



## **Effective waste and recycling initiatives help create UK's environment capital**

Peterborough was the top recycler among unitary authorities in 2006/07 and 2007/08 and was fourth best in 2008/09 with a recycling rate of 48 per cent. The city council aims to achieve over 65 per cent combined recycling and composting of household/garden materials by 2020 – one of the country's highest targets – and to generate energy from residual (non-recycled) waste.

Peterborough works within the RECAP partnership (Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – see [www.recap.co.uk](http://www.recap.co.uk)) on initiatives to reduce waste and improve recycling.

As 'best performer' for waste collection in the 2007 Association for Public Service Excellence awards, Peterborough provides an 'alternate-weekly' kerbside collection of waste, commingled recyclables and compostable organic garden materials from over 70,000 homes.

However, poor understanding of the three-bin system among large numbers of migrant workers who recently arrived from new 'A10' European Union member states has resulted in increased levels of contamination of otherwise recyclable materials. The city council has addressed this by securing finance from the Migration Impacts Fund to employ bi-lingual community engagement workers to explain the system to people whose first language is not English.

In partnership with local charity Compass-Sofa it introduced in November 2009 a six-month pilot scheme for the kerbside collection of textiles from 3,000 households. Re-usable clothing, shoes and other household fabrics are sorted for sale through charity shops and the remainder is sent to a local textile re-processor.

In another award-winning partnership, the city council's WEEE Re-use centre repairs Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (such as household white goods) for re-sale to needy families. Items that cannot be repaired are dismantled and component parts are sent to re-processors.

Meanwhile, the city council is making progress on its Waste 2020 strategy, having secured planning permission in April 2009 for a 100,000-tonne capacity materials recycling facility (MRF) at an existing factory in Fengate, Peterborough, and in November 2009 for a 65,000-tonne capacity energy-from-waste (EfW) facility to be built on the site of the existing materials recycling facility.

Senior officers are currently preparing a shortlist of potential firms that will be invited to open detailed negotiations leading to the selection of preferred contractors for the construction and operation of the new MRF and EfW facility.

All these initiatives are designed to deliver the waste hierarchy of reduce, re-use, recycle and recover value rather than landfill materials. They are conserving valuable raw materials and reducing carbon emissions from the mining and transportation of raw materials and the manufacture of new products.

When the EfW facility becomes operational in 2014 it will divert non-recyclable waste from landfill while recovering energy in the form of electricity and heat that can be supplied to the national grid or used by local businesses.