

MAJOR CONTRACT SIGNED TO REDUCE WASTE

A £730 million contract that will see thousands of tonnes of Cambridgeshire waste composted or recycled will be officially signed off, Tuesday, April 8.

Cambridgeshire County Council and local company Donarbon Waste Management Limited will sign the 28-year contract, at the special event.

The new contract will see the most modern recycling facilities in the eastern region built at Waterbeach to help reduce the waste from Cambridgeshire's growing population.

The Council has been successful in attracting £35 million in Government PFI credits to help pay for the scheme.

The centrepiece of the plans is a state of the art Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant which sorts "black bag rubbish", removing material for recycling before producing a compost-like material. But waste chiefs made it clear that this technology should not be seen as an alternative to using existing kerbside recycling services as kerbside sorting results in higher quality materials for recycling. It is instead a way of capturing materials that are harder to separate at the kerbside.

The Waste PFI Project is a long-term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract that includes the design, build and management of new facilities to collect waste from householders in Cambridgeshire.

The scheme will also include a visitor centre where people, including local children, will be able to learn more about recycling and find out about the MBT plant, which uses environmental friendly methods to treat waste. Additional facilities for the composting

of kerbside collected kitchen and garden waste will also be provided under the new contract.

Now that the contract has been signed, Donarbon will begin construction on the new plant on their existing Waste Management Park at Waterbeach located off the A10 between Waterbeach and Chittering. This is already used for recycling, composting and landfilling waste from Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire has topped national league tables for recycling and composting since 2003-2004 and is on track to exceed its target of 50% for 2007-2008. But it still has to spend £7 million each year landfilling thousands of tonnes of rubbish that cannot currently be treated, a figure that is set to rise by another £1 million in 2008-2009 due to recent Government landfill tax increases.

Cambridgeshire County Councillor John Reynolds, who was instrumental in bringing the PFI contract to fruition as the previous Lead Member for Planning and Regional Matters, said "Helping to secure a greener future for our children and grandchildren has always been at the heart of this contract. We are very pleased to have laid the foundations for managing Cambridgeshire's waste over the next 28 years."

Mark Davenport, Managing Director for Donarbon Ltd said, "We are extremely pleased to be working with Cambridgeshire County Council and all the District Councils in the county on this exciting new project. This is a major new investment for a company our size and so we will put every effort into ensuring that the contract runs smoothly, and we look forward to working with all local residents as well

as councils to promote more recycling through the new waste treatment facilities we are building and the education centre."

More information about the Waste PFI Project is available on the County Council's website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/wastepfi