



POPLAR HARCA'S REGENERATION PROJECT WITH PLASTIC OMNIUM URBAN SYSTEMS CHANGES THE LANDSCAPE IN LONDON E3

As one of the world's leading suppliers of underground waste management systems, Plastic Omnium Urban Systems has for many years worked alongside local authorities and communities to improve their environments. And as environmental, financial and aesthetic considerations continue to increase in importance for estate managers, Plastic Omnium Urban System's products are attracting even greater interest.



Leading the charge in the UK is Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (Poplar HARCA), a housing association based in the heart of East London. Poplar HARCA's latest regeneration project aimed to transform challenging inner city stock into places of beauty where people would really choose to live. A proactive, joined-up strategy was developed which encompassed maintenance, management and resident engagement. It also used good design to secure long term improvements in environmental quality by revolutionising refuse arrangements to achieve sustainability targets whilst eradicating fires, fly-tipping and vermin in communal areas.

Waste management was an important element within the programme and strong partnerships between Poplar HARCA, Tower Hamlets Council and Plastic Omnium Urban Systems meant that refuse could be taken underground. Plastic Omnium Urban System's Underground Refuse Systems were the clear favourite for the job.

Poplar HARCA has 183 underground refuse systems in use and a further 29 in development. When they were installed, they were the first of their kind in the UK – and it remains the largest installation of Underground Refuse Systems in the country. Furthermore, recent upgrades have showcased best technical practice, making it easier for residents to dispose of their waste while keeping the number of wheeled bins to a minimum. 5000 litres of waste can be kept securely under each unit: ideal for the area's high density estates.



The results have been dramatic, for Poplar HARCA, Tower Hamlets Council and residents alike.

- Physical waste has been removed from the street scene, together with much of the vermin that feeds on it.
- Refuse fires have been eliminated, saving repairs money and improving respect for the environment.
- Weekly cleaning and tagging of Underground Refuse System units and adoption of latest pedal driven technology further encourages regular use.
- Time and money have been saved through reducing the amount of dumped items that then have to be removed, with further savings arising from reduced landfill and tipping costs.
- Cost savings are reinvested in the area, ensuring that local residents benefit at every level from the installation of the Underground Refuse Systems.



“Transforming our estates makes a huge difference in quality of life for our residents,” says Suzanne Wolfe, Assistant Director of Technical Resources at Poplar HARCA. “A vital part of this process has been the installation of Plastic Omnium Urban Systems’ Underground Refuse Systems, which have reduced street clutter, removed street waste and vermin, delivered cost savings and improved the appearance of our estates. From our experience, Underground Refuse Systems make an important contribution to the effective management of waste in high-density housing environments.”

In addition, all the evidence Poplar HARCA has subsequently gathered indicates that providing high quality, safe communal spaces enhances the wellbeing of residents. Customer satisfaction figures show that satisfaction with the quality of the estates rose from 69.2% in 2011 to 88% in 2014. Satisfaction with caretaking services showed a similar increase, 65% in 2012 to 79% in 2014.

Whilst Poplar HARCA is currently the largest operator of Underground Refuse Systems in the UK, other organisations are also benefitting from their installation and still more are showing interest in using them. They are also learning from Poplar HARCA’s best practice approach to managing the systems at events such as last summer’s 'Taking Refuse Underground' event, which was organised by Plastic Omnium Urban Systems.

“Plastic Omnium Urban Systems is proud to have supported Poplar HARCA throughout this outstanding programme of regeneration,” concludes Richard Gregg, managing director of Plastic Omnium Urban Systems UK and Ireland. “Our Underground Refuse Systems are delivering tangible benefits for all concerned, illustrating the value that they offer for local authorities, housing associations and property developers throughout the UK.”

To find out more about Plastic Omnium’s products and services for local authorities, housing associations, developers and refuse collection providers, please visit www.plasticomnium.com/env/uk/en, email customerservices@plasticomnium.com, or call 0121 521 4472.