

# Waste Prevention and Recycling as **the way forward** instead of rebuilding the Edmonton incinerator

The Edmonton incinerator in Enfield has been operational since 1971 and is at the end of its life. Rather than commissioning a new incinerator we argue that emphasis needs to instead be placed on reaching recycling targets and accelerating North London's transition to a circular economy. We are living in a climate emergency and already are seeing some of the severe impacts unfolding. North London needs to move forward by swiftly doubling down on waste prevention and increasing its recycling rates.

## Our alternative four action point plan as described further down will:

- Ensure we can meet climate emergency targets by preventing the incineration of the majority of plastics.
- Ensure we reach the London Mayor's 65% recycling target by 2030 and shift to a 100% circular economy by 2050.
- Create a large income stream for North London from the sales of recycled plastic granules right here at our doorstep.
- Ensure the historic social and racial injustice of incinerator air pollution in Edmonton comes to an end.

**A better solution for North London to reach existing targets.** Our four action point plan will allow North London to reach 65% recycling by 2030, advance to 85% by 2040 and aspire to zero waste by 2050. Only 280,000 tonnes of residual waste incineration by 2030 would remain that can be dealt with using existing incineration capacity and landfill, further declining to 120,000 tonnes by 2040 and close to zero by 2050. A solution aligned with legislative changes and the latest technologies.

## 1. Setup of a £10 million per year waste prevention, reuse and recycling improvement fund

Managed by the North London Waste Authority the fund will enable local authorities and local community organisations to rapidly scale collection service improvements, waste prevention efforts, and awareness campaigns. Financed from packaging producers' payments to local authorities from the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme that will be in place by 2024. Based on DEFRA calculations the EPR scheme will transfer £900 million per year to local authorities across the UK.

Today the NLWA invests less than a million pounds per year from its revenues in waste prevention campaigns and recycling collection improvements.

NLWA expenditure	2019/20	2020/21
Waste Prevention Programme	512	296
Communications Campaign	82	9
Other Recycling Initiatives	189	94
Total waste prevention and recycling gains	<b>783</b>	<b>399</b>
Total NLWA expenditure	<b>59,017</b>	<b>61,512</b>

The North London zero waste to incineration fund would scale up activity by a factor of 15. To rapidly reach 65% recycling by 2030 and 85% by 2040.

## 2. Invest in a 700,000 tonne mixed waste sorting and plastics recycling facility at the EcoPark

The latest technologies allow for the sorting, purification and recycling of many materials in black bag refuse. An integrated mixed waste sorting and plastics recycling plant can recover and recycle the majority of plastics and nearly all metals, drink cartons, and paper & card. Recovery of these materials would reduce North London's total residual waste stream by up to 22%. By adding organics recovery with Anaerobic Digestion an additional 48% of North London's residual waste (food and garden waste) can be transformed into biogas for energy and digestate for compost. **Mixed waste recovery can reduce residual waste disposal needs by up to 70% for North London and bring substantial recycled plastics sales income.**

In Norway the IVAR IKS facility recovers 82% of black bag plastics at 98% purity and turns this into recycled plastic pellets.



In Northwich, England, the Renaissance facility recovers 70% of black bag waste for recycling of plastics and metals and biogas production.



In de Wijster, the Netherlands, out of 800,000 tonnes of residual waste 35% is recovered into biogas and digestate, and 12.5% is turned into recycled plastics, metals and drink cartons.

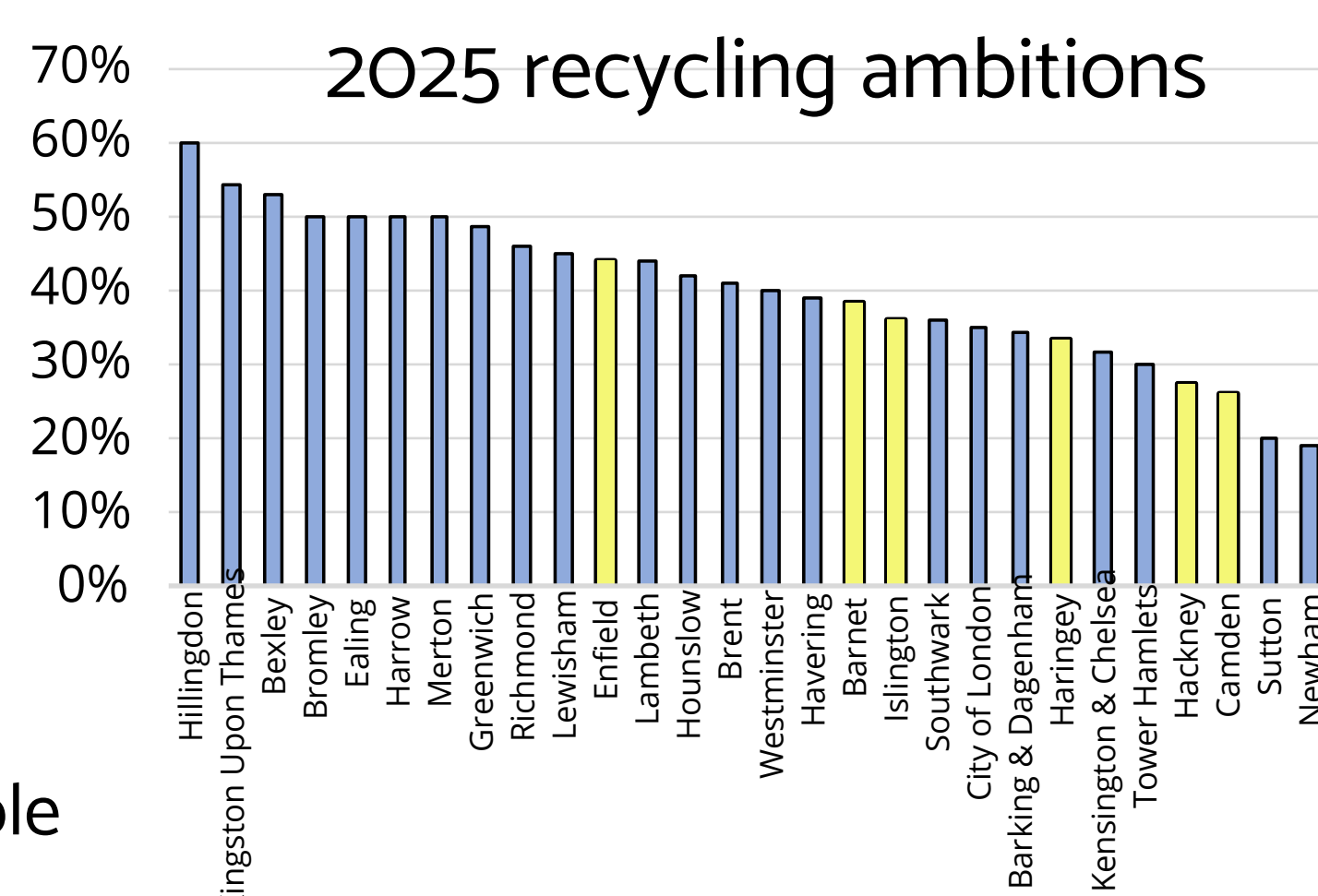


## 3. Swiftly enhance our council's Reduction and Recycling Plans (RRPs) + leverage legislative changes

### North London is lacking in recycling ambition

The majority of London's councils **target recycling above 40% by 2025 and seven at or above 50%**. The targets of the NLWA boroughs are:

- Camden 26%
- Hackney 27.5%
- Haringey 33.4%
- Islington 36.0%
- Barnet 38.4%
- Enfield 44.0%
- Waltham Forest not available



The UK has set a target of 65% recycling by 2035, and the Greater London's Authority by 2030, across household, commercial and industrial wastes. The NLWA and 7 North London councils' ambition should be to reach these targets and leverage upcoming legislative changes to this end.

### The UK government aims by 2025 to have in place:

1. Deposit return schemes for containers
2. Separate stream collection of recyclables
3. Mandatory food waste collections
4. A £200 per tonne plastics packaging tax
5. Extended bans on single use plastics
6. Textiles + packaging producer responsibility
7. Waste prevention targets
8. Collections for all plastics packaging

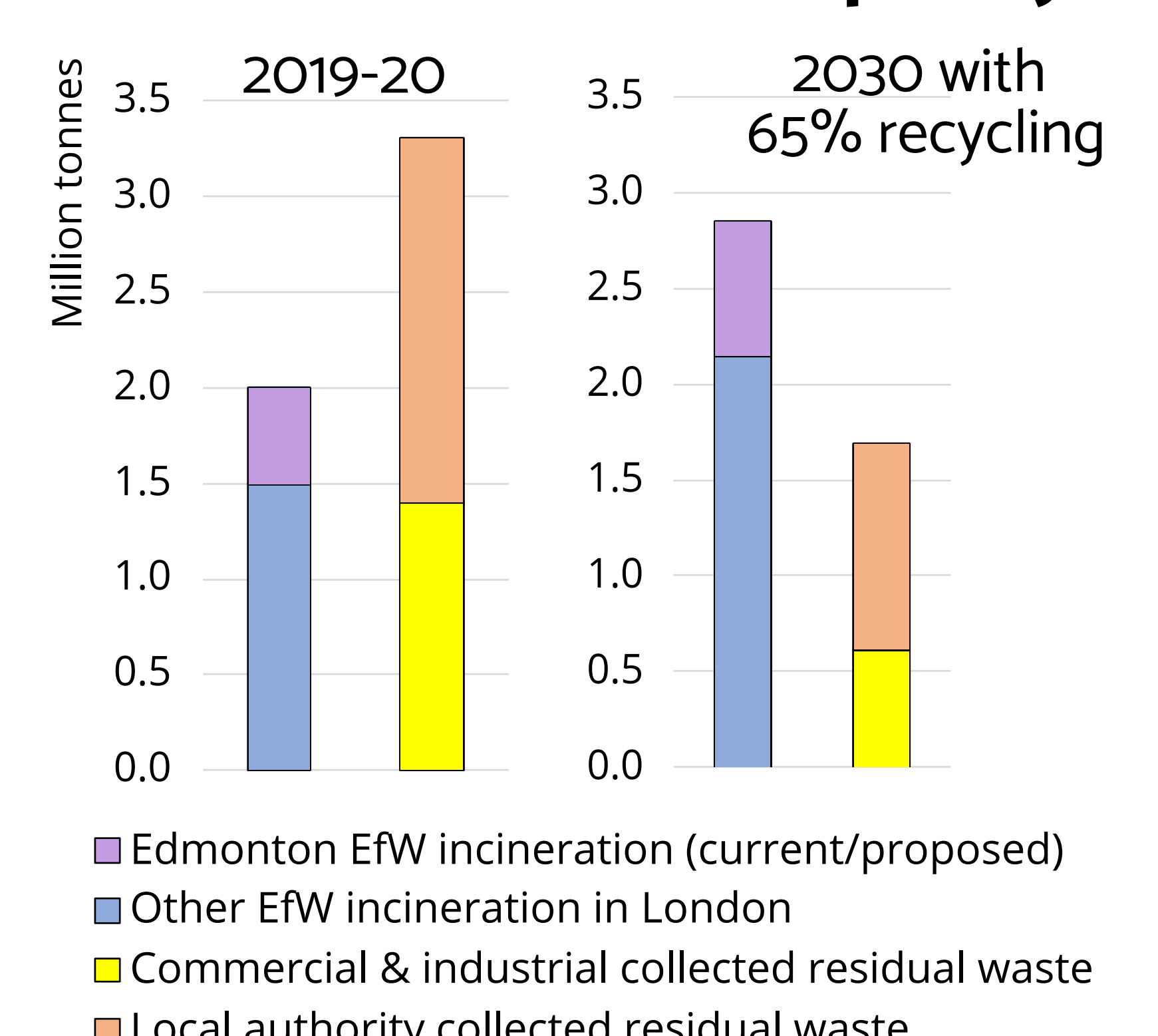
## 4. Ensure any remaining residual waste is disposed in the most environmentally friendly manner

London will have 2.15 million tonnes per year incinerator capacity by 2025 when excluding Edmonton. There are 3 other incinerators in Bexley, Sutton and Bermondsey, and a 4th being built by Cory also in Bexley will start operations in 2025. **The Cory incinerators at Bexley will be equipped with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in 2026 to capture 1.5 million tonnes of CO2 emissions.** The NLWA from Islington already sends wastes to Cory's Northumberland Wharf transfer station from where it can be transported by barge to Bexley's incinerator. Sufficient capacity will be available for disposing of residual waste in these incinerators with CCS technology.

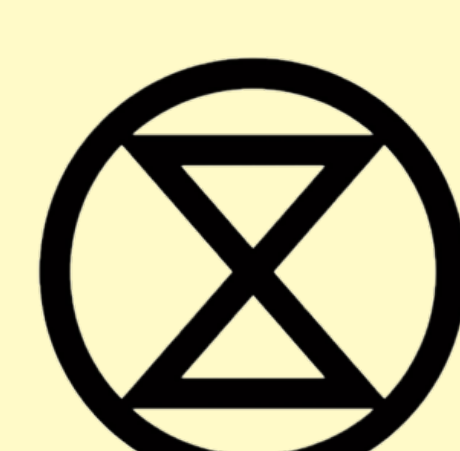
3% of residual wastes are inert and will need to be landfilled or turned into a product for road or building construction, similar to incinerator's bottom ash.

27% of residual black bag wastes are textiles, unrecyclable plastics, sanitary wastes, wood, glass, furniture and mattresses. These would be incinerated until their separate collection is boosted for reuse and recycling. The NLWA has already put in place in 2021 a mattress recycling scheme.

### London does not need more incineration capacity



This four point action plan has been developed by:



**XR ZERO WASTE**

[www.xrzerowaste.uk](http://www.xrzerowaste.uk)