

Cabinet	 TOWER HAMLETS
Wednesday, 21 February 2024	
Report of: Simon Baxter, Corporate Director, Communities	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Reduction and Recycling Plan Progress Report - Quarter 3, 2023	

Lead Member	Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Originating Officer(s)	Richard Willams, Head of Operational Services Fiona Heyland, Environmental Services Improvement Manager Louise Houston, Environmental Services Improvement Team Leader
Wards affected	(All Wards);
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Forward Plan Notice Published	22/11/2023
Exempt information	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority 7: Working towards a clean and green future

Executive Summary

The Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) 2023-2025 was approved by Cabinet in September 2023. Progress reports are provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis detailing achievements that has been made against actions detailed within the plan. The attached Quarter 3 report is presented to Cabinet for note.

The Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) is a requirement set by the GLA to ensure all London authorities are in general conformity with the London Environment Strategy. The proportion of household waste sent for recycling is now an Oflog measure.

This latest RRP comprises environmental metrics drawn from the previous reporting cycle (2018-2022) along with a cross-cutting action plan drawn from our Strategic Plan and Tower Hamlets Waste Management Strategy. This second RRP covers a

two-year period from April 2023 to the end of March 2025 and sets out our ambition to achieve a 23% recycling rate.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-2025, Quarter 3 2023 Progress Report.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 A quarterly progress report was requested as a recommendation of the approval of the RRP at September Cabinet.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is noting report and there are no alternative options.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-2025 (RRP), Quarter 3 2023 Progress Report (Appendix 1) provides an update on recycling performance with commentary and sets out the progress and achievements against priorities and actions. The report describes:
 - RRP background
 - Recycling Performance
 - RRP priorities and actions
 - Other actions and progress

Progress summary and context

- 3.2 The GLA requires all London authorities to have a Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) showing that they are in general conformity with the London Environment Strategy.
- 3.3 The Office for Local Government (Oflog) waste management performance measures are 1. Proportion of household waste sent for recycling, 2. Residual waste per household and 3. Contamination rate of recycling – calculated as the estimated proportion that is rejected of the total amount of household waste sent for recycling.
- 3.4 The household recycling rate target set in the RRP is 23% by March 2023. The household recycling rate for the April to October 2023 is estimated to be 16.04%. Progress has been made on actions within the RRP, however it will take time for some of these to have an impact on the recycling performance.
- 3.5 A key barrier to increased recycling performance that has been highlighted is the lack of internal and external storage for recycling which the council is

addressing through the Flats Recycling Project. To date the project team has been working with 37 different property managers. Infrastructure improvements have been rolled out to 600 blocks with a further 325 scheduled before the end of the financial year. The target number of blocks is 2170 by the end of next financial year.

- 3.6 The population density, fast population growth and high proportion of flatted properties poses significant challenges for waste and recycling services, along with the growth in the night economy. The residual waste tonnage increases in higher proportion every year, compared to the dry mixed recycling, which has only grown marginally. The property growth has a direct impact on the increase of the household residual waste generated. The total number of dwellings given by WasteDataFlow in 2023-24 is 144,240, whereas, in 2022-23, this number was 140,210. This is a 2.87% increase from last year. It is estimated that we are collecting 130 tonnes more residual waste from households every month this year compared to 2022-23.
- 3.7 The food waste collection service currently covers all low-rise properties however, our recent monitoring indicates that only around a quarter of households are taking part in the service. Analysis of our waste composition indicates that about 34% of residual waste is food waste and so a plan has been developed to target increasing participation in this service as quickly as possible.
- 3.8 38 engagement events have been delivered this year to date including education sessions at schools, recycling engagement stalls, swap events, waste minimisation workshops, caretaker training sessions and a staff pod session. The recycling champions network now has 104 people signed up.
- 3.9 The “Let’s Rethink it” ran throughout the year and included outdoor, social media and programmatic advertising.
- 3.10 We are working with ReLondon on developing our service standards and policies, with a view to ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities about waste, recycling and contamination. This work is particularly focussed on the managing agent and landlord stakeholder group. We are holding an event with them in March to progress this work.
- 3.11 We have been using data and monitoring to identify estates with high contamination and are highlighting problems areas with managing agents. We are going to start working on an estate-by-estate basis to encourage correct recycling behaviour.

Resources delivering the RRP

- 3.12 Most of the projects within the RRP are being undertaken by the Environmental Services Improvement Team and are funded from current revenue budget provision and the allocation of CIL funding for the Flats project.

- 3.13 There are 2 full-time and 1 part-time Officers who cover engagement activities and events. There are 3 full-time Officers, plus one current vacancy, in the Flats Recycling Project Team and one full-time Project Manager. Other projects are covered by two full-time and one part-time Environmental Services Officers, with part-time cover provided by a Project Delivery Manager.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An equalities assessment was undertaken for the RRP. No other implications have been identified.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

Environmental (including air quality)

- 5.2 The council's waste management services contribute to the protection of the environment and protecting human health through the promotion of waste minimisation and effective management of waste arising in the borough.
- 5.3 The main focus of the RRP is to move waste up the waste hierarchy by providing residents and businesses in the borough with greater access to services that will allow and encourage them to waste less, reuse and recycle more. This will contribute to the council's efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of the council's waste management services.
- 5.4 The RRP also looks to support the achievement of the council's air quality action plan objectives through the incorporation of the council's plans to green the waste services vehicle fleet.

Risk Management

- 5.5 Some actions set out in section three of the RRP seek to address the some of the expected upcoming Government reforms. However, implementation of these actions is subject to further clarity from Government, access to funding

and the ability to address operational and waste treatment issues as identified in the RRP, specifically action LB Tower Hamlets #4.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report provides an update on the progress made towards the delivery of the Council's Recycling and Reduction Plan 2023-25, aimed at delivering improvements to waste and recycling performance as part of the strategic plans to deliver a clean and greener future for Tower Hamlets, and to comply with requirements set by the GLA.
- 6.2 The costs incurred to date in delivering the outcomes detailed in Appendix 1 to this report have been contained within existing revenue budget provision and approved capital programme for the Flats recycling package.
- 6.3 Delivering on the actions within the RRP will generate extra cost and budget pressures in 2024/25, relating to increased quantity of recycling tonnage to be processed combined with inflationary pressures on processing costs. Revenue growth bids for this have not been submitted and the service will monitor and mitigate these cost pressures in 2024/25.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Pursuant to s.355 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the Council must:
- 7.2 Act in general conformity with the provisions of the London Environment Strategy dealing with municipal waste management, save to the extent that compliance does not impose excessive additional costs on the authority.
- 7.3 Act in accordance with any guidance from the Secretary of State for determining what is to be regarded as acting in general conformity or imposing excessive additional costs.
- 7.4 Pursuant to s.356 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the Mayor of London can give a direction requiring the Council to take action if he considers it necessary for the purposes of the implementation of the London Environment Strategy. The Council must comply with any such direction.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- [Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-2025](#)

Appendices

- RRP Qtr3 Progress Report

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

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

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