

The last edition of *Organics Recycling* had the headline “Thinking Big”, but is big always best? Not all agree, writes Tony Breton of Novamont

# THINKING LOCAL



**Through the use of innovative collection and on-site treatment techniques The One Brighton community proves local to be just as effective as thinking large.**

The past five years has seen incredible expansion of food waste collection services across the UK and today about 35% of all “street level” households have their food waste collected separately or with garden waste. However, the same cannot be said for the four million flats and apartments of which less than 5% receive any form of targeted food waste service. All forms of separate collection in flats are difficult. Engaging the public is always the key to a successful collection scheme but doing so in typically transient populations, often with relatively high levels of social deprivation and lack of interior space for storage and motivation can be nigh on impossible. It can also be extremely costly with door to door collection essentially cost-prohibitive.

All of these factors were considered for One Brighton, a development by Crest Nicholson BioRegional Quintain LLP in the centre of Brighton. The development consists of 172 apartments – from eco-studios to 3-bedroom units – plus office and



Far left: the One Brighton flats development; and (left) the composting and recycling chutes; and (below) compost material which has had some sawdust added



community space. Designed, built and run in line with the 10 One Planet Principles, a global initiative developed by BioRegional and WWF, it is claimed to be the most sustainable residential development in the UK.

Waste management is made simple for residents, there are two multi-material recycling chutes for mixed paper and card, cans and plastics, mixed glass, non-recyclables and of course, organic waste. Waste separation was designed into each flat and under every kitchen sink there’s a compartmentalised bin, one for recyclables, one for non-recyclables and one for organic waste. Regular communications are made to residents through the One Brighton web portal, display boards and notices. For the organic waste, residents use home compostable liners to help them collect and carry it to the recycling point.

The waste chutes each feed into separate 660l bins. The bags of organic waste are then fed directly into the

on-site Big Hanna T60 in-vessel composting unit along with some sawdust (to help maintain the correct C:N ratio) by the “green” caretaker. After 8-10 weeks mature, pathogen and odour free – despite its location there has never been a single odour complaint – compost with no trace of the home compostable liners is removed from the unit.

Compost quality is essential and having tested different types of liners in the Big Hanna composter, One Brighton found that the only liners which, without any pre-treatment, were completely composted at the end of the composting cycle were made from a certified OK Compost Home (equivalent to AfOR’s home composting standard) grade of Mater-Bi.

This compost is then made freely available for residents to use in the roof top allotments, their balcony planters and will soon be used in the development of the communal gardens. The on-site use of the compost and ease of waste collection are the main reasons why they have a participation rate of about 55%.

The scheme has helped inspire Brighton and Hove Council in the production of the UK’s first planning guidance on Food Growing and Development. The new Planning Advice Note provides guidance on how food growing can be incorporated into proposals for new developments as well as promoting on-site composting. 