**Southwark Council renews hold on best recycling rates in Inner London**

A DEFRA report, released 11 December, shows that a considerable commitment from the people who live in the borough, Southwark Council, and Veolia, the company contracted to manage waste collection and the borough’s state of the art recycling facility, have together increased recycling, and maintained Southwark’s title, once again.

Southwark’s recycling centre is equipped with the latest technology and is one of the best in the country. This enables the council to remove as many recyclable materials as possible from household waste.

When all possible recyclables have been removed from Southwark’s waste, the remainder goes on to be turned into fuel at [a specially modified incinerator](https://www.selchp.com/energy-recovery/), which generates electricity and heat. The electricity is fed into the national grid and the heat is delivered to 2,800 neighbouring council homes, through the council’s innovative network of pipes, providing heating and hot water, reducing the use of fossil fuels and keeping carbon impacts low. All of this means that Southwark sends less than two per cent of its waste to landfill.

Cllr Richard Livingstone, Cabinet Member for environment, transport management and air quality, said: “This achievement is testament to the hard work of the council, Veolia and most importantly our residents. I would like to congratulate everyone involved and encourage even more people to start separating, cleaning and putting out their recyclables for collection.”

The council is constantly working to drive up recycling and its longstanding partnership with Veolia has enabled long-term investment in the best quality facilities, to recycle and recover as much as possible, while keeping costs down.

Achieving the highest recycling rates in Inner London is a huge achievement for an area with such a high percentage of high rise homes. High rises present much more of a challenge to recycling than street level properties and the council collects from some of the highest residential tower blocks in the whole of London, with about three quarters of all Southwark homes being flats.

The people who live in Southwark play a huge part in increasing recycling across the borough. Their efforts to clean and separate recyclables from general waste are key to Southwark achieving the best recycling rates in Inner London. All future improvements are equally dependent on people keeping up the good work and even more residents recycling everything they can and avoiding contaminating their recycling with dirty items and fabrics.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

The DEFRA data was published 11 Dec: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763212/LA_and_Regional_Spreadsheet_201718.xlsx>

This confirms that Southwark is still the best ranked recycler in Inner London - using the ONS definition of Inner London.

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| *Graph 1: Household Waste Recycling by London Council’s 2017/18* |
| cid:image004.png@01D4923C.E1E9DC80 |

 The red boroughs are the inner London ones.

Points of interest:

1. Southwark is several points ahead of other Inner London authorities
2. Southwark has moved up the all London league from 19th to 17th place
3. Southwark is catching up with several other boroughs
4. Southwark is in the top quartile for total quantities of household waste in the same dataset (ie less residual waste per household and less total waste per person)

In Southwark you can’t recycle these in your household waste:

* food waste\*
* textiles\*
* plastic bags
* black bags
* expanded polystyrene packaging
* small items of furniture
* batteries
* fireworks

\*These are especially bad: food can contaminate other items in your recycling – such as paper and cardboard – making them unviable for recycling, and fabrics get caught up in the recycling machines, causing damage and slowing the process.

In Southwark you can recycle:

* mixed paper and cardboard
* mixed glass bottles and jars
* food tins and drink cans
* aerosols and foil
* household plastic packaging, including clean plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
* food and drink containers (e.g. Tetra Pak)

You can learn more about recycling in Southwark here: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/recycling>