

Aardvark Recycling is a new social enterprise working in partnership with Lambeth Council that has secured funding to establish an innovative and cutting-edge project called the Stockwell LED (local economic development) through Recycling Programme. Here's a bit more information about what Aardvark is hoping to achieve.

Food waste and dry recyclables

Stockwell LED is a recycling and waste education programme aiming to create jobs through raising awareness about environmental and healthy living issues, while opening access to a range of services for disadvantaged households. It will provide services to 7,800 households across 3 wards in Lambeth (Stockwell, Larkhall and parts of Clapham Town), based mainly in estates. Current inequality of service provision within the borough means that residents on estates have no doorstep collection of any materials. The project will create, as its core, this new service, offering a door-to-door collection service of food waste and dry recyclables.

The dry recyclables service provides residents with reusable orange bags to collect their recycling material. This is collected weekly and deposited in the communal bring banks located on site. The kitchen waste collection provides kitchen caddies and biodegradable bags to the residents for food waste storage and also operates on a weekly basis. This waste is taken to a Rocket In-Vessel Composting facility at a local site, operated by Aardvark, with the compost that is produced being made available to local groups for community, especially food projects, and estates environment improvements.



The community hub and the furniture reuse scheme

The project will be physically focussed around a community hub or drop-in retail unit. It is hoped that in the long term a site will be found that can be redeveloped in an environmental and sustainable way, acting as a model for other community based projects and public spaces. This site will serve as a base for the door-to-door collection services and a number of other services including reusable furniture scheme. This scheme will work in parallel with the kitchen waste service and offer a free collection of furniture and electrical items from local residents' doorsteps. The furniture will be refurbished where necessary and be available to disadvantaged householders at low cost from the retail unit, working in partnership with other local furniture and housing projects.

Fresh fruit and vegetables and the real nappy laundry service

Other projects set to go ahead in the near future include a vegetable box and refill scheme, promoting both healthy living and the reduction of packaging and waste, and a real nappy promotion and laundering project. This will involve making Real Nappy start-up packs available at cost to those who would ordinarily be unable to afford them. The box scheme will provide low cost fruit and vegetables along with healthy eating tips and ideas for recipes. Both the vegetable box and Real Nappy service will use a bicycle and trailer for deliveries and collections, rather than a petrol vehicle, to minimise emissions.

Benefiting from recycling

By combining the provision of a recycling service for a range of different materials with a retail outlet in the same location, Aardvark hopes to enable the target community to benefit in a much wider sense from recycling. Not only will it create jobs and provide a range of services normally unavailable to people living on estates, but it will also clearer the links between cleaner, greener and healthier living and local regeneration.

The project currently has grant funding from the Big Lottery Fund through the Community Recycling and Economic Development (CRED) Programme and HM Treasury through the Invest to Save Budget.