

4.5 Circular Economy

The borough's emissions from the disposal of waste were 4 kt CO₂ in 2019, 0.6% of its total greenhouse gas emissions. Although this a relatively small fraction, there are important additional benefits to reducing waste and increasing recycling such as the reduction of emissions associated with producing goods.

Changes which can be made to reduce both direct and indirect emissions from waste include:

- Minimising the production of waste, especially food waste – food and drink contributes around 10% of London's consumption-based emissions .
- Promoting reuse to prevent items entering the waste stream.
- Recycling everything which can be recycled, including paper, plastics and metals.
- Increasing the operational efficiency of waste collection rounds

Progress so far

The Council has recently consulted residents on proposals to reduce waste, improve recycling and reduce the use of single use plastics in its operations. In September 2020, the Council agreed a set of measures, including fortnightly collections of general waste, no longer collecting side waste, a new contamination policy and no longer providing clear recycling sacks to properties able to store wheelie bins. However, the Carbon neutral Plan represents a significant scaling up of ambition beyond these changes.

Facilitating wider change

Immediate

- Institute fortnightly collections to increase recycling, reduce residual waste and reduce HGV movements by 2023.
- Introduce a collection charge for emptying contaminated recycling bins as general waste by 2023.
- Work with organisations across the borough to procure and operate within the Good Food in Greenwich guidelines; promoting sustainable, healthy and affordable food and food waste reduction.

Programme development

- Explore feasibility of further measures:
 - » separate food waste collections at all residential property types and commercial premises
 - » collections for harder-to-recycle/smaller volume waste streams (e.g. batteries, films, hard plastics).
 - » increased reuse and alternative treatment options (e.g. treating bulky waste into refuse-derived fuel (RDF)).
- Promote behaviour change to reduce waste, increase reuse and increase recycling through communications campaigns.

Our Key Asks of Others

The Government

- Provide additional powers to councils to reduce waste generation, such as to pursue a “pay-as-you-throw” model