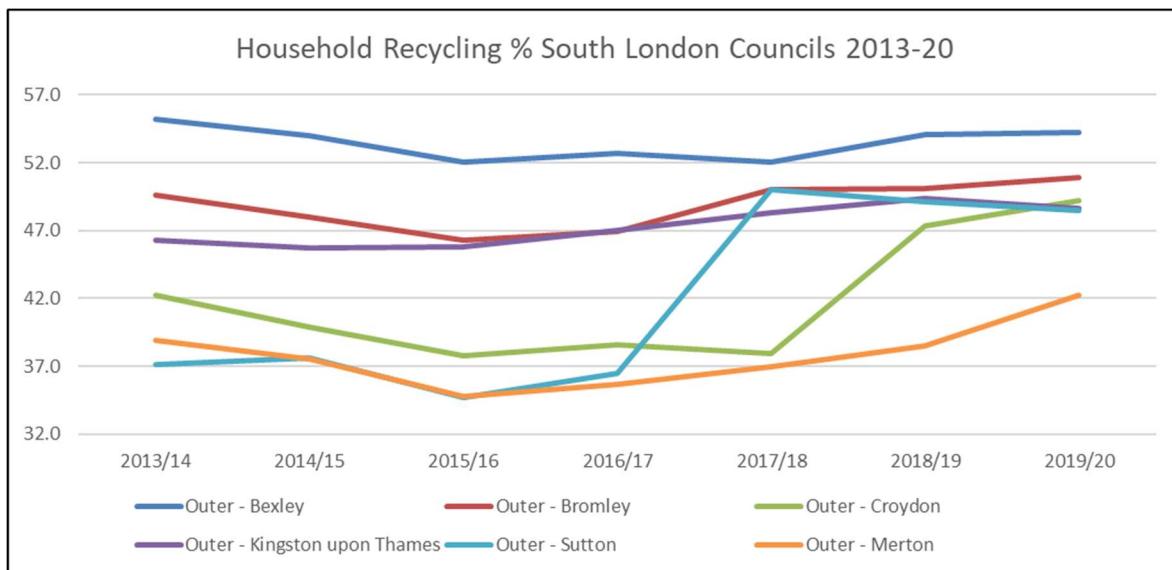
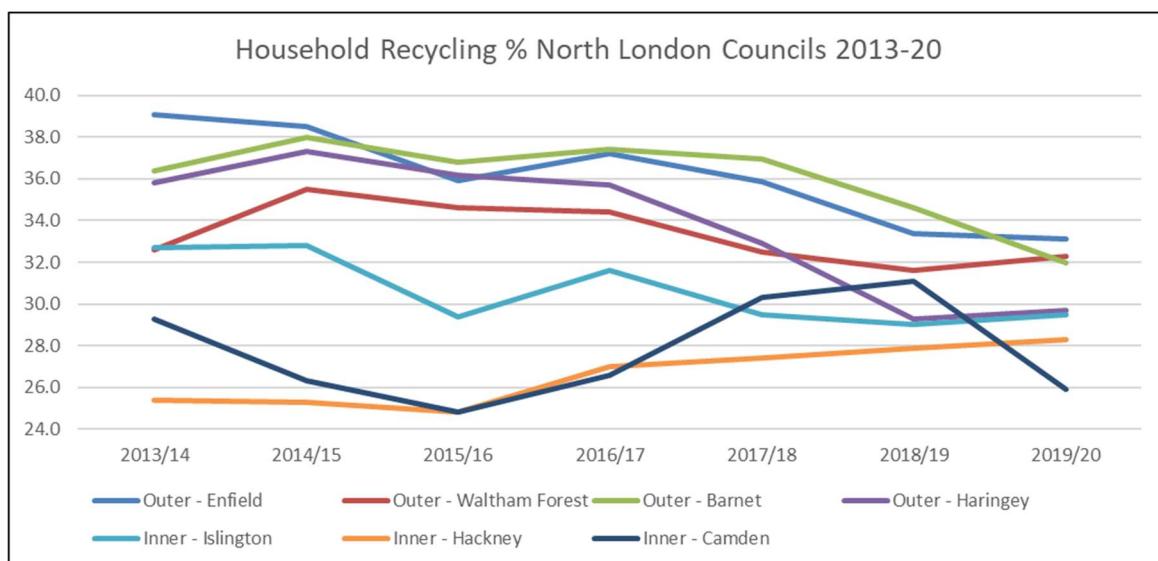
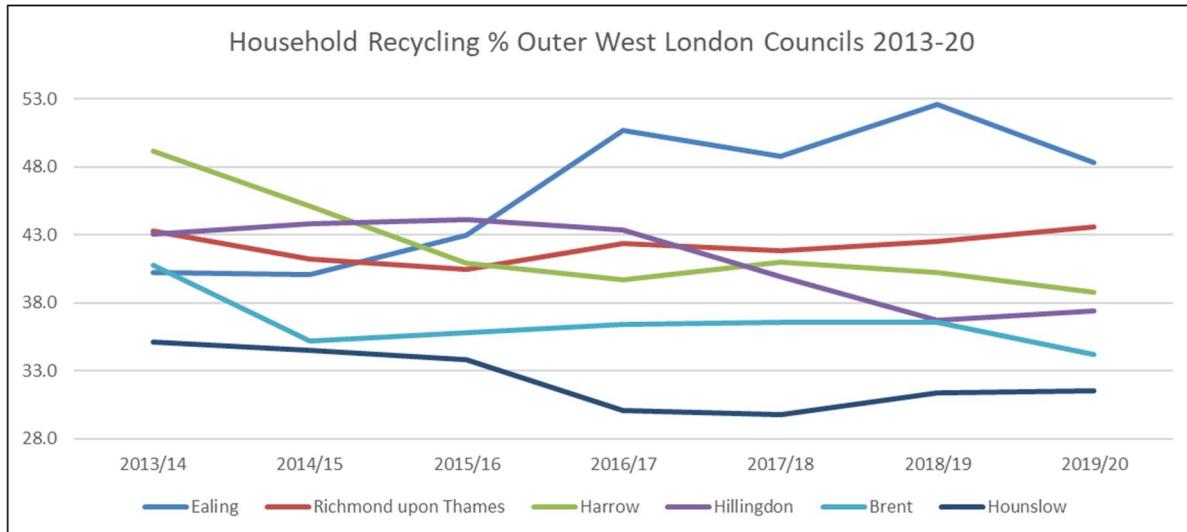


ENCAF WASTE GROUP - REPLY TO COMMENTS MADE ON 29 JUNE 2021

- It might be useful to compare with outer London boroughs in e.g. south or west London to see if recycling has fallen there too.

Here are some charts based on DEFRA recycling figures up to March 2020 (*please note each chart has a different scale*). The first shows the recycling rates of all the Councils in the North London Waste Authority, with a clear declining trend for the four outer city boroughs. The second shows the outer boroughs for South London, these are high performing boroughs with generally flat to increasing trends. The third is the outer boroughs for West London, which are also mostly high performing, with similarly flat to increasing trends, although with some decline in Harrow and Hillingdon.





- What does “reduced recycling” mean? We are putting less in our blue bins? OR the council is recycling less of the blue bin content? How do they measure it? Quantity in the bins OR quantity that is actually recycled?

Recycling is measured by **weight**. The recycling rate is the weight of the selected recyclable material as a proportion of the weight of the total waste collected. The selection of dry recycling is in 2 stages:

- Residents put in the blue bin what they select;
- Blue bin contents are collected and taken to Biffa’s Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Edmonton where it is separated into the different waste streams (metal, glass, plastic, card and paper). There is an interesting film explaining this at <https://www.biffa.co.uk/about-us/waste-journeys/recycling-facilities>

The weight to determine the recycling rate is that of the material sorted into its separate waste streams at the MRF. So the recycling rate is based on how much material is selected and prepared for recycling, and not how much of that material is actually used to make new materials.

Contamination is the weight of what is rejected at the MRF. Enfield Council states in its Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) that its rate is 9-11%.

Separate calculations are made for (a) food and (b) green waste, which are collected separately, and these count towards the overall recycling rate. In the north London region, the majority is dry recycling.

If the recycling rate is decreasing, this is because (1) residents are putting less into the blue bins, or because (2) more of what they selected is being rejected at the MRF, or both.

A common reason given for reduced blue bin collections is large migrant populations, they do not stay in the borough long enough to learn how to recycle properly, or once they have learnt, they leave and

are replaced by new residents. Another could be a major increase in the proportion of flats in a borough, since flats generally generate much less dry recycling than houses. Neither seems to apply in Enfield.

The more likely cause therefore seems to be that more blue bin waste is being rejected at the MRF. This is the reason given by NLWA, that residents are making a lot of mistakes in their selections. As the recycling rate has *declined* in Enfield consistently since about 2014, the implication is that residents are regularly making *more and more mistakes*, their performance is constantly getting worse. But this is not consistent with research which shows that generally people are willing to recycle, and tend to improve a little over time, and this is reflected in the national trend of increasing recycling.

3. Karl Brown raised this point that might be worth considering:

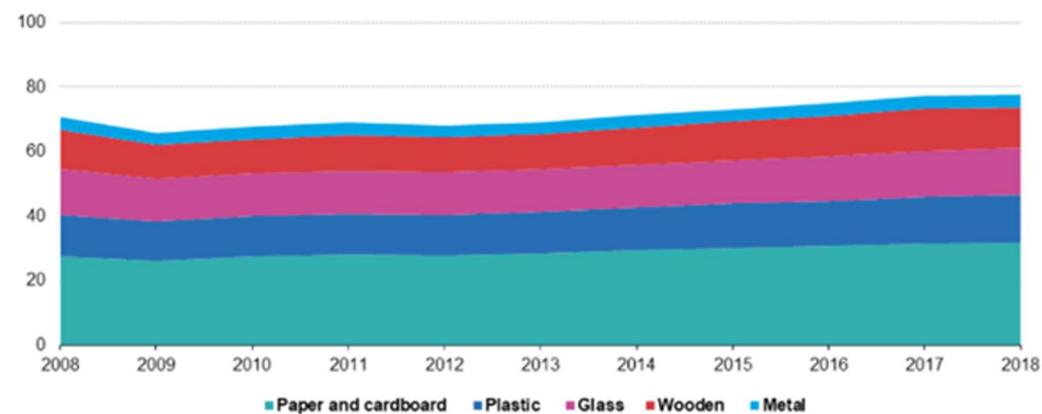
<https://www.pgweb.uk/forum/environmental-issues/1286-recycling-are-we-not-so-bad-rather-than-bad#6056>

A senior from the NLWA had highlighted that recycling performance was less than spectacular based on weight, possibly because packaging is lighter than it used to be. Supermarkets have contracts no more than 12 months to keep pace with changes in packaging technology. We could each be recycling more items but less in weight, so if non-recyclables have stayed the same weight the % of recycling would fall.

This is an interesting point, but no facts are given to support it. Recycling in Enfield has been in decline since about 2014, but no evidence is given of what packaging weight reductions have occurred during this time, but none in the period 2008 to 2014 when the recycling rate was increasing. No doubt reduced weight in packaging is an advantage to businesses and to consumers, but light, especially plastic packaging has been used for a long time. Have there been big shifts since 2014? My personal experience is that the packaging I put in the blue bin is heavier (glass, metal, robust plastic, card), and that in the black bin is much lighter filmy plastics.

Further, the argument is not consistent with EU data for packaging waste generated over the period 2008-2018, which tends to show weight increase:

**Packaging waste generated by packaging material, EU, 2008–2018
(million tonnes)**



Note: Eurostat estimates between 2008 and 2011.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: env_waspac)

eurostat

Figure 2: Packaging waste generated by packaging material, EU, 2008–2018

(million tonnes)

Source: Eurostat ([env_waspac](#))

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Packaging_waste_statistics#Time_series_of_packaging_waste

4. If non-recyclables don't go to landfill, what alternative is there but to incinerate?

Incineration for residual waste is currently the only practical alternative to landfill, given the quantities of waste produced. Our concern is that incineration is increasing, with no strategy for reducing it and the consequent GHG emissions produced (2019-20 540,000 tonnes incinerated by NLWA, and it projects to be incinerating at the 750,000 tonnes capacity of the new incinerator when it is constructed). The Government and Climate Change Committee strategy is that we must reduce waste and increase recycling to 65-70% by 2030. NLWA itself claims (as do others) that we should all be able to recycle 70% of our waste currently. But the motivation to work for change in this direction is missing.

5. Is there any connection with the blue bins only being collected every two weeks? It used to be every week didn't it?

Changing collection arrangements can change recycling rates. The new separate food collection service was introduced at the end of 2019, and the new two weekly collection service for dry recycling and residual waste (previously weekly) was introduced shortly before the first pandemic lockdown in March 2020. The most recent published data is 2019-20, so it is too early to evaluate the impact of the new service. Enfield Council's RRP, created in around June 2019, forecast that the effect of the new collection service, together with the provision of larger blue bins, would contribute to producing

an increase in the recycling rate to 49.55% by 2020-21. In an update to the RRP (December 2020) the 49.55% rate was maintained, but the date to achieve it is deferred to 2021-22. The target of 49% recycling by 2022 also features in the Council's Climate Action Plan (p 27). This target seems challenging.

6. I'm a church warden at St Andrews Enfield and regularly litter pick. More than 50% is McDonalds 25% Greggs. Have we approached them to get buy in?

Not that we are aware, but we would definitely support an anti-littering campaign in Enfield Town, as you have suggested. It is a sad fact that a huge amount of litter is produced by people eating out and not disposing of their litter properly. Who is to blame, the food and drink businesses, or the consumers?

McDonalds and Greggs are aware of the problem, according to their websites. Takeaway food is part of their business, so providing bins on their premises does not really address the problem. Bins in parks and other public places often over flow, are searched by people and animals, and as you point out do not really address the problem either.

The Government has two schemes on which it has already started consultation. One is the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme (the “polluter pays”). Under this scheme producers would be made responsible for the costs of clearing litter of the packaging they produce, and of disposing of it. This could encourage more action by takeaway food sellers.

The second is a Deposit Return Scheme, under which consumers pay an extra amount per drink container they buy, about 20p, which they can recover by returning the container to the seller or an automated collection point. This could also have a significant impact (including an increase in recycling, as the drinks containers are pretty much all recyclable, and the collection and sorting would hugely improve over blue bin collections).

Unfortunately, neither scheme is likely to be introduced before 2023.