

AGENDA ITEM: 7

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Meeting	Budget and Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	1 September 2010
Subject	Reducing Waste and Increasing Recycling Rates in Barnet
Report of	Environment & Operations
Summary	Barnet has experienced only incremental increases in recycling and waste reduction over the last few years. This paper sets out the reason for this, including the impact on performance, and the anticipated future implications. It outlines the strategy in place to address this.

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Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	All
Enclosures	None
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the reasons for only incremental increases in recycling and comment on the strategy set out to deal with these pressures.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The strategy and work to reduce waste and increase recycling contributes to the Corporate Priority of 'A successful London Suburb'. As residents are key to increasing our performance, it also contributes to the corporate priority of sharing opportunities and sharing responsibilities, and the Future Shape principle of a 'new relationship with citizens'.

3. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 3.1 None.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The risks of failing to reduce waste and increase recycling include the increased costs of waste disposal due to increases in the levy paid by the Council to the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), the loss of potential income from the sale of recyclable materials through income-sharing arrangements with the recycling contractor, and the risk to the Council's reputation relating to performance.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 The most recent equalities data within satisfaction surveys is analysed as it becomes available. This data showed no significant differences in the claimed use of recycling services by different diversity strands.. Residents of flats generally recycle less waste, and work is ongoing to expand the service to flats which currently do not recycle.
- 5.2 A recent composition analysis of waste suggests that in larger housing types, residents recycle an average amount of waste, but produce significantly more waste overall. As part of the development of publicity and communications work, the Waste & Sustainability Team will gather intelligence on average recycling and refuse tonnages across the borough, and relate this to mosaic profiles and the outcomes of recent waste composition analyses, to better understand where more targeted communications would be effective.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROCUREMENT, PERFORMANCE & VALUE FOR MONEY, STAFFING, ICT, PROPERTY, SUSTAINABILITY)

- 6.1 The Council pays for the disposal of waste through a levy payment to the NLWA. The levy includes the cost of Landfill Tax, which is currently £48 per tonne and is now set to rise by £8 per tonne per year. The levy payment is £8.73M for 2010/11. Provisional figures from NLWA indicate that the cost of Barnet's levy payments will almost double to £17.298M by 2015/16. Figures are based on current collection systems staying the same, plus projected increases in charges such as the landfill tax which is included in the levy

- 6.2 These figures include the projected additional costs for the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS), which is focused on driving down the amount of biodegradable municipal waste disposed of. There is considerable uncertainty about the future impact of LATS costs, but in any case the rise in the Landfill Tax acts as a significant driver to encourage a reduction in waste sent for disposal.
- 6.3 The cost of the recycling contract for recycling from houses, flats, schools, recycling banks and the Civic Amenity & Recycling Centre is £3.9m per year. The cost of the refuse and green garden/kitchen waste collection services is £5.8m. Increases in recycling will lead to increased income from the sale of materials, for which Barnet receives a 50% share. Increases in the amount of refuse collected will lead to increased collection and disposal costs.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 The governments Waste Strategy for England (2007) sets a target of 50% recycling, reuse and composting of household waste by 2020 for all local authorities.
- 7.2 The government has initiated a review of the national waste strategy, and has already suggested that it wishes to work towards a “zero waste” approach whereby recycling is increased and waste is reduced.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of Scrutiny committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the constitution; the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Committees are in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Performance

- 9.1 Barnet’s recycling rate has increased slightly between 2008/9 and 2009/10, but as anticipated, this increase is small. A Waste Action Plan was approved by Corporate Directors Group in March 2010 which detailed the reasons why the Council was failing to meet its targets for waste reduction and recycling.

Performance Category	Actual 2008/09	Target 2008/09	Actual 2009/10	Target 2009/10	Target 2010/11
Recycling, composting and reuse (NI 192)	31.18%	35%	33.1% (provisional)	37%	40%
Disposal per household (NI 191)	732 kgs	690 kgs	698.96 kgs (provisional)	662 kgs	625 kgs

- 9.2 At current rates of performance, the target of 40% recycling in 2010/11 is unlikely to be reached.

Reasons for this performance

- 9.3 Further analysis of the data suggests that the key reasons why the recycling rate has not increased significantly are:

- There has been a reduction over the last two years in the amount of paper, clear glass and textiles presented by residents for recycling. Compared with 2008/9, recycling increased overall by 1,855 tonnes. However, the tonnage of paper collected for recycling declined by 1,540 tonnes, and this is likely to be due to the effects of the recession, for example with local free newspapers containing fewer pages due to less advertising by estate agents. This loss of tonnage was partly offset by the full-year effect of collecting plastic bottles and cardboard, which were only collected for the latter part of 2008/9. An additional 703 tonnes of plastic bottles, and 2,190 tonnes of cardboard was collected compared to 2008/9. This, and a slight reduction in waste sent for disposal (NI 191) has helped to offset the reduction in paper, and deliver the slight increase in performance of 2%.
 - The tonnage of green garden and kitchen waste has only slightly increased in 2009/10 (by 151 tonnes) from 2008/9, and any potential improvement was limited by the long winter affecting the amount of garden waste that was available for collection.
 - There has been insufficient targeted engagement and involvement of residents in reducing their waste and recycling more (with the existing council service provision there is the potential to recycle or compost 77% of household waste from houses and low-rise properties, and 59% from flats).
- 9.4 Looking specifically at the amount of waste being generated and disposed of by residents (NI 191), this has fallen significantly from 732kgs to 699kgs per household between 2008/9 and 2009/10. The scale of the movement is what was projected, however the starting point for 2008/9 still remains a very high figure. It is considered that the fall in waste for disposal in 2009/10 was due to the effects of the recession on residents' buying power. Therefore this reduction in waste generated would not be sustained as the economy recovers, unless the council takes more active steps to promote waste prevention among residents. This is supported by the findings of a recent waste composition analysis, which broadly showed that the more affluent housing groups sampled put out significantly more waste overall, and recycled a lower proportion of it than other groups.
- 9.5 Two waste composition surveys of the contents of residents' residual, recycling and organic waste containers have been carried out (September 2009 and May 2010). Tables in Appendix 1 show the average spread of materials in residents' refuse bins across the two surveys. While officers have noted the limited sample size of this analysis, commissioned by NLWA, there are some interesting outcomes:
- The amount of waste being generated in Barnet per household is still the highest of all NLWA boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Waltham Forest)
 - The amount of food waste that is being "captured" for composting is low
 - 66% of material in the refuse bins in houses could have been recycled but was not. 37% of material in the refuse bins in flats could have been recycled but was not
 - Both waste composition analyses showed significant differences in recycling behaviour across the five housing types sampled.

Comparisons to other local authorities

- 9.6 An analysis of provisional waste data for London boroughs shows Barnet's performance ranked 15th out of 33 in 2009/10, falling from 11th in 2008/9. Barnet's

NI 191 figure is 699kgs compared with a London average of 608kgs. Barnet's recycling rate of 33.1% compares reasonably with the London average 32%. Bexley continues to be the top performer, with 518kgs and 50.7% respectively.

9.7 Looking at performance across the UK, Barnet is provisionally ranked 326 out of the 438 local authorities that we have waste data for, for 2009/10.

9.8 To compare Barnet's performance with others, an analysis of the six London boroughs with the highest recycling performance and the three with the lowest amount of waste sent for disposal in 2008/09 has shown the following:

- An equal mix of boroughs with in-house and contractor-provided recycling services, the top three with the lowest amount of waste for disposal all had contractor-provided recycling services. However, interestingly all the boroughs had the same model of provision in place for both recycling and refuse (i.e. both provided in house or both provided by a contractor)
- An equal mix of boroughs with a "kerbside sort" recycling collections and "co-mingled" collections
- Three collected food waste alongside garden waste in wheeled bins (as we do in Barnet), three operated a paid-for green waste service and two were only running trials of food waste collections. The top two performers (Bexley and Harrow) had no plans to collect food waste separately from garden waste
- Have a moderate but not high proportion of flats – residents of flats tend to recycle less than houses, and further work is being done in Barnet to encourage flats residents with recycling facilities to use them more fully, and to identify flats that do not yet have facilities.
- Rely on collecting a relatively high proportion of their waste for composting, as well as good recycling performance, to achieve their high overall performance.
- The three top performers in London have moved to alternate weekly refuse collections, and another has plans to do so. Bexley and Harrow, the two top performers are also less accepting of residual waste .
- This analysis illustrates that the main factors for top recycling performance in London are a mixture of alternate weekly collection and less acceptance of residual waste.

Implications

9.9 The waste levy is a key driver for reducing the amount of waste that householders produce. The levy includes the costs of waste disposal through the NLWA, and includes the Landfill Tax, but not the council's own costs of collecting refuse for disposal (ie. crew, vehicles, depot and fuel costs). The Landfill Tax costs local authorities £48 for every tonne of rubbish disposed of. The table below shows how the overall levy costs are projected to increase over time without a dramatic reduction in household waste.

Waste levy cost projections for Barnet

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
£8.73M	£10.68M	£11.47M	£10.43M	£14.68M	£17.29M

9.10 The cost driver for reducing household waste is evident. Each 10 kg decrease in waste being sent for disposal across all households would equate to a reduction in

Landfill Tax of £65k, and an approximate overall reduction in collection and disposal costs of £175k.

- 9.11 In the coming years the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) may present a risk of additional fines of £150 per tonne for biodegradable waste sent to landfill where this is in excess of a quota allocated to the NLWA boroughs. There is some uncertainty about the future of LATS and the costs this may involve, so these cannot be defined at present.
- 9.12 The evidence overall suggests that Barnet will, with its current approach, continue to only make incremental increases each year. A significant change will be required in the approach taken if the Council is to make progress towards the national recycling targets of 40% in 2010 and 50% in 2020; and the even higher figures likely to be required for Barnet by the North London Waste Authority (NLWA).

Strategy to reduce waste and increase recycling

- 9.13 The strategy to reduce the amount of household waste produced and increase recycling rates is underpinned by the following strategic priorities:
- the expansion of the service to increase convenience for residents
 - the engagement of those residents in using the services available to them more fully.

Actions already undertaken/being undertaken

- 9.14 May Gurney, the council's recycling contractor, have delivered a number of performance improvements over the last few years, including collection of tetra paks since mid December 2009 (contributing to the cardboard tonnage collected) and the installation of additional flats recycling facilities. May Gurney's plans going forward include looking at opportunities to create additional space on collection vehicles to enable more materials to be collected and/or improve efficiency of collections and performance. Where the number of collection vehicles can be reduced, this will reduce fuel and staffing costs.
- 9.15 The proportion of waste received at the Civic Amenity & Recycling Centre in Summers Lane that is recycled, reused or composted is over 60%, which is a high level of performance when compared with NLWA's aspirations for all north London sites to achieve 65% by 2020.
- 9.16 A Waste Action Plan has been developed to identify the key actions required to deliver the challenging future waste performance targets. Work has, and will continue to be implemented to:
- Improve coverage of the recycling services for flats
 - Encourage "on the go" recycling (at stations, libraries) – these were rolled out across the borough's main town centres in March 2010 and are currently being evaluated.
 - Ensure continuing enforcement of compulsory recycling
 - Investigate options for incentivising residents to recycle through reward schemes such as "Recyclebank", and review the outcomes of a trial in another London borough.
- 9.17 Further actions that are due to be implemented within the existing strategy include:
- Promoting house to house collections on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

- Trialling a food bank for the borough's larger estates
 - Ensuring all traders have a trade waste agreement and piloting a new recycling service for trade waste.
 - Pilot new approaches with local businesses and shoppers to reduce the amount of packaging
 - Adopt a no side waste, closed lid policy and stop issuing any extra bins to residents.
 - Develop a business case for further waste minimisation options.
- 9.18 A large strand of further work that is currently being developed is around targeted communication and engagement with residents. In Barnet, the Futerra research on behaviour change has shown the scale of the challenge of engaging residents. Although the Futerra project did not provide the answers on what approaches will be effective, it has signalled that we do need a new relationship with citizens to engage them in the behaviour change that will be necessary. Improved intelligence gathering to provide a better understanding of who is and who isn't recycling and who is producing the most waste is being developed. This would enable more effective targeting of messages within geographical areas.

Further Potential Action

- 9.19 Each of the actions we have already undertaken or plan to do, will only have a minimal impact on recycling rates when analysed separately. However, it is their collective impact, when implemented with more targeted engagement, encouragement and enforcement, which is more significant.
- 9.20 Nevertheless, they are unlikely to result in more than incremental changes in waste performance. There are a range of other arguably more significant actions (in policy, reputation or cost terms) that could be implemented by the council to reduce waste and increase recycling. These include:
- Rolling out the kitchen caddy scheme to those already with a green bin to encourage the recycling of food waste
 - Ceasing the neighbourhood skip service
 - Inclusion of mixed plastic into existing kerbside recycling collections (currently these would need to be exported to China as there is no UK processing facility)
 - Further waste minimisation options alongside reducing service costs.
- 9.21 As part of the NLWA procurement project to provide future waste management facilities and services, NLWA will be modelling the potential performance and costs of a number of service options for recycling, organic and residual/refuse waste for each of the seven NLWA member boroughs. Officers will be reviewing these models and their impact towards key decisions as part of an Inter-Authority Agreement with NLWA, which will define each borough's approach to achieving its share of the overall target of 50% recycling, composting and reuse by 2020.

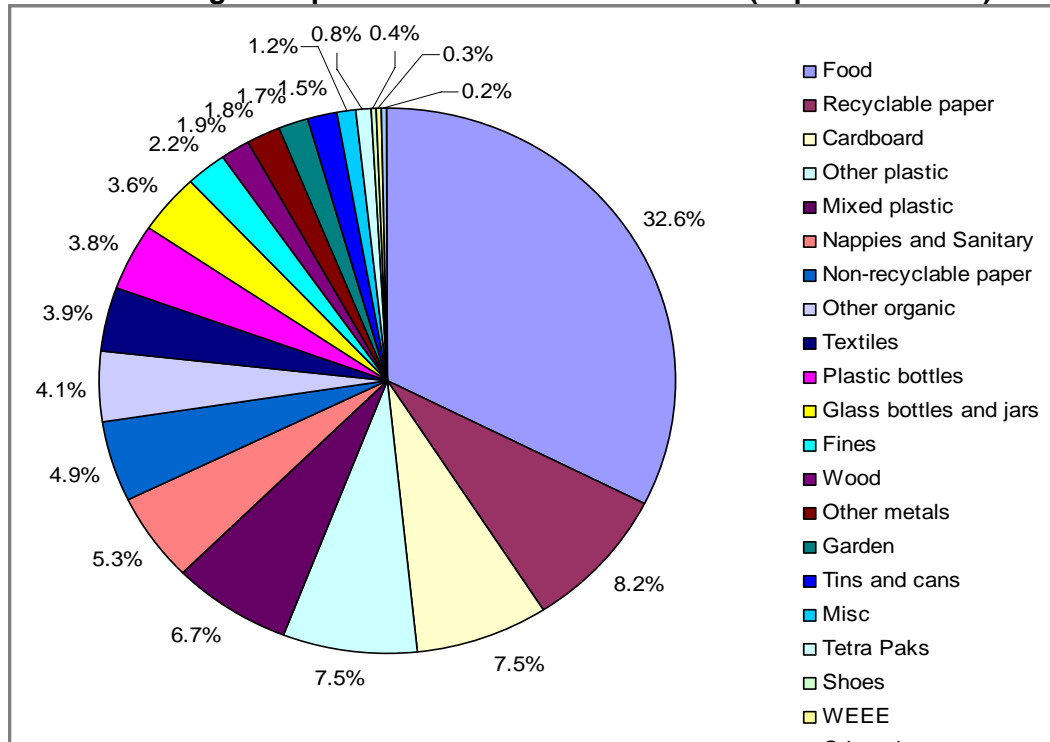
10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

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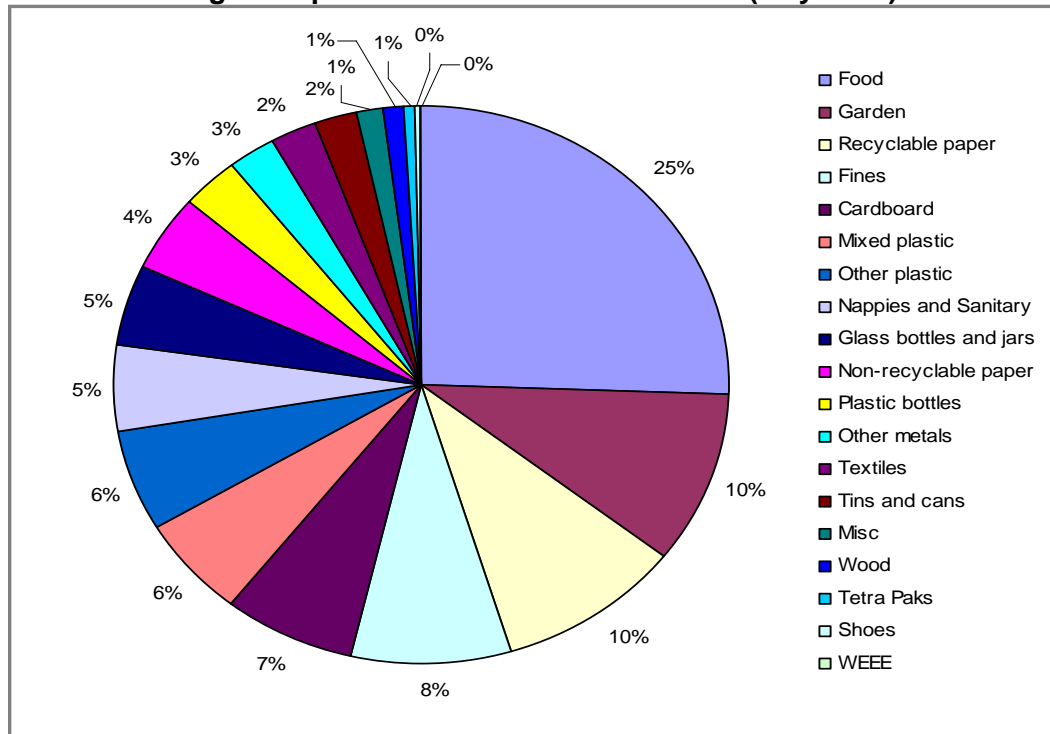
Composition Analysis

Table 1: Average composition of refuse bin contents (September 2009)



Material	kg/hh/wk	Percentage
Food	5.1	32.63
Recyclable paper	1.28	8.19
Cardboard	1.17	7.49
Other plastic	1.17	7.49
Mixed plastic	1.04	6.65
Nappies and Sanitary	0.83	5.31
Non-recyclable paper	0.76	4.86
Other organic	0.64	4.09
Textiles	0.61	3.90
Plastic bottles	0.59	3.77
Glass bottles and jars	0.57	3.65
Fines	0.34	2.18
Wood	0.29	1.86
Other metals	0.28	1.79
Garden	0.27	1.73
Tins and cans	0.24	1.54
Misc	0.18	1.15
Tetra Paks	0.12	0.77
Shoes	0.07	0.45
WEEE	0.05	0.32
Other glass	0.03	0.19
Total	15.63	100.00

Table 2: Average composition of refuse bin contents (May 2010)



Material	kg/hh/wk	Percentage
Food	4.17	25.48
Garden	1.66	10.13
Recyclable paper	1.57	9.56
Fines	1.37	8.39
Cardboard	1.13	6.89
Mixed plastic	0.97	5.90
Other plastic	0.96	5.87
Nappies and Sanitary	0.83	5.04
Glass bottles and jars	0.79	4.80
Non-recyclable paper	0.69	4.22
Plastic bottles	0.53	3.22
Other metals	0.42	2.58
Textiles	0.40	2.45
Tins and cans	0.36	2.22
Misc	0.23	1.41
Wood	0.15	0.89
Tetra Paks	0.11	0.70
Shoes	0.04	0.22
WEEE	0.01	0.04
Total	16.38	100.00

The following tables 3 and 4 show the overall destinations for household waste from the two composition surveys. Table 3 shows the actual destination of waste, and table 4 shows the potential optimal destination if residents were to recycle and compost more of their waste using existing services.

Table 3: Actual destination of waste

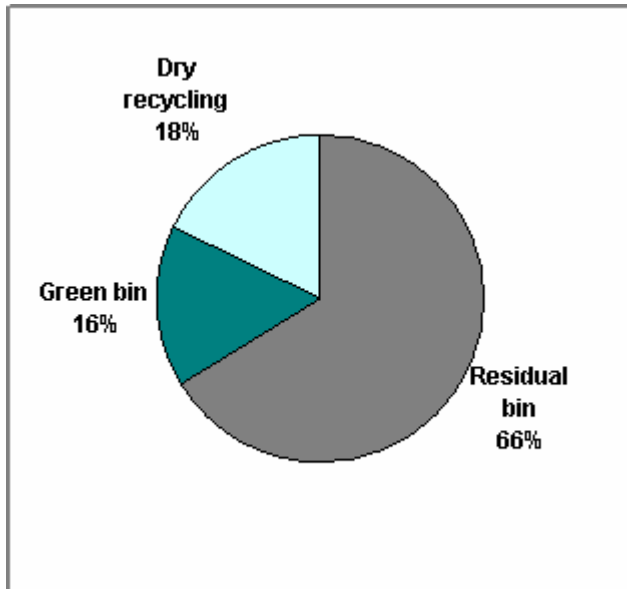


Table 4: Potential destination of waste

