

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

REPORT OF: MANAGING DIRECTOR

FOR SUBMISSION TO: PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

DATE: 29 JULY 2020

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report provides a review of the communications activity relating to the North London Heat and Power Project during 2020, and sets out planned communications activity for the coming months for comment and noting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is recommended to comment on and note this report

SIGNED:  Managing Director

DATE: 17 July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report provides an update on communications activity in connection with the North London Heat and Power Project (NLHPP), and its connection to the communications activity relating to the day to day services provided by the Authority.
- 1.2. Members receive an update on stakeholder engagement and communications activity at each meeting of the Authority and the Programme Committee as part of the NLHPP Update. The report to the last Programme Committee contained information on communications relating to cessation of work as a result of COVID-19, and of the correspondence exchange with Extinction Rebellion (XR) following an XR letter sent to all councillors in north London boroughs. The NLHPP Update to the Authority meeting in June contained details of social media activity as well as feedback on use of virtual communication for market engagement in connection with the procurement of the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF).
- 1.3. This report provides a brief overview of recent communications activity, and looks forward to planned communications over the next months. The report includes in Appendix A the press notices (by topic) and social media activity relating to the NLHPP since January.

2. ENSURING INFORMATION IS ACCESSIBLE

- 2.1. As a public authority promoting a major construction project, it is a key priority to ensure that information about the project is readily available to interested groups and individuals and that information is accurate. Therefore, action has been taken:
 - 2.1.1. Keeping the NLHPP website updated (www.northlondonheatandpower.london). The website was refreshed in June 2019. It includes extensive project information, videos, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and information on project announcements made. It also provides clear information about what is planned for the EcoPark site including the brochure attached as Appendix B.
 - 2.1.2. Using social media to ensure that key facts about the project are in the public domain. The project account also provides links to the work carried out by the Authority to promote recycling and to encourage waste prevention. This highlights that the project contributes to the overall aims of promoting the circular economy and ensuring that waste is used as a sustainable resource.
 - 2.1.3. Preparing press notices for local and trade press, to provide greater detail on specific activities.
 - 2.1.4. Writing letters/emails to individuals or groups addressing the specific points raised by them in connection with the project. This includes formal written responses to the deputations to the Authority meeting on 25 June. The Authority has a scheme of publication under which information requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 on any aspect of the Authority's

responsibilities is provided on the Authority's main website at <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/scheme-of-publications>.

- 2.1.5. Frequent updates which are provided to an increasingly wide range of stakeholders as the project has moved into delivery. This includes engagement with the community around the facility both directly and through the Community Liaison Group as well as regular updates to representatives across north London including councillors and Members of Parliament.

3. KEY ESTABLISHED MESSAGES

- 3.1. Members will be aware that Authority communications make clear the following important points about the project, to explain how it contributes to sustainable resource management for the people of north London. These are supplemented by more detailed information and references to relevant source material. The website is kept up to date and members are briefed as further analysis is prepared. The information provided is set out in this section.

The Project

The North London Heat and Power Project is our plan for a new world-class facility that will replace our existing energy from waste plant, support increased recycling and enable the recovery of energy from north London's non-recyclable waste

Over the next ten years we are building:

- A Resource Recovery Facility and Public Reuse and Recycling Centre, which represent major investments in new recycling facilities to help north London achieve 50% household recycling
- An Energy Recovery Facility to divert waste from landfill and generate low carbon energy from waste, in the form of heat and power.
- EcoPark House on River Lee Navigation including a visitor and education centre, where residents can learn more about the circular economy and how to reduce the carbon impact of their waste

Waste infrastructure

The NLHPP will provide essential infrastructure for the circular economy. The Project will deliver flagship recycling facilities for our residents, including the first ever public reuse and recycling centre at the EcoPark. The Resource Recovery Facility will provide capacity to manage up to 135,000 tonnes of recycling every year. Our new community and education centre, called EcoPark House, will provide information about the ways in which our residents can reduce their waste and recycle more.

As recycling rates increase, the NLHPP will ensure that the waste that can't be recycled is treated as a resource for society and not sent to landfill. The ERF will use this waste to generate low-carbon heat and power for up to 127,000 homes.

Climate emergency

The NLHPP is instrumental to tackling the Climate Emergency declared by north London boroughs. Failure to build this world-class project will risk the waste from over two million north Londoners being sent to rot in landfill.

The Energy Recovery Facility will achieve major greenhouse gas savings by diverting waste from landfill, generating low carbon heat and power, and extracting metals for recycling.

Key stat: Our new facility will have the carbon impact of saving the equivalent of 215,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year by diverting waste from landfill. That's like taking 110,000 cars off the road each year.

Air quality

As a public authority, our primary responsibility is to protect the health of our residents. We're investing in the most advanced technology possible to capture, control and monitor emissions from the ERF. This will make our facility one of the safest and cleanest in the world. Our facility will comply with the strict public health standards set by the Environment Agency.

Recycling and waste prevention

We're investing in recycling and waste management facilities at Edmonton EcoPark, including a flagship Resource Recovery Facility. This is an important part of our wide-ranging action to help our residents recycle more in the future.

Our flagship Resource Recovery Facility will provide capacity to recycle around 135,000 tonnes of waste, including wood, metals and plastics, that might otherwise be sent to landfill. The new public Reuse and Recycling Centre will enable residents to bring their recyclable materials directly to Edmonton EcoPark for the first time.

Advanced and proven technology

Energy recovery is the most sustainable and responsible solution for managing future volumes of non-recyclable waste at Edmonton EcoPark. It is a proven technology that is used by world leaders in sustainable waste management.

We're investing in the most advanced technology possible to clean emissions. This will make our facility one of the safest and cleanest in the UK. This includes Selective Catalytic Reduction to control the emissions of nitrogen oxides, as well as a combined wet/dry scrubbing system to capture particulates and other flue gasses.

Community Benefit

As a public authority, our duty is to contribute positively to the local area and operate in a way that responds considerately to local residents and businesses. We want our Project to benefit the local community. That's why we've set targets to achieve 25% local employment and 10% local expenditure.

We're creating 225 on-site skills training opportunities for school leavers or the unemployed who want to start a career in the construction industry. We're also providing at least 100 apprenticeships for local people during the construction phase of the project.

The energy recovery facility will be built under the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI) – sometimes referred to as the "Blue Book" agreement which creates a partnership to foster cohesive working relationships between employees and employer in delivering the construction project.

Value for money

The new facility is the only proven, sustainable and cost-effective solution to treat north London's non-recyclable waste at Edmonton EcoPark. As a public authority,

NLWA is able to borrow from public sources, to secure finance at lowest possible cost to the taxpayer.

Construction

We are committed to delivering this project safely, on time and on budget, while considering the needs of the local community.

We are bringing forward innovative techniques to build our project, which have already helped us achieve 1,000 fewer lorry movements during the preparatory works. We require all our contractors to sign up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Health, safety and well being

The NLHPP is leading new standards of excellence in Health and Safety in construction, where everyone can take pride in the absence of incidents, and in one of the most advanced safety cultures to work in. On this project health and safety is the number one priority and is engrained in every plan we make, and every task we do.

4. WORKING WITH CURRENT SERVICES

- 4.1. Once built, the ERF and the new Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) will provide a modern, more efficient continuation of the current services, using tried and tested technology which is being updated to ensure that current and future standards of clean air and emissions management are met. The ERF will have the highest-performing, proven technology for flue gas treatment in the UK.
- 4.2. The Authority provides current services through providing seven Reuse and Recovery Centres (RRCs) in the area where residents can deposit recyclable waste, and a further RRC will be added as part of the RRF when the new facility is provided. This, combined with the activity of the Constituent Boroughs as collection authorities, allows residents to recycle any material which can be accepted into the recycling market. The Authority has a contract for the management of this recycling with Biffa, and the contract maximises the amount of materials that are put back into use.
- 4.3. To demonstrate to the public that the Authority is maximising the recycling in the area to the extent, in the absence of effective powers from central Government, that it is able, social media activity with NLHPP information also references the current activity of the Authority relating to both recycling and waste prevention.
- 4.4. The NLHPP is part of the NLWA's wider action to increase recycling in north London. This strategy includes calling on Government to enact legislation that will improve recycling rates – such as a Deposit Return Scheme, Extended Producer Responsibility, and greater powers for local authorities to enforce correct recycling.

5. ENGAGING WITH THE SUPPLY CHAIN

- 5.1. Sections 2 to 4 relate predominantly to dealing with interest in the project from members of the public. Successful delivery also depends on communicating with the supply chain to raise awareness and interest and to ensure that potential contractors are aware of the Authority's expectations. Market information days

have been held for all contracts. The third market information event – held virtually - for the energy recovery facility contract took place on 30 June. In addition to having a dialogue with potential contracting companies, Authority officers have met the National Joint Council for the Engineering Construction Industry, the Engineering Construction Industry Association and the GMB and Unite unions.

6. OVERVIEW OF SUMMER 2020 ACTIVITY

- 6.1. There is a proactive summer plan of activity through July to September to maintain momentum, to continue to put the project in the context of the circular economy and to draw attention to specific benefits being delivered. These activities include:
 - 6.1.1. Eco Park South. This is a major focus. Subject to members' approval at this meeting the announcement of the tender award will be made. This will demonstrate that work on this element of the project will begin in earnest and will highlight the important role of new recycling infrastructure at the EcoPark in achieving 50% household recycling rates in north London. While attention from opponents to the project focuses on the energy recovery facility, we will want to promote awareness of the extensive infrastructure for recycling which is a core part of the NLHPP. We are looking to develop video material which will help “bring to life” how these facilities will operate.
 - 6.1.2. Apprenticeship progress – proactive announcement of new apprenticeships on site (social media, press releases, video update) to demonstrate the direct positive impact the project is having on the local community. This comes at a time when youth employment is a major concern and shows NLHPP is a very positive force on this agenda.
 - 6.1.3. Embedding the project in the circular economy – linking work on the NLHPP with initiatives which the Authority is taking. This includes: calling on the Government to adopt the “polluter pays” principle and put more onus on producers to meet the costs of packaging disposal, challenging nappy manufacturers to improve customer awareness of how to dispose responsibly of their projects, working with Biffa to achieve ever greater progress in securing UK end destinations for NLWA recycling, working with boroughs to support the delivery of Reduction and Reuse Plans (RRPs) and taking forward fashion and food waste prevention activities which not only reflect NLWA priorities but are also aligned with London-wide activities of the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB).
 - 6.1.4. Health and safety – social media and video content to support the construction activity that is taking place at Edmonton EcoPark, and to demonstrate that the Authority is demanding high standards on contractors and working with them to achieve this.
 - 6.1.5. Construction updates – proactive communications including video updates, social media activity and media updates. This includes sewer diversion update and transport yard completion – showing that the project is moving from a plan to reality.

6.1.6. Updated technical information – ensuring that we proactively communicate on national or local developments about waste facilities and environmental impact

6.1.7. In addition to broadcasting on the above issues for wide public interest via websites, general press releases and social media, more targeted sharing of information will be managed. This will include holding meetings of the Community Liaison Group digitally to maintain the dialogue with local residents, and ensuring stakeholders are kept up to date with developments via briefing notes.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1. In preparing communications, consideration is given to accessibility of the information provided and the appropriate format.

8. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

8.1. The Legal Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

9. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

9.1. The Financial Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

List of documents used:

Press notices issued

Letters sent to members of the public, councillors and MPs

Contact officer:

Ursula Taylor
Unit 1b Berol House
25 Ashley Road
London N17 9LJ
Ursula.taylor@nlwa.gov.uk

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY, PRESS NOTICES, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT JAN-JUNE 2020

1) Twitter content from 1 January – 5 July 2020

Total:

- 97 tweets
- 54,100 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 1,576 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Breakdown by month:

January 1st – 31st

- 13 tweets
- 9,100 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 117 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- Procurement (contract awards, market information events)
- ERF – emission controls, low-carbon energy
- Wise up to Waste activities
- Climate Emergency messaging
- Project leaflets, newsletters, website details

February 1st – 29th

- 10 tweets
- 8,000 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 110 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- Innovation on the project – Deep Soil Stabilisation
- Wise up to Waste activities – Low Plastic Zones
- Climate Emergency messaging
- Construction update video
- Social value – apprenticeships and training
- Community engagement – presentation to Enfield Society

March 1st – 31st

- 8 tweets
- 9,700 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 200 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- COVID-19 – closure of RRCs
- Wise up to Waste activities – Global Recycling Day
- ERF – low carbon energy, climate emergency messaging
- Construction update video
- Social value – first apprentice appointed
- Community engagement – construction newsletter, construction impacts on community

April 1st – 30th

- 18 tweets
- 9,500 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 203 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- COVID-19 – closure of RRCs, supporting essential waste services in north London, advice on recycling
- Procurement – Market information webinar
- RRF – Help become London's leading recyclers
- ERF – low carbon energy, divert waste from landfill
- Earth Day 2020

May 1st – 31st

- 20 tweets
- 6,700 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 116 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- COVID-19 – closure of RRCs, supporting essential waste services in north London, advice on recycling
- Remobilisation update and video
- #OneYearOn campaign

June 1st – 30th

- 25 tweets
- 9,000 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 765 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- COVID-19 – closure of RRCs, supporting essential waste services in north London, advice on recycling
- Remobilisation update and video
- Procurement – Market information webinar
- ‘Did you know?’ campaign – ERF, RRF, social value, climate emergency, recycling rates
- Project brochure launch
- International Women in Engineering Day
- Innovation on the NLHPP – Deep soil stabilisation

July 1st – 5th

- 3 tweets
- 2,100 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)
- 65 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet)

Tweet topic areas

- Procurement – Market information webinar, ERF procurement given green light
- Plastic Free July

2) NLHPP Press Releases since January 2020

The below outlines the press releases that the NLHPP have released since January 2020 and the trade press coverage each has received.

Total number of press releases: 7

Proactive

Procurement:

March 2020 - *First apprentice appointed on North London Heat and Power Project.* [Link.](#)

- Networks Online

April 2020 - *Major opportunity for contractors to deliver £600m Energy Recovery Facility in north London.* [Link.](#)

- Science tells
- Construction Enquirer
- The Construction Index

June 2020 - *Final online webinar for contractors interested the new £600m Energy Recovery Facility in north London.* [Link.](#)

Remobilisation:

April 2020 - *North London Heat and Power Project goes digital during the COVID-19 crisis.* [Link.](#)

June 2020 - *North London Heat and Power Project Construction Workers Start Returning to Work Sites.* [Link.](#)

- Materials Recycling World
- New Civil Engineer
- Construction Enquirer

Reactive

Support for the NLHPP:

April 2020 - *North London boroughs confirm backing for vital North London Heat and Power Project ahead of Earth Day 2020.* [Link.](#)

- Hackney Gazette (x2)
- Islington Gazette (X2)
- LetsRecycle
- Hamodia Jewish Newspaper
- Enfield Independent
- Epping Forest Guardian
- Hampstead and Highgate Express
- Wood & Vale Express

June 2020 - *North London councillors give green light for major investment in north London's waste management facilities.* [Link.](#)

3) NLHPP stakeholder communications since January 2020

Project Newsletter

A community newsletter was produced in February 2020 covering:

- Project progress
- Apprenticeship and training opportunities
- Upcoming work on the RRF and ERF

It was issued online, sent to our e-newsletter distribution list and sent to 19,000 homes in north London.

Community Videos

Community update video, May 2020

- Provided an update on the project progress during COVID-19, the work the waste prevention team have been doing, and plans for remobilisation.
- It was shared with the CLG group and wider stakeholders
- It received 85 views

Remobilisation video, June 2020

- Following the contractors beginning work on site after COVID-19
- Outlines what work is taking place.
- It was shared with the CLG group and wider stakeholders
- It received 74 views

Stakeholder Enquiries

Proactive

- Issued an email to all north London MPs in January ahead of the campaign event that XR Enfield organised and informed of in their letter
- Issued an email to all north London councillors in April regarding the XR letter
- Emailed 3 local businesses informing of upcoming works

Reactive

Responded to 44 stakeholder enquiries covering a number of topics about the NLHPP including carbon impact, air quality, alternative solutions and project costs. This number includes the recent deputations.

- Enquiries from local businesses = 6
- Enquiries from local residents = 16
- Enquiries from local councillors and MPs= 10
- Enquiries from journalists = 1
- Deputation responses = 11

Responded to 2 FOIs

Responded to 89 potential subcontractors for the NLHPP

APPENDIX B: NORTH LONDON HEAT AND POWER PROJECT BROCHURE