

Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the carbon reduction element of our new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the Authority and the Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames for the years 2020-2035.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Authority is asked to:-

- 1) Approve the key messages on waste carbon savings (appendix 1).

1. Background – The Authority and Boroughs committed in 2005 to a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) which included waste prevention, reuse, recycling, infrastructure and contracts. The action plans were reviewed and updated in September 2017 and approved by the Authority. The remaining key aims were to support boroughs to deliver a 50% recycling target and to ensure availability of appropriate waste treatment and recycling infrastructure to meet future needs.

The Authority has developed a five-year Business Plan which was approved in March 2020 and commits to review the JMWMS from 2020-2035 in partnership with the constituent Boroughs.

2. Strategic Outcomes – In September 2019, the Authority members shared their Borough priorities. The strategic outcomes created are:

- Effective and efficient operations focused on - **WHERE WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE**
- Our climate emergency response is to focus on - **NO MORE WASTE**
- Recognise the only workforce we have is our - **RESIDENTS and COLLEAGUES**
- Tackling clean streets and flytipping because – **WASTE IS A CRIME**
- We can't wait for legislation – **BE PROACTIVE**
- Joined up and consistent - **USING HIGH-QUALITY DATA**

3. Future Vision - In October 2019 the Borough Environment Directors held a future-vision workshop which is being developed through the West London Environment Directors Board. The outcomes include:

- Financial stability
- Better transport
- Carbon neutral by 2030
- Smart City Models
- A Virtual Single Waste Authority
- Greening communities

- Collaborative models in the sub-region and pan London

4. Policy context – The JMWMS must consider the wider policy context, which includes the following targets:

- Carbon neutral by 2030 (Borough Climate Emergency targets)
- 65% recycling: by 2035 (UK Government target) by 2030 (GLA target)
- Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (UK Government target)
- Zero vehicle emissions by 2050

5. Our climate emergency response is to focus on No More Waste – The main difference between our past and future decarbonisation programmes is that we need each resident and business to actively participate, this is not something we can do in the background with no impact on people's daily lives

Circular economy – Waste reduction is the biggest decarbonisation activity we can undertake to remove waste from Energy from waste (EfW). The Waste Minimisation team has, since 2010 focused our attention on the waste hierarchy to minimise cost, reduce waste and reduce our carbon impact. The decarbonisation materials identified in the waste minimisation plan are food waste, textiles and single use plastics. In 2021 we will be adding a circular economy plan to support green recovery. Reports from the UK resources council indicate that for every £1 invested in circular economy projects, £2.40 social value can be realised. WLWA will use these projects to understand and demonstrate how this benefit can be achieved in west London.

Increasing recycling – WLWA waste composition analysis completed each year and most recently in March 2020 identifies the scale of non recyclable packaging, it indicates that houses are very good recyclers whereas properties with communal bins need more assistance. The Plastics Tax and Extended Producer Responsibility legislation will unlock the current economic and technical barriers to increasing recycling by focusing primarily on the amount of “non-recyclable” recyclables in our current waste stream. In addition, West London Waste and Borough partners have projects ongoing to understand what we can do to assist people in properties with communal bins to increase recycling.

Increasing composting – WLWA has invested £3m in food waste projects to double the amount of food waste collected. Residents using the food waste recycling service reduce their food waste, reducing food waste decarbonises all the way along the supply chain and has a significant impact. The Projects Update provides more detail on the progress of food waste collection projects.

Energy from waste – WLWA has completed a significant decarbonisation programme by removing waste from landfill (demonstrated in the road to net zero presentation appended) and moving towards more recycling, composting and energy from waste. EfW is a net improvement on fossil fuel energy through the energy grid. To stay carbon neutral as the grid decarbonises we must extract the most carbon costly and easily recyclable materials from EfW. Decarbonisation meetings with Suez our residual waste services contractor (SERC) and Viridor (Lakeside contract) have confirmed compatibility with our circular economy, waste minimisation and recycling projects and the need to explore carbon capture and storage. WLWA has much more residual waste than is guaranteed in its contracts which enables us to always focus on waste reduction and recycling in preference to energy from waste.

6. Environment Bill – The Environment Bill 2019-21 is in the committee stage in the House of Commons until the beginning of December 2020. Consultations on the regulations relating to consistency, extended producer responsibility and deposit return schemes are expected in March 2021.

7. Next steps

To develop our collective understanding of what good will look like in 2035 is the next step for the JMWMS development and describing how the necessary changes will affect various themes:

- **People**, e.g. flats, houses, businesses, public realm, access to facilities, collection systems, managing change,
- **Infrastructure**, e.g. space for sorting, waste reduction, reuse, recycling, niche materials, organic waste, commercial waste,
- **Technology**, e.g. decarbonising, chemical recycling, approach to risk, costs and benefits, legislation, efficiency, data,
- **Legislation**, e.g. Commercial waste, reuse, extended producer responsibility, deposit return schemes,
- **Partners**, e.g. Government departments including Defra, HCLG, BEIS; Contractors, Producers (supply chain), consumers.

8. Financial Implications – These are incorporated in the annual process of long-term financial planning and budget setting. Increasing participation in food waste recycling to deliver long term cost and carbon savings is vital to manage the increased cost of additional waste resulting from Covid 19.

9. Legal Implications – A legal requirement exists for two-tier areas (including in Greater London) to have a JMWMS and keep it under review. Before formulating policies as part of the strategy, authorities must carry out such consultation as they consider appropriate. Furthermore, authorities must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State, the most recent of which was published in 2005 and has since been archived. The 2005 guidance is very prescriptive, but as the guidance is almost fifteen years old and is archived, it would be reasonable to consider that it is no longer a live document that authorities must consider when writing a new JMWMS. The law also requires that the waste authorities for two-tier areas in London ‘have regard to the Mayor’s municipal waste management strategy’, the current version of which is the 2018 London Environment Strategy (LES).

In summary, the Boroughs are required to have a JMWMS, keep it under review, consult as deemed appropriate and have regard to the LES. It should also be a high-level document to provide a strong vision whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet the evolving requirements of national and regional policies.

10. Impact on Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy – Included in the report

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- 1. The WLWA climate emergency response is to focus on No More Waste**
 - a) No more waste needs each resident and business to actively participate, it is not something we can do in the background
 - b) Reducing waste per household is the biggest decarbonisation activity we can undertake
- 2. The WLWA Waste Minimisation Plan supports decarbonising by focusing on food waste, textiles and single use plastics**
 - a) WLWA has invested £3m in Borough food waste projects to double the amount of food waste collected.
 - b) Residents using the food waste recycling service reduce their food waste, reducing food waste decarbonises all the way along the supply chain
- 3. To increase recycling West London Waste and Borough partners are focusing on food waste projects and properties with communal bins.**
 - a) The Plastics Tax and Extended Producer Responsibility legislation is needed to unlock the current economic and technical barriers to recycling
- 4. Energy from waste is not “bad”, it is the sheer amount of waste thrown away every day that is bad**
 - a) WLWA has more residual waste than is guaranteed in contracts and stays focused on waste reduction and recycling in preference to energy from waste.
 - b) The WLWA waste minimisation plan will assist Energy from Waste to be carbon neutral as the grid decarbonises by removing fossil carbon
 - c) WLWA has completed a significant decarbonisation programme by removing waste from landfill. The next phase is carbon capture and storage for materials we cannot extract from energy from waste.