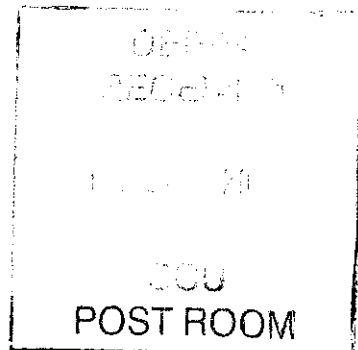


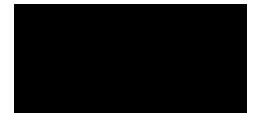
Dr Therese Coffey MP
Nobel House
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30 August 2017

Executive Mayor's Office
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Dear Dr Coffey,

Thank you for your letter of 31st July regarding recycling. Like you, we are determined to increase our recycling rates. We are committed to ongoing improvement of our recycling rates and believe that we have demonstrated innovation in this area but realise that there is more work to do.

You have asked about our particular challenges, our contractual status and our partnering arrangements.

The particular challenge in Tower Hamlets is the type of accommodation. About 80% of the homes in Tower Hamlets are flats which has the double effect of a reduced amount of space for separating out recycling in the home and additional complexity for residents of taking their waste to 2 separate bins (even if those bins are co-located). Many of the homes are in buildings that were developed in a period where there was less household waste and so identifying the space for more bins is also challenging. *Finally, the type of waste in the borough means that it is difficult for us to reach the high rates of London Boroughs with more gardens as we have very little garden waste which as you know contributes to the proportion of recycling. For example Bexley who had the highest overall recycling rate in 2015/16 at 52% had a dry recycling rate of 31.35% and 20% from composting or anaerobic digestion. We conducted a waste audit in 2014 that showed less than 4% of the overall household waste stream was garden waste.*

It is important to remember that there is a great deal of good will amongst our residents for recycling and this is one of our best opportunities for increasing recycling. To this end we are already committed to working with Tower Hamlets Homes and Registered Providers in developing plans and pilot schemes to improve our recycling with our partners.

We are currently starting the review of our household waste contract and a new contract should be in place by 2020 and we see this as being a key opportunity for improving our recycling rates.

We are open to partnering with other London boroughs to share best practice and increase value for money. *We are looking to work with Resource London who are co-ordinating a flats recycling project across London and we are one of 9 London Boroughs who are participating in an EU funded project that is seeking to minimise food waste, increase food recycling and promote healthy eating (the TRiFOCAL project).*

My Cabinet member for Strategic Development and Waste, Cllr Rachel Blake would welcome a meeting with you or one of your colleagues or civil servants to discuss our challenges and opportunities on this front.

Yours sincerely,



Mayor John Biggs
Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets

