



London Community Recycling Network
Community Compost Strategy

Updated May 2005

A working document

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Community composters hide behind large pieces of paper at the London CRN Community Compost Strategy Day

Foreword

The year has seen an increasing profile for organic waste management in London and the UK as a result of the introduction of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. The prospect of further statutory recycling targets alongside the LATS regime indicate a scaling up of activity, particularly around biodegradable municipal waste.

With the demise of the Landfill Tax Credit scheme and with CRED funding due to run out towards the end of 2005, it is clear that the days of myriad grant funded activities have passed. Neither the reduction in funding availability nor the prospect of increased scaling up of recycling and composting activity bodes well for the small scale community composting sector.

Central government has recognised the role of social enterprise in delivering best value in public services, but many organisations encounter difficulties when engaging with the procurement arms of local government. In addition, the legal and technical requirements surrounding the collection and composting of food waste make this area expensive and difficult to access for small groups.

Despite these problems, the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme represents a significant opportunity for voluntary and community groups engaged in composting activity. The community composting sector has a potential role to play in the delivery of home composting support services for local authorities through the promotion of Master Composter schemes. This additionality to local authority schemes may allow home composting to be counted towards LATS targets. In addition, persuading waste disposal authorities to pay recycling credits to third parties for the cost of avoided disposal is a priority for London CRN's lobbying activities and is regarded as the most effective way to secure the financial viability of community composting groups.

The community composting sector needs to become more efficient and relevant to government targets and local authority service delivery. Measuring impacts and demonstrating financial worth will be essential to proving the case for small scale activity.

London CRN's strategy process, developed by and with member organisations, identifies practitioner needs and aspirations while this document details the steps London CRN can take to support the community composting sector and to tackle the challenges that face it.

Introduction

London CRN supports and represents community recyclers in London. This document is a working business strategy developed with community composting groups at the Community Composting Strategy Day on February 16th 2005.

Members are offered support through a range of services. London CRN is set up to be fair, flexible and responsive to member needs and services are reviewed regularly in order to continuously improve them. The Network aims to positively represent members best interests at all times, working to ensure that their knowledge, experience and skills are utilised wherever possible.

Community recyclers can be defined as:

“A group/ enterprise with social values involved in community-based sustainable waste management”.

Community recyclers work with both municipal and commercial sectors in four main areas:

- Recycling - focusing on collection and recycling of both household and commercial dry recyclable waste.
- Composting – providing services and support for composting of organic waste.
- Re-use - targeting manufactured goods that can be refurbished, repaired or reprocessed.
- Reduction - providing services and support around minimising waste.

The strategy development process ensures that London CRN:

- Fits with and best supports community composters, especially those who are members of London CRN.
- Provides a focus for composting activity.
- Ensures member involvement in the development of projects.
- Anticipates changing developments within the sector.

London CRN is already actively engaged in many of the activities outlined in this strategy, allowing the Network to work towards its vision through supporting members. This document covers the financial year 2005-2006.

Strategy 1: Working together to support community composters, ensuring that they have sufficient knowledge and resources to work towards high quality waste management activities.

The groups present at the Strategy Day event identified a lack of knowledge and exemplar projects as a key barrier to the successful propagation of community composting.

To achieve the above strategy, London CRN will encourage groups to provide community composting services through:

Funding support and advice

- Advice and information on funding streams, disseminated in the funding e-news, distributed to any group wishing to sign up.
- Free advice and support with funding applications for community composting projects.

Formal and informal partnerships

- Advice on approaching and working with local authorities and other statutory bodies.
- The facilitation of informal partnerships of community groups in order to take advantage of collective strength when bidding for local authority contracts or lobbying to improve the environment.
- The publicising of tips for community groups and suggesting feasible ideas for small scale projects.

Professional advice to community groups

- A free copy of the CCN guide to community composting for eligible community groups.
- Information about other community compost groups and projects, provided through case studies (available on the London CRN website), tours of exemplar projects and informal networking events such as breakfast briefings and socials.
- Mentoring by established groups for new groups wishing to start or expand community composting projects.

Strategy 2: Working together to ensure that the benefits of community composting are returned to their local communities.

The groups present at the Strategy Day wanted information and advice to be kept simple and understandable. As such, it may be better for London CRN to advise groups individually on issues such as the ABPR as individual circumstances will vary and generic "factsheets" will quickly date.

London CRN will provide information and opportunities for networking to community composting groups by:

Updating on events, news etc.

- Groups can sign up to the quarterly compost e-news: a digest of the latest news in organic waste management plus details of forthcoming events and current volunteer / employment opportunities in the community composting sector.
- Details of forthcoming events are also added to the Events Diary on the London CRN website.

Keeping it simple

- Straightforward advice on specific issues such as the requirements of the Animal By-Products Regulations.

Leading by example

- London CRN will make off the shelf project plans and funding applications available for download from its website.

Holding events

- London CRN will arrange tours of exemplar community composting projects for other community groups.
- London CRN will hold additional events and best practice workshops on topics of interest to the community composting sector.
- London CRN will continue to hold Master Composter training events at community composting premises.
- London CRN will use its knowledge of the sector to refer enquiries from the public to community groups running relevant projects.

Strategy 3: Working with local authorities to position the community composting sector as a potential key service provider.

Signposting funding opportunities

- London CRN will notify community composting groups of funding and partnership opportunities with local authorities via its compost e-news service.

Lobbying for development

- London CRN will encourage local authorities to include the community sector in green and kitchen waste schemes' development.
- London CRN will also create a toolkit with which community compost groups may engage with their local authority.

Access to local authority staff

- London CRN will, where appropriate, continue to promote the community composting sector to local authority officers so that they are aware of the full range of locally focused and community led services available.
- London CRN will also endeavour to provide a comprehensive list of community sector activity, including groups not formally established as community composters, for individual boroughs.



Cam Matheson of the East London Community Recycling Partnership proves that community composting is not rocket science.

Conclusion

London CRN members and potential community composters contributed to this strategy. It will be regularly reviewed by London CRN staff in order to identify further areas for development. London CRN will continue to hold annual consultation days to further develop this strategy and will supplement these events with further material and sub-sector specific consultation and continuous user feedback.

The challenge for community composting is enormous. Timing is crucial as the UK's sector is rapidly changing as is London's infrastructure. London CRN's strategy is designed to assist the continued development of community composting in London and be suitably responsive to changing needs and a changing environment.

