

HIGHLY COMMENDED

University of Derby - Revised waste contract pays off for the environment

In 1999, Derby was the first higher education institution to introduce a pay-by-weight contract with its waste management provider - an innovation which has since been widely replicated. Such schemes save money by using information to optimise the placement of bins, and to ensure that those which are collected are full. This results in fewer movements of collection vehicles, as well as other environmental benefits.

The University continues to benefit from the scheme. Environmental and Energy Manager, Jo Hasbury, believes that it's both "the most cost-effective, and the most environmentally beneficial, way to manage waste. Since 1999 we've reduced the number of bins emptied each week by 35%, and the number of bins on site by 22%."

She calculates that the resulting annual savings to the waste budget rose to an estimated 19% in 2004-5.

More recently, the University has concentrated on recycling. In partnership with the local council, it provides recycling schemes for glass, paper, cans, and plastic in residences, and on its initiative facilities for these materials plus mobile phones and toner cartridges at tutorial sites. In 2004-5 this amounted to 127 tonnes, which is about 17% of its waste.

10 tonnes of this recycled material has been shipped to rural Ghana, through a partnership with the charity, Datalink. The shipments include over 300 PCs (part of the 800+ PCs which the University has donated), as well as other IT equipment, books and sports equipment. To date, Datalink has used these and other donated PCs to train over a million Ghanaians in computer skills. Jo Hasbury observes that "re-using waste equipment in these ways is much better for the environment, and sustainable development, than simply recycling materials and components."



Jo Hasbury

Judges' Comments on Waste (continued)

The importance of measurement and partnerships is also demonstrated by the University of Derby. Its pioneering pay-by-weight waste contract has been both very cost-effective, and environmentally beneficial, and influenced other universities to adopt the same approach. The key to this has been a consistent and tenacious use of the data generated to provide opportunities for improvement. The University's partnership with a recycling charity is also benefiting not just the environment, but also the broader objectives of sustainable development, through the re-use of equipment in Africa.