

PRESS RELEASE

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PaperChain Welcomes Balance in the Collection Method Debate

For a number of years, PaperChain has been calling for balance in the area of recycle collection methods, to ensure the UK can achieve maximum recycling benefits at an affordable level for waste producers, particularly householders through their Council taxes. PaperChain welcomes the Waste and Resource Action Programme (WRAP) report, "Choosing the right recycling collection system", which sets this debate in context and provides evidence-based answers to some of the myths surrounding the different systems employed in the UK.

It is clear from the report that there is a place for all collection systems, but that segregation should always be considered first as a means of delivering the best quality recycle to the market at the lowest overall cost to the producer. Where segregation of all materials is not possible, paper and board (fibre) should be kept separate from other forms of non-paper based packaging waste in order to significantly reduce the potential for food and non-fibrous contamination. Full single-stream mixed dry recycle collections should only take place where there is clear evidence that the other systems would fail to deliver the desired outcomes for the producer, and where sorting facilities can achieve the desired process control parameters to deliver quality recyclables to the market.

PaperChain members recycled 3.3 million tonnes of quality recovered paper and board from various UK waste streams over the course of 2008, representing 84% of UK domestic paper and board recycling. In carbon terms, this represents a benefit of over 4.4 million tonnes to the UK environment against disposal of the material through landfill and incineration¹ and an avoidance of over £180 million worth of disposal costs to waste producers. The vast majority of recovered fibre used in UK paper and board recycling in 2008 came from source-segregated systems allowing domestic mills to deliver the highest carbon benefits. Paper recyclers, no matter where in the world they are, cannot turn materials such as plastic, metal, aluminium and glass into new paper products, and inevitably this type of material will end up in landfill after being rejected from the paper recycling process. This not only adds a carbon cost to the paper mill carrying out the recycling, but it is also a missed opportunity to recycle the rejected material through the correct material recycling stream. Segregation of recyclable materials at source significantly reduces the risks of this happening.

Recycling is now a desired outcome for the vast majority of UK waste producers and it is clear that they want demonstrable evidence that all materials put out for recycling are indeed recycled. Collection methods that sort materials at the point of production offer far more certainty to the waste producer and avoid significant "scare stories" associated with waste-losses at later sorting stages that are outside their control. Segregation at the point of collection also offers a direct, bespoke quality feedback system to the individual waste producer that is far more difficult through a closed-bin single-stream dry mixed recyclable collection system.

¹ See "Paper and cardboard recycling – greenhouse gas benefits explained": http://www.paper.org.uk/information/factsheets/greenhouse_gas.pdf

Notes to Editors

- For additional information on PaperChain, in the first instance please contact Catherine Waterfield, External Affairs Coordinator, on 01793 889612 or email enquiries@paperchain-recycling.org.uk.
Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paperchain-recycling.org.uk>.
- PaperChain Members used around 3.3 million tonnes of recovered paper and board in 2008, representing 84% of recovered paper and board used in the UK.
- This represented carbon savings of over 4.4 million tonnes compared to other UK disposal options and removed over £180 million worth of disposal costs for waste producers.
- PaperChain supports the "Campaign for Real Recycling". Please visit: <http://www.realrecycling.org.uk>.