

# Biffa commends Defra on common-sense approach to co-mingled collections

The recently announced decision to include the co-mingled collection of recyclables in the Regulations transposing the Waste Framework Directive reflects a common sense, practical approach to sustainable waste management in the UK. Biffa's interpretation of the Directive is entirely consistent with that reached by Defra and their legal advisors; waste for recycling is to be collected separately from residual waste, and this occurs with both co-mingled and kerbside sort systems.

The decision will allow all waste producers, including local authorities, to decide for themselves on the most appropriate waste management system for their individual "local" circumstances. For most businesses, waste for recycling will always be collected co-mingled as it would be completely impractical to carry out either separate collections of a vast array of different materials or to organise kerbside sortation.

In relation to household waste, much has been said about the merits of either scheme. The recently published work by Eunomia/WRAP for the Welsh Assembly Government once again seeks to suggest that source segregated collections are better, this time environmentally and economically. However, the work is based upon a number of assumptions from a small sample of Welsh local authorities and which are clearly open to alternate interpretations. We do not recognise the costs used in the modelling and are not persuaded by the arguments concerning low value job creation.

What is clear and irrefutable is that the highest rates of recycling are consistently achieved by local authorities that use co-mingled collections. In our view the primary reason for this is that the system is simple for householders to operate and hence participation rates are consistently higher. In our experience, reject rates from co-mingled collections are consistently overstated whereas reject rates from source segregated collections are all too often ignored.

Responding to the CRR's planned judicial review, Ian Wakelin, Biffa's CEO said "We will be watching this with interest but suspect it will not come to fruition. Defra have made the UK's position on the transposition very clear to the European Commission and this has not been challenged. I would encourage CRR to give up on what has become a divisive campaign and work with the waste management industry to encourage higher recycling rates in all sectors of the UK economy."

In Biffa's view, the majority of waste for recycling will continue to be collected co-mingled because it is simple, straightforward, convenient and cost-effective. Where local circumstances require a different approach then this should be a matter for individuals and not the law.

## About Biffa

Biffa is the leading nationwide integrated waste management business that provides collection, treatment, recycling and technologically-driven energy generation and recovery services. Biffa provides an essential service to satisfy the business needs of its commercial, industrial and public sector customers throughout the UK, helping them to meet their legal obligations and corporate responsibility commitments.

## Further press information from:

David Savory, Director - External Affairs at Biffa on 0121 661 6713 or [david.savory@biffa.co.uk](mailto:david.savory@biffa.co.uk).