

GBRf works with Biffa to turn derelict land into emission reducing transport hub

May 6, 2021



Previously unused land in East London has been transformed into a transport hub, linking key waste sites with leading waste manager Biffa's facilities by rail. The Renwick Road site opens today in partnership with GB Railfreight (GBRf) and will be able to transport 250,000 tonnes of waste from London by rail.

Transporting waste by rail is a key strategic aim for Biffa which is working towards transporting 50 per cent of all its waste by rail by 2025. Since it launched its strategic partnership with GBRf in 2018, over a million tonnes of waste have been transported by rail, saving more than one million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions from reaching the atmosphere.

Mick Davis, Chief Operating Officer for Resources and Energy Division at Biffa said: "The opening of our new rail hub marks the next step in our strategic partnership with GBRf to increase our capacity for transportation by rail. It will help us reduce dependence on vehicles on the road and reduce the emissions we produce. The site was totally derelict when we took it on and amongst the rubbish and debris we cleared, we actually found some interesting items, including one and a half tonnes of World War Two bullets."

John Smith, Managing Director at GBRf commented: “We are delighted to be working with Biffa on this project and our collaboration will see us move thousands of tonnes of waste in a sustainable way. This is the way forward if we are to reach the net zero carbon emission target by 2050 and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Biffa in the months and years to come to ensure more waste can be removed by rail.”

Biffa has spent £4.2 million developing the site, removing 14,000 tonnes of previously fly-tipped waste and debris. Renwick Road has always been a railway yard, with its earliest record dating back to 1864. It fell out of use in 1991 and has remained unused until now. Operating five trains a week, Renwick Road will transport waste from North and East London to sites at Roxby, Scunthorpe, Leeds and Manchester.

Benefits of transporting waste by rail:

1. It helps manage waste more sustainably, taking vehicles off the road
2. Transporting waste by rail reduces the number of emissions produced by vehicles – through its rail transportation Biffa has reduced its emissions by 75%
3. Local communities can benefit as there is less traffic on the road

History

Biffa and GBRf have been working together since 2018 when they announced the partnership to transport more waste by rail. It came after the opening of a transfer station in Manchester in 2017 and one in Leeds in 2018.

Photo credit: GB Railfreight