

Householders in Wales are to learn whether their councils send recycling overseas. From this month local authorities will be able to record every destination for their recycling, rather than just one destination as was the case in the past.

Keeping recycling in Wales instead of sending it away or burying it in landfill can have economic as well as environmental benefits.

Recycling 100,000 tonnes of waste can create up to 250 jobs as opposed to 20 to 40 in the case of incineration and approximately 10 land-filling. In addition local authorities can raise money by selling the end products of recycling, which can then be used by Welsh industry.

Environment Minister Jane Davidson has welcomed the move, which she had called for alongside Assembly Member Nerys Evans.

Ms Davidson said:

“I am delighted that we are now recycling or composting 44 per cent of our municipal waste. The next step is to make sure that we benefit from this increased recycling.

“We must stop thinking of our waste simply as something we need to dispose of and start thinking of it as a resource. By keeping as much as possible of this waste in Wales local authorities can generate much-needed funds, while Welsh industries won’t need to look overseas for raw materials.

“It is still better to recycle overseas than to landfill at home. But it is greener and makes more financial sense to process recycling here in Wales where Welsh local authorities, businesses

and jobs can benefit.”

The greater transparency is a consequence of changes to the WasteDataFlow system, which Welsh local authorities will use to record waste, recycling and end destination data.

The first results – covering October to December 2010 – will be available in March 2011. The Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Agency Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) are working closely with local authorities to help them make the most of the new system.