SOUTH LONDON WASTE PARTNERSHIP

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PART A REPORT

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Report to: South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) Joint Committee

Date: 12th January 2023

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Report title: Waste Composition Analysis Findings

Summary

This paper provides an update to Members of the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee on the findings of a recent waste composition analysis project that was conducted across two phases in the summer and autumn 2022.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and comment on any aspects of the waste composition analysis project.

1. Background and introduction

1.1   Working with specialist environmental consultancy, Resource Futures, the SLWP boroughs conducted a comprehensive waste composition analysis exercise in 2022. Following best practise, the analysis was conducted across two phases (sampling at different times of year is important due to the seasonal variability in the composition of waste):

- Phase 1 – July and August 2022
- Phase 2 – October 2022

1.2   35,331kg of waste (residual, recycling and food) was sampled from 1,469 kerbside properties and 785 flatted properties. Resource Futures followed best practice and used the Office for National Statistics (ONS) London Output Area Classification (LOAC) tool to identify a representative sample of households in each of the four boroughs for inclusion in the study.

1.3   This robust methodology, and the substantial size of the sample, means that the findings are subject to a maximum standard error of +/-

3% at the SLWP level (and between +/-5.7% - +/-6.2% at borough level) at the 95% confidence level. In other words, we can be confident that 19 times out of 20, the figures obtained from the study will be within 3% (either way) of the 'true' figures you'd have got if waste samples had been taken from the entire SLWP population.

2. Findings

2.1 A summary of the interim findings from Phase 1 of the waste composition analysis project was presented to Members of the SLWP Joint Committee in September 2022. Members asked that the full findings were shared once phase 2 of the sampling had been completed.

2.2 A presentation of the key findings from both phases of the project will be given to Members of the SLWP Joint Committee at the meeting on 12th January 2023. The following findings will be highlighted and discussed:

- 55.7% of what's in the average residual waste bin (by weight) could have been recycled using the councils' recycling collection services. This includes food waste (29.2%), of which 12.5% was still in its packaging and 8.8% was edible/avoidable.

- A further 8.5% of what's in the average residual waste bin could have been recycled at the local Household Reuse and Recycling Centre (HRRC), e.g. scrap metal and wood.

- 7.1% of what's in the average residual waste bin could have been recycled at local shops/supermarkets (e.g. soft, flexible plastics)

- 28.8% of what's in the average residual waste bin is considered difficult to recycle.

2.3 The findings from the waste composition analysis project will:

- Help the SLWP boroughs further improve their recycling rates by gaining a better understanding of what residents are putting in their residual waste bins and using this knowledge to tailor and target behaviour change campaigns accordingly.

- Calculate capture rates per commodity, enabling the boroughs to understand where the improvement areas are so that we can target our communications and operational efforts in the areas where the most impact can be achieved.

- Enable the SLWP boroughs to more accurately measure the carbon impact of their residual waste treatment activities and monitor progress against reduction targets.

- Support waste minimisation by identifying which items are currently going to the ERF which could be rehomed, reused or upcycled.
- Model the impacts of possible future national legislation changes such as a Deposit Return Scheme and free garden waste collections.

3. Legal impacts and implications

3.1 None

4. Communications

4.1 This report has been drafted by the Partnership's Communications Advisor, who works closely with the four SLWP boroughs and the partnership's commercial partners to ensure communications and engagements activities support the themes agreed in the SLWP Communications Strategy 2020-2022.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and comment on any aspects of the waste composition analysis project.

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