

PTZW - Pathway to Zero Waste

Over the next five years the South East is destined to produce more construction and demolition (C&D) waste than any other region in the UK. With landfill costs increasing annually and capacity fast running out, this disposal method is not only financially and environmentally damaging, it is quickly becoming practically impossible. Chindarat Taylor, director of Pathway To Zero Waste, explains how we need to take a catalytic route to zero waste, kick-starting the economy along the way.

Landfill space is running out fast – within three to five years in the South East of England it will be full – so the debate about whether we should take the pathway to zero waste is entirely academic; there is no choice. Incremental change in the way we do things, such as planning, building partnerships and procurement will not make a big enough difference quickly enough. The route to zero waste in the South East (particularly) has to be a catalytic one and Pathway To Zero Waste (PTZW) will be the catalyst to make it happen quickly and spread widely. PTZW is a major transformation

programme set up by SEEDA (the South East England Development Agency), The Environment Agency and WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme). Its initial focus is on reducing the huge volumes of material sent to landfill by the region's 37,000 construction companies. This presents a massive opportunity for them, and their clients, to generate considerable savings through increased materials resource efficiency – an estimated £370m by 2011 alone.

Key driver

A key driver of the programme is sustainable

prosperity – creating long-term economic growth. With a target to achieve a 50% reduction in construction and demolition waste to landfill, requiring some 2.7 million tonnes of material to be diverted – substantial investment in waste infrastructure is needed as a matter of urgency.

The existing network of facilities in the South East is insufficient for the increased volumes and types of materials that will need processing. Many more are needed. This presents considerable commercial opportunities for companies and organisations that have capability to operate in this area. And though substantial, the



Chindarat Taylor, director of Pathway To Zero Waste.

investment needed is dwarfed by the returns, and savings, it will generate.

PTZW will act as a catalyst to actively get businesses working together – brokering deals and creating dialogue between policy directors, landowners and waste management companies, to spread the development of infrastructure needed. It also provides expert guidance, training and the tools to help businesses establish resource-efficient processes.

The public sector's role

The cornerstone of the PTZW programme is the creation of a strong market for re-used and recycled materials, by increasing demand through public sector and private sector procurement and supply chains. The public sector in particular is under increasing pressure to review the specification of materials and with build programmes set to increase in this sector, it is particularly well positioned to ensure the industry develops its building projects in an environmentally sound way, using materials more effectively and increasing the take-up of re-used and recycled materials.

As the PTZW programme moves into its delivery stage it will seek to use public sector procurement as a lever for change, aiming to

ensure that the region's planned £1.6bn build programme has specifications in all contracts requiring the use of optimum levels of recovered materials.

PTZW is regional initiative with national significance and against a challenging economic background, the time is now right for businesses and local government to join the PTZW; to work together to benefit both their businesses and the environment; and to help kick start the economy along the way.

PTZW Objectives

The objectives for PTZW are to change the practices of both the private and public sector, from 'waste' to 'resource' and to divert materials from landfill. Its targets for construction and demolition (C&D) waste are:

- To reduce the amount of C&D waste sent to landfill by 50% against 2008 levels by 2011 – one year ahead of national and industry targets.
- To reduce the amount of C&D waste sent to landfill by 90% by 2020, paving the way for a zero waste region.

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