

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: RESIDUAL WASTE REDUCTION PLAN UPDATE

REPORT OF: MANAGING DIRECTOR

FOR SUBMISSION TO: AUTHORITY MEETING


DATE: 3 DECEMBER 2020

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on work delivered under the Authority's Residual Waste Reduction Plan, and includes steps taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the work. The report details the changes to the programme in order that the Authority continues to encourage waste reduction, repair, reuse and increased recycling through a programme of effective communications and resident engagement.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Authority is recommended to note this report.

SIGNED:  Managing Director

DATE: 23 November 2020

1. PLANNED PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY IN THE RESIDUAL WASTE REDUCTION PLAN

- 1.1. The Residual Waste Reduction Plan 2020-22 ('the Plan') is the Authority's plan of activity to encourage waste prevention and recycling. The activity includes outreach, i.e. face to face conversations with residents such as at stalls in supermarkets and giving presentations; as well as communications, including social media communications, relating to waste prevention and recycling. The Plan also includes details of how the Authority will work in partnership with the constituent borough councils to assist in delivering each borough's Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP). The Plan is based upon a rolling six-month programme of work, with progress updates and next period's plans of activity discussed at Members' Recycling Working Group meetings. The aim of the Plan is to bring about a reduction in residual waste in north London.
- 1.2. The Plan was approved at the Authority meeting on 13 February 2020. The Plan is available on the Authority's website: <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/our-strategies>
- 1.3. A significant amount of activity in the Plan involves officers meeting with residents face-to-face, delivering presentations to community groups for example and attending festivals and other public events to give tips and advice about waste reduction and recycling. In 2019-20 face-to-face conversations about food waste prevention were held with 11,000 people at over 100 events.
- 1.4. The activities address four waste stream priorities namely: food, bulky waste, textiles and single-use products, particularly plastics. Activities include:
 - 1.4.1. Ongoing work – outreach work, stalls and presentations to encourage waste prevention, as well as education work with schools and colleges
 - 1.4.2. Enabling others to spread the message through advice and training to community groups - including online resources
 - 1.4.3. New initiatives – including support for innovative and trial projects through the Waste Prevention Community Fund
 - 1.4.4. High profile events and activities – one-off events such as the North London Waste Prevention Exchange.
- 1.5. Communications work is a core part of the Plan, delivered through social media, specific communications campaigns and communications support activity for the above waste prevention and recycling activities.

2. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE FIRST NINE MONTH'S PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY

- 2.1. When the Plan was approved by the Authority in February, the potential impact of COVID-19 was unknown. However, following the imposition of restrictions, NLWA officers cancelled all planned face-to-face waste prevention and recycling events. None of the 'ongoing work' outlined in paragraph 1.3 has been delivered in the expected form since 15 March.
- 2.2. Unfortunately also the project to develop more Low Plastic Zones has been on hold. This involves working with businesses to reduce single use plastic. The development of guidance documents or 'how to' guides and associated training to share best practice and enable the community to take action by delivering events and activities has also been on hold.
- 2.3. However, despite these challenges there has been much progress, which is detailed below.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE RESIDUAL WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAMME IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

- 3.1. The next section of this report gives a progress update on the activity between June and December 2020.
- 3.2. **Face to face outreach activity and presentations** have been replaced with online webinars delivered via Teams Live and online question and answer sessions (Q&As) delivered via Facebook Live or Instagram Live.
 - 3.2.1. In the five months 1 July and 30 November, 20 online events have been or are planned to be delivered by NLWA staff as follows:
 - 3.2.1.1. 10 Teams Live webinars including the following subjects: food waste (3), recycling (3), plastics (3) and textile waste (1).
 - 3.2.1.2. One webinar on recycling for a community group.
 - 3.2.1.3. Eight Facebook LIVE Q&A events focussed on recycling namely what can and cannot be recycled, of which one was specifically about textiles recycling. These were particularly encouraged by Cllr Chandwani, having regard to the feedback she received from residents.
 - 3.2.1.4. One Instagram Live Q&A on textiles.
 - 3.2.2. Five Instagram Live interviews about textiles waste have/will also be delivered by journalists and online influencers as part of the Love Not Landfill/Stop & Swap events programme by 30 November (see below).

- 3.2.3. To date this online activity has reached 399 external online attendees and generated 346 questions/comments. (This excludes attendees to the Stop & Swap events which are reported separately).
 - 3.2.4. Recent paid promotion on social media of around £100 per webinar has seen the number of sign-ups increase significantly in comparison to the first few webinars where there was no paid-for promotion. The first plastics webinar was the most popular event to date with 65 online attendees.
 - 3.2.5. A new section of the NLWA website has also been created to host content from the online events.
 - 3.2.6. Moving forward, officers will work with borough colleagues to jointly promote and deliver some future events and to programme some events which are borough specific.
- 3.3. **Library displays** – all north London libraries were emailed with the offer of a non-contact food waste prevention display for when they re-open. To date, six libraries have been sent a display.
 - 3.4. **Textiles waste prevention – clothing swaps** – Although COVID-19 restrictions mean the Authority is unable to deliver a programme of face to face swap events, nine online clothes swap events have instead been organised in conjunction with the London Waste and Recycling Board's (LWARB's) Love Not Landfill campaign team. LWARB is delivering the events with the help of an existing online clothes swapping platform called Nuw - <https://www.thenuwardrobe.com/>. North London residents get a free 30-day access to the swapping app. as part of the programme.
 - 3.5. Five swapping events are being delivered in 2020, four in 2021. Each clothes swap is preceded by an online discussion on Instagram Live, between a journalist and an online influencer talking about different aspects of the textiles industry and waste, which anyone can attend.
 - 3.6. The first Instagram Live event was viewed live by approximately 60 people and at the time of writing had received a further 160 views so far. The event, on 11 November was a conversation between Channel 4 presenter Zabrina Grant and online influencer, writer and fashion activist Ben Pechey. Their interview, which focussed on non-gender clothing, was bubbling with a shared enthusiasm for charity shopping. The subsequent swap (to which both Zabrina and Ben each donated an item of clothing) attracted 12 people (against a target of 30). Two items of clothing were swapped as a result and in total 70 items of clothing have also been uploaded to the Nuw app for north Londoners to swap with.
 - 3.7. The project is supported by PR activity which has to date resulted in a very positive BBC Radio London interview with writer and online blogger Lauren Bravo one of the

hosts for a future online discussion. There has also been a very positive piece of coverage in the Enfield Independent newspaper. A final report, including achievements against targets will be produced at the end of the project.

3.8.

3.9. **Waste prevention education programme** – A review of 10 years of NLWA waste education work was reported to the MRWG in June. As a result, MRWG requested that officers consider the opportunity to work with the Eco-Schools programme, managed in England by Keep Britain Tidy, rather than working on a standalone waste education project for north London going forwards. A report was subsequently submitted to the September MRWG meeting. The Eco-Schools programme was decided not to be the right vehicle.. However, taking account of Members’ questions about the necessity of creating something new, officers propose to work with partners who have a similar focus and are already working on waste issues in schools. This work is now being taken forward.

3.10. **Waste prevention community fund** - NLWA has a £60,000 annual fund to allocate to community groups wanting to deliver new waste prevention projects which support NLWA activity but do not duplicate what either boroughs or NLWA is delivering. Following a successful promotional campaign resulting in more applications being received than NLWA had received in previous years, six projects have been awarded funding. Inception meetings have been held with all the projects and agreements have been signed and work commenced. A press release is being issued about each project at an appropriate time for the project.

3.11. Officers have subsequently agreed with one project – Forest Recycling – that their project will be deferred to 2021-22 because of practical difficulties associated with COVID-19 restrictions. A short summary of each of the projects is enclosed in Appendix A to this report.

3.12. **Digital communications campaigns** – Following on from the first two digital campaigns of the year namely ‘In a Fix’ and ‘the Fridge Diaries’ which were delivered in May and June, a number of additional digital campaigns have been delivered since. Full details of these campaigns are included in a new campaigns section of the NLWA website <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/campaigns-and-projects> but they are summarised below

3.12.1. **‘My Wardrobe, My Way’**. This social media campaign aimed to help residents to make the most of the clothes they already own and make considered choices when purchasing new items rather than buying and disposing of lots of items whenever fashions change. The campaign used social media to deliver video content, live online events, Q&As and webinars, and included a competition for a frontline worker to win a styling session with a fashion stylist. The competition closed on 22 October

and was won by a very grateful frontline worker. The campaign reached more than 30,000 people across north London on social media, which led to high levels of engagement with the posted content. The Facebook Q&A was viewed more than 120 times and the Instagram Live event and video were each viewed more than 1,000 times.

- 3.12.2. **Repair Week** - London's first 'Repair Week' was delivered between 12 and 17 October 2020. To support Repair Week NLWA worked with five north London repair experts who were filmed demonstrating a simple, handy repair on Instagram TV. The videos were shared on NLWA's social media channels and were added to the NLWA repair week webpage once complete – <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/RepairWeek2020> The repair tutorials included [The Restart Project's](#) 'How to Speed up your Laptop or Computer' and [Worn Well's](#) 'Repairing a Tear'. In addition, a presentation was delivered as part of a London Environment Directors' Network (LEDNET) repair event on NLWA's experiences of delivering repair cafes. The campaign resulted in NLWA gaining a phenomenal 500 new followers on Instagram over the course of the week.
- 3.12.3. **Pumpkin Pledge** – In the lead up to Halloween NLWA ran an online campaign to encourage celebratory activities that do not generate food waste. It is estimated that [12.8 million pumpkins](#) are purchased and thrown away at Halloween. The aim of the campaign was also to encourage residents to pledge to have a food waste-free Halloween. Residents were encouraged to look out for the 'Pumpkin Pledge' on our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) channels.
- 3.12.4. **Pick the Habit** – this digital campaign focussed on encouraging people to pick just one good habit to reduce food waste. The campaign included a [BuzzFeed quiz](#) for people to find out which food loving personality they are and therefore identify which techniques they were most likely to find successful in reducing their food waste at home. The quiz was promoted with the offer of a prize for one participant of a £50 voucher to spend at the Hackney based zero-waste shop '[Get Loose](#)'. The competition closed on 16 November 2020 so at the time of writing, the results of this campaign are not yet available.
- 3.13. **Public Relations (PR)** – officers ran a procurement exercise appointing Barley Communications as a result to support key waste prevention and recycling activities across the Plan. The contract includes promotion of the online clothes swapping Stop and Swap events, and a campaign to encourage a reduction in the use of single use plastic items, particularly single-use face coverings associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. NLWA has commissioned some polling with residents to assess levels of understanding about what to do with single-use face coverings which will form the basis of a media campaign targeting regional, national and

trade media. The campaign will aim to raise awareness of the issue and encourage residents to seek out reusable alternatives. A campaign around waste plastics would build on and complement the Authority's existing programme of work on single-use plastics including Low Plastic Zones.

- 3.14. **Funding bid.** An unsuccessful funding bid for £80,000 was also submitted in partnership with Olio (the food sharing app.), LB Camden, LB Enfield and LB Havering who led the bid. The bid was made to the government's local digital COVID-19 fund with the aim of encouraging more food sharing in north London to support those particularly impacted by the pandemic. Although the bid was unsuccessful some good relationships have been established and it may be possible to further promote food sharing later on in the programme.
- 3.15. **Behaviour change research** – officers are currently undertaking a procurement exercise for a specialist partner to undertake research into how best to encourage behaviour change in relation to throwing away clothes and single use plastic items. It had originally been planned to incorporate some research into recycling contamination behaviours too, in order to inform NLWA's behaviour change communications. However, London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) and Keep Britain Tidy have recently reported on some research into recycling contamination behaviours that they have carried out. As a result, officers concluded that the contamination part of the research was unnecessary and that NLWA communications on recycling contamination could go ahead on the basis of this recent and relevant research.

4. UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- 4.1. Other activities will progress as outlined in the approved Plan, subject to the impact of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and feedback from the Member Recycling Working Group (MRWG). Key highlights include:
- 4.1.1. A tender will be issued between January and March 2021 for a communications agency to deliver a communications campaign on recycling contamination.
 - 4.1.2. The Authority's annual waste prevention exchange conference about waste prevention will take place between January and March 2021.
 - 4.1.3. Planning will start for a return to the physical cooking demonstrations and clothes swap events that are included in the Residual Waste Reduction Plan.
 - 4.1.4. As the experience to date is that physical clothes swap events engage more people than online swaps, the aim is to deliver some physical events promptly, and as soon as they are permissible. Depending on the timing and nature of future clothes swaps it is hoped to be able will be extend

their impact with more supporting communications, including a media campaign around attitudes to clothes swapping in January and some Valentines-themed activity designed to raise the profile of the swaps.

- 4.2. The proposed programme of activity for the next six-month period (1 April to 30 September 2021) will be discussed at the MRWG meeting prior to this Authority meeting and will be brought forward for consideration and approval to the February Authority meeting.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The main equalities implication of the changes to the programme of activity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is that the impact disproportionately affects those who are digitally disadvantaged.
- 5.2. The replacement activity that NLWA has been delivering online in place of physical face-to-face events uses a range of online platforms. This means that if residents don't have access to a computer for example, they may still be able to see messages about the benefits of waste prevention by other means such as by using a smart phone. One of the main reasons for sending display materials to libraries was also so as to maintain some non-digital activity in the programme.
- 5.3. Going forwards, as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, it will be important to consider the potential risk of exclusion from the replacement waste prevention activities as more of our work moves online. Local radio and printed publications will need to be considered to spread the messages to those who may not have a route to access the internet. The development of training for community groups to deliver waste prevention initiatives such as repair cafes or activity taking place in the Low Plastic Zones will also help to ensure that there is an equal opportunity for people to engage in the residual waste reduction programme.

6. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

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

7. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

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

List of documents used:

NLWA - 2020-22 Residual Waste Reduction Plan – available at
http://www.nlwa.gov.uk/media/2848/2565222-nlwa-residual-waste-reduction-plan-2020_v5.pdf

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APPENDIX A: INITIATIVES SUPPORTED THROUGH THE WASTE PREVENTION COMMUNITY FUND IN THE YEAR 2020 – 21

The Waste Prevention Community Fund (the Fund) was established to provide community based (non-profit making) organisations with access to funding in order to develop new approaches to tackling waste prevention, and also to extend the reach and impact of the Authority's waste prevention activity in north London. With up to 100% funding of the project cost, support can be provided for projects up to £15,000 tackling a waste prevention problem. This appendix provides details of initiatives that are being supported in 2020-21. A significant aspect of the community fund is to test support for different sorts of projects, finding creative ways to get people thinking – and acting – on waste prevention.

1. Get Loose Get Out!, Hackney City Farm

Plastic packing waste prevention in Hackney and wider London

Hackney City Farm received funding to upgrade the on-site zero-waste packaging shop and trial a zero-waste packaging deposit collection scheme. They will be partnering with Growing Communities who have collection points across North East London. This would be London's first ever Deposit and Collection point for zero waste products. The trial of the collection point will enable them to assess and increase collection points. If viable, they could expand it across as many of these collection points as possible and share their learnings with other packaging free retailers so they can replicate this across other boroughs. Lastly, they will install a display screen with the aim of connecting Hackney City farm visitors (about 100,000 every year) with waste reduction events taking place in North London, as well as displaying waste reduction tips and advice for visitors to try at home.

2. There Should be Light, Forest Recycling Project (deferred to 2021-22)

Textiles & Furniture waste prevention in Waltham forest

The Forest Recycling Project received funding to deliver a series of workshops focused on fabrics reuse, specifically upcycling and recycling lampshades using reused fabrics. The workshops will provide an opportunity to provide information and encouragement to repair, reuse, repurpose and recycle fabrics more widely in participants' lives.

3. Zero Waste Feast, Feast With Us

Food Waste prevention in Camden, Islington and Haringey

Feast with Us provides free meals for the local community; the meals use surplus food. COVID-19 has resulted in a move to a food distribution system rather than people meeting up to eat together. This has created more waste, particularly single-use plastic containers and possibly food waste in the home. The funding will be used to create a zero-waste system that will address the food and plastic waste generated through Feast with Us's new

way of working. The project will also include the creation and trial of hubs for recycling single-use plastic food containers.

4. Community Cooks, Food Hall

Food waste prevention in Haringey, Hackney and Islington

Food Hall provides community meals using surplus food. The funding will support this work as well as providing training, mentoring and qualifications for 20 community cooks who will provide online and other training to show people how to cook whilst wasting less food.

5. REVIVE: Repair & Resale environmental initiative revitalising communities, Groundwork

Furniture and food waste prevention in Barnet

The funding will enable Groundwork to continue to deliver work from the LOOP furniture reuse hub on the Grahame Park Estate. Repairing and/or upcycling broken furniture. REVIVE participants will also receive guidance on appropriate recipes, best-before dates/labelling. Tips for extending the life of food. Learn how to utilise leftovers and scraps.

6. Bowes and Bounds Waste Reduction, Myddleton Road Market

Toys, textiles, gifts, furniture waste prevention in Haringey and Enfield

Myddleton Road Market will run a six-month community led waste awareness project in the Bowes Park and Bounds Green area. The work will include community led/delivered clothes swaps and toys swaps as well as donation drives for the local food bank. Individual workshops can be replicated as standalone initiatives by any other community group with support or toolkits.