

**AUTHORITY REPORT: EAST LONDON WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME****1. Confidential Report:**

1.1 No.

**Executive Summary**

**Purpose of Report** – To update Members on progress with the delivery of the Authority's Waste Prevention Programme (WPP) which is in the second year of a two-year trial, including a recent change to the terms and costs under which future work with Library of Things would have to proceed.

**Position** – The Waste Prevention Programme was approved for a two-year trial from April 2021 to March 2023, and a review of this trial with recommendations for Members to consider on its continuation will be brought to the Authority meeting in February 2023. The Programme includes the provision for ELWA to part-fund the set-up costs of a Library of Things kiosk in each of the four constituent councils, with one having opened (in Barking and Dagenham) during 2022. Library of Things has now changed the costs and terms under which further installations would proceed.

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that the Authority:

- (a) notes progress against the second year of the Waste Prevention Programme, as set out in Appendix A;
- (b) agrees to pause the Library of Things projects in Havering, Newham and Redbridge if the respective Constituent Council is unable to accept the revised terms of installation; and
- (c) agrees that any unspent ELWA budget intended for Library of Things be available to fund other projects during the remainder of 2022-23.

**2. Background:**

- 2.1 Preventing waste from arising is preferable to recycling it or using it for energy recovery in both environmental and financial terms; it can also be a way of helping people to save their own money.
- 2.2 In recognition of the importance of preventing waste, a two-year trial of an East London Waste Prevention Programme (WPP) was approved. The projects and initiatives in the WPP would complement existing work being undertaken by the Constituent Councils and other partners.
- 2.3 After initial delays to the launch of the programme, work commenced in April 2021. The action plan for Year Two of the WPP was approved by Members in February 2022.

**3. Programme Update:**

- 3.1 Appendix A is the full action plan for Year Two of the Waste Prevention Programme, showing the allocation of anticipated costs for different projects. The estimated project and staff costs for the year total £0.242m, including additional costs of maternity cover.
- 3.2 This section provides an update on some of the key activities since the last report to the Authority.

### Repair Cafés

- 3.3 During Year One, ELWA made a successful bid to the [Distributor Take-back Scheme](#) for funding to support the delivery of Repair Cafés. The events are free to attend, offering on-site repair opportunities for a range of products as well as information and signposting to other waste prevention, reuse and repair initiatives.
- 3.4 The first repair cafés took place in early 2022, and the second round was run during July and August. The range of organisations taking part in the events was expanded to offer a wider range of services for electrical repair, working primarily with an organisation called The Restart Project. This proved to be particularly popular with attendees.
- 3.5 A third round of repair cafés got underway in late September:
- Friday 30 September, Relish Café (Barking Learning Centre, LBBD)
  - Saturday 15 October, Woodford Memorial Hall (LB Redbridge)
  - Wednesday 26 October, Forest Gate Youth Zone (LB Newham)
  - Saturday 5 November, Salvation Army building in Romford (LB Havering)
- 3.6 A total of 214 people attended these events, with 109 items being repaired. This has been estimated to be equivalent to 192 kg of waste diverted from disposal, and 2,024kg of carbon dioxide emissions prevented.
- 3.7 The popularity of these events appears to be increasing, to the point that the number of visitors to the Redbridge event exceeded the available repair capacity. Officers from ELWA, Redbridge and the host venue did their best to signpost those turning up who could not be served to other sources of repair, including the regular Transition Town Ilford events that ELWA is now supporting.
- 3.8 The funding that ELWA received from the Distributor Takeback Scheme (DTS) for these events has now been fully used up, and officers are therefore looking for alternative sources of funding to potentially continue staging the events. This will include continuing to monitor likely spend on projects still planned for the remainder of 2022/23.
- 3.9 However, following the success and growing awareness of the events that ELWA has organised, there are community groups starting to come forward that are looking to stage their own versions of these events (including groups that have hosted events delivered by ELWA as part of the DTS funding). ELWA will therefore look to work with Constituent Council officers to support these as much as possible, on the basis that community-run events are likely to be a more sustainable model for such events in the future.

### School Uniform Banks

- 3.10 In mid-October a communications campaign began online and directly with schools, with the aim of encouraging up to 25 schools per borough to sign up for a School Uniform Bank. This project was trialled in the first year of the Waste Prevention Programme, and following a redesign to make it more streamlined, it is now being scaled up.
- 3.11 The School Uniform Banks will provide an opportunity for families to donate usable school uniforms they no longer need, with other families able to purchase these

donated items at considerably lower cost than buying new from shops. The funds raised can then support projects at the schools.

- 3.12 The project is being delivered jointly by ELWA and the IWMS Operator's communications partner Keep Britain Tidy (KBT), which already works with schools to deliver education sessions and site visits. ELWA has funded the communication materials and guidance documents, as well as hosting a dedicated web page for schools to sign up on, access resources, and upload data about items collected. KBT is helping to monitor and administer the scheme, as well as engaging with schools on both the opportunity as well as (in the case of those that sign up) providing support or encouragement. The Constituent Councils are each providing 25 collection banks from their stocks to support the scheme.

### Composting

- 3.13 ELWA has allocated £500 per borough to subsidise the costs of home composting bins for residents, which is in the process of being distributed following the re-establishment of a national framework for the supply of these products that local authorities can access. The proposals for how this funding will be used are being worked on with officers from the Constituent Councils.
- 3.14 Online training on effective composting is now being organised for residents to be able to access for free, through an organisation called Garden Organic. This organisation already works closely with Essex County Council, and ELWA officers have discussed the scheme with their peers from Essex to ensure that introducing a similar arrangement in East London would be appropriate and effective. Once the final arrangements have been made, plans will be put in place for the training opportunity to be advertised, both via marketing channels as well as through the portal from where discounted composting bins are purchased.
- 3.15 ELWA organised a site visit in October to an estate in Hackney where community composting is in place, so that officers from the Constituent Councils could understand how it would work and what sort of requirements there would be for suitable sites. These officers are now working with housing providers to identify locations where such schemes could potentially be taken forward using funding from ELWA's Waste Prevention Programme budget.

### Food Waste

- 3.16 ELWA and the Constituent Councils are working with Mind, a mental health charity, to undertake food waste workshops for their members. The first workshop was run in Havering with the next being planned for Barking and Dagenham.
- 3.17 Workshops for residents are also being planned with an organisation called Nutrition Kitchen in Newham, and a local chef in the other three boroughs. In advance of this, a training session was held earlier in November for all the officers involved to ensure that everyone had the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively co-deliver these sessions. This training will also support future engagement with residents outside of the workshops, such as at public events or in online sessions.
- 3.18 Work is continuing on the preparation of a London-wide campaign on food waste, which will go public for the first time in the fourth quarter of the 2022/23 financial year. ELWA has contributed funding to this on behalf of East London, and is represented on both the Project Board and the smaller steering group. Insights work that will help inform the messaging of the campaign has now been completed, and a

creative agency is in the process of being appointed to use the information gathered to deliver some campaign proposals.

#### 4. Library of Things

- 4.1 As reported previously, ELWA has allocated funding to support the Constituent Councils in introducing one Library of Things tools/equipment rental kiosk per borough during the two-year trial of the Waste Prevention Programme. Each Constituent Council is asked to provide £0.015m towards the set-up costs, with ELWA contributing the remaining amount. The latter amount was originally £0.015m, but following inflationary increases that Library of Things was experiencing, ELWA's contribution has increased to £0.025m (for a total of £0.040m) per site.
- 4.2 The first Library of Things kiosk opened in August 2022 at Barking Library, with a formal launch the following month.
- 4.3 With three of the four boroughs still to bring forward proposals that can be signed off for funding and taken into the contractual stage, ELWA has now been notified of two further departures from the original Library of Things funding model. These changes are applicable to any further sites for which contracts have not been signed, so will impact the proposals for sites in Havering, Newham and Redbridge:
- a) An additional contingency of 10% (or £0.004m) per site for the set-up costs needs to be allocated, owing to further inflationary pressures.
  - b) Host venues or funding bodies need to make up the difference between monthly costs and income for running the sites, with break-even set at 40 rentals per month. The costs could be up to £0.018m per year, depending on how far below the break-even levels the usage actually is.
- 4.4 Library of Things is proposing to use open-book accounting in both cases to ensure that there is transparency on any additional set-up costs or genuine shortfalls in monthly revenue that they expect the local authority to cover.
- 4.5 ELWA should be able to accommodate the requirement for contingency to be set aside for the set-up of the sites, given the underspends being experienced elsewhere in its budget (as outlined in an earlier report on the agenda for this Authority meeting), meaning that each of the Constituent Councils would still need to allocate £0.015m from other sources to make up the full set-up cost allocation.
- 4.6 However, it is not appropriate for ELWA (as a Joint Waste Disposal Authority) to cover any ongoing shortfalls in revenue that Library of Things experiences once a site is up and running. The kiosks are intended to become part of the fabric of services on offer to local communities via libraries or other host venues, and as such the responsibility for promoting and marketing these services is best done by the local council and community partners through the wide variety of channels and connections that are already in place.
- 4.7 The requirement to potentially cover a shortfall in the income from a Library of Things kiosk represents a financial risk for the Constituent Councils that did not exist when the proposals for these installations was first included in the Waste Prevention Programme. This risk may not be acceptable, particularly in light of the already-increased set-up costs that ELWA would likely need to cover. Initial feedback from Constituent Council officers is that the inclusion of this risk in the new terms for the sites means it is unlikely that the match funding and agreement to install the kiosks would be signed off.

- 4.8 With three of the four boroughs still to bring forward final proposals, there is an opportunity to pause work on the Library of Things project in light of the latest cost increases and changes to terms.
- 4.9 A pause to the project could allow alternative solutions for tool/equipment rental services to be looked into by officers from ELWA and the Constituent Councils. There do not appear to be other organisations offering facilities of a specification similar to those provided by Library of Things, but it may be feasible to work with libraries, community groups and other partners to devise 'lower tech' solutions that would still make some tools and equipment available to rent locally.
- 4.10 The Library of Things project represents £0.050m of the £0.136m project budget for the Waste Prevention Programme in 2022/23 (i.e. over a third). In addition, £0.015m was transferred to the London Borough of Newham in Year One of the Waste Prevention Programme for the installation of a kiosk in that borough, shortly before the proposal relating to the intended venue was terminated. If Newham decides that it is not content with the revised terms from Library of Things, ELWA officers will arrangement for the reimbursement of the initial contribution.

### Conclusion

- 4.11 In consultation with officers from the Constituent Councils, ELWA officers are recommending to Members that the Library of Things project is paused while the new financial risk is assessed further.
- 4.12 Officers from Havering, Newham and Redbridge will continue to work with appropriate colleagues to determine if there is scope for the risk of any revenue shortfall associated with under-use of a kiosk in their borough to be covered.
- 4.13 In the meantime, ELWA and Constituent Council officers will begin work on alternative lower-cost routes to providing local tool and equipment rental as an alternative to Library of Things. Officers will also prepare proposals for how the unspent budget could be spent on expanding other projects, such as the Repair Café events and an expanded food waste campaign in early 2023.

### **5. Next Steps:**

- 5.1 Officers will continue to work with the Constituent Councils and other partners to deliver the projects set out in the Year Two action plan for the Waste Prevention Programme.
- 5.2 The practicalities of delivering a Library of Things kiosk in the three boroughs that have not yet received one will be assessed in light of the adjusted terms, and work will be undertaken on alternative options as required.
- 5.3 A review of the two-year trial Waste Prevention Programme will be brought to the Authority meeting in February 2023, including estimated impacts and outcomes from activities that are still to be implemented during the remaining two months of the financial year. As part of that review, Members will also be presented with options in order to make a decision on whether and how to continue with waste prevention activities funded by ELWA once the two-year trial ends in March.

**6. Relevant officers:**

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**7. Appendices attached:**

Appendix A Waste Prevention Plan 2022/23

**8. Background papers:**

02 Dec 2019	East London Joint Waste Prevention Programme
29 Jun 2020	East London Joint Waste Prevention Programme – Update
30 Nov 2020	East London Waste Prevention Programme
8 Feb 2021	East London Waste Prevention Programme
25 Jun 2021	East London Waste Prevention Programme
1 Oct 2021	East London Waste Prevention Programme
3 Dec 2021	East London Waste Prevention Programme
4 Feb 2022	East London Waste Prevention Programme
1 Jul 2022	East London Waste Prevention Programme
30 Sep 2022	East London Waste Prevention Programme

**9. Legal considerations:**

- 9.1 The Waste Minimisation Act 1998 amended the Environmental Protection Act 1990 by inserting section 63A which gives both waste collection authorities i.e. the four Constituent Councils and the Waste Disposal Authority (ELWA) the power to take steps to minimise generation of controlled waste. Before doing so the Waste Disposal Authority is required to consult the Waste Collection Authorities (the Constituent Councils) in its area about proposals and vice versa if a Waste Collection Authority was minded to bring in steps to minimise waste then it must consult with the Waste Disposal Authority.

**10. Financial considerations:**

- 10.1 The Waste Prevention Programme budget for the current financial year, 2022/23, is £0.222m, including provision for temporary maternity cover. Actual expenditure to 30 September (including commitments) is £0.066m.
- 10.2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24 to 2027/28 elsewhere on the agenda makes provision for an ongoing budget of £0.222m (plus inflation) for waste prevention. This is subject to annual consideration by the Authority as part of the MTFS and budget / levy setting processes, with formal budget approval for the forthcoming financial year taking place at the February Budget and Levy Setting Authority meeting.

**11. Performance management considerations:**

- 11.1 Work is ongoing to develop benchmarks and metrics for evaluating the impacts of the WPP, using a combination of pre-existing tools, academic research and insights from other local authorities.

**12. Risk management considerations:**

- 12.1 Risk assessments will be undertaken for the WPP and individual activities to be delivered by the Waste Prevention Manager, with mitigating actions being taken as required.

**13. Equalities considerations:**

- 13.1 An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the WPP, to ensure that the programme is adequately serving the diverse communities in East London.
- 13.2 The WPP has been compiled to ensure a reasonably equitable balance of service delivery and public engagement in all four of the Constituent Councils.

**14. Follow-up reports:**

As required.

**15. Websites and links for further information:**

- 15.1 [www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk](http://www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk)

**16. Glossary:**

Constituent Councils / the Councils = London Borough Councils of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham & Redbridge

ELWA / the Authority = East London Waste Authority

IWMS Operator = Renewi UK Services Limited, which is the Operator of the Integrated Waste Management Services contract

KBT = Keep Britain Tidy

MTFS = Medium Term Financial Strategy

WPP = Waste Prevention Programme

**17. Reviewed by Management Board:**

- 17.1 14 November 2022.

**18. Confidentiality:**

- 18.1 Not applicable.