

Report for: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting:	27 May 2021
Subject:	West London Waste Authority Food Waste Funding
Key Decision:	Yes - grant funding of £500k
Responsible Officer:	Michael Butler – Director of Environmental Services
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Varsha Parmar – Environment and Climate Change
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Potential for all wards due to prevalence of communal properties across the Borough
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out information on the project in relation to the grant funding received by London Borough of Harrow from West London Waste Authority (WLWA) for increasing food waste recycling and encouraging food waste minimisation.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve notification of the project and planned spend of the funding grant received from WLWA
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Environmental Services, following consultation with the Director of Finance, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, to spend the funding as required under the terms of the grant.

3. Approve an increase to the 2021/22 Capital Programme by £357k to reflect the allocation of the funding for capital expenditure

Reason: (for recommendations)

- Harrow, in partnership with WLWA and the other partner Boroughs, identified disposal budget pressures whereby significant changes must take place to ensure that Boroughs can maintain solvency whilst preparing for potential legislative changes in 2023 and responding to the climate emergency by 2030
- WLWA and the Environment Directors Board (representing the 6 West London Boroughs) agreed to make £0.5m available for each Borough to address one of the identified areas of change, food waste, of which the Council presented its business case and was successful
- The funding has now been received and approval for spend of this funding is required to commence the project. The proposed spend will consist of £357k capital and remaining £143k revenue.

Section 2 – Report

Options considered

The requirements of the grant funding specified that the projects be on food waste diversion from residual and food waste minimisation. Therefore, no other options were considered as part of this project.

As part of the value stream mapping workshops, it was identified that communal properties, flats above shops and commercial food premises were the high priority and therefore no further options were considered as part of this project.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Disposal budget pressures identify that significant changes must take place to ensure that Boroughs can maintain solvency whilst preparing for potential legislative changes in 2023 and responding to the climate emergency by 2030
- 1.2. Harrow declared a climate emergency in 2019 and developed the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2019-2024 (approved by Cabinet in January 2019) that sets out key objectives in tackling the climate emergency. One of the objectives in the strategy is about '*Reducing waste generation and increasing recycling rates*'.
- 1.3. From waste compositional analysis undertaken in Feb/Mar 2020 it was identified that 35-40% of the residual household and communal waste bins were made up of food waste. This signified an accessible tonnage that could be diverted from residual waste disposal culminating in reduced disposal costs.
- 1.4. In addition, diversion of food waste from residual bins for recycling (and ultimately waste minimisation) was identified as an important

contributor to addressing the climate emergency and linked to Harrow's Climate Change Strategy. The additional benefit would be around increasing overall recycling rates.

- 1.5. West London Waste Authority (WLWA) and the Environment Directors Board made up to £0.5m available for each Borough for them to address one of the identified areas for change, food waste.
- 1.6. Value stream mapping workshops were undertaken by Harrow in partnership with WLWA to work through where the funding would be best allocated in order to deliver the most value.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. The grant funding requirements identified two key objectives for the funding
 - 2.1.1. To drive up food waste collected from households by approx. 1kg/hh/week, and
 - 2.1.2. To drive down residual waste collected by at least 1kg/hh/week

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. Based on the value stream mapping workshops undertaken with WLWA, Harrow identified three key areas where tangible improvements could be made to capturing food waste for recycling. These were then further developed as part of the value stream mapping into key projects.
 - Communal bins stores
 - Flats above shops
 - Engagement and communications
- 3.2. Due to the amount of funding and to ensure the success of any changes implemented in these key areas, the aim of the project is to be used as a pilot to assess the effectiveness of investment improvements against performance.
- 3.3. Should the pilots prove effective then further funding will be sought to roll-out across further sites within the Borough

4. PROJECTS

- 4.1. Communal bin stores
 - All standard communal properties (excluding flats above shops) across the Borough have had access to facilities to recycle their food waste since January 2019
 - Identified that there are still challenges around contamination of the food waste bins and dry mixed recycling bins, along with low participation in some areas

- Project involves undertaking a Borough-wide review of all the communal bin store areas to identify top 20 most challenging sites in regard to use, space and infrastructure requirements
- Then to develop and implement action plans for each site to address key barriers to recycling with a focus on food waste recycling

4.2. Flats above shops

- Properties of this type are still to obtain access to facilities to recycle their food waste. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to address this as part of the project to ensure fair and equal access to all waste and recycling services across the Borough
- Flats above shops tend to have limited space and challenging environments around share requirements of what space is available
- Project aims to look for a correlation between those flats above shops and identified commercial food waste premises where there is the potential for shared resources around storage capacity for food waste recycling. This will also increase feasibility and appeal of food waste recycling for businesses.

4.3. Engagement and communications

- Engagement and appropriate communications will be key to ensuring the success of any change / addition in service provision
- The project will develop new signage and other communications collateral that will support the service delivery
- Direct engagement with applicable letting agents, managing agents, landlords and residents will be undertaken to ensure success of any changes
- Engagement with applicable ward councillors to ensure buy-in and support of the project

5. DELIVERY

5.1. High level timeline

Ref	Action	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21
1	Identify and confirm communal bin store pilot areas								
2	Site identification, assessment and agent engagement								
3	Procurement and purchase								
4	Recruit Project Officer								
5	Comms design and purchase of applicable collateral								
6	Roll-out inc. bins, signage & resident engagement								
7	Monitoring - pre, during and post								

5.2. Planned spend

Element	Estimated spend	Comments/description
Project officer	£29,000	6-month fixed term post
Weighing equipment	£2,000	4-week hire (2 weeks pre and 2 weeks post project) – to monitor and quantify impact of the changes
Bins	£357,000	Food bin housing units Replacement / repaired / improved recycling bins
Signage and comms	£112,000	Clear pictorial signage identifying what item goes where and how to dispose of bulky items Also include engagement packs and activities with residents
Total	£500,000	

6. WARD COUNCILLORS' COMMENTS

The project has the potential for all wards to be impacted due to prevalence of communal properties across the Borough, therefore this is not applicable.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Resource and Waste Strategy (RWS) released December 2018 by DEFRA, sets out a number of overarching targets including

- zero avoidable waste by 2050
- double resource efficiency by 2050
- zero plastic waste by 2042
- and zero food waste to landfill by 2030

Although Harrow does not currently send any food waste to landfill (recycled via Anaerobic Digestion or incinerated), this funding and projects will contribute to Harrow Council's efforts to achieving zero avoidable waste and contributing to the country's efforts around zero food waste to landfill.

In addition to this, the RWS current consultations state that mandatory separate food waste collections for all business and households may be required from 2023. This project contributes to Harrow Council achieving this target.

Government also announced targets regarding reducing greenhouse emissions by 68% over the next decade (compared to 1990) figures. Diverting food waste from incineration for recycling positively contributes to this reduction, therefore this project will help contribute to that target.

A recent study produced by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has found that globally food accounts for around a third of the total global greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity. Reducing food waste and ensuring that what remaining food waste we produce is dealt with responsibly is therefore a key area of action in tackling climate change. This initiative directly supports the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2019 to 2024, approved by Cabinet in January 2019, and the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Interim Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2020

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **Yes**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.
Yes

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Changes implemented at each target site do not lead to a change in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Results from pilot (even if negligible) will still provide an improved understanding of possible further options to explore▪ Extensive engagement with stakeholders is a key element of the project and research	Amber

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
behaviour i.e. waste generation is not reduced and recycling rates not increased	will be undertaken into behaviour change practices to ensure that planned changes stand the chance of being the most effective	
Pilot does not provide a tangible decrease in disposal cost despite spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project is a pilot and from external funding ▪ Budget still based on current service delivery and no MTFs targets associated with the project, therefore no risk to current budget in the short term if pilot is unsuccessful (as per the initial driving factors for the pilot around disposal costs) 	Amber
Project is so successful that current capacity within rounds is not sufficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food waste has been in place within standard communal properties since Jan 2019 and these have been picked up by the current household food waste rounds – due to reduced uptake there is still suitable capacity to facilitate any increase as a result from the pilot ▪ Although flats above shops do not currently have access to food waste recycling services, there is only a limited number across the Borough and it is deemed that there is still sufficient capacity within the current rounds to facilitate any potential increase in tonnage 	Green
Funding does not provide sufficient project officer resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project has been budgeted to cover a 6-month post; however significant work has been undertaken already that will ensure that the Project Officer's time can be well focused on completing the pilot ▪ Support is available from within current resources in terms of operational knowledge to assist the Project Officer as/when required 	Green

9. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

A significant proportion of the funding has been allocated to the purchase of bins. Due to the value, this was not able to be included as part of the current framework for standard bin purchases within the waste service.

Therefore, a separate procurement exercise will be required to purchase the bins for this project. WLWA are looking to undertake a procurement exercise for the purchase of food waste bin housing units on behalf of the 6 London Boroughs, of which Harrow have requested that they be included as able to access the framework prices delivered as part of this.

The Corporate Procurement team will support any procurement requirements associated with the funding. All procurement will be undertaken consistent with the Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 111(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives a local authority the power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. This will include doing anything that, in its opinion, is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, its area or any part of it or all or some of its residents.

In addition to this, section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities general power to do anything individuals may do unless it is specifically prohibited in legislation.

Use of the food waste funding received from the WLWA for the project highlighted in this report will fall within the powers in Section 111(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

The increase to the 2021/22 Capital Programme requested in this report falls within the threshold allowed for Cabinet in section B48 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding of £0.5m provided by WLWA is one-off and has to be spent in accordance with the key objectives set out in Section 2 of the report.

The proposed food waste project will involve the installation of new bins, improvement of access to facilities and recycling campaigns. The cost of bins is estimated at £357k. Therefore, the proposed split of revenue and capital costs is £143k and £357k respectively.

The collection of waste from flats above shops is to be undertaken by existing crews, therefore no additional waste collection cost is anticipated in the pilot.

The waste composition analysis conducted by WLWA suggests that 40% of waste in communal residual waste bins is food waste, so diverting this for food waste recycling will have a significant financial impact as there is a large cost difference between the disposal of residual waste stream and food waste stream. The result of the pilot will be reviewed to establish its impact on recycling and costs.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS / PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In the exercise of its functions, the Council has a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") to have 'due regard' to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The proposed project will advance equality of opportunity for all and it is considered that the project will not adversely impact on persons within the protected characteristics.

13. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Please identify how the decision sought delivers these priorities.

- 1. Improving the environment and addressing climate change**
 - a. Project contributes to attaining Resource and Waste Strategy targets around zero avoidable waste and separate food waste collections
 - b. Project also contributes to target of reducing greenhouse emissions by 68% by 2030
- 2. Tackling poverty and inequality**
 - a. The project looks to ensure all properties within the Borough have access to separate food waste recycling collections
- 3. Building homes and infrastructure**
 - a. The project looks to improve the bin store infrastructure within existing communal properties
- 4. Addressing health and social care inequality**
 - a. Recycling positively contributes to better air quality via reducing greenhouse emissions, which in turn provides a better quality of health for residents
- 5. Thriving economy**

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Dawn Calvert
Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 09/04/2021

Statutory Officer: Abiodun Kolawole
Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12/05/2021

Chief Officer: Paul Walker
Signed off by the Corporate Director

Date: 08/04/2021

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta
Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 08/04/2021

Head of Internal Audit: Susan Dixon
Signed by the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 28/04/2021

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

EqIA carried out: NO

There are no adverse impacts on equality as a result of this report as the project is about current service improvement and there are no substantial service changes or introduction of new services.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Rebecca Johnson - Head of Strategy, Development and Performance,
Rebecca.johnson@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO