

1. Summary of Performance

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- 1.1** The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) (the Authority) is the statutory joint waste disposal authority for north London, one of six such authorities in England. As such, NLWA is responsible for the disposal of waste collected by seven north London Boroughs (LBs) (the constituent boroughs): Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest.
- 1.2** The area served by NLWA consists of over two million residents making NLWA the second largest waste disposal authority in the country by volume of waste managed.
- 1.3** The Authority also arranges for the recycling and composting of waste collected by six of the seven constituent boroughs and for the provision of reuse and recycling centres (RRCs).
- 1.4** In addition to the operational functions for managing waste, the Authority works jointly with the north London boroughs to deliver public-facing behaviour change programmes to encourage waste prevention and recycling. NLWA aims to manage the waste in line with the waste hierarchy, prioritising waste management actions which are better for the environment above those that are less preferred from an environmental perspective. This means that waste prevention work is prioritised, recycling and composting are promoted, and disposal to landfill is avoided as far as possible.
- 1.5** NLWA is the owner of LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL), which operates an energy from waste (EfW) facility and other waste facilities at the Edmonton EcoPark in Enfield. LEL also operates transfer stations in Hornsey Street, Islington and Wembley, Brent. NLWA has 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.
- 1.6** NLWA is currently delivering the largest project in its history, The North London Heat and Power Project (NLHPP) (the Project). The NLHPP addresses the need to replace the existing energy from waste (EfW) facility at the Edmonton EcoPark, which is reaching the end of its operational life. The Project includes design, construction and commissioning of an energy recovery facility (ERF), a resource recovery facility (RRF) to maximise the recycling of materials from bulky waste and other materials (including a new public reuse and recycling centre), and EcoPark House, which will provide a visitor centre and community space for local residents. EcoPark House will also be the home to Edmonton Sea Cadets.
- 1.7** NLWA does not employ any staff directly, but makes cross-borough arrangements for support services, involving LB Camden, LB Enfield and LB Haringey and is mainly funded by a levy it places on its constituent boroughs for waste services and by specific charges for the management of some types of waste.
- 1.8** The COVID-19 pandemic provided an unprecedented challenge in 2020-21 and the Authority and its partners had to deal with disruption and uncertainty at short notice which had impacts across the year.



1.9 At the start of the year, the Authority was two weeks into the first national lockdown. In response to the lockdown, all Authority staff moved to working from home and all non-essential services and visits – including visits to Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRCs) – were prohibited, with RRCs closed as a result. Increased monitoring and reporting arrangements were put in place to assure boroughs that waste services were being delivered and to manage risks with contractors. Construction work on the NLHPP was paused so that arrangements on-site could be reviewed to ensure it could operate safely.

1.10 Throughout the year the priority was to maintain essential waste disposal services to protect human health, whilst constituent boroughs, LEL and other contractors were managing peaks of above average staff absences due to COVID-19. NLWA continued to maintain disposal and recycling services and initiated twice weekly update meetings online with borough colleagues and contractors to ensure that the status of the service was known and properly reported to enable the London-wide situation to be monitored. As the first lockdown eased the Authority and its contractors also managed the re-opening of RRCs with additional protections in place, including social distancing, additional cleaning and the introduction of a booking system for RRC visitors to manage the volume of people and waste coming into each site.

1.11 Mixed dry recycling tonnages increased by 6.2% (6,626 tonnes) from 115,344 tonnes in 2019-20 to 121,970 tonnes in 2020-21. The kerbside waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) collection service also became more popular through the year, as several boroughs suspended their bulky waste collection services during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, to redeploy staff to core waste collection services.

1.12 However, there was an 8% fall in the amount of garden and kitchen waste processed into compost and digestate from 49,600 tonnes in 2019-20 to 45,642 tonnes of organic wastes, a fall of 3,958 tonnes. Some boroughs temporarily ceased organic waste collections during the pandemic due to staff absence levels and the need to prioritise residual waste collections, so this fall was not unexpected.

1.13 The resultant household recycling rate was 28.4%. However, it is important to note that the figures are provisional and based upon three quarters of actual tonnage and an estimated fourth quarter's data using an average of the first three quarters. This is because the quarter 4 data has not yet been submitted to WasteDataFlow, the national waste database and will not be validated until September.



1.14 All RRCs closed in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, in line with other RRCs across the country and in response to government restrictions. Reopening in May 2020 was a major development which involved revised arrangements with recyclers, several of whom were initially not accepting material for reprocessing due to supply chain and manufacturing disruption. The reopening took considerable organisational and communications effort as the RRCs were one of the first parts of the economy to reopen and attracted considerable public attention.

1.15 Arrangements for reopening included traffic marshalling, road management orders, introduction of a booking system to manage demand and the flow of visitors and waste. New operational procedures were also introduced on re-opening to protect the health and safety of staff and visitors and new arrangements were made to manage social distancing on site. Communications included a residents' communication plan, on-site site signage and new website information, including the development of the online booking system.

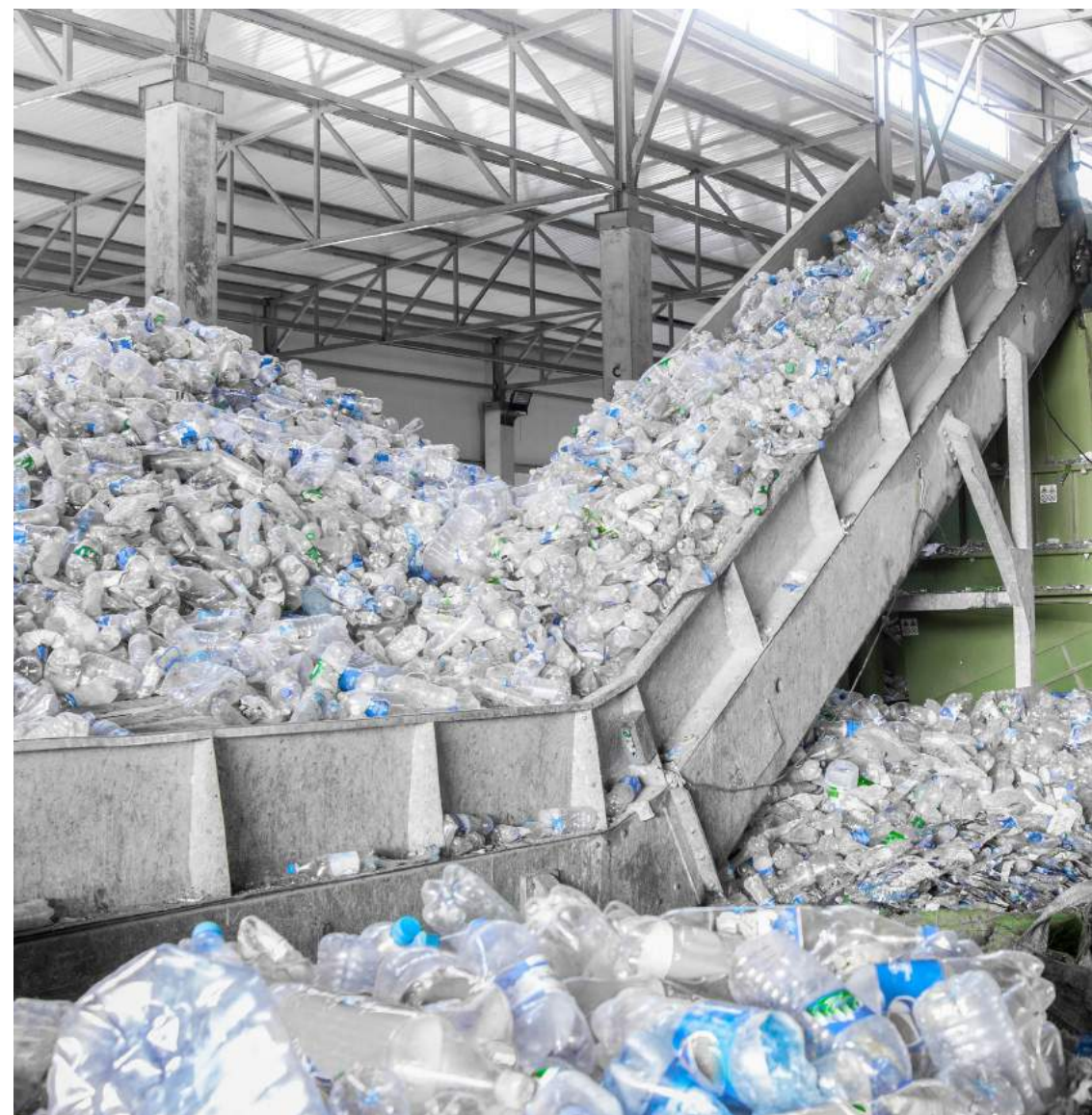
1.16 As well as managing demand, the booking system also provided residents with the certainty that there would be an available time slot for them to dispose or recycle their waste. The number of time slots available on the booking system was increased as restrictions eased and the RRCs continued to remain open throughout the second and third lockdowns. However, RRC waste volumes were considerably lower than the previous year as a result of the closure - 25,995 tonnes were received at Authority managed RRCs during the year, a reduction from 42,962 tonnes or 38.4% compared to the previous year.

1.17 Another major development in waste service delivery was entering into a lease for the Seneca Recovery Facility at Wembley. The lease is for seven years with the opportunity to terminate after five years. The facility is acting as a transfer station for the management of Barnet and Camden waste and provides significantly greater flexibility than the Hendon waste transfer station which it replaces. Taking on this lease provides important resilience to support delivery of the NLHPP and avoid costs which would otherwise arise on the Project.

1.18 The first full year of operation of the mixed dry recycling contract with Biffa resulted in improved performance. 339 tonnes of waste which would previously have been rejected for being too contaminated was instead kept for processing. Progress on this was part of a comprehensive programme of work which the Member Recycling Working Group (MRWG) oversaw. This included liaison with Biffa to continue to increase UK processing of recycling and to reduce dependence on far east destinations.



- 1.19** Although the Authority did not deliver a large-scale recycling promotional campaign as it had in the previous year a number of other operational measures were introduced to stimulate recycling including a new Borough Recycling Fund. Over £93,000 was awarded to Boroughs to trial interventions aimed at combatting recycling contamination and/or increasing the capture of dry recyclables. Information about recycling on the Authority's website was also extensively updated and some of the online question and answer sessions focussed on answering residents' questions on recycling in north London. Overall recycling rates, (recycling, composting, and reuse), fell from 28.9% in 2019-20 to 28.4% in 2020-21 as noted above.
- 1.20** There were substantial developments in the relationship with LEL during the year. The Authority completed the purchase of the EcoPark, save for the portion of land on which the current Energy from Waster (EfW) facility sits and a small area of the site which will be used by Energetik for an energy centre. (Energetik is the company who will be running the district heating network, taking heat supply from the new ERF.) The full purchase of the site will be completed when the current EfW facility closes. The Authority will be owner of the new assets that will be created and the landowner of the site on which they are located.
- 1.21** The wider relationship between the Authority and LEL was also reviewed to ensure that there was alignment between the aims of the organisations and that there was the maximum collaboration, especially to deliver and prepare for operation of the NLHPP facilities. Membership of the LEL Board has been refreshed. It now includes the Authority's chair and vice chairs, borough officers and Authority officers. At a working level, there is increased collaboration and coordination, and this will be built on in 2021-22.



1.22 Examples of new ways of working for the Authority which were introduced in the face of the pandemic included completely replanning actions to encourage a reduction of residual waste. Face to face events and physical meetings with members of the public were not possible; however, a programme of social media activity was instituted, including the development of webinars, Facebook Live question and answer sessions and the use of Instagram Live to host interviews with social media influencers. New campaigns were developed directly as a response to COVID-19, for example campaigns to encourage reusable face masks and to avoid disposable face masks contaminating recycling. The major annual conference event, the Waste Prevention Exchange, was organised as an online event with nearly double the usual physical number of event attendees.

1.23 The volume of communications activity during the year was significant as it was necessary to provide sufficient explanation and notification to residents about changes to services, such as the RRC service, as a result of the pandemic, as well as to deliver on planned communications initiatives and use digital communications in particular to replace face-to-face activity as noted above.

1.24 Notable successes in the year included a very successful digital campaign to mark London's first Repair Week, which included a series of online repair videos with local repair experts explaining and showing how to do everyday repairs. The campaign resulted in NLWA gaining a 10% increase (500) in followers on Instagram over the course of the week. NLWA was also able to distribute £60,000 in funding to community groups working on waste prevention activity in north London through its Waste Prevention Community Fund. In addition, NLWA delivered its most successful ever, in terms of number of attendees, annual Waste Prevention Exchange conference, online and an online sustainable wedding fair which was also a new event for NLWA. Further details are included in section 8 of this Annual Report.

1.25 The NLHPP progressed in a very significant way. Progress in design, planning and procurement was maintained through remote working involving many partner organisations, by a strong focus on digital tools, collaboration and communications. There have been important advances on all works associated with construction of new facilities. The preparatory works of the laydown area where materials will be stored prior to use, a new transport yard, an upgrade of Deephams Farm Road to access the site and sewer diversion enabling works have all been completed.

1.26 Enfield-based company Galldris Construction Ltd completed construction on three contracts during the year: a temporary Transport Yard for LEL, adjacent to the EcoPark at Hawley Road, a new northern access entrance from Deephams Farm Road to the site and the sewer diversion enabling works. Work is well underway on the sewer diversion itself too.



1.27 In addition, Buckingham Group Ltd. completed construction on the laydown area, which is being used by contractors to assemble materials before transporting them to the EcoPark, and houses the workforce in newly built office and welfare facilities. Taylor Woodrow is the first contractor to use the laydown area and they began mobilising their workforce onto the site in January 2021. Taylor Woodrow was awarded the contract to build the major set of new facilities in the south of the EcoPark: the new RRF, a public RRC and EcoPark House. This work has now started on-site and will deliver excellent new assets by late 2022.

1.28 Barhale, the contractor appointed to divert the Angel and Chingford sewers beneath the future RRF and public reuse and recycling centre, also used an innovative construction technique, allowing them to finish the sewer ahead of schedule.



1.29 Community engagement on NLHPP continued with the Community Liaison Group meetings and resident newsletters as well as ongoing responses to questions and requests for information from local stakeholders. In the period, the Authority produced and circulated two community newsletters to 28,000 homes and businesses, and one construction newsletter to 19,000 properties near the EcoPark. The Communications team used social media to ensure that key facts about the project are in the public domain. In the period April 2020 to March 2021:

1.29.1 335 tweets were issued from the NLHPP twitter handle, with the following impact:

1.29.1.1 132,737 impressions (number of times a user saw an NLHPP tweet)

1.29.1.2 5,070 engagements (number of times a user interacted with an NLHPP tweet including retweet, reply, 'favourite')

1.29.2 Forty-three press releases were also issued during the year

1.30 During the year, the Authority also approved the start of procurement for the new ERF, which will represent the centrepiece of the new EcoPark development. This will be in construction from 2022 to 2025. Bidders are now preparing to submit their detailed solutions for developing the new facility. As regards COVID-19, construction work was initially paused to review plans for safe working. When appropriate plans were in place, construction restarted. In response to new variants, existing precautions were extended with the introduction of testing for construction staff and the deployment of new wrist-worn devices which warn if two individuals come closer than two metres.

1.31 In addition, as at April 2021 13 apprentices are now employed on the scheme and 34 training places have been provided to local people, mostly through the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL), to give them experience of work on a major construction site.

1.32 Despite COVID-19 the Project has successfully maintained its planned momentum and delivery has continued safely and successfully during the year.

1.33 Finally, on governance and finance matters: On governance there were no major local changes compared to the previous year. However, national emergency legislation was introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coronavirus Act 2020 granted the UK government emergency powers to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequent regulations, made using powers in the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, imposed on UK citizens a national lockdown and the wearing of face coverings. The Cabinet Office published “Procurement Policy Note – Responding to COVID-19”, which set out information and associated guidance on the public procurement regulations in response to the pandemic. The Authority adjusted its working practices in compliance with these regulations and requirements.

1.34 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, also came into force on 4 April 2020. These regulations allowed local authorities much greater flexibility in relation to how they hold their meetings, including use of electronic, digital or virtual locations. NLWA held five Authority and six Programme Committee meetings remotely as permitted by these regulations.

1.35 On finance matters, the net budget requirement as reported as part of the ordinary business of the February 2021 Authority meeting indicates that the total forecast expenditure for the year was less than budget at £67.165 m for 2020-21. As the levy is fixed at the start of the year, this resulted in the Authority forecast having a balance brought forward, of £4.157m as at 31 March 2021. In February 2021, the Authority set the budget for 2021-22 and agreed that the levy for 2021-22 would be set at £57.798m (consisting of a base element of £53.584m and a Re-use and Recycling Centre (RRC) element of £4.214m). The use of revenue balances and charges for both household and non-household waste make up the balance to fund the Authority’s 2021-22 budget of £72.237m.

1.36 Further detail on the activities undertaken during 2020-21 is included in the following sections of this annual report.

