

PRESS STATEMENT

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ESART produces report on sustainable landfill

The Environmental Services Association Research Trust has published its first report, in partnership with The Norlands Foundation.

The study - '*Sustainable landfill in the UK: a review of current knowledge and outstanding research and development*' - says sustainable landfill can only be achieved if each generation manages its waste to final storage quality ("FSQ") which means that any emissions to the environment from residues are acceptable and do not need further treatment.

According to the report, sustainability can only be achieved within a generation of 30 years by pre-treating to FSQ levels before landfilling, or degrading and flushing the waste once it has been buried. Flushing would need to be at a higher rate than at present.

The research was undertaken by Knox Associates and notes both that pre-treatment technologies (such as incineration, composting or conventional liquid waste treatment plants), do not produce FSQ residues and also that there is no documented case of active waste having been taken to FSQ once landfilled.

The report observes that, uniquely in Europe, the UK has attempted to set FSQ levels. (Other European countries do not seem to be addressing the problem, and have instead been concentrating on a different subject, acceptance criteria for pre-treated wastes.)

The study concludes with a list of research initiatives addressing FSQ.

Nick Blakey, ESART research programme manager, said:

“The publication of this first report, in partnership with The Norlands Foundation, is an important milestone for ESART. Together, we’ve been able to open up the research in this area and communicate the key message that whatever waste management methodology we decide to use, residues requiring landfill will be produced and that we have to acknowledge that we can’t just place these in the ground and walk away.

“This report was commissioned not to defend landfill, but to look to the future and decide what issues need to be researched to develop further a technically sound range of waste management tools.”

Andrew Street, Chairman of The Norlands Foundation said:

“We were delighted to join forces with ESART to fund the study and welcome the findings of the Knox Associates’ research.”

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For further information, or a copy of the report, please contact:

Nick Blakey, Research Programme Manager, ESART	020 7824 8882
Andrew Street, Chairman, The Norlands Foundation	01225 318 800

Notes to Editors

1. The Environmental Services Association Research Trust (*ESART*) is an independent environmental body established, in 1998 and on the initiative of the Environmental Services Association, under the Landfill Tax Regulations 1996. *ESART*’s mission is to facilitate the development of sustainable waste management by providing technical direction and support to the waste management industry through a high quality R&D programme, in partnership with other funding organisations. Current contributors include Biffaward, Cleanaway, Global Environmental, Hales Waste Control, Hanson Environment Fund, Onyx, Shanks, SITA, and Viridor Waste Management.
2. The study was funded jointly with The Norlands Foundation environmental body and carried out by the environmental consultants Knox Associates. The Norlands Foundation is an independent trust, established by Thames Water to support environmental schemes in North Surrey and research into landfill practice.
3. To date, *ESART* has committed over £700K to projects starting in 1999/00 with a total value of £1.3M. This additional gearing through partnership funding illustrates the cost-effective use of landfill tax funds. Its 'early start' priorities have included 'scene-setting' review studies (like the one reported here); technical work influenced by the implementation of environmental legislation and the industry response to the poor public perception of waste management activities.