

A Waste and Recycling Education Strategy for schools in Devon



There are 566 schools in Devon divided between Secondary, Primary, Special and Independent, either administered by the LEA or privately, educating more than 100,000 children at any one time.

It is widely acknowledged that educating young people about the subject of waste will be beneficial in developing more sustainable communities in the future, thereby reducing pollution and conserving natural resources.

For many years the issue of waste and indeed more broadly the environment itself was not specifically studied as a mainstream subject in school although it could be brought into a wide range of subjects such as maths, science, art and geography. More recently, however, with the advent of Education for Sustainable Development the subject can be allocated some time within the national curriculum.

Currently, whilst teachers may well choose to home in on the subject of waste and recycling and there is a wide range of information sources for them to call on, there is no strategic or corporate plan in Devon to support or enable schools to bring waste and recycling to the forefront of their daily activities or incorporate it more actively in their learning processes.

This strategy aims to provide policies to assist schools to develop their knowledge of waste and therefore influence their actions with respect to waste education and waste management. . .

Aims

- To increase awareness of waste issues in Devon schools including all aspects of the waste hierarchy
- To enable schools to achieve waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting of their waste
- To assist schools in achieving the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum
- To promote green procurement, closing the loop and best practice in waste management

Objectives

- To produce and provide best practice guidelines, advice and information for schools
- To help put in place facilities to enable schools to reduce, re-use, recycle and compost their waste.
- To provide a resources bank for teachers
- To provide a programme of educational visits to schools and arrange for schools to visit waste facilities
- To work in partnership to further the aims
- To provide a team of 'educators' to achieve the objectives and resource them appropriately

Don't let Devon go to waste

 **recycle now**

Proposed actions and policies. . .



1. Visits to waste management facilities

Visits to waste management facilities can enhance children's understanding of waste issues and can form an important part of their education when combined with classroom learning. The facilities which are 'owned' or managed by local authorities or community groups in Devon are as follows:

- The Greenhouse, Plymouth
- Material Reclamation Facility (MRF)
- Exeter MRF
- Torbay MRF
- 19 Recycling Centres
- Proper Job Chagford centre
- South Molton Recycle
- Scrap stores
- 'Access' to 4 Landfill sites

Schools are welcome to visit these facilities by arrangement with the relevant 'authority', however, their availability needs to be advertised such that schools are aware of them. Transport to such facilities can be an unaffordable expense to schools and financial assistance needs to be considered. In terms of visits to landfill sites discussion with the landfill site operators would be required. The facilities are fairly well spaced across the county and schools should be encouraged to use those nearest to them where possible. Visits will form part of the structured resources offered to schools. ■

Policy one: The availability of facilities for school visits will be advertised widely and funding to assist schools with transport will be sought. Visits will form part of the structured resources offered to schools.

2. Provision of 'Educators'

Currently all local authorities and community groups pay ad hoc visits to schools on request. Some are more proactive than others depending on staff resources and policy. There are two full time 'educators' employed in Devon currently. One works for South Molton Recycle (SMR) and is jointly funded by North Devon and Torridge District Councils. One works in Plymouth schools, funded by Landfill Tax Credits. Whilst ad hoc visits should continue, officer time is at a premium and the SMR and Plymouth initiatives need to be expanded to cover all of Devon. It is considered that a team of four including a project manager, 2 project workers and an administrative assistant could deliver waste education to all schools in Devon. There is currently no funding in place to provide educators so funding would have to be sought.

Policy two: Funding will be sought for a team of educators to be employed to deliver waste education to all schoolchildren in Devon



Junk band 'Weapons of Sound' at Redhills Combined School



Waste Summit 2004 workshop



Cycler the rapping robot

3. Resources for schools

The educators' role will be to:

- Visit all schools in Devon on a rolling programme
- Arrange visits to facilities
- Promote waste awareness in accordance with the waste hierarchy
- Facilitate the provision of recycling and composting services to schools
- To provide a resources bank for teachers, educators and officers to use.
- To produce best practice guidelines, advice and information for schools
- To promote green procurement in schools
- To work in partnership with the Local Authorities, Global Action Plan, Community Groups, Industry and schools to implement the Waste Education Strategy.
- To link with the Don't let Devon go to Waste campaign
- To manage an education website

For an understanding of the scale of the school system, the table below details the number of schools of different types in Devon, Torbay and Plymouth. ■

District	Primary	Secondary	Special	Independent	Referral	Total
East Devon	56	7	1	7	0	71
Exeter	28	5	3	13	2	51
Mid Devon	37	4	0	2	0	43
North Devon	48	6	2	3	2	61
South Hams	41	4	1	3	1	50
Teignbridge	47	6	2	7	0	62
Torridge	36	3	1	5	0	45
West Devon	28	2	0	3	0	33
Sub Total	321	37	10	43	5	416
Torbay	34	7	3	4	6	54
Plymouth	60	17	8	8	3	96
Grand Total	415	61	21	55	14	566



'Don't Let Devon go to Waste' promotional pack

Schools already have access to a mesmerising range of materials ranging from books, to web-sites and packs from organisations such as Wastewatch and Alucan. However, it is recognised that more explicit curriculum based materials need to be provided. There are CD roms available and it would be appropriate to develop one specifically for Devon. The Devon County Council (DCC) website is being developed to provide a large site for waste education. The information provided by Wastewatch is curriculum based and can be made available for schools but it is designed more specifically for use by 'educators'. The resources will need to be designed appropriately for each Key Stage. Information packs are currently available from the Environment Agency. An information pack needs to be developed along with Best Practice Guidelines covering both educational material, services and procurement. ■

Policy three: A bank of resources will be developed and made available to schools to assist with achieving all key stages of the National Curriculum and developing waste awareness.

4. Resources for Educators

As well as resources for schools themselves, the Educators will require a bank of resources and a 'manual'. The majority of the guidance will be provided in the form of the Waste Education for Schools Programme resources. There is already a range of 'resources' available which can be procured by the educators. For example: theatre groups, cyclist, the DCC road show trailer, compost bins, wormeries, and the junk band weapons of sound. Some of these resources would need financing, others are free. The educators would incorporate the use of these resources into their school visits programme. ■



Policy four: A range of resources will be developed and provided to support the work of the educators.

5. Enabling recycling and composting

Whilst it is commendable to educate school children in sustainable waste education it is important that they can practice reducing, re-using and recycling their waste at school. Waste collection services are provided by the District or Unitary Councils of Devon or by private contractors depending on the results of the procurement process. The LEA as client is currently working on a collection contract which will include a recycling option. The majority of District Councils of Devon who provide collection services from schools do a limited collection of recyclables. This service needs to be expanded. It also needs to go hand in hand with educating the schools about how to segregate their waste for recycling. The County Council pays recycling credits for district council recycling collections and voluntary groups on a discretionary basis.

Some local authorities provide free compost bins to schools. The offer could be widened to all schools. However, compost bins need managing and schools would need advice to maintain them. The

educators would be versed in this subject in order that they could offer assistance. There is also the issue of school kitchen waste which could ideally be composted. The educators could assist schools in achieving this. ■

Policy five: Recycling and composting facilities will be offered to all schools in Devon. Support will be provided by the team of educators.

6. Management

The Waste Education Steering Group was set up in 2003 as part of the Don't let Devon go to Waste initiative. It is made up of waste management officers from all local authorities in Devon, the Environment Agency, GAP and community group representatives and a representative of the Devon LEA. The group has developed this strategy. ■

Policy 6: The implementation of the Strategy and the management of the Educators will be overseen by the Waste Education Steering Group.

7. What next?

The Waste Education Steering Group will develop an action plan and seek funding to implement this strategy.

In the meantime if you have any queries about waste and recycling education in schools including arranging visits, please contact: Lindsay Coyle on 01392 382920 or lindsay.coyle@devon.gov.uk, visit www.devon.gov.uk or contact the recycling officer at your local council, whose details can be found at www.recycledevon.org ■

