

What Happens to Our Plastic Recycling?

The value of material for recycling is notoriously volatile and tends to reflect the demand in the market.

Any material rebate received is used to offset costs of running the service.

Stroud District Council collect around 1,700 tonnes of plastic annually. Plastic collections are conducted co-mingled, meaning that a number of materials are mixed in one collection receptacle (primarily a green wheelie bin). Other materials include glass and steel/aluminium cans. This material is tipped from the collection vehicles in to our transfer station at Gossington. From here it is bulked and hauled to our contracted Material Recovery Facility (MRF) on the outskirts of Birmingham.

This facility sorts the various items and in the case of plastics, sorts according to their type of polymer. This determines each material's melt temperature and possible end uses.

These polymer types are various but can include PET, PETE, HDPE and more. Once sorted, the plastics are compressed by a machine into a bale shape and transported to a plastic reprocessing plant. The contracts for the sale of this are negotiated directly by the MRF.

Stroud District Council receive regular reports regarding the end re-processing destinations. The vast majority of our plastic is reprocessed in the UK but some goes to European Countries. In the last 12 months plastics have been reprocessed in Germany, Netherlands and Belgium. No plastic has been sent to Malaysia.

Any end destinations, including those overseas, need to have strict licences in place and these are confirmed by the MRF prior to any trade of material.

