

Council introduce battery recycling

Edinburgh is to introduce battery and plastic bottle recycling as part of the city's wider waste and recycling strategy.

City residents have been recycling a range of materials for several years, with plastic bottles and batteries now being added to the kerbside recycling box collection.

From today, plastic bottles will be picked up from the red kerbside boxes while batteries will be picked up from the blue kerbside boxes for recycling.

Currently, in Edinburgh plastic bottles are one of the most asked about recyclable items and residents can recycle plastic bottles by using on-street packaging points and bring sites.

A recent UK Government survey (YouGov) revealed that 275,000 tonnes of plastic are used each year in the UK, which is around 15 million bottles per day. And plastic bottles can take up to 500 years to decompose.

The introduction of battery recycling at the kerbside is an exciting new initiative not seen in the city before.

Householders can currently recycle their household batteries at various shops as well as the Council Community Recycling Centres, but the additions to the kerbside recycling box collection means the public will be able to place batteries in their blue boxes for recycling.

A 2010 survey by the European Recycling Platform found that nearly half of the UK population had never recycled a battery, with 29 per cent of those saying that they did not even know that batteries could be recycled.

The study also revealed that there is a lack of knowledge of

where batteries could be taken to be recycled.

In the UK, only about three to five per cent of all household batteries are recycled. Most old batteries end up in landfill, where they can leak harmful chemicals into the soil. The introduction of the new recycling initiative in Edinburgh will help with reducing the harmful affects on the environment.

The recycling scheme makes it easier for residents to recycle more materials and can help reduce the amount of batteries and plastic bottles ending up in landfill.

The new waste and recycling strategy will work towards the target of increasing recycling in Edinburgh to 75% by 2020. The Council currently spends over £7m per year on landfill tax. This is set to increase to £12m by 2014, if action isn't taken to get more people to reduce, reuse and recycle.

✘ Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environmental Leader, said: “We are really stepping up our recycling activity in Edinburgh; with the introduction of a food waste pilot due to start soon and now householders will also be able to recycle batteries and plastic bottles at the kerbside. It is important as a city that we lower the amount of rubbish sent to landfill and the introduction of these new services will make it easier for residents to recycle even more materials.

“Everyone has a responsibility to reduce waste, especially with materials such as plastics and batteries. Recycling at the kerbside protects natural resources and I would urge the public to get behind these new services and reduce, reuse and recycle where they can.”