Subject: Waste and Recycling in London

Report to: Environment Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat Date: 27 November 2013

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out background information for a discussion with the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB), the Mayor’s Senior Advisor for the Environment and Energy and other invited guests about waste and recycling in London.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee notes this report as background to discussing waste and recycling in London with invited guests.

3. Background

3.1 Effective management of waste in a socially, environmentally and economically acceptable manner is one of the greatest challenges facing local governments today. Reducing the amount of waste produced and reusing waste that cannot be prevented presents the greatest economic and environmental benefits for London.

3.2 The Mayor believes that “we cannot continue to manage waste by investing in expensive waste collection and treatment infrastructure without implementing an active strategy of reduction and reuse”\(^1\) and published his municipal and business waste management strategies in November 2011.

3.3 *London’s Wasted Resource: The Mayor’s Municipal Waste Management Strategy*\(^2\) sets out the Mayor’s policies and proposals for reducing the amount of municipal waste produced, increasing the amount of waste reused, recycled or composted, and generating low carbon energy from waste remaining. This strategy also sets out how the Mayor, through the London Waste and Recycling Board, will help develop more waste management infrastructure in London.

3.4 The London Waste and Recycling Board has a £73 million fund to promote activities resulting in less waste being produced, boost the development of waste management infrastructure to help turn London’s waste into new products and renewable energy.

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\(^1\) [http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Municipal%20Waste_FINAL.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Municipal%20Waste_FINAL.pdf)

\(^2\) Ibid.

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3.5 The Assembly has previously published reports about waste management and recycling, most recently:

- *Waste not, want not – A review of why recycling rates vary across London;*³  
- *Carrots and Sticks – A review of waste financial reward and compulsory recycling schemes;*⁴  
- *London Assembly response to the Mayor’s draft business waste strategy,*⁵ and  
- *London Assembly response to the Mayor’s draft waste management strategy.*⁶

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 This meeting will provide the opportunity to discuss a number of issues, including:

- Meeting recycling targets for London;  
- London’s waste capacity and waste management infrastructure; and  
- Benefits and risks of waste to energy facilities.

4.2 The Mayor’s key targets set out in his Municipal Waste Strategy are:

- Achieve zero municipal waste direct to landfill by 2025;  
- Reduce the amount of household waste produced from 970kg to 790kg per household in 2031;  
- Increase London’s capacity to reuse or repair from 6,000 tonnes-a-year to 30,000 by 2031;  
- Increase London’s current recycling and composting rate of 25% to at least 45% by 2015 and 60% by 2031;  
- Cut greenhouse emissions by one million tonnes by 2031; and  
- Generate as much energy as possible from organic and non-recyclable waste.

Recycling

4.3 The most recent Household Waste Recycling Rates for London were published this month. These show that after an increase of 2% from 32% in 2010/11 to 34% 2011/12 they have remained at 34% for the 2012/13 period.⁷

4.4 The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) quarterly waste and recycling figures for north London boroughs released earlier this year showed that despite seeing rates improving, the area will need to “almost double” the figures if targets are to be met. The recycling rate for the north London

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boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest between April and June 2012 stood at 32.9% in 2012/13, up 2.4 per cent from 30.5% in 2011/12.

4.5 Of the waste collected from these boroughs, 26.6% was sent to landfill, down from 29.4% in 2011/12. The remaining waste not recycled or sent to landfill went for energy recovery. However, the figures are still far off north London councils’ target of recycling 50% of household waste and sending 15% less waste to landfill by 2020.

**Waste capacity**

4.6 The Mayor is keen for London to retain the value of its waste by managing more of this material within the capital. The London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) manages a £73 million fund to assist the development of new waste management infrastructure in London.

4.7 The ‘Capacity Gap’ - the amount of new waste infrastructure capacity required to deliver the Mayor of London’s waste targets - is calculated by comparing the waste infrastructure required to meet the Mayor’s targets using his preferred approach for managing local authority collected waste and subtracting existing and planned infrastructure. LWARB has worked with the GLA to identify what additional waste management is required to deliver this approach for local authority collected, commercial and industrial waste streams.

4.8 The resultant capacity gap has been estimated to be 4,091,000 tonnes at 2015, 5,398000 tonnes at 2020, and 8,493,000 tonnes at 2030.  

4.9 Good design will be crucial to ensure new waste facilities maximise reuse, recycling and low carbon energy generation opportunities and are more acceptable to the public. LWARB have produced an online map of London’s waste sites and strategic industrial sites with potential for the development of new waste management facilities.

**Waste-to-energy**

4.10 Waste-to-energy plants burn household and similar waste that remains after waste prevention and recycling. From this waste the plants generate energy. This can be in the form of steam, electricity or hot water. The electricity is fed into the grid and distributed to the end-users; the hot water, depending on local infrastructure, can be sent to a nearby district heating (or cooling) network to heat (or cool) homes, hospitals, offices etc, and the steam can be used by the nearby industry in their production processes.

4.11 In its 2009 report ‘Where there’s muck there’s brass’ the Environment Committee acknowledged two significant areas for concern: potential health impacts caused by air pollution and the dangers of reducing recycling rates, and called on the Mayor to publish evidence on climate impacts and health effects of waste-to-energy technology.

4.12 The Mayor’s Municipal Waste Management Strategy also sets out how the Mayor aims to shift London’s waste from a net contributor of climate change to a source of emissions savings. The Mayor’s emissions performance standard is a metric that considers the overall carbon impact of

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9 http://www.londonwastemap.org/  
10 http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications/where-there-s-muck-there-s-brass
waste management activities and the carbon intensity floor sets the minimum CO2eq that can be emitted from turning London’s local authority collected waste to energy.

**Invited guests**

4.13 The Committee expects to put questions about waste and recycling in London to:

- Matthew Pencharz, Senior Advisor Environment & Energy, GLA;
- Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive Officer, The London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB);
- Andrew Lappage, Head of Waste Strategy & Contracts, North London Waste Authority (NLWA);
- Ian Davis, Director of Environment, London Borough of Enfield; and
- Jacob Hayler, Economist, Environmental Services Association (ESA).

Other relevant organisations may also be present to provide additional views.

5. **Legal Implications**

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

6. **Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

**List of appendices to this report:** None

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**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

List of Background Papers: None

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