
| Waltham<br>Forest                                        | 22290                           | 21873                           | 22977                                        | 1104                                                      | 5.05%                                                     | 687                                                    | 3.08%                                                  |
| <b>NLWA total</b>                                        | <b>186192</b>                   | <b>185555</b>                   | <b>193719</b>                                | <b>8164</b>                                               | <b>4.40%</b>                                              | <b>7527</b>                                            | <b>4.04%</b>                                           |
| Hackney<br>(excl. NHH<br>growth)                         | 28763                           | 28765                           | 29032                                        | 267                                                       | 0.93%                                                     | 269                                                    | 0.94%                                                  |
| <b>NLWA total<br/>(excl.<br/>Hackney NHH<br/>growth)</b> | <b>186192</b>                   | <b>185555</b>                   | <b>189619</b>                                | <b>4064</b>                                               | <b>2.19%</b>                                              | <b>3427</b>                                            | <b>1.84%</b>                                           |

Table 1: Collected Residual Waste (excluding RRC tonnage)

3.1. Table 1 above shows the budgeted and actual residual waste tonnages collected by the constituent boroughs April to July 2024/25 Year-to-Date (YTD), excluding residual tonnages collected at RRCs.

3.2. When setting the Budget for 2024/25, residual waste tonnages were expected to remain relatively stable, due to continued pressure on the Cost of Living. However,

actual tonnages for the period April to July 2024/25 are higher than the same period in 2023/24 by 7527t or (4.04%) and above the budgeted position by 4.40% (8164t). Cost of living pressures have eased slightly with inflation slowing. However, much of the increase we are seeing can be attributed to London Borough of (LB) Hackney who have seen substantial growth in their commercial waste (NHH) portfolio since April 2024, approximately 4,100 tonnes compared to the same period in 2023/24.

- 3.3. When the increase in commercial waste seen in Hackney is excluded the increase in residual waste against the same period last year is a more modest 3427t (1.84%).
- 3.4. We have also seen higher than expected tonnages in both (LB) Waltham Forest and (LB) Barnet. In the case of Waltham Forest, the forecast for residual tonnages was based on the introduction of fortnightly collections from early 2024. Moving to fortnightly collections is generally associated with achieving lower tonnages, however the expected service change has been delayed until the end of 2024/25. Officers are working with Barnet colleagues to determine the rationale for the 3.83% increase in tonnages experienced in the first third of the year.
- 3.5. Whilst the 2024/25 YTD tonnage is slightly higher than in previous years, tonnages for the first four months of 2024/25 are 1534 tonnes lower than the pre-covid baseline in 2019/20 (see figure 1 below).

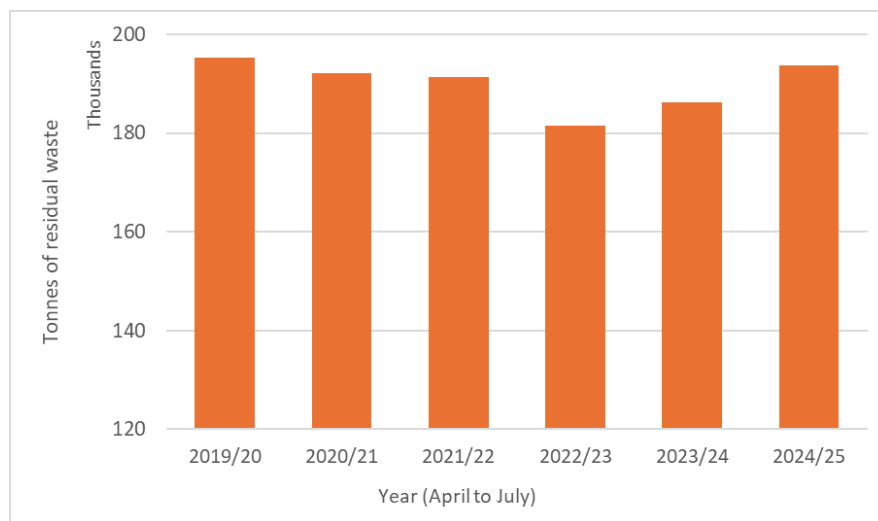


Figure 1: Residual waste tonnages for the period April to July

## Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR)

|                       | (A)<br>2023/24<br>Actual<br>YTD | (B)<br>2024/25<br>Budget<br>YTD | (C)<br>2024/25<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(T) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(%) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(T) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(%) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Barnet                | 8412                            | 8407                            | 8644                                         | 237                                                       | 2.82%                                                     | 232                                                    | 2.76%                                                  |
| Camden                | 5101                            | 5102                            | 5542                                         | 440                                                       | 8.62%                                                     | 441                                                    | 8.65%                                                  |
| Enfield               | 5872                            | 5873                            | 5923                                         | 50                                                        | 0.85%                                                     | 51                                                     | 0.87%                                                  |
| Hackney               | 5837                            | 5836                            | 5723                                         | -113                                                      | -1.94%                                                    | -114                                                   | -1.95%                                                 |
| Haringey              | 5505                            | 5511                            | 5553                                         | 42                                                        | 0.76%                                                     | 48                                                     | 0.87%                                                  |
| Islington             | 4786                            | 4655                            | 4850                                         | 195                                                       | 4.19%                                                     | 64                                                     | 1.34%                                                  |
| Waltham<br>Forest     | 5793                            | 5792                            | 5787                                         | -5                                                        | -0.09%                                                    | -6                                                     | -0.10%                                                 |
| <b>NLWA<br/>total</b> | <b>41305</b>                    | <b>41176</b>                    | <b>42022</b>                                 | <b>846</b>                                                | <b>2.05%</b>                                              | <b>717</b>                                             | <b>1.74%</b>                                           |

Table 2: Collected Dry Mixed Recycling

- 3.6. Table 2 above shows Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) performance for the period April to July 2024/25 against the budgeted position; and the outturn for the same period in 2023/24.
- 3.7. DMR tonnages for 2024/25 were expected to remain stable compared to 2023/24 tonnages. However, we have seen an increase in DMR tonnages through the first third of 2024/25. Actual tonnages for the period April to July 2024/25 are up against budget by 846t (2.05%) compared to 2023/24. The increase in tonnage at just over 2% is proportional to the percentage increase in residual waste.
- 3.8. While the overall picture is close to forecast, there is notable variation between boroughs: with (LB) Camden experiencing an 8.65% increase compared to the same period last year, with Hackney seeing a small decrease (-1.95%) compared to last year. Under the menu pricing arrangement, changes in waste volumes for individual boroughs affects the levy for that borough.

## Organic waste streams

|                                        | (A)<br>2023/24<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (B)<br>2024/25<br>Budget<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C)<br>2024/25<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(T) | C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(%) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(T) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(%) |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Food</b>                            | 6324                                         | 6354                                         | 7037                                         | 683                                                       | 10.75%                                                   | 713                                                    | 11.27%                                                 |
| <b>Garden</b>                          | 11100                                        | 12201                                        | 10561                                        | -1640                                                     | -13.44%                                                  | -539                                                   | -4.86%                                                 |
| <b>BioK</b>                            | 5235                                         | 5228                                         | 3941                                         | -1287                                                     | -24.62%                                                  | -1294                                                  | -24.72%                                                |
| <b>Garden (RRCs)</b>                   | 2179                                         | 2179                                         | 2609                                         | 430                                                       | 19.73%                                                   | 430                                                    | 19.73%                                                 |
| <b>Organics Total<br/>(incl. RRCs)</b> | <b>24838</b>                                 | <b>25962</b>                                 | <b>24148</b>                                 | <b>-1814</b>                                              | <b>-6.99%</b>                                            | <b>-690</b>                                            | <b>-2.78%</b>                                          |

Table 3: Collected Organic Waste

- 3.9. Table 3 above presents the Authority's organic waste performance for the period April to July 2024/25 against the previous year and the YTD budgeted forecast for 2024/25.
- 3.10. The total volume of organic waste has fallen from last year. Tonnages for garden waste are heavily dependent on the weather. In 2023/24 NLWA saw an increase of 61% in garden waste tonnages during the same period (April to July), due to good growing conditions compared with hot and dry weather experienced in 2022/23.
- 3.11. The 2024/25 outturn April to July for garden waste is slightly below the same position for last year (539 tonnes less) but remains higher than tonnages for the same period in 2022/23 and 2021/22. Garden waste is included when calculating the recycling rate. In North London with relatively low levels of garden waste these impacts are marginal, however in areas outside of London with a high percentage of kerbside properties and larger gardens, garden waste is a major factor in high recycling rates and with good growing conditions the benefits are increased.
- 3.12. Overall, food waste tonnages have increased by 11.27% in 2024/25 compared to the previous year, reflecting the increase in properties receiving dedicated food waste collections, including the introduction of separate food waste collections in (LB) Islington. However, if we exclude Islington's tonnages, the Authority has seen a 1.38% reduction in food waste tonnages compared to 2023/24. This demonstrates that while new services are being offered and promoted to residents, it is challenging to maintain a high yield of separated food waste particularly in ultra urban areas with large proportions of flats and Flash (**Flats above Shops**) properties.
- 3.13. The increase in dedicated food waste collections means BioK (mixed food and garden) has reduced and will continue to do so as more separate collection services

are introduced. The introduction of increased separate food waste collections has not yet led to growth in overall organic waste streams.

|                                     | (A)<br>2023/24<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (B)<br>2024/25<br>Budget<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C)<br>2024/25<br>Actual<br>YTD<br>(Apr-Jul) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(T) | (C-B)<br>Variance<br>2024/25<br>Actual v<br>Budget<br>(%) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(T) | (C-A)<br>Variance<br>Actual<br>24/25 v<br>23/24<br>(%) |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Islington<br>Garden                 | 75                                           | 209                                          | 409                                          | 200                                                       | 95.69%                                                    | 334                                                    | 445.33%                                                |
| Islington<br>Food                   | N/A                                          | N/A                                          | 798                                          | N/A                                                       | N/A                                                       | N/A                                                    | N/A                                                    |
| Islington BioK                      | 1471                                         | 1471                                         | 17                                           | -1454                                                     | -98.84%                                                   | -1454                                                  | -98.84%                                                |
| <b>Islington<br/>Organics Total</b> | <b>1546</b>                                  | <b>1680</b>                                  | <b>1224</b>                                  | <b>-456</b>                                               | <b>-27.14%</b>                                            | <b>-322</b>                                            | <b>-20.83%</b>                                         |

Table 4: Islington Organic Waste

- 3.14. Table 4 above details Islington’s organic waste performance for the period April to July 2024/25 against the previous year and the YTD budgeted forecast for 2024/25 and the symbiotic nature of the various organic waste stream.
- 3.15. The tonnage budget for 2024/25 was set in November 2023, Islington made a decision to change their service offer after the budget setting process was completed which explains why the Budget forecast does not reflect the current operation.
- 3.16. In April of this year, Islington replaced its BioK service with separate weekly food waste collections and a chargeable garden waste service. The reclassification of garden waste from mixed organic is the reason behind the increased garden waste tonnage in Islington for the period April to July 2024/25 compared to budget and the previous year. The increase in tonnage however is not as large as one could expect had the garden and food waste elements of BioK transferred directly to the separately collected waste streams.
- 3.17. Generally, when garden waste charges are introduced, in the long run there is relatively little impact on volumes collected. The previous Government accepted this analysis in deciding against a requirement to provide garden waste collections for free. However, in the short term there can be some reactions to the charge, for example some material might be diverted to RRCs as residents that do not immediately subscribe to the kerbside collection service find alternative provision for their waste. This may lie behind a proportionately large increase in garden waste seen at Hornsey Street RRC in Islington April through July 2024/25 compared to the same period last year and is reflected in the increase in garden waste collected at RRCs in Table 3. There is little evidence to suggest significant volumes of garden waste end up in the residual waste bin following the introduction of a

chargeable service. NLWA would expect garden waste yields to recover as the percentage of subscribers increases.

- 3.18. Hackney also introduced a subscription-based chargeable garden waste collection service in May this year which has contributed to lower tonnages than the Authority would have otherwise expected (a reduction of 426 tonnes compared to the budgeted position for April to July).

### RRC tonnages

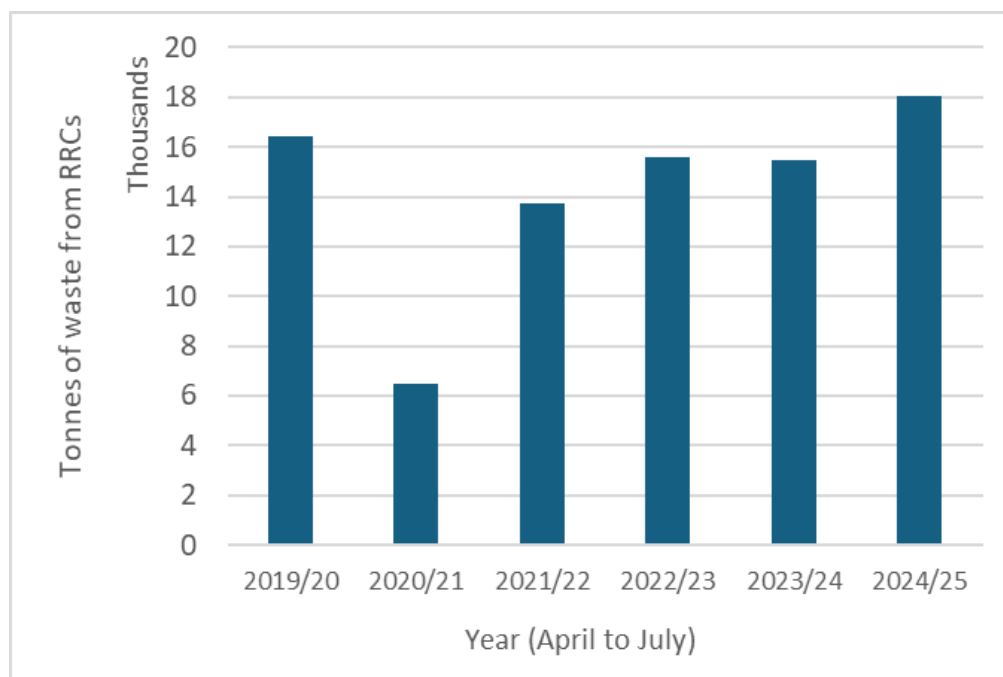


Figure 1 Tonnes of waste collected at RRCs (excluding Barrowell Green) for the period April to July

- 3.19. Figure 2 above shows RRC tonnages since 2019/20 for the period April to July, excluding Barrowell Green. Waste received at RRCs for 2024/25 is higher than previous years and up 16.8% on 2023/24.
- 3.20. Across all RRCs, garden waste has increased by 20% for the period April to July 2024/25 compared to the same period in 2023/24, with variation between sites. Hornsey Street RRC experienced a 92% and Regis Road RRC a 23% increase in garden waste tonnages during this period compared to the same period last year.
- 3.21. An increase in the tonnage received at RRCs can be expected as officers continue to work with LEL colleagues to increase provision of specialist recycling materials and more widely promote RRCs to residents. For the period April to July, there has been an 82% increase in the tonnes of expanded polystyrene (EPS) recycled through RRCs in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 and a 285% increase in hard plastics for the same period.
- 3.22. April to July 2024/25 has seen a 19% increase in residual waste, including bulky waste containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), across all RRCs compared to the same period in 2023/24. This varies across sites with Western Road seeing a 51% increase in residual waste. Overall, RRC visitor numbers have increased since

March 2024, with Western Road, South Access Road and Summers Lane seeing a further increase in July 2024 against the previous month. Generally, when there is an increase in visitor number, tonnages increase proportionally.

#### 4. DESTINATIONS UPDATE

| Material        | Baseline March 2020 |        |          | Q1 24/25 |        |          |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------|----------|----------|--------|----------|
|                 | UK                  | Europe | Far East | UK       | Europe | Far East |
| Cardboard       |                     |        | 100%     | 17%      | 0%     | 83%      |
| Mixed Paper     | 43%                 | 19%    | 38%      | 32%      | 68%    | 0%       |
| Glass           | 68%                 | 32%    |          | 100%     | 0%     | 0%       |
| Aluminium Cans  | 100%                |        |          | 100%     | 0%     | 0%       |
| Steel Cans      | 100%                |        |          | 100%     | 0%     | 0%       |
| Plastic Bottles | 100%                |        |          | 100%     | 0%     | 0%       |
| Other Plastics  | 100%                |        |          | 100%     | 0%     | 0%       |

*Table 5 Dry Mixed Recycling End Destinations*

- 4.1. The Authority is collaborating with Biffa to work towards the goal of processing all DMR materials within the UK by 2030. The table above compares data for Quarter 1 (Q1) 2024/25 to the March 2020 baseline. We continue to see and benefit from the strong domestic demand for metals, plastics and glass to ensure 100% treatment of those materials in the UK.
- 4.2. As previously reported to the Authority, the UK's current domestic capacity for reprocessing cardboard and mixed paper (fibres) falls short of the volume being produced and a similar situation exists across Europe. As a result, both the UK and European countries have been consistently exporting cardboard to far eastern markets for reprocessing. Biffa capitalized on disruptions in global supply chains following the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully directing larger volumes of cardboard to UK and European processing plants during 2021/22 and 2022/23. As markets return to pre-pandemic norms, the reduced demand for fibre in the UK and Europe is increasing the UK's dependence on far eastern markets. With energy costs remaining relatively high in the UK and Europe, there is little incentive for processors to expand their capacity. As a result, no cardboard was processed in Europe in Q1 2024/25 compared to 64% in the first three quarters of 2023/24 and the volume processed in the Far East has increased to 83% from 28% for the same periods. Whilst more mixed paper is now being processed in Europe compared to the March 2020 baseline, the Authority and Biffa have successfully redirected this material away from far eastern markets.
- 4.3. The level of detail reported for end destinations and the quality of this data varies across the sector which makes benchmarking challenging. Officers are working with Biffa to improve the granularity and accuracy of the end destinations data for DMR, and we intend to work with waste leaders across London to standardise our approach to reporting this.



## 5. WOOD RECYCLING

- 5.1. The Authority is committed to promoting the proximity principle and processing as much of our materials in the UK as possible. However, in the case of wood recycling, the UK market for treated woods does not meet demand.
- 5.2. London Energy working with NLWA officers have secured capacity within the EU to process waste wood with the large multi-national company Kronospan. Waste wood we extract from residual waste at our transfer station and from our RRC network goes by sea to a plant in Latvia where it is dried, cleaned and sorted before being recycled into panel board.
- 5.3. By exporting to the EU market, we have achieved in Q1 of 2024/25 a recycling rate of 89% with only 11% of the most heavily contaminated wood being sent for energy recovery. This is a marked improvement against previous years when wood waste treated in the UK was generally only sent for energy recovery.

## 6. COMMODITY PRICES

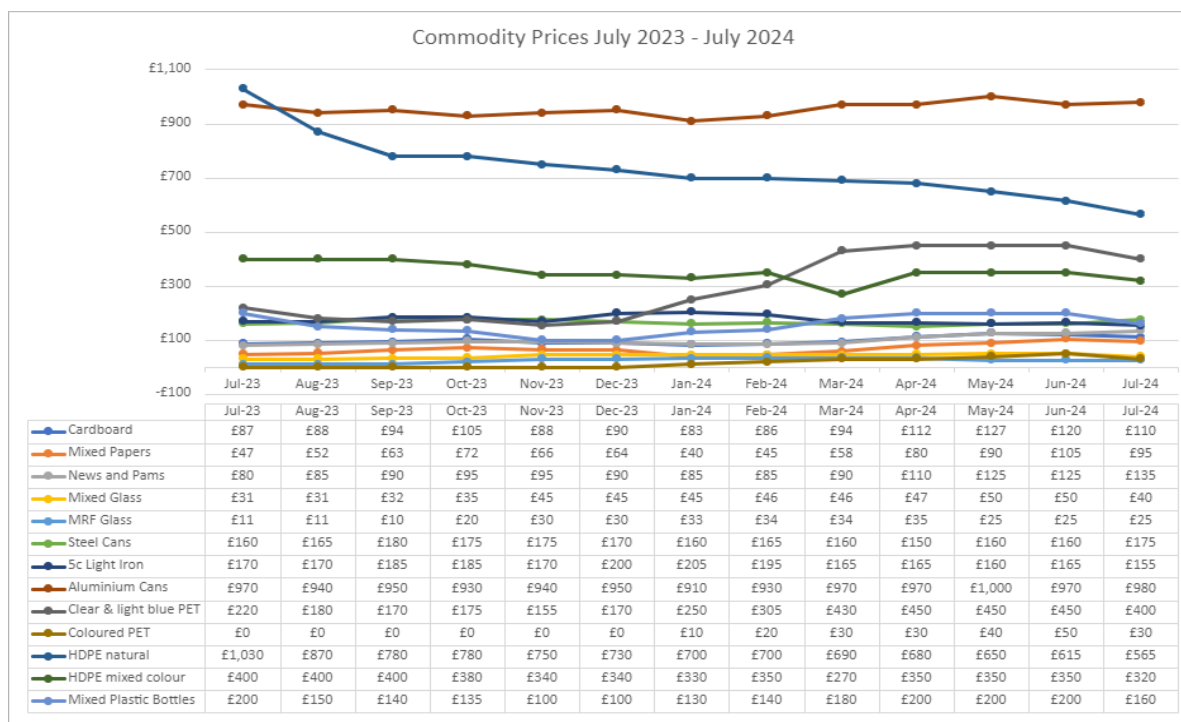


Figure 2 Recyclable Commodity Prices

- 6.1. Figure 3 details the movement in commodity prices over the last 12 months and highlights in particular the volatility in plastic markets with PET (drinks bottles) becoming more valuable and a sharp drop in the value of HDPE Natural (milk containers) which has seen prices decrease from £1,030 per tonne in July 2023 to £565 in July 2024. Plastic commodities make up 14.5% of DMR collected from the kerbside, excluding soft plastics.
- 6.2. In the early part of the year, the Authority has benefitted from a small increase in commodity prices. However, due to volatility in the market, it is hard to be confident that this will be maintained.

| DMR Net Basket Price |          |        |          |         |
|----------------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|
|                      | Forecast | Actual | Forecast | Actual  |
|                      | 23/24    | 23/24  | 24/25    | 24/25   |
| Q1                   | £43.00   | £43.26 | £39.00   | £36.17  |
| Q2                   | £43.00   | £41.89 | £39.00   | £56.04  |
| Q3                   | £43.00   | £40.48 | £35.00   | £47.93* |
| Q4                   | £43.00   | £41.11 | £35.00   | N/A     |

Table 6 Dry Mixed Recycling Net Basket Price

*\*Estimated based on two of the three months actual*

- 6.3. Table 6 above shows the value of DMR materials against Budget. The DMR net basket price is calculated using published prices for the previous three months. For example, the Q1 figure is the average of prices published on Letsrecycle for January to March 2024. Q2 is published prices for April to June, and the Q3 estimate is based on 2 months of published prices for July and August 2024.

### **Textiles**

- 6.4. The textile industry has reported a crash in recycling prices since the start of 2024. The following factors affect this; poor-quality fast fashion feedstock, a rise in export costs due to the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea, and increased taxation from African and Asian markets. Prices for recycling centre textile bank material were as low as £20-£50 (Let'sRecycle) for July 2024 compared to £90-190 in July 2023. NLWA with LEL have secured a price of £186 per tonne for textile materials collected through RRC clothing banks. This off-taker also contributes an additional £5 for every tonne of Authority textiles to a community fund pot to support circular initiatives in north London.
- 6.5. The crash in prices has generated uncertainty and concern for the future of European textile recycling markets. NLWA will continue to call on the Government to invest in the sector, place a ban on fast fashion, and develop an extended producer responsibility scheme for textiles to drive up material quality and place the burden of managing waste textiles on producers.

## **7. RECYCLING CONTRACT**

- 7.1. The initial six-year term of the Biffa Contract for the recycling of DMR is due to expire in December 2025. The Contract provides that the parties may by mutual agreement extend the initial term on up to four occasions for a maximum period of four years i.e. not going beyond December 2029.
- 7.2. Any agreement to extend the Contract must be formalized in writing, signed by both parties, and finalized no later than twelve months before the expiry of the initial term. Therefore, any extension agreement must be completed by 14 December 2024.
- 7.3. Officers are currently undertaking benchmarking and soft market testing with a view to determine whether an extension or a new procurement is the best course

of action. Officers plan to present findings and recommendations to the Authority in early December 2024 to inform a decision.

## **8. SPECIALIST RECYCLING UPDATE**

- 8.1. This section provides an update on the specialist recycling services primarily collected at the Authority's RRCs. These provide residents with solutions for materials that are difficult-to-recycle and impractical to collect as part of the kerbside collection service provided by Boroughs.
- 8.2. NLWA continues to work with LEL to expand the service offering at its RRCs, including extending existing specialist services to more sites. The Authority provides for the collection of 29 different material types across all sites. Both South Access and Edmonton EcoPark RRCs now have provision for all material streams. Owing to space restrictions, not all sites are able to accommodate the current full suite of materials where specialist recycling streams often compete for space with standard provision. Recent legislative changes, such as the requirement to segregate bulky waste containing POPs, has put further pressure on site capacity for new materials. LEL are currently reviewing the layout of several RRCs, including Summers Lane and Western Road, to better optimise the space that is available. For sites that do have capacity, officers and LEL colleagues are exploring the opportunity to trial high value materials such as electrical devices for reuse and recycling.

### **Expanded Polystyrene**

- 8.3. As of July 2024, 12 tonnes of expanded polystyrene (EPS) have been diverted from the residual waste stream across seven north London RRCs, equivalent to 20 double decker buses by volume.
- 8.4. 5.14 tonnes of EPS have been collected between April and July this year (2024/25), almost double the amount received in the same period last year (2023/24).

### **Hard Plastics**

- 8.5. Hard plastics are now collected from four RRCs; Hornsey Street, Regis Road, South Access and EcoPark RRC. 73.16 tonnes of hard plastic have been collected between April and July 2024. This is more than double the tonnages for the same period in 2023 (22.91 tonnes). Since the service launched in March 2023, 177 tonnes of hard plastic have been collected for recycling.
- 8.6. Officers and LEL colleagues are exploring opportunities to expand this service to Summers Lane RRC which may require reconfiguration of the site to accommodate an additional container.
- 8.7. LEL colleagues conducted the procurement exercise referred to in the April 2024 Service Update Report and, despite being unable to expand the scope of hard plastics collected at RRCs, have secured an arrangement with one of their existing off-takers to recycle the material. This has ensured the service can continue at the current levels of service provision in an environment where few end markets for

exist for hard plastics. LEL will continue exploring options for this difficult-to-recycle material to improve the resilience of the existing service.

### **Mattresses**

- 8.8. At the end of July 2024, NLWA had recycled just under 280,000 mattresses since the trial commenced in June 2021 and are capturing on average 10% more mattresses per month than in 2023. 31,229 mattresses have been collected for recycling so far in 2024/25 (April to July).
- 8.9. As well as offering a recycling service for mattresses at RRCs, LEL extract this material from residual waste streams at NLWA's transfer stations and the EcoPark Resource and Recovery Facility (RRF). Since May this year, the new RRF captured the highest number of mattresses each month followed by Wembley and Hornsey Street transfer stations. Of the RRCs that offer the scheme, South Access Road in Waltham Forest and Summers Lane in Barnet received the greatest proportion of mattresses for recycling since January 2024.

### **Carpets**

- 8.10. Between April and July 2024, 50.6 tonnes of carpets were collected for recycling at RRCs. This brings the total since the scheme started in November 2023 to 77.17 tonnes. Originally operating as a trial at South Access RRC, the scheme was extended to Summers Lane and Hornsey Street earlier this financial year. Since expanding the service, the average volume of material captured per month has increased by 193%.
- 8.11. Due to the quality and volume of the material received at RRCs, the service has maintained a 95% recycling rate, with the remaining 5%, primarily the carpet underlay, disposed of through energy recovery.

### **DIY Reuse**

- 8.12. North London residents have collected 110.7 tonnes of DIY materials from South Access and Summers Lane RRCs with 19.6 tonnes reused between April and July this year.
- 8.13. In the first quarter of 2024/25, the most popular products taken by residents include unused bricks, roof tiles, paving slabs, bags of cement, kitchen worktops and external doors.

### **Vapes (E-cigarettes)**

- 8.14. All RRCs now provide a dedicated recycling bin for disposable vapes. The service is managed through our WEEE compliance scheme operator, ERP. Data on the volume of vapes recycled will be available in due course following the first collection of material from RRCs by ERP.
- 8.15. Across the UK, five million disposable vapes are discarded weekly – up from 1.3 million in 2022. Providing a recycling solution for this waste stream recovers the

valuable lithium-ion batteries found inside disposable vapes and minimises the fire hazard by separately collecting, managing and storing this material.

## **9. IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT SOUTH ACCESS AND HORNSEY STREET**

- 9.1. Officers are continually working with LEL colleagues to increase our recycling and reuse service offering at RRCs and improve the accessibility of sites. Several improvement works were completed at South Access Road RRC in July 2024 including updated site signage, rearranging containers to increase the tonnage capacity of several materials and a dedicated parking zone for cyclists. These improvements will support more residents to safely access the RRC, supporting better navigation around the site and increasing access to containers for the safe deposit and storage of materials. The new layout maximises the full space available, allowing flexibility to introduce new material streams and containers. It also allows operational staff to have a clearer view of the site and reduce the double-handling of materials, enabling them to better assist residents to recycle their waste correctly.
- 9.2. The Authority has reached an arrangement with LB Islington to carry out improvement works at Hornsey Street RRC which are due to start in October 2024. The upgrades are focused on providing pedestrians and cyclists with safe access to recycle a number of materials at the RRC. A section of paved land at the entrance to the site will be reconfigured and material recycling containers installed to support improved access.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS AND POLICY**

- 10.1. Following the King's Speech, and prior to Parliament's summer recess, the Government made a number of announcements which officers are monitoring closely:
  - 10.1.1. The Government [launched Great British Energy](#) and [published the associated Bill](#) to bring it into being (the Bill received its second reading on 5 September 2024). This will be a "publicly owned, clean-energy company...[which]... will own, manage and operate clean power projects, such as wind farms, up and down the country." NLWA has written to the chair of GB Energy, Juergen Maier to highlight its interest in the Local Power Plan and its experience of running a publicly owned energy from waste facility.
  - 10.1.2. Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [announced a rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan](#). He stated that a new statutory plan will be developed "to protect and restore our natural environment with delivery plans to meet each of our ambitious Environment Act targets. This will focus on cleaning up our waterways, reducing waste across the economy, planting millions more trees, improving air quality and halting the decline in species by 2030."

10.1.3. A Private Members Bill – [the Lithium-ion Battery Safety Bill](#) – was laid before Parliament. This includes provisions regarding the safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries.

10.2. A Government consultation on expanding the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to energy from waste facilities closed on 2 August 2024. After submitting NLWA's response, officers continue to engage with neighbouring waste disposal authorities and LEL colleagues to explore the potential impacts of the scheme on north London. This work will put the Authority in a better position to offer expertise on, critique and review guidance provided to the sector on participating in the scheme, which is expected to be published in 2025. Given that the Government proposes a monitoring, reporting and verification only period that commences from January 2026, officers are anticipating a quick turnaround on the Government's response to the consultation.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

## **12. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER**

12.1. The Legal Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

## **12.2. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER**

12.3. The Financial Adviser has been consulted during the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

### **Contact officer:**

Michael Clarke  
Head of Strategy and Services  
North London Waste Authority  
Unit 1b, Berol House  
25 Ashley Road  
London N17 9LJ