



Towards a low waste north London

Summary guide to the North London Joint Waste Strategy 2025 - 2040

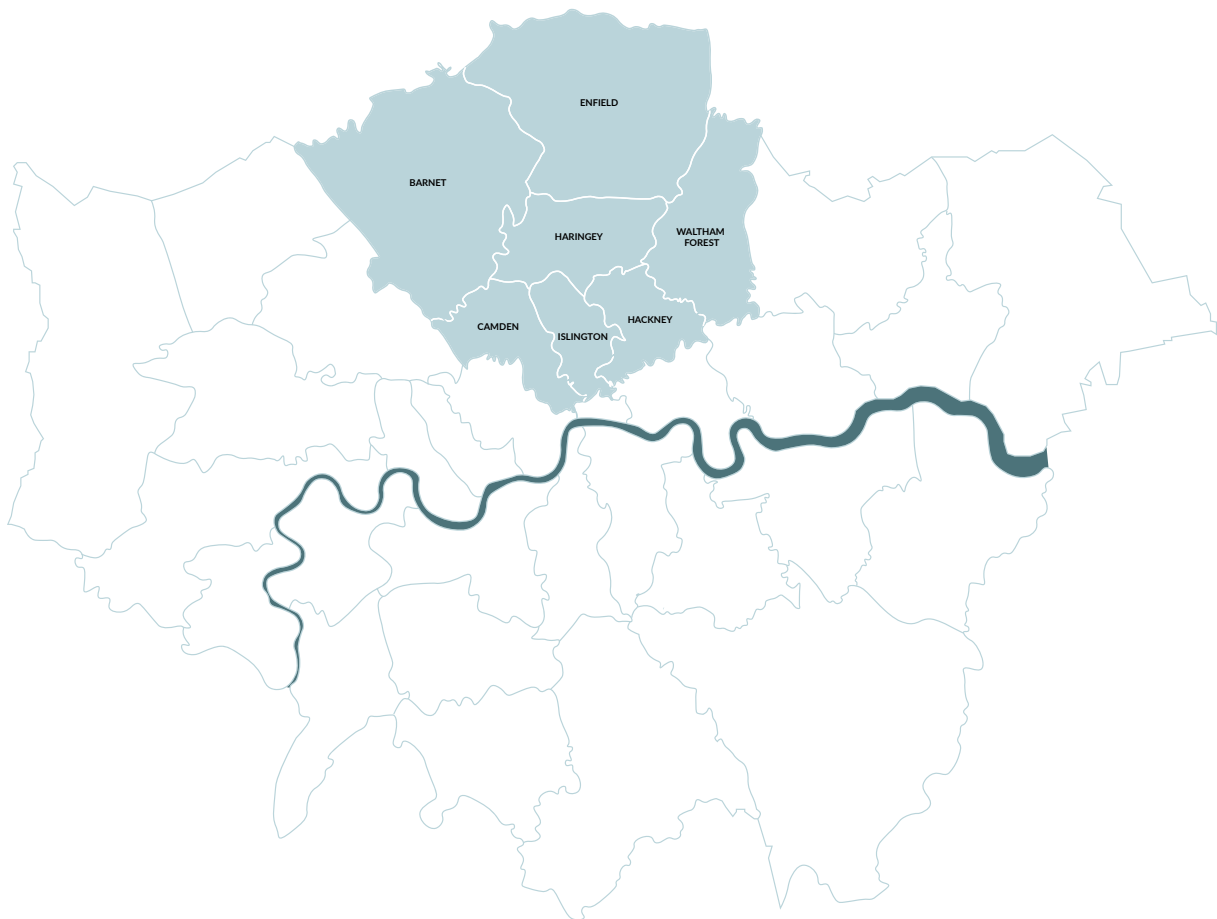


Background

The seven borough councils of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest collect the waste and recycling for two million residents. North London Waste Authority is responsible for recycling, composting and disposing of the waste collected by the councils.

About this guide

This document is a shorter, summary version of the draft North London Joint Waste Strategy 2025-2040. You can read the full strategy at northlondonwaste.commonplace.is



The North London Joint Waste Strategy will form the basis of how all eight authorities manage waste in the future, and how we will work together to deliver essential waste services in the best interests of north London's residents.

Councils collect rubbish and recycling from households. They pay a levy to NLWA depending on the amount their residents throw away.



Operates at scale for two million residents to get the best environmental outcomes and value for money



NLWA arranges for materials collected by councils and brought to reuse and recycling centres to be sorted and sold to recyclers



LondonEnergy
Powering the Circular Economy

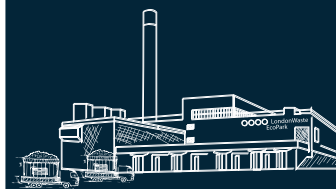
Owned by NWLA to operate reuse, recycling and disposal infrastructure



LEL runs a publicly owned energy from waste plant to dispose of residual waste in the most environmentally responsible way



The funds generated go to NLWA to pay for services and keep costs down for Councils



Energy is generated and sold

Our vision

To manage north Londoners' waste according to the waste hierarchy, prioritising waste reduction then maximising reuse, repair, recycling. We will then use the most climate-friendly means of disposal possible where waste reduction is not feasible. This includes providing environmentally-friendly, best-value, resident-focused services and policies that meet the challenges of the climate emergency.

Aims and objectives

We will aim to:

- A1.** Promote waste prevention and reduction.
- A2.** Promote sustainable resources and waste management policies in north London and create a more circular economy.
- A3.** Minimise the overall environmental impacts of resource and waste management, especially the effects on climate change.
- A4.** Engage residents, community groups and local businesses in the development and implementation of resources and waste management.
- A5.** Provide resident-focused, cost-effective, best value services.

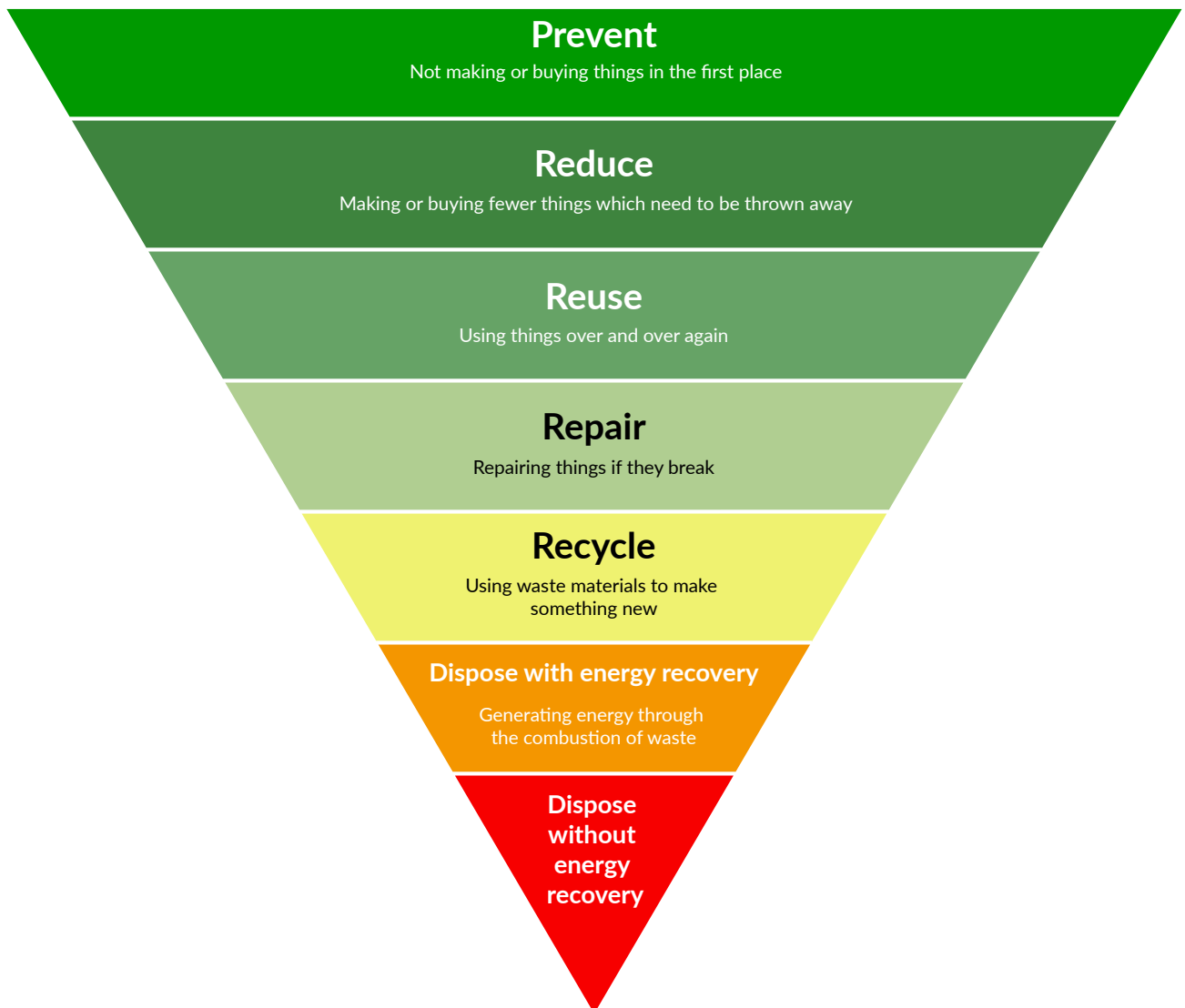
These aims are underpinned by a series of further objectives:

- O1.** Explore innovative waste management policies which contribute to meeting the challenges of the climate emergency. This will help to achieve environmental goals including improving air quality and achieving net-zero targets.
- O2.** Work across our boroughs and with the north London community to minimise the amount of residual wastes arising.
- O3.** Work across our boroughs and with the north London community to increase uptake of reuse and repair.
- O4.** Work across our boroughs and with the north London community to maximise recycling.
- O5.** Divert resources and waste from landfill and support more sustainable initiatives for disposing of waste.
- O6.** Deliver the infrastructure needed to manage north London's waste, and work with the local community to maximise the benefits of our facilities.
- O7.** Increase accessibility of our services and information for all members of the community.
- O8.** Maximise all opportunities for social value benefits from waste and resource management, including employment, skills and wellbeing.

Waste hierarchy

A guiding principle of managing waste and resources is the waste hierarchy, which informs the approach taken in this Strategy. Prevention of waste in the first place is the top rung of the waste hierarchy.

Successfully applying the waste hierarchy will help us transition away from a take-make-dispose economy to a more circular system which keeps resources in use for as long as possible.



We want the items produced and used to be designed sustainably and have as long a life as possible. So rather than making, using and then throwing stuff away in a linear system, a circular economy means finding new ways of making use of materials and keeping value in the system. This is the outcome we would like to see in north London and nationally, to help tackle the climate emergency by cutting down our consumption of virgin materials and avoiding the carbon emissions associated with waste disposal.

Context

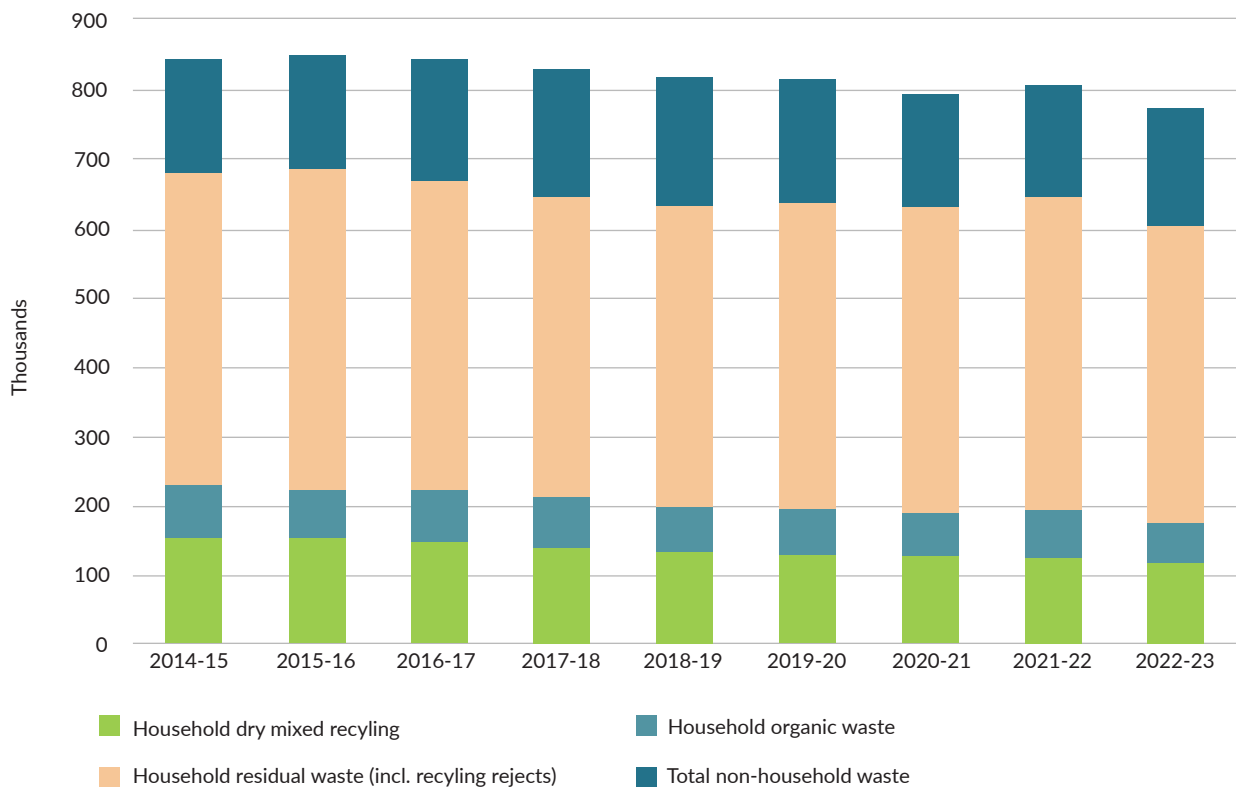
North London has:

- Some of the country's most densely populated areas.
- A highly diverse and mixed population.
- A more transient population, where people move in, out and around the area more than the UK average.
- Areas with high levels of deprivation, alongside more affluent areas.
- A large proportion of homes in flats and shared housing.
- Far fewer homes with gardens than the UK average.

The makeup of the area heavily influences what can be achieved with regards to waste reduction and recycling. We must work within the local context, always ensuring we maintain a good understanding of local issues and deliver our environmental ambitions in collaboration with our community.

Our performance and ability to achieve the environmental ambitions we have for north London are also heavily influenced by government policy. Progress towards a low waste society depends on having a strong legislative framework to guide behaviour. We need consistent and aligned policymaking across government, real support for local waste management operations, and timely delivery of key commitments.

Total waste processed in north London has remained fairly stable over the period 2014 to 2023, fluctuating around 800,000 tonnes since 2018-19. Population growth is the most significant factor driving potential growth of waste tonnage in the future. The population of north London is expected to grow faster than the national average.



Our approach

Our first priority is to support a reduction in waste by promoting prevention, repair and reuse. Our activities on waste prevention, repair and reuse will aim to promote a circular economy, keeping materials in use and out of the waste stream for as long as possible. This will most significantly reduce our impact on the environment.

We will:

- **Campaign for government to target businesses** and ensure they are responsible for the costs of the waste they produce, while supporting the repair and reuse sector to help move us towards a more circular economy.
- **Provide prevention, reuse and repair opportunities** to enable the move to a circular economy.
- **Engage and inform residents** through our behaviour change campaigns to bring about strong and sustained participation in waste minimisation, reuse and recycling systems.
- **Expand our work with schools** to promote waste prevention to the next generation.
- **Strengthen partnerships** with public sector authorities, environmental groups, campaigners, and grassroots organisations to help us design, develop and deliver waste prevention initiatives in our communities.
- **Report data on total waste per person and residual waste per person** to monitor our overall progress on waste reduction.

Targets

Reduce avoidable food waste by 50%

Reduce recyclable material in residual waste by 50%

Double the % of material reused at our Reuse and Recycling Centres



If waste cannot be prevented in the first place, or items are unable to be reused or repaired, our next best option is to improve and maximise our recycling. This has the benefits of diverting material away from rubbish bins and avoiding the use of virgin material to make new products.



We will:

- **Ask government to encourage the use of recycled materials** and support local authorities with more local powers, resources and appropriate targets.
- **Maintain clear, effective and efficient collection methods** to enhance levels of recycling and ensure that as full a range of recyclables as possible are collected from residents.
- **Collect food waste from every household** and undertake a programme of communications and resident engagement so the service acts as a driver for behaviour change and is taken up by the community.
- **Innovate and expand the range of materials** we collect by exploring new initiatives we can offer to increase our recycling services.
- **Secure a new contract for recycling processing** and take this opportunity to ensure the services meet our environmental ambitions and deliver social benefits.
- **Provide the infrastructure north London needs** to manage the waste produced in the area, reducing transport emissions and maintaining local responsibility and oversight.
- **Aim for our recycling to be processed where it will be treated with the highest environmental standards**, and within the UK wherever possible.
- **Work with residents to ensure there is clear information** on what can and cannot be recycled and use our outreach with community groups to help raise awareness of recycling initiatives.
- **Build more partnerships with local businesses** to support more circular business models and encourage use of our local services.

Targets

50% of household waste to be reused, recycled or composted
100% of recycling to be processed within the UK

We want any waste which cannot be prevented, reused or recycled to be managed in the most effective and environmentally friendly way. We will prioritise reducing the environmental impact of disposal, where there is no option to prevent or reuse waste.

We will:

- **Ask government to legislate to reduce plastic** and other fossil-based content in the waste stream and ensure product designers and manufacturers are responsible for the emissions of their products.
- **Improve our facilities** to manage all of north London's waste using the latest and best technology to control pollutants and limit our environmental impacts.
- **Use north London's waste as a resource** for society by generating energy and heat for the local area, reducing demand on fossil fuels.
- **Investigate the use of carbon capture** and storage technologies to further reduce the carbon impact of our facilities.
- **Continue our progress to decarbonise our vehicles** and look to electric or alternative fuels for our fleets as a means of reducing our overall carbon impact.
- **Actively monitor new technologies** for sorting and treating waste with a view to improving our infrastructure and decarbonising the waste stream.
- **Produce new analysis** examining the carbon impact of the waste produced in north London.



Targets

Zero landfill for the waste collected by local authorities in north London.

It is a key priority for us to deliver collaborative, community-focused services which provide value for money and maximise social value.

We will:

- **Campaign for adequate funding from government** for waste services and policy that recognises the local requirements of north London.
- **Ensure all residents have access to the services** they need to reduce their waste, recycle more and dispose of items responsibly where necessary.
- **Work collaboratively alongside partners** to deliver the best possible services and influence government policy in pursuit of our vision of sustainable waste management and a circular economy.
- **Look to maximise social value** from all of our activity including by providing apprenticeship and training opportunities, educational activities, community grants, volunteering time and paying the London Living Wage.
- **Provide good quality green jobs and training** in the north London area and help build awareness of these opportunities in waste management and related sectors.
- **Adopt sustainable procurement policies** and use our influence to help reduce waste, drive environmental benefits and progress towards a circular economy.
- **Develop and implement best-in-class asset management** practices to maximise the life of our assets and safeguard their functions and value for the community.

Monitoring our performance

This Strategy provides the strategic framework for waste management operations in north London from 2025 to 2040. To ensure we deliver on the intentions set out in this document, we will also publish regular delivery plans to track the actions and commitments we will undertake in the shorter term.

Reporting on the Strategy will be to the North London Waste Authority, which is made up of 14 councillors, two from each of the seven north London boroughs. It is these councillors that make decisions relating to the disposal of north London's waste and hold NLWA accountable for meeting its responsibilities. Our progress towards achieving the aims of the Strategy will be presented to the Authority, and the public, on an annual basis.

Consultation

NLWA and the constituent boroughs are keen to ensure the new Strategy reflects the needs of north London's communities. As part of the development of the new strategy, we have been talking with, and listening to partners, residents, community groups and local businesses. In summer 2023 we gave residents a chance to tell us their views on waste and the environment, and to inform the Strategy's aims and objectives.

- Respondents prioritised reducing carbon emissions and using environmentally friendly methods of disposal.
- Recycling more items and reducing the amount of waste produced was a priority for many.
- Supporting repair and re-use was a popular option.
- Most respondents favoured legislative options from government, including banning products that cannot be easily recycled or ensuring that more products are recyclable as well as making manufacturers responsible for the costs of disposal.
- A large majority of respondents also wanted manufacturers to design items to last or that are able to be repaired.
- Respondents wanted their council and the NLWA to provide accessible and easy-to-use facilities for recycling, to be able to recycle more things and for councils and NLWA to influence manufacturers and retailers to ensure that products and packaging can be recycled.

We are now seeking feedback on the draft strategy and a public consultation is open until 19 January 2025. Have your say at northlondonwaste.commonplace.is



