

Veolia Southwark electrifies operations with new zero-emission forklifts

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[Veolia](#) and Southwark Council have secured new lithium-ion powered forklifts, a positive step towards achieving the goals laid out in Southwark Council's climate strategy to transform the area into a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

Veolia Southwark has taken a significant step towards carbon-neutrality and enhanced operational efficiency by investing in four new state of the art lithium-ion battery powered forklifts. These forklifts are a key part of the recycling infrastructure, used to transport compacted bales of waste from the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) floor into shipping containers to be transported and recycled.

The new vehicles are fitted with a sophisticated sonar mechanism which calculates their reverse trajectory, scans surroundings, and automatically slows the vehicle when obstacles are detected, making them safer to operate than previous models.

These forklifts support operational efficiency and sustainability, replacing previously trialled diesel and lead-acid battery models. The older models frequently faced challenges such as overheating, mechanical breakdowns and inflexible battery charging requirements, which made them ill-suited for the dynamic MRF environment.

The new forklifts are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which have a comparatively longer lifespan of approximately eight to ten years. When these batteries reach the end of their optimal operational life, they will be repurposed for uses such as energy storage, before they are eventually processed securely at a dedicated battery recycling facility.

Matthew Crane, Regional Manager at Veolia Southwark, said: "Our investment in four lithium-ion clamp

trucks marks a significant milestone in Veolia Southwark's journey towards ecological transformation. After years of trialling different solutions, we've found the perfect balance between sustainability and operational efficiency. These vehicles not only address the unique challenges of our MRF environment but also align with the carbon-neutrality goals we are working towards in partnership with Southwark Council."