

Select Committee Review: Plan for Waste

Policy 27 of the Plymouth Plan – Minimising Plymouth's Waste

31 August 2016



The City will adopt an approach to waste management that strives to achieve the most sustainable solution, subject to the constraints of feasibility and financial viability. As such, the City will proactively support the development of a circular economy to gain maximum value from materials and products by keeping resources in use for as long as possible, and then recovering material value at the end of life. In order to achieve this outcome, the City will develop and keep under ongoing review a 'Plan for Waste', which will follow the waste management hierarchy which prioritises waste management in the following order: 1. Prevention; 2. Preparing for reuse; 3. Recycling; 4. Other recovery; 5. Disposal, and will aim to achieve a 50 per cent recycling rate. Particular measures include:

1. Waste prevention. In order to sustain the delivery of high levels of waste reduction, the City will:
 - a. Continue to actively undertake waste prevention and minimisation awareness raising campaigns and educational activities.
 - b. Promote and support home composting for garden, vegetable and fruit wastes.
 - c. Support the development of community composting schemes.
 - d. Support those engaged in the development of a circular economy and the extension of product life.
 - e. Require all planning applications for major development to include a site waste management plan demonstrating how the demolition, construction and operational phases of the development will minimise the generation of waste.
2. Waste reuse and recycling. The City will:
 - a. Continue to proactively assist community and voluntary groups, and businesses which seek to explore, pilot and develop reuse and recycling activities and projects to generate economic and social value.
 - b. Use the planning process to encourage the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste in the city in delivering regeneration and infrastructure projects that support the delivery of Plymouth's growth vision, and identifying a site for a facility to manage such waste arisings.
 - c. Enhance its recycling infrastructure and continually seek opportunities to support investment in its Materials Recycling Facility, Household Waste Recycling Centres and the expansion of these and other facilities as viable options for increasing recycling.
 - d. Use the planning process to ensure that new developments provide integrated facilities for the storage of recyclable and non-recyclable waste, allowing for the development of new technologies which deliver green and practical solutions to recycling in the home.
3. Waste recovery. In relation to residual waste that is still left to be managed and which is not committed as part of the waste stream to be processed through the Devonport North Yard Energy from Waste Plant, the City will strongly encourage the use of emerging green technologies for waste recovery.

In this respect, the City will give proactive assistance to public sector organisations, community and voluntary groups, and businesses which seek to explore, pilot and develop the use of green technologies.

4. Municipal waste management outcomes. The City will minimise the amount of municipal waste that is landfilled, so that less than 2 per cent of waste arising are landfilled by 2016. Additionally, through a 'Plan for Waste', the City will identify detailed actions to achieve ambitious waste management outcomes to maximise the prevention, reuse and recycling of waste.
5. Proposals for Commercial and Industrial (C&I) facilities will need to demonstrate that there is a need for the facility and that there are no other appropriate facilities for waste management in a reasonable proximity. Landfill of C&I waste arisings will not be supported in Plymouth and the City will work jointly with adjoining waste planning authorities to ensure that adequate capacity remains available to meet the city's needs. In respect of the processing of incinerator bottom ash from the Energy from Waste plant, which forms part of the waste stream generated for Torbay and south and west Devon, the City will expect a regional solution to be found given the city's urban nature.

The management of all of the waste streams generated by people and businesses and that arise in Plymouth are guided by the waste hierarchy. These are identified as municipal, commercial and industrial, and construction and demolition waste. The principle that waste should be driven higher up the hierarchy is set out in the policy, in order to achieve the most environmentally sustainable approach to waste management. The guiding principle behind this approach is that waste should be seen as a resource to be reused either directly or through recycling, rather than being disposed of.

From 2007 to 2014 waste municipal arisings have fallen by 18 per cent. Recycling rates have also improved significantly across the city. Plymouth's recycling rate, for municipal waste, has nearly doubled from just over 20 per cent in 2005 to nearly 40 per cent in 2013. These are real achievements for Plymouth and demonstrate the ability for progress to be made that the city can be proud of as it moves on the journey to becoming a greener city. In this respect, it is important that the opportunities for enhancing the reputation of the city for environmental stewardship and as a green city is maximised. Waste as a resource and the waste hierarchy is an important part of this strategy.

Plymouth's waste needs assessment (2014) identifies that there are small quantities of low level radioactive waste generated in Plymouth, primarily from the healthcare sector. Given the specialist nature of treatment/management requirements it is not anticipated that any specific provision will need to be made in Plymouth for the management of this waste. It also identifies that there are movements of hazardous waste in and out of the city for treatment at specialist facilities. It is not expected that significant new specialist treatment facilities for such waste will be needed during the time covered by the Plymouth Plan.

Finally, Devonport Dockyard undertakes strategic defence operations, including work on nuclear submarines. Any specialist waste streams that arise from these operations will be expected to be managed by the site operators. Proposals which facilitate the safe and efficient transportation of any wastes from the City are supported but it is not considered that a treatment facility within the city would be appropriate.