

Cory Environmental operates a best practice model of river borne transportation of London's rubbish

Partners: Cory Environmental
Western Riverside Waste Authority
Corporation of London
Westminster City Council
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Port of London Authority

Sea and Water (S&W) members Cory Environmental has for decades been transporting and facilitating 700,000 tonnes a year - or 15% of Londoners household rubbish - along the Port of London Authority-operated River Thames to Essex. By doing so Cory Environmental has removed the equivalent of 100,000 lorry movements a year from roads in London and the surrounding counties reducing pollution, congestion, noise and vibration. Their work is an excellent case of a business serving society in a profitable and environmentally-sustainable way using water as its preferred mode of transport.

Cory Environmental is one of the UK's leading waste-management companies. The company significantly contributes to the UK economy as it employs 1,000 people nationwide. In London alone there are 150 members of the lighterage workforce who are directly responsible and engaged in water-freight activity. Cory is responsible for their training and development.

Cory disposes of the waste on behalf of the Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA); the City of London, Westminster City Council and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Cory is the biggest barge operator in London and owns and maintains a fleet of 7 tugs and 47-barges which are used to transport and dispose of the gathered municipal rubbish. It transports the waste in xx-tonne containers daily which are loaded onto 300-tonne capacity barges which are pulled by tugs along The Thames.

Water-borne transport enables Cory to dispose of the waste at the Mucking Landfill site at Thurrock in Essex.

WRWA

In 2002 Cory Environmental began a 30-year contract to handle more than 635,000 tonnes a year of rubbish and recycling for the WRWA that is responsible for the rubbish of the London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Lambeth, Wandsworth, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. As part of the contract Cory took over the responsibility for the operation of the Smugglers Way Transfer Station in Wandsworth and the Cringle Dock, in Battersea where the municipal waste and recyclables are delivered. The waste is then packed into sealed containers and loaded onto the barges and transported.

Corporation of London

Cory Environmental operates the Walbrook Wharf in the City of London as part of the company's long-term waste disposal contract with the Corporation of London. When the company took on the contract it had to significantly invest in the handling equipment at the wharf and the barges; converting them from an open barge waste-handling operation to containerised waste. The Corporation's rubbish is delivered to the waste transfer station at Walbrook Wharf, loaded onto barges which sail downstream to Essex.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

On behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Cory operates Northumberland Wharf at Canary Wharf. Unlike the other contracts Cory Environmental is required to load the rubbish onto its barges before they sail to Essex.

Mucking Landfill site and Belvedere Power Station

Cory's operation of the Mucking Landfill site was due to expire at the end of 2007 because it was planning to use the waste as fuel for a brand-new energy-from-waste plant at Belvedere adjacent to the river at Bexley.

As the planning permission for the plant was delayed the company is seeking an extension to continue the life of the Mucking Landfill site for the disposal of its waste until 2010. Without the extension Cory's fleet of barges would probably have been mothballed (perhaps permanently) with the loss of 150 jobs, the majority of which represent Cory's very specialist lighterage workforce that once lost would be extremely difficult to re-establish. The transport of the waste would then be transferred, either temporarily or permanently, onto London's already congested roads.

The decision by the GLA to request that a Judicial Review takes place about the decision is surprising as no other riparian site exists in London for such a facility.

When the Belvedere Power Station begins commissioning it will generate 66 MW of electricity from the waste diverting 585,000-tonnes a year from landfill. This will

prevent fossil fuels from being quarried, transported by road and used to power the plant.

Recycling

Cory is exploring the potential to divert some recyclable materials handled on site from road to water transport but this will be dependent on the development of reprocessing facilities down-river.

Malcolm Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Cory Environmental says:

“Cory has a long history of successfully transporting large amounts of London’s waste by water and we are planning to continue to do so for the next 30 years. Water freight is a vital component of our logistics chain and it benefits the environment, the local community and society in general.”

Sea and Water

Dr Heather Leggate, Director of Sea and Water, says Cory Environmental’s services is a sound example of the case for water whereby business is operating a profitable and environmentally-sustainable service using the under used logistics solution of water as its main transport mode.

“The effective management and disposal of waste is a real issue for London as it is increasing year-on-year. Cory is to be commended for all it is doing to minimise the harmful green house gas emissions that road transport generates by transporting London’s waste on efficient water borne services and advocating quayside-processing facilities. In a few years time the waste will be used as fuel for electricity removing green house gases’ emissions that are caused from landfilling rubbish.”

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Picture captions:

- 1) Cory Environmental transports 700,000 tonnes of domestic rubbish a year down the River Thames to Essex. Using the Thames is more environmentally-friendlier and it benefits the local community as 100,000 lorry journeys a year are avoided.

Editor’s notes:

Sea and Water is the thought-leader that encourages logistics managers to take freight off the highly-congested road network and onto the environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of short sea, coastal and inland shipping. Modal

shift to water will reduce carbon emissions that will contribute to HM Government's Kyoto Climate Change targets. Water-borne freight is environmentally sustainable and it has economic benefits for the port and wharf communities around the UK.

The organisation was set up in 2003 as a result of the Water Freight Forum's recommendation in its report Freight on Water (2002).

Cory Environmental is one of the UK's leading recycling and waste management companies operating across the country. It provides a wide range of integrated services from street cleansing and municipal waste collection, to recycling, transfer and disposal. Cory's services have been recognised with a number of awards for sustainable transport, the management of facilities and city cleanliness.