

# Waste Solutions

Keeping you up-to-date on your local waste management

## WASTING AWAY



When we leave our waste for collection each week, how many of us think about the impact those black bags full of rubbish are having on the environment?

The vast majority of us never give it a second thought. The moment the rubbish is taken away we merely begin adding to the waste mountain again.

Every home, organisation and company is in the rubbish business. It's not only big business, but also a growth industry.

Nowhere is this more evident than in one of the world's biggest cities - London.

Locally, over 530,000 tonnes of waste is now being produced, compared to 403,000 tonnes 10 years ago. On average that is half a tonne per person each year and the problem is getting worse.

In the next 25 years, if nothing is done to check the increase it is expected to virtually double from current day levels.

Until now, the answer has been to bury this rubbish in holes in the ground,

known as landfill sites. However these sites will not always be available and environmental concerns about them are growing.

The main gas given off by material breaking down in landfill sites is methane. It takes more than 30 years before all dangerous gases are removed from these sites and they become safe.

Everyone accepts that another solution has to be found. To discourage this

practice the government introduced a Landfill Tax, which is currently £12 per tonne. This will cost East London Waste Authority (ELWA) a staggering £5m this year alone.

Something needs to be done to address the problem and this is where

an organisation like ELWA is leading the field.

ELWA's plan for dealing with waste is highlighted in this newspaper. It shows how an innovative and forward thinking approach can have an impact on this growing problem for London.

## What is ELWA?

The East London Waste Authority was created in 1986 following the abolition of the Greater London Council and is responsible for the disposal of waste generated by the people of the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Newham.

There are 48 staff who work at ELWA's refuse transfer station at Jenkins Lane, Barking and these staff are employed as drivers, plant operators, site supervisors and administration personnel.

The type of waste that ELWA deals with includes general household waste,

street cleansing waste, trade refuse and the waste delivered by residents to the four civic amenity sites. These are situated in Frizlands Lane, Dagenham; Gerpins Lane, Upminster; Chigwell Road, Woodford and Jenkins Lane, Barking.

The annual bill for this operation is around £21m.

Most of the costs are for the fees and taxes charged for dumping this waste in landfill sites on the outskirts of London.

This has been the solution for disposing of the waste until now, but this is all about to change.

## Meet the Chairman

Welcome to Waste Solutions, East London Waste Authority's first newspaper. This newspaper tells you about waste management and what ELWA is planning to do in the future. It is also full of interesting information about waste management and we hope it gives you a valuable insight into this industry.



Roy Patient, Chairman of the East London Waste Authority

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# ELWA Members

There are four boroughs that make up ELWA, of which each borough elects two members to sit on the ELWA Committee. These eight members work together to decide the best strategy for waste management for the boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham and Redbridge.

**Chair:**  
Cllr Roy Patient  
Barking & Dagenham

**Vice-Chair:**  
Cllr Alan Weinberg  
Redbridge

Cllr Bill Dale  
Barking & Dagenham

Cllr Ian Corbett  
Newham

Cllr Jeff Stafford  
Havering

Cllr John Saunders  
Newham

Cllr Richard Newcombe  
Redbridge

Cllr Owen Ware  
Havering



Cllr Roy Patient



Cllr Alan Weinberg



Cllr Bill Dale



Cllr Ian Corbett



Cllr Jeff Stafford



Cllr John Saunders



Cllr Richard Newcombe



Cllr Owen Ware

## Equality for all

The area covered by ELWA has the distinction of being one of the most culturally diverse areas in the country. It is also an area where there is much poverty with the associated features of poor environmental standards, lack of educational achievement and social exclusion.

In these circumstances ELWA has a role to play by:

- Aiming for our workforce to reflect the community at all levels
- Ensuring our services are accessible on an equal basis
- Aiming for high environmental standards in all we do.

# A future for waste

ELWA has developed a plan for dealing with the local area's waste for the next 25 years.

Known as the Integrated Waste Management Strategy (IWMS), it is designed to get the best

balance between costs and environmental impact.

The strategy considered all the available options for disposing of rubbish and four alternatives were identified.

These were:

- Recycling
- Organic treatments (composting and anaerobic digestion)
- Energy treatment (generating power through incineration)
- Landfill

Two major factors emerged from the study. First, which ever option was chosen, disposal costs would significantly rise and second, continuing with a major landfill operation would be the most expensive method.

The solution ELWA has decided upon is to reduce the landfill operation

whilst developing the other alternatives.

This will be achieved by developing a strong partnership with a private sector contractor via ELWA's IWMS contract, which is currently being tendered. Finance will come from the four boroughs and substantial help will

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## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE AVAILABLE WASTE TREATMENT OPTIONS

### Recycling

#### Advantages

ELWA estimates that up to 17% of its waste can be recycled at a cost which is comparable to landfill. Recycling is considered to be the most environmentally sustainable treatment option.

#### Disadvantages

Material recycling is likely to require the establishment of expensive kerbside collection systems. The cost of recycling is not likely to be cheaper than landfill for about 10 years. The viability of recycling is very dependent upon the sale value of recyclable materials.

### Organic Treatments

#### Advantages

ELWA estimates that up to 26% of its waste can be composted and/or digested. Composting is considered to be one of the most environmentally sustainable treatment options.

#### Disadvantages

Composting could require the establishment of an expensive waste collection system. The cost of composting is not likely to be comparable to landfill for 15 years or so. The extent to which the composted material can be used as a product varies considerably.

### Energy Treatments

#### Advantages

ELWA estimates that up to 59% of the waste can be diverted from landfill as a result of the use of energy recovery and mixed waste recycling. Modern waste incineration is widely considered to be environmentally sustainable. The cost of this approach in East London could be comparable with the cost of landfill within five years of operation.

#### Disadvantages

Waste incineration is considered by some to be environmentally damaging and possibly involving diversion from recycling. This option may result in longer planning processes.

### Landfill

#### Advantages

All waste can be disposed of by burying – called landfill. Energy can be obtained by the conversion of landfill gas.

#### Disadvantages

The cost of landfill is likely to rise significantly. The rate of increase will be unpredictable. Landfill is considered to be the least favourable approach in environmental terms. As local landfill sites close, ELWA may have to take waste further away from East London.

# The four Rs

There are at least four R's in waste management and they are:

**REFUSE** – say no to unnecessary products and services, such as taking home the minimum number of plastic carrier bags.

**REDUCE** – don't make so much waste in the first place by buying or consuming less.

**REUSE** – rather than throw it away. Glass jars are a good example.

**RECYCLE** – avoid industry having to start again by returning materials that can be treated and used again, such as paper.



## Civic amenity sites

Once you have finished with this newspaper, instead of throwing it in the bin, put it in a bag with other old papers and take it to your local civic amenity site. Then place the paper in a designated skip.

The following civic amenity sites are available for local people to dispose of and recycle their own waste. All sites can receive general waste but we do encourage everyone to recycle and a list of recycling services is given for each site.



**Barking & Dagenham** – Frizlands Lane, Dagenham

You can recycle paper, glass, aluminium cans, scrap metal, oil, car batteries and green waste at this site.

**Havering** – Gerpins Lane, Upminster

You can recycle paper, glass, cans, metal, cardboard, batteries, oil, textiles and green waste at this site.

**Newham** – Jenkins Lane, Barking

You can recycle paper, glass, drink cans, oil, concrete/brick rubble, textiles (clothes and shoes), fridges and freezers, car batteries and green waste at this site.

**Redbridge** – Chigwell Road, Woodford

You can recycle paper, glass, cans, plastic bottles, aluminium foil, metal, car batteries, oil, fridges and freezers and green waste at this site.

*continued from page 2*

come through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), a Government scheme which provides financial support for specific public/private partnerships.

ELWA has been awarded £47m PFI funding, payable over the next 25 years. This reduces the cost of waste disposal to the boroughs and, ultimately, local residents, by an average of £2.5m per year.

Four proposals for the future treatment and disposal of East London's municipal waste were examined by ELWA. These have now been narrowed down to two – Milton Keynes-based Shanks Waste Services Ltd and

Surrey-based Thames Waste Management.

The proposals from these companies include a range of methods and technologies aimed at helping ELWA deliver a modern approach to waste management. ELWA hopes to select one of these companies as its preferred bidder early in the New Year.

In return, ELWA will require the successful company to provide a host of modern facilities for safely treating and disposing of waste. They will also have to hit some impressive targets, including increasing recycling from the current 6% to at least 25% by 2005 and 30% by 2010.



## Not an age old problem



The waste problems facing us today are very much a 20th century problem. Before the Industrial Revolution at the beginning of the 19th century, England was a very different place.

Towns and cities were not as large as they are today and, surprisingly, recycling was very much a way of life with most waste being returned to the land as fertiliser. Of course, our ancestors did not have to worry about two of the main causes of waste - paper and plastic packaging – in those days.

By the end of the 19th century, things had started to change. New towns and cities had sprung up and with them came huge populations producing tonnes of waste.

The UK had never had to deal with such large quantities of waste before and as a result much of it was either dumped untreated into the sea or transported to large refuse dumps, which had no controls over what could be put into them.

The 1960s saw people becoming more prosperous but much more wasteful and the problems caused by unsound waste disposal continued to grow until the mid-1980s when western governments began to realise it could not go on and that the methods used to dispose of waste had to be made safe for everybody.

## A mayoral view

Not surprisingly, London Mayor Ken Livingstone is developing his own waste management strategy for the capital.

And ELWA has been invited to comment on the draft strategy, when it is published for formal consultation in early 2002.

The Mayor's vision is that municipal waste should no longer compromise London's future as a sustainable city. Just like ELWA's 25 year strategy, it recognises the need for lifestyle habits to change and for better management of waste.

Mr Livingstone's proposals include establishing a waste database for London and supporting the creation of a self-sufficient stable market for recyclable materials in London.

# FROM HIGH STREET TO TIP

## ...in less than five hours

To easily explain what is involved in disposing of East London's rubbish we followed one food carton's journey from a waste bin in a Newham high street to its final disposal in Essex.



**12 noon** – After munching a burger from his favourite fast food restaurant, Steve dumps the food carton in a waste bin in the high street. Later that day it begins the first stage of a ten-mile journey to Essex. The bin is emptied and the rubbish is left in a sack by the road for the Newham refuse collection team.



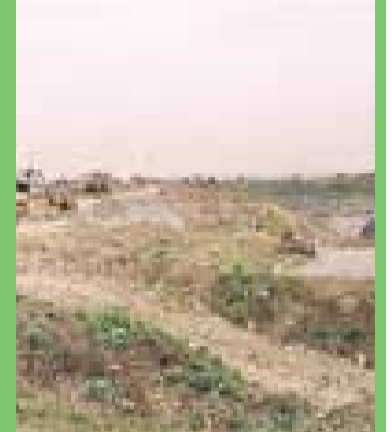
**2 pm** – Chargehand Barry collects our sack and loads it in the back of one of the borough's refuse lorries.



**2.30 pm** – The load is on its way to the waste transfer station in Jenkins Lane, Barking. It is now emptied into a large hopper and compacted into a roll on/off container. Jenkins Lane handles over 350,000 tonnes of this type of refuse a year.



**4 pm** – It is still only four hours since Steve dropped his carton in the bin, but it is now on the final stage of its journey down the A13 to Aveley. Over 50 similar loads will make the trip today to the site on the outskirts of London. The food carton is part of a 14 tonne load that by the end of the evening will be buried deep in an old gravel quarry.



Our story does not end here. Once the hole is completely full, the site will be sealed and grassed over, blending in with the countryside. Our burger carton, along with millions of cubic metres of other waste material, will slowly rot and breakdown. During the process the site has to be carefully monitored for as long as 30 years.

## Waste Quiz

Having read *Waste Solutions*, please look at the questions below and see how many answers you get right. The answers are all contained in this newspaper.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> How many tonnes of rubbish are expected to be produced in the four boroughs this year?</p> <p>A 50,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B 150,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C 530,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p><b>3</b> Which council is not part of the ELWA group?</p> <p>A Redbridge <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B Hackney <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C Newham <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>D Barking &amp; Dagenham <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>E Havering <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p><b>5</b> What is the main gas given off by material breaking down in landfill sites?</p> <p>A Methane <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B Carbon Monoxide <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C Nitrogen <input type="checkbox"/></p>                                      |
| <p><b>2</b> How much does it cost annually to dispose of East London's rubbish?</p> <p>A £2.1m <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B £21m <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C £210m <input type="checkbox"/></p>                          | <p><b>4</b> How much Landfill Tax per tonne does ELWA have to pay the government?</p> <p>A £1 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B £5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C £12 <input type="checkbox"/></p>   | <p><b>6</b> How many years can it take before all dangerous gases are removed from landfill sites and they can become safe?</p> <p>A Less than 3 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B About 13 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C More than 30 <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

Answers: (1) 530,000 (2) £21m (3) Hackney (4) £12 (5) Methane (6) More than 30

Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 5.00pm

**ELWA/5**

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East London  
Waste Authority

## Contact us

For more information about ELWA contact Alan Dawson, ELWA Office Manager on 020 8270 4964 or via e-mail to [adawson@barking-dagenham.gov.uk](mailto:adawson@barking-dagenham.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can visit our website on

[www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk](http://www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk)