



# Environment Committee 10 November 2015

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Title	Waste Action Plan		
Report of	Commissioning Director for Environment		
Wards	All		
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Urgent	No		
Key	Yes		
Enclosures	Appendix A – Waste Action Plan 2015 Appendix B – London Boroughs Waste Collection Services 2013/2014 Appendix C – Scope of Services Indicative Recycling Rates, 2014/15		
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# **Summary**

This report sets out the activities in the Waste Action Plan 2015 intended to aid the improvement of recycling performance in the interim period before the development of the Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy. The Waste Action Plan is included as Appendix A to this report and sets out current and planned activities in the short to medium term.

# Recommendations

- 1. That the Environment Committee notes the actions outlined in the Waste Action Plan, attached at Appendix A.
- 2. That the Environment Committee approves the proposed implementation of the plan as set out in 1.30 of the report.

#### 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

#### Recycling performance

- 1.1 Barnet's current recycling rate stands at 37.95% (2014/15) against an overall target of 41% and against an outturn of 36.35% in 2013/14. For reference Appendix B summarises the performance and household service offer of all the London Boroughs.
- 1.2 Since the introduction of the new service in October 2013, recycling rates have increased by 4.95%, having plateaued at around 33% for the four previous years. This represents a significant improvement against previous performance. However this increase has not been significant enough to reach the ambitious target rates set.
- 1.3 As the current situation stands it is unlikely that Barnet will reach either the Barnet 42% target for 2015/16 or the EU and national target of 50% by 2020. A Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy is currently being developed to inform the council's approach to waste management up to 2030. This Waste Action Plan sets out proposed activities intended to aid the improvement of recycling performance in the interim period before the development of the Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy.
- 1.4 Figure 1 demonstrates the recycling targets against outturns achieved so far.

Year	Barnet Target	Outturn
2012/13	34%	33.02%
2013/14	38%	36.35%
2014/15	41%	37.95%
2015/16	42%	/
2016/17	43%	/

Figure 1

- 1.5 An assessment of garden waste tonnages has shown that there has been a 17.81% drop in tonnage in 2014/15 compared to the average tonnage for the previous three years. This is estimated to have reduced the overall 2014/15 recycling rate outturn by 2.28%. Although there is likely to be some seasonal and annual growing impact to this reduction, it is considered that this is an outcome of the change from weekly to fortnightly garden waste collections.
- 1.6 Garden waste tonnages recycled at the Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre have also reduced. Between October March 2013/14, 649.08 tonnes were recycled compared to 474.52 during the same period in 2014/15.
- 1.7 A Waste Composition Analysis was undertaken during November 2014 and again in April 2015 which evidenced that only 4.24% and 1.71% of residual waste respectively, contained garden waste (see 1.10 for further information).

Organic/Garden Waste (tonnes)	Q1 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	% difference
Barnet	5713.1	4967.38	-13.05%
Enfield	6517.1	5995.04	-8.01%
Harrow	6676	5774	-13.51%
Brent	5228.72	3454.93	-33.92%
Greenwich	4965.79	4514.82	-9.08%
Hillingdon	5649	5024	-11.06%

Figure 2

1.8 The above table shows the amount of kerbside organic/garden waste tonnage collected in a selection of London boroughs in Qtr 1 2015/16 compared to the same period last year. It can be seen that there has been a decrease in organic/garden waste tonnages across all the boroughs in the comparison.

#### **Recent initiatives**

- 1.9 Over the past year, there have been several initiatives that the Waste and Recycling service has undertaken to gain more insight into residents' recycling habits and improve performance. These include:
  - Waste Composition Analysis
  - Scope of Services Recycling Rates, 2014/15
  - Participation monitoring
  - Internal staff only food waste survey
  - Participating in Behaviour Change initiatives with the West London Alliance

- "50% Recycling by 2016" Campaign

# 1.10 Waste Composition Analysis

The analysis of waste from houses was undertaken in two seasons; the results from November 2014 revealed that 35.46% of waste in the average refuse bin was food waste and 15.23% was dry recycling, and 4.24% was garden waste. In April 2015 43.70% of waste in the refuse bin was food waste and 11.38% was dry recycling and 1.71% was garden waste.

- 1.11 The same analysis at flats in November 2014 showed that 43.58% of waste in the refuse bin was food waste and 14.97% was dry recycling. In April 2015 31.29% of waste in the refuse bin was food waste and 14.84% was dry recycling.
- 1.12 The Waste Composition Analysis has shown that we are collecting the majority of available dry recycling and garden waste at houses. The analysis highlights that the food waste stream as an area for targeted interventions at houses with the potential for reduced reliance on residual waste capacity.
- 1.13 For flats the analysis shows the need to capture more of the dry recycling, and also pilot a food waste recycling offer to flats in order to understand to what extent performance can be improved.

#### 1.14 Scope of Services Indicative Recycling Rates, 2014/15

An analysis of waste tonnages, their source (e.g. houses, flats, schools) and the type of waste from these sources (e.g. residual waste, or waste that is recycled) is provided in Appendix C. The analysis evidences that there are potential gains to be made to capture more waste for recycling. This is specifically the case for dry recycling at flats and houses, and food waste at flats and houses.

#### 1.15 Participation Monitoring

The Participation Monitoring at houses took place over two weeks during April and May 2015 with a sample of 1,086 households. The results are based on an assessment of whether households took part at least once during the two weeks and showed that:

- 90% took part in the refuse service
- 85% took part in the dry recycling service
- 38% participated in the food waste service
- 58% participated in the garden waste collection service (note: this survey took place at the start of the growing season and may not reflect the maximum level of participation for garden waste during the year)
- 1.16 The dry recycling and food waste participation results are generally good (top performing boroughs information is currently being sought to compare and benchmark) but further work needs to be done to improve levels of

participation, particularly in the recycling of food waste.

# 1.17 <u>Internal Staff only Food Waste Survey</u>

Between December 2014 and February 2015, council staff that lived in Barnet were invited to participate in an online survey to assess attitudes to using the food waste service. There were 88 responses to the survey. Of these, 85% currently use the service. For those residents who had never used the service or had stopped using the service, the biggest concerns were about hygiene and food attracting vermin.

- 1.18 <u>Behaviour Change initiatives with the West London Alliance (WLA)</u>
  The Waste and Recycling service is currently undertaking a pilot project to test a range of interventions aimed at increasing participation in food waste collections at houses. The project includes:
  - Citizens' Panel survey to understand barriers to participation
  - Participation and food bin usage monitoring
  - Pilots of 6 interventions in 6 roads for 8 weeks during September/October:
    - Letter to residents offering free food waste caddy liners at their local library and generic leaflet
    - Letter to residents with a delivery of free liners and generic leaflet
    - Letter to residents explaining where liners are available to purchase and generic leaflet
    - Stickers on top of residual waste bin and generic leaflet to residents offering larger outside food waste containers
    - Stickers on top of residual waste bin and specific leaflet with information on what happens to recycling
    - Generic leaflet alone, for a control group.

The results of this work will be analysed by late November to inform future approaches to engagement and updated verbally at the November meeting.

#### 1.19 <u>"50% Recycling by 2016" Campaign</u>

The recent 50% Recycling by 2016 campaign was devised as a result of discussions between the Communications team, the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Chairman of the Environment Committee. As part of the Campaign there were; poster campaigns, waste collection vehicle signage, direct mail leaflets, and an issue of Barnet First dedicated to promoting recycling. As part of this issue of Barnet First, free compostable caddy liners were made available on request. There were approximately 700 responses/requests for these liners, which shows that residents were interested and keen to share their thoughts with us however no impact on recycling rates has been recorded by either the free liners or the 50% campaign. Future communications will take into account any learning from previous campaigns, and from the service pilot projects and other improvements set out in this report.

1.20 There was also a reply slip included in this edition of Barnet First to gauge residents' views on a number of potential waste and recycling actions. There was a moderate level of support for stickers on bins (327 responses), regular leaflet updates (296 responses), a list of where food caddy liners can be purchased (240 responses), information on what happens to recycling (295 responses) and frequent information about how well we are doing in reaching our target (265 responses). These responses have informed a number of trials that are currently being undertaken by the service, see paragraph 1.18.

#### The Waste Action Plan 2015

1.21 The Waste Action Plan (see Appendix A) sets out a number of initiatives to be implemented in the short to medium term, some of which are currently underway. These actions broadly fall into three categories; household, commercial, and street cleansing. As set out in paragraph 1.3, these actions are to be implemented alongside the development of the Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy.

#### Household

# 1.22 Increasing dry recycling at flats

There is currently an average recycling rate of 9% across all flats indicating that there is potential to improve recycling at these properties. The service has planned a number of activities that will aim to increase dry recycling at flats across the borough:

#### 1.23.1 Expanding the dry recycling service at flats

At present, 71.4% of flats in the borough have a dry recycling service in place. It is intended that the service will negotiate with flats managing agents to install dry recycling facilities at the remaining sites, seeking to maximise the balance between residual and recycling bin capacity to support the 50+% recycling ambition. While the process of negotiations with managing agents is lengthy, this area of activity represents one of the obvious areas for improvement.

However it must be noted that these sites are the late adopters of the service, and it is possible that it will be harder to engage residents and managing agents, and that potentially these sites may have practical barriers to joining the service such as limited space for bins. Nonetheless it is important that this service is promoted as a universal service to all residents. As part of this work the service will need to allocate resources to carry out an audit of the current bin provision and available space at each flats site.

#### 1.23.2 Dry recycling bin rebalancing at flats

There will be a programme of work to rebalance the refuse and recycling bin capacities at flats to support the achievement of a 50+% recycling rate. These initiatives will aid learning on how best to increase the flats recycling rate which currently sits at approximately 9%. This will help overall recycling

performance to some degree, however it is recognised at a national level that the potential yield of recycling tonnage from flats is significantly lower than from houses and therefore this would be an incremental increase only. The average dry recycling yield from flats in London is approximately 50/kg/household/yr. If this increased to 80/kg/household/yr this would result in a 0.8 per cent increase in London's recycling rates. (Source: Resource London Programme Plan 2015-16).

When considering how this would be implemented at a wider scale it is recognised that the majority of regeneration growth expected in the next several years will mainly be flatted developments. Therefore it will be important to set clear and ambitious planning requirements for developers in order to deliver progress on current and future targets. These plans are already being considered by planning colleagues. Further improvement targets would be factored into the Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This aspect needs to be progressed and escalated further within the Strategy

#### 1.23.3 Flats recycling focus groups

A number of focus group sessions were held in October 2015 to understand residents' views on the flats recycling service and future options, and gain an insight into barriers to their participation.

# 1.23.4 Planning approach

The service is working with Planning to update requirements for new developments to support the 50+% recycling ambition.

#### 1.24 Increasing food waste recycling at houses

The Waste Composition Analysis has shown that of the total food waste generated by residents at houses, only around a quarter is being recycled. The Waste and Recycling Service has embarked on a food waste behaviour change pilot project at houses. This involves trials of a range of food waste interventions to change behaviour at houses (as set out in section 1.18). Monitoring has been undertaken in the trial areas, with results due by the end of November 2015. The results will inform future interventions at a boroughwide level. It is hoped that some incremental improvement can be made.

#### 1.25 Food waste pilot project at flats

A food waste collection service is not currently offered to flats with six of more dwellings (flat blocks up to five dwellings are already served). There are plans to pilot the further extension of the food recycling offer to flats. It is intended that separate food waste containers will be provided to a sample of flats sites, working initially with Barnet Homes. There will be supporting communications and monitoring of the level of food waste diverted from the residual waste stream, to assess the success of the trial and understand the cost/benefits of a wider rollout.

#### 1.26 Increasing dry recycling at houses

The Participation Monitoring study undertaken in April and May 2015 provided evidence that 85% of the households assessed took part in the dry recycling service. These results are good but indicate that there is still scope for further growth in dry recycling participation rates. It is planned that enhanced communications focused on encouraging participation will be developed. It is also planned that following the results of the food waste behaviour change pilots (see section 1.18), the intervention that has proven to be the most successful at affecting behaviour change will be used to further encourage non-participants to take part in dry recycling if appropriate.

1.27 The pilots were originally planned to be undertaken by a number of councils through the WLA so that there would be opportunities for collective learning and sharing of experiences. Currently Barnet are the only participants in this study and therefore any decisions around the most effective interventions for encouraging dry and food waste recycling behaviour will be based on Barnet's own experiences and results.

#### 1.28 Communications and Engagement

The next steps of the 50% Recycling by 2016 campaign are currently under review. It is intended that the next phase will incorporate all the learnings from the surveys and behaviour change work in order to reflect more nuanced future communications campaigns but thus far there has been no discernable impact.

#### 1.29 Managing contamination

The recycling service changed to a comingled dry recycling service from October 2013. Barnet currently has the lowest level of contamination (non-recyclable materials) in its recycling loads delivered to the North London Waste Authority out of the 6 north London boroughs that take part in this arrangement. The confirmed Barnet dry recycling contamination rate for Q1 2015/16 is 5.04%, with other boroughs having rates of between 8.7% and 11%.

Barnet also had no vehicle loads rejected due to quality issues, while the other boroughs all had loads rejected during Q1 and/or Q2. Low contamination rates help to maximise the council's recycling performance rate, and the income and value of recycling. Barnet's position reflect a relatively high level of awareness of the service among service users, as a result of the service's work to engage and inform residents through communications and publicity including doorstepping, leaflets, website, and information hangers left by collection crews on bins containing contamination.

### 1.30 Implementation

The activities in the attached Action Plan (Appendix A) will be implemented in two phases. The first phase includes already ongoing activities on expanding the dry recycling service at flats, dry recycling bin rebalancing at flats, increasing food waste recycling at houses, and piloting a food waste project at flats. The second phase will include work on increasing dry recycling at houses through ongoing communications, progressing the learning from early

experience of the Phase 1 activities such as food waste pilots at flats, and strengthening planning requirements for future developments.

#### Commercial

1.31 The service has reviewed all commercial waste contracts to ensure that all customers are paying for the appropriate number of bins and the collection frequency that is provided to them. This has supported the robustness of the mechanism used to calculate the costs of waste disposal that the council pays to the North London Waste Authority for managing the disposal of commercial waste.

#### **Street Cleansing**

- 1.32 On-the-go recycling bins have been poorly utilised in pilots undertaken during rollouts in 2010 and 2014. In both cases the recycling bins have been heavily contaminated through misuse by users.
- 1.33 A pilot is currently being developed to install recycling bins in two different parks to assess the feasibility of on-the-go recycling in parks. It is hoped that this approach will be received better by park users. Experience suggests that when commuters are rushed there is less time and inclination to select the correct bin for the waste, it is hoped that this will not be the case in park locations.
- 1.34 The Street Cleansing service carried out a 5 week pilot starting on 15 June 2015 where the Town Centre crews in Area 4 (Edgware, Hale, Burnt Oak, Colindale, West Hendon) were asked to separate glass / plastic bottles, paper, cardboard and cans from the general litter at Town Centres. The general waste was disposed of at Hendon and the recycling was taken to a bulking site. The total average Tip Weight of recyclables is reported at 237.986kg (0.238 tonnes) from the five Town Centres over the five week period; 47.60kg (0.0476 tonnes) per Town Centre; 9.5kg (0.0095 tonnes) per week. It is reported that this represents a third of waste materials normally cleared from a Town Centre location.
- 1.35 The Town Centre crews reported that additional time was required to litter pick in this way due to double handling and increased walking. Additional time was also required for disposal due to additional travel time and unloading bags so the correct type of waste could be delivered to the correct site. It is recognised that operations of this nature are required in order to lead by example, and therefore further operational changes are necessary to fine-tune this pilot in order to minimise operational delays, ensure efficient operational delivery and define the need for additional resource. This pilot will therefore re-start and continue until the end of November 2015.

- 1.36 Further extending this pilot to also include Parks and Open Spaces as the required waste type is easily accessible to staff would therefore render a greater return in tipping weights.
- 1.37 In the longer term and based on the assessment of the cost effectiveness of the above approach, the service will consider the best options for the future. If the above approach is not proven to be cost effective, then alternative approaches based on using technologies to sort the mixed materials and extract any recycling will be pursued and considered in the Waste Strategy.

#### **London Boroughs comparison**

1.38 The London Boroughs Waste Collection Services table for 2013/2014 (Appendix B) sets out the performance and service offer for each of the London boroughs. It can be seen that for the top four best performing boroughs in terms of their recycling rate, the refuse service is offered on a fortnightly basis. Eleven of the thirty-three boroughs have a fortnightly refuse collection. Seven make a charge for collection of garden waste, with charges ranging between £35 - £75 per annum.

#### Conclusion

- 1.39 The Waste Action Plan and other associated activity will ensure that residents are able to recycle more and the mechanisms for doing so will be improved. The impact of this will be most noticeable in:- Expanding the recycling offer available to 12,560 flats which currently do not have dry recycling (equates to a 8.7% of the total households in the borough) could with a prudent estimate equate to uplift of 0.34% in the recycling rate. This calculation assumes that all sites are provided with the service for the full year (rather than being rolled out in stages) and that recycling participation is slightly lower than at the 31,367 flats already served as the new sites are late adopters of the service.
- 1.40 Increasing food recycling overall is a key activity, as it has declined post-roll out. We are taking a number of steps to increase food waste tonnages collected from houses, informed by pilots, and we would expect the total impact to be an uplift of 0.8% in the recycling rate.
- 1.41 Delivery of the Waste Action Plan is proposed to be formulated based on the best potential for improvements in performance, taking into account the potential for tonnage improvement and the timescale involved in implementation.
- 1.42 For the medium and longer term impact, the Waste Strategy will continue with these initiatives but also set longer term aims and ambitions which will continue to improve recycling through 2017/18 until to 2030. The publicity behind the 50% campaign has been wide spread with the council setting out its level of ambition for progress on recycling. The action plan demonstrates the better understanding obtained through data collection and subsequent

analysis to identify the practical drivers that will impact behaviour change. However, there are still key challenges about how Barnet residents are motivated to continue to recycle more in order to achieve the ambitious recycling targets.

- 1.43 It is still early stages for the food waste behaviour change pilot project at houses but preliminary indications show that the greatest impact is being driven by stickers on residual waste bins to encourage residents not to place their food waste in these bins. There is potential to change behaviour at the point of disposal, and the ongoing pilot will indicate whether this intervention is successful over a longer period of time. This has a clear benefit and is also supported by WRAP evidence. Once all pilots have been completed in November 2015, the results will be analysed, for further testing or wider implementation from January 2016.
- 1.44 The implementation of various service improvements including the expansion of dry recycling to flats and behaviour change activities targeting food waste at houses will require further resources. The scope of these resources will depend on the findings from the initial work and pilot projects and will be determined in the light of these.
- 1.45 It is expected that there would be a maximum impact of a 2% improvement in the recycling rate based on the activities set out in Appendix A. This would be the full year effect once all interventions were rolled out realistically, a number of the interventions will be rolled out over a longer period.

#### 2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Street Scene Delivery Unit delivers the services to residents and local businesses, and monitors performance of the operational services and collection tonnages. As a result the Delivery Unit devises projects within its service scope and budget to support improvements in performance and deliver reductions to costs where possible.
- 2.2 Recent and projected recycling rates are not currently on track to meet Council targets. This report seeks the acknowledgement of a Waste Action Plan proposed by the Delivery Unit to support improvements in performance in the short to medium term.
- 2.3 Although the Waste Action Plan aims to deliver a range of initiatives designed to increase recycling rates, considering the current performance, it is unlikely that the 42% target for 2015/16 will be achieved. Recycling targets will remain challenging without any significant changes to the service offer in order to drive up residents' engagement and participation in recycling.
- 2.4 This is evidenced by the Waste Composition Analysis which shows that residents could recycle more materials, particularly food waste, and the participation survey which shows that residents could be much more engaged

with the food waste service. Such changes to the service offer would need wider consideration beyond the scope of the Delivery Unit alone. The Delivery Unit would then be responsible for delivering the agreed changes.

#### 3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 In light of the development of a Municipal Waste and Recycling Strategy, the Council could opt to implement no further action in the interim, however this would not serve to increase performance, reduce disposal costs, and prepare the ground for the achievement of the EU and national target of 50% recycling by 2020.

#### 4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 If agreed, the Waste Action Plan will continue to be implemented.

#### 5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

#### 5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 includes the following aims:
  - Barnet will be a Leader in London for recycling
  - Over 50% of waste collected will be reused, recycled or composted in 2020.
- 5.1.2 There is a 42% recycling target for Barnet in 2015/16.
- 5.1.3 At this stage in the development of the strategy there are no implications relating to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its stated priorities or the future health and wellbeing of residents.
- 5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)
- 5.2.1 As part of the Waste Action Plan, collection rounds and the supporting resources and infrastructure needed to deliver them will continue to be reviewed in a bid to optimise routes, collections and the value of materials, therefore increasing efficiency and reducing costs.
- 5.2.2 Barnet pays the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) for the disposal of its residual waste and the treatment of its garden waste, food waste and recyclable waste through a statutory default levy. For 2015/16 Barnet has paid a levy of £10.735m. It is also due to receive an estimated income of £0.561m for co-mingled recyclable waste from the NLWA. When reviewing the longer term approach to services, consideration will be given to the balance between the council's waste collection costs, the effect on its disposal costs as paid through the NLWA levy, and any performance benefits.
- 5.2.3 There will be significant call on resources to implement many of the initiatives

outlined in the Waste Action Plan, including new programmes of work resulting from the findings of various ongoing pilot projects. This will be managed within existing Delivery Unit service budgets and use of the Weekly Collection Support Scheme funding. Any additional further resources required to deliver new service improvements will need to be reviewed against the service benefits and value for money they can deliver.

It was previously envisaged that the council would implement recycling incentives scheme to promote increased recycling of household waste by residents. This would be funded by the use of the Weekly Collection Support Scheme funding. Emerging evaluation of the progress of incentives schemes elsewhere in the UK indicates that they are not delivering significant improvements to recycling participation and performance, or value for money. It is therefore proposed that the council reviews the options and considers an alternative approach that will deliver better value for money.

- 5.2.4 At this stage, there are no procurement, staffing, IT, or property impacts identified.
- 5.2.5 The diversion of waste from disposal would help to manage Barnet's waste more sustainably.

# 5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 The Council's Constitution (Clause 15, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A) sets out the terms of reference of the Environment Committee. These include specific responsibilities for: (1) commissioning refuse and recycling, waste minimisation and street cleaning, and (5) to approve any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources.

#### 5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 There is a risk that the initiatives outlined in the Waste Action Plan do not deliver the expected increase in recycling rates, and/or that these initiatives do not provide a cost-effective solution. This will be mitigated by close monitoring and performance management.
- 5.4.2 There is a risk that the initiatives outlined in the Waste Action Plan result in increased contamination of recycling and food waste bins as these services are rolled out to households that have not previously chosen to participate. This could have a negative effect on recycling income, other service users' engagement, and the council's recycling performance figures. This can be mitigated to a limited extent by regular communications to service users.

#### 5.5 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.5.1 The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 sets the Strategic Equalities Objective, which is: that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect, and will have equal access to quality services which provide value to the tax payer. Changes to policies and services are analysed in order to assess the

potential equalities impacts and risks before final decisions are made.

5.5.2 Any significant changes to services will be consulted on and the potential impacts on the protected characteristics taken into account.

# 5.6 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.6.1 At present there is no planned consultation.

#### 6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Quarter 1 Performance and Contract Monitoring Committee Report, 2015/16.