


Cabinet 27 February 2019	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe – Acting Corporate Director, Place	Classification: Unrestricted
Tower Hamlets Waste Management Strategy	

Lead Member	Councillor David Edgar – Cabinet Member for Environment
Originating Officer(s)	Dan Jones, Divisional Director Public Realm. Fiona Heyland Head of Waste Strategy, Policy and Procurement
Wards affected	(All Wards);
Key Decision?	Y
Forward Plan Notice Published	13 December 2018
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Strategic Plan Priority	A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in;

Executive Summary

This report presents the Council's Waste Management Strategy 2018 - 2030, at appendix one, for approval by the Mayor in Cabinet. It details the Council's priorities and sets the future direction for waste, recycling and cleansing services, in order to deliver environmental improvements across the whole borough. The Strategy sets a framework for waste services from which operational, planning and any future procurement decisions will be based until the year 2030 and it provides a mechanism for demonstrating the Council's waste services will be delivered in general conformity with national and regional policy.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the results of the public consultation carried out on the draft Waste Management Strategy 2018-2030
2. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1 and 4.2.
3. Adopt the Waste Management Strategy 2018 - 2030.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council last adopted a Waste Strategy in 2003 and since that time the legislative framework surrounding waste management has changed significantly with the EU, the UK Government and the Mayor of London driving the agenda towards a more sustainable and circular economy. This has resulted in challenging targets being set at both regional and national levels. For instance the Mayor for London's target that by 2030, 65 per cent of municipal waste will be recycled.
- 1.2 Environmental improvements are a key priority for Tower Hamlets, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets has made a Manifesto pledge to achieve 35% recycling by 2022. However delivering these improvements within an inner London Borough are challenging. To meet these challenges there is a need to reduce the amount of waste created and increase the percentage that is reused, recycled or composted.
- 1.3 An increased focus on improved engagement, communication and education with resident, business and visitors to the borough is essential in order to encourage positive behaviour change. The need to work closely with registered social landlords, managing agents, private landlords and housing associations is key to encouraging responsible management of waste people produce.
- 1.4 To this end, the Waste Management Strategy sets out the key policy and service changes that are needed to support the delivery of these improvements as well as the behaviour changes and incentives that are required. The strategy itself will be supported by a number of key delivery plans that will be developed during the life of the strategy.
- 1.5 The Waste Management Strategy also provides the Council with a mechanism for demonstrating that its waste management services will be delivered in general conformity with national and regional strategy and policy and how the Council's own targets and performance will contribute to national and regional waste and recycling targets.
- 1.6 The Council is required to develop a Reduction and Recycling Plan, as set out in Proposal 7.2.1.b of the London Environment Strategy. This plan will be developed as part of the implementation planning process for the Waste Management Strategy. The Reduction and Recycling Plan must be submitted to the GLA for review and approval by the end of March 2019.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Waste Management Strategy details the Council's priorities and sets the future direction for waste, recycling and cleansing services, in order to deliver environmental improvements across the whole borough. The Strategy provides a mechanism for demonstrating the Council's services will be delivered in general conformity with national and regional policy. The Mayor

may choose not to progress the Waste Management Strategy. This course of action is not recommended as it would not provide a way of sharing and delivering on a vision for future waste management, or demonstrating general conformity.

- 2.2 The Mayor in Cabinet may choose to further amend the Waste Management Strategy. This would require further consultation with the GLA and presentation to Cabinet at a later date, delaying the implementation process. The Waste Strategy is fundamental to informing and supporting the design and mobilisation of the new in-house waste services. Any delay in adopting the Strategy could negatively impact on this process and driving increased engagement and behaviour change to achieve the 35% recycling target by 2022.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The overall objective for the Waste Management Strategy (the Strategy) is to drive more sustainable waste management in the borough and contribute to the Council's priorities to deliver on commitments to create a cleaner borough and increase waste minimisation, re-use and recycling.
- 3.2 The Strategy covers the period to 2030, with an expectation that it will be reviewed every four years. The strategy is structured around six priority areas:
1. Collaboration at the heart of change
 2. Supporting people to love their neighbourhood
 3. Supporting people to reduce, re-use and recycle
 4. Making waste a resource
 5. Reducing carbon and improving air quality
 6. Building our green economy

Highlights of the Waste Management Strategy

- 3.3 The Strategy recognises the challenges that the borough faces as a result of the growing population and increased density of housing in the borough and the pressure that this places on our waste and cleansing services.
- 3.4 A key focus of the Strategy is delivering a cleaner and greener place that everyone is proud to live in, work in and loves to visit and the Strategy emphasises the need to work with more people and organisations to achieve this.
- 3.5 A central aim of the strategy is to move more of our waste up the waste hierarchy with the core objective of helping residents to reduce waste and keep items in use for longer in line with the principles of a more circular economy.

3.6 The Strategy will guide a service improvement programme with a core objective of delivering a marked improvement in our recycling services in order to achieve increased recycling performance and reduce levels of contamination.

3.7 The Strategy accounts for the need to improve local air quality in the borough by cutting emissions from our waste management activities,

Consultation Process

3.8 Following engagement with Members and other stakeholders a draft Strategy was developed and presented to Cabinet in June 2018, requesting approval to commence public consultation.

3.9 The public consultation commenced on 3rd August 2018 and ran for a period of nine weeks, closing on 5th October. The aim of the consultation was to present the key ideas and proposed service changes set out in the draft Strategy and obtain feedback from as broader range of local stakeholders as possible. An online communication strategy, and particularly the use of social media, was implemented throughout the consultation period to advertise events and put out messages related to the draft Strategy.

3.10 A summary of the consultation engagement activities is set out below:

- **Online Questionnaire** - The online questionnaire was 'live' for the entire consultation period with a total of 681 respondents.
- **Telephone Survey** - SMSR Research conducted a telephone survey along with some face-to-face research with 1,100 people interviewed.
- **Targeted Focus Groups** - Five focus group events were run in collaboration with Resource Futures and were designed to engage particular stakeholder groups around specific areas of the waste strategy. These events were also arranged to cover a diverse range of times and locations.

	Venue	Time	Stakeholder Group
1	Account 3	Thursday 6 th September 1-3pm	3 rd and Voluntary Sector
2	Whitechapel Idea Store	Wednesday 12 th September 11am-1pm	Business Sector
3	Island House Community Centre	Thursday 20 th September 4-6pm	Schools/Parent Groups
4	Ecology Pavilion	Wednesday 26 th September 6-8pm	RSLs, TRAs, MAs, Residents

5	Room C1 Mulberry Place	Thursday 27 th September 13:30-15:30	RP Staff
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- **Public Engagement Events** – Four public engagement events were run in collaboration with The Campaign Company and paralleled the focus groups. As public-facing events. The activities included an information stall, merchandise giveaways, and fun activities facilitated by Campaign Company staff. Participants were encouraged to complete online questionnaires using mobile devices, or contribute ideas and views of the services in other creative ways, such as writing messages on a ‘graffiti wall’. The Campaign Company recorded a total of 188 direct engagements that resulted in the completion of the online questionnaire or recording of views, while many other passers-by spoke with facilitators but did not take part in activities.

The events took place as follows:

Date	Time	Place
6 September	12 – 3pm	Bethnal Green Gardens
12 September	11 – 2pm	Whitechapel Market
22 September	11 – 2pm	Chrisp Street Market
26 September	4:30 – 6:30pm	Ecology Pavilion; Mile End Park

- **Summit Event** – A Summit Event took place on Monday 1st October from 6-8pm at The Atrium (124 Cheshire St, E2 6EJ). This public event was open to all and provided an opportunity to engage stakeholders regarding our proposed strategy, and waste services, and environmental issues and challenges in general. In total, 65 people attended and were given the opportunity to ask questions to speakers and panellists.

3.11 A copy of the draft Strategy was also sent to the GLA on 11th September 2018 in order that it could be reviewed for general conformity with the Mayor of London’s Environment Strategy.

Headline findings from the public consultation

3.12 In the main, the responses to the consultation were positive and the priorities and targets set out in the draft Strategy were largely supported. The following is a summary list of the headline findings:

- Residents living in purpose built flats are least likely to try to recycle everything;
- Older age groups are more likely to be engaged in recycling;
- Environmental issues appear the main drivers for why people recycle;
- More information is needed about what can and can’t be recycled as there is still some confusion over this;
- Storage for recycling is still an issue for many residents;

- More education, engagement and outreach is wanted;
- Services need to be improved as they are no longer meeting the needs of users.

3.13 Detailed below are key aspects of the consultation and what we learned from our stakeholders:

- **We asked what the council can do to help people recycle more and produce less waste**

What was said

It was clear from the consultation that the recycling service needs to be improved with respondents wanting a regular, reliable and standardised recycling collection service and more or bigger recycling bins. Charging for over production of waste and lack of recycling had more limited support. Respondents felt that providing the right amount of waste and recycling storage each week and providing a standard weekly collection of recycling across all properties would encourage less waste and more recycling. Therefore the council should look to other options and service provision to encourage waste minimisation and greater recycling. Respondents to the questionnaire were keen to see the council collect a wider range of materials for recycling and there is a clear need for the council to encourage more recycling and provide clearer guidance on what can and cannot be recycled.

Our plans for helping people recycle more and produce less waste

The council will review bin numbers and frequency of collections from purpose built flats and consider options for standardising collections from houses, this will include reviewing the containers used for collecting waste and recycling from houses.

Improving recycling on Estates;

We are working with Tower Hamlets Homes, other social and private landlords as part of our Estate Waste Improvement project and looking at a range of infrastructure improvements and pilot schemes with the aim to increase levels of recycling and better general management of waste. Through the project we will be looking to increase the capacity for dry recycling bin provision, ensuring there is suitable signage to help residents to recycle correctly and investigating options for incentivising residents to recycle more of their waste.

We will look to deliver more joint communication and engagement activities and we will work closely with other housing providers to roll out the improvements across the Borough to increase the level and quality of recycling collected.

We will review our policy on recycling sack distribution and ensure

blocks of flats have sufficient number of recycling bins.

Engaging the wider community;

We will look to work more closely with schools and community organisations to deliver a programme of engagement activities as a means to improving resident's knowledge and understanding of waste minimisation and recycling activities.

Increasing the range of materials collected for recycling:

We will explore options to collect other items such as textiles and small electricals for recycling and develop a comprehensive communications plan, improving on the way we engage with residents and the local community.

- **We asked about food waste collections**

What was said

There is support for providing a separate food waste collection to all properties and it is seen as important to increase recycling. Over 60% (of those who don't currently have a service) said they would use a food waste recycling service if provided

Our plans for food waste collections

Providing a service to blocks of flats can be challenging with issues of storage space and contamination to overcome. The council will conduct food waste collection trials, benchmark other boroughs and carry out a feasibility study to determine the most practicable approach for expanding the service to blocks of flats.

We will improve on our service to houses, review starch liner provision and encourage greater participation.

- **We asked how the council can help people to share, repair and reuse more**

What was said

A large proportion of respondents felt that increasing the amount of furniture and other large household items for collection would help them share, repair and reuse more. Organising other reuse and sharing initiatives were popular.

Our plans to help people share, repair and reuse more

The council already operates a comprehensive collection service but it is evident from the consultation that the service is not accessed or used by a large proportion of the Borough. We will review the service to ensure that it is more accessible and more material is captured for reuse and recycling.

We plan to explore other initiatives and work closely with local community groups and charities to enable residents to donate and

access reusable items.

- **We asked about our commercial waste service**

What was said

Businesses felt that the existing waste and recycling service is not meeting their needs. The pricing is not competitive with other local contractors. Some expressed concerns over the quality of the sacks provided and limitations and range of the services on offer.

Our plans for the commercial waste service

Bringing the waste collection services in-house provides the council with a great opportunity to improve, rebrand and relaunch its commercial waste service. In order to contribute to the Mayor of London's recycling target of 50% of Local Authority Collected Waste to be recycled by 2025 the amount of recycling collected from businesses in the borough needs to increase greatly. The dry recycling collection service will be promoted and encouraged and the terms of the whole service changed to allow greater flexibility to meet needs of businesses in the borough, whilst still being competitive. We will look in to the feasibility of offering a food waste collection service for businesses.

- 3.14 The key findings and lessons learned from the public consultation have been incorporated into the Council's intentions that are set out in the final version of the Strategy.

GLA Review of General Conformity

- 3.15 As indicated in paragraph 3.11 above, a copy of the draft Strategy was submitted to the GLA for review of general conformity with the London Environment Strategy as part of the consultation process. The Council received an initial officer response on 1st October 2018 which indicated areas of the Strategy that were confirmed as being in general conformity and indicating areas of the Strategy that needed strengthening.. Details of the GLA's review of general conformity is attached as Appendix 3.
- 3.16 The Strategy has been updated to address the comments made by the GLA and as such will be in general conformity with the London Environment Strategy.

Next Steps

- 3.17 Detailed delivery plans will now be drawn up, costed and taken forward. The development of these plans will be linked to our business as usual improvements and the work that is being undertaken to bring the waste collection and cleansing services back in house from April 2020.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An Equalities Analysis has been carried out in relation to the Waste Management Strategy to identify any evidence or views that suggests that different equality or other protected groups (inc' staff) could be adversely and/or disproportionately impacted by the proposal.
- 4.2 The majority of the proposals will make positive impact on the environment of the Borough, which will be beneficial for all regardless of their background. The consultation did not demonstrate that any particular equality group was against any particular proposals. The Equalities Assessment is attached at Appendix 2

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report sets out other specific statutory implications.

Best Value Implications

- 5.2 Waste and recycling services have a current combined annual value of annual value of £29.7M. The predicted growth in population and properties in the borough over the life of the Strategy would be likely to increase the annual costs of these services, as the quantity of waste generated in the borough increases.
- 5.3 The Strategy provides the Council with a framework for delivering more sustainable waste management services in the future. Through the implementation of the plans set out in the Strategy the Council can seek to deliver more effective and efficient services and drive greater engagement in waste minimisation and recycling in order that cost impacts of managing waste from an increased population can be mitigated.

Consultations

- 5.4 Details of the public consultation and other consultation activities on the draft Waste Management Strategy are set out in section 3 of this report.

Environmental Implications (including air quality)

- 5.5 The Council's waste management services contribute to the protection of the environment and protecting human health through the effective management of waste arising in the borough.
- 5.6 Moving waste up the waste hierarchy i.e. by ensuring a greater quantity of waste is re-used or recycled as opposed to being disposed of as residual waste, contributes to the Council's efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of the Council's waste management services.
- 5.7 Through the implementation of the Waste Management Strategy and delivery of future waste management services the Council will ensure the in-house service contributes to the Council's sustainability agenda by ensuring the

vehicle fleet meets the latest emissions' limits specifications and detailed improvement plans are in place for contributing to a greener environment.

Risk Management Implications

5.8 The Council last adopted a Waste Strategy in 2003 and since that time the legislative framework surrounding waste management has changed significantly with the EU, the UK Government and the Mayor of London driving the agenda towards a more sustainable and circular economy. This has resulted in challenging targets being set but other aspects of the EU's package on the Circular Economy have yet to be set out in national strategy and policy. The following are the key areas of risk the above arrangements are seeking to mitigate.

- The outcome of the EU referendum has created a period of uncertainty surrounding how the legislative framework for waste management services may be impacted by the UK leaving, as much of the current legislation has been driven by EU Directives. There is an expectation that the EU's package on the circular economy will lead to changes to a number of EU directives on waste. There is an expectation that these revised directives will be transposed into UK law but once the UK has left the EU there could be divergence of legislation and policy over time.
- The Government published its new Resources and Waste Strategy on 18th December 2018. This new strategy sets out the Government's intentions to redress the balance of consumerism in favour of the natural world by maximising the value or the resources that are used and minimising waste that is generated. Whilst the strategy sets out proposals in relating to placing a greater emphasis on producers to pay the full net cost of managing waste that their products produce through an "extended producer responsibility regime" and the potential implementation of a Deposit Return Scheme for packaging items, both intentions are subject to a consultation process and so any specific impact on the Council's new Strategy and waste management services are not fully clear at this time. However, ensuring the focus for the new services remains on the waste hierarchy, sustainable good practice, cost efficiency and meeting the needs of the local community, the service can somewhat mitigate the potential impacts of changes to the legislation.
- The anticipated growth in population will result in increasing total annual tonnages of Municipal Waste being generated, increasing pressure on future services and the resources needed to deliver those services and the Council's budget. To help mitigate the impact of population growth on the quantity of waste the Council has to manage in future years, the Strategy incorporates a greater focus on waste minimisation. Being at the top of the waste hierarchy and meaning waste generation is prevented would provide the greatest opportunity to reduce the Council's costs for waste management services.

- The nature of the Council's housing stock provides significant challenges for the delivery of recycling services and aspirations to achieve the higher level of recycling performance that both the Mayor of Tower Hamlets and the Mayor of London have pledged. The Strategy places a greater focus on driving the right behaviours to improve both the quality and quantity of recyclable materials the council collects. This will not only help to drive improved recycling performance but will help to mitigate the overall costs for waste services.
- The Resources and Waste Strategy has set out that the Government's intention to ensure that every household and relevant business has a separate weekly collection of food waste, albeit that this intention is subject to consultation. Expanding the food waste service to flatted properties, where practicable, is a Mayoral priority for Tower Hamlets, is a priority within the London Environment Strategy and received strong support from residents in the public consultation. As stated in paragraph 3.8 above, providing a food waste recycling to blocks of flats is likely to be more challenging than the provision of this service to street level properties has been. It will be important to conduct trials, benchmark other boroughs and carry out a feasibility study to determine the most practicable approach for expanding the service to blocks of flats in order that any potential negative impacts can be mitigated.
- Lack of effective engagement with key stakeholders such as registered social landlords, managing agents and housing associations in relation to the proposals for controlling residual waste, reducing the levels of contamination and improving the presentation of waste on collection day could prevent the Council from its goals in relation to waste minimisation and improved recycling performance. By working more closely with these stakeholders through the Housing Forum and its sub-groups to deliver more effective and efficient services and a greater level of joint education and engagement activities this risk can be mitigated.
- There is a potential for negative publicity in relation to taking a more robust approach to controlling volumes of residual waste and taking enforcement action against littering and small scale dumping. This risk can be mitigated by providing the opportunities for people to demonstrate correct behaviours before such action is taken.

Crime Reduction

- 5.9 Waste crime damages the environment, causes distress to our communities adding to the fear of crime and some people feeling unsafe in their community. Waste crime also costs the Council money to sort out the consequences. The actions set out in the Waste Management Strategy sit at the heart of the Council's cleaner, safer, greener agenda.

- 5.10 Where possible, through increased awareness raising and working with partners and other stakeholders, the Council will seek to prevent waste crime in the first place.
- 5.11 Through the Big Clean Up campaign, improving our litter bin infrastructure and better management of the night time economy, the Council is working to reduce incidences of littering and dumping of waste.
- 5.12 Through the implementation of a new graffiti and street art policy and the deployment of increased resources, the Council is working to tackle unwanted graffiti and reduce occurrences of flyposting in the borough.

Safeguarding

- 5.13 There are no safeguarding implications from this report

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report recommends that the Mayor in Cabinet adopt the Waste Management Strategy 2018 - 2030s. As part of the development of the strategy key policy and service changes are proposed that will enable delivery of sustainable improvements to waste management. In setting out the ambition and priorities for the Council the strategy focuses on 6 priority areas. These areas have been developed for the purpose of shaping the future waste service delivery model for the borough over the next 12 years.
- 6.2 The Strategy provides a mechanism for demonstrating that the Council's waste services will be delivered in general conformity with national and regional policy. Set out within the Strategy are the service improvements, policy changes and response to the challenges faced that will underpin key decisions in relation to service provision. Whilst there are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations to this report, the adoption of the Strategy will need to be considered within the context of the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and competing demands for resources.
- 6.3 The Strategy incorporates a greater focus on waste minimisation, as outlined within paragraph 5.8. Improvements in this area that lead to a reduction in the quantity of waste produced would provide the Council with the greatest opportunity to minimise the costs of waste management services, currently at £29.7m. These costs will need to be considered in the context of growth in population.
- 6.4 The cost of producing the strategy has been contained within the service's revenue budget.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council is a relevant waste authority and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 ("the Act") provides that local authorities have a duty to arrange

collection of household waste and collection of at least 2 types of recyclable waste.

- 7.2 .Extensive consultation has been carried out over a 9 week period and is publicised in the “Draft Waste Management Strategy Public Consultation Report”.
- 7.3 An Equality Assessment has been carried out and the results taken into account when reaching the decision to recommend that the draft Strategy is adopted. This is compliant with the Council’s Equality Duty and is sufficient for the Council to understand the impact of its decisions on persons who have a protected characteristic. The legal duty on the Council is to ensure that it properly understands the impacts of its decisions for the purposes of Equalities.
- 7.4 The Act gives a local authority power to require residents to place waste for collection in specified receptacles and has a discretion whether to charge a fee or not for the receptacle.
- 7.5 Failure, without reasonable excuse to comply with a requirement to place the household waste in a specified receptacle or the failure to comply with a notice requiring action to be taken in respect of commercial or industrial waste (that is likely to cause a nuisance or to be detrimental to the area) could lead to a prosecution, punishable by a fine for up to £1,000. A local authority can also issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for either of these offences.
- 7.6 In carrying out its functions, the Council must also comply with the public sector equality duty set out in S149 Equality act 1990, namely it must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.7 The Council has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness by virtue of the best value due in accordance with section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Waste Management Strategy 2030
- Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 3 – GLA Review of General Conformity

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- Draft Waste Management Strategy - public consultation report

Officer contact details for documents:

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