

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT OF: HEAD OF STRATEGY AND SERVICES

FOR SUBMISSION TO: AUTHORITY MEETING

DATE: 10 MARCH 2022

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report informs Members about the latest operational activities

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the operational update provided since the last report to the Authority on 16 December 2021 at sections 2 to 4; and
- b) Note the recycling update set out at sections 5 and 6

Signed.  Head of Strategy and Service

Dated. 28 February 2022

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update of the main operational matters that have arisen since the report to the Authority meeting on 16 December 2021.
- 1.2. The North London Waste Authority (the Authority or NLWA) has a statutory responsibility for the provision of municipal waste disposal services for the seven constituent borough councils. The Authority also has powers to arrange for the reuse, recycling and composting of municipal waste and to operate Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRCs).

2. STORM EUNICE

- 2.1. Storm Eunice was identified by the Meteorological Office (Met Office) on 14 February, with the expectation it would arrive on Friday 18 February. At 3.30am on 18 February, the storm warning was increased to red level. This meant dangerous weather was expected – it was very likely that there would be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure.
- 2.2. In light of the red warning, an early morning decision was made to close the Authority's network of RRCs with the exception of Hornsey Street, which is predominantly an indoor facility. As a result of the booking system it was possible to contact residents and advise them of the closure on safety grounds. Those with bookings were given the option of visiting Hornsey Street on the day or any of our RRCs in the next seven days without the need to make an additional booking. The RRC network was completely reopened on Saturday 19 February.
- 2.3. In readiness for Boroughs potentially suspending part or all of their collection services during this severe weather event, NLWA officers made arrangements with LondonEnergy Limited (LEL) to extend the opening hours at the Wembley Transfer Station on Saturday 19 February. Extending opening hours to 3:30 pm on the Saturday provided capacity for Boroughs to catch up services that were suspended.
- 2.4. Biffa were forced to close the Edmonton Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) on instruction of the London Fire Brigade late on the Friday afternoon. The roof of the warehouse operated by LIDL, located opposite the MRF was partially ripped from the building (fig 1) and there were concerns that the roof could be blown into the MRF with the potential to cause severe injury to colleagues and major damage to the plant. The impact of this closure on our Borough collections teams was minimal as the majority of rounds had already completed their collections and tipped their materials. For those that hadn't Hornsey Street and Wembley remained open.



Fig 1

2.5. Biffa reopened late on Friday night, they operated as normal on Saturday 19 February and operated a second shift on Sunday 20 February to ensure sufficient capacity to process materials collected by Boroughs as part of their catch-up contingency plans.

2.6. Barnet and Islington both made changes to their service and used these contingency arrangements to catch up their collection services.

3. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE AT THE ENERGY CENTRE

3.1. To support the ongoing construction work associated with the North London Heat and Power Project (NLHPP) it has been necessary to close a small section of the internal Western Road at the EcoPark from the 7 February for a period of 10 weeks. This is required to facilitate trenching work under the carriageway for the installation of high-pressure steam pipework and Low and High Voltage cables.

3.2. The closed section is used normally by borough vehicles to get from the southern gate at the EcoPark to drop off waste at the energy centre or bulky/organic waste collection facilities. (In the plan below, the area marked 1 is the southern entrance to the EcoPark with the area between 1 and 2 closed for works). To ensure services continue with the minimum of disruption operational traffic has been instructed to enter and exit the EcoPark site from the northern entrance leading to Ardra Road.

North of EcoPark site <----- ----- ----- ----- -----> South of EcoPark site

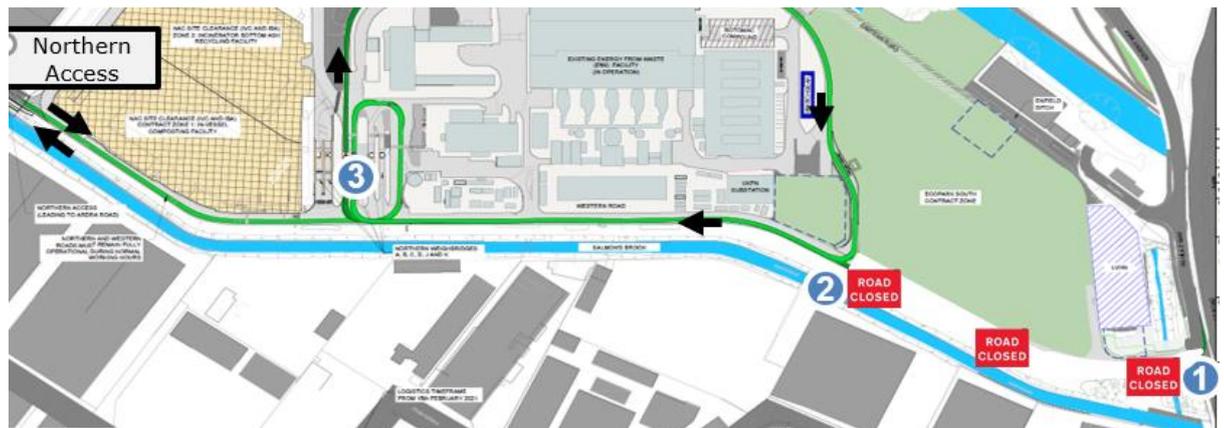


Fig 2

3.3. Authority officers working with LondonEnergy counterparts introduced new operational protocols to facilitate the diversion and communicated these to Borough counterparts. The diversion has caused no operational disruption for Boroughs.

4. SWITCHGEAR RENEWAL

- 4.1. A longstanding works plan is the installation of new switchgear at the energy centre. Switchgear is necessary to allow the export of the electricity generated by LEL. As well as providing resilience against aged equipment, replacement of the existing switchgear is needed to supply power to the new resource recovery facility being constructed by the NLHPP.
- 4.2. LEL's initial plan for installation of the switchgear had been to undertake a complete shutdown of the energy centre. During the period of the shutdown all north London's residual waste – up to 39,000 tonnes - would have been diverted to third party facilities over the period of the works, with increased costs and logistical challenges for the tipping and transporting of waste.
- 4.3. In seeking to mitigate risks, LEL have identified an improved delivery route, which stages the works over a longer period of 53 days but avoids a complete shutdown and enables the site to continue to operate with only a small loss of availability throughout this period. This reduces the waste needing to be sent to third parties to around 16,000 tonnes and reduces any risk of disruption to boroughs who will continue to deliver their tonnages as normal. Furthermore, with a lower volume of waste being sent to third parties, it reduces the potential for waste having to be landfilled.
- 4.4. The new programme of works which started on the 30 January 2021 is progressing as planned and is successfully maintaining availability. Works are expected to be completed in the last week in March.

5. NEW AND SPECIALIST RECYCLING

- 5.1. Mattress recycling has continued across the Authority's network of Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRC's) and transfer stations. The number of mattresses being recycled continues at high levels. At the end of January 2021, 51,302 units had been recycled since the scheme began in June 2021. This suggests a full year of operation would see circa 75,000 mattresses extracted from the residual stream, which is circa 2,700 tonnes.
- 5.2. Figure 3 below, details the tonnage and number of mattresses apportioned to the constituent boroughs up to the 31 January and the extrapolated full year benefit of the scheme.

	June - January (8 Months)		Full Year Forecast	
	Units	Tonnage	Units	Tonnage
Barnet	10055	361	14784	532
Camden	5688	204	8365	301
Enfield	7989	287	11746	423
Hackney	7680	276	11292	406
Haringey	6721	242	9882	356
Islington	6407	230	9419	339
Waltham Forest	6762	243	9942	358
Total	51302	1844	75430	2715

Fig 3

- 5.3. LEL are in the process of procuring a long-term contract for the processing of mattresses. It is expected a three-year contract will be awarded in March 2022 and ensure the continuation of this new service.
- 5.4. The Authority is now accepting Expanded Polysterene (EPS) across the network of RRCs with dedicated shredders/compactors in operation at both Summers Lane and South Access RRCs. A third unit has been installed at Wembley Waste Transfer Station (WTS), acting as a hub site for EPS collected at the remaining RRCs. Officers from the Authority are currently working with colleagues from Enfield to look at the feasibility of introducing a compactor at Barrowell Green RRC.
- 5.5. Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) is extremely light (13kg per cubic meter) which means in tonnage terms the scheme will not divert significant tonnages from the residual stream. However, EPS has long been considered by residents and those in the industry to be a problem material; difficult to recycle and very often too big to place in a residential bin. The NLWA scheme to recycle this material, the only one

of its kind in the UK, provides residents with a non-disposal option across the RRC network.

- 5.6. Terra-Cycle have unfortunately discontinued the crisp packets recycling service, and officers are working to find a new outlet so we can continue to accept these products at our network of RRCs.

6. DESTINATIONS UPDATE

- 6.1. Figure 4 details the end destinations for Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) collected across the six participating Boroughs that use the NLWA Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) contract with Biffa. (Enfield Dry Mixed Recyclate is processed under a separate agreement managed by the London Borough of Enfield.)

Material	March 20 baseline			Quarter 2 Average 21/22			Quarter 3 average 21/22			2023 Target			2030 Target
	UK	Europe	Far East	UK	Europe	Far East	UK	Europe	Far East	UK	Europe	Far East	UK
Cardboard			100%	7%	55%	38%		90%	10%	10%	50%	40%	100%
Mixed Paper	43%	19%	38%	58%	42%		34%	66%		70%	30%		100%
Glass	68%	32%		100%			100%			100%			100%
Aluminium Cans	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%
Steel Cans	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%
Plastic Bottles	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%
Other Plastics	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%

Fig 4

- 6.2. The table highlights significant improvement in the processing of mixed MRF glass, in quarters 2 and 3 of 2021/22, to the extent this was managed wholly within the UK. This is a significant achievement well ahead of the 2023 target for this commodity.
- 6.3. We have also made real progress in reducing our reliance on processors from the far east and non-European countries. In Quarter 3 of 2021/22 we saw only 10% of cardboard and none of our Mixed Papers being treated in the Far East.
- 6.4. While we have reduced the percentage of fibrous materials going to long haul destinations, the lack of capacity within the UK market particularly for the processing of cardboard remains a significant problem. UK paper mills have been able to get high quality, source segregated paper particularly from industry. This has reduced the ability to place MRF paper at UK destinations.
- 6.5. NLWA has previously called for central government to initiate a program of measures that will stimulate the growth of processing capacity within the UK, so that there is a consistent market in this country for recycled paper and cardboard.

7. COMMODITY PRICES

- 7.1. The price the Authority will receive during quarter 4 of 2021/22 from the sale of recyclates is £75.30 per tonne which represents a significant increase against a budget expectation of £22.00.

7.2. Global demand, following the COVID-19 Pandemic, has driven prices for fibre, metals and plastics higher than forecast. We expect the market to correct these prices during 2022 and we are already seeing some evidence of this correction begin to take effect particularly on cardboard prices which have fallen in December to £130 per tonne from a high of £153 per tonne in September. We expect plastic and metal to follow suit in 2022.

7.3. Figure 5 below sets out the actual net basket price received since the current contract with Biffa started in December 2019. It also details the forecast price for 2022/23, this profiled forecast provides an average price of £40 per tonne across 2022/23.

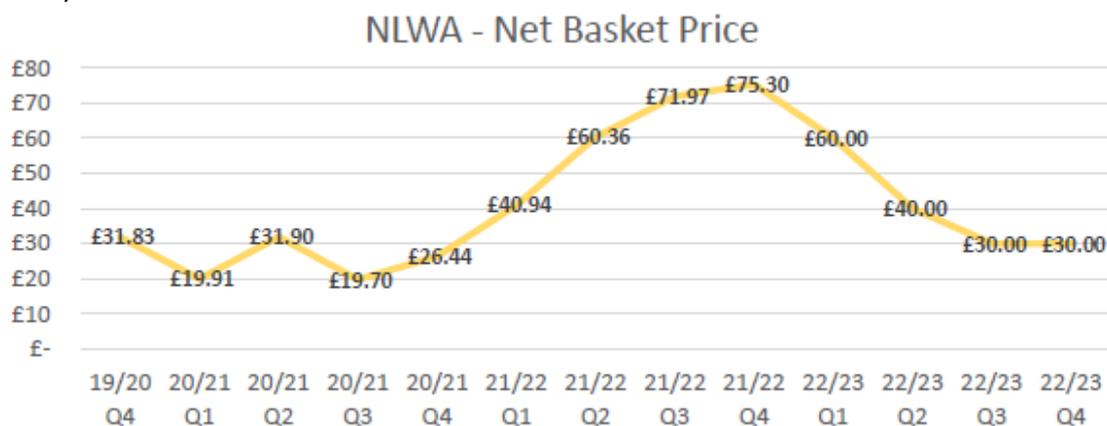


Fig 5

8. DMR MATERIAL COMPOSITION

8.1. Figure 7 provides the latest confirmed average composition of DMR for quarter 4 (January to March 2021/22). This composition analysis is based on 300 composition samples taken at the MRF in the previous quarter.

Material Stream % Q3		Material Stream % Q4		variance
Fibre	53.2	Fibre	52.2	-1.0
Glass	19.9	Glass	21.3	1.4
Metals	3.3	Metals	3.3	0.0
Plastics	10.0	Plastics	9.7	-0.3
Non target	4.1	Non target	4.2	0.2
Process rejects	9.6	Process rejects	9.3	-0.3

Fig 7

8.2. The composition analysis shows that generally composition of materials is relatively stable, there has however been a slight reduction in Fibre and Plastics with a corresponding increase in Glass. Encouragingly Process Rejects fell again in Quarter 4 by 0.3%, building on a similar reduction in Quarter 3.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

10. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

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

11. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

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

List of documents used:

Letsrecycle.com

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