

Environmental and Waste Management Group



December 2019 Newsletter

LEGISLATION, REGULATORS, GUIDANCE & CONSULTATIONS

Annual results for local authority collected waste generation and management for England

Official figures released by Defra ([Local authority collected waste management for England for 2018/19](#)) highlight a 0.5% decrease in 'waste from households' recycling from 2017 to 2018, together with decreases in residual waste treated and the amount of total waste recycled.

Pat Jennings, CIWM's Head of Policy, Knowledge and External Affairs, said: "There is little good news in the latest stats and overall they demonstrate the pressing need for the significant policy changes that have been the subject of discussion and consultation across the UK during the past 12 months."

(Read more: circularonline.co.uk)

Geological disposal of nuclear waste

The Environment Agency (EA) and Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) have published their annual report on their scrutiny of Radioactive Waste Management's (RWM) work to develop geological disposal. (Read more: gov.uk)

Government ends support for fracking

The government announced a moratorium on fracking (the enhanced extraction of natural gas from shale) on 2 November following the publication of new scientific analysis in a [report by the Oil and Gas Authority \(OGA\)](#) which found that it is not currently possible to accurately predict the probability or magnitude of earthquakes linked to fracking operations.

Fracking already takes place across the world including in the US, Canada and Argentina. However, exploratory work to determine whether shale could be a new domestic energy source in the UK has now been paused - unless and until further evidence is provided that it can be carried out safely.

(Read more: gov.uk)

INCIDENTS AND PROSECUTIONS

Waste transfer company director sentenced after repeated serious safety failings

The director of a Blackburn waste transfer company was found guilty and banned from being a company director after knowingly exposing employees to serious unsafe working conditions. Despite a conviction for transport related health and safety offences following a fatal incident in 2013, and further enforcement action in 2017 for using a poorly maintained and damaged telehandler, the director had allowed the continued use of the same seriously damaged machine on the waste transfer site.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Steven Boyd noted that “workplace transport incidents remain a major cause of fatal and serious injuries in the waste and recycling industry. It is important that vehicles are maintained in a safe condition.” (Read more: [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))

EA civil sanctions

The EA has published a list of Enforcement Undertakings (EUs) it accepted between 20 October 2018 and 22 May 2019. (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST

Electric vehicle battery waste

Recycling technologies for end-of-life lithium ion batteries (LIBs) are not keeping pace with the rapid rise of electric vehicles, storing up a potentially huge waste management problem for the future, according to a new study led by the University of Birmingham in collaboration with researchers at the universities of Newcastle and Leicester, and published in the 150th anniversary issue of Nature.

The report acknowledges that rapid growth in the market for electric vehicles is imperative, to meet global targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to improve air quality in urban centres and to meet the needs of consumers, with whom electric vehicles are increasingly popular. However, growing numbers of electric vehicles present a serious waste-management challenge for recyclers at end-of-life. Nevertheless, spent batteries may also present an opportunity as manufacturers require access to strategic elements and critical materials for key components in electric-vehicle manufacture: recycled LIBs from electric vehicles could provide a valuable secondary source of materials. The report outlines and evaluates the current range of approaches to electric-vehicle LIB recycling and re-use, and highlights areas for future progress. (Read more: [nature.com](https://www.nature.com))

UK hits renewable energy record as wind shatters 16GW threshold

A new energy record was set on Sunday 8 December when wind provided more than 40% of the UK's power. National Grid said onshore and offshore wind generated up to 16,162GW, making up a 43.7% share of electricity and reaching more than double the amount that nuclear produced, at 20.5%. This was followed by gas generation making up 12.8% of the mix, with biomass at 7.9%, imports at 7.4%, coal at 3.1%, hydro at 1.7%, solar at 1.3%, storage at 1.1% and other sources at 0.5%. (Read more: [energylivenews.com](https://www.energylivenews.com))

New tool to improve carbon management in infrastructure

The [Carbon Infrastructure Transformation Tool](#) (CITT) Project has released a [report](#) spurring the next stages of development for a tool that could deliver changes in carbon management in infrastructure projects

The CITT project is a collaboration between industry and academia, with research being carried out by the University of Edinburgh Business School and Costain. Findings from the report will be important for clients, design teams and contractors in measuring, and reporting carbon reductions. The results of the research will also help developers of carbon calculation tools identify areas for future development and understand the effectiveness of tools. (Read more: [pbctoday.co.uk](#))

Viridor invests £2m in innovation to create transport fuels from landfill gas

Viridor has signed an agreement to work with Dutch company CarbonOrO to deliver a global first – a gas clean-up system which transforms landfill gas into transport fuels in a process which also allows for successful capture of carbon dioxide. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](#))

Environmental services managers face mounting responsibility

More than a third (36%) of environmental services managers in local authorities, government or infrastructure agencies rank ‘mounting environmental responsibilities’ among the three main challenges they face. The next two biggest challenges were ‘increased fly-tipping’ (36%), and ‘difficulties of meeting the cost of running environmental services’ (35%). (Read more: [pbctoday.co.uk](#))

UCL’s ‘Big Compost Experiment’

UCL’s Plastic Waste Innovation Hub invites you to help shape the future of the planet, inviting us to participate in a UK nationwide citizen science research experiment in compostable and biodegradable plastics. The experiment has two parts: The first part is for everyone, whether you compost or not – a short 5 minute survey; the second part is optional for those who compost – a home composting experiment. (Read more: [bigcompostexperiment.org.uk](#))

£1million funding launched to accelerate waste-reduction innovation and research

Environmental compliance scheme Ecosurety has launched a £1million innovation and research fund for projects that seek to reduce the impact of packaging, batteries or WEEE (electronic waste) on the environment. The fund will be spread across three years with individual grant applications of up to £150,000 being accepted.

Applications to the Ecosurety Exploration Fund can be made via the [Ecosurety website](#) (where more details on eligibility can be found) from Thursday 28 November. The deadline for submission is 11.59pm, Tuesday March 2020. Winners will be announced at a special event in May 2020.

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

Battery Safety conferences

Amey will be hosting a summit in February 2020 in Cambridgeshire to discuss ways that government and industry can work together to encourage the right consumer behaviours, review industry safety protocols where necessary, and ultimately prevent further accidents. (Read more: circularonline.co.uk)

A **Battery Recycling Europe** conference will take place on 19 and 20 February 2020 in London. The event is described as bringing together battery recycling industry experts, collection scheme operators and battery manufacturers to learn, share and discuss the current and emerging topics in the battery recycling industry. (Read more: wplgroup.com)

Plastics in the environment

The Geological Society will be hosting a one-day meeting entitled “Plastics in the Environment” at Burlington House, London on Thursday 14 May 2020. This one-day meeting will bring together researchers from a diverse range of disciplines (e.g. hydrology, sedimentology, geochemistry, Earth science, biology) to discuss the fate of plastics in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. (Read more: geolsoc.org.uk)

INTERNATIONAL

Plastic policies “lagging behind” in South-East Asia

A new UN Environment Programme assessment of plastic waste policies has found limited packaging-related policies and “weak enforcement” are aggravating the problem of plastic pollution in South-East Asia.

The report, [The Role of Packaging Regulations and Standards in Driving the Circular Economy](#), is the first comprehensive look at policies on packaging waste and standards in 10 countries in South-East Asia and recommends that harmonised, pan-ASEAN policies would be a boon to countries in tackling the plastic pollution problem. (Read more: circularonline.co.uk)

Meanwhile, Malaysia is set to publish a circular economy roadmap for plastics by 2020. The roadmap will be introduced as part of the 2018-2030 roadmap towards zero single-use plastics, according to reports by The Malaysian Reserve. The roadmap aims to provide a direction for policy and stakeholders – including state governments. (Read more: circularonline.co.uk)