

22 February 2011

Dear Mr/Madam

You may have been following recent discussion on commingled collection of recyclables and Defra's decision to include it in its transposition of the European Waste Framework Directive regulations. We welcome this decision. It enables private sector investment in the UK's green economy to deliver high and steadily growing recycling levels in a cost effective manner which is convenient for householders. As one of the UK's leading recycling, renewable energy and waste management companies, we should like to take this opportunity to share our broader views on the subject.

Commingled recyclables are those placed in the same recycling bin, for sorting and further processing at a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). Classing them as a separate collection of recyclables represents a common-sense approach to sustainable waste management, as it is realistically often the only solution to enable increased recycling levels of commercial and industrial waste. This simple and convenient, 'one stop' approach also encourages the highest participation levels. There is clear evidence that local authorities employing commingled collections are achieving the highest recycling rates in the UK, and that such systems offer simple, safe and cost-effective recycling collections with minimum disruption to traffic flows for public and private sector waste producers.

Addressing the issue of quality of materials for recycling under a commingled system, the advanced processing technologies and quality control methods found in modern, well-managed MRFs ensure that the quality of output products from commingled collections matches, and can exceed that of, alternative systems. The efficiency of such facilities is supported by the UK and international commodity markets, which consistently buy these products. The market dictates and demands quality – recovered materials simply would not sell if they failed to meet demanding product specifications which make materials suitable for re-manufacturing. As a further indication of demand, several leading paper mills in the UK have themselves invested in their own MRFs to process commingled materials, thus supporting this method via their own investment.

There has been substantial investment from both public and private sectors in MRFs and recycling systems in recent years. Significant opportunity and demand also remains for additional recycling sorting facilities to meet public and private sector needs and meet landfill diversion targets. This is why Viridor has invested over £50million in recycling technologies and facilities in the last year, with another potential £1billion of further investment in recycling and recovery technologies in the pipeline. Recovering value from waste (via recycling and energy recovery) currently accounts for 45% of our business, and we expect this share to increase year-on-year.



Viridor therefore has a long-standing and continued commitment to recycling and maximising the opportunities to recycle materials throughout the UK, for the benefit of businesses, the general public, the environment and the public purse. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you like any further information about our work and views, or would like to visit one of our recycling facilities in operation.

Yours sincerely

Colin Drummond
Chief Executive

