

Putting the Community First

BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

Waste Prevention Strategy

2005-2020

To prevent waste
by working together
and sharing responsibility
for a cleaner, greener Barnet

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Foreword

by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Barnet is facing tough challenges in waste management. The amount of waste we are producing is growing, and sending our waste to landfill is an increasingly unsustainable option. Barnet Council has already shown that it is committed to changing the way we look at waste through our Compulsory Recycling Scheme, which was introduced borough-wide in March 2005, but we need to go further. This Waste Prevention Strategy is the next phase in Barnet's response to the growing waste problems we are facing.

The environmental reasons for tackling waste through prevention include: stopping the pollution that the transport of waste creates; protecting our surroundings by not using landfill sites; and preventing the production of methane, a harmful gas. There are also financial benefits to be gained. As a modern and efficient council, Barnet aims to reduce costs where there is no negative impact on services to residents. There are significant savings to be made through reducing the amount of waste we produce as a borough. The council must pay to take residents' waste to landfill so preventing waste will significantly reduce this cost. The amount we will have to pay to take waste to landfill will increase over time – costs which we may ultimately have to pass down through the Council Tax. For this reason the council and residents of Barnet must work together to reduce waste where it arises and ensure that we avoid the rising costs of our rubbish.

The council is committed to tackling waste, not just through recycling but also by reducing the amount of waste produced in the first place. However we cannot meet this challenge alone. We must share responsibility for our waste and change our behaviour. We must find new and innovative ways to prevent and reuse waste and will look at our own behaviour and begin to change. The council will work with residents, community groups, partners and businesses to meet the vision set out in this strategy.

Our approach, put forward in this strategy, highlights this need to share responsibility for waste, as well as to work together. It also shows that the council is prepared to regulate and enforce waste prevention across the borough, and our strong track record with recycling shows that we take this issue seriously. This is also reflected in the long-term nature of the strategy. Our approach is intended to last for the next 15 years, and whilst the initiatives we have proposed are short-term, there are plenty of ideas for the future in the appendix – preventing waste is a long-term task which requires a flexible response.

By sharing responsibility and working together we can take up the challenge of preventing waste for a cleaner, greener Barnet.



Councillor Matthew Offord
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport



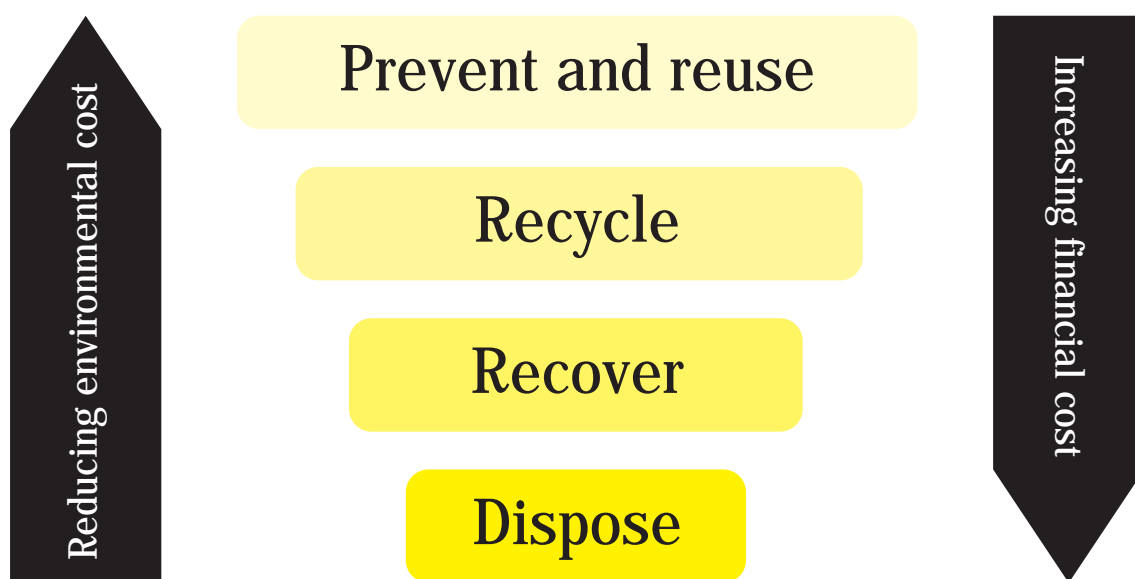
Introduction

As one of the largest boroughs in London, Barnet produces the second largest amount of waste in north London. Each resident of Barnet produces around 477 kg of waste every year, which means that each person generates about seven times their body weight in rubbish. The total amount of waste produced in Barnet is 153,000 tonnes a year – that's the average weight of an iceberg, or the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

As the first borough to adopt compulsory recycling, Barnet Council has shown that it is prepared to make tough decisions in order to meet the challenging recycling targets that we have set ourselves. At the same time, Barnet residents have demonstrated their commitment to a cleaner, greener Barnet and levels of recycling have increased markedly since the scheme was introduced. However, recycling is only part of the picture. In order to make Barnet a cleaner, greener borough, we must work together to prevent waste from arising in the first place.

Waste prevention means avoiding and reducing the waste we generate, and reusing items instead of throwing them away. Waste prevention is at the top of the waste hierarchy (shown in Figure 1, below). The waste hierarchy demonstrates that if we can reduce the amount of waste we produce through measures at the top of the hierarchy, there will be less to manage through expensive processes such as recycling, energy recovery and disposal lower down the hierarchy.

Figure 1 - The waste hierarchy



Based on DEFRA: Waste Not Want Not 2002

Waste prevention is the best way to deal with our waste. However, trends indicate that the amount of waste Barnet produces will increase from the current level of 153,000 tonnes per year to approximately 228,000 tonnes per year by 2020. This is in line with a predicted national increase and is in part due to a predicted increase in households in the borough, as well as an ongoing increase in the amount that existing households are throwing away. This predicted increase would lead to an unsustainable amount of waste for the borough to manage and means that we will have to work much harder to cut down the amount of waste we produce.

The implications of the increasing amount of waste are not just environmental. Increased waste means increased disposal costs, which ultimately have to be met through the Council Tax. This strategy sets out the council's approach to ensuring that this does not happen. As illustrated below, in meeting our targets and carrying out the three key initiatives set out later on in this strategy, we will make a substantial reduction in the waste produced in Barnet, as well as a reduction in the cost of disposal.

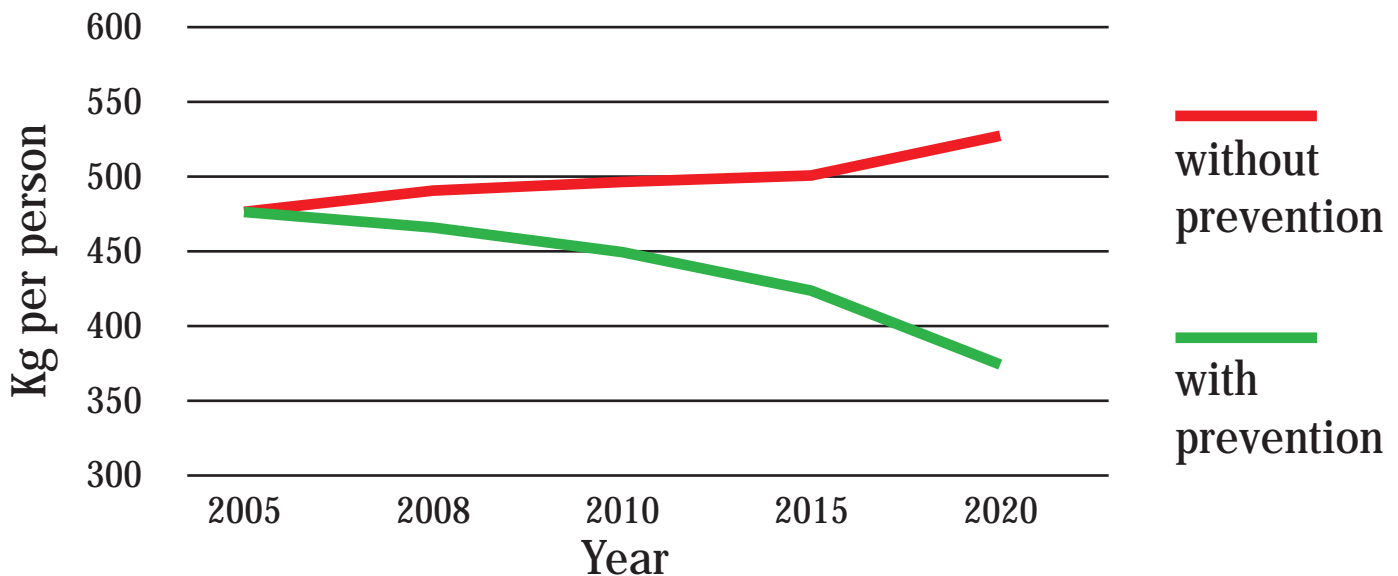


Figure 2 - Impact on waste growth over time

In figure 2 the red line shows the predicted increase in kilograms of waste produced per person in Barnet over the next 15 years. In contrast, the green line shows what can be achieved through implementing all of the waste prevention initiatives detailed in this strategy (including those outlined in Appendix 1).

There are already several waste prevention initiatives under way in Barnet and these provide a solid foundation on which to build. These include the following:

- Promoting home composting
- Promoting the use of alternatives to disposable nappies
- Encouraging the reduction of unwanted junk mail
- Collecting furniture for reuse by community groups and charities
- Working with schools on the Barnet Environmental Action for Real in Schools (BEARS) programme

This strategy aims to make significant reductions in the amount of waste produced in the borough and will be a vital part of Barnet's overall Waste Management Strategy, which is due to be completed in 2006.

The context

National and regional

Barnet Council is responsible for collecting the waste that its residents produce. The responsibility for disposing of this waste is held by the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), of which Barnet is a member, along with six other north London boroughs. The NLWA has produced a North London Joint Waste Strategy, and Barnet has taken this strategy into consideration when formulating its own strategic direction.

Barnet must also comply with the Mayor of London's Municipal Waste Management Strategy, as well as the Government's National Waste Strategy (Waste Strategy 2000). Each of these wider strategies contains recommendations and requirements around waste prevention and all of these have been taken into consideration in this strategy.

Barnet

Barnet is outer London's fastest growing borough; by 2020 we are projected to be London's largest borough with a population of over 364,000. We are determined to both face the challenges and realise the opportunities this presents. The regeneration of Cricklewood is built around a vision 'to create a

new gateway for London and a vibrant urban area in Barnet'¹ and reflects Barnet's status as a key part of London as a world leading city.

Barnet's approach to the large-scale regeneration projects that are planned over the coming years is based on three strands: protect, enhance and grow. Waste prevention will be integral to this approach as it is adopted throughout Barnet's regeneration schemes. In planning future developments we will ensure that we work towards an infrastructure that supports waste prevention.

Barnet's new Community Strategy promotes the theme 'Growing Successfully'. This objective will be supported through this strategy, particularly through working in partnership.

One of the council's five key priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan is 'A Cleaner Greener Barnet', with a service objective to 'Minimise Waste and Maximise Recycling'. This strategy is crucial to achieving this objective, which is reflected in the vision below.

Barnet's Vision

The waste hierarchy, the growing amount of waste in Barnet and the costs of putting our waste in landfill sites are all driving forces behind this Waste Prevention Strategy. In its role as a community leader, the council will promote a vision for Barnet which will drive the strategy.

The vision below demonstrates the council's commitment to preventing waste and the links between waste prevention and our key corporate priority of a Cleaner, Greener Barnet. It also highlights that Barnet's approach to waste prevention is one of shared responsibility with residents and partners.

To prevent waste by working together and sharing responsibility for a cleaner, greener Barnet

This vision will drive our approach to meeting our key waste prevention objectives and targets:

Objective 1: Reduce the overall amount of waste from households

- Limit waste per person to the 2004/05 level of 477 kg/pp per year by 2008
- Arisings per person to be reduced to 452 kg/pp per year by 2010
- Arisings per person to be reduced to 425 kg/pp per year by 2015
- Arisings per person to be reduced to 375 kg/pp per year by 2020

Objective 2: Increase participation in waste prevention activities

Specific targets will be formulated for the individual initiatives as baseline data is gathered.

The council will approach its objectives through the three key activities outlined below in the short-term. These activities and initiatives have been identified through consultation with residents, businesses and partners, as well as on the basis of several criteria including the most discarded materials; the short-term chances of success; cost effectiveness; laying a foundation for changes in behaviour and attitudes; and building on existing initiatives.

Activity 1: Sharing responsibility

The Waste Prevention Strategy can only work if everyone in Barnet takes responsibility for the waste they produce. The council will play an active role whilst acknowledging that lasting results can only happen when the responsibility for waste is shared. We will:

- Educate and work with residents, voluntary and community groups, partners and businesses to bring about changes in attitude and behaviour
- Examine the council's own waste practices and identify ways of increasing waste prevention (such as the reduction in paper waste and the use of refuse bags made of corn starch)
- Champion the Waste Prevention Strategy and align resources to ensure its success across the borough



Initiative: Nappy campaign

Disposable nappies make up 2% of all waste and it is estimated that it could take up to 500 years for a nappy to break down in landfill. We will build on our existing work on promoting alternatives to disposable nappies. We will continue to work with the North London Real Nappy Campaign in which the North London Waste Authority will provide a £51 subsidy to people that prove they are using alternatives to disposable nappies. We will build on existing promotion and consider other best practice examples, as well as working with groups such as nurseries and maternity wards to promote alternatives and encourage parents to take responsibility for reducing nappy waste.

Activity 2: Working in Partnership

The council will work closely with its partners in implementing the Waste Prevention Strategy. We will achieve this by:

- Working with businesses to develop innovative approaches to waste prevention
- Working on waste prevention initiatives with our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership through the theme of 'Growing Successfully'
- Working with developers and planners to ensure that waste prevention is fully integrated into Barnet's regeneration schemes as the borough grows

Initiative: Promote 'Smart Shopping'

Statistics show that packaging is one of the key reasons for waste in the UK. For example, there are eight billion carrier bags used in the UK each year; that equates to 135 bags per person per year. In 2001, British households produced the equivalent weight of 245 jumbo jets per week in packaging waste and every year, each person produces four times as much packaging waste as their luggage allowance on a jumbo jet². We will work with consumers and businesses in Barnet to promote reusable products (such as shopping bags), refillable items, vegetable box schemes, and a reduction in packaging.



Activity 3: Enforcing and regulating

Where necessary and as a last resort, the council will use its powers to ensure the implementation of the Waste Prevention Strategy over the next 15 years. This may involve:

- Charging schemes for certain types of waste and packaging
- Changing the way we collect waste (for example smaller bins)
- Monitoring of waste composition and amounts
- Lobbying for change at a regional and national level

Initiative: Restricting residual waste

We will review our current refuse collection arrangements to ensure appropriate wheeled bin use and to discourage additional side waste.

Leading by example

It is vital that, as a community leader, the council shares responsibility for waste prevention and leads by example. Alongside the initiatives set out above, we will establish how much waste the council produces and examine its composition. We will then work to identify ways in which the council can cut down on the amount of waste it produces and promote these methods internally. We will also work to establish sustainable procurement policies that work to minimise waste and ensure that those wishing to do business with the council work to prevent waste too. We will also ensure that waste from regeneration construction is minimised. We will champion this Waste Prevention Strategy throughout the authority and with our partners on the Local Strategic Partnership, emphasising that waste prevention is a relevant issue for all organisations, and publicising our good practice in order to encourage others to follow.

Barnet's diverse communities

Waste prevention impacts upon all members of our diverse communities and the responsibility for waste prevention must be shared. Barnet's diverse communities are supportive of the council's commitment to prevent waste. Initial discussions have commenced with representatives of faith and other community groups resulting in a greater understanding of the subject and how individuals can contribute. Many residents have migrated from countries where preventing waste is done as a matter of economic and social responsibility and the council will build on its existing work with faith and community groups to promote the understanding that waste prevention is as relevant to life in Barnet as it is in countries where there is a culture of waste reduction and reuse. We will ensure that this strategy is communicated to and supported by our diverse communities, particularly through the specific education and awareness-raising initiatives highlighted for medium-term action in Appendix 1.

Financial information

Savings

The financial benefits of waste prevention are significant. As a modern and efficient council, Barnet aims to reduce costs where there is no negative impact on services to residents. The initiatives proposed in this strategy, both the short term key initiatives and the longer term initiatives in Appendix 1, will help us to avoid the growing costs of our rubbish. Figure 3 shows how much Barnet will save by sharing responsibility for our waste and implementing just the three key initiatives identified in this strategy³.

Figure 3 Savings through key initiatives

	Initiative	Average annual saving	Total saving over life of strategy
		£	
1	Real nappies	120,000	1.8m
2	Promote smart shopping	70,000	1.0m
3	Restricting residuals	640,000	6.5m
	Total	830,000	9.3m

The savings occur as a result of several factors including:

- Avoided disposal costs
- Avoided collection costs
- Avoided costs of Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme allowances that would otherwise have to be purchased
- Income from charges levied

The impact of waste prevention will grow over time as the initiatives become more established and we begin to share responsibility for our waste.

Costs

The three key initiatives identified in this strategy can be achieved within existing resources and their costs are highlighted in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Costs of key initiatives

	Initiative	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Average annual cost over life of strategy
		£			
1	Real nappies	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300
2	Promote smart shopping	0	3,400	19,200	30,000
3	Restricting residuals	4,000	8,100	113,500	17,600
	Total	8,300	15,800	137,000	51,900

Barnet will also strive to identify external funding for many of the initiatives in the strategy, which would reduce operational costs and further improve the value for money that we can deliver through preventing waste. Potential sources of funding could include:

- The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which promotes home composting
- North London Waste Authority, which currently provides a subsidy for using alternatives to disposable nappies
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- European Union

We will work to ensure that all funding possibilities are explored and that Barnet gains the maximum value for money from waste prevention, delivering savings that can benefit residents.

Monitoring and reviewing the strategy

This strategy puts forward Barnet's approach to waste prevention for the period 2005 to 2020 and it is intended that the strategy be reviewed every three years. Actions for the short term (and prior to the next review) are detailed above. We will work in the short term to establish baseline data in order to set ourselves challenging targets for each initiative. This will ensure that we meet the targets under our overall objective and will undertake regular monitoring to measure the success of our activities.

Potential medium to long term (three to 15 years) initiatives are listed in Appendix 1. The focus for the medium term will be around education and awareness-raising of prevention issues and the priority actions will be considered at the first review of the strategy in 2008, in order to ensure the strategy remains relevant and effective. This is particularly important since the waste industry is ever-changing. The introduction of new technologies, as well as European and government legislation and regional shifts mean that Barnet must maintain a proactive yet flexible approach to waste management and in particular waste prevention.

Acknowledgements

This strategy has been produced by Barnet Council and is supported by a technical working document prepared by Eunomia Research and Consulting, which was funded by the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs, under the WIP Local Authority Unit Direct Consultancy Support Programme.

- ¹ Barnet's Housing Regeneration 2004/05
- ² source: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk
- ³ Further cost information for all proposed initiatives, including those in Appendix 1, are included in the technical working document that supports this strategy.
- ⁴ Cost estimates were derived by identifying variable costs (eg. the number of home compost bin subsidies claimed), fixed costs (eg. marketing budgets), and internal staff costs. These costs were developed in consultation with officers through reference to known standard industry costs and existing Barnet Council cost structures.



Appendix 1

Medium-term initiatives for waste prevention: awareness-raising and education

Initiative	Activity
Schools awareness programme	Engage schools in programme Provide educational materials related to the curriculum to teachers
Waste prevention publicity campaign	Introduce a campaign based on best practice Use consistent design principles and messages and distribute information at CARCs, libraries, council offices, website Coordination/integration with recycling programmes and other messages Work with community groups to ensure all of Barnet's diverse communities are communicated to Raise awareness of the future consequences for residents of continued growth in waste
Eco teams	Establish and train an eco team trial group within Barnet Review results of trial and extend eco teams if appropriate
Waste prevention directory	Develop a directory that lists goods and services that support waste prevention

Longer-term initiatives for waste prevention

Initiative	Activity
Home Composting	Promote home composting through garden centres and other additional means Provide educational material with subsidised bins Establish master composter programme building on the work of WRAP and LCRN
No junk mail promotion	Review effectiveness of current promotion Distribute "No junk mail" stickers, on request
Council procurement/internal policies	Establish sustainable procurement policies that work to minimise waste Reduce regeneration construction waste
Tonnage-based levy	Agree to and implement a system of tonnage based levy for residual waste sent to North London Waste Authority for treatment and disposal Include impact of levy in developing costings for waste prevention actions

Initiative	Activity
Wood banks	Work with community enterprises to establish reuse bank based at CARC
Work with retailers to facilitate actions and promotions	<p>Work through the LSP, NLWA, Mayor of London and other appropriate organisations to lobby for business waste prevention initiatives</p> <p>Encourage retailers to offer multi-trip packaging, promote refillable and long life items, reusable bags</p> <p>Work with NLWA partners to investigate development of a 'reuse credit' equivalent to the avoided or deferred cost of disposal</p> <p>Work with business networks where they exist, to raise awareness of waste prevention</p> <p>Develop tailored initiatives appropriate for large companies and SMEs respectively</p>
Community composting	<p>Engage and assist local groups where there is long term commitment</p> <p>Work with NLWA to offer recycling credits to accredited groups</p>
Enforcement on commercial waste in household waste streams	Ensure all traders have trade waste agreements
Furniture and electrical goods re-use	<p>Work with community enterprises (eg. FRN)</p> <p>Promote reuse options to callers to the special collections service</p> <p>Collect furniture in block cleansing, if outlets for this furniture exist</p> <p>Establish a council contract for household special and WEEE collections that stipulates a reuse component</p>
Lobby central government for policy action on waste prevention	Work with NLWA partners to lobby central government for greater action to reduce waste growth
Neighbourhood front garden exchanges	Support local used goods exchange days, including on estates
Online materials exchange	Investigate website costs, viability, and liability issues
Reuse and resale shops	Promote reuse and resale shops
Inclusion in tender evaluations	All council tenders to consider potential waste growth impacts
Waste composition monitoring	Undertake regular monitoring to ascertain trends and effects of programmes
Evaluation of waste growth effects of household waste options	Consider waste growth impacts when evaluating collection options

Initiative	Activity
Action by Trading Standards on packaging	<p>Investigate instances of reported excess packaging, local test cases</p> <p>Lobby and work with businesses at local and national level to reduce packaging</p> <p>Take prosecutions where appropriate</p>