

Briefing Note: Markets for Recyclable Paper and Plastics from Residual Waste

Plastics

Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS) own and operate a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Costessey, near Norwich. The MRF separates plastics from the co-mingled collections of Norfolk's WCAs into PET, HDPE and Mixed Plastic Bottles. PET is sent to Holland, HDPE and Mixed Plastic Bottles are sent to a UK reprocessor.

There is also the viable option to bale mixed plastic for the Chinese market where demand for plastics remains very high, but NEWS choose not to do this for ethical reasons and also because of the uncertainty of the end use of the material.

NEWS is currently in discussion with a number of reprocessors about plastics recovered from the residual waste stream treated by Contract A. With reference to quality standards and polymer separation from material separated from the residual waste stream, NEWS can meet the standards required by the market and will initially look to separate plastics from the residual waste into the three streams identified above. The co-mingled source separated recycled material received at the MRF can be heavily contaminated and whilst separating good quality plastics from the residual waste stream presents different challenges NEWS anticipate the quality of the plastic separated from the residual MSW stream will be on a par with that it successfully marks from the co-mingled source separated waste stream.

However NEWS and others are seeing an emerging UK secondary market for mixed plastics which they envisage maturing by 2011 such that there will be an active market for mixed plastic separated from the residual waste stream by the time the Reference Project for Contract B models service commencement in 2013.

To help aid better quality material being extracted from residual MSW, NEWS is keen to develop in partnership with the County Council and the WCA's, a campaign to encourage the public to think about how they present their waste in the residual bin in order to aid recovering greater value from residual MSW through additional recycling performance.

Paper

NEWS sends to the UK market paper and card recovered at the MRF from the co-mingled material received from Norfolk's WCAs and is experiencing very high demand for this material from the market. NEWS is also in discussion with the paper recyclers on market appetite for paper recovered from the residual MSW stream with reference to Contract A.

These discussions have led NEWS to be very positive about market demand for paper recovered from this stream especially as demand from the export market remains virtual insatiable. Whilst paper recyclers may quite rightly be publicly majoring on the quality of the paper they want to receive from Local Authorities, the discussions NEWS is having with the market clearly indicates to them that there will be a growing demand for paper recovered from residual MSW, especially by 2010 when Contract A is operational and that this market will have developed significantly by the time the Reference Project for Contract B models service commencement in 2013.

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