

# Focus Group Qualitative Research

North London Waste Authority

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Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) manages waste transportation and disposal on behalf of seven London boroughs; Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, and Waltham Forest. They also manage the recycling for six of the seven boroughs.

NLWA needed to better understand how they are viewed by the wider community and partners to inform their approach to communication with residents and wider stakeholders. As a quantitative survey would only inform NLWA of a high-level view, an initial piece of qualitative research was required to give NLWA the in-depth understanding of how and why people feel the way they do.

NLWA is currently undertaking a major construction project 'North London Heat and Power Project' (NLHPP) that will replace the current waste recycling facility with a state-of-the-art recycling and energy recovery facility on the same site. The new facility will be much larger and some residents in the area could be impacted by construction traffic or concerned about the volume of traffic and emissions once the facility is up and running.

By commissioning this qualitative research, the research has covered both objectives to be cost effective and prevent respondent fatigue. It has given NLWA the opportunity to better understand the feedback and concerns of residents and stakeholders and highlight where NLWA can position their communications to mitigate concerns and improve its reputation in the wider community and with stakeholders.

## 2. Research Objectives

Qualitative research was undertaken with residents and stakeholders most likely to be affected by the work undertaken by NLWA and the seven boroughs. The objectives of the research were to:

- Understand in detail the view of the community towards NLHPP construction, its impact and mitigation.
- Understand the views of the community towards NLHPP.
- Test the effectiveness of key messaging and communication materials in relation to NLHPP.
- Establish what stakeholders think about NLWA.
- Benchmark the perceived reputation of NLWA compared to other organisations.
- Determine whether the reputation of NLWA differs across the different stakeholder groups.
- Determine whether the reputation of NLWA differs depending on which part of the organisation (NLWA) the stakeholder has experience of.
- Identify areas where the research subjects think NLWA could improve its reputation; and
- Identify how the respondents think NLWA could best improve its reputation.

## 3. Methodology

Qualitative research offers in-depth insight and value into respondents' responses that can not necessarily be obtained using quantitative research.

### 3.1 Sample Profile

In consultation with the client, the research was split into two groups of residents and stakeholders as follows:

Qualitative Research with Residents	Qualitative Research with Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five groups with residents who live within the seven boroughs, at varying distances from NLHPP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups with organisations and partners who work alongside NLWA on projects</li> <li>Groups with Borough Officers</li> <li>Groups with Borough Directors of Finance or Environment</li> </ul>

In addition to the groups, AECOM undertook two depth interviews with stakeholders who were unavailable to attend the scheduled groups.

#### 3.1.1 Residents' Profile

A total of 26 residents took part in the qualitative research about NLWA and the NLHPP. Table 3.1 shows the respondents' demographic and location profile and any other key criteria for each group. Respondents were screened to make sure no one worked for NLWA.

**Table 3.1: Demographic Profiles of Residents' Groups**

Location	Type of Respondent
<b>Group 1: Residents in 1.5 radius from the NLHPP site</b>	Mix of ages Mix of genders Mix of ethnicities
<b>Group 2: Residents in 3-mile radius (north 406)</b>	Mix of ages Mix of genders Mix of ethnicities
<b>Group 3: Residents in 3-mile radius (south 406)</b>	Mix of ages Mix of genders Mix of ethnicities
<b>Group 4: Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest)</b>	Mix of ages Mix of genders Mix of ethnicities
<b>Group 5: Residents in 3+ miles radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet)</b>	Mix of ages Mix of genders Mix of ethnicities

#### 3.1.2 Stakeholder Profile

A total of 14 stakeholder respondents took part in the qualitative research. A breakdown is provided in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Stakeholder Groups/ Depth Interviews**

Location	Number contacted	Number engaged
<i>Borough Directors of Finance/ Environment</i>	16	5
<i>Borough Technical Officers</i>	7	4
<i>Organisations</i>	8	5
<i>Ward Councillors</i>	18	0

## 3.2 Recruitment

### 3.2.1 Residents' Recruitment

AECOM appointed a specialist company, Acumen Research to recruit respondents whilst ensuring they recruited a good mix of respondents, making sure that resident who don't always take part in groups were given the opportunity to and ensuring that the focus groups were not full of people from activist of residential groups.

All resident participants were screened to ensure they met the eligibility criteria for the focus group they were being recruited for. Participants were told the purpose of the research was to understand their views of NLWA and NLHPP and their impact on them and others.

All groups with residents were structured to last between 60 and 75 minutes to allow comprehensive coverage of the topics. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and constraints on staging traditional face-to-face focus groups in person, the groups were completed virtually (using Microsoft Teams). Each group comprised of three to five participants.

All respondents were given £50 incentive to thank them for taking part.

### 3.2.2 Stakeholder Recruitment

AECOM contacted all stakeholder participants by email initially, using a contact list provided by NLWA. The groups were structured to last 60 to 75 minutes and were conducted virtually (using Microsoft Teams) and comprised between two and four people.

Two stakeholders took part in depth interviews using Microsoft Teams with an experienced moderator and these interviews lasted up to 60 minutes.

## 3.3 Discussion Guide

The basis of discussions were topic guides, which were developed prior to the research being undertaken. These acted as an aide to the moderator to ensure all topics were covered during the focus groups and there was consistency across the different focus groups. A copy of the guides can be found in Appendix A. Topics in the residents' discussion guide included:

- General awareness and opinion of NLWA
- Previous experience with NLWA
- Awareness of Edmonton Eco Park
- Awareness of the NLHPP
- Construction of the NLHPP
- Post-Construction of the NLHPP

- Next steps for NLWA and NLHPP

Topics in the stakeholders' discussion guide included:

- General awareness and opinion of NLWA
- Previous engagement/ experience with NLWA
- Current Information on NLWA
- NLWA compared to other organisations in the same sector
- Awareness of current projects (NLHPP)
- Next steps for NLWA and NLHPP

Prior to the focus groups and interviews taking place, NLWA and AECOM held a joint meeting to ensure the final discussion guides were capturing the right information to answer the research objectives.

### **3.4 Moderation**

The focus groups and depth interviews were conducted by trained and experienced moderators. The moderator stimulated the discussion using their knowledge of the study topic, with the assistance of the discussion guide, taking the research objectives into consideration.

Throughout the discussion, the moderator introduced different topic areas (based on the discussion guide) to promote discussion and debate. Participants were encouraged to discuss their views within the group and not simply respond to a set of questions posed by the moderator. Participants were asked to give reasons for their opinions and respond to others they may or may not agree with.

### **3.5 Analysis**

All groups and interviews were recorded within Microsoft Teams and then converted to audio files for transcribing. Those transcripts then became the basis of the analysis in the following sections.

## 4. Findings – Resident Focus Groups

### 4.1 Awareness of NLWA

The first task within the focus groups was to understand respondents' awareness of NLWA. Roughly two thirds of respondents were unaware of NLWA and thought more people in the area were also unaware of NLWA.

*“No, I’ve never heard of them”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“No who are they? What do they do? (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

A handful of respondents across the groups had heard of NLWA but were unsure of what their role was as an organisation but could hazard a guess as to what they do.

*“Yeah, I’ve heard of them but cannot tell you what they do”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Are they in charge of like the waste services for the different boroughs, so for like Haringey, for Waltham Forest?” (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I’ve not heard a great deal, but do they deal in waste recycling?” (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

*“But I don’t know what responsibilities theirs are and which are the boroughs. I don’t think anybody does unless you work in the industry”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“Yeah, I just thought it was the different borough councils that had their own, I didn’t think that there was someone above it that controlled it”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

A few respondents knew they were involved in waste management but did not know or understand how NLWA responsibilities sit alongside the individual borough councils.

*“Yeah, it’s like a quango, it oversees waste management, well, it’s for north London, so I’ve no idea what its relationship is with the boroughs”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“Deal with waste, but I don’t know whether it covers like your binmen or whether it just covers recycling centres, I’ve no idea”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“Or is it like a governing body that like makes sure that we’re doing what we need to do and that the councils are doing what they should do”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I assumed that there was somebody coordinating stuff, but no idea what they did or who they are. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

### 4.2 Previous waste management engagement

Given the limited awareness of NLWA, there were only a handful of respondents who had prior knowledge or engagement with NLWA. Two respondents had engaged with NLWA at educational events.

*“I did once just through when I was teaching in a school and I’d spoken to somebody at an event about possibly coming to talk to the children about recycling and rubbish”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, we had someone come into school to talk about recycling to the kids. I remember they were quite engaged on the subject and I wanted to do something similar again but either then funding was not there, or we just weren’t able to engage again to bring them in”. (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

As few respondents were aware of NLWA, they did not understand NLWA’s role with waste management and referred to previous engagement with their local council as their principal contact for waste management.

*“A long time ago, I mean not recently, I mean the last time I did it, they missed a day once, but that’s not a big issue, so I had to call them [the Council], that was just an email and then I remember once, I had to remove a mattress from the house without a car and I think back in the day, NW, there was something called Clarence and Clarence used to remove the council wastage and you were allowed to dispose about two days a year through the Clarence system, but that was a long time ago, to be honest. That’s it, really”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I think Enfield Council contacted me, we had our bins stolen, so we had to contact somebody to get one, but I don’t know if it was them. I think we went through Enfield council”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I think I would just go through your local authority; I wouldn’t even think to contact anyone else”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yeah, I wouldn’t think to contact them NLWA for any reason [to do with waste]”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“It’s really hard to get through to anyone, honestly. If anyone has managed to have conversations with them, then they’re amazing, but it’s really hard to communicate with anyone”. (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

### 4.3 Awareness of Edmonton EcoPark

As awareness of NLWA was limited so too was their awareness of Edmonton EcoPark; very few respondents knew where the site is when first introduced by the moderator.

*“Not really to be honest, I don’t know about it”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I’m not aware of where you mean”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I mean I assume they don’t actually make themselves very, how can I say, they’re not making themselves known in the community, let’s say”. (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

Some respondents guessed where the site is, but they were not confident it was Edmonton EcoPark.

*“Is it near the Coca Cola’s place?” (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“The place with the big chimney down by the, underneath the North Circular?”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Oh, is that the LondonEnergy, is it the LondonEnergy place, yeah, on the way to Ikea?” (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“It’s a very industrial area, you can’t see it, it’s not obviously off the road. I was trying to think, I used to work in a school in Chingford and I can remember seeing in the distance a huge chimney thing in that direction and I’m trying to think, was that the same site or was that a different thing altogether?” (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

A handful of respondents did know where the EcoPark there was at least one person in each group who could explain to the other respondents where the site is.

*“Because when you drive past it there’s a big sign on it and it says LondonEnergy, but originally I didn’t know it was a waste, I didn’t know it was waste, I just thought it was like energy, like supplying power and stuff”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“It’s quite industrial around there, isn’t it, so I just feel it’s just like another factory or yeah, I don’t really take much notice of it, to be honest”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“Yeah, you can always see the smoke from where we live, because you can see, the window of our flat you can see the big chimney and you can see the smoke in the distance”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Yes, it’s the new one, isn’t it, sort of by Picketts Lock, sort of by the back of, near like Ikea. I think it’s new, yeah”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

One respondent knew about the EcoPark because their son had applied for an apprenticeship onsite.

*“The reason why I know about the EcoPark is that my son is looking for apprenticeships and there’s a couple of apprenticeships, so when you’re looking for apprenticeships it comes up with a little map, so then I could identify exactly where they were, so that’s how I’m aware of the EcoPark”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

One respondent thought the name of the Ecopark is misleading.

*“They shouldn’t call it an EcoPark, it’s misleading. And you think you can go there for a family day out, perhaps like the Eden Centre or something. I can see they want to make the thing friendly and whatever, but it’s not a park, it’s clearly not a park. Don’t call it a park, you know what I mean?” (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

## 4.4 Views on the current site

Once all respondents in the group were aware of the site and its location, they were asked what they thought about it being in the area and how it made them feel.

Some respondents felt that the site was needed as the waste needed to go somewhere to be dealt with, even if respondents were not aware of the site prior to these discussions.

### 4.4.1 General views on the site

Respondents were asked their thoughts on the site and what their general views of its objective was.

*"It seems like they are, they're trying to reduce the carbon emissions from what it is now and to use the waste into actually energy, like providing energy". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*"I mean if it's there, it's there. It's there to do the job, it's there to sort out the waste. I think it doesn't affect me so much, because I don't live as close, but if it's there, it's there". (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*"I've got no qualms about it, to be honest, not at all. Rubbish ought to be collected and taken away, that's just a given". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"For me, if you come down past it, past a certain, in a certain direction you could actually see the waste inside the site". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*"It must provide, because it's quite a big site there, isn't it? So, it must be providing something for the local area". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

#### 4.4.2 Concerns about smell from the site

Some respondents who lived closer to the site reported that smells do come from the site. Particularly on days when the weather is warm, or the wind is blowing in the 'wrong' (or a certain) direction.

*"You smell it, don't you?" (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"Yeah, yeah, there's a really strong smell on certain days". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"Yeah, I agree, I think sometimes in the summer you can get some strong smells and just, I don't know, I don't mind it being there. I didn't used to particularly like driving past it and just seeing all the, what I presume is steam coming out, you just kind of worry what you're breathing in as you're kind of going around". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

#### 4.4.3 Concerns about smoke pollution

In addition to the smell, some respondents also referred to the smoke they often saw from the site and how that was a concern as it could be smelt in areas around the site especially on days when it was warm or when the wind was blowing in the wrong direction.

*"I just imagine it does, because they've got a massive big chimney there off the incinerator and when we first moved here there was a really bad smell all the time, every time they used it, but I think they might have altered it slightly, because you don't get that toxic smell anymore that you used to get and you don't seem to see the same level of smoke". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*"I was going to say sometimes you see like plumes of like steam come out, so in my mind they're burning, I'm presuming they're not, but they're possibly burning stuff as well, I don't know". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"I only know that the big incinerator that's kind of near the A406, I just associate that with it. I can see it, across the window and then I used to work in Tottenham, so I used to drive past it every single day and "I've seen it's expanded onto another side of the road where it didn't used to be". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

#### 4.4.4 Impact of the site on respondents

One respondent who lives in one of the areas closest to the site recalled protests about the site.

*“I know because when we first moved here, which was quite a long while ago now there was a lot of protests about it, there were people walking round carrying coffins and saying that they were poisoning everybody and the smell was really bad, but I mean it has improved a hell of a lot recently”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“There are some people in the area that don’t like the site I believe. I’ve seen some articles and negative press. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

Some respondents said the site did not impact them directly and had no view of the site but felt it might affect others.

*“And there’s shops near there, so you sort of think when you’re out shopping in the retail parks, what’s in the air that you’re breathing in, but it’s got to go somewhere I guess”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“And I really don’t know, unless there are residential areas being kind of set up, in which case I’d be pretty annoyed, so I don’t know”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“So, if there are a lot more buildings happening, so if it is causing any kind of pollution or smells, everyone soon might pick up on it. I mean I’m, for example, in Walthamstow, I’m not too far out”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I used to use that area quite a bit, the North Circular and there was always like endless lorries driving in and out of there all day long. You know, every time I went past there were two or three waiting to get into the place, so yeah, it must give quite a bit of employment”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Well, I go down that way, I go to that Pets at Home, it is the vets for my animals, so I actually go there quite a bit at different like times of days and stuff and I’ve never seen any, I’ve never gotten any sort of smell, odd smell when I’ve been there or anything like that, so unless it’s like specific time or night or things like that, all different times of day I’ve gone down there and I’ve never seen anything or any further like issues in that sense, but yeah, because we don’t live in that bit and also it’s kind of like a dead end street as well, it only goes to that place, it doesn’t go anywhere else, so it’s kind of like self-contained from my view of that”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

#### 4.4.5 Views on the current construction

Some respondents had noticed construction work had begun in the area and development had started.

*“Is it, what at the moment alongside it? Yeah, they’ve been doing a hell of a lot of work there for the last sort of year or so, sort of leave a bit next to it, yeah”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I didn’t know, no. Like when you go, like I occasionally go to Ikea and there is building work going on on that side of the road, but I didn’t know it was anything to do with the new energy centre”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

### 4.5 Benefits of the NLHPP project

All respondents were then asked what they think the benefits of the NLHPP project will be. Respondents went on to discuss the following subject topics:

- Employment Opportunities
- Education
- Economy
- Environmental

#### 4.5.1 Employment Opportunities

Many respondents felt the NLHPP would provide great employment opportunities during the development and construction phases and once the site is complete. This response was unprompted by the moderator.

*“I think it will open up a hell of a lot of jobs for people. I think it will make a lot of people a lot more conscious regarding recycling and things like that. I know I have become a lot more conscious with recycling over the years and I do think that will possibly help, especially if you’ve got an education centre doing that. I think it’ll be really helpful”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Yeah, definitely. Yeah, it’s not just the people that will be working in the energy centre, it’s the people that will be involved in actually building it all, so you know, like labourers and stuff like that. So, yeah, it will definitely help with jobs, I think”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I think jobs, the fact that it’s expanding as well, or it appears to be expanding and it gives more opportunity for people to get jobs in the local area”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yeah, I’d second that, apart from jobs, I can’t think quickly of what benefits are about of them just being there, it’s more to do with what are they doing whilst they’re there. So, if they’re there providing jobs for the local community, if they’re there providing knowledge and intel for the local community and highlighting the importance of benefits of regeneration and recycling and waste management, then I think that’s a good thing”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Jobs as well, yeah, yeah, jobs, they’re the main pluses, I would say, but you don’t know, until it’s up and running, you don’t know how it’s going to operate, do you, really?” (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

Several respondents also thought the creation of 100 apprenticeships was a great opportunity for local people and as mentioned above, one of the respondents only knew about the site because their son had applied for an apprenticeship.

*“I think it be really good for the younger teenagers as well, like for apprenticeships, giving them something to do and also yeah, good opportunity for people, for work and I think they should maybe prioritise people that live within the area as well. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I think, sorry, from my point of view I think it’s helped, I mean sort of going back to apprenticeships, but it’s created job opportunities for young children, definitely, like my son and I live in a high rise and we have a lot of bulky waste, which gets built up around the block. It doesn’t look very nice, it’s quite unsightly, every single week, you know, people are throwing out mattresses and broken furniture and stuff like that and I do see the van coming and going, so it’s nice to know, I’m sure it goes there, because I’m in walking distance of the EcoPark, so it’s nice to know where it goes and if I had any bulky waste that I wanted to be taken away, for example, I don’t know if I could, you know, I’d probably contact my borough, but it’s nice to know where it goes anyway”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

## 4.5.2 Education

Respondents felt the new visitor and education centre (EcoPark House) would be a great addition. They felt it would provide an opportunity to engage with schools and educate groups on site. There was agreement in the groups that it would be good for school engagement to increase when the site opens.

*“I do think as well maybe they could link up a bit more with like, with schools and stuff, just so, to kind of educate the younger generation about recycling and things, but I don’t know, I think everything’s a bit difficult at the minute, but I think that could potentially be another benefit of them being in the local areas”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I’ve never really engaged with recycling, but as a teacher, a lot of my kids, no-one comes walking to school, they don’t get it, they don’t understand the long term of effects of what they’re doing, what they’re behaving, you know, they’re told these things and we have a small group of students who go round and do the green part, pick up litter and stuff, but most kids don’t get it, they don’t really care. So, education, especially for local schools, it’s one site in the whole country, but if you get a few schools understanding better what’s going on and why it’s going on, it’s good, really. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“Yes, and I think maybe even for just the children to see that when you put something in a bin it doesn’t just stop there, you know, they’re a bit more knowledgeable with stuff”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

Several respondents felt increasing awareness of the site in the local area, not just among school children, would help increase recycling awareness and educate adults.

*“Yeah, but I think it’s good that people get to learn about waste management, you know, how often rubbish gets picked up, what happens to the bins that are picked up”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I mean as long as they get more involved in the community and communicate more with the people, the locals, I see no reason why they can’t be a success”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, I think people just view it as like the rubbish collection place, so it will maybe kind of improves its reputation a bit”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yeah, I agree with what everyone’s said, I think we struggle here where you can take bulky items, you’ve got to kind of get a book in for the local authority and that can take ages and then it’s just left wherever you can leave it, really. So, I think that would be good and to upcycle things and give people the opportunity to go and get someone else’s stuff, a bit like a non-payable eBay, if you like. I think that’s a good idea and the education stuff”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

## 4.5.3 Boost the local economy

Some respondents felt the site’s presence in the local community could boost the local economy in terms of the development of shopping areas and job opportunities in areas.

*“Well, in terms of the positives, I mean, there’s bound to be more workers, so that should help to boost the economy there, so the shops would get more customers with these guys, because I noticed that when they were doing the stadium all these construction workers in orange and so because of that, because of the influx, I noticed that Sainsburys was always busy, all those shops around there were always busy, so*

*that could be a positive. It's not all bad". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"If they're creating jobs, then definitely, especially in today's market. You know, I think the local area as well, I mean we know the area, it's not particularly affluent, it's quite depressed in some ways, so any opportunity you give young people these days to do something different, then yeah, why not". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"It could end up with more shops being built as well, I guess, around the area". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"There might be more money to develop the retail part". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

#### 4.5.4 Environmental benefits

Several respondents said the new site must have some environmental benefits given the advances in construction and technology compared to when the old site was built. They hoped the new site would generate better and more cost-effective power supplies to the benefit of residents.

*"Well, I think if it reduces the emissions, you know, a substantial amount that would be good and obviously you said there's going to be another recycling plant there as well, which is obviously good for the area". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*"I hope environmental benefits, the fact that, because everything's moved on, from the fact that it would have been such an old plant, that they would have adapted the way that they recycle things, so it might not have so much kind of negative environmental impacts, kind of in the local air, if you like, and I would hope about the smell, because they may have found a way that it can be contained better". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"If it's producing more waste is that helping drive down any kind of domestic household bills or it's still just the same old EDF tariffs? I mean I know that EDF use or claim to use renewable energy sources, but that should bring down the costs in theory or I suppose it's just purely environmental we're talking about". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"Or do you develop new housing, new housing developments, estates or flats, power from this site ... inaudible. That could be a selling point for some people, you know, this flat is powered by renewable energy, directly, 100% and that would attract a different market, other people would be attracted by that, I'd have thought". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

One respondent hoped the new site will be more attractive and fit better within the landscape and the community and be less of an eyesore.

*"Maybe it looks a bit more attractive as well, because it's not pleasant to look at, when you drive past, it's not a scenic part of Edmonton". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

## 4.6 Concerns

Despite the potential benefits, there were a few concerns raised by respondents.

### 4.6.1 Environmental Concerns

A few respondents mentioned how they questioned what environmental impacts the site has on the area.

*“So, I was wondering about the wildlife impact as well, there’s that much construction and the equipment that would be used for all different parts on the site, so how’s it going to stop animals from accidentally eating things that they shouldn’t be or even disturbing current homes that different wildlife have in that area as well”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I guess the, is it the canal that runs down the back there, I think, that could get contaminated, the nice bits of the canal anyway”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

#### 4.6.2 Odour Concerns

As mentioned earlier, some respondents noted that there could be concerns with the smell near to the site.

*“I think I’m going to go with the smell for negativities and just, it was so strong in the summer, when I moved here, people were talking about the smells in the summer and I was thinking what smell is this and when it came I was like okay, this is it, this is the smell and the positive side, I would say the jobs and education. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, because you wouldn’t have your windows open in the summer”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yeah, it’s the wind as well, isn’t it, on certain days, you kind of feel like they’ve had a big collection of rubbish, you can sense it”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“For me, what kind of waste is being disposed of there, how much household, how much industrial, hazardous materials? When you incinerate waste, you’re effectively releasing exhaust gases, flue gases, so how safe is it? There is water, like a lake or a river near it. Does anything leak into there, I was thinking that, because you kept saying river before”? (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

#### 4.6.3 Construction Concerns

Construction noise and air pollution were of concern to residents, especially once they learned about the length of the construction programme.

*“I would imagine pollution and noise from the site will still be there”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Yes, I think that the pollution and all that, that would be negative, noise pollution, so disturb the people and so on, but on the plus side you have the, you do have the apprenticeship things available, you do have the opportunity to kind of boost the economy with all those workers, so there’s something to think about”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, it was just like the demolition of the current site and the impact of that dust and dirt, you know and ten years of rebuilding, it’s quite a long time if you live in that area, so I think obviously it will get better, but for the local community to have to endure ten years and again as I say, it’s just about, you know, when you’re near a construction site, it’s quite overpowering sometimes with the dust and the dirt and the fumes and you know, so I think that would be like a negative thing for me, because it’s over quite a long period of time”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

Some respondents said that construction could be of a concern and respondents highlighted several concerns linked to this including:

- Increase in noise pollution;
- Increase in air pollution from the site construction;
- Increase in air pollution from the increased traffic on to site during and post construction; and
- Road layout and access feasibility to the site.

*“Especially if there’s access to domestic as well as industrial waste, so I can go down there and dump some stuff off, that’s even more traffic. From my point of view, from what I can remember there’s only one way in and one way out, which is not really a problem for me, but it might be a problem for them, finding other access routes, to kind of spread the traffic congestion a bit more, if it is an issue”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“So, there’s more cars and stuff on the road, that’s more congestion, we talked about traffic and traffic calming in the area is a nightmare, you’re just adding more traffic on the road”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“It must be, it can’t be 100% clean in certain processes, so is it an efficient solution in dealing with the pollution levels, what I’m getting the pollution levels won’t be so high. You were saying before about using new technologies these days, understanding it better, we can really reduce pollution levels, even though we’ve got a bigger factory or a bigger site. More cars on the road, mind you, there’s going to be a lot more traffic going into and the North Circular’s hell anyway on a good day. If you’ve got more lorries coming down the North Circular, especially on that roundabout, have you ever been on the roundabout, you haven’t been on it? But people who use that roundabout, it’s not the friendliest one to use, to be honest, especially in rush hour. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“Yeah, I just think where it’s based it’s all such small roads, it’s like it won’t be able to take all the traffic of the lorries and people trying to commute as well”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, there’s bound to be and there’ll be temporary lights up somewhere that will impact something”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I think the condition of where it is is quite a through route, so people would kind of quite likely to go back and forth to get to Tottenham or Edmonton and vice versa and on the A406 it is quite congested anyway”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“Yes, because it’s totally created by the lorries. Obviously, they’ve got to have access, but I think there should be a little bit more care and attention paid to it, because it’s a bit ruthless”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

Some respondents were concerned about potential cost implications, asking if they would pay more council tax to fund the development for example.

*“I’m wondering about the cost, who’s paying for this? Is it the taxpayers which is why, you know, is its council tax funding, is that why we’re being asked, because our council tax is going to go up to pay for this? Like where’s the money coming from to pay for this, you know, ridiculously large project that’s going on for ten years. Are the people in the local area going to receive some solar panels so that they get some help towards the cost of their living, because they’re living on the site or, you know, so I think actually is the impact to us going to be we live in a greener environment, but also it’s going to*

*cost us and it's the impact to the people who live in that area, that they live in a better environment and they're going to have, you know, less of a cost implication on their energy". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"I was thinking hasn't it cost a lot of money to put it there and how has it been funded and if there's already something there, who's funding to put the new one there?" (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

*"I think that's a really interesting point, it's just like to invest behind this, are we sacrificing somewhere else in the local borough? Because I think you're right, I think it will then, if it starts to impact other services, to be able to fund this, then it does impact us". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"And have they already got most of the funding, how much funding have they got already, you know, it's a ten-year project. Obviously, they need x amount of money to start the project, but then they're not going to currently have all of the money for a ten-year project now". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"Also, I'm not sure if the cost of the project will be passed down to the residents of the borough via council tax increasing". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"The thing is, when you've got really big heavy lorries driving up the road, it's going to cause a lot of potholes as well and then whether that is ever going to get fixed as well is another completely different story, because it's not just the initial however many years it's going to take, it's the after years to fix the roads that they've damaged, getting into their access points as well". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

## 4.7 Mitigation of construction impacts

Respondents were asked how they thought their concerns could be mitigated:

- **Local Employment:** some respondents said it was important the development:
  - ensured that employment opportunities went to the right people; and
  - ensured that local people benefited from this site.

*"Yeah, I feel like to maybe have, maybe some sort of driver you decide you're going to invite a certain amount of people from local areas to the facility for like job opportunities, maybe just interviews or maybe doing like some sort of recruitment drive would be quite good, because I feel like a lot of people don't know that the facilities probably exist or will exist, so they might also miss out on that opportunity, just from not knowing, so I think that would be a good idea". (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*"I mean an increase in jobs would be quite beneficial for the area, but I do wonder, how will it be marketed like to local people, will it be marketed to what kind of people, whether it will be through maybe like the job centre route or even there are like charities that help with employment or even through like housing associations and through the council, stuff like that. So, that's what I would be interested to know". (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

- **Consultation:** a few respondents felt NLWA should reassure local communities about the environmental impacts of the site and show that all steps have been taken to reduce any negative impact during construction.

*"They could do like consultations with residents to see how they feel and provide feedback. So that if people have got like questions, if they're concerned about levels*

*of pollution, they can be made aware of how they're looking to keep these at a low". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*"I'd guess something like, you know, promises on air quality and pollution and anything, the change in that, making sure that that doesn't affect the area or the kind of local environment to it. I guess something maybe about the noise as well, knowing that that would be in kind of acceptable ranges within acceptable hours, maybe". (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

- **Site access:** respondents highlighted site access, during and after construction as reasons for concern, including:
  - Traffic to site during construction;
  - Impact on traffic in the surrounding areas;
  - Traffic to site post-construction; and
  - Access for jobs when completed (i.e. will the transport links be sufficient or reliant on car).

*"Or maybe develop the road system so it's not as bad". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"And then potentially the same with the traffic as well, if you've got lorries going out at all times of the day, you know, it'd be good to know when that is, I suppose or the minimal effect that could have". (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*"Maybe it might improve transport links, just that little bit of the hub, that part, because there's two buses that go alongside of it, it isn't a very nice place to wait for a bus or anything". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"I think the traffic created by the building of the new site, you can't really do anything about that, because it's going to go on and obviously they need to do that to build the thing, so although it's going to be a bit of a pain in the arse you can't really get away from that". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

Overall, respondents felt there should be more transparency and that information should be more easily accessible and not just available on the project website. They thought if they were more transparent then this would reassure local people about the impact of the development on their lives, during and after construction. More detail about the type of information and how people would like to receive it can be found in Section 4.8.

*"I think it's about being like as transparent as possible and having, not just like going well, it was on the website for people to find it. It's about putting it out there, like as I said about even just like handing out leaflets at a market and things like that. Anyone can go, well, we had it on our website, but who knows to look at it, I mean not a lot of us knew actually it existed, so you'd never know that they had a website to go and look at anyway. So, yeah, being as transparent as possible and handing out that information to people, instead of making it that people have to find it". (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*"Yeah, I think they need to be aware of the concerns that people have with the building of it and they need to take steps to be able to reassure people, because ultimately you don't want everyone getting really annoyed with it and like as Graham was saying, people protested before. So, it doesn't create a great environment in the community". (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

One respondent suggested the lack of awareness means people they do not know if the EcoPark is leading the way in terms of 'eco stuff' and this should be better communicated to the local community.

*“I’ve not really got a perspective on whether, you know, this is something loads of councils and authorities are doing, are we ahead, you know, because I think that’s a really positive story if we are leading the way in London or nationally, I think there’s something about kind of being at the forefront of eco stuff. But again, I’ve got no idea, I’ve got no idea if we’re playing catch up here or not?” (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

For some respondents, a lack of knowledge about the process and the site means they do have concerns because they cannot make an informed decision about the development and felt increased awareness could help to reduce the concerns.

*“I guess I don’t know enough about the process of actually recycling and doing it. Like I mentioned the incinerator before, I think there must be by-products of kind of making energy. It can’t be perfectly like carbon neutral or anything like that. I don’t know, but that would be my understanding”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“It seems like a very positive, progressive thing to do, so it’s kind of like, well, yeah, I’d expect you to be thinking along these lines. There’s just a niggle for me, it’s just are there any risks involved”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“And also like from a, just an average person, I’ve got no idea what you just said to me in terms of how big is that, how much of an impact, is it a drop in the ocean, you know, don’t just give me big stats, kind of give it to me in a way that I understand. You know, does it fuel something for a year to come for this many residents, what does that look like, because at the moment it’s like is that just a drop in the ocean or is that really going to make a big difference, you know, just to get a sense of what it means”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

## 4.8 Information and communication

Respondents were asked how they would like to receive communications from NLWA in general but also about the NLHPP and how they should have access to that information.

*“I think it’d be good if they done some kind of marketing campaign, just to inform people or how long it’s going to be, what effect it will have on that area and just try to reassure everybody basically that it’s not going to impact everybody too much or if it is what’s going to impact us. We just need to be given more information really”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Just like if they were doing a redevelopment plan within, like they’re doing in Edmonton, they notify the residents there to let them know exactly what’s going on and step by step and so forth. So, it’s just about informing people and keeping people informed really, I think”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I guess if you haven’t really heard of, I’d never really heard of it beforehand, I guess if they could post letters maybe, just to kind of inform people of what’s happening to what’s going on, just to kind of make sure that everyone around the area is aware, rather than it just kind of happening and if you know about it, then you know it”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

Respondents felt the following platforms would be best:

- **Council website:** Respondents felt this is a website people are already familiar with and they go to for other services. However, some respondents debated that information on a website will only be found if you look for it and know to look for it.

*“I think maybe council websites are a good one, because people often go on their council website to maybe pay council tax, to pay rent or to apply for, you know, parents applying for schools or something like that. It’s not too intrusive, it just could be, you know, there. Maybe posters at the bus stop as well, yeah”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“Have some pictures of workers and what they’re doing, have an insight, what it looks like inside”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I guess my reservation would be that if there was something big that affected a lot of people, that it was just, it felt like it was buried on a website that you wouldn’t know to check, I’d kind of worry about that. So, perhaps, if there’s like FAQs on that site that says, you know, what’s going to happen and what people’s concerns are and how that’s going to be announced, like how it’s going to be fixed, if something short like that could be posted out a bit wider and you know, catch people who aren’t necessarily on the look-out for it, that might be useful”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

- **Social media:** Others referenced social media platforms and local community social media sites as ways to provide information about the EcoPark and to educate locals about what the new site will bring to their community and local area.

*“Social media is a good one”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“You can’t beat social media, everyone’s on it!” (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

- **Leaflets and mailings:** Some respondents were concerned that not everyone is online. Therefore, leaflets and mail outs to those people that are likely to be most impacted by the development e.g. people who live closest to the site were considered important.

*“Trying to reach people older, like my mum doesn’t have a smart phone, she doesn’t have wi-fi, she wouldn’t know how to use a computer, she doesn’t really want to know, but yeah, so like a leaflet through the door, she loves mail. A lot of people don’t like circulars or leaflets and then that contributes to recycling and it’s not very green, but for a lot of older, you know, older people they don’t mind. I know my mum doesn’t mind leaflets, so yeah”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“And it’s not very difficult to let the people, the locals know, people living in Tottenham, people living in Edmonton, it’s not hard to let them know what’s going on. For example, there could be things in Sainsburys, Tesco, because everybody shops, a lot of people shop in these places around here, the big Sainsbury’s and places like that and it’s not difficult to give them leaflets, just to let them know what’s going on”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“I mean for elderly people, they don’t really, some may not use social media platforms”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

- **Local press:** Some respondents mentioned the local newspaper as a way of communicating and promoting the site.

*“I think maybe the local newspaper, but also like some of the local authorities and housing associations they have like almost like newsletters for residents, so I think that would be a good way, because most people do, even if they just have a quick flick of it, they do normally have a look at what is going on in their kind of local area”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“I would have said to put it in the local newspaper for me”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“I think putting it in like, is it the Haringey People, does that still exist, like a local newspaper or the free newspapers, I think Waltham Forest do like an email thing that they send round to residents, so putting something in that as well, so you know what’s happening”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

- **Live consultation events:** Some respondents said they hoped that some engagement had already taken place in the community closest to the site, so that people know who is responsible and what the potential impact is, and to give people the opportunity to get assurance should they need it. Respondents would like some engagement to take place to inform local residents.

*“Just, you know, you just want someone who’s got some responsibility to go out there and say this is what the impact’s going to be and answer questions, whatever you want to call it”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“Well, basically the bottom line is they will need the support of the locals, so they don’t feel like they’re being left out. It would be in there, you know, it would be nice for them to have the support of people, yeah”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“It sounds a bit like it needs to be done how when they were building the stadium, you kind of knew what was going to happen and you saw what it was going to look like, nobody knows what this is going to look like, there hasn’t been any kind of, like you were saying about pictures being sent round to say this is what it’s going to be like, this is what’s going to happen, nobody knows anything”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“You could do it on this, couldn’t you, just have an open public meeting on Zoom. I don’t need to know because I live three miles away, but people in a certain area do. Leaflets, posters, whatever, but announce an open public meeting where people can answer questions and concerns”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

## 4.9 Conclusions

Only a few respondents were aware of the EcoPark across the groups but they were also surprised by the lack of awareness and knowledge of the EcoPark, particularly, as it is a positive news story around employment and the potential benefits to the local economy. The EcoPark’s general contribution to helping the area be more environmentally friendly was also welcomed.

*“If you’re talking about, you know, it’s all to do with the environment and environmental awareness, you would have thought something like that would probably have a higher profile in society. I’m surprised that after all these years and we’ve been talking about the environmental a lot over the last decade or two, that we’re still, as a group of professional adults kind of clueless or unaware of it and that’s a shame in some ways”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I guess the people would be able to use it as well, whereas previously it’s just where the rubbish goes, whereas now, we’ve got, not that we don’t have a use for it, but why would we kind of go there, whereas this in the future we’ll be able to, then they definitely need to increase awareness”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

Several concerns were raised, including:

- Traffic (during and post construction)
- Noise during construction

- Smell from the site – construction and waste
- Cost of the construction

*“I mean I think it’s obviously going to cost a lot of money, so they’re doing it over ten years, so obviously there’s going to be technology involved and you know, what they’re doing is not something that’s not actually just going to last for now, it’s going to last for ten years and more to come, you know, so I think there’s probably a lot of technology going into it. I like the fact they’re going to be using the same amount of space, but more efficiently and effectively, you know, they’re not kind of taking over green land or, you know, anything like that. So, they’re kind of the positives I think as well”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

*“I was just going to say it’s kind of swings and roundabouts, because this increasing more jobs, which is a benefit, more people will move into the area, which could then put more of a burden on like doctor’s surgeries, schools, budgets that are already tight with not enough places, but then it kind of swings back the other way, that there’ll be more people in the area who would spend money, so it kind of, it’s the kind of happy medium, really”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

Most residents, whilst recognising the benefits and raising some concerns about the site, felt the EcoPark had been there for some time and they had been unaffected. They didn’t therefore feel it would affect them going forward in the future.

*“So, I guess it hasn’t made a difference particularly to me not knowing who exactly the North London Waste Authority were”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“Yeah, because I think people think of that kind of sites as places that we can’t go, it’s just for, you know, the staff, not for our use, so”. (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*“I think to me it doesn’t, it hasn’t really mattered much because I haven’t received a bad service so far, so I haven’t had a reason to know, okay, what is that site”. (Group 3, Residents within 3-mile radius (South A406))*

*“But it’s also like, you know, we have no awareness of this site and it has existed for years without it actually impacting our lives and it’s been really clear on how is it going to impact us and do we actually need to know. What will determine the level of urgency of this information and to who and at the moment it’s just information, unless it does impact me, in which case I would want that information given to me in a much more obvious way”. (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/ Waltham Forest))*

Most respondents thought more publicity about the EcoPark would appease those residents with concerns.

*“If it’s a facility that can interest schools and it’s a place to actually go and learn and, you know, make children aware, because obviously it’s the next generation that we’re looking to and if it’s giving job opportunities and apprenticeships, that’s also a really positive thing. Do I personally need to know about it? Yes, maybe, but would I go there, probably not, because of the proximity.” (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

*“For the area, yes, if it’s bringing jobs to the area, that’s always a positive. Education for the local school children or for not the local school children if it’s bringing people outside the area into the area for the right reasons and if it means that the energy within Walthamstow is, you know, more carbon free, then it’s going to be a good thing. So, yeah, it’s definitely a positive, just not necessarily for living in Barnet”. (Group 5, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Barnet))*

## 4.10 Future thoughts

When the new EcoPark opens, many respondents said publicity about the new recycling centre will be key to its success as people will need to know that the new centre is there, when they can go there, what they can take and what can be recycled. Educating people about the benefits and why they should separate their waste could encourage people to engage more with the idea of recycling.

*“I think there is, yeah, I mean if they could do, if they could make people more aware of that, then I think that would be a benefit, because people would know what they can recycle, what they can't recycle”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“If you look at recycling plants as well, sites, the biggest problem I have is that some of them don't take certain stuff, so you've got one that doesn't take electricals and some won't take cardboard, sorry, wood. So, it means you've got to separate everything, that can be, they're not that close together, so that can, I can see it being annoying. You know, I remember years ago, I'm now going back twenty years, but where I used to live there was a site there and you literally used to just go and throw your rubbish in in a bag, in a black bag and it didn't matter what was in it, they'd take the whole lot, but now it all has to be separated, because some don't take certain items, which is a bit frustrating”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

Respondents felt that by increasing engagement with young people at school and inviting them to the new Education Centre will help to educate future generations about recycling and what happens to waste when it leaves the house.

*“I do think it will help for our future generation, because I know I have tried to make my children a lot more conscious when it comes to recycling and using things that are environmentally friendly as well. So, I do think that helps and I think going to these places where they can do like a school trip or something and find out things about how they're going to use it, things in the future and what there is to do. I know my son has come to me and said, oh, I can't eat this because it's this and this is just by things that he's learnt at school and I think if they do implement things like that at school, it will make a massive difference”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Would they be having like an outreach thing of going to schools to teach kids about what they do and the benefit of it all?” (Group 4, Residents in 3+ mile radius (Enfield/Waltham Forest))*

Some respondents felt general information on recycling was needed as they felt not everyone knows what is recyclable or what can be recycled. Some felt recycling is still a relatively new concept and not everyone does it at all or don't do it as much as they can so education and awareness of recycling in general is required.

*“I definitely think it's the education a well, they haven't really put out a lot of information regarding, like everyone's saying regarding the recycling. I live in a flat and I'd say probably about eight years ago we received the food waste bins, the little small food waste bins and some bags, but we've never known where that's meant to go, is that meant to go with the communal waste, how often it gets picked up, who picks it up, it just doesn't have any information on it and then ever since then we've never received any extra bags and we haven't had any further. So, it's quite confusing, we haven't been told anything, we haven't been given any information as everyone said, what's recyclable and what's not”. (Group 2, Residents within 3-mile radius (North A406))*

*“Yeah, I think they do need to communicate with us, you know, maybe events or maybe just some way of engaging with the people, so that, you know, we know what's going on, we know how to perhaps have specific information on maybe how to get rid of bulky*

*waste or certain things. They do need to engage with, it would be nice, they don't have to, but it would be nice for them to engage with the people more, I think". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

*"I think educate as well, relaunch and educate, so we can kind of see, getting more understanding of how we can help the environment and then see how they're helping the environment, so it's kind of like full circle". (Group 1, Residents within 1.5-mile radius of the NLHPP)*

## 5. Findings - Stakeholders

We completed focus groups and depth interviews with a range of environmental stakeholders and borough stakeholders. For the purpose of anonymity but to differentiate between stakeholders, any quotes in the following chapter are identified as one of two types of stakeholder:

1. Environmental Stakeholder – Environmental organisations who have partnered up with or been subcontracted by NLWA to conduct work on their behalf
2. Borough Stakeholder – All Borough specific Technical Officers, Directors of Finance and Directors of Environment

### 5.1 Relationship with NLWA

Stakeholders were asked to describe their relationship with NLWA and about their day-to-day role.

**Community engagement:** Some of the stakeholders linked up with NLWA when the opportunities arose to engage with members of the community in the local area.

*“I would say that they certainly seem quite interested in our take on electricals, as a way to inspire people in their community and you know, just recently, I think just this week they released an interview to one of our staff members, as part of London Circular Week of kind of highlight us, like inspirational, the work that we do and so I think that they seem to want to promote this approach to prevent more electrical waste, in terms of comms.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

*“They have tried to run community repair events themselves, which I think it’s not necessarily their role to do that and I’ve already shared this with them and secretly they’re already like thinking, planning to do it differently, more supporting existing community groups and I think they can play a really important role in helping to communicate and signpost opportunities to their constituents, more than to be running themselves some activities on, specifically on, in this case, repair and reuse.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

Some stakeholders highlighted the need to collaborate with or be commissioned by NLWA to reach joint objectives and this enabled them to engage with the communities jointly with NLWA.

*“I think we collaborate or are commissioned to do work for them, which, you know, our charitable objectives are very much aligned to what they’re trying to achieve as an organisation. Obviously, they’re working to support their members, but also right down to resident level, so that’s where we can kind of really support their work and add value around that kind of sustainable behaviour change.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

*“So, yeah, a key partner in those boroughs of London to help with making London greener, more sustainable and less wasteful. So, you know, that’s one big part, as I mentioned earlier in what we’re trying to achieve ourselves. So yeah, both from sort of funding and partnership. I would say, you know, not as a funding partner, if that makes sense, so they’re not just giving a cheque to go, you know, these guys do some good things, where we’ve worked with them it’s very much co-designed programmes, which, you know, meet their needs, meet our needs and aspirations as well.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

*“The North London Waste Authority are kind of like the key funders, so for in terms of [redacted], over the years they’ve got involved with kind of textiles, reuse projects, sustainability, I think it was a clothes swap and give and take and things like that. So, yeah, in terms of [redacted]’s capacity and [redacted], yeah, the North London Waste Authority is a core partner, really.”*  
(Environmental Stakeholder)

**Financial governance:** Some of the borough stakeholders work with NLWA on a financial level or long-term strategic level rather than a day to day operational level and the financial aspects are a key part of their work.

*“I’m the director of resources and my involvement in NLWA is more to do on the finance and money side of things as opposed to kind of operations, because directors of environment are also involved and obviously members are involved too, from a decision making perspective. I would say over the last four or five years the involvement has been very specifically about the rebuild of the eco park or rather reprovision of the eco park.”* (Borough Stakeholder)

Some of the borough representatives had been involved in various roles within the borough and therefore have had different types of involvement with NLWA over the years and brought this wealth of experience to the interview.

*“I’ve been in this role for just over a year, I’ve been at [the borough] for about, I don’t know, seventeen, eighteen years, mostly in waste services, environment services and my sort of current remit covers environment services as [other person in the group] highlighted, highways management, transport strategy, building control, air quality, sustainability”.* (Borough Stakeholder)

## 5.2 Stakeholder views of NLWA

All stakeholders were asked what they think about NLWA as an organisation and their views on them as an organisation to work with.

*“So, they’re not like a key, like a huge part of our work, but not because of anyone’s choice. It’s like we collaborate when there is an opportunity and in the past we’ve benefited from their community fund, but yeah, they play a role in contributing to communicate to Londoners about this type of lifestyle changes linked to our work.”*  
(Environmental Stakeholder)

*“Yeah, I think, I mean I guess we’ve seen both sides, we’ve been supported through funding to do, you know, events and engagement, but we’ve also been kind of contracted, so there’s a slightly different relationship there. Yeah, they’ve actually been really great to work with, they’re very clear on their expectations, you know, the kind of quality, the branding, the messaging, you know, they’re very kind of clear. They don’t leave us thinking we don’t really know what they mean or what they want. So, we’ve found them to be a very good steer as a client to what they want, you know, from these events, but also listening and learning, you know, they’ve put this work out to tender because they want a sort of specialist organisation to help them with communicating and sharing. So, they’re responsive to what we can bring and the added value we can bring and the ideas that we have brought”.* (Environmental Stakeholder)

*“When I started at Waste Watch, the North London Waste Authority was an existing client, so I think that relationship had gone back some time even before I was there and then through the years I guess it was varied as in the quantity of work we delivered to the North London Waste Authority, some years it would be a lot of pieces that they put out to tender or competitive and that we’ve won and some years it’s been less and then more recently we just finished a campaign around nappy contamination and working with North London Authority to try and address that in a more strategic way*

*through lobbying nappy manufacturers and I guess that is a slightly different relationship, because that was us. The other example was North London want to do a piece of work and we are commissioned to do it for them, the nappy contamination campaign was more, we knew what we wanted to do and we were looking for partners who wanted to get on board. So, North London essentially were one of a number of local authorities or waste partnerships that we worked with.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

### 5.2.1 As a Partner Organisation

Some of the Environmental stakeholders who worked in partnership with NLWA knew who they needed to liaise with and work with in NLWA to collaborate on work.

*“And I feel like I would know who to go to, who to work with. I guess, you know, you partner with an organisation if you’re strengthened by the collaboration, so sometimes there’s not, like if you feel like you’ve got the skills and the expertise to do something there’s not a need, necessarily a need to look outside of your organisation. But I certainly feel like I know who to go to.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

However, for some of those stakeholders, they made the point that everyone is stretched thin now and because of the current times, collaboration has been made harder with NLWA.

*“Sense of who’s working on what, so I think it’s definitely made collaboration harder. Obviously, everyone has been a bit stretched and collaboration is also a little bit one of those things that can sometimes be a nice to have when there’s the opportunity to really think what would build this. So yeah, I’d like to, I’m interested to see what we can do to kind of bolster collaboration, once life returns to some degree of normality.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

## 5.3 Information on and from NLWA

Communication was a subject topic mentioned by all groups during this research for several reasons including:

**Communication channels between NLWA and stakeholders are not always clearly defined:** Some respondents felt communication channels between NLWA and the stakeholders were not always clearly defined

*“Whether they’ve even got the right people at the right meetings, discussions are taking place in one set of meetings and actually it should have been in the meeting that I chair, but it’s in the comms meeting and that’s what I mean, it’s very much comms focussed, we’re not always sort of technical officers in the comms meeting, and our comms officers probably don’t know whether something is technical.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“Often I’ll get something from the chief exec, that was the director of finance, why am I hearing this for the first time from the director of finance when this is something that we could have actually had an input into? There just doesn’t ever seem to be enough discussion, it’s very much divided and conquer.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“Or what they’re planning to do in the future, just a month ahead, but again you see that might be discussed at the NLWA comms borough meeting, which we’re not part of and the comms person that attends that from my borough is, you know, he works in the comms team, he’s not going to understand the detail. So, he might not take away the right things from it, which would be the same, similar comments with his junior officer.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Some respondents felt different people from the same organisations and NLWA attended different meetings and therefore some consistency was lost as the different groups did not necessarily talk to each other or know to talk to each other.

*“So I guess I’m not involved on an operational level on a day to day within NLWA, like I don’t access London Energy and things like that because we’ve got contract managers that do, but I probably have the same level of input as others really, but it’s more strategic and then there’s some officers in my team access at different levels, so one of my officers will go to the waste minimisation meeting and one of them will go to, I don’t know what they call it now, but it used to be the 50% Group and so on and so forth to deal with coms issues and things like that. (Borough Stakeholder)”*

A number of stakeholders mentioned that whilst NLWA had historically had a low staff turnover, in recently years they felt there had been more of a staff turnover and changes in staff had not always been well communicated meaning stakeholders were not always contacting the most appropriate person.

*“If they could send out a structure chart, just with the new person’s contact details, when anybody new changes they put a new person in, take the old person out, that would be good. There’s certainly been a few personnel changes in the last two years, before that it was very static, but there have been quite a lot of changes and even some of the new people who’ve come in have only been there a short while and they’ve changed again, so I don’t think that has been communicated properly.” (Borough Stakeholder)”*

*“I was just going to say, so there have certainly been some, within the last couple of months new starters at NLWA that I don’t know who they are”. (Borough Stakeholder)”*

**Conflicting strategies and messages between stakeholders and NLWA can lead to mixed messaging been delivered to the public which is detrimental to all parties’ reputations and does not encourage public trust in the decisions being made and displayed:** Respondents felt when stakeholders and NLWA are not communicating a unified message, it can result in a conflicting strategies or messages and that affects everyone.

*“That’s something that sometimes I struggle with, because I think, everyone interprets things differently, fine, I interpret something and then actually I don’t know and I think why have they done that and I think it just stays with me and perhaps actually they didn’t mean it in that manner, but I didn’t know that and I think that’s going to go absolutely against what we are saying here in [my borough] and now we look a bit silly because we’re not unified and so on and so forth, so I think that would be really advantageous moving forward.” (Borough Stakeholder)”*

*“Just to add maybe the point as well, it’d be good to know what, when they do things like that what their end goal is, what they hope to achieve from it?” (Borough Stakeholder)”*

*“So sometimes like individual objectives of some of these companies start butting up against, like the overall strategic objective of what we’re trying to achieve, which is ultimately keeping the cost as low as possible, when having the most effective waste disposal process etc, etc. So, that’s quite inefficient and negative.” (Borough Stakeholder)”*

Some stakeholders felt that the long-term strategic messages were communicated well, the day-to-day items were not always and these messages, which they still feel is important are missed.

*“Yes, so I think they’re quite good at keeping us updated, in our future vision is to communicate this to residents and we’re put a coms plan into place and this is how we’re going to do it, NLWA is going to lead on it and we’re going to do this, this and*

*this, but they're not very good at communicating some of the day to day stuff." (Borough Stakeholder)*

*"Kind of a difficult one on that one, because I think a lot of our time for the last three years, four years has really been spent on the capital programme, the infrastructure that's going up. It's a huge piece of work, it is taking up a lot of the North London Waste Authority's time. I suppose after that then the conversation is usually about finances and the levies that impacts every borough and then after that will come down to operational issues. There has been a few operational things that have come up that are different with different boroughs and how that affects, whether it's contamination rates or whether it's recycling rates or ease of access in and out of a site but they seem to be in the background a lot more now." (Borough Stakeholder)*

However, one environmental stakeholder highlighted there is sometimes a gap in the communication and information does not always filter down to the right people. On occasion they felt if they had been aware of something in advance such as a campaign or new policy, then they could have aligned their campaign and made the message twice as powerful.

*"I guess just in terms of sometimes what they're kind of working on, so for example you know, they're doing the hashtag bin [insert specific hashtag here], which is all about reducing contamination from recycling and then you've got the reusable scheme as well. Like sometimes they don't tell me that they're launching these kinds of things. So, I think there's just a little bit of like a gap in communication with relevant project partners who might be doing or achieving similar goals." (Environmental Stakeholder)*

**Lack of information and communication can cause frustrations amongst stakeholders as some felt they are receiving information late and must react in an efficient way which creates work and can cause unforeseen consequences or reactions on other elements of their work:** A couple of stakeholders felt when communications were missed, the time spent they spent trying to "figure out" what was happening which is an inefficient way of working for both NLWA and the stakeholders as the example below highlights.

*"It's just extraordinary the amount of officer time that's spent filling in the gaps in the information basically. It's so inefficient in the way that we have to find a spreadsheet from two years ago and try and work out what's going on because we can't get the information ourselves, and stuff like that." (Borough Stakeholder)*

One stakeholder mentioned that on occasion NLWA have responded to queries or requests for information from members of the public with a high level, promotional message rather than answering the specific question or providing the facts requested and this can cause some mistrust from the public as they focus on other things connected to their reputation and "big wins" rather than the facts that the public want to hear.

*"There is an issue with the NLWA and it feeds into the discussion about comms. Comms are always trying to big up the Authority rather than saying the facts. The Authority doesn't really get involved in national, there is a lot of stuff happening in national policy which the NLWA always does its own thing, it has a huge amount of resources and it does spend a lot of money on overheads above and beyond the actual core business of managing waste, but it doesn't really contribute anything to these national conversations or even London wide conversations, and it always just does its own thing and big's itself up, states the obvious and says that others are.. "We're more ambitious than others" and that plays into the comms around the energy recovery facility. It's always "We're doing the best, it's always the best," rather than just stating the facts." (Borough Stakeholder)*

One respondent reported receiving information via third parties rather than directly from NLWA which they found frustrating.

A couple of respondents noted that working in a partnership is not always straightforward and that relationship can become difficult if information is not communicated effectively between NLWA and the boroughs.

*“This is absolutely key, we spend millions of pounds with them each year so the relationship has to be open, it has to be trustworthy, it has to be timely and all of those things at the moment, I don’t think are there.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“Partnership working is a really messy organic thing and you can say if you don’t trust people you can say and things like that. It’s much better being messy organic and trying to build that trust rather than always trying to stage manage and formalise everything because it really does annoy people if it’s very clear that you’ve sat on it until you’ve got your line up basically.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Lastly, a couple of respondents recognised in the last year, NLWA has faced challenges getting messages out to the public due to the constant changing environment around COVID-19.

*“I think for all of us, the last year has been hugely challenging and like many other people as well, but simply capacity wise, because of the challenges that it’s thrown up, not just across our waste services, but probably many other services. So, engaging with the public has been ongoing and constant with many messages, clearly like health messages being right at the front, but there’s a lot of different service changes that has taken place, that’s needed messaging to get out to the public, which clearly you run the risk of them just being diluted down, because there’s so many other public health messages, Government messages, social care messages.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

## 5.4 NLWA compared to other organisations in the same sector or industry

Stakeholders were asked what they thought of NLWA compared to other organisations in the same sector. Some stakeholders felt they were not getting as much information as they expected based on other their experience with other organisations.

*“So I worked for seventeen years doing waste disposal as well as waste collections, so I’m coming at it from a bit of an understanding from NLWA, and there are certain things that I don’t think that we’re getting enough information about the disposal side, nor do I think that they’re getting enough information from a collection side. Other organisations similar to NLWA I think tend to communicate a little better” (Borough Stakeholder)*

One respondent felt the NLWA and their organisation were aligned in terms of the messages they wanted to convey more so than with other agencies or organisations they had worked with.

*“I think that there are a lot of, there’s a lot of potential for moving away from like a conversation specifically on electrical waste and more into piloting and growing work on electrical reuse and in any case, as much as possible filtering out counterintuitively perhaps like what might flow otherwise into stream waste into, yeah, supporting the reuse economy more prominently, so that’s a general trend and I think one that we, North London Waste Authority, because it understands some of the key issues around it, we hope it might be more proactive in that area in the future. It’s kind of a problem that we see across the board with the majority of waste authorities, if not, all of them.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

One respondent went a step further to suggest that if the waste authorities worked together more than some efficiencies and strategies could work better for all involved.

*“From a local authority’s point of view, it’s only really the waste authorities that are particularly interested in waste prevention. You know and that’s why you see North London as a huge disposer of waste of having that huge interest in waste prevention and I just wonder what more could be achieved with the waste authorities working together. So, for example funding research around waste prevention and insights into those behaviours and actually if the waste authorities were working together, then that reduces the cost per body.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

## 5.5 Current projects with NLWA

Many respondents noted that the NLHPP is dominating current discussion between boroughs and NLWA in many of their meetings.

*“All our meetings at the moment seem to be discussing the plant. It is dominating both internal and external press and discussions as there is so much pressure on us to get it right.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“I think through the, in the time I’ve been here, probably the main focus of everything with the waste authority has been centred around the new facility, for obvious reasons, the size and scale of that project. I do think that probably, and colleagues might agree, that that is a huge distraction to possibly other areas that we, as a group might want to look at as sort of longer term strategies for waste recycling, how we deal with what we collect, because I think it’s a lot, it’s not all meetings are dominated by the new facilities or works, they are so large in scale and far reaching that it just subsumes all of our meetings.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Other respondents went further to suggest that the NLHPP dominating discussion is at the expense of other day-to-day services and only urgent issues were being addressed and not the long-term vision.

*“Some of our day-to-day needs seem to be being left behind because so much is being directed towards the success of the NLHPP instead.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“Yes, like if this is the business we have to discuss, we have to discuss it, but I suppose it’s just I would like to think that there is still the horizon scanning happening from the authority, so we’re not so focused on this that we’re tunnel vision and don’t see what’s coming down the pipeline.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

A couple of respondents felt financial decisions were not being fully communicated with current projects and that makes things a lot more difficult for directors of finance in their roles etc.

*“I mean we pay for it, so if we weren’t paying for it, it wouldn’t happen, but NLWA do lead on it. I mean so one negative that I have kind of just remembered is the London Energy Limited, I think it’s called, the sub company of NLWA and it’s a wholly uncomfy, but there’s some weirdness about their operating deficit and how it’s funded. I mean it’s all very circular and oh, like there was a transfer of assets from there to NLWA and that was all very complicated, so I guess the negatives in kind of these standalone entities is that it makes it quite inefficient, quite complicated in terms of just getting transactions completed.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

## 5.6 Improvements required/ Next steps

When asked, the stakeholders had several suggestions for how NLWA could improve things going forward and what their suggested next steps would be including:

- An improvement in communication
- Transparency in long term strategy and communications
- Improved timescales for communications
- Understanding that not all boroughs are the same, nor are all organisations

Overall, many respondents would like to see an improvement in communication from NLWA to the boroughs. including having a plan for how information is communicated.

*“The only thing I would say is that I feel from our conversation that we have a similar, our points are very similar about the boroughs, that it’s not one borough that has a particular point of view or that it’s, you know, that all borough have the same point of*

*view and also have the same, you know, issues is too strong a word, but you know, the same, you know, in relation to information filtering down or up or sharing of data or the types of information that NLWA provides.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Having visibility of what is coming allows all the boroughs to align their own messaging where possible and reduce the potential for mixed messaging both internally and to members of the public.

*“So if they were just better at giving visibility of like these are the big things coming, not even necessarily eco park related, but of course there’s that, but even just like for upcoming stuff in terms of changes, I think they can definitely improve on that more. I think so, I don’t always feel like I have a forward plan of what’s happening or what’s going to be happening or what’s changing.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Improvements in the timeliness of the information dissemination would enable boroughs time to make decisions and feed into their own strategies rather than having to react.

*“Yeah, yeah, yeah and also, you know, we’ve just got very busy bloody lives, so you just don’t need something that kind of, because these are also big irreversible decisions, which can make quite a lot of money, so you just want to make sure, I want to make sure I’m not backed in to having to make a decision, because I have to fall into line with a timeline.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

*“So, one of the things I picked up previously with the authority was just about having a forward plan of key decisions that are going to come, so that we can work backwards and know what information we need when.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

However, the difference between boroughs was highlighted and what may work in one area may not be appropriate in another and bespoke communication plans may be needed for example:

*“So North London Waste need to realise that, actually, so when they’re doing their communications, to actually, there’s certain types of communications will work with certain boroughs, but especially with Enfield, because it’s right in the middle of that, actually they need to do more close coms with some of the residents in explaining that and what’s actually happening, because if they just do a blanket approach, the same with all seven boroughs it probably won’t work, so yeah, it’s probably something that needs to be picked up.” (Borough Stakeholder)*

Lastly, all respondents acknowledged that it has been a difficult 12 months for all involved and NLWA has been supportive during that time, at a time when they too have been stretched, like many organisations.

*“NLWA has been really supportive with helping us decide when and when we shouldn’t be doing in person events throughout COVID, so obviously with restrictions slightly easing and I know in our last meeting we did discuss more outreach activities, so we’re kind of aiming to do that a bit more. So it’s been quite nice to have, you know, the ability to talk to our funders and then get their insight on what, you know, level of work is okay, that they accept in a sense, because online work is great, but you don’t get that kind of value of in person, like behaviour change and you have to make so many different connections for them to finally kind of take that message, in a way. So, yeah, I’m hoping we can do a lot more outreach now, soon.” (Environmental Stakeholder)*

*“It would be probably not so wise to replicate the efforts of organisations that are community grounded and run as NLWA, like a community activity itself, rather than supporting these activities and making sure that they grow and that they’re well sustainable, I think it builds more community resilience as well, which is better than kind of maybe risking some community activities, because they’re run by, the waste*

*authority might be perceived then as a service, which is not what they are, if they're one-offs, sort of like short term activities. So, we did mention this to them in the past with regards to their community repair recycling event that they had and they seem to have been already taking that on board" (Environmental Stakeholder)*

*"I think that everyone has been really over stretched in local government, but the staff at the NLWA are really, really over stretched, they're really stressed and a lot of them are really good people." (Borough Stakeholder)*

## 6. Conclusions

Focus Groups and indepth interviewers were undertaken with 26 residents and 14 stakeholders about the NLWA as an organisation and the development of the NLHPP site.

### 6.1 Summary of key points raised by residents:

- Most of the residents we spoke to were largely unaware of NLWA's existence, who they are and what they are responsible for.
- Most respondents had only communicated with their borough local authority and had not had reason to contact NLWA directly.
- Several residents were aware of the NLHPP site and a couple were aware of the redevelopment that is taking place, but most were unaware of what the site is for and what is currently happening onsite.
- When it was explained what the NLHPP is, most respondents mentioned about positive and negative impacts and raised concerns about how the site could affect communities based near the site.
- Apart from the residents in the areas closest to the EcoPark, most residents felt it was too far from where they live to have much of a direct impact on them with regards to traffic, smells, noise and they would expect there to be positive aspects such as jobs, boost to the economy which could impact them..
- A couple of residents were highlighted if they were not aware of the site before this research, then it is unlikely to affect them in the future. They had not been affected by traffic in the area or been made aware of the site through the construction, smells, or noise.
- A few of the residents felt the NLHPP was very positive and were surprised they had not heard more about it.

### 6.2 Summary of key points raised by stakeholders:

- Borough stakeholders felt the NLHPP is dominating most meetings and agendas and are concerned that other aspects of NLWA/ borough work are being side-lined as a result.
- Environmental organisations who collaborate with NLWA felt they are a good authority to work with and their objectives are aligned with many of the projects or schemes the organisations have attempted to implement.
- Borough stakeholders felt they were not always informed of social media campaigns until after they had been implemented. It was felt better communication could have reduced the instance of mixed messaging and enabled other organisations to align their own campaigns thus strengthening the message.
- Respondents from the boroughs were concerned information about NLWA and their waste management policy and strategy were not always disseminated to the boroughs in a timely effective way. More timely communication would enable the borough to align their own policies if possible.
- Communication was highlighted by all borough technical officers and the directors of finance and environment who felt that information was not always passed down the pyramid or the chain of communication from NLWA through the different levels of the local authorities groups and boroughs.

- Some borough respondents felt there had been several staff changes recently and would like such changes to be communicated more frequently as it was time consuming trying to find who to contact.
- It has sometimes felt that communications were received too late, resulting in more reactive than proactive messaging. Some planned messaging campaigns at borough levels have had to change last minute to align with NLWA's messaging.

# Appendix A Discussion Guides

## A.1 Resident discussion guide

### NLWA Discussion Guide – resident focus groups

*This topic guide has been designed to provide structure to the interviews – **it is NOT intended to be used as a script**. To help the moderator, prompts have been included (throughout the guide see 'PROBE'); these are suggestions of questions that can be asked if appropriate to probe deeper into the respondents' views.*

#### Introduction

- Self / AECOM / independent consultancy are conducting research on behalf of the North London Waste Authority (NLWA)
- Purpose of research to talk about NLWA and North London Heat and Power Project (NLHPP)
- Emphasise there are no right or wrong answers
- Emphasise confidentiality – recording interview for accuracy of reporting. Recording will not be passed on to anyone outside the research team or the client team – retention by the client in line with retention policy – details here: <https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/data-protection..> Findings are aggregated for reporting. Stress anonymity in reporting of findings.
  - Mobiles on silent
  - Cameras v no cameras
  - How the discussion will work (contributing to discussions, materials being shared);
  - Consent form check

All feedback today and the session will remain anonymous.

## Introductions

- Name?
- Where do they live?
- What do they think about the general area they live?
  - Likes?
  - Dislikes?
- Do they know who North London Waste Authority (NLWA) are?

5 mins

## General awareness and opinion of NLWA

- What do they know about NLWA?
  - Who are they?
  - What do they do?
  - How do they know about them?
  - If they don't know NLWA, then what do they think they do?
- What are the first two or three words that come to mind when they hear NLWA?

*READ OUT INFORMATION ON NLWA: North London Waste Authority is a local authority which has the sole responsibility for managing waste collected by seven north London boroughs – it is one of six 'statutory waste disposal authorities' in the country. It covers the following seven boroughs: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Waltham Forest. They manage waste transportation and disposal on behalf of seven London boroughs in the north London area, serving over two million people. They also manage the recycling collected by six of the seven boroughs. The seven boroughs collect nearly 820,000 tonnes of waste and recycling a year, of which 675,000 tonnes comes from households.*

*Their aim is to preserve the resources and the environment today and for future generations. They are committed to innovation and careful planning to ensure we manage waste resources effectively and sustainably. They work with residents, schools and businesses in north London to promote waste minimisation and recycling to preserve resources and reduce the amount of waste that has to be disposed of.*

*Waste disposal services are mostly delivered through a contract with LondonEnergy Ltd - a company which is owned by NLWA. We also manage seven household waste recycling centres on behalf of the boroughs.*

*NLWA is governed by 14 members, two councillors from each of the seven north London boroughs. It is these members that make the decisions relating to the disposal of north London's waste.*

*(If asked – the North London Waste Plan is separate from the NLWA. The North London Waste Plan (NLWP) is a draft planning policy document which is being prepared jointly by seven north London Boroughs in their capacities as planning authorities.*

The north London Boroughs are combining forces to ensure there is sufficient provision of land allocated for managing waste in north London. The NLWP plans for seven waste streams, including Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW), Commercial and Industrial (C&I), Construction, Demolition and Excavation (CD&E), hazardous, agricultural, waste water and low level radioactive waste. More information is available here: <https://www.nlwp.net/frequently-asked-questions/#toggle-id-13>

- Have they got any previous experience of NLWA?
- Have they had any previous contact with NLWA?
- What do they think of NLWA?
  - As a provider of waste services?
    - Probe: what type of waste do they deal with?
    - Probe: where does the waste come from?
    - Probe: what do they do to the waste?
  - Type of organisation is it?
    - Probe: if NLWA were a car what type of car would it be and why?
      - Probe any key adjectives
  - As an employer?
    - Probe: what type of employer do they think they are?
    - Probe: what do they think it would be like to work for NLWA?
  - Community engagement
    - Probe: what do NLWA do for the local community?
    - Probe: are they aware of them working with schools / business / residents?
      - If yes – probe for details
      - If no – do they think they should? What should they do?

10 mins

Note to moderators – some respondents will potentially want to talk about the NLHPP more than NLWA so be prepared to go with the conversation and discuss NLHPP before the NLWA (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the discussion guide before the 1<sup>st</sup> section)

### Awareness of Edmonton EcoPark

#### INFORMATION FOR MODERATOR:

- Edmonton EcoPark is a waste management site located immediately to the north of the North Circular and to the west of the River Lee Navigation.
- Are they aware of the current energy from waste facility?
  - Probe: What does it do / what is its purpose?
- LondonEnergy Ltd operate the current waste management activities at Edmonton EcoPark which includes a bulky waste handling facility and energy from waste plant which manages north London's non-recyclable waste.
- The existing facility at Edmonton EcoPark has successfully diverted over 21 million tonnes of waste from landfill since energy from waste treatment started nearly 50 years ago.
- The existing facility at Edmonton EcoPark is the oldest facility of its type in London and one of the oldest in Europe. Whilst it has many large investments over the decades, the facility will reach the end of its useful life soon. Therefore, the NLHPP will safeguard a sustainable future for north London's non-recyclable waste.
- Were you aware of all the activities that happened at the site?

- How does it make you feel to have such a facility in your area?
- What is their current experience of Edmonton EcoPark?
  - Probe: Likes?
  - Probe: Dislikes?

Thinking about the facility at Edmonton EcoPark what does it provide in terms of?

Probe:

- Employment
- Waste services for local residents
- Education / apprentices etc
- Local economy
- Local area / environment

Were they aware that by 2025 the current facility is due to reach the end of its life?

**10 mins**

## Awareness of the NLHPP

- The NLHPP is NLWA's plan for a new sustainable waste hub in north London at the Edmonton EcoPark. It will replace the existing facility which is reaching the end of its operational life after diverting non-recyclable waste from landfill for 50 years.
- The NLHPP will deliver:
  - an **Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)** to generate low carbon energy from waste, in the form of heat and power.
  - a **Resource Recovery Facility (RRF)** with an area to process bulky waste and prepare materials for energy recovery, including a brand-new Reuse and Recycling Centre for residents to use.
  - A new visitor and education centre on the River Lee Navigation, known as **EcoPark House**, where the local community will be able to learn more about waste management and recycling, and how to reduce the carbon impact of their waste. It will also provide a new modern home for the Edmonton Sea Cadets.
- Are they aware of the NLHPP?
  - If yes, what do they know?
- What is the objective of the development?
  - What will the new site do / provide?
- How did they find out about the Project (more on information sources later)?
  - How does having such a facility in the area make you feel?
    - Why?
  - Probe: what will it mean for you / the area in terms of:
    - Employment

- Waste management and recycling
- Education / apprentices etc
- Local economy
- Local area / environment

#### INFORMATION FOR MODERATOR ON WHAT THE NEW SITE WILL PROVIDE:

- The most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to treat non-recyclable waste in north London. The ERF will divert up to 700,000 tonnes of waste from landfill every year and use it instead to generate low carbon heat and power for homes and businesses.
- A programme for at least 100 apprenticeships and 225 onsite skills training opportunities for the local community.
- New recycling facilities for local residents, including the first ever Reuse and Recycling Centre at the site, as well as a new visitor and education centre called EcoPark House.

Probe: Does that description match what they thought?

- If not, what was different? Why etc
- Does that change their view of the development?

**15 mins**

## Construction

#### MODERATOR TO READ OUT:

*Construction enabling works started on the NLHPP in January 2019, with completion estimated for 2030. During this time period, the Project will reach a number of other milestones including the commissioning of the RRF and EcoPark House in 2022 and commissioning of the new ERF in 2025.*

*Construction of the NLHPP is a highly complex project. Current operations at the EcoPark must continue alongside construction of the NLHPP to ensure north London's waste carries on being treated.*

- How do they think construction of the NLHPP is affecting / will affect the local area?
- Probe: Ask the group to list all aspects they feel will be affected by the construction. Do not mention negative or positive but ask they list all aspects (in a thinking out loud exercise) as a group.

Exercise (Moderator to read out): Now I want to take all the attributes mentioned and I want you to think about your opinion on those attributes during construction (i.e. when the development is ongoing). Using the scale of 1-5 where 1 is "It does not affect me" and 5 is "It affects me a lot", I would like you to tell me where you are on that scale for each attribute, during construction. We will then repeat for post-construction.

Moderator to go through each attribute. If some attributes are not mentioned in general discussion, the moderator will add them at the end. Moderator to introduce each attribute and ask for each during and post construction and note down all answers given.

Moderator to probe for more detail on the attributes listed and rated and understand why they gave them the scores they did by going through the following questions:

Probe: impact – positive / negative?

- Traffic? (any specific routes? Type of traffic? Time of day?)
- Local area?
- The environment? (What do they mean by environment? Climate / noise / air / visual?)
- Jobs / skills / training?
- Community?

**20 mins**

## Once Built

What effects will the NLHPP have when it is built?

- Probe: How will it affect the local area or community?
- Probe: how will it affect the environment?
- Probe: Will it affect jobs or apprenticeship opportunities?
- What about training?

What are the main benefits from this development?

Probe: To them personally?

Probe: To the area?

What are the main concerns about this development?

- Probe: To them personally?
- Probe: To the area?
- Why are they the main concerns?

NOTE TO MODERATOR: Make a note of all concerns raised, to use in the next step.

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned, how would they rate themselves about this development and their concerns?

What can be done to mitigate these concerns?

- How can NLWA help to mitigate them?
- Take each concern mentioned previously and probe how can each one be mitigated?

What information would they like to know?

What communication is needed from NLWA?

- What information?
- What format?
- What timescales?

**20 mins**

How will the site affect the community?

- Will it increase in job opportunities?
- Will it increase the training and upskilling of local residents?
- Will it attract other businesses to the area?
- Will it increase engagement with schools or key organisations?
- Will it help them personally in any way?

Probe: How should NLHPP 'identify' the area?

Overall, what do they think are the next steps for NLWA and the NLHPP?

- What Improvements do they need to make?
- What would they like to happen?
- What do they want to hear/ read about?

**10 mins****THANKS AND CLOSE**

## A.2 Stakeholder discussion guide

# NLWA Discussion Guide

*This topic guide has been designed to provide structure to the interviews – it is **NOT intended to be used as a script**. To help the moderator, prompts have been included (throughout the guide see 'PROBE'); these are suggestions of questions that can be asked if appropriate to probe deeper into the respondents' views.*

### Introduction

- Self / AECOM / independent consultancy and Conducting research on behalf of the North London Waste Authority (NLWA).
- Purpose of research to talk about NLWA.
- Emphasise there are no right or wrong answers.
- Emphasise confidentiality – recording interview for accuracy of reporting. Recording will not be passed on to anyone outside the research team or the client team. Findings are aggregated for reporting. Stress anonymity in reporting of findings.
  - Mobiles on silent
  - Cameras v no cameras
  - How the discussion will work (contributing to discussions, materials being shared)
  - Consent form check

All feedback today and the session will remain anonymous.

### Introductions

- Name?
- Who do they work for / which London Borough and Ward do they represent?
- What is their current involvement with NLWA?
- Why did they get involved with NLWA?
- Where are they based?

**5mins**

### General awareness and opinion of NLWA

- What do they know about the NLWA?
  - Who are they?
  - What do they do?
  - How do they know about them?

- How is their organisation affected by NLWA?
  - Probe: What role does their organisation play working with NLWA?
  - Probe: How important is their work and relationship with NLWA?
  - Probe: How is their work impacted by NLWA? Have they ever had reason to contact NLWA? IF yes, what was their experience like?
    - Positive/ Negative?
- What are the first two or three words that come to mind when they hear NLWA?

*READ OUT INFORMATION ON NLWA: North London Waste Authority covers the following seven boroughs: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington Waltham Forest. They manage waste transportation and disposal on behalf of seven London boroughs in the north London area, serving over two million people. They also manage the recycling collected by six of the seven boroughs. The seven boroughs collect nearly 820,000 tonnes of waste and recycling a year, of which 675,000 tonnes comes from households.*

*Their aim is to preserve the resources and the environment today and for future generations. They are committed to innovation and careful planning to ensure they manage waste resources effectively and sustainably. NLWA works with residents, schools and businesses in north London to promote waste minimisation and recycling to preserve resources and reduce the amount of waste that has to be disposed.*

*NLWA is governed by 14 members, two councillors from each of the seven north London boroughs. These members make the decisions relating to the disposal of north London's waste.*

What do they think of the NLWA?

- As a provider of waste services?
  - Probe: what type of waste do they deal with?
  - Probe: where does the waste come from?
  - Probe: what do they do to the waste?
- Type of organisation is it?
  - Probe: if NLWA were a car what type of car would it be and why?
    - Probe any key adjectives
- As an employer?
  - Probe: what type of employer do they think they are?
  - Probe: what do they think it would be like to work for NLWA?
- As a Subcontractor manager?
  - Probe: what type of sub manager do they think they are?
- Community engagement
  - Probe: what do NLWA do for the local community?
  - Probe: are they aware of them working with schools / business / residents?
    - If yes – probe for details
    - If no – do they think they should? What should they do?

**20mins**

## Information on NLWA

What are the main sources of information available to them on the NLWA?

Where do they go for information?

Do they know where to look?

Do any communications they see / are informed about make them feel more aware and included in what NLWA are doing?

- Why or why not?
- What's missing?

What information do they feel they should be getting, but they're not?

How would they like NLWA to communicate with them?

Is there any information they feel is OVER communicated?

Do they feel the NLWA does a good job explaining the strategy and goals of the organization?

**10mins**

## NLWA compared to other organisations

- Can they think of other waste organisations in the area or nationally and how they communicate with the communities around them?
  - If so, then who? What do they do? How do they communicate?
  - How does NLWA compare?
  - How could NLWA improve?
- What are their priorities for improvement?

Exercise (Moderator to read out): Now I want to take all the improvements mentioned and I want you to think about your opinion on those improvements for NLWA. Using the scale of 1-5 where 1 is "very important" and 5 is "not at all important", I would like you to tell me where you are on that scale for each improvement

Moderator to go through each attribute. If some attributes are not mentioned in general discussion, the moderator will add them at the end. Moderator to introduce each attribute and ask for each during and post construction and note down all answers given.

Moderator to probe for more detail on the improvement listed and rated and understand why they gave them the scores they did by going through the following questions:

Probe: improvement?

- Communication platforms
- Level of engagement
- Public awareness
- Reputation

- What are essential / nice to have?
- What would have the biggest impact?

**15mins**

Are they aware of any current major projects that NLWA are undertaking?

- If so, then what project? How are they aware of the project?
- What communication have they seen/ received about the project?

Overall, what do they think are the next steps for NLWA as an organisation?

- What Improvements do they need to make?
- What would they like to happen?

**10mins**

**THANK AND CLOSE**

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