#### **CABINET**

### 13 July 2021

Title: East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy 2027-2057 – Public Consultation

Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Realm

Open Report

Wards Affected: All

Key Decision: No

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### Summary

As Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the other three Constituent Boroughs of Havering, Newham, and Redbridge collect household and other waste that is subsequently treated and/or disposed of by the East London Waste Authority (ELWA) as the Joint Waste Disposal Authority (JWDA).

ELWA and its constituent Boroughs (collectively the 'Partner Authorities') are statutorily required to produce a Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (JRWS) to replace the existing strategy which is expiring.

The context around the Partner Authorities delivering waste management services is subject to considerable change over coming years and this needs to be reflected in the replacement JRWS. These notably include significant forthcoming changes to national waste policy and the ending of ELWA's current waste treatment contract in 2027 with the need to develop successor arrangements. There will also be an increased expectation from the Mayor of London that the Partner Authorities meet their obligations to be in 'general conformity' with the London Environment Strategy (LES) when the ELWA contract ends.

The Preliminary Draft of the new East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) has been developed in close cooperation between officers and Members of the Partner Authorities and is attached at Appendix A to this report. This report sets out the key elements of the ELJRWS and the context around it.

A public consultation is planned on the ELJRWS during mid-July to mid-September, which will be delivered by ELWA. This report sets out the details of the consultation.

This report seeks approval of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS and the associated public consultation plan, in line with parallel approvals sought from the other four Partner Authorities for the purposes of the stakeholder engagement process set out in the report. The process and timescales towards adoption of the ELJRWS is also set out in this report.

## Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the release of the Preliminary Draft of the East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) and associated documents to the four statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Greater London Authority, Historic England, and Natural England);
- (ii) Approve the start of the public consultation on the ELJRWS in line with the proposals set out in the report; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, My Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Realm, to approve any appropriate minor amendments within the strategy document and/or changes in the public consultation timeline.

# Reason(s)

To assist the Council to achieve its priorities of "Inclusive Growth" and "Well Run Organisation", and to ensure that the Council's service to collect household waste (refuse) and recycling runs effectively and efficiently.

## 1. Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Current Waste Management Arrangements

- 1.1.1 In line with other Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has a statutory obligation to collect household waste arising from homes and other premises, alongside commercial waste at the request of individual businesses. The WCAs are also responsible for undertaking street cleansing and other public realm management duties, which result in the collection of other waste streams.
- 1.1.2 The East London Waste Authority (ELWA) is a 'Joint Waste Disposal Authority' and is responsible for providing treatment and disposal services for the waste and recycling collected by the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, and Redbridge.
- 1.1.3 ELWA has a contract for the management of the waste collected by its constituent Boroughs and the operation of the four Reuse and Recycling Centres (RRC's) which started in 2002 and ends in December 2027.
- 1.1.4 Through its long-term contract, ELWA arranges for various treatment processes for the recycling, including sorting infrastructure for mixed materials and composting capacity for garden waste.
- 1.1.5 The residual waste (i.e., waste that is not reused, recycled, or composted) delivered to ELWA is primarily managed through two Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) Facilities, located at Frog Island (Havering) and Jenkins Lane (Newham). These reduce the total volume of residual waste through a bio-drying process, and then

separate the remainder into three fractions – metals and glass/stones for recycling, 'Compost Like Output' (CLO) that undergoes further treatment so it can be used as a non-agricultural soil improver and Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) which is sent for energy recovery.

1.1.6 As such ELWA's contract delivers very high level of diversion of waste from landfill and recycling/composting which supports the constituent Borough's recycling rates. However, unlike several other WCAs both in London, the contract has prevented the introduction of food waste collections by the constituent Boroughs and has disincentivised several improvements that they might otherwise make to their recycling services.

## 1.2 The Statutory Context

- 1.2.1 The WCAs and WDAs in 'two tiers' areas (i.e., areas with separate WCAs and WDAs) in England are required under s32 of the Waste Emissions Trading Act to have in place a joint strategy for the management of household and similar wastes. The Act also obligates these Authorities to:
  - Ensure that the policies in the joint strategy are kept under review;
  - Have regard to the relevant government guidance; and
  - When formulating a joint strategy "carry out such consultation as they consider appropriate".
- 1.2.2 Waste Authorities in London are required to deliver waste management services in 'general conformity' (subject to some caveats) with the Mayor of London's Resources and Waste Strategy – currently the waste policies of the Mayor's wider 2018 London Environment Strategy (LES). This requirement extends to the policies of any Joint Waste Strategy.
- 1.2.3 The Constituent Boroughs also have a statutory obligation to produce a Waste Local Plan, which sets out land use policies for waste development in the local area and ensures that local planning authorities provide sufficient space for the management of an amount of waste apportioned in the London Plan.
- 1.2.4 This will include waste that is not collected or treated by the Partner Authorities, such as privately managed commercial waste and construction/demolition waste. The production of a Waste Local Plan is separate from the development of the ELJRWS and is not within the scope of this report, but the Partner Authorities (particularly ELWA) will need to have due regard to the local planning context when delivering future infrastructure solutions for waste management.

## 1.3 Current and Future Government and Mayoral Waste Policy

- 1.3.1 The national Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) was published in 2018, and notably include proposed policies for setting up of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging waste, and establishing more consistent household and business recycling services across the country (Consistency).
- 1.3.2 The Government launched a second round of consultations on two of the three proposed policies in March 2021, with a view to the introduction of the policies from

- 2023. The third consultation (Consistency) was delayed until 7 June 2021. Notwithstanding that, residual uncertainties around the three proposed future policies will lead to significant changes to both collection and disposal activities in the Partner Authority area.
- 1.3.3 The DRS proposals are likely to mean that the recycling rate of drinks containers will increase and littering of these products will reduce. However, the number of drinks containers in constituent Borough waste collections (both recycling and residual waste) will reduce, and it is not clear if the items diverted into the DRS will be able to be counted in local authority recycling rates.
- 1.3.4 The EPR proposals, aside from making the packaging industry responsible for the costs of packaging waste, are likely to drive consistent recyclability labelling on packaging and the use of more recyclable packaging.
- 1.3.5 Broadly in line with the Government's Consistency proposals, the Mayor of London's Minimum Service Standards set out in the LES include six main dry recycling materials collected from all properties and separate food waste collections, including from flats where practical and cost-effective.
- 1.3.6 The modelling underpinning the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS reflects prudent assumptions on the impact of EPR and DRS. The future collection systems modelled are also compliant with both the Mayor's Minimum Service Standards and the expected requirements of the Government's Consistency proposals.
- 1.3.7 Government and Mayoral waste policy are expected to evolve further over the life of the Strategy (2027 to 2057) and several specific future policies are included in the RWS. However, these are not sufficiently developed to include in the ELJRWS modelling.

# 2. Proposal and Issues

### 2.1 Recycling Rate Targets

- 2.1.1 The RWS sets out two recycling targets that 50% of household waste will be recycled or composted by 2025 and that 65% of municipal waste (which includes commercial waste that is similar in composition to household waste, including that collected by the private waste sector) recycled or composted by 2035.
- 2.1.2 The LES contains recycling rate targets for London of 50% of Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW) by 2025 and 65% of Municipal Waste recycled by 2030. LACW is all waste collected by local authorities, which is mainly household waste but also includes other wastes such as commercial waste collected by local authorities, street cleansing and fly-tipped waste.
- 2.1.3 It is important to note that targets are respectively national targets for England and London-wide targets, not targets on individual local authorities within these areas. It is acknowledged that individual local authorities will over- or under-achieve against these national and regional recycling rate targets depending on local circumstances.

- 2.1.4 The differing performance expectations for household waste recycling amongst local authorities are largely driven by the proportion of properties that are flats and the amount of garden waste available. In general, people who live in flatted properties recycle less than those who live in houses and produce little to no garden waste, whilst a large volume of garden waste often makes a significant contribution to the recycling rates in higher performing parts of the country.
- 2.1.5 Across the Partner Authorities' area levels of garden waste collected are relatively low because many properties in the region have very small or no gardens, with the lack of a garden becoming even more common due to the increasing number of blocks of flats. As such, the ELWA area could reasonably be expected to achieve lower recycling rates that many other local authorities both in London and nationally.
- 2.1.6 Furthermore, as stated above, the current MBT-based residual waste solution makes a significant contribution to constituent Borough recycling rates. However, it cannot confidently be assumed that there will be any recycling contribution from residual waste treatment when ELWA's contract ends in 2027.
- 2.1.7 Based on 18/19 figures the overall contribution of the MBT recycling to Borough recycling rates is 5% which is likely to increase using current measures before 2027. However, irrespective of ELWA's post-2027 residual waste solution, government reporting changes are likely to substantially reduce the amount of MBT outputs that can officially be reported against recycling rates.
- 2.1.8 The ELJRWS modelling assumes that the proportion of properties that are flats will significantly increase in the future in line with Borough forecasts, further depressing future recycling rates.
- 2.1.9 It is also important to note that the RWS targets are significantly predicated upon central government policies that are not under the control of local government (notably DRS and EPR). Furthermore, the municipal waste targets are significantly predicated on the recycling performances of businesses that use private sector waste companies for their collection services.
- 2.1.10 The shared LACW recycling rate minimum performance within the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS is 35% for 2030. Key assumptions in the underpinning modelling are:
  - The loss of the recycling rate contribution (currently 5%) from the MBT's either at the end of the existing ELWA contract or before if reporting requirements change.
  - The increasing proportion of flats as above.
  - Prudent assumptions on the impact of EPR and DRS and the assumption that material captured by the DRS will be reported against individual local authority recycling rates.
  - That, in conformity with the Government's Consistency proposals and the LES Minimum Service Standards, the constituent Boroughs will add glass and a wider range of plastic containers to recycling services, as well as launching separate food waste collections.

- The retention of the existing weekly residual waste collections for properties served at street level, and the existing garden waste charging and collection arrangements.
- 2.1.11 There are also local ambitions to achieve higher recycling performance than that which has been modelled, contributing as much as possible to the London-wide aspiration of 50%. Whilst the overall 35% recycling rate minimum performance set out above is reasonable but challenging, there are further factors not reflected in the current modelling that could reasonably be expected to drive higher recycling rates if they arise. These include a greater recycling rate contribution from the EPR and DRS proposals than what has been modelled, and further policies set out in the RWS that have not yet been developed and were not modelled on that basis. Exploration of future residual waste treatment options may also yield cost-effective solutions for continuing to recover recyclable materials that would further drive up the modelled performance.
- 2.1.12 Consequently, the targets included in the ELJRWS are as set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Borough Contributions to the Joint LACW Minimum Recycling Performance and LES Ambitions for 2030:

Borough	2030 LACW Minimum Performance	LES Aspiration
Barking & Dagenham	35%	50%
Havering	45%	50%
Newham	28%	50%
Redbridge	35%	50%
Joint Performance	35%	50%

## 2.2 ELWA's Successor Post-2027 Waste Treatment and Disposal Solution

- 2.2.1 The end of the current waste treatment contract in 2027 will mean that ELWA needs to make new arrangements to manage the waste and recycling collected by the Partner Authorities. This is a process that can take several years to plan because of the large investments that may be needed in new infrastructure and because of the lengthy procurement times. If new facilities are needed, lengthy development times will be needed.
- 2.2.2 The end of this contract also provides an opportunity for improvements to be made to reuse and recycling services for households and businesses. It can take time to plan these types of improvements, particularly where investment in new contracts or vehicles are required, and there will be differing infrastructure needs to support these arrangements.
- 2.2.3 It is important for ELWA and the Constituent Councils to work together on planning future arrangements for managing resources and waste, so that the right types and sizes of waste and recycling treatment are available, and the best whole system solution is obtained.
- 2.2.4 Due to the uncertainties around the detail of future policy and the capacity available for different types of infrastructure in 2027, it is not appropriate or possible to set out

- a prescribed solution for the reuse, recycling and treatment/disposal of waste handled by ELWA beyond 2027 at this stage.
- 2.2.5 Considering the above, section 2.2.2 of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS contains a series of priorities and actions to guide the process of developing successor arrangements and that link back to the overall objectives of the ELJRWS.
- 2.2.6 ELWA will, in due course, develop a procurement plan to support the delivery of future waste treatment capacity from 2027 onwards. ELWA officers will work with the Constituent Councils to understand their infrastructure needs as they make plans for any future changes to refuse and recycling collection services.

# 2.3 The Term of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS

- 2.3.1 As stated above there is limited scope for changes to waste collection and/or treatment/disposal arrangements before the end of ELWA's existing contract in 2027. Additionally, ELWA's successor contracts could last for up to 30 years in line with standard waste industry contracts for residual waste treatment (which relate to the long payback period for this expensive type of infrastructure). Considering these factors, the ELJRWS period is 2027 to 2057.
- 2.3.2 The Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS does however still set out a range of actions that the Partner Authorities are committed to undertake to improve services prior to 2027.
- 2.3.3 Clearly there is significant potential for the context to change both between now and 2027, not least as central government policy and as ELWA's post-2027 waste treatment arrangements both take shape. Therefore, Section 5.4 of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS commits the Partner Authorities to review of the Strategy by 2028 and thereafter at intervals of not more than 10 years.

# 2.4 Other Key Elements of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS

- 2.4.1 Aside from the key points above, the contents of the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS are set out below:
  - Chapter One Introduction sets the context for the ELJRWS, why it in needed and the aims and objectives of the strategy.
  - Chapter Two What is Our Current Situation? sets out the context of the Partner Authorities' area, current waste management arrangements, a description of the waste managed, and the current performance.
  - Chapter Three What Might the Future Look Like? describes what changes
    the Partner Authorities expect to see in the future, both in terms of how the area
    will change, what impacts national and regional policy may have on the types
    and quantities of waste being generated, and some of the other factors which
    may also play a role such as changes in consumer behaviour.
  - Chapter Four Where do we Want to Be? sets out the vision for how the Partner Authorities will work together to help reduce waste as well as increasing reuse and recycling. It sets out the recycling rate targets and the priorities and actions for ELWA's post-2027 arrangements described in more detail above.
  - Chapter Five How do we Get There outlines how the Partner Authorities will work together to achieve the aims and ambitions set out in the ELJRWS

- including the partnership working arrangements and provisions for future review described above; and
- Chapter Six Measuring Success describes how the performance indicators outlined will be used to measure success.

## 2.5 Strategy Development Process

- 2.5.1 The ELJRWS development was commenced in 2019, with ELWA as the lead authority. A Project Team was established comprising officers from ELWA and the four Constituent Councils to work closely together on the development of the ELJRWS. A Project Board, comprising the Managing Director of ELWA and the four borough Environment Directors was also established.
- 2.5.2 Overall oversight of the project was undertaken by the eight borough Members nominated to serve as ELWA Members, which includes the portfolio holders for Environment from the Constituent Councils.
- 2.5.3 Initial workshops were held with the Members and officers to set out priorities that would need to be addressed in the document.
- 2.5.4 A procurement exercise for consultancy support was then undertaken, to assist the Partner Authorities in undertaking forecasting and modelling work prior to drafting the ELJRWS. The successful bidder was Ricardo Energy & Environment.
- 2.5.5 The first stage in developing the ELJRWS was the establishment of a baseline, using data from 2018-19 as this was the last full year for which the necessary information was available at the point this work got underway in October 2019. A comprehensive forecasting exercise was then undertaken, to model the amount and composition of waste that the Partner Authorities would need to manage in the future. Modelling was then undertaken on how the Partner Authorities could work together to reduce this amount of waste and divert a greater amount for reuse, through communication campaigns and enhancements in reuse services and partnerships.
- 2.5.6 The modelling of future collection services was then undertaken to enable the Partner Authorities to understand what recycling performance could be expected. This used the service models set out by the Government in its Consistency proposals (which correlate to the Mayor of London's Minimum Service Standards), with extensive benchmarking of other local authorities undertaken to determine what is likely to be achieved.
- 2.5.7 Once all this forecasting and modelling work had been completed, the Partner Authorities reviewed the findings and engaged with the Greater London Authority to agree reasonable future performance levels and aspirations for the ELJRWS.
- 2.5.8 The ELJRWS itself was then drafted, along with the necessary supporting documents (which are outlined below). These were extensively reviewed by Members and officers from the five Partner Authorities, prior to completion of the Preliminary Draft.

### 2.6 Timetable

- 2.6.1 In parallel with these decisions the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS will be reviewed by each of the Partner Authorities in the cycle of Council Cabinet and ELWA Authority meetings in June and July 2021, with the same recommendations being made at each.
- 2.6.2 Subject to approval from the five Partner Authorities, the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS will be released to the four statutory consultees in summer 2021.
- 2.6.3 Around 6 to 8 weeks has been allocated for public consultation in the summer, as set out below.
- 2.6.4 During the autumn time has been allowed to incorporate any changes that may be required to the ELJRWS following the public and statutory body consultation processes. The feedback from this exercise, as well as a further review of the evolving national policy landscape, will be used to update the ELJRWS before it is finalised and formally adopted by Partner Authorities.
- 2.6.5 From the end of November/December, the final ELJRWS will need to be passing through the pre-Cabinet governance processes in the Constituent Councils, so that formal adoption can proceed around February 2022.

# 2.7 Statutory Consultation

- 2.7.1 The ELJRWS will need to be sent to the Greater London Authority for formal consultation, to determine if it is in general conformity with the London Environment Strategy.
- 2.7.2 As a new waste management strategy, the ELJRWS would under most circumstances automatically be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This is a comprehensive assessment process that is governed by specific regulations, which requires its own consultation approach. SEAs are typically carried out where the environmental impacts of a plan or strategy can be fully identified.
- 2.7.3 However, the ELJRWS is a high-level document that sets out a broad direction of travel for the Partner Authorities as they plan for the future of resources and waste management in the area, and as such does not contain any proposals on future waste collection or treatment services. Without some options for future service delivery set out, particularly for the treatment of the collected waste, it would not be a worthwhile exercise carrying out an SEA at this stage as the environmental impacts cannot be assessed. An SEA may be needed for the ELWA procurement plan, and a commitment to undertaking an SEA Screening Report on that document to determine if that is the case has been noted in the ELJRWS.
- 2.7.4 An SEA Screening Report has been produced for the ELJRWS (Appendix C), which will be sent to the statutory consultees for SEAs (namely the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England). This report, which will have the ELJRWS, and background information attached, will seek the agreement of those consultees that an SEA is not required for the ELJRWS.

- 2.7.5 The risk of the statutory consultees disagreeing with the Partner Authorities' position on an SEA not being required is low, but there is the possibility that one or more of them will determine that, regardless of the level of detail, the ELJRWS is new and therefore automatically requires one.
- 2.7.6 To help mitigate this risk, informal engagement with the statutory consultees is being undertaken by officers from ELWA and the Constituent Councils using existing connections with the three organisations.
- 2.7.7 An SEA being determined to be required could put the formal adoption of the ELJRWS in February 2022 at risk, as the process of producing an SEA is lengthy and requires a public consultation period of at least five weeks.
- 2.7.8 Advice will be taken on whether there is scope, in this event, to overlap the SEA production and consultation processes with the final completion and pre-Cabinet governance period for the formal adoption of the ELJRWS.
- 2.7.9 However, there remains a risk that a statutory consultee determining an SEA is needed would delay formal adoption of the ELJRWS until later in 2022.

#### 2.8 **Public Consultation**

- 2.8.1 A planned public consultation is planned for the ELJRWS, which will take place in the summer 2021 once approval to commence has been received from all five Partner Authorities. The public consultation will last around 6- 8 weeks.
- 2.8.2 The public consultation will be run by ELWA through a combination of an online survey and focus groups.
- 2.8.3 The online survey will be linked to from a new page on ELWA's website, and the four Constituent Councils will use their own websites and social media channels to raise awareness and direct local stakeholders to that page to participate. The survey questions are attached as Appendix B.
- 2.8.4 An online focus group will take place near the start of the public consultation period, with participants recruited by a specialist agency to be representative of the Partner Authorities' area and with varying levels of pre-existing knowledge of waste and recycling services. The focus group will be run by Ricardo Energy & Environment, using a facilitator with no other connections to the ELJRWS project.
- 2.8.5 A second meeting will take place towards the end of the consultation period, aimed at groups who are already engaged on waste and environmental issues. It is hoped that this meeting will be able to take place as an in-person event, but a decision will be taken on that before the start of the public consultation period based on the latest Government advice regarding social distancing etc. ELWA will work with the Constituent Councils to identify and contact individuals or groups who may wish to be invited to this session.
- 2.8.6 A report will be produced after the public consultation has concluded, which will inform any amendments that may be needed to the Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS before a final version is produced for formal adoption by the Partner Authorities.

#### 3. Consultation

- 3.1 Regular workshops and briefings have been provided for the eight ELWA Members during the development of the ELJRWS, including the four portfolio holders for Environment from the Constituent Councils.
- 3.2 Officers from ELWA and the Constituent Councils have been engaging with the Greater London Authority (GLA) since work on the ELJRWS project began, to chart a course towards achieving general conformity with the LES. The earliest of these discussions helped to shape the modelling work that was subsequently undertaken, whilst further engagement has continued as the modelling was completed and the ELJRWS entered the drafting stage.
- 3.3 The engagement has been productive and positive, and the Partner Authorities appear to be on track to achieve general conformity with the LES. This will be confirmed during formal consultation with the GLA (as noted above).

## 4. Financial implications

Implications completed by: Sandra Pillinger, Group Accountant

4.1 The targets and priorities within the ELJRWS do not bind the Council to any specific expenditure, but there will need to be investment in recycling and waste services in the future to meet performance expectations. Further analysis of financial implications will need to be undertaken as more specific proposals are brought forward for the Council's collection services as well as the wider infrastructure solutions for ELWA.

## 5. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 5.1 By virtue of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council has been established as a waste collection authority. The Council is a member of the Waste Authority along with the London Boroughs of Havering, Newham and Redbridge which is the statutory Waste disposal authority.
- 5.2 Section.32 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 sets a requirement for waste authorities in two-tier areas to produce a joint strategy for the management of household waste and other similar wastes. Ministerial Guidance was issued in 2005. The guidance indicates that these joint strategies should be reviewed and updated every five years at a minimum.
- 5.3 As set out in the main body of the report ELWA is tied into the Integrated Waste Management Services Contract until 22 December 2027 so planning need to commence in terms of establishing a waste strategy for collection and disposal that will take over waste management across the four waste collection Boroughs and the waste disposal authority.

5.4 In terms of developing the strategy consultation will need to be carried out at a meaningful time with both statutory consultees and other interested parties so that the responses can be taken into account in finalising and adopting the strategy.

## 6. Other Implications

- 6.1 **Risk Management** The potential risk to the outcome of the recommendations to approve the policy document are assessed as being LOW.
- 6.2 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact -** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the ELJRWS. There are no specific equality implications relating to the content of the ELJRWS. Local collection arrangements are already in place to meet the needs of disabled residents. The cultural diversity of the borough will inform the development of any communications or education programmes arising from the ELJRWS.

## Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

### List of appendices:

- Appendix A: East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) 2027 to 2057 – Public Consultation.
- Appendix B: Joint Strategy Consultation Survey Questions
- Appendix C: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report