

Business diversification for recycling firm keen to tackle plastic waste

Written by Luke

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Riverdale Paper has invested in a new UNTHA QR shredder to support the company's business diversification.

The Gateshead firm quickly established itself as the North East's leading paper recycler. But contracts with some of the UK's largest commercial organisations in retail, financial services and public arenas, has seen demand for Riverdale's wider expertise grow.

Now, the team is being increasingly tasked with tackling plastic waste including polypropylene, HDPE and pre-consumer material from the automotive industry, to name just a few. With volumes of around five tonnes per week, the QR1700 therefore made for the perfect purchase.

With a current processing capacity of two tonnes per hour, the shredder is reducing the plastics to a <30mm fraction that is then sold on to reprocessors for granulation and recycling. The QR is also being configured to suit different plastic grades.

"The speed and simplicity of machine changeover is very impressive," comments Riverdale's assistant general manager Kevin Brown. "The QR is also very easy to clean down which reduces the risk of cross-contamination. This is crucial, given recyclate quality has never been so important."

Riverdale acknowledged the rising plastic challenges within industry and made the bold move into this recycling niche, in late 2017.

"Plastic is a difficult material to handle, but despite the doom and gloom headlines, it is also a material rich with opportunity," elaborates Kevin. "We knew that by recycling a 'waste' stream that many other firms shy away from, we could provide a better overall service to both existing

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and new customers.

“By carefully segregating and processing plastics in the way that we do, we’re also able to attract larger rebates than if we were producing mixed bales.”

This project marks the first QR installation since the ground-breaking new technology was introduced to the UK market last Autumn.

Commenting on the project, UNTHA UK’s sales manager Dan Fairest said: “We were incredibly excited to unveil this shredder at the PPMA Show in October, and industry feedback has surpassed our expectations.

“Interest in this machine is also high because of the extent to which plastic waste is dominating media headlines at present. China is pushing back on material quality, pollution in the oceans has never been so severe, and even Chancellor Philip Hammond raised the mounting single use plastic issue in his spring statement. The problem isn’t going to go away, so operators are looking for plastic recycling systems that will address this critical industry concern.

“The QR has been successfully installed and is performing as specified. This is therefore a very exciting time for companies like Riverdale.”

Developed in conjunction with recyclers worldwide, the QR was 18 months in the making. It can process an array of materials including plastics, film, mixed rigids, packaging waste, pallets and wood for biomass. It is available to trial, for free, in UNTHA UK’s North of England test centre.