

Waste plastics for recycling

Policy Statement



Background

This policy statement sets out our over-arching approach to managing plastics sent for recycling, including plastics which are exported.

The need to increase recycling is high on the public and political agenda, coupled with a recognition that materials need to be reprocessed in a sustainable manner and not to the detriment of people, our oceans or wildlife. Biffa wholeheartedly supports this initiative and wants to see it underpinned by the development of new reprocessing capacity within the UK.

The plastics we manage and the challenges we face

Presently, around 90% by weight of the waste plastics Biffa trades from our sorting and transfer facilities is sent to companies within the UK, including for reprocessing into secondary raw materials such as at our own award-winning plastics reprocessor, Biffa Polymers. Only around 10% (mainly comprising LDPE film) is exported, predominantly to reprocessors within the EU.

Lower grade ("C" grade) film like plastic carrier bags and sacks, which makes up about 2-3% by weight, is currently considered to be at greatest risk of not being properly recycled if exported and therefore is not currently exported but is sent for energy recovery in the UK.

Our approach and commitment

- 1. We will only export plastics for recycling where there is no commercially viable market within the UK**
- 2. We will only export plastics through well-established, trusted and accredited brokers, with a reliable document trail, who are also accredited by the Environment Agency**
- 3. We will unilaterally suspend exports of any plastics if our tests for export are not met**
- 4. We will continue working with the waste industry and regulators to help combat waste crime by sharing intelligence and highlighting known risks**

It is incumbent on industry to show true environmental leadership. Our policy shows a clear drive to put the protection of the environment at the centre of how to manage recycled plastics.

Michael Topham
Chief Executive Officer
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