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Middletons develop unique RDF Plastic Strapping Solution to Retrofit Biffa's balers

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In a pilot scheme at Biffa's Dewsbury recycling plant in Yorkshire, Middleton Engineering, the UK's leading baler and recycling equipment engineers, has developed a practical, cost effective plastic strapping solution for baled RDF waste, which is retrofitted to the company's existing fleet of twin ram balers.

Until recently, the conventional method for tying baled refuse derived fuel (RDF) waste has been to use steel wire with twin ram balers. Plastic strapping can be 40% cheaper, and it is combustible, which makes it perfect for Energy for Waste applications. It is also more environmentally friendly, as it uses recycled PET (Polyester).

For Biffa, twin ram balers are used to give greater compaction and so reduce transportation costs and now, with plastic strapping, they can avoid the £5 per tonne premium that Energy for Waste plants charge for processing bales tied with steel wire. Together, these will equate to significant savings for Biffa's Dewsbury plant, which processes 60-70 thousand tonnes of waste per year, enough to power 10,000 homes.

To investigate the viability of this pilot, Biffa turned to Middletons, who have been providing balers and recycling equipment to Biffa in Bradford, Cardiff, Grimsby, Hull, the Isle of Wight and Dewsbury for over 15 years.

After extensive research, Middletons designed and built a solution that will integrate the PET strapping system with any twin ram baler. At the same time, they overcame the tendency of RDF material to expand when it exits the baler and, after further modifications and the addition of a specially engineered 'spout' to hold the material in place while strapping is completed, the pilot is now successfully running at Biffa's Dewsbury plant.

Anthony Holley, Biffa's Regional General Manager Yorkshire says: "Biffa is committed to enabling its customers to recycle as much waste as possible, helping to guide them toward zero waste to landfill. We are delighted to work with Middleton Engineering on this exciting pilot to process RDF more economically and efficiently. Middleton's engineering skill and prowess ensures that this strapping system can be fitted onto any of our twin ram balers and makes retrofitting a far more cost effective solution."

Middleton Engineering's Technical Director Mark Smith added: "Now we know how best to retrofit a plastic strapping system onto any make and model of baler we can

help the hundreds of organisations out there who currently use twin ram balers to reduce transportation costs. With this cost-effective retrofit option, organisations no longer need to replace these balers, but just add our plastic strapping solution. This could potentially lead to much more RDF being produced and energy recovered and a greater reduction in landfill.