



Access to Public Information Request

Date of receipt: 19 October 2021

Date of response: 16 November 2021

Access to Public Information request regarding recycling end destinations and responsibilities

Request:

Please could you provide responses to the following questions under the Code of Practice for Access to Public Information:

1. At what point does the contractual responsibility of the States of Guernsey (or any/all other relevant Guernsey body) in respect of recycling end? E.g. is it once the recycling is loaded on the lorry/ferry, once it has left the island, once it has reached its final destination, etc.
2. What is the full journey of recycled waste from Guernsey? E.g. where does the waste from the white and blue bags travel through/to and what is the end point for the recycled waste?
3. Does Guernsey have any responsibility (contractual or otherwise) for where recycling ends up once it has left the island?

Response provided by Guernsey Waste, a trading business of the States' Trading Supervisory Board:

1. At what point does the contractual responsibility of the States of Guernsey (or any/all other relevant Guernsey body) in respect of recycling end? E.g. is it once the recycling is loaded on the lorry/ferry, once it has left the island, once it has reached its final destination, etc.

The States' Trading Supervisory Board acts as the island's Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), whose functions include ensuring waste and recycling are dealt with in accordance with the island's Waste Management Plan. That function is performed, at the operational level, by Guernsey Waste.

Guernsey Waste's role as far as recycling is concerned is therefore a statutory duty, performed on behalf of the WDA, rather than a contractual responsibility. We deal with around 30 different waste and recycling streams, for which we contract various companies to carry out sorting, processing, export and/or reprocessing.

The precise nature of each contract varies, but generally it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure the material is placed onto the recycling markets as intended. They are responsible from the point at which they receive these materials on-island or in the UK, to the point at which they are received by a subsequent processing company or manufacturer. There is an expectation in all our contracts that where material is passed onto another company to carry out the next stage of sorting/reprocessing, our contractor is able to provide adequate assurance that any subsequent processing is carried out in accordance with our intended purpose. In other words, to be reprocessed as efficiently as possible into new materials.

Reporting requirements are in place for several of the larger contracts, requiring Guernsey Waste to be advised of where materials are being sent, so that due diligence can take place. Our staff have visited a number of UK facilities that handle the island's recycling, including plastics, cardboard, batteries and food waste. We have also visited facilities in Sweden that receive the island's general waste, for energy recovery.

2. What is the full journey of recycled waste from Guernsey? E.g. where does the waste from the white and blue bags travel through/to and what is the end point for the recycled waste?

All recycling streams are first sorted locally by our contractors to ensure it complies with the acceptance criteria of the subsequent receiving facility. For example, blue and clear kerbside recycling bags are manually and mechanically sorted on Island into the various material types and contaminants removed before the individual material types are exported to the UK for further processing and recycling.

The final destination of the reprocessed materials depends on the material itself. In the case of higher grade plastics, these are processed at a facility in the UK which produces a number of products, including plastic film and plastic pellets. These are then sold on to manufacturers for use in producing new packaging and/or other products.

In the case of food and drinks cartons, the cardboard fibres are separated from the plastic polymers and aluminium, again in the UK, and the different materials then go on to be processed separately into different products.

No waste or recycling is exported outside of the UK directly by Guernsey Waste. However, some waste and recycling streams can be exported outside the UK (but typically within the EU) by some of our contractors. This can happen, for instance, where there are limited options within the UK for processing the material, or where the subsequent processor is part of a larger business, with reprocessing plants located outside of the UK.

3. Does Guernsey have any responsibility (contractual or otherwise) for where recycling ends up once it has left the island?

Guernsey Waste has a duty to ensure that waste and/or recycling exported from the island is used for the purpose that is intended – whether that be through recovery of the materials themselves or the recovery of energy. We do that by contracting only with reputable companies (local and UK-based) who can provide the necessary assurances, and by applying the appropriate due diligence. We undertake to ensure materials end up where they can most beneficially be used and with the least environmental impact, which in most cases will be within the UK.