
Joint News Release: Issued Wednesday 10th March 2021

Producers and councils join forces on ‘public confidence in recycling charter’

The Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (INCPEN), the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP), the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) and the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) join forces to develop the ‘**Public Confidence in Recycling Charter**’. The Charter aims to be fit for purpose for the 2020s and help meet the needs of the public, the packaging value chain, and the four UK governments. The focus is on reporting what happens ‘beyond the bin’.¹

The new Charter has five top aims: -

1. Reinforce public confidence in recycling across the UK.
2. Celebrate when councils and the supply chain deliver great recycling results.
3. Embrace system transparency as opportunities to be open about supply chain challenges that need attention, especially as they relate to public confidence in recycling.
4. Develop better collaboration across all parts of the UK packaging value chain² particularly with recycling achievements and public confidence in mind.
5. Support delivery of the four governments’ ambitions on recycling and resource efficiency, and help gain best results from recycling systems where public confidence is a key factor.

The initial development work by the four organisations will run parallel with the extensive game-changing consultations by the UK government and devolved administrations on extended producer responsibility, consistency of recycling collections, and deposit return systems. Engagement on testing and finalising the Charter will take place with wider sets of stakeholders across the UK.

The new Charter is expected to be launched in Autumn 2021.

Paul Vanston, INCPEN CEO said, ‘This Public Confidence in Recycling Charter aims to support the public’s increasing desire for information about what happens to recyclates beyond the bin. It’s also about celebrating when councils and the supply chain deliver great recycling results. INCPEN is extremely pleased to co-design the new Charter with the councils partnerships in Kent, Somerset and Surrey. These have long demonstrated their commitments to transparency of public information on recycling, and proved themselves to be among the leaders.

¹ Or ‘beyond the bag’ for those council areas that use bags and not bins.

² Includes manufacturers, packer/fillers, brands, retailers, citizens, councils, waste companies, recyclers, reprocessors.

Councillor Nick Kenton, KRP Chairman and portfolio holder for planning and regulatory services at Dover District Council said, 'I'm proud to say the KRP has published extensive details of where all of Kent's recyclates and waste go as far back as 2011. That includes all 13 Kent councils. All 84 private companies who handle Kent's 711,000 tonnes of materials. 76% of that stays in Kent. Just 9.5% goes abroad for recycling. Our recycling rate is touching on 50%, and a mere 1.5% goes to landfill. These figures are backed-up by data to support public confidence in recycling in Kent. What's needed now is public confidence on a national scale, which is why we're delighted to be working with INCPEN on the new Public Confidence in Recycling Charter'.

SWP Managing Director, Mickey Green said: 'Knowing and showing what happens to recycling is key to building public trust and driving recycling behaviour change. That's why more than a decade ago we were the first waste authority in the country to publish comprehensive details of what happens to our recycling and where it ends up, and why we have done it every year since. Around 98% of what we have collected this year has stayed in the UK. Being able to evidence that, and the carbon savings that go with it, is very powerful. This charter will help strengthen the 'contract' we are forging with the public and we look forward to working on it with colleagues from around the country.'

Councillor Neil Dallen, Chairman of the Surrey Environment Partnership said, 'As public interest continues to grow it's critical that there is complete transparency about what happens to recycling. This has always been important to us in Surrey and we've already seen it pay dividends in our recycling rate which the recent Defra report showed is now at 56%. The more confidence people have in what happens to their recycling the more motivated they are to make the effort. So, we're delighted to be at the forefront of developing this new charter.'

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Editor's Notes

1. Questions for any of the project partners about this press release can be directed, in the first instance, to Paul Vanston, CEO of INCPEN. Email: paul.vanston@incpen.org
2. The 'Public Confidence in Recycling Charter' also has the shorthand name: the 'Beyond the Bin Charter' or 'Beyond the Bag' Charter.
3. The Public Confidence in Recycling Charter builds on the work by the Resource Association in the 2010s through its 'End Destinations of Recyclates' (EDR) Charter. At the demise of the Resource Association in 2020, INCPEN became the new owner of the EDR Charter.
4. The KRP, SWP and SEP represent the interests of 30 councils and around 3.77million citizens (6.3% of England's population). The three partnerships collected 733,456 tonnes of household recyclates in 2019/20 (7.3% of all England's household recyclates). Total household tonnage in 2019/20 across the three partnerships was 1,435,128 tonnes (6.2% of England's tonnage).

5. Whilst the initial development work on the Charter involves the KRP, SWP and SEP, the intention is to consult wider later in 2021 across all four nations of the UK. This ensures the Charter relates to the needs of all four UK nations, and links well to the new systems planned for Extended Producer Responsibility on a UK-wide basis.
6. **INCPEN** is a sustainability organisation focused on research, policy and systems relating to packaging. INCPEN's membership comprises manufacturers, brands, retailers, recyclers and reprocessors that contribute over £8billion to UK GDP, and 600,000 jobs to the UK economy – most of whom are key workers. INCPEN and its membership actively contribute to delivering the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. We desire a global approach, and local societies, that operate in harmony with our planet's natural resources.
7. The **Kent Resource Partnership** (KRP) is a unique, multi-award winning resource waste partnership including all 12 of Kent's district/borough councils and Kent County Council. For reference all 13 councils are listed in alphabetical order:- Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dartford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swale Borough Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The KRP's 'Materials End Destinations' report for 2018/19 (latest audited year) is at: https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/105517/Kent-Resource-Partnership-Materials-End-Destinations-Publication-2018-19.pdf
8. The **Somerset Waste Partnership** (SWP) was established in 2007 and manages waste services on behalf of Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, South Somerset District Councils, and Somerset County Council. This made it the first county-wide waste partnership in the country. It has a history of innovation – the first to roll out food waste at scale; the first to publish an annual report showing exactly what happens to all its recycling; and it is known for its commitment to collecting quality source separated recycling materials which are used as resources by UK industry. In 2020 SWP turned its end use register into an infographic to better communicate this important message to the public: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/beyond-the-kerb/
9. The **Surrey Environment Partnership** is made up of Surrey County Council and the 11 district and borough councils in the county. It aims to manage Surrey's waste in the most efficient, effective, economical and sustainable manner. To find out more, visit www.surreyep.org.uk