

Authorities set targets for recycled materials

■ Declarations of intent to set 10% targets follow WRAP's series of Reconstruct events.

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Six local authorities, a regeneration company and a hospital trust have set targets of 10% of the materials used on projects to be from recycled or reused materials.

The declaration of intent follows the success of the many Reconstruct events held by the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) between June and October.

A number of seminars and workshops, which attracted 500 delegates, explained exactly why organisations should think innovatively about recycled content when specifying and procuring projects. Feedback forms from the delegates indicated that, in total, they had influence on a quarter of UK construction spend.

The following have now based WRAP's advice: Aberdeen City Council; Bristol City Council; Dundee City Council; Glasgow City Council; Lancashire County Council; Newcastle City Council; Raploch Urban Regeneration Company and Whips Cross

Hospital University. Many are expected to follow suit.

Isabelle Hershorn, procurement programme projects officer at WRAP, said: "The construction industry is one of the biggest users of products and materials totaling 420 million tonnes a year. The amount of waste generated is about a third of that total. The materials need to be used more efficiently and managed more effectively.

"The Reconstruct events were developed to provide those involved in building design, development and construction with strategies, tools and guidance to maximize resource efficiency. It is precise, smarter specification of construction projects with a higher recycled content.

"Many mainstream construction products include recovered material. Through product substitution, you can increase the overall recycled content used on a project at no extra cost or risk," she said.

"This will demonstrate a real contribution to sustainable devel-

opment - and help to satisfy clients, investors and planning authorities."

The seminars and workshops also provided new evidence on the commercial, operational and environmental benefits, and helped make the case for change.

"Recycled content is different to recycling on site. We are trying to encourage schools, local

activities, housebuilders and private and public sector clients to choose products with a higher percentage of recycled content," said Hershorn.

"Dense concrete blocks, for example, may have the same quality specification or performance but some will contain 50% or more of recycled content and some 0%," she said.



GROUND WORK: An X-ray fluorescence analyser from Ashtead Technology Rentals proved vital on an archaeological dig featured in Channel 4's Time Team 'Big Roman Dig' programme. The device, used as part of health and safety mitigation procedures, identified higher levels of arsenic and cadmium than found in a preliminary survey and brought the dig to an early, but safe, conclusion.

Withers rolls out recyclable subsidence repair solution

Croydon-based subsidence, piling and foundation specialist Withers has launched a recyclable subsidence repair solution.

The With-A-Mid foundation system is designed to replace traditional solutions such as ground beams and compressible-cell core polystyrene blocks.

The new system uses recyclable, collapsible steel chairs to create a void in the ground and reduce the risk of heave in clay sub-soils.

"The cell core method results in large numbers of egg-box type sheets being deposited below ground," said Withers managing director Rob Withers.

"While these are effective in counteracting heave, they are not an environmentally-friendly

solution and are expensive as they're derived from oil."

The quantities in which they are used are also significant. Withers alone uses 800,000 sheets a year.

"If we stacked these up, that would equate to about 29km - that's three times the height of Big Ben and twice the height of the London Eye," Withers said.

"Our collapsible void support chairs can be removed from the ground and reused."

"They collapse from 220mm to 25mm and can easily be pulled from the ground," Withers said.

The technique is also claimed to require less excavation, reducing the amount of waste material deposited in landfill sites.

Suppliers set for £13m Blackburn homes boost

Builders merchants are set for a boost in Blackburn after local housing management company Twin Valley Homes announced details of a materials supply contract worth a potential £13m.

The annual value of purchases under the proposed contract is valued between £750,000 and £1m per year. The company is looking to develop a partnering agreement for an initial five-year period, with an option to extend the deal to 10 years.

Twin Valley Homes is in talks with Pendle Borough Council to

supply materials to the authority's direct labour organisation. With the anticipated spend for Fenella rated at £200,000 per year, the total potential contract value adds up to £13m.

The deal includes the provision, maintenance and inspection of 100 km to 75 operatives, as well as the supply of general building materials and decorating materials.

The successful supplier will also act as the buying agency for Twin Valley Homes in respect of any specialist non-stock

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