

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT OF: HEAD OF STRATEGY AND SERVICES

FOR SUBMISSION TO: AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE: 16 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report informs Members about the service delivery performance for north London's waste and how communications activities have contributed to the Authority's agenda of reducing waste and maximising recycling.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to:

- A. Note progress on initiatives to expand the Authority's recycling services
- B. Note the communications activity supporting service delivery and supporting north London residents in reducing waste and increasing recycling
- C. Note the update on operations delivering services to boroughs and residents across north London, including an assessment of waste volumes
- D. Note the planned return of normal opening hours at our Reuse and Recycling Centres from 3 January 2022, following the temporary introduction of COVID-19 safe precautions on the 13 May 2021.



SIGNED: Head of Strategy and Service

DATE: 6 December 2021

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on activities undertaken to establish new recycling streams and to communicate with the public on waste minimisation and recycling. It also outlines the main operational matters that have arisen since the Authority meeting held on 7 October 2021.
- 1.2. The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) has a statutory responsibility for providing municipal waste disposal services for the seven constituent borough councils and has powers to arrange for the reuse, recycling and composting of municipal waste and to operate Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRCs).

2. INCREASING MATERIALS FOR RECYCLING

- 2.1. The initiative to recycle mattresses has been under way since June and was reported to the Authority meeting in October. The initiative is proving to be generating more take-up and recycling than was expected. It is highly welcome that there has been success in raising awareness of this scheme, and residents have made use of the ability to bring mattresses to Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRCs) across the north London area. By the end of November almost 26,300 units have been recycled. If the rate of recycling continues as at present, some 52,600 mattresses would be recycled in a full year amounting to nearly 1500 tonnes of waste being transferred from the residual waste stream to the recycling stream.
- 2.2. Approximately 73% of a mattress is recycled on average dependent on its construction, this would equate to around 1,100 additional tonnes of recycling. This would equate to an increase of around 0.1% in the average recycling rate for north London.
- 2.3. Table 1 below, details the tonnage and number of mattresses apportioned to the constituent boroughs. This is for the period June to end of November 2021.

Total to date	Tonnes	Units
Barnet	142.67	5169
Camden	80.41	2913
Enfield	112.93	4092
Hackney	108.57	3934
Haringey	95	3442
Islington	90.56	3281
Waltham Forest	95.58	3463
	725.72	26294

Table 1

- 2.4. In November the Authority launched the recycling of expanded polystyrene (EPS). To provide greater service efficiency state of the art EPS shredders/compactors have been installed at Summers Lane and South Access RRC's with a third unit at Wembley Waste Transfer Station, these are expected to be operational during

December. This trial is the result of NLWA taking the initiative to develop a partnership with the British Plastics Federation and Greenbank Recycling Solutions. The latter is providing on-site compactors and managing the onward processing of the material. Collection of EPS will be made from all north London's RRC sites during a year-long trial, with Summers Lane, South Access and Wembley being EPS hubs to pre-process the material for shipping to its UK based end destination. The polystyrene is voluminous but light. The recycling will allow it to be used in insulation and similar products, avoiding the need for virgin materials to be used for these purposes.

- 2.5. Officers have also made progress in establishing a partnership with Terracycle. This is a company who works with manufacturers to arrange recycling of specialist products which cannot be managed as part of the household dry mixed recycling contract. A recent development is that crisp packets are now being collected across the RRC network and taken to Hornsey Street RRC from where Terracycle take them for recycling. The scheme was advertised as part of the newspaper-based campaign promoting our RRC network. Crisp packets are another light product. However, it is positive to be able to make available a recycling route for something so frequently thrown away. There are estimates that the UK consumes 6 billion packets of crisps a year, which would equate to around 100 million in north London.
- 2.6. Officers are also working with Terracycle to introduce a coffee pod recycling collection at RRCs. The aim is to offer this service to residents from early 2022.
- 2.7. These initiatives come in addition to the operation of the Authority's contract with Biffa for managing household collections of mixed dry recycling. This includes provision to recycle a wide range of materials, with all of north London's plastics and steel/aluminium cans being reprocessed in the UK, supporting the development of a domestic circular economy.

3. EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH (ECO) UPDATE

- 3.1. In addition to offering recycling services, the Authority continues to take forward media campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of waste prevention and recycling and to help residents reduce their environmental impact.
- 3.2. The 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) took place from 31 October to 13 November. Related to this, the Authority promoted a campaign called Not a Minute To Waste. The campaign highlighted the vast quantities of waste produced every minute in London – 233 tonnes per hour across the capital. That is equivalent to 67 double decker buses full of waste every hour. The campaign called on everyone – Government, businesses, and individuals – to play their part and reduce waste to help tackle the Climate Emergency.

- 3.3. The main campaign artwork gave an impression of what just one hour's waste looks like and appealed to residents to take one minute to make a greener choice. Key Elements of the campaign were 8 billboard ads across north London seen by 1.4 million people over the campaign length; a dedicated web page, NotaMinuteToWaste.co.uk; an accompanying press release (see nlwa.gov.uk/news/londons-colossal-chuck-away-habit-worsening-climate-emergency-warns-waste-authority); and social media advertising. On social media there were over 900,000 viewings of the message, with 3,500 "likes". As a result of the campaign, the Authority chair was interviewed in ITV London News.



Image 1: campaign artwork for Not a Minute To Waste.

- 3.4. The Authority also supported Recycle Week (20 – 26 September) by participating in the national advertising campaign, run by Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), as well as producing and promoted online content. This included blog pieces on "Wishcycling", on where north London recycling goes, and how to make recycling part of the daily routine (see nlwa.gov.uk/blog). There was also a dedicated campaign page which included a recycling quiz (nlwa.gov.uk/campaigns-and-projects/recycle-week-2021).
- 3.5. From 16 – 31 October, officers delivered a textiles waste reduction campaign called My Wardrobe, My Way. The campaign encouraged residents to follow the principles of a "capsule wardrobe" – a modest but versatile collection of clothes. Main elements of the campaign were a new video which featured north London influencer, Austyn Farrell, sharing how he manages his own wardrobe; a guest blog piece from stylist Wendy Rigg; a pop-up event as part of Islington's Greener Together festival; paid social media promotion and a dedicated web page (nlwa.gov.uk/campaigns-and-projects/my-wardrobe-my-way).
- 3.6. The pop-up event was delivered alongside the Thanks for Trying art exhibition as part of Islington's Greener Together festival and involved a screening of the campaign video and a Q&A session with the creator of it. Residents were also

engaged in conversations on alternatives to buying new clothing and how to make the most of their wardrobes, utilising a display of second-hand clothing as inspiration, which was provided by the charity Traid.

- 3.7. Activity on the Thanks for Trying contamination campaign continued through face-to-face engagement with residents, as in-person events resumed especially towards the end of the summer. Officers met residents at a variety of events including summer fairs, college freshers' fairs, shopping centre stalls and workshops for community groups, engaging over 800 people. Webinars were also delivered for some community groups that prefer to continue meeting remotely and a college that enabled remote participation in classes. The art exhibition created for the campaign has also been on tour and officers have brought it to events and public spaces in Camden, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest, with further bookings being planned for the remaining boroughs. These activities have provided opportunities to answer residents' queries on recycling, to promote Authority wide recycling services, whilst also encouraging reuse and repair of household items and textiles.
- 3.8. To encourage waste reduction at Christmas, from 18 November – 24 December, a campaign called "Rethink Wrapping". The campaign highlights the energy used to produce wrapping paper and the amount of wrapping paper used at Christmas, much of which is hard to recycle, and therefore single-use. Influencers were recruited to showcase fun and inspiring alternatives to wrapping presents with traditional wrapping paper. Key elements of this campaign include: a press release (nlwa.gov.uk/news/tis-season-wrap-single-use-christmas-paper), social media including paid promotion and a dedicated web page (nlwa.gov.uk/campaigns-and-projects/rethink-wrapping)

4. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

- 4.1. NLWA officers have held a series of meetings with counterparts from the seven constituent boroughs to review tonnage delivered in 2021/22 against budget and to update forecasts.
- 4.2. Table 2, column C shows that in Barnet, Camden, Hackney and Haringey we are forecasting that residual waste will be below forecast for the year. In Enfield, Islington and Waltham Forest waste arisings are expected to be higher than forecast, though the overall picture is almost 15,000 tonnes below budget.

Residual Total (Exc. RRC's)	19/20 Outturn Tonnage	20/21 Outturn Tonnage	21/22 Budget Tonnage [A]	21/22 Q2 Forecast Tonnage [B]	21/22 Q3 Forecast Tonnage [C]	22/23 Budget Tonnage [D]	Variance [A-C]	Variance [A-D]
NLWA	571,677	557,489	582,149	570,902	567,246	576,879	(14,903)	(5,270)
Barnet	102,108	109,147	116,050	111,245	108,905	114,000	(7,145)	(2,050)
Camden	73,760	61,917	74,401	71,424	68,636	72,761	(5,765)	(1,640)
Enfield	91,057	88,430	87,458	87,907	87,972	84,832	514	(2,625)
Hackney	88,412	84,691	85,284	85,313	84,602	85,492	(682)	208
Haringey	70,942	72,574	75,229	72,104	72,128	73,783	(3,101)	(1,445)
Islington	77,788	69,895	73,949	72,487	74,399	75,082	450	1,133
Waltham Forest	67,611	70,835	69,778	70,423	70,604	70,928	826	1,150

Table 2

4.3. Table 3 below shows the key factor influencing the lower level of waste.

Residual	Waste Type	19/20 Outturn Tonnage	20/21 Outturn Tonnage	21/22 Budget Tonnage [A]	21/22 Q2 Forecast Tonnage [B]	21/22 Q3 Forecast Tonnage [C]	22/23 Budget Tonnage [D]	Variance [A-C]	Variance [A-D]
NLWA	Household (levy)^	461,375	479,824	478,961	471,952	473,106	473,325	(5,855)	(5,636)
	Non Household	91,636	65,412	85,993	82,267	78,098	87,386	(7,895)	1,392
	Chargeable Household	18,666	12,253	17,195	16,683	16,042	16,169	(1,152)	(1,026)
	Total	571,677	557,489	582,149	570,902	567,246	576,879	(14,903)	(5,270)

Table 3

4.3.1. Residual Non-Household (Commercial Waste) for 2021/22 is now expected to be 15% below pre-COVID 19 levels. While we now forecast commercial waste to be 78,000 tonnes this year, compared with 65,000 tonnes when economic activity was severely impacted in 2020/21, this is less of a bounceback than was expected. Commercial waste collected by boroughs currently represents only a small proportion of total commercial waste in North London. Authority officers will work closely with borough counterparts on improving the reliability of Non-Household declarations as part of the final in year and 2022/23 forecasting exercise scheduled to take place in December 2021.

4.3.2. By contrast, household residual waste is expected to be 1.2% below forecast, although this shows a growth of 12,000 tonnes compared to pre-COVID-19 levels, indicating that increased working from home and on-line deliveries are continuing to be an upward pressure on household waste.

4.4. Table 4 below details the latest forecast for Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) tonnage delivered to Biffa. Overall this is 1,323 tonnes above budget with Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest delivering increased recycling compared to budget and Barnet, Camden and Hackney delivering lower tonnages than budgeted.

DMR Tonnages	19/20 Outturn Tonnage	20/21 Outturn Tonnage	21/22 Budget Tonnage [A]	21/22 Q2 Forecast Tonnage [B]	21/22 Q3 Forecast Tonnage [C]	22/23 Budget Tonnage [D]	Variance [A-C]	Variance [A-D]
NLWA	110,585	117,728	115,727	118,741	117,050	120,304	1,323	4,577
Barnet	26,535	29,736	29,375	28,900	28,358	29,163	(1,017)	(212)
Camden	16,669	15,248	16,452	16,641	16,035	16,452	(417)	0
Enfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hackney	18,470	19,608	20,739	20,572	19,969	20,559	(770)	(180)
Haringey	16,982	19,553	17,651	19,689	18,528	18,696	877	1,045
Islington	15,973	15,904	16,148	16,272	16,249	16,950	101	803
Waltham Forest	15,957	17,679	15,363	16,667	17,911	18,484	2,548	3,121

Table 4

5. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE AT THE ENERGY CENTRE

- 5.1. The prime responsibility of the Authority is to ensure that waste disposal services are maintained for our seven constituent boroughs. At the last Authority meeting officers updated Members on the operational difficulties that had been encountered at the Biffa Materials Recovery Facility (Fire) and the LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL) operated Energy Centre (the unavailability of Turbine 4(TA4))
- 5.2. The Biffa operation operated well since returning to service on 13 August 2021.
- 5.3. The Energy Centre is the oldest facility of its type operating in Europe. When a Turbine is unavailable, the capacity of the Energy Centre to process residual waste is restricted. This would not be the case in a more modern facility, which would have the capability to treat waste independent of the turbine's operation.
- 5.4. Turbine 4 (TA4) was taken offline for maintenance and was scheduled to return to service on the 28 July. However, mechanical and electrical issues have led to a severe delay in its return.
- 5.5. LEL and their contractor Ethos have continued to work to reinstate TA4, these includes a series of technical procedures.
 - 5.5.1. The turbine oil system has been flushed to remove debris and after achieving satisfactory test results the Alternator Rotor has been threaded back into the Generator.
 - 5.5.2. The Alternator Rotor up-shaft lead required replacement, this work was carried out however, the lead failed its electrical testing, causing an 8 week delay while materials were sourced.
 - 5.5.3. The Rotor was transported to a specialist engineering facility to accommodate and test the on-line vibration monitoring system and to conduct High Speed Balancing.
 - 5.5.4. High speed balancing has now been completed and the rotor was transported back to the energy centre.

- 5.6. This allows TA4 to recommence operations on 4 December, allowing the Energy Centre to operate at full capacity. However, it will be necessary to plan for TA4 to have a fuller overhaul in 2022.
- 5.7. As a result of the extended outage of the turbine, it has been necessary to send more of north London's waste to third parties than forecast in the Budget. It was reported to the October Authority meeting that in August 5,000 additional tonnes had to be sent to third parties for disposal, including 3,725 tonnes being sent to landfill. Our estimate for the TA4 outage is that between August to October the NLWA Budget forecast 12,907t would need to be treated at 3rd parties, in practice, this will increase to 23,411 with an additional 10,504 being sent to 3rd parties.

6. RRC WORKING HOURS

- 6.1. In March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 emergency, RRCs across the country were required to close as part of the first national "lockdown". On 13 May 2020 NLWA's RRCs reopened in North London.
- 6.2. On reopening, public opening hours were reduced to enable additional Covid-19 control measures to be implemented; such as enhanced cleaning and additional time to complete site safety briefings after members of the public had left site.
- 6.3. The changed opening hours have been 08:45 to 16:15, in place of the previous hours of 08:30 to 16:30 for all RRC's with the exception of Hornsey Street, which were Monday to Saturday 08:00 to 20:00 and on Sundays and Bank Holidays 08:30 to 20:00. Based on the latest government advice and in consultation with LEL, officers have developed proposals to revert to previous operating hours from Monday 3 January 2022.
- 6.4. However, the identification of the COVID 19 Omicron variant introduces a complication, with further information about its infectivity and a decision by Government on whether to update guidance expected around the time of the Authority meeting. A final decision on whether to restore opening hours will be made following this. This is likely to lead to a short delay in any extension of opening hours to ensure that there are clear communications with the public.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

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:

Letsrecycle.com

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