

CPI gives warm welcome to Defra packaging strategy



Andrew Barnetson of the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) says that the new Packaging Strategy recently issued by Defra shows that Government has been listening to the paper packaging industry during consultations leading up to the release.

There is a welcome recognition of the paper packaging industry's recycling success story with comments such as "The UK regularly exceeds its paper packaging recycling targets ... due mostly to the commercial and industrial stream, from where material is collected easily and cheaply."

Corrugated packaging is largely conspicuous by its absence in the report as this is clearly one area of packaging where Defra can see the recycling loop working as it would wish. No surprise, as over 80% of all corrugated packaging in the UK is sent for recycling after use and, on average, every corrugated box contains 76% recycled fibres.

Defra's recognition of the need to improve the quality of recyclate emanating from UK waste streams, particularly those from domestic sources, alongside the call for Local Authorities to treat recycling as a source of revenue, is also welcomed. This is an area where CPI has lobbied consistently as it sees this issue as fundamental to the future success of UK recycling schemes. Although it is right that Defra should push for higher recycling rates for other poorer performing materials, CPI says it will be a challenge to prevent this from impacting negatively on paper recycling as a whole, whether packaging or non packaging.

It would not be acceptable or efficient if the paper recycling industry ended up having to deal with a poorer quality raw material simply to ensure other materials raised their recycling performance.

Another major theme of the report welcomed by CPI is the emphasis on optimising packaging. This is another area where the corrugated packaging industry has been working hard with its customers. It is encouraging them to move towards specifying packaging materials based on performance criteria. This allows customers to 'rightweight' their boxes, which means using the exact amount of materials necessary to make distribution of goods as efficient and sustainable as possible.

CPI also supports Defra's wish to improve consumer education about packaging and hopes this is one area where Defra will take the lead. Packaging still has a disproportionately high profile in the environmental debate when there are many other much bigger environmental issues which should be commanding the public's attention, such as food waste.

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Notes to Editors

- For additional information on the UK paper industry, in the first instance, please contact Catherine Waterfield, External Affairs Coordinator, on 01793 889612 or email cwaterfield@paper.org.uk. Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paper.org.uk>.
- CPI is the voice of the paper industry in the UK, representing papermakers, tissue manufacturers, corrugated packaging producers and recovered paper merchants.
- CPI represents 265 member sites across 60 companies, with a combined annual turnover of £4 billion and 24,500 personnel.
- Corrugated packaging accounts for more than 30% of all UK packaging.
- Over 80% of all corrugated packaging in the UK is recycled