

Somerset Waste Partnership reference – 2019-20 – 192 follow up questions  
Enquiries relating to – Plastic recycling  
Date of response: 15.07.2019

Dear XXX

FOI Plastic recycling

I am writing regarding your recent request for information from Somerset Waste Partnership, which has been dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is a partnership of Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset District Councils, and Somerset County Council. This response covers all those partner authorities.

I confirm we hold the information you request. In response to your questions: -

Question: How do you decide which processors to use as it appears all the material are mixed plastic bottles.

Is it based on:-

- How the reprocessed undertakes the reprocessing
- The end result of the reprocessing
- The price the reprocessor charges
- The location of the reprocessor
- Or any other basis.

The marketing of materials is the responsibility of our contractors, SWP have no involvement. In general, the decision is likely to be made on demand – which reprocessors are buying at any time, the price being paid and which contracts the contractor has in place with reprocessors. Both Kier and Viridor are national organisations and are marketing materials from many different locations. We do strongly express our preference that material is recycled in the UK where possible, but we are aware that there is not sufficient reprocessing capacity in the UK for plastics in particular, so there is a need to export sometimes.

From 2020 we are starting a new collections contract with a new contractor, and they share our preference to recycle within the UK where possible. They have provided a proposed list of UK reprocessors. In the event they cannot recycle within the UK, they prefer to send to European markets, and only if that is not available, to send further afield.

You state the kerbside collection is inter alia plastic bottles only (predominantly two types only).

The recycling centre also collect pots tubs and trays ( 7 types).

Question:- Can I presume they are included in your schedules list of material which actually are just described in your scheduled last as "mixed plastic bottles".

In 2017/18, we were not widely collecting plastic pots, tubs and trays at the recycling centres. We were accepting them at two sites only and for the residents who took part in the Recycle More Trials in Taunton Deane who wished to continue recycling

their plastic pots, tubs and trays following the end of the trial. There were very small quantities of plastic pots, tubs and trays in there and so the load was still classed as plastic bottles.

In 2018/19 we started collecting plastic pots, tubs and trays at all recycling sites and so the material from recycling centres is now recorded as mixed plastics. Those from kerbside collections are still reported as mixed plastic bottles as we do not collect pots, tubs and trays at the kerbside yet.

Incidentally the recycling centres, when I last looked showed pictures of 11 cartons in one photograph and 7 in the other (attached).

Question; Are these counted as plastic (PET, HDPE, PVC) and therefore disposed of as per your schedule. If not please give details of the recipients as per the original request dated 2nd July.

Cartons are not the same as plastic pots, tubs and trays. They are a separate material which are collected and recycled separately (i.e. 'Tetra Pak'). Cartons are made of a mix of cardboard, aluminium and plastic and not recorded with plastic bottles and pots, tubs and trays. In 2017/18, as shown on our End Use Register (<https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/end-use-register/>) we recycled 27.10 tonnes of cartons and they were sent to Sonoco Recycling in West Yorkshire.

Finally as the pictures show 11 and 7 "cartons"; There must be others which the public needs to know how to dispose of.

Question: How do you update the items in the photograph if indeed you do. If other cartons are not shown in the photograph where can the public dispose of them and how are they informed about this.

The images in the cartons pictures are designed to be representative of the types of cartons that can be accepted in the banks. The signage was provided by ACE UK who manage carton recycling nationally. The signage was updated fairly recently when we started accepting single use paper based coffee cups with cartons.

The signage we use for plastic pots, tubs and trays is shown in the photo attached. Again, it is meant to be representative of the types of container accepted. We do publish more detailed guidance on our website <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/act-on-plastics/>

As mentioned previously, we do annually publish an End Use Register which details what happens to our materials. The 2018/19 one will be published shortly. Do see <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/end-use-register/> for further details.

We are always happy to discuss these matters with residents and answer any queries. You are welcome to give us a call on 01823 625700 should you have any further queries.

If you feel your request has not been answered in sufficient detail or if you wish to clarify the information given, please contact me and I will be happy to address the issues you raise.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been dealt with, or the information you have received, you can ask for an internal review of our decision.

Please send your request to:

Lucy Wilkins  
Information Governance Team  
Somerset County Council  
County Hall  
Taunton  
TA1 4DY or email [informationgovernance@Somerset.gov.uk](mailto:informationgovernance@Somerset.gov.uk)

An internal review will then be carried out and we will write to you with the results of our investigation. If you are not content with the outcome of our review, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (<https://ico.org.uk>) for an appeal: The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF      Tel: 0303 123 1113

Please quote the reference numbers at the top of this correspondence in any future correspondence with Somerset Waste Partnership.

Yours sincerely