

1. Introduction and summary

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) is the statutory joint waste authority for north London, one of six such authorities in England. We are responsible for the disposal of waste collected by the seven north London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest.

NLWA is the second largest waste disposal authority in the country by volume of waste managed and serves more than 2 million residents. We arrange the recycling and composting of waste collected by six of our seven boroughs and oversee reuse and recycling centres.

NLWA is the owner of LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL), which operates an energy from waste facility and other waste facilities at the Edmonton EcoPark. LEL also operates transfer stations in Islington and Brent. We have a waste services contract with LEL as well as contracts with other companies for the treatment of mixed dry recyclable materials, waste electrical and electronic equipment, and tyre recycling and disposal.

NLWA does not employ any staff directly, but makes arrangements for support services with Camden, Enfield and Haringey Councils. We are mainly funded by a levy placed on constituent boroughs for waste services and by charges for the management of some types of waste.



Refuse collection vehicle in action

Performance in 2021/22

NLWA manages waste in line with the waste hierarchy to protect the environment and preserve resources for future generations. We work with our boroughs to deliver public-facing behaviour change programmes to encourage waste prevention and recycling. We did fewer face-to-face activities due to COVID-19 restrictions, but our campaigns had a cumulative reach of more than 77million people.

We processed 113,685 tonnes of mixed dry recycling tonnages from households. This is slightly lower than the 117,728 tonnes processed in 2020/21, but higher than pre-pandemic tonnages. The provisional household recycling rate is 28.7%, which is an increase on the previous year's 28.5%.

2020/21 saw a reduction in garden and food waste as some boroughs temporarily suspended organic waste collections to safeguard Residual and Dry Mixed Recycling collections. This was reversed in 2021/22 where the tonnage increased to 47,672 from 42,460 tonnes in 2020/21, which is even higher than tonnages collected pre-pandemic. Given the relatively low proportion of homes with gardens and the high proportion of flats, volumes of organic waste in north London are lower than many other authorities.

This year we became the first Authority in the UK to start recycling polystyrene. In June 2021 we launched a scheme to recycle mattresses and by the end of March recycled 67,000 mattresses, saving 1,527 tonnes.



Mattresses waiting to be processed

Reuse and Recycling Centres operated with a booking system which was introduced the previous year. This enabled facilities to be run safely and residents to be confident that they could maintain social distancing and use the sites without queueing. The booking system will be kept under review in 2022/23. 38,607 tonnes of material were collected at our Reuse and Recycling Centres, of which 72% was reused, recycled or composted.

We dealt with 573,359 tonnes of residual waste, a slight increase on the previous year (570,394), but lower than pre-pandemic level. A damaged turbine at the aging energy from waste facility meant it was not able to operate to its full planned capacity. This resulted in 29,491 tonnes of waste going to landfill compared with 25,172 tonnes in 2020/21.

North London Heat and Power Project

To help tackle the climate emergency and to prevent rubbish going to landfill we are delivering the largest project in our history. The 50-year-old energy from waste plant, which is reaching the end of its operational life, is being replaced by the greenest Energy Recovery Facility in the country.

We are building a resource recovery facility (RRF) to maximise recycling from bulky waste and a new public reuse and recycling centre. The new EcoPark House will provide a visitor centre and community space for local residents and home for the Edmonton Sea Cadets. Significant progress was made on these facilities this year, and they are on course to be complete in 2023.



NLHPP logo

In December 2021 the Authority decided to award the contract to Acciona SA for the design and build of the new energy recovery facility. The contract was signed in January 2022. This followed a thorough review of the business case which assessed that it represented the most cost effective and environmentally responsible solution for dealing with north London’s residual waste. Members noted that the facility would have the flexibility to deal with a range of waste volumes and therefore if waste reduced, it would not prevent the facility working. Members also noted that the facility would have tighter emissions control than any facilities in the UK and would be linked with a district heating network which would ensure that the power generated from the facility would be used as efficiently as possible.

Building the Energy Recovery Facility is creating hundreds of skilled jobs, including 180 training placements and 90 apprenticeships, bringing life-changing career opportunities for local people. These new positions are in addition to the hundreds of jobs, apprenticeships and training placement already created to take the project to this point.



One of our many apprentices on site

Community engagement on the project continued with the Community Liaison Group meetings and increased communications to increase awareness of the project and its benefits. Newsletters were sent to 28,000 residents in the wards around the site and briefings were held with community groups. Social media campaigns reached 518,000 people.

Governance and finance

On governance there were no major changes compared to the previous year. NLWA held five Authority and six Programme Committee meetings. These all took place in person as the Authority had no flexibility to hold meetings remotely. All meetings were livestreamed and recorded so that they were available to be viewed by members of the public. We facilitate deputations to be made remotely so that residents wishing to raise issues at meetings were given the widest possible opportunity to do so.

On finance matters, the net budget requirement as reported as part of the ordinary business of the February 2022 Authority meeting indicates that the total forecast expenditure for the year was less than budget at £72.237m for 2021/22. As the levy is fixed at the start of the year, this resulted in the Authority forecast having a balance brought forward, of £9.266m as at 31 March 2022. In February 2022, the Authority set the budget for 2022/23 and agreed that the levy for 2022/23 would be set at £57.047m (consisting of a base element of £52.440m and a Re-use and Recycling Centre (RRC) element of £4.607m. The use of revenue balances and charges for both household and non-household waste make up the balance to fund the Authority's 2022/23 budget of £76.712m.