

# Northern Ireland needs new waste infrastructure



Traditionally, we have lived on the basis of 'take-make-waste'. Although that is changing with great improvements in recycling, for the foreseeable future we will continue to produce hundreds of thousands of tonnes of rubbish that can't be recycled or composted.

We now recycle over 50% of our household waste every year, and want to increase it to 65% and beyond by 2035. The question remains, however, what do we do with the rubbish that can't be recycled?

## 15 Million Reasons to say Yes

Households in arc21 alone produce a staggering 15million black bins' worth of rubbish every year that can't currently be recycled. If you were to line those bins up, they would stretch from Belfast to Tokyo.

Northern Ireland solves its household waste problem by burying it in the ground (240,000 tonnes landfilled p.a.) or exporting it overseas for incineration (c.130,000 tonnes p.a.). Neither option is sustainable.

Landfill sites are nearing capacity and their negative impact upon climate change means that councils are committed to more than halving the amount of waste they currently landfill.

Export markets for waste are either closing – China for instance no longer accepts plastic imports – or imposing punitive import taxes (the Netherlands introduced a €32 per tonne tax in January 2020).

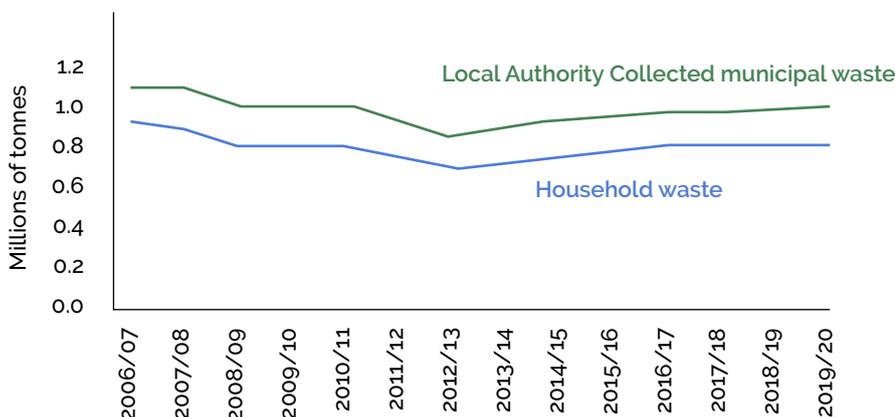
## Waste Can Power Potential

The alternative, which is best practice across Europe, is to develop critical new waste infrastructure, such as Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities. arc21's proposals at Hightown Quarry, which include one of the island's largest recycling facilities and an EfW facility, will help safeguard council waste services and treat waste as a resource while society adapts to a more sustainable approach.

## Benefits

Provide 210,00 Tonnes of thermal capacity	Generate 18MW of electricity
Create and sustain c.300 jobs	Tackle Climate Change
Increase recycling	Reduce Greenhouse Gases by 57,000 tonnes annually
Enable the Clean Energy sector	Support the Circular Economy
Reduce financial uncertainty for councils and ratepayers	Tackle waste crime

## NI Council Collected Waste 2006-2020



Since 2012/13, the total amount of waste collected by Northern Ireland councils has increased by 9.4% to just under 1million tonnes. The figures mostly exclude Commercial & Industrial Waste.

A WRAP report published in 2020, however, estimated that 773,000 tonnes of waste similar to that collected from households, was generated by businesses in Northern Ireland.

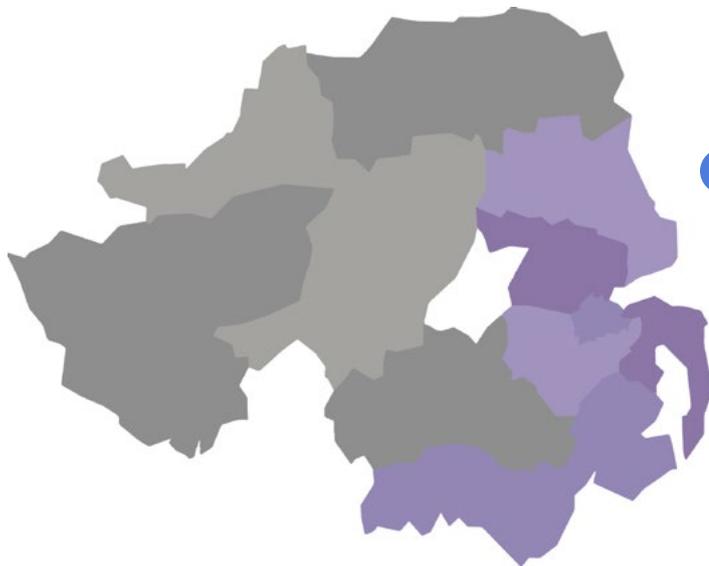


## Infrastructure Gap

Independent analysis suggests that every year for the next 15 years Northern Ireland will produce over 500,000 tonnes of household, commercial and industrial waste that can't be recycled.

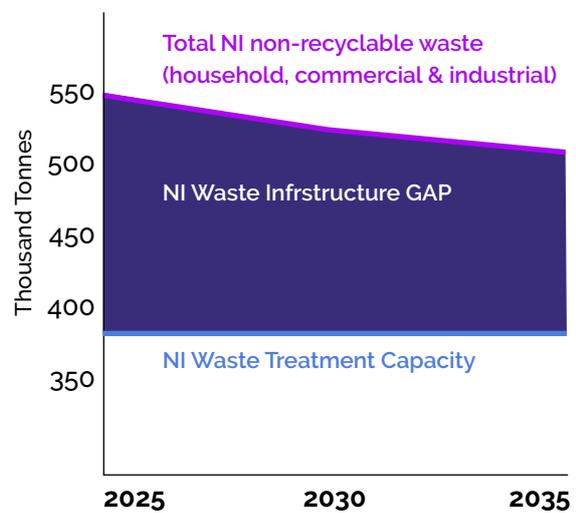
On the basis that recycling improves to 65%, arc21's proposed facilities are built and accounting for COVID-19's impact, Northern Ireland will still have a waste infrastructure gap. Existing facilities will not be sufficient to solve this waste crisis by themselves.

By 2035 it's estimated that, even with the arc21 project on stream, we will produce 124,000 tonnes more non-recyclable waste than we can treat locally.



arc21 is made up of councils in the east of Northern Ireland providing services to 1.1million people.

## NI Waste Infrastructure GAP



“ The UK Committee on Climate Change has recommended a ban on landfilling biodegradable waste by 2025 and the phasing out of waste exports. Over a 20-year period, methane gas from landfill is 84 times more potent as a Greenhouse Gas than CO<sub>2</sub>.

arc21's proposed facilities will minimise landfill, reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by 57,000 tonnes annually and produce enough energy for the equivalent of 30,000 homes.