

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE STATES' TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LAURIE QUERIPPEL**

Statement from Deputy Queripel:

The following questions are submitted in light of the decision taken by the Chinese Government that China will no longer be accepting paper or plastics for recycling. I have addressed these questions to both of you conscious of the fact that you preside over committees/boards that both have responsibilities for the various aspects of waste management.

Response:

The Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure (CftE&I) is responsible for waste policy and the States' Trading Supervisory Board (STSB) has operational responsibility for strategy implementation. As the questions relate to operational matters they are addressed by the STSB President.

Question

Are you in a position at this stage to make an assessment as to how and in what ways this development may possibly impact upon the Islands current recycling efforts and the impending waste strategy?

Answer

Although China recently imposed tighter controls in imports of recyclables, these new measures have been known about for some time. They are not blanket bans on paper or plastics, but more stringent requirements on the nature of the materials that will be accepted.

For example, China will no longer accept what is termed in the recycling industry as mixed paper. That refers to an unsorted combination of paper and cardboard, which Guernsey does not produce. All paper and cardboard is pre-sorted in the island, either through source segregation at bring banks or separation of 'clear bag' materials, prior to export.

The reason Guernsey does not export 'mixed paper' is because we recognise the importance of quality in terms of securing markets for recyclables. Materials collected locally, both from the kerbside service and through bring banks, are of a consistently very high quality. That has always been a priority and the approach has served the island well. For instance, following the global financial crisis post-2008, many UK authorities were reported as having to stockpile recycled material due to reduced manufacturing demand. However our local contractor was able to maintain output markets due to the consistent, reliable quality of our materials.

The local company which the States of Guernsey has contracts with to process plastic and paper sends these materials to UK processors. There is demand for the reprocessed materials within the UK and in Europe, and our contractor is confident that due to the quality of our materials they will have no issue in securing outlets for all the paper and plastics collected locally.

Question

If the answer to the previous question is no, could you please advise as to when you will be able to provide an assessment and also what matters are likely to be taken under consideration in relation to our current recycling efforts and further, whether and what aspects of the new waste strategy operationally, financially or otherwise, might possibly be effected and perhaps revisited as a result of this development?

Answer

The STSB and its Trading Asset, Guernsey Waste, continually monitor the contracts it has with recycling companies and it monitors worldwide trends and markets. As detailed in the answer to question 1, our local partner does not foresee any direct impact from the tighter restrictions being imposed by China due to the nature and quality of the materials we export, and our existing end-user markets.

Question

Following this decision by China is it likely that more of the Islands paper and plastics intended for recycling will end up being disposed of via incineration and/or landfill?

Answer

No - Guernsey is able to continue with some confidence to export its recyclable material to the UK market place. There is currently no reason to expect this position will change, but in any event the island is well placed to meet any challenges due, again, to the consistently high quality of recycling materials that we produce.

That is why, for instance, we encourage islanders not to put black plastic in their kerbside bags or into the bring banks. While that is frustrating for those who are keen to recycle as much as possible, processors do not want black plastic as it causes problems with subsequent sorting and there is a lack of demand for the material. Keeping out this and other problem plastics, such as cling film and crisp packets, improves the quality of our recycling and should ensure we continue to maintain secure markets for all our materials.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 2nd January 2018

Date of Reply: 16th January 2018
