

Somerset Recycling Week launches with highest ever recycling rate

Somerset Council is launching its 'Recycling Week' with a celebration as their latest recycling tracker shows the county's recycling rate reaching new heights.

The tracker shows the Somerset's recycling rate reaching its highest ever level at 56.4%.

First pioneered by Somerset Waste Partnership in 2008, the tracker shows what happens to every tonne of household waste - where it goes, the companies involved and its likely use as new packaging and products.

The tracker shows that in 2022/23 more than 142,500 tonnes of material was collected for recycling and reuse, and of that 96.6% stayed in the UK for reprocessing – including 54.4% staying in Somerset.

Of the 6,500 tonnes of plastic collected, the full 100% went to UK based reprocessors. The amount of waste going to landfill was 6,444 tonnes – almost half the weight going to landfill in 2021/22 – with 103,897 tonnes going to Energy from Waste.

Through the recycling efforts of Somerset residents, an impressive 125,254 tonnes of carbon was saved. This is the equivalent of taking 48,175 cars off the road for a year.

Other key figures include:

- 23,270 tonnes of food waste was collected – all of which stays in Somerset, going to an anaerobic digestion plant to be turned into biofertilizer to be used on agricultural land and biogas which is used to generate electricity.
- 41,330 tonnes of garden waste was collected – all of which stays in Somerset, going to Walpole, Dimmer and Priorswood to be composted, ready for use on gardens and farms.
- 4,096 tonnes of electricals and batteries recycled in the UK, and an additional 3.5 tonnes of smart tech donated for reuse via Fixy.

During Somerset's Recycling Week residents will be encouraged to help recycle and reduce even more by seeking out the hidden recyclables in their home alongside, tips and guidance.

The week kicked-off with a day of behind-the-scenes tours of the 'Material Recycling Facility' – or MRF – at Evercreech, run by Suez, the council's collections contractor.

The open day allowed one hundred locals the chance to see how recycling lorries mechanically empty each compartment of recycling material. This also includes

sorting machinery, separating plastics from tins and cans which are mixed in the blue bags.

Cllr Dixie Darch Executive Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change said: “The recycling tracker is a valuable tool and shows how committed we are to responsibly processing our waste.

“The increased recycling rate and falling landfill are very positive and show that residents are, like Somerset Council, working hard to make the county greener and more sustainable.”

Residents can read the full recycling tracker report on Somerset Council’s website: www.somerset.gov.uk/recycling-tracker/.