

Subject: Bag It or Bin It?

Report to: Environment Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 3 March 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper invites the Committee to agree its report into food waste in London, *Bag it or bin it? Managing London's domestic food waste*.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees its report *Bag it or bin it? Managing London's domestic food waste*, as set out at Appendix 1.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on the 3 June 2014, the Committee agreed the scope and terms of reference of an investigation into food waste in London. The terms of reference were:
- To establish baseline data for London's present performance in dealing with food waste, and to map food reduction initiatives in London;
 - To explore, with relevant organisations, how the household food that does reach the waste stream can be collected and handled more effectively, particularly from flats;
 - To identify the preferred current and potential future options for London to process and recycle its household food waste, with a view to reducing to zero the amount that goes to landfill.
- 3.2 Officers confirm that the report and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to formally agree the report *Bag it or bin it? Managing London's domestic food waste* as set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 The report makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Following the final local government finance settlement for 2015/16, every London borough should allocate available resources to include separate food waste collections in their waste management regimes, across all property types.

Recommendation 2

The London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB), in partnership with the GLA, Boroughs and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) should improve data collection on food waste so that better projections of need and demand can be made, and the impact of food waste on London's overall recycling and landfill targets can be assessed. Annual food waste recycling statistics for local authorities should be made available on the London Data Store.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should join London Councils in its efforts to secure additional resources from the Government to develop separate food and organic waste collection services.

Recommendation 4

Alongside government funding the Mayor should make available from his own resources ongoing funding for waste reduction and recycling programmes such as the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) or Recycle for London.

Should the London Waste and Recycling Board's (LWARB) self-financing capabilities not be sufficiently achieved, the Mayor should make a long-term commitment to protect LWARB's budget, thereby enabling LWARB to continue its programmes to support boroughs and successfully embed food waste recycling in their waste management strategies. This could be achieved, for example, by including funding for LWARB in the GLA budget plans through to 2018/19, or by entering into contracts with LWARB for funding in return for delivery.

Recommendation 5

In line with the London Finance Commission's calls that London government should be allowed to make additional self-determined investments in its own infrastructure, the Mayor should lobby the Government for the devolution of landfill tax to London.

Recommendation 6

Boroughs should consider introducing specific measures and incentives to increase resident participation in separate food waste recycling collections, particularly in flats and estates, thereby reducing the amount of food waste in the residual waste stream.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should work with LWARB and London Councils to introduce mechanisms for a consistent, London-wide approach to communication about food waste by April 2016. Collaboration with networks like the Association of London Cleansing Officers (ALCO) or the London Recycling Officers Group (LROG) as well as specialist organisations like the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Keep Britain Tidy would be beneficial.

Boroughs should consider extending and diversifying their communication and engagement approach to inform residents more successfully about food waste recycling, for example, by:

- ensuring a recurring scheme of promotion including circulating correspondence to new residents;
- more regularly engaging with residents through dedicated waste advisors or local ‘green champions’; and
- setting up school and community engagement schemes and aiming to offer food waste collection services to all schools.

Recommendation 8

Design for housing development should enable waste minimisation and separation:

For new housing developments, the Mayor and Boroughs should use their planning and housing investment powers to ‘design out waste’, for example by prioritising funding for schemes that meet the highest levels of waste minimisation, and by promoting best practice for separating and recycling food waste. The proposed 2015 review of the Mayor’s Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance should consider these ideas and also make particular reference to the requirements for food waste separation and storage.

For existing housing developments, the Mayor and LWARB should provide additional financial and technical support to waste collection authorities and community groups to retrofit alternative waste solutions, such as composting schemes or the removal of single stream waste chutes.

Recommendation 9

In developing future asset management strategies, the Mayor should consider how he can utilise GLA land holdings to enable waste infrastructure and sustainable development, providing small and commercial-scale anaerobic digestion plants on these sites.

Recommendation 10

The Government should press for EU regulations to be changed, namely the Sludge Directive, to allow anaerobic digestion of sewage sludge and organic waste such as food waste alongside each other (co-treatment) and the Mayor should support this call.

Recommendation 11

LWARB should expand its brokerage role to promote mutual interests between London’s waste authorities and the waste industry. This could include hosting or facilitating a regular “forum of exchange”, providing technical expertise where needed, or assisting with developing suitable business models.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – *Bag it or bin it? Managing London’s domestic food waste*

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: None

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