

Westminster Council unveil UK's largest electric waste collection fleet – powered by the waste they collect

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Westminster City Council and Veolia have announced the full-scale rollout of the UK's largest electric refuse collection fleet. The vehicles are the next generation in electric Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) development and will deliver a cleaner and quieter service, powered directly by energy generated from the waste they collect. Housed in a specially designed depot, smart charging infrastructure will ensure they are always ready to go when needed.

Westminster Council has invested £20m in the 45 new zero emission trucks which will be introduced over the coming weeks in a ground-breaking initiative that will benefit residents by reducing vehicle noise, cutting air pollution and drastically reducing the borough's carbon emissions.

Westminster will gradually replace its entire 80-strong truck fleet, in the biggest decarbonisation programme of its kind by a UK local authority. Many of these vehicles will be housed at the new fully electric depot at Landmann Way, near Bermondsey. The electric vehicles will charge their batteries by drawing electric power from an adjacent energy recovery facility which uses the waste collected from homes and businesses in Westminster.

Westminster's fleet, operated by its environmental partner Veolia, completes 50 million collections every year and each electric vehicle saves up to 89% CO₂e compared to a diesel-powered fleet. Veolia worked to procure, design and operate the new depot and charging infrastructure which will be capable of charging 54 vehicles simultaneously. Smart charging will allow the partnership to support the National Grid by receiving power at non-peak times to maximise local resources and strengthen the Grid's resilience.

Pascal Hauret, Managing Director Veolia UK Municipal said: "It's fantastic to see our teams working together with Westminster City Council to deliver a cleaner, greener and quieter service for residents, businesses and visitors across the city.

"Using the waste we collect to power the electric fleet is an exciting innovation because that creates a local loop of energy, using local resources to run local services. I'm incredibly proud of the solutions Veolia and Westminster are pioneering together to build the sustainable municipal services we need, now and in the future."

Cllr Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, said: "By replacing diesel-powered refuse trucks with a £20m investment in UK-built electric vehicles, Westminster City Council is voting with its fleet.

"The trailblazing electrification will deliver an essential service that is quieter for residents, improves air quality in central London and reduces our fleet emissions by 50 per cent, or over 2,000 tonnes of CO2 per year. This is a significant moment in the evolution of sustainable council services and we look forward to further expanding our zero-emission vehicle fleet in the future."

The trucks, built by Dennis Eagle Ltd in Warwick, will be the mainstay of a zero-emission refuse fleet which also includes 90 electric street cleaning vehicles ranging from e-bikes to e-sweepers.

The South East London Combined Heat and Power facility (SELCHP) will provide the site with 3.3GWh of electricity per year via a private wire to charge the e-fleet. This facility treats residual waste to create 265GWh of electricity, supplying enough electricity to the grid to power 48,000 homes, and generating heat for a local district heating scheme serving over 2,800 homes. Over 50% of the electricity generated by SELCHP qualifies as renewable under the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme.