

WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME EVALUATION
WDA/48/13

Recommendation

That:

Members agree in principle to an increase of up to 10% (£24,800) in the waste prevention budget for an on-going evaluation of the programme as set out in paragraph 4 of this report subject to the annual budget setting process.

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WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME EVALUATION**WDA/48/13****Report of the Chief Executive****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To seek Members agreement to an on-going evaluation of the Waste Prevention programme;
- 1.2 To advise Members of the need for a waste composition analysis of residual waste subject to future annual budget setting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Over the last three years, the Authority has funded and successfully delivered a full and wide ranging waste prevention programme across Merseyside and Halton and supported local district activity. This programme commenced following the detailed waste composition analysis conducted for the Authority in 2010 which showed that food waste formed the largest component of household waste sent to landfill (28%) at significant cost to the Authority and residents. The waste prevention programme has therefore emphasised food waste reduction.
- 2.2 The outputs for the 2012/13 waste prevention programme were the subject of an Authority Special Focus Report in September (Report WDA 34/13). The programme of activity has recently received national recognition as the winner of the Best Waste Minimisation or Prevention Project Award at the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee LARAC Awards 2013.
- 2.3 DEFRA will be publishing a Waste Prevention Programme for England on 13th December 2013 and Local Authorities including MRWA are expected to play a key role in the delivery of this plan.
- 2.4 The waste prevention programme has been reviewed by Internal Audit and in a report to the Authority (WDA 28/13) identified no key issues but included a recommendation for improvement that an evaluation should be undertaken of the full waste prevention programme prior to the setting of the 2014/15 budget. This report and recommendation provides a response to the Internal Audit report.

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority**29th November 2013**

3. Current Waste Prevention Monitoring and Reporting

3.1 Waste Prevention sits at the top of the statutory waste hierarchy and the Waste Prevention Programme was developed as part of the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside. The programme prioritised food waste, textiles, home composting and junk mail through a diverse range of activities on the economic and environmental benefits of reducing these waste streams to enable key behavioural change by residents which could also save them money i.e. reducing food waste can save the average family over £600 per year.

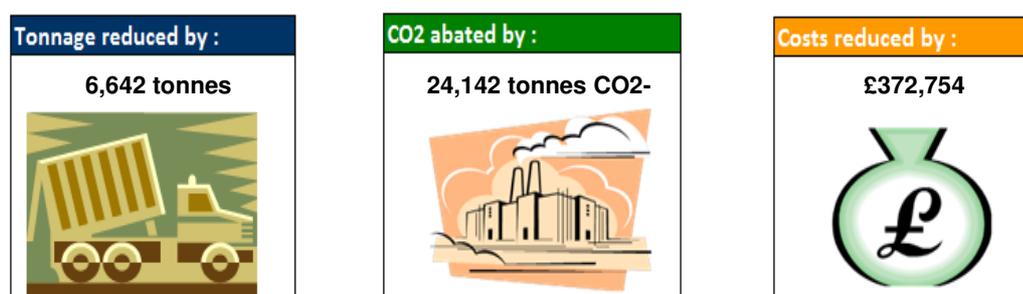
3.2 The Authority has used a variety of approaches to promote waste prevention to residents. This includes:

- Promotion of the national Love Food Hate Waste Campaign and provision of food related items to help residents reduce food waste such as cool bags, rice measures, shopping lists and recipe cards;
- Joint communications by districts e.g. procurement of advertising panels on refuse collection vehicles;
- Attendance at major events with high footfall such as Food and Drink Festivals;
- Radio adverts, newspaper adverts, leaflets and posters;
- Supporting national and European initiatives;
- Use of websites and social media; and
- Establishing and providing support to the Merseyside Textile Forum;

3.3 Currently there is no single system available that can accurately calculate the savings and impacts of any waste prevention programme. The Authority has joined a consortium of Local Authorities in the development and use of a Waste Prevention and Carbon Toolkit that is trying to address this issue. The Toolkit steering group includes support from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the national Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP). The Toolkit is being developed using national data sets, further research and has been peer reviewed. This is to ensure the Tool is robust for use by Local Authorities to gauge what savings and benefits have been achieved

through waste prevention activities. By using the Toolkit, the Authority has been able to identify indicative savings in the development of waste prevention projects and to report on the programme annually (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Waste Prevention Programme outputs 2012/13



- 3.4 The Authority uses other data sets to monitor and report on activity in the waste prevention programme including hits on the Waste Partnership website Recycle for Merseyside and Halton, registrations to the Mail Preference Service and sales of home composters through the National Framework scheme. The Authority has engaged directly with over 18,600 people at 49 large footfall events in the last three years where residents are requested to complete questionnaires in return for the Love Food Hate Waste merchandise available. These questionnaires provide personal data and responses on brand recognition for Love Food Hate Waste and the Pass It On Textile Campaign. The information is stored on a database which by December 2013 will hold almost 8,000 personal e-mail contacts and information from residents. This data is currently used to provide further information via E-Zines to residents on waste prevention and can be used in future to undertake more detailed survey work and analysis across a range of demographic profiles and household types.
- 3.5 This reporting demonstrates there is considerable activity and engagement with the public to increase their awareness and understanding of waste prevention. However, it is very difficult to determine the extent to which each of the various activities has played a role in changing the attitudes and behaviour of residents to reduce their waste.
- 3.6 Therefore, this report proposes that the current evaluation tools used by the Authority are supplemented in the next financial year by incorporating further work to understand residents' practices and behaviours in terms of reducing household waste. This will help the Authority to have a better

understanding of the impacts of its waste prevention activities both before and after the activities are undertaken to determine which campaigns and services deliver value for money, add social value, offer financial savings and long-term behavioural change.

- 3.7 The type of evaluation undertaken could be financially significant and onerous; therefore, it is proposed that the additional evaluations whilst not as robust should be commensurate with the level of budget and projects undertaken during the programme. External factors which play a role in the reduction of household waste arisings will also need to be considered such as increasing food prices and difficult economic conditions. Evaluation can be undertaken using a wide mix of methodologies at varying costs which includes whether the work is done in-house or through external service providers e.g. engagement with residents can range from representational face to face household interviews, road shows and focus groups to the use of on line tools and social media for conducting surveys and questionnaires using existing data held by the Authority and baseline information obtained during the public consultation for the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy (JRWMS) in 2010 and 2011.

4. Proposals for Evaluation

- 4.1 Given the wide range of activities that are undertaken in the waste prevention programme, it is proposed that an on-going programme of evaluation is undertaken, focused on the priority waste streams each year, which are currently food, textiles, junk mail and garden waste. Members may wish to agree in principle to fund this evaluation work either by:
- Extending the scope of any future waste prevention budget to include a small contribution for evaluation work on the programme; (at no more than 10% of the waste prevention budget) or
 - Agree to an increase in the waste prevention budget at annual budget setting for an on-going evaluation of the programme without a reduction in the delivery programme.
- 4.2 The evidence from evaluation will help to quantify the impact of the Authority's activities and enable officers to plan future campaigns and communicate more effectively with residents on the outcomes of their efforts to reduce waste.
- 4.3 It will also be important that waste composition data be kept up to date. The last analysis was conducted in 2010 as part of the JRWMS review. Recommendations will be put forward for future Authority budget setting to

undertake a further composition analysis of the household residual bin waste on Merseyside during 2015/16 and prior to the commencement of the Resource Recovery Contract. This data will help to inform the Authority of regional variations in waste compared to national data and improve reporting using the Waste Prevention and Carbon Toolkit.

5. Risk Implications

5.1

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Failure to reduce household waste arisings by residents	2	4	9	Evaluation of waste prevention activities will help to assess the impact of funded schemes and inform future programmes which should become more effective in increasing participation by residents leading to changing key behaviours to reduce waste.
Failure to provide opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage in service development and delivery.	2	4	8	Ensure appropriate engagement mechanisms are in place to allow public contributions to the development of Authority policies and activities.
Failure to support residents and stakeholders	2	4	8	Identify appropriate joint working opportunities with districts,

to make practical changes in their behaviours and easier to contribute to sustainable waste and resource management activities.			contractors and other stakeholders to ensure the delivery of behavioural change programmes to residents, local communities and businesses.
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6. HR Implications

- 6.1 An on-going annual evaluation of key materials for waste prevention can be embedded in to the programme with no staffing implications if kept commensurate to the programme.

7. Environmental Implications

- 7.1 Better understanding of the impact of the Authority's waste prevention programme supports the strategic objectives and targets of the JRWMS and Corporate Plan to:
- Achieve a 50% recycling rate;
 - Reduce the climate change/carbon impacts of waste management (Diversion of food waste and textiles from landfill having the highest carbon benefit of any household waste materials);
 - Maximise waste prevention;
 - Maximise landfill diversion/recovery of residual waste; and
 - Promote behavioural /cultural change that delivers the Strategy objectives.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The waste prevention budget is £248,000 in the current financial year. A 10% increase would provide up to £24,800 for evaluation of the programme. The initiatives undertaken in the programme continue to demonstrate financial savings through the metrics in the Waste Prevention

and Carbon Toolkit (£372,000 identified primarily for food waste in 2012-13 where a three to one return on investment is being shown as approximately £100,000 was spent on the Love Food Hate Waste Campaign).

- 8.2 Members will be presented with the evidence of the programme evaluation each year in the Waste Prevention annual report and that data will be used to inform the annual budget setting for the following year. The financial requirements for a waste composition analysis of residual waste will also be put to Members for future consideration.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The Authority has successfully used a variety of activities to promote waste prevention to residents and direct engagement figures have increased year on year.
- 9.2 Officers are able to report on financial and environmental savings primarily from the Love Food Hate Waste Campaign using the Waste Prevention and Carbon Toolkit and activities engaging with residents. Further evaluation work will help to improve the local data included in the tool to give increasingly robust outputs should Members agree to allocate appropriate financial provision for this work.
- 9.3 The aim of an on-going evaluation campaign will be to investigate and obtain evidence that the activities of the Authority are being effective in raising awareness about waste prevention and successfully encouraging residents to change their behaviour.

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The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.