

Mr Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Our ref: Env/CM
Date: 9 December 2010

Dear Mayor

Re: Draft Business Waste Management Strategy

The London Assembly Environment Committee is pleased to respond to the consultation on the Draft Business Waste Management Strategy, launched in October 2010 alongside the draft Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The Committee will submit a consultation response on the latter, under separate cover.

The Committee welcomes the Strategy and considers it an essential component in planning for, and effecting the sustainable management of London's waste in the future. A joined-up approach to waste management is crucial if London is to make headway in reducing negative impact on the environment, minimising the amount of waste it produces, avoiding landfill and putting left-over waste to good use through increased recycling and re-use.

You will note from our consultation response (appended to this letter for ease of reference) to the previous Mayor's draft Strategy, that the Committee is particularly concerned to see practical measures and support put in place to better engage small and medium-sized businesses (SME) in a programme of sustainable waste management.

We conducted research during 2006/7 focusing on waste management practices in the SME sector, including the barriers businesses face, and their expectations for service provision. The findings from the research broadly supported three desired outcomes for a London wide business waste strategy – for businesses to recycle more, for greater co-ordination of the waste streams produced by London businesses and greater awareness among businesses of resource productivity and sustainable waste transport and management. In that context we focused our earlier response on three key areas – the role of local authorities in handling business waste from the SME sector, avenues for increasing awareness in the sector, and the need to further engage the hotel and restaurant sector. We wish to pick up on some of these points.

The Committee is pleased to note the current draft Strategy's focus on the SME sector in the proposals for business waste set out under Policy 2. We are encouraged that the Strategy acknowledges 'the waste management challenges they (SMEs) face', and that 'greater

recognition is required to help address their needs in this area'.¹ We note the proposed partnership building work to increase the variety and quality of materials from SMEs, to help generate economies of scale for collecting and processing their waste.²

However we would wish to see more attention paid, particularly in the interim, to how local authorities might be better equipped to offer and promote commercially competitive trade waste collection and recycling services to local businesses.

We are also disappointed that only a small proportion of SMEs in London are to receive support from the Smart Green Business Group to help improve their environmental performance.³ According to statistics released by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills in October, London is home to 837,605 SMEs, the vast majority (99 per cent) having less than 50 employees.⁴ With support being offered to a mere 1300 SMEs, there is a long way to go. The Committee recognises the need for realism in target setting. It also recognises that there will not be the resources in the current climate to deploy to developing extensive infrastructure to support partnerships. However there is clearly scope to share existing successful models, such as the Cross River Partnership⁵ with boroughs, and other agencies such as the Federation of Small Businesses⁶ to help create wider support coverage for SMEs in the capital.

The Committee appreciates that the draft Strategy focuses on waste outputs as opposed to waste inputs. However we believe that greater co-ordination of the waste streams produced by London's businesses is a vital step in achieving a more sustainable approach to not only managing business waste, but to managing London's waste as a whole. We note the possibility of pilot work in conjunction with the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) around product and manufacturing reduction, and mainstreaming and slimming down potential waste streams and packaging streams. The Committee's report '*On the Go' recycling*' published in May 2009, should provide a useful reference point.⁷ We would urge you to actively pursue this option and await with interest the outcome of your discussions with WRAP.

I hope that you find the Committee's comments useful in finalising the Strategy, and would welcome the opportunity for further dialogue.

¹ Page 57, draft Business Waste Strategy

² Ibid

³ Page 71, draft Business Waste Strategy

⁴ The Department for Business Innovation and Skills published SME statistics for 2009 on 13 October 2010. For more information see <http://stats.bis.gov.uk/ed/sme/>

⁵ For more information see <http://www.crossriverpartnership.org/>

⁶ For more information see <http://www.fsb.org.uk/>

⁷ See <http://www.london.gov.uk/archive/assembly/reports/environment/on-the-go-may09.pdf>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

Darren Johnson AM
Chair of the Environment Committee