NLWA Member briefing

Update on North London Heat and Power Project February 2026

Why the new Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) is needed

NLWA is transforming the EcoPark into a sustainable waste hub with the UK's greenest Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) and flagship recycling facilities to help boost recycling. The ERF represents the best environmental, financial, and societal solution for north London's waste, replacing the 50-year-old facility currently onsite.

February 2026 Aerial Shot of Progress on ERF

- NLWA has specified the most advanced emissions control technology to eliminate pollutants, making the ERF one of the safest, cleanest and highest-performing facilities in the UK.

- A local, publicly owned ERF treats residual waste close to where it is created, offering a better environmental and lower-carbon alternative to landfill or exporting waste elsewhere.

- Residual household (bin-bag) waste from two million north London residents will remain a major challenge for decades, even with higher recycling and reduced waste per person.

- The new ERF has a maximum capacity of 700,000 tonnes per year but can operate efficiently at lower waste levels. Its capacity prevents waste being landfilled or exported and can meet future demand if the population grows.

- Government analysis shows that, even with new projects, London will still have 1.44 million tonnes of residual waste without treatment capacity—meaning no over-capacity exists.

- The ground-breaking plans for the ERF received development consent in 2017 as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, highlighting its importance in tackling the climate emergency and supporting a circular economy.

- The Edmonton ERF under construction meets strict new government standards, will provide heating and hot water to up to 60,000 homes, and is designed to be carbon-capture ready. Energy generation for homes and the national grid reduces disposal costs for council taxpayers.

- Since construction began, inflation and skilled labour pressures—driven by higher energy and material costs, Brexit and rising interest rates—have affected the construction industry.

- The contractor has cited that project delays are primarily due to challenges in securing and mobilising mechanical, electrical, and piping (MEP) subcontractors.

- Not completing the project would cost significantly more because NLWA would still need to dispose of residual waste when the current facility closes.

- Costs to dispose of residual waste would increase on the open market, further compounded by transporting waste long distances, paying for other facilities, and losing money already invested in construction. Abandoning a half-built project wastes taxpayer funds and leaves the waste disposal problem unresolved.

- Cancelling the project would harm district heating plans, reduce local employment opportunities, and worsen air quality due to additional transport emissions.

Construction delay

In early 2024, NLWA identified a significant delay in ACCIONA's delivery of the ERF through robust contract management. ACCIONA cited challenges from securing MEP subcontractors, linking it to the requirements of National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI). NLWA Members had stipulated in 2019 that NAECI was important for supporting good employment relations on the project.

By mid-2024, progress was four to five months behind schedule, and despite strong performance by subcontractors on civil works, ACCIONA had yet to secure subcontractors for MEP tasks. NLWA required ACCIONA to review its approach and establish a realistic delivery schedule. While a NAECI-registered workforce was on site by December, uncertainty remained, prompting NLWA to commission an independent audit in early 2025.

The audit, completed in June 2025, provided a detailed assessment of the situation and is being discussed with ACCIONA to restore delivery certainty.

Latest construction progress (as of December 2025)

Although the ERF is behind schedule, the site is very active and making visible progress every day. Major construction milestones have already been achieved, with the concrete and steel exterior of the facility largely complete and work now focused on installing the core process equipment.

Several key structural milestones are complete, including the tipping hall floor, installation of the waste chutes, placement of the generator step-up transformer (the link between the ERF and the electricity transmission network) and significant progress on the turbine hall walls ahead of the steam turbine generator's arrival. The administration building steelwork is finished, and concrete floors are now being installed.

Most of the specialist equipment needed to process waste and clean emissions has already been manufactured and is ready for installation, ensuring momentum in the next phase of the programme.

Installation of critical process equipment has begun, including the assembly of the economiser for one of the two boilers and the bag filters within the Flue Gas Treatment structure—marking a major transition from civil construction to operational systems.

Supporting works across the wider site continue to advance, demonstrating sustained progress across all areas of the project.

Aerial Site Images (as of February 2026) – *Ctrl + click on image to open and download*

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the delay increase the cost of the project?

The project continues to operate within the overall budget set by Members. If any additional funding is required beyond the current limits, this would be reported transparently to Members in Authority meetings and subject to formal approval.

NLWA is taking proactive steps to manage the delay and maintain cost control. This includes commissioning an independent audit, working closely with ACCIONA and holding them to account on deliverables, and reviewing contractual arrangements to strengthen delivery certainty.

The ERF remains the best value solution for taxpayers. Not completing the project would cost significantly more because NLWA would still need to dispose of residual waste when the current facility closes. Without the ERF, disposal costs could rise with taxpayers exposed to market volatility and private sector profit margins.

This facility is essential for north London's future. It will provide a modern, safe, and sustainable solution for managing waste, reduce landfill, generate low-carbon energy, and keep control of costs for council taxpayers. Delivering it successfully remains the top priority.

What steps are NLWA taking to ensure the project gets delivered?

NLWA is committed to delivering the new Energy Recovery Facility because it is essential for north London's long-term waste needs. The project is governed by a clear contract that sets out exactly what the contractor must deliver, and NLWA is enforcing these requirements.

Most of the major civil and structural work is already complete. The remaining work focuses on the mechanical and electrical systems, which are more complex. NLWA has asked the contractor for a detailed recovery plan and is using the contract to ensure progress continues.

NLWA provides regular progress updates during Authority meetings. The new facility will play a vital role in reducing landfill, lowering carbon emissions, and generating reliable energy for many years.

How delayed is the project? When will it be completed?

Construction of the ERF is progressing, but the project is running behind its original schedule. Delays in the mechanical and electrical installation phase mean the completion timeframe is currently under review. NLWA is working closely with ACCIONA to address these challenges and has asked the contractor to provide an updated recovery plan. Most civil and structural works are already finished, and efforts are now focused on advancing the remaining phases while maintaining high safety and quality standards. The ERF remains essential for north London's future waste management, and NLWA is committed to delivering the facility as soon as practically possible.

What is the issue causing the delays?

The primary reason for the delay is the slow progress in the mechanical and electrical installation phase. This includes critical systems such as boilers and flue-gas treatment equipment. Mobilisation of specialist subcontractors for these works has taken longer than planned, which has impacted the overall schedule.

NLWA is actively working with ACCIONA to accelerate these activities and on a revised recovery plan to ensure the project is delivered as soon as possible.