



environmental  
services  
association

## **ESA PRESS STATEMENT**

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# ***Six million tonnes of UK waste will be without a home by 2030, finds independent review***

**LONDON, 30 September 2017:** The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice for the UK's resource and waste management industry, today launched its latest briefing: *'The treatment capacity gap that urgently needs to be addressed'*. Supporting this briefing, ESA also released an independent analysis of the UK market for the treatment of non-recyclable wastes, produced by Tolvik Consulting.

ESA's briefing highlights:

- recycling rates are unlikely to rise much above current levels, which would leave the UK six million tonnes short of treatment capacity by 2030, even after factoring in a continuation of waste exports to the EU and the development of some currently unplanned facilities;
- boosting recycling rates above the industry's expected range of 50-55% is likely to cost at least £1.5 billion and will require significant government intervention to support markets for recycled materials;
- closing the forecast 6 million tonne capacity gap would lead to £4.5 billion capital investment, 1,500 permanent jobs in the waste sector and almost 7,500 jobs in the construction phase; and
- the additional energy from waste facilities would produce almost 0.5GW of electricity, capable of powering around 720,000 homes.

Commenting on the report, ESA Executive Director Jacob Hayler said:

***“The waste and recycling industry is alarmed by the emergence of a critical lack of infrastructure to treat the nation’s waste. ESA’s Members have invested around £5 billion in UK recycling and recovery facilities in the past five years and completed detailed modelling exercises to understand what further investment is required for the future.***

***Their conclusions are stark: by 2030 the UK needs faces a shortfall of six million tonnes of waste treatment capacity. Without action, this means that five million UK homes will see their waste buried in landfill when it could be used to generate energy, helping to safeguard the UK’s energy supplies.***

***We urgently need the government to recognise the waste crisis the UK is facing and give the industry the long term clarity it needs to invest in new energy from waste facilities.”***

Tolvik’s analysis supports the waste and recycling industry’s view that the UK is heading for serious under-capacity for the treatment of waste which cannot be recycled. As landfills close at an uneven rate around the country some regions will be left with no landfills and no replacement infrastructure before the end of this Parliament.

Tolvik Director Adrian Judge said:

***“Current policy uncertainty, particularly in England, is discouraging investment into the sector, which desperately needs new infrastructure both for recycling and for energy from waste facilities.***

***This is creating the risk of a mismatch between waste tonnages and available treatment capacity, which could lead to significant quantities of waste without a home by 2030.”***

Both the report and the ESA Briefing document are attached to this release

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## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors:**

1. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK’s waste is managed.

2. We work with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. ESA's recent Circular Economy report '*Going for Growth – A practical route to a circular economy*', which outlines how a Circular rather than a linear economy can help manage resources sustainably, can be downloaded [here](#).
3. ESA's Members manage waste on behalf of the whole of society and we are recovering more than ever before. For example, the industry has helped quintuple the UK's household recycling rates over the last decade.
4. **The sector at a glance**
  - Total turnover: **£11 billion**
  - Direct Employment: **106,000 people** (*including waste collection, treatment and materials recovery*)
  - Municipal waste handled each year: **27 million tonnes**
  - Energy generated (across landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste) each year: **approximately 11,867 GWh**, which is 3.5% of the UK's electricity
    - **9,083 GWh of that was renewable electricity** (taking out non-biodegradable portion of EfW) which is **11%** of UK's renewable electricity
  - Greenhouse **gas emissions down by 70% since 1990.**
  - The **top seven companies account for approximately 40% of turnover**. Many hundreds of SMEs provide either localised or more specialised services
  - Waste & recycling is the **most highly rated of all council services** by the public (2016 survey)

For further details please visit [www.esauk.org](http://www.esauk.org)

## **Press Contact**

**Toni Waters – Communications and Membership Officer**

*ESA Press Office* - (0207) 591 3219 (DD - (0207) 591 3206)

*Mobile* - (07841) 572 834

*Email* - [t-waters@esauk.org](mailto:t-waters@esauk.org) / [press@esauk.org](mailto:press@esauk.org)