Increasing reuse and recycling through procurement

Swansea University
Swansea University are procuring a £250,000 waste management contract to collect, recycle and dispose of waste from the main Singleton campus, Hendrefoelan campus and the Sketty Lane Sports Centre. Swansea University wish to push the boundaries with their procurement, to ensure that the waste contractor appointed works with the University to maximise reuse and recycling, and to achieve the corporate goals of zero waste to landfill. The WRAP Cymru support identified areas where further sustainability requirements could be included within the procurement process.

Aims and objectives
The University’s key aims for the new waste contract are to ensure a comprehensive, high quality waste management service, which would:

- reflect the University’s commitment to increase waste prevention, recycling, reuse, and recovery of waste wherever possible.
- develop innovative strategies incorporating objectives and milestone targets which support the University’s aspiration of zero waste to landfill by 2015.
- make best use of contemporary containers, waste management tools and techniques.
- provide effective management with clear and concise Management Information reporting; and
- facilitate a clean and tidy appearance across the University’s sites.

Background
Universities have an important role to play in the promotion and practice of sustainability and Swansea University has a clear Sustainability Policy. As part of this, the University acknowledges that its purchasing decisions carry economic, social and environmental implications and recognises its responsibility to procure goods and services in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable practices are increasingly being mainstreamed within the Higher Education sector. Swansea University already has a great deal of experience in managing cutting-edge research into sustainability and is leading the way with a number of innovations that have been introduced on campus. For instance, the University was the first in Wales to achieve Fairtrade status. Staff commitment to waste minimisation is
also high - the University has stepped up its recycling policy and collection points for mixed recycling are now in every department.

The current Sustainability Policy for the University signed by the Vice-Chancellor states:

"With an annual turnover in excess of £170m, and a community of some 15,000 students and 2,500 staff, we also recognise the need to manage our operations on a sustainable basis and that creating a more sustainable future is the responsibility of us all. It is with this in mind that this policy has been formulated."

**WRAP Sustainable Procurement Project Support**

There have been a number of lessons learned from the University’s previous waste management procurements, and the University wants to ensure that their forthcoming tender encourages innovation and new ideas for waste prevention, re-use and recycling. They do not wish that the new contractor simply continues with the current service that is in place, but that a future contract will demonstrate innovation, and will help achieve the corporate goal of zero waste to landfill.

As part of the WRAP Cymru support, the University’s draft Invitation to Tender and Service Level Agreements for the procurement were reviewed and recommendations on how to further embed sustainability in to the contract were made. These included requirements to increase re-use and recycling, and explore opportunities for increased community benefits through student engagement.

The review of the documents also identified how to include input into the selection criteria and how issues relating to sustainability could be evaluated.

**Recommendations**

A key recommendation from the review was the need to set clear and specific targets for waste prevention, reuse and recycling. It was recommended that in addition to aligning these with the University’s zero waste to landfill target, that percentage targets were set for the quantity of waste prevented, reused or recycled.

The review also highlighted the importance of ensuring appropriate contract monitoring and reporting requirements within the specification to support the progress towards meeting targets. This could include details on contamination rates and end markets for materials.

The opportunity to include specifications relating to the reuse of materials and equipment was also highlighted. By reusing and redeploying items rather than disposing of them costs can be cut by reducing expenditure on new goods and materials as well as savings on disposal costs, resulting in economic and social benefits, as well as environmental.

One of the priority areas for the University was how a waste contractor might propose to deliver behaviour change through engagement with students and staff. WRAP Cymru recommended that the University consider requesting that bidders provide this information within a Behaviour Change Plan. The plan should engage University staff and students to reduce, reuse and recycle waste across the campus.

WRAP Cymru also provided guidance on how the evaluation methodology and criteria could be used to implement the recommendations provided.

**Outcomes**

In 2013, Swansea University achieved a recycling rate of 36%. By driving increases in recycling through the new contract,
recycling is expected to increase to 50% by 2015, with further diversion from landfill by increasing waste prevention and reuse measures.

The WRAP Cymru support has been estimated to generate the following savings over the three year lifetime of the contract:

- £9,390 cost savings
- 71 tonnes of waste from landfill
- 174 tonnes of CO$_2$

**Mark Durdin, Sustainability Officer (Energy and Waste),** stated that:

‘*We have taken suggested example questions and clauses from WRAP Cymru and pasted them straight into the specification, as they have done a brilliant job of providing us with what we need to go the extra mile in building sustainability in to the waste contract*.‘
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