

CKS to address WEEE implementation concerns

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The Chairman of CKS Group, Christopher K. Stephens, announced on Monday that the PLUS-quoted company will open a purpose-built WEEE treatment facility in Gloucestershire, UK at the beginning of April 2007.

Supported by an £8 million investment plan and a strong heritage in reuse and corporate resource management, the new facility will offer best practice leadership in the secure recycling of IT and Telecoms equipment.

“We recognise the unique challenges of processing data bearing equipment, and the concerns of business users around identity theft and data protection,” Mr Stephens told reporters at the Environment Agency’s annual Environmental Futures conference.

He said that the new 56,000 ft² facility would add 45,000 tonnes treatment capacity to the UK’s annual capabilities, and that the incoming recycling evidence requirements were a natural extension of the existing audit trail required by responsible data owners.

Stephens noted that the changing cost responsibility for disposal, under the WEEE Directive, does nothing to address the importance and costs of securely destroying confidential information.

“Unless customers are utterly convinced that their own responsibilities have been addressed, they won’t do right by the environment,” he said. “They will oppose the reuse and recycling objectives in preference to non-recoverable and destructive processing. For end-users, more sustainable production and consumption behaviours are a social priority, not a commercial priority.”

Phil Sprason, the Managing Director of the new operation, believes that whilst there is little legal incentive to better practice, there is an ethical obligation on both producers and consumers.

“The recycling targets are different for each of the waste categories, but they simply reinforce a minimum, pan-European expectation,” Sprason said. “DEFRA are rightly concerned that local standards will in fact reduce to this lowest common denominator, when what we need is continuing improvement.”

Bob Straughan has, as the Recycling Operations Director, been tasked with building a premium processing service that exceeds all compliance requirements, reaches beyond the producer compliance schemes and attracts socially responsible customers and local authorities.

“Annex II of the WEEE Directive has been watered down in recent guidance,” Straughan said. “This potentially means we have a massive oversupply of recycling capacity in the UK, which is patently and obviously untrue to even the least critical observer. At CKS, we have significant experience from both the electronics and the waste industry on our team. My objective is to first set the standard, and to then help our competitors lift their own standards.”

Unusually, CKS plans onsite plastics reprocessing capability. Traditionally an area where the UK is extremely deficient and most recyclate needs to be exported to Asia, CKS recognises that new intelligent materials will blur the lines between plastics and electronics. From the outset, they intend to apply their electronics experience to the new challenges in this area.



Approaching its 10th anniversary as an asset recovery specialist, the CKS customer base is formed of major asset management firms such as Computer Sciences Corporation and Getronics. It's their end-customers, in the military, public and financial sector that will shape the future of waste management.

CKS believe that it will be end-customers that change producer behaviour going forward.

Derek Morgan, Head of Strategy, commented... "Until now it has been governments that have needed to force a halt to bad behaviour. While this has been happening, consumer expectations have surged ahead. Householders simply won't accept hazards in their home any longer and corporations no longer accept inefficiency and waste."

"The Environment Agency has a tough enforcement task ahead. Poor practice needs to be weeded out and corporate fly-tipping punished – all on an increasingly limited budget," Morgan said. "However, the responsibility for improvement sits with the customer. Nothing about WEEE changes that simple fact."



CKS: Best Practice Leaders

Front Row:

S. Hoare (Reuse), C. Stephens (Chairman & CEO), S. Stephens (Skills / Education),
H. Houghton-Jones (Performance), P. Sprason (Recycling)

Back Row:

B. Straughan (Operations), C. Green (Second Life Markets), R. Harkess (Corporate Sales),
L. Goosen (Channel Sales), D. Morgan (Strategy), K. Frampton (Quality & Audit)

The "WEEE Directive" programme at Environmental Futures 2006 is sponsored by CKS Group plc.

*Company representatives are available for further discussion at
Stand 28 throughout the duration of this event.*

CKS Group plc, a PLUS-quoted company, is a founder corporate member of the Institute of Information Security Professionals, has refurbishment and recycling facilities that are licensed with the Environment Agency, and has ISO:9001, ISO:14001 and IIP accreditations. CKS specialises in secure asset recovery associated with changes in people, technology or business and has consultants with significant experience in professional risk and compliance management.