

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT OF: HEAD OF STRATEGY AND SERVICES

FOR SUBMISSION TO: AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report informs Members about the latest operational activities and associated issues dealt with by the Strategy and Services team of the Authority

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to note performance on service delivery in the current year.

SIGNED:  Head of Strategy and Services

DATE: 15 September 2020

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. This report provides Members with an update of the main operational matters that have arisen since the Authority meeting in June 2020, as well as the latest available validated tonnage information from municipal waste collected by the seven London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest. The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) has a statutory responsibility for providing municipal waste disposal services for the seven constituent borough councils and powers to arrange for the reuse, recycling and composting of municipal waste and to operate Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRCs).

2. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

2.1. LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL) introduced a new weighbridge software system in June. No tests were run to trial the interface with the Authority's software before it went live. Further details are given in section 6. However, the impact has been that there have been problems in accessing the data required to compile the most recent information of tonnages delivered for June, July and August which can be verified by the Authority for the purposes of statutory WasteDataFlow reporting (WasteDataFlow being the national web-based waste data reporting system). Officers are actively engaging with LEL to bring about solutions so that reports can be sent to Boroughs.

2.2. Comparing the first five months of 2019 with those of 2020, there has been an increase in the overall tonnage of Household Kerbside Residual waste from March onwards. This mirrored the national impact of Covid-19 since the pandemic meant that people were producing a higher proportion of their waste at home.

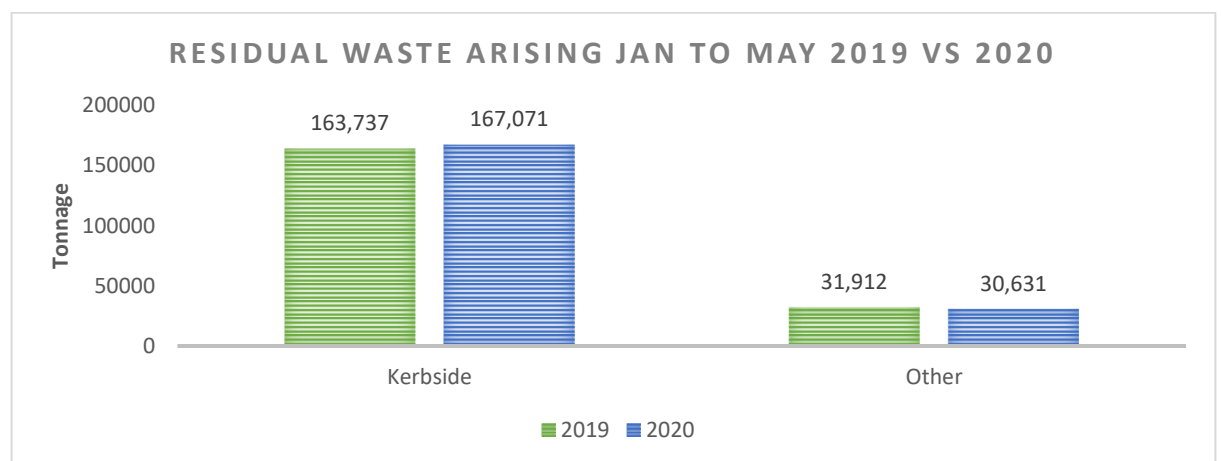


Figure 1: Residual waste arisings Jan-May 2019 and Jan -May 2020

2.3. There was a significant drop in the tonnage of 'Other Residual' waste as Boroughs prioritised core kerbside services over bulky waste, street cleaning, and horticultural waste (parks residual waste). The closure of many schools and businesses saw a significant drop in the quantity of chargeable waste collected,

which helped to combat the rise in household kerbside waste, preventing disposal facilities from being over-run with tonnage

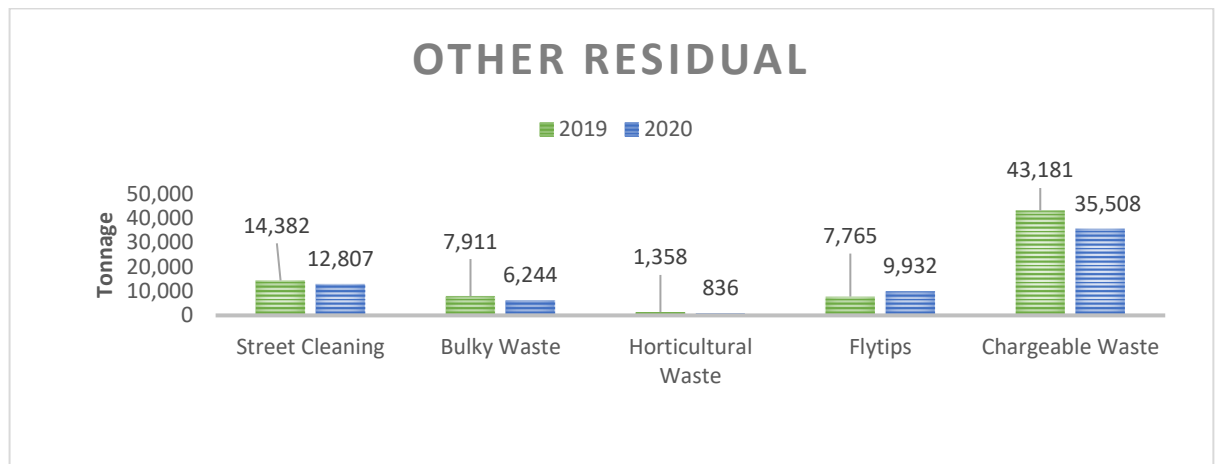


Figure 2: Other Residual waste arisings Jan-May 2019 and Jan-May 2020

2.4. With an increase in the amount of time residents were at home due to COVID-19 restrictions there has been a corresponding increase in Biodegradable Kitchen Waste and Food Waste. However, conversely there has been a decrease in Green Waste; this decrease is largely due to ongoing disruption to Barnet’s kerbside collections and their introduction of chargeable garden waste from May. Several boroughs also limited parks activities to redeploy staff to essential waste collection services, which resulted in less parks green waste arising

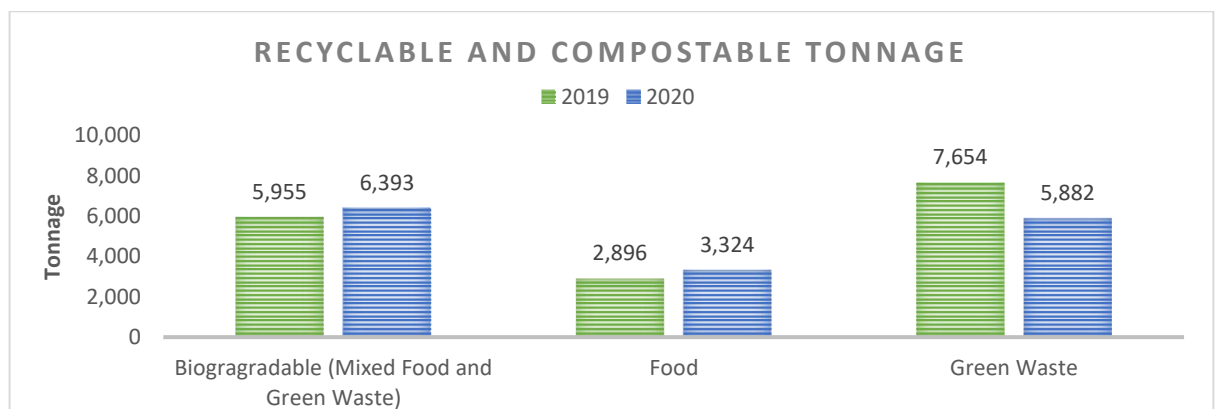


Figure 3: Recyclable and Compostable Tonnes Jan 2019-May 2019 and Jan 2020-May 2020

3. REUSE AND RECYCLING CENTRES (RRCS) & REUSE SHOP

3.1. The Kings Road reuse shop reopened on 3 August. Arrangements were put in place by LEL to ensure that it could operate in a COVID-19 secure way. This included a one-way system, limits on customer numbers at any one time and a requirement that all transactions would be paid by card not cash. However, the shop closed on 10 August following a break in, in which the safe was stolen. The closure allowed

LEL to improve security and to conduct investigations into the circumstances of the break in - as the safe should not have held cash because cash transactions were not permitted at the time. The shop reopened on Wednesday 26 August.

- 3.2. Capacity at the RRCs generally has been increasing. With effect from 13 July, LEL allowed the use of all bays at RRCs and allowed vans to use the sites. They significantly increased the number of slots made available through the booking system. At the time there were waits of several days for any resident wanting to visit Summers Lane (Barnet), Regis Road (Camden) and Western Road (Haringey). They therefore received the largest proportionate increase in booking slots. As the peak period for RRC usage in the year has passed, we now see that every RRC has free booking slots at all opening times on every day of the week. We will therefore consider with LEL the need for the continuation of this system and will report back in December.

Fridge recycling update

- 3.3. Since the easing of lockdown and the re-opening of the reuse and recycling centres there has been an increased demand for fridge and freezer disposal. This has put pressure on the Borough collections of these items, the reuse and recycling centres where they are temporarily stored and the treatment facilities where they are finally delivered. The situation has been worsened by the closure of Viridor's fridge reprocessing plant in St Helens, Merseyside which had capacity for 600,000 units per year.

<https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/viridor-to-close-st-helens-weee-facility/> .

- 3.4. The Boroughs drop off fridges at RRC's (a long existing arrangement) and LEL have not permitted them to do so because of the backlog of equipment being held on site. 2029 units were still collected in August from the sites.
- 3.5. Alternative arrangements at short notice were made for Boroughs to direct deliver fridges to EMR, Willesden. The service is being closely monitored. There are prospects for the situation improving over the coming weeks, as the initial surge of disposal after lockdown passes, and reprocessing plants tackle the backlog of absorbing current fridge and freezer supplies.

Geron way transfer station

- 3.6. Following consideration and agreement by the Programme Committee, a decision has been taken to enter into an agreement for lease for the Seneca Resource Recovery facility in Wembley. This will assist with managing waste volumes away from the EcoPark during the North London Heat and Power Project construction works and will operate as an alternative to the Hendon transfer station for the period of the lease. At Programme Committee on 7 September the agreement for

lease was approved by Members. Officers are working with LEL to agree operational plans for the Seneca facility and the transition away from the Hendon transfer station

4. MRF SERVICES

4.1. At the June Authority meeting, Members were updated on the steep rise in Authority Mixed Dry Recyclables (MDR) arriving at Biffa’s Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in April 2020, when the switchover of Hackney’s MDR coincided with the peak of the pandemic, leading to a 40% rise in NLWA tonnage tipped at Biffa during April 2020 compared to April 2019.

4.2. Looking at total MDR arising between January and July 2020 (January being the first full month since the new contract commencement) against the same period last year, Figure 4 shows that since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, tonnage has generally been higher than in 2019.

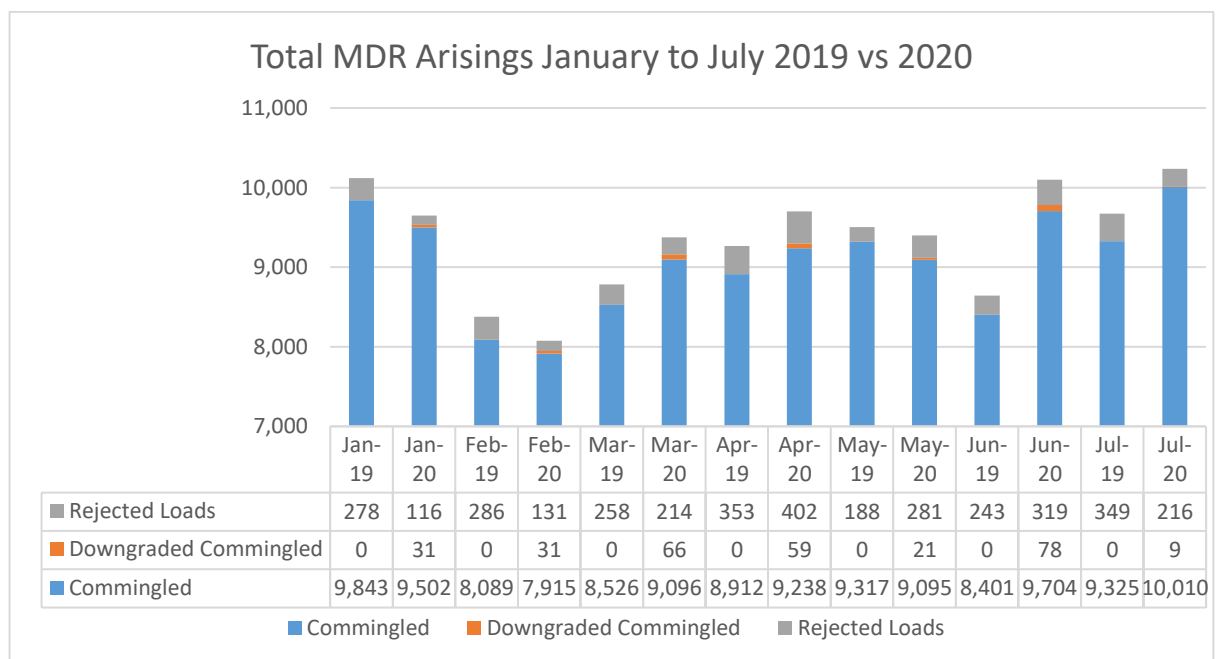


Figure 4: Total MDR Risings January to July 2019 compared to January-July 2020

4.3. Figure 4 demonstrates that during the pre-lockdown period, there was a 3% decline in processed MDR tonnage and a 56% reduction in rejected loads, reflecting the revised rejections process and introduction of downgraded loads category contained within the new MRF contract. However, the post-lockdown period saw a 7% rise in processed MDR and a 3% increase in rejected tonnage compared to the equivalent months last year.

4.4. Since the contractual changes led to such dramatic tonnage swings between 2019 and 2020, an alternative way of looking at the impact of the pandemic on MDR is to

consider the proportion of tonnage rejected since the new contract commencement in terms of pre-lockdown figures against post-lockdown figures, shown in Table 1 below. This demonstrates there has been a noticeable rise in the proportion of commingled tonnage rejected since lockdown began during March 2020.

Table 1: Pre and post lockdown figures

	Pre- Lockdown (Jan to Feb 2020)	Post- Lockdown (Mar to Jul 2020)	Year to Date (Jan to Jul 2020)
Processed Commingled	99%	97%	97%
Rejected Loads	1%	3%	3%

- 4.5. The issue of tackling contamination will be addressed through the Members Recycling Working Group (MRWG) and an action plan is being implemented.

5. **COMMODITY PRICES**

- 5.1. The chart below provides the latest market information, and shows commodity prices between September 2019 and August 2020, taken from LetsRecycle.com, which is used to index MRF income against.

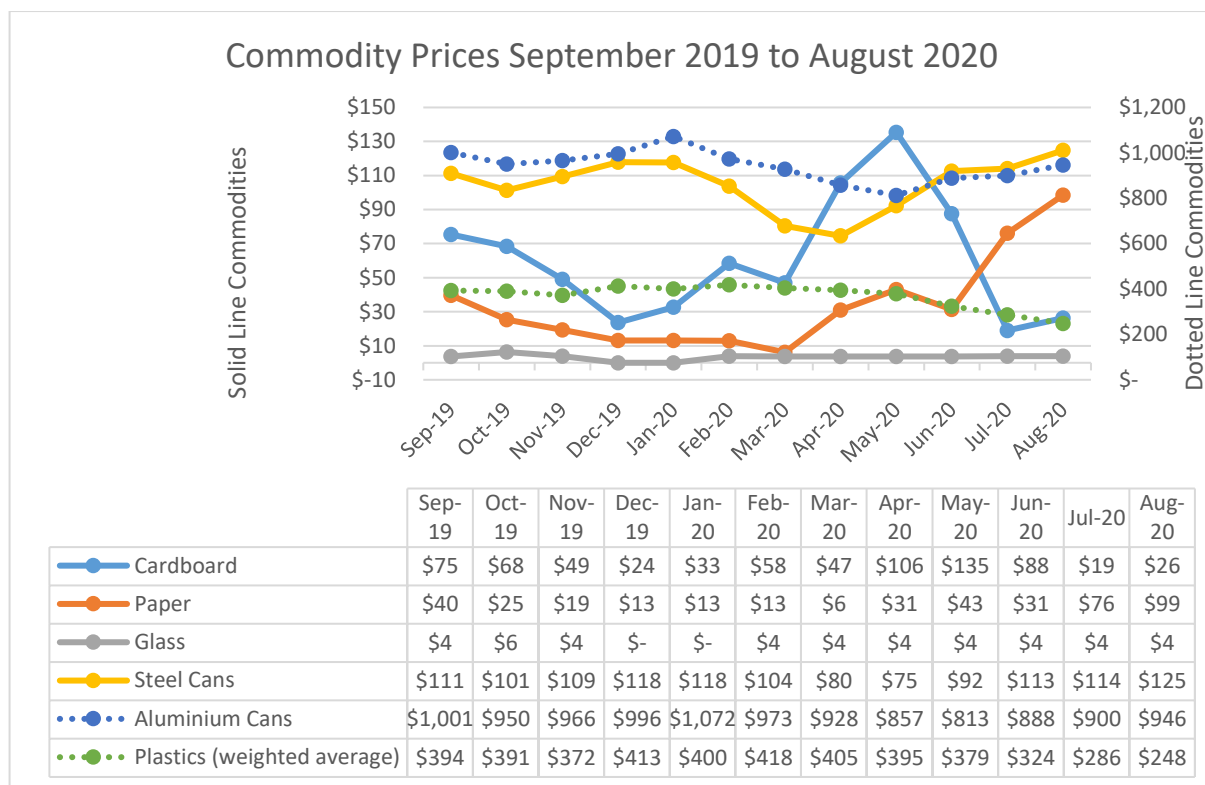


Figure 5 : Commodity Prices Sept 2019-Aug2020

- 5.2. Aside from glass, there have been fluctuations in the value of all commodities.
- 5.3. Cardboard initially saw an increase when lockdown commenced, possibly caused by a sharp spike in buying by consumers increasing the demand for bulk deliveries by supermarkets; however, from June cardboard prices have declined rapidly, perhaps as a medium-term result of the reduction in business activities leading to a drop in demand for products delivered in cardboard packaging.
- 5.4. At the start of lockdown, Paper was at the bottom of a long-term decline in price; however, there has been a sharp rise since, likely due to the increase in online shopping by consumers stimulating demand for printed card packaging which is included in the Paper recycling stream.
- 5.5. Conversely, Steel Can prices saw a decline around the start of lockdown, which can broadly be attributed to the suspension of much of the international manufacturing industry. Now that manufacturing in some countries have recommenced production, demand has picked up and Steel Can prices have returned to pre-lockdown levels. Aluminium Cans reflected a similar trend, albeit less severely.

Plastics prices have seen a dramatic decline since the onset of lockdown, perhaps due to a fall in demand for plastics used in the hospitality industry and for single use 'on the go' water bottles

6. LONDON ENERGY LTD DATA PROVISION

- 6.1. The report to the Authority meeting in June reported that LEL introduced new weighbridge software on 1 June. The paper reported that following implementation of the system, LEL was working with officers to address teething problems which were affecting the Authority's receipt of data. No trial testing was undertaken of the interface between the Authority's software and the new software system, and considerable effort is still being expended to address data gaps. It is apparent that the company had incomplete understanding as to the specific data which was supplied to the Authority via the previous system despite a specification being provided in May 2019.
- 6.2. The Authority supplies data to boroughs daily, to enable a cross check for consistency between weighbridge data and borough fleet data. However, it has not been possible to do this on a reliable basis since June
- 6.3. Within the waste management contract there are obligations on LEL to provide data in a format suitable to the Authority. Although a report identifying additional missing data was provided by LEL on Friday 11 September following meetings and correspondence, information remains incomplete which puts at risk the timetable for providing the report to WasteDataFlow for the Authority and constituent Boroughs.
- 6.4. In addition to this Officers have identified a discrepancy in tonnage reports relating to Hornsey Street Waste Transfer Station. For mixed dry recycling, the weighbridge reports do not reconcile between the inbound and outbound transactions. Officers are going through a process to identify how this could have arisen and will report back in December.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications as a result of actions in this paper.

8. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

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

9. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

- 9.1. The Financial Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

List of documents used:

WasteDataFlow - national web-based waste data reporting system

Available at <http://www.wastedataflow.org/>

Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England, HM Government, 18 December 2018,

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>

Letsrecycle Website: -Trade website

Available at: www.letsrecycle.com

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