Local authority reduction and recycling plans

Frequently Asked Questions Version 1.0 January 2019

This document has been produced following discussions between the GLA and LWARB’s Resource London (RL) programme with London local authorities to provide clarity on what should be included in local Reduction and Recycling Plans (RRPs). This document reiterates the requirements and expectations on waste authorities, and the support available, to develop RRPs in general conformity with the Mayor’s municipal waste provisions in his London Environment Strategy. GLA Officers are available for further discussion with local authorities in supporting the ongoing development of RRPs.

Definitions

Question – What are flats defined as?

Answer – Properties with communal collections and flats above shops.

Common performance metric benchmarking

Question – Should data for the benchmarking exercise come from Waste Data Flow, DEFRA statistics or from raw data from the borough?

Answer – For consistency use the figures from Waste Data Flow and 2017/18 DEFRA statistics. See amended Appendix 1 – RRP Template for more information.

Question – How should ‘total annual household food waste’ be calculated?

Answer – See amended in Appendix 1 – RRP Template: Estimates should be made for avoidable (edible) food waste produced (kgs/head). The focus of activities to report against this metric should be on food waste prevention (i.e. behaviour change activities rather than food waste collection). Data should be taken from a borough’s own, or Resource London/WRAP, composition data.

Question – Why are some measures per household and some per head?

Answer – Per head is a more accurate measure and is the metric that is used for London’s reduction and waste generation targets. However, measuring residual waste by household allows for comparison against previous and national data.
Setting common performance targets

**Question** – If stretching targets are set but not achieved (for a valid reason) will there be any come back/consequences on the boroughs?

**Answer** – The RRP should set out clear mechanisms and commitments to meet locally set targets in line with the borough’s duty to act in general conformity with the municipal waste provisions of the London Environment Strategy. There is an expectation that boroughs will monitor and report progress against targets, to give the GLA early notice and evidenced reasons if targets will not be achieved, and to update the RRP in line with that duty if necessary during the four-year RRP period.

The Mayor has the power to direct an authority if he considers it necessary for the purposes of implementing the municipal waste provisions. The Mayor wants to work collaboratively with boroughs to develop their waste contracts and RRPs. He will only use his power of direction as a last resort.

**Question** – How soft can targets be for trialling new services? For example, can there be a target for introducing a commercial food waste trial but no specifics about how it will be run?

**Answer** – RRPs should include target dates for new service trials and some detail (e.g. commercial food waste trials planned for x properties over y period) to indicate that there is intention to go beyond the trial if successful. The ambition should be for roll out borough wide to help show direction of travel. Again, flexibility should apply for amending RRPs so more detail and performance can be added once known.

**Question** – What calculations should be used to translate behaviour change activities into % changes?

**Answer** – This will vary depending on the type of behaviour change activity. Boroughs should refer to Resource London advice on good practice tools and templates. See Appendix 1 – RRP Template for more information.

Minimum level of service for household recycling

**Question** – Does food waste have to be completely separate to comply with the London Environment Strategy or can it be combined with garden waste?

**Answer** – Yes, food waste services should be presented and collected separately from garden waste collection services to meet the Mayor’s minimum level of service for household waste recycling (Proposal 7.2.1 in the London Environment Strategy). Introducing separate food waste has been proven to boost recycling rates, reduce contamination and support the production of high quality organic waste suitable for renewable energy production (e.g. via anaerobic digestion). Boroughs that have implemented successful separate food waste services are encouraged to share their experience with other boroughs. Resource London support is available to undertake service reviews and provide advice and good practice case studies.

**Question** – What is the Mayor’s position on charging for garden waste collection services?

**Answer** – The Mayor’s London Environment Strategy (Policy 7.2.1) states that waste authorities should collect other items for recycling including garden waste, where it makes sense to do so. Whether or not the authority charges for this service is a local decision.
**Timeline, submission and response**

*Question* – Can local authorities get feedback on the RRP content before they send it to cabinet for sign off?

*Answer* – Yes there are opportunities for discussions with the GLA before final submissions, and Resource London will be able to support with content.

*Question* – How long after the RRP is submitted will formal feedback be received from the GLA?

*Answer* – The GLA has stated feedback and Mayoral sign off will be given within two months of submission to the GLA. Boroughs are advised to submit their RRP as soon as it is ready and it would be helpful for boroughs to indicate their timeline to the GLA to enable good planning and allow for feedback to be given in good time.

*Question* – Is there potential to amend RRPs? For example, if a borough is undertaking a service review at some stage during the first RRP period and can’t commit to service improvements now?

*Answer* – Every effort should be made to undertake service changes and reviews etc. within the first RRP timeframe to help meet local targets and align with the Mayor’s waste policies. RRPs should include key activities to happen one to two years after each four-year RRP period. RRPs are about direction of travel - there will be flexibility to amend them during the RRP period if needed.

**Miscellaneous**

*Question* – Is there any training available for using the Emissions Performance Standard (EPS) tool?

*Answer* – Yes. The GLA has developed an online tool ([https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/waste-and-recycling/waste-policy](https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/waste-and-recycling/waste-policy)) to support boroughs in modelling their baseline performance and waste options against the EPS. Training sessions will be run by the GLA in February 2019 (more details to follow), with the feedback gained integrated into an updated tool and user guide.

*Question* – If the RRP has to be signed off by cabinet it will be in the public domain and there may be potential issues with sharing commercial targets/service changes publicly. Is it possible to create two versions of the document?

*Answer* – Local authorities can have a ‘public’ version and remove commercially sensitive plans they don’t want to share publicly.

*Question* – Should boroughs include details for interventions that they’ve considered but won’t be undertaking for a particular reason?

*Answer* – The Mayor expects boroughs to set out activities for achieving locally set targets as well as targets set out in his London Environment Strategy. These should be discussed and sense-checked with Resource London. RRPs should include measures the borough is taking to drive improvements in a particular area, as well as measures that have been explored and discounted, and the reason why.
Question – Is there any funding available for service changes and improvements?

Answer – Funding for advice on the RRP is being made available free of charge to boroughs through support by LWARB’s Resource London programme. Some funding for specific projects may be available from time to time. Please contact Beverley Simonson or Cathy Cook at Beverley.simonson@resourcelondon.org and Cathy.cook@resourcelondon.org or visit the Resource London website (https://resourcelondon.org/) for more information. In addition, the GLA is lobbying Government to secure greater funding for London waste management.

GLA and RL officers are available for further discussions. Please contact Dottie Allan at Dorothy.allan@london.gov.uk.