



## Incentivising recycling at household waste recycling centres in Denbighshire

Denbighshire County Council operates three household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) to serve its population of around 95,000. The largest and most-used site is located in Rhyl and provides recycling facilities for over 20,000 households in the town and neighbouring Prestatyn. The county's smaller inland towns can use the two other sites, based in Denbigh and, further south, Ruthin.

Together, the sites achieved a recycling rate of 88 per cent in 2014/15, reflecting a process of consistent improvement. In April 2015, the council introduced a separate charge for the kerbside collection of garden waste, which resulted in an increase in the amount subsequently brought to the council's HWRCs.

The newly-built HWRC at Marsh Road, Rhyl, has replaced two aging facilities in Rhyl and Prestatyn. This provided an opportunity to develop a more up-to-date layout focused on maximising recycling.

### **Bespoke layout increases flexibility**

The council was keen to future-proof the new site when designing it, as well as ensuring ease of use, making a split-level plan essential. It was decided that instead of constructing a fixed number of bays for containers, the site would be laid out with a road circling the site like an athletics track, with containers on the inside and a straight side wall with a drop down to skips for larger and heavier materials.

The developing recycling culture has had an effect on what happens to the waste after it's been deposited at the sites. Almost all types of waste are accepted, although users are limited to six bags of rubble, bricks, tiles and soil, even if they come from a household. The sites have had to put something in place to deal with the large range of materials deposited there and the new set-up provides more flexibility.

### **Keeping things simple with clear signage**

The Denbighshire philosophy is to keep things as simple as possible for the resident, so instead of having an overarching approach to signage at its sites, the council considers each sign in isolation.

Where signage is necessary, WRAP's Recycle Now iconography is used to clearly signpost the materials taken by each container. The council fully complies with standards regarding providing signage in Welsh, especially important in the inland towns, with 42 per cent of the population of Ruthin speaking the language.

Indeed, the only signs that are not statutory or offering essential information





are those displaying the current recycling performance of sites. These aim to instill a sense of pride and a feeling of progress in residents by advertising the fact that the level of recycling has risen from around 70 per cent in 2009 to nearly 90 per cent in 2015.

### Meet and greet system

The philosophy of keeping things simple carries over to interaction with the council operatives at the site. In greeting users entering the site, operators give advice on what should be done with the waste brought in and make sure that all waste is sorted, but the approach that they take has evolved in recent years.

Previously, they emphasised what was expected of users of the site, dealing with residents who brought unsorted household waste. However, the familiarity with the system and separate waste streams that users have developed means that staff can now take a more advanced approach, while also clamping down on traders trying to dump commercial waste.

To encourage staff interaction, the site's contractor has also introduced an incentive scheme to motivate them to drive better recycling, maximise the payload of skips leaving the site and ward off illicit trade

waste. The incentive scheme had a huge effect, reducing the volume of residual waste going through the council's HWRCs by around 50 per cent.

### Mattress recycling hits 98 per cent

The county's approach to HWRC waste and recycling is exemplified in the work undertaken with furniture and mattresses. Around 450 tonnes of mattresses are collected at the HWRCs every year, with a recycling rate of 98 per cent.

Following the success of the on-site deconstruction initiative, which started in 2009, CAD Recycling created a dedicated facility for mattress recycling at its site in Denbigh, which opened in 2012. Now, the site processes between 300 and 400 mattresses per day seven days a week from all over north Wales and parts of northwest England.

This all stems from the incentivisation system put in place in Denbighshire to make certain types of recycling financially viable for them. Mattresses were one of the items identified as ending up in residual waste skips while still containing significant material value. As such, the council's arms-length contractor has developed a new business model, which now generates revenue from this waste stream.