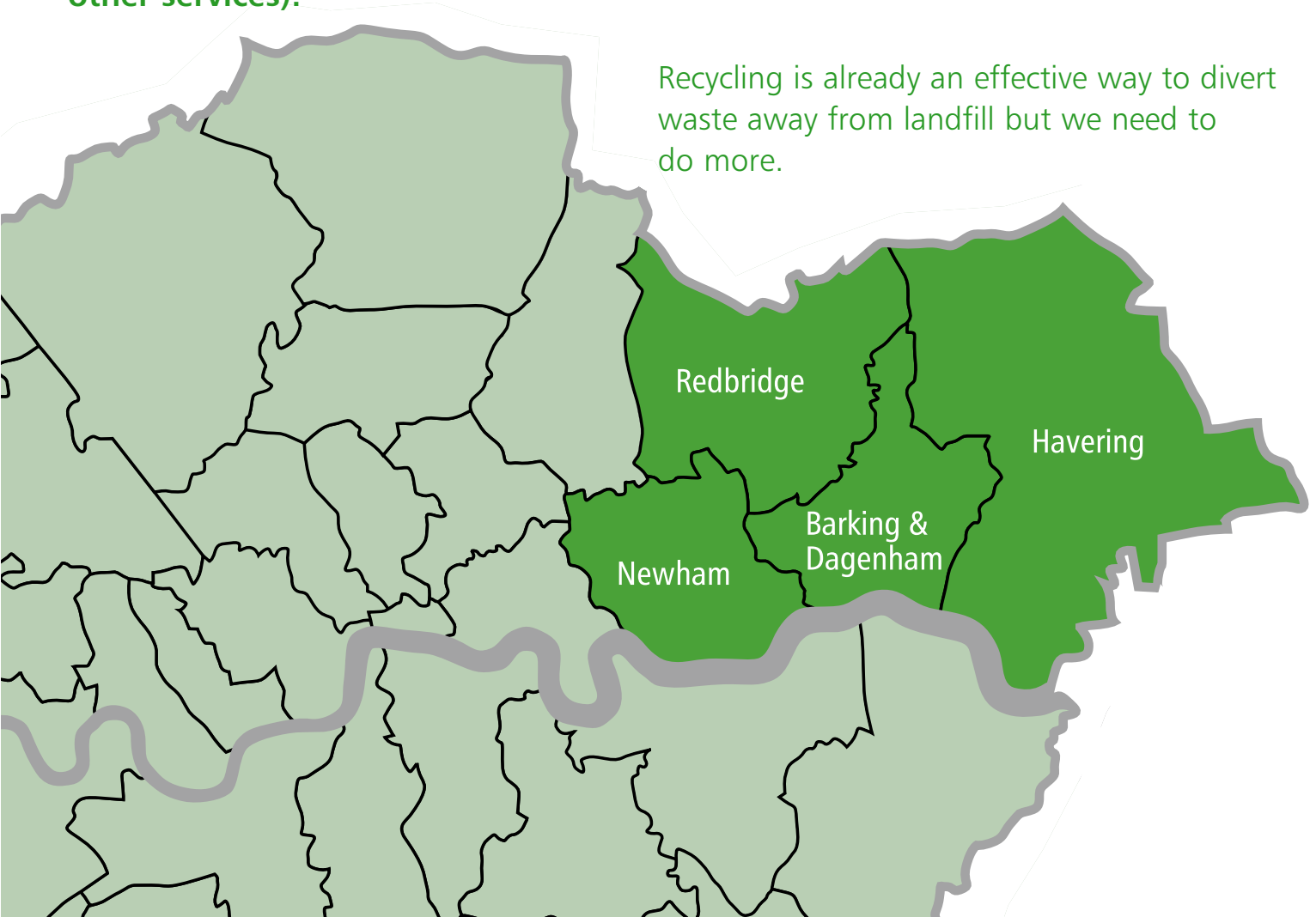


Looking Ahead



In east London the amount of biodegradable household waste going to landfill sites needs to be reduced to fall into line with English and European law. If this doesn't happen, councils in the area could face multi-million pound fines with householders looking at an increase in council tax (or a reduction in other services).

Recycling is already an effective way to divert waste away from landfill but we need to do more.



What is ELWA?

The East London Waste Authority, or ELWA, is a special body that was formed twenty years ago to deal with the waste from the four east London Boroughs - Newham, Havering, Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham.

In 1996 ELWA approved a 25-year strategy for dealing with east London's waste. Two extensive rounds of consultation had taken place with the four councils and over 150

environmental and community groups. As a result of the consultation, a private sector partner was engaged to put the relevant infrastructure in place to increase recycling rates and deal with any waste left over from the recycling process.

The UK's largest independently owned waste management company, Shanks Waste Management, was chosen as the preferred partner and the service began in December 2002.

The Current Strategy

The current 25-year contract, being delivered by Shanks Waste Management, provides:

- Education and awareness programmes aimed at informing the public about waste issues and helping them recycle more
- Bottle bank (bring site) facilities to collect specific recyclable materials
- Doorstep separation of recyclable materials by the four boroughs
- Four new Reuse and Recycling Centres (one in each borough) to separate materials for recycling
- New waste treatment plants called Bio-MRFs (Biological Material Recovery Facilities), which dry and stabilise waste before sorting out further materials for recycling, energy recovery (production of a renewable fuel) and disposal.



Planning for the Future

Even the best laid plans sometimes need to be reviewed. Issues that are difficult to predict, like the growth of the Thames Gateway and new legislation aimed at reducing the amount of biodegradable household waste sent to landfill, mean the goal posts have already moved since the strategy was agreed.



What has changed?

New landfill targets: The target given by the Government, at the time the strategy was written, was to send 33 per cent of the total waste generated to landfill. Since then it has been announced that east London must now progressively reduce that percentage so it landfills less than 100,000 tonnes of biodegradable household waste by 2020 (which will be about 15% of ELWA's total waste at that time, based on current estimates). Biodegradable waste is waste which decomposes over time. For example food, garden waste, paper, paperboard, card, clothes, and kitchen scraps are all biodegradable.

A lot less biodegradable household waste must be landfilled each year and unless an alternative is found, ELWA could be fined £150 per tonne for anything over the new landfill limits or have to 'buy' other people's unused landfill capacity. The cost of either outcome might be passed on to Councils and ultimately to the Council Tax payers.

An increase in population: When the original strategy was drawn up, the population within the four boroughs was about 850,000. The amount of waste to go to the facilities, like landfill sites, was calculated by using this number. However, since then, the extra Thames Gateway housing development has been proposed. This could add between 60,000 and 90,000 new homes to the ELWA area. Even with high recycling rates, it is highly likely that with the current strategy ELWA would have to landfill more to help cope with the thousands of tonnes of extra waste all these new householders will produce.

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The original strategy needs to be revised to ensure all the new issues are included and that it caters for every aspect of east London's future development.

Thanks to a government grant, ELWA, along with Environmental Resources Management (ERM), a specialist firm of environmental consultants, has been considering a wide range of options to solve the problem.

After looking at eight different options, ELWA and ERM have come up with three possible solutions to cope with the household waste arising from the rapid rise in population, while increasing recycling and reducing the amount of waste needing to be landfilled.

Options looked at	Further consideration?	Reasons
1) Start again Stop the existing contract and start again with a new way of managing east London's household waste.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Lose benefits of existing contract with Shanks • Time delay in putting new large-scale facilities in place
2) Use the Government's trading scheme The Government will allow councils to landfill more if they buy permits from other councils who landfill less.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be enough permits initially • Uncertain cost of buying permits in future
3) Recycle more Recycling more paper and clothes while composting more separately collected garden waste is a possible option.	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This solution has been taken forward for further consideration, but it is recognised that it is increasingly difficult and expensive to achieve higher levels of recycling
4) Make more of the new Bio-MRFs More renewable fuel from ELWA's waste would result in less waste sent to landfill.	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This solution has been taken forward for further consideration, but it is recognised that this renewable fuel is a new product in the UK
5) Add a composting type plant for mixed waste Adding a composting plant to the Bio-MRFs would reduce the amount of the material that would otherwise need to be landfilled.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New rules about the quality of materials that can be spread on land as a soil improver • If materials don't meet quality standards they would have to be sent to a landfill site at extra cost
6) Add an anaerobic digestion type plant to the Bio-MRFs An anaerobic plant would digest the output material from the Bio-MRF.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not likely to make enough difference (outputs still biodegradable and will still be landfilled) • Uncertain reliability of technology
7) Add an incinerator An incineration facility would burn waste and produce ash to be used in the Bio-MRF.	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, expensive facility with a potentially long time delay before this is operational • Incompatible with Bio-MRFs that are already being constructed • Doesn't meet the Mayor of London's policy on new incinerators
8) Add another type of facility An advanced thermal treatment facility could be added to the Bio-MRF.	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This solution has been taken forward for further consideration, but it is recognised that this would require the use of technologies that are new to the UK

Solution One - Recycle More

By recycling more paper and clothes or composting more garden waste, ELWA may be able to meet government targets for landfill diversion. This solution would have the benefit of also helping to meet borough, GLA and national recycling strategies. However, it is increasingly difficult and expensive to achieve higher levels of recycling.

Solution Two - Make More of the Bio-MRFs

The Bio-MRFs could play a greater role in helping east London to meet its waste targets. Sending more household waste from the Bio-MRFs (see Current Strategy box) to become fuel would result in more renewable energy being produced. This would also dramatically reduce east London's reliance on landfill.

Solution Three - Add Another Type of Facility

An advanced thermal treatment plant could be added to the Bio-MRF process. The material produced by the Bio-MRFs could then be turned into energy.

These possible solutions form part of the strategy review and therefore are still ideas and have not been decided upon by ELWA or any of the east London borough councils.



Have Your Say

The key problem facing east London, as identified by ELWA, is the need to reduce the amount of biodegradable household waste going to landfill.

ELWA is now planning for the next 10 years and you are invited to express your opinion on the way forward. This can be done by answering the key questions here or visiting the ELWA website www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk

Q1) Do you agree that the right options have been selected?

- i.e.
- **Solution One:** Recycle more
 - **Solution Two:** Make more of the new Bio-MRFs
 - **Solution Three:** Add another type of facility

 Yes No

Q2) Please comment on your answer to Question One

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Q3) How can people be encouraged to reduce the amount of waste they throw away?

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Q4) What can be done to encourage people to recycle more?

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Please send your answers to the following address:

Sarah Sanders Hewett, Environmental Resources Management, 8 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0ER

Closing date: Thursday, 30th June 2005

Email: elwaconsultation@erm.com

To download the report in detail and to answer these questions online,
please visit: www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk