

NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

REPORT TITLE: TRANSITION OF NEW FACILITIES INTO OPERATION

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

FOR SUBMISSION TO: AUTHORITY MEETING

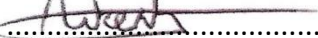
DATE: 30 JULY 2024

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report provides an update on the Authority's work to transition the new facilities delivered by the North London Heat and Power Project into operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

SIGNED:  Director of Corporate Services

DATE: 18 July 2024

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. The North London Heat and Power Project's (NLHPP) first facilities on EcoPark South are successfully transitioning into business as usual and opening to the public. The Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), a large waste management building with capacity to manage 374,000 tonnes of waste in linked with a public Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC) for residents and businesses. The third facility, nearing completion, is EcoPark House, a vibrant educational and visitor centre for use by north London residents and schools. This report details the transition arrangements, including plans to support the public opening of the RRC and EcoPark House.
- 1.2. This report provides a further update to the Planning for Future Service Delivery report discussed at the December 2023 Authority meeting and complements the NLHPP Update report on this agenda. The report structure provides:
 - 1.2.1. A summary narrative
 - 1.2.2. A focus on delivery acceptance from main contractor Taylor Woodrow
 - 1.2.3. Details of progress in the transition from delivery of the RRF, RRC and EcoPark House into operations
 - 1.2.4. Key Risks
 - 1.2.5. Mobilising our resources for successful deployment

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1. The handover and transition of facilities into operation and business as usual is progressing well with joined up working between NLWA, LondonEnergy Ltd (LEL) and the main contractor Taylor Woodrow, with the shared aim to deliver high quality facilities for public use and borough operations.
- 2.2. The RRF has been completed, LEL user acceptance testing was successful and now the facility is accepting waste and meeting the demand from all seven boroughs.
- 2.3. The Edmonton EcoPark RRC is the first major public facility delivered as part of the NLHPP and is conveniently located for Enfield, Waltham Forest and Haringey. The RRC opened to the public on 15 July 2024 and accepts more than 25 types of waste for recycling. For the first time, north London residents and businesses can now bring their recycling directly to the EcoPark. The new flagship recycling facilities are an investment in north London's future and form part of NLWA's wider waste management strategy to support the circular economy.
- 2.4. EcoPark House is the last building to be completed as part of the EcoPark south works and is expected to be handed over in late August 2024. The off-grid, state of the art facility is intended to be a community and visitor centre to educate

residents, facilitate learning and maximise social value long term on the site. It will also be home to the Edmonton Sea Cadets.



RRF

- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year
- Safe for drivers with automated traffic management
- Fast turnaround with an average 14 minutes weighbridge to weightbridge
- Clean Air via a bespoke state of the art air quality system



RRC

- Conveniently located for three boroughs, and a new service for local people
- Takes all types of waste except asbestos
- Able to take commercial waste



EcoPark House

- High quality education and visitor centre
- Flagship home for Edmonton Sea Cadets
- Flexible space for our constituent borough's residents

Figure 1: Key Outcomes for the EcoPark South Facilities

3. MAIN CONTRACTOR TAYLOR WOODROW DELIVERY ACCEPTANCE

- 3.1. In March 2024, the RRF was transferred from Taylor Woodrow to NLWA, who seamlessly handed it over to the operator of the facility, LEL so that they could begin commissioning.
- 3.2. Smooth transition of the RRF into operation was achieved through careful management of two workstreams: quality assuring the construction and commissioning carried out by Taylor Woodrow and pre-operational planning by LEL staff and NLWA officers. NLWA is ensuring that the facilities are of a good quality with safety and operational performance at the forefront of every decision. To allow operational ramp-up by LEL and planning for public use to begin in earnest, some non-critical documentation was agreed to be delivered after handover. An agile and collaborative approach between NLWA and LEL to the user acceptance testing, as well as a well-planned, sensible ramp up process and careful management of defects periods, have strengthened the delivery of the operating model and guided continuous improvement.
- 3.3. EcoPark House is the remaining building to be delivered by Taylor Woodrow in summer 2024. As with the RRF, EcoPark House will be transferred to NLWA and

then to LEL to manage and undertake commissioning and trial operations. The handover process will be similar to that of the RRF, with some flexibility expected around non-critical documentation being delivered later.

- 3.4. As handover of the last EcoPark South facility is imminent, NLWA is in the process of agreeing the final costs with Taylor Woodrow. The outcome will be reported to a future Authority meeting.

4. RRF

- 4.1. The RRF was completed by Taylor Woodrow in March 2024, when LEL took over and the facility and started the journey to business as usual. Ramping up was successfully carried out in line with the plan in Figure 2 below, with a steady state achieved on 10 May, less than a month after the operational trials began.

Waste Ramp Up Plan & Trial Ops Schedule

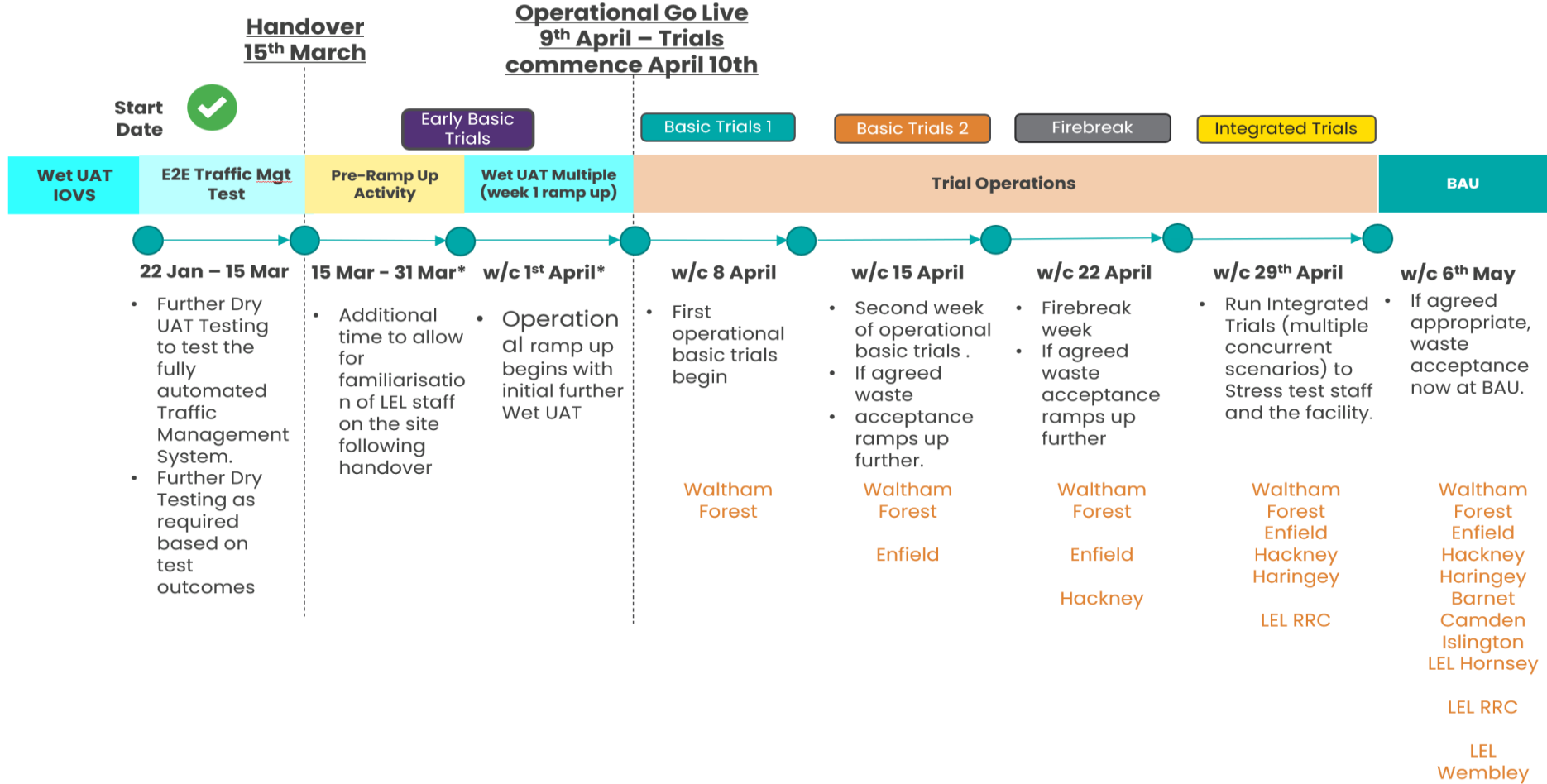


Figure 2: Ramp Up Schedule

- 4.2. The RRF is open 24 hours a day all year round for boroughs to drop off waste. It has the capacity to manage 374,000 tonnes of waste every year and is designed to bulk recycling and organic waste for onward transport to processors, extract recyclables from residual waste and prepare bulky waste for energy recovery. The RRC will allow north London residents and businesses to drop off their recyclable and non-recyclable waste at the EcoPark for the first time.
- 4.3. Pre-planning involved detailed assessment of operations, traffic management, safety, maintenance and business continuity. Building on this, there was a comprehensive ramp-up with borough testing. LEL undertook a series of trial operations to test their many operational processes and, once complete, began to accept waste in April from the first borough, Waltham Forest. In early May, LEL began accepting waste from all seven boroughs, which was a successful outcome for LEL and NLWA. Transitioning the boroughs to use the EcoPark, through the well-planned, gradual and flexible testing programme to accept waste, highlighted challenges and allowed for some fixes, including additional driver training. All issues were rectified.
- 4.4. A number of valuable lessons have been identified in the delivery of the RRF, which will be used to inform the ERF delivery. Now in operation, the RRF will be continuously monitored to optimise operations. There are ongoing investigations to explore further developments which could further enhance the extraction of recyclable items from the residual waste. The space within the site is small given the large volume of waste which north London generates; however, technology is always improving, and officers are looking for examples across Europe.

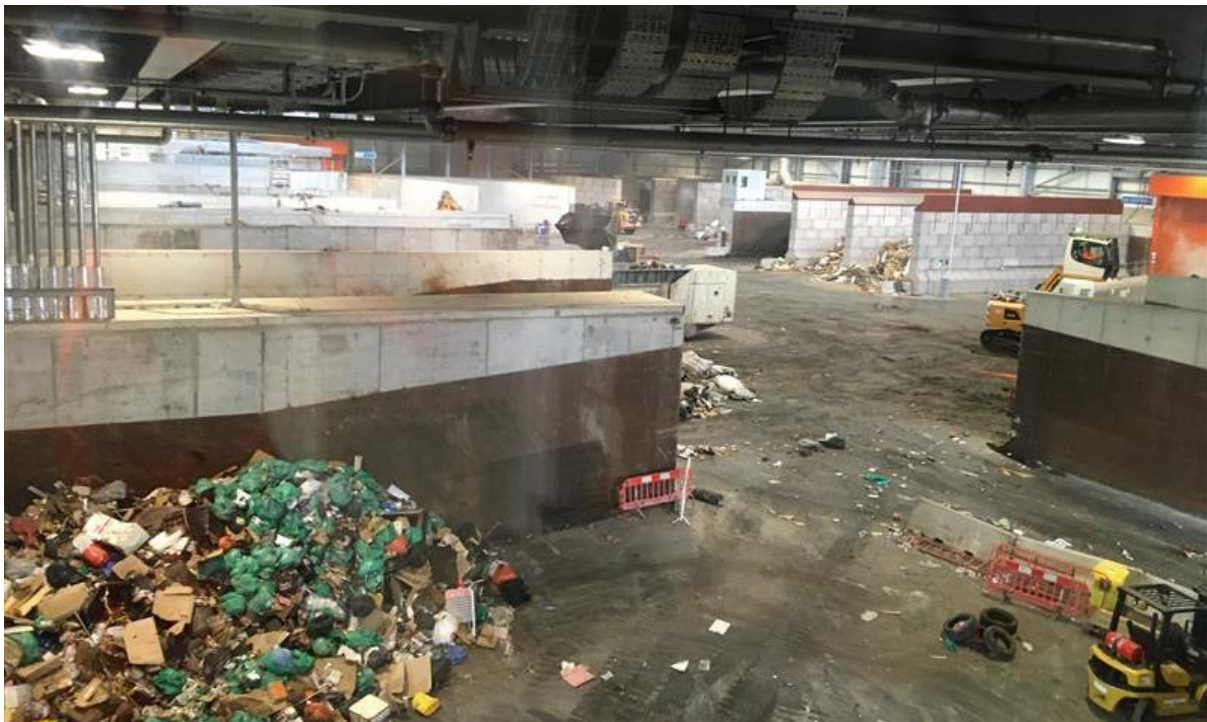


Figure 3: the RRF in operation

Collaborating with our constituent boroughs

- 4.5. In the lead up to the RRF opening and throughout testing, the following borough activities took place:
 - 4.5.1. Fortnightly updates at the Borough liaison meetings, attend by heads of service and other lead officers from all seven boroughs.
 - 4.5.2. Regular updates at Directors of Environment meetings.
 - 4.5.3. Operational Safety Group Meetings were held on a quarterly basis with operational staff from constituent boroughs and contractors.
 - 4.5.4. Several operational working group sessions were held.
 - 4.5.5. Site tours for operational staff, union representatives, heads of service, health and safety professionals and directors have been held regularly.
 - 4.5.6. NLWA and LEL completed 300 staff inductions, which ran through both normal and emergency procedures.
- 4.6. Boroughs now deliver their waste to the new facility. Key benefits are:
 - 4.6.1. The facility has a split-level design with drivers tipping waste through a door, which is beneficial for driver safety.
 - 4.6.2. Borough drivers are kept separate from site operational staff.
 - 4.6.3. Traffic control around the site is state of the art to keep vehicles segregated and minimise incidents.
 - 4.6.4. Bespoke air quality system which minimises any risk of odour affecting surrounding communities
 - 4.6.5. Drivers spend less time on site. Industry standard is 20-minute turnaround time weighbridge to weighbridge; the RRF visits average 14 minutes.
 - 4.6.6. Newer systems enable better collection of operational data to inform decision making.
- 4.7. The most recent monthly statistics on the RRF's performance are from May 2024:
 - 4.7.1. The facility has been available 100% of the time: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - 4.7.2. 5,879 deliveries have been facilitated from borough partners.
 - 4.7.3. A total 16,111 tonnes of waste have been accepted.

Food Waste

- 4.8. Food waste is delivered by boroughs to the new RRF for bulking and onward transport to Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facilities. The outputs from (AD) include biogas, which can be used to generate electricity or be upgraded into synthetic natural gas. The solid materials are commonly used as fertiliser.
- 4.9. Food waste storage and bulking is notoriously difficult at scale, due to the mix of oils, solids and other liquids that create slippery conditions and prevent handling of food in the same way that other waste types are handled. In addition, the odour profile is unpleasant and in certain conditions dangerous to health. The RRF allows the Authority to manage this food waste safely with purpose-built bays that prevent oils and other liquids coming into contact with surfaces that are driven or walked on. This enables machinery to operate without sliding around. The state-of-the-art odour control and air filtering systems ensure odours and small particulate matter are removed from the air making the environment safe for colleagues to operate in.
- 4.10. It should also be noted that government legislation to make food waste collections mandatory, coupled with boroughs moving away from the more expensive Biological and Kitchen (BioK) waste stream, is set to increase the volume of food waste significantly. The RRF provides additional capacity to help meet that growing need.

5. OPERATING THE RRC

- 5.1. The EcoPark RRC was handed over to NLWA and LEL in March following a rigorous testing and assurance process. The transition process was completed and the RRC opened to the public on Monday 15 July 2024. The phases of the RRC opening are set out in Figure 4 below.

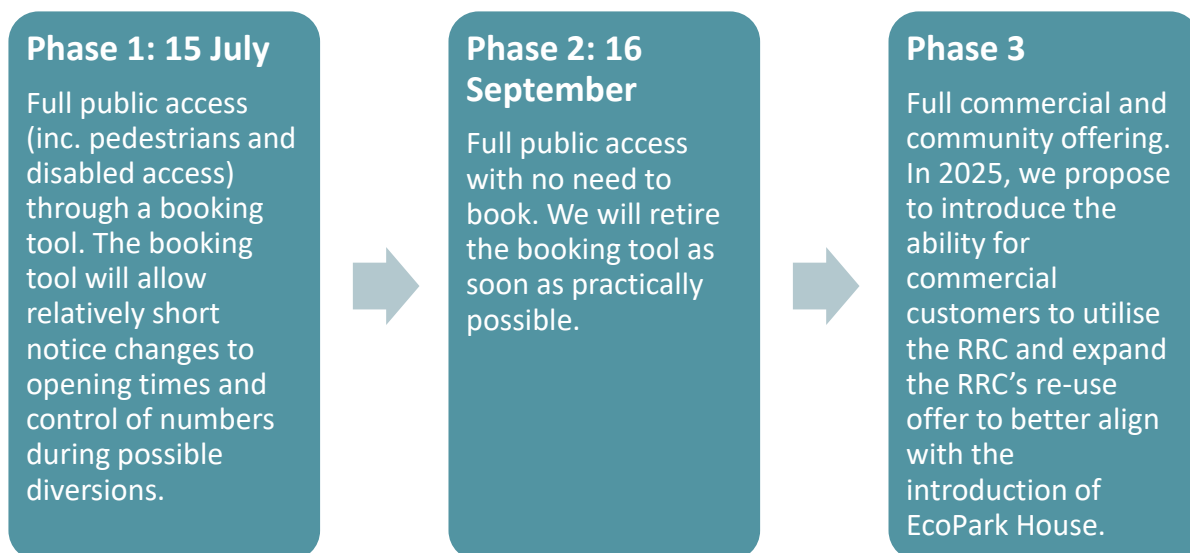


Figure 4: RRC Opening Phases

Advertising the new RRC to users

- 5.2. The RRC opening was advertised in weekly and monthly papers in Enfield, Waltham Forest and Haringey and on NLWA's website. Newsletters were distributed to households within an approximately 15-minute drive of the EcoPark (approximately 100,000 homes and businesses). It was also advertised on a local billboard; in Enfield, Waltham Forest and Haringey council print publications; and in Enfield's e-newsletter. Social media campaigns and press releases are planned featuring the formal opening.

Benefit to North London Residents

- 5.3. The brand-new, flagship recycling facilities are conveniently located to serve residents and business within Enfield, Waltham Forest and Haringey, are an investment in north London's future and form part of NLWA's wider waste management strategy to support the circular economy.
- 5.4. The recycling centre accepts over 25 waste types for recycling, as well as non-recyclable household waste material. This provides benefits as the RRC collects everything our residents expect, as well as items not usually accepted, including mattresses, expanded polystyrene, carpets and vapes.
- 5.5. The split-level design means waste can be disposed of without the need to climb steps. Access is available for pedestrians and cyclists through a separate side entrance, offering protection from vehicle traffic and increasing pedestrian safety.
- 5.6. The site has a small footprint, but it is well designed to deliver a full range of services while being accessible and safe.

- 5.7. NLWA and LEL will continue to identify opportunities for additional recycling services. In the future there will be the opportunity to open the RRC and EcoPark House space for community, charity and school groups to link to environmental projects. This could include providing space to local groups to offer repair and reuse opportunities as well as a pop-up reuse shop.

User Groups

- 5.8. North London residents and businesses will bring their recycling directly to the EcoPark by car, on foot or by bicycle. The facility is conveniently accessible to residents living in Enfield, Waltham Forest and Haringey. Businesses can use the EcoPark, and once the facilities have transitioned to business as usual the services for this user group may be expanded upon.
- 5.9. NLWA will build on the RRC and EcoPark House education offer to engage a range of north London residents to use the facilities and the EcoPark.

Accessibility

- 5.10. There has been a significant effort to separate construction and public traffic on the site, and these groups will enter, exit and move around the site on different roads. Access for pedestrians and those using bicycles (including cargo bikes) has been provided from the outset. A side service road has been blocked from traffic and used to provide access to containers for most public needs.
- 5.11. LEL has created short tutorial videos to show the journey to the RRC for those travelling by bus, on foot and by bicycle.
- 5.12. Further work will be done to develop safe walking routes to the facility, for their journey from public transport interchanges to the EcoPark.

6. ECOPARK HOUSE

- 6.1. EcoPark House, expected to open to the public in autumn 2024, will become a vibrant educational outreach and community hub for north London residents visiting the Edmonton EcoPark. The visitor experience will build on the current in-school education offer and tours which are currently delivered by NLWA, LEL and Acciona as part of their social value commitment. The offer will ramp up with the full offer planned to be in place for the start of the academic year in September 2025. Figure 5 shows the targeted user groups.

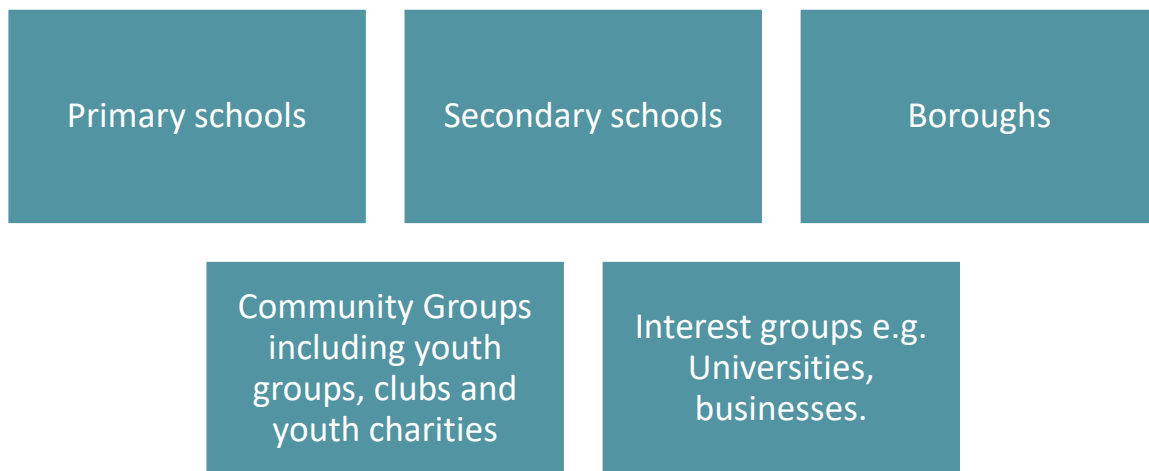


Figure 5: Targeted User Groups

Borough and Community Engagement

- 6.2. Officers are keeping boroughs and prospective visitors up to date on the offer and will arrange visits once timing is more certain. Officers attend various forums including the bi-monthly Education Steering Group with lead officers from the boroughs working on waste prevention education. Officers also have monthly one-to-one meetings with boroughs to inform them of progress. NLWA officers engage in the monthly Community Liaison Group to engage with community leaders, with borough representation to discuss the needs of our residents.
- 6.3. Once EcoPark House visit bookings can be made, NLWA will engage the community through channels such as social media, the NLWA and NLHPP websites, on site advertising at the new RRC, borough sustainability focus groups, e.g. repair groups, and by building on existing relationships with Community Fund recipients and those engaged via current campaigns, e.g. reuseable nappies.
- 6.4. To maximise social value, visibility of EcoPark House and engagement with boroughs, school governors and communities, EcoPark House will be offered as a meeting place, for annual general meetings or team away days with the option of an educational session or tour.

Visitor experience

- 6.5. After EcoPark House is handed over and tested, engaging visits for the target groups will commence. Existing tours and education sessions will then be delivered at EcoPark House and the new offer phased in. Visits will include a tour, an educational session to suit the groups' interests, use of the facility to suit community need or a combination of these.
- 6.6. NLWA currently offer an extensive and varied educational programme for schools through the NLHPP Schools Programme and different waste-focussed initiatives

delivered to schools and residents in the seven north London boroughs. The offer has been expanded and will be developed further to capitalise on being at the EcoPark and being able to see waste treatment in action.



Figure 6: Educational Topics Available

6.7. The new offer will include:

- 6.7.1. New education topics to expand on the primary school offer, including NLWA's new outreach programme for primary schools, 'In the Know', which is launching in September 2024, with seven schools (one in each borough) signed up to take part in the pilot year.
- 6.7.2. Tailoring waste-related sessions to suit different audiences.
- 6.7.3. Constantly evolving tour offer depending on site safety.



Figure 7: EcoPark House

Wider Offer Including Community Use

- 6.8. Community use will include the options outlined above, with a focus on re-use, the waste hierarchy and waste prevention activities.
- 6.9. EcoPark House will serve as a catalyst for cross-group collaboration, bringing together grant recipients of the Community Fund as well as pupils and teachers from the NLHPP Schools Programme to meet and share ideas. This dedicated space will facilitate collaboration among various stakeholder groups through a range of activities, including networking events, workshops and exhibitions. EcoPark House will aim to strengthen community ties and promote innovative approaches to waste education.

Sea Cadets

- 6.10. Edmonton Sea Cadets, who were established at the EcoPark and registered with the Charities Commission in 1964, eagerly await their return to the site. Preparations are being made locally, with support from their regional and national bodies, to ensure a smooth transition to their new premises. Sea Cadets representatives are working closely with the NLHPP project team, LEL and NLWA to ensure their requirements are met and the facility is fit for purpose.
- 6.11. The Sea Cadets will begin moving their boats and equipment back to the EcoPark once the building has been handed over and it is safe to do so. From this point, extensive Sea Cadet testing and head office checks will occur, including staff training and putting processes and equipment in place.
- 6.12. Developing the unit will involve a recruitment drive to bring the numbers of cadets and adult instructors up to full capacity. This objective is being undertaken by the Sea Cadets national recruitment team in conjunction with the district team. The Sea Cadets will build on strong relationships at the EcoPark and invite NLWA and LEL staff to apply to volunteer.
- 6.13. As the Edmonton branch rebuilds its numbers, Sea Cadets from our constituent boroughs, including Hackney, Waltham Forest and Enfield, and further afield are expected to use the facility. EcoPark House will be established as an area flagship and with the aim of becoming a national flagship. Visiting units would use EcoPark House for training and personal development, e.g. boating qualifications or first aid.
- 6.14. Edmonton Sea Cadets wish to capitalise on their good relationships with NLWA and LEL through shared education opportunities and educate their unit as to how we, as a society, can reduce the impact we have on the world through responsible action and waste reduction. This will help young people to grow and develop as they progress through the Sea Cadets through access to education and key skills within the Navy framework while they build self-esteem and leadership skills.

- 6.15. A contract between NLWA and the Edmonton Sea Cadets guides the terms and conditions for use and has been prepared collaboratively between the two organisations.



Figure 8: Edmonton Sea Cadets Unit Head and District Commander being shown around the Top Deck of EcoPark House

7. KEY RISKS

- 7.1. The main risks are associated with change as facilities are handed over and enter operation. Risks are considered during the transition process and then move into business as usual. Risks are managed by the NLHPP project team, LEL and NLWA, with teams working collaboratively to identify and agree mitigations. Transition risks are held, considered and managed by the NLHPP and LEL. Both NLHPP and LEL’s risk registers inform NLWA’s high-level strategic risk register.



Figure 9: Diagram of the transfer of risk ownership through transition

- 7.2. Table 1 sets out the key risks and mitigations.

Table 1: Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
It is essential to assure public safety at EcoPark South for the opening of the RRC and EcoPark House and on an ongoing basis. This includes safe passage, customer experience on site and security of operational areas.	Additional security reviews, separation of construction and public traffic, more signage and safety briefings for operatives with consideration of public use.
Delivering practical operation against budgeted cost assumptions	Engage with Members and borough officers. Demonstrate value for money.
Site coordination: ensuring that public facilities do not affect and are not affected by ERF construction activities	Construction Design Management damage avoidance techniques are in place and the careful ongoing management of interfaces between NLHPP and LEL requirements at the EcoPark.
Social value at EcoPark House not optimised in the short to medium term	Education offer has been advanced, with buy-in from prospective visitors. Broader offer to capitalise on social value opportunities is being developed. Extensive engagement with Sea Cadets to enable their offer.

8. MOBILISING RESOURCES FOR DEPLOYMENT

- 8.1. The delay to delivery of EcoPark House is regrettable. However, as with other facilities, officers are ensuring that the asset is taken over from the constructor only when the building is fully completed, and tests have been thoroughly conducted.
- 8.2. At the December 2022 Authority meeting, Members delegated Authority to the Managing Director to enter into a new Waste Management and Maintenance Contract in relation to the EcoPark South facilities. The contract, which was signed in March 2024, sets out the service requirements for the facilities (including operations, maintenance and reporting), the payment mechanism and requirements for reporting on costs, the health and safety standards expected and the agreed approach to asset management. LEL will provide all staff required to operate and maintain the facilities and will work closely with NLWA officers on matters including the visitor offer at EcoPark House.
- 8.3. The running costs for EcoPark South facilities have been incorporated into the NLWA 2024-25 budget. The approach taken to efficiently manage costs with LEL includes a 'cost plus' mechanism for the first year of operations. This means that a set of assumed costs have been agreed with LEL, with a review taking place in the second half of the financial year between NLWA and LEL to establish the true recurrent cost of running the EcoPark South facilities.

- 8.4. Following establishment of the future recurrent cost of EcoPark South operations, officers will consult constituent boroughs affected on how best to apportion the costs in line with the Inter-Authority Agreement, that was agreed in 2016.
- 8.5. Officers are operating the resourcing of key personal between LEL and NLWA as efficiently as possible, not compromising the integrity of running a safe operation. For example, NLWA and LEL staff have assessed present and planned activities for the visitor offer and have repurposed activity inside our organisations. Staff will manage the education content, deliver sessions and host tours.
- 8.6. LEL and NLWA communications and education focussed staff will occupy the office space within EcoPark House from handover to promote collaborative working and maximise asset performance and utilisation for north London's residents. More generally, while it is important that EcoPark House is primarily used to provide outward facing services, it also provides a useful hub for collaborative activities involving NLWA, LEL and/or borough staff working together when it is not being used by external groups.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no equalities implications arising from this paper. Operational plans aim to make the facilities accessible to the widest range of potential users.

10. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

- 10.1. The Legal Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments have been incorporated.

11. COMMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISER

- 11.1. The cost of constructing the new facilities has been funded by borrowing. The borrowing has been taken from the Public Works loan board, taking advantage of low rates of interest to minimise the cost to boroughs in future.
- 11.2. In line with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) regulations 2003 as well as the Authority's policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), the Authority will begin to include a provision to repay the debt when it falls due. This is required to begin from the financial year after the assets are brought into use.
- 11.3. The first waste was taken delivered to the facility in April 2024 and this is the point that the RRF is considered to be in use. Therefore the MRP charge will be charged through the levy from the financial year 2025/26. Interest on the borrowing has been capitalised during the construction period and this will be charge to the levy from the date that each of the facilities is in use. Interest was budgeted in 2024/25 and included in the levy and charges.

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