

Viridor officially opens £317m Avonmouth waste management centre

Waste management firm Viridor has officially opened a £317m facility in Bristol it says will divert hundreds of thousands of tonnes of rubbish from landfill every year.

The firm's new site at Avonmouth, which has created 125 new jobs, consists of a £252m energy recovery facility (ERF) and a £65m plastic reprocessing plant.

The latter will allow for 80,000 tonnes of plastic – more than 1.6 billion bottles, tubs, and trays – to be recycled and returned to the economy every year.

The ERF is designed to divert 320,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste away from landfill and generate enough energy to power the equivalent of 84,000 homes. It has already begun exporting electricity to the grid and powers plastic reprocessing at the site.

Viridor said the facility could help UK plastic waste exports by around 8% and save 126,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year – the equivalent of taking more than 67,000 cars off the road.

The company estimated five more plastic reprocessing facilities on the scale of Avonmouth would be needed to end all plastic waste exports from the UK.

Viridor chief executive Kevin Bradshaw said the additional plants could generate a third of a billion pounds in new investment and will create more than 600 jobs across the country.

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Mr Bradshaw said: "We are leading this effort and want to build more state-of-the-art facilities like Avonmouth. DEFRA's ambitious and vital policy reforms have the potential to create the stable investment environment to realise this ambition and align job creation with doing the right thing for the environment."

Resources and waste minister Jo Churchill, who visited the site on Thursday (March 3), described Viridor's facility as a "game changer" in work to reduce the use of polluting plastics.

Ms Churchill said: "The new Avonmouth site shows we can create jobs that have a positive impact on our environment, cut our CO2 emissions and give our plastics new life."

Viridor agreed a [five-year contract with Unilever](#) in 2019

which sees the household goods giant receive and use a range of recycled plastic from the Avonmouth facility.

Viridor was [handed back operations](#) of the ERF at the start of 2021. More than 500 people were employed onsite at the peak of construction. A total of 20 principal contractors were engaged during the build, with 40% of orders being placed with firms from South West England and Wales.

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