



Operational update

INCREASED OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Earlier this year, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK received the necessary permissions from the planning authority and the Environment Agency to increase the operational capacity of the facility to 295,000 tonnes per year. Without making any modifications to the operation of the facility, we have been operating at this increased capacity throughout 2020 and are on track to process in the region of 295,000 tonnes of waste by the end of the year.

As well as diverting up to an additional 26,000 tonnes of waste from landfill in Suffolk, the additional waste will increase the electricity generated and exported to the national grid. This will roughly equate to enough to power an additional 3,800 homes on top of the 40,000 homes the facility already powers each year. Furthermore, an investigation by Siemens, the manufacturer of our turbine, found that we can increase the output of our turbine without making any hardware changes. As a result, the maximum turbine output of the facility has increased from 25 to 26 megawatts.



Putting Suffolk's waste to good use



COVID-19 and the facility

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility has remained operational, continuing to play its essential part in managing waste in Suffolk, whilst generating electricity for the national grid. Although our office staff have been able to work from home, the facility would not be able to operate without our skilled maintenance and operations teams. To remain operational whilst providing a safe working environment for staff, we have adopted new ways of working, including introducing shift patterns for teams on site to limit contact, restricting access to the control room, and increasing cleaning across the site.

We have also noticed a change in the waste material over this period. At the start of the pandemic, with many shops and businesses closed, we saw a reduction in commercial waste arriving at the facility. Despite this, the facility continued to operate at normal levels, with the difference made up by an increase in household waste.

Despite all the challenges that 2020 has brought with it, the facility has continued to operate efficiently throughout, generating energy-from-waste at an increased capacity. This is testament to the hard work and team spirit displayed by all fifty of the team on site.



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MAINTENANCE AND SHUTDOWNS

Maintenance shutdowns are a normal part of operational life at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility and are necessary to ensure that it continues to run efficiently. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we made the decision to postpone our major four-week spring shutdown to this autumn. In the spring, we carried out a minor shutdown, focusing on only very essential tasks, which meant that significant tasks, including the repainting of the stacks, had to be put on hold. In October, as well as the normal cleaning and repairs carried out inside the furnaces and the boilers, maintenance was undertaken on the ash dischargers and conveyor, and equipment across the site was calibrated. We also repainted the stacks which involved a team of contractors abseiling from the top at 81.5 metres.



Visitor centre update

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF VISITS

In early March, we made the decision to temporarily close our visitor centre to the public to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the essential service that SUEZ and Suffolk County Council provide.

Prior to the closure, we had a busy start to the year, welcoming over 250 visitors across 31 groups to the facility in January and February. Almost half of these visits were educational groups from schools and clubs across Suffolk.

Although the facility continues to remain closed for the time being, you can reserve a space on our waiting list for when we reopen by emailing suffolkefw.uk@suez.com.



VIRTUAL RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS AND ADULT GROUPS

We have been busy behind the scenes over the past few months working on a suite of free, virtual resources for educational groups, adult groups and individuals. For schools, clubs and other educational groups, we have developed an age appropriate virtual tour package which includes a presentation about waste, the “4 Rs” (reduce, re-use, recycle and recover), the facility and the energy-from-waste process, followed by a video tour of the facility. Sessions can be delivered virtually via a choice of meeting software, or in person at your school when appropriate.

For adult groups and individuals interested in finding out more about the facility, we have developed an online package which includes a presentation about the facility and its role in managing waste in Suffolk, followed by a virtual tour of the facility and a live question and answer session led by our Community Liaison Manager.

The virtual tour for adults is available now, and the educational resources will be available for the spring term. All resources can be tailored to meet individual needs.

If you are interested in any of these resources, please email us at suffolkefw.uk@suez.com.

Behind the scenes for Heritage Open Days 2020



In September, the facility took part in the Heritage Open Days 2020 festival with a virtual event. Forty people tuned in from the comfort of their own home to one of two free webinar sessions which included a presentation about the facility and its role in managing household waste in Suffolk and a virtual tour, including areas which are normally off limits to visitors.

Although we were disappointed not to be able to open our doors to visitors in person, we were glad to still be able to take part in the festival and were really pleased with the response received from the public. If you did not get a chance to join us in September, the webinar recording is available to watch on the news section of our website: www.suffolkefw.co.uk/who-we-are/news

Safety culture at its best

On November 19, the facility celebrated three years without a lost time incident on site (an incident which results in an employee missing work due to an injury). This fantastic achievement by staff, contractors and visitors is testament to the positive health and safety culture that SUEZ recycling and recovery UK embodies across all its sites.

John Tatton, Plant Manager, said:

"I'm really pleased with how the team at Suffolk have responded to the challenges of 2020. Achieving this tremendous health and safety milestone underpins the high-quality work of the team at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility."

'Home sweet home' for peregrine falcons

A pair of peregrine falcons have found a new home at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility. The pair, which are known to the local area already, can often be seen residing on the louvres on the northwest side of the building. We are pleased they have taken up regular residence at the site, and we are in the process of constructing a nesting area to encourage them to nest in the spring.

Peregrine falcons are a protected species in the UK, and often find unusual nesting places on tall, city structures that replicate the cliff edges that they would naturally nest upon. They are among the fastest animals on the planet, reaching speeds of up to 200 miles per hour when 'stooping' – diving down on prey from height.



Going electric has never been easier

As part of our ongoing commitment to cutting down carbon emissions and investing in sustainable solutions, we have installed four electric vehicle (EV) charging points on site.

The chargers use electricity generated from the energy-from-waste process on site and will be available for all staff, contractors and visitors to use, including members of the public who are attending as part of a site tour.

