

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – COMMUNITIES AND PLACE
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Meeting date: Thursday 5th September 2019

From: Angela Jones – Acting Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure
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WASTE AND THIRD SECTOR TASK AND FINISH RECOMMENDATIONS – SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board commissioned a Task and Finish group to focus on the role of the 3rd sector in waste reduction. The purpose of this report is to provide a six monthly update on the recommendations from the Reuse and the 3rd Sector findings.

2.0 Issues for Scrutiny

2.1 Scrutiny are being invited to address the progress made on the recommendations of the Waste and 3rd Sector Task and Finish findings.

3.0 Background

3.1 A key element of the commissioning of the Task and Finish Group was due to the need to effectively collaborate with partners to ensure a countywide approach to the waste hierarchy that maximises the benefits of resources to Cumbrian households before they enter the waste stream.

The overall findings identified 4 main areas:

- Building financial resilience within the sector
- Developing the capacity of third sector reuse
- Further engagement with members around third sector
- Linking waste reuse to the Council's wider approach

4.0 Progress on the Recommendations

4.1 The Task and Finish Group made six recommendations which are responded to below.

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
1.	Explore the approach towards reuse at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) or periphery within contractual obligations and/or, capacity implications	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>There are contractual obligations impacting on this recommendation, with the current Renewi 25 year PPP contract until 2034. However, further options will be explored with the possibility of undertaking a pilot scheme at one of the HWRCs, which will need to be discussed with Renewi. In the meantime third sector organisations will be encouraged to reuse as much waste as is possible before it becomes “contractual waste” and subjected to the complex contractual obligations.</p> <p>The first stage will be a benchmarking review of other Local Authorities who have implemented this type of approach, whilst being bound by a long-term contract.</p>	

Progress Made

A number of other Local Authorities have been identified as part of the benchmarking exercise to have some form of reuse facility despite being bound by a long-term waste disposal contract – examples include Warwick, Staffordshire. Birmingham and South West Devon both have a long-term waste contract (contractor) where they have jointly worked together to provide these facilities. Edinburgh has an award winning reuse shop. Some large waste contractors (such as FCC) are renowned for their successful running of HWRC shops. Conversations have been undertaken with a number of local authorities to establish how they overcame any contractual issues, it appears to be a willingness to do “the right thing” on the part of the contractor, and not putting purely commercial/contractual barriers in the way.

Encouraging Reuse through the Cumbria County Council (CCC) Permit Line before waste is disposed of at the HWRCs. The Permit Line has recently been brought in-house to CCC (previously under the management of Cumbria Waste Group). This has allowed greater flexibility in ensuring that waste is not automatically disposed of through the HWRCs where it can be reused, one of the key reasons for bringing it in-house. For example, if a resident calls with a house clearance (due to bereavement) and are having difficulties with the amount of waste to move, the permit scheme will discuss and refer residents to websites such as Freecycle and Freegle. Taking the waste to charity shops would also be a recommendation before disposal. Where the staff are aware of a permit being requested for items such as furniture the staff will enquire and suggest the above.

Encouragement of increased engagement with 3rd sector reuse organisations (see recommendation Nos. 4 and 5 for an update on the Reuse Forum and Reuse Mapping initiatives).

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
2.	The Council should reintroduce the Waste Prevention Fund on the same level	<p>Recommendation not accepted.</p> <p>The removal of the Waste Prevention Fund was agreed through the Strategic Planning/Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2018/19, the reinstatement of the fund cannot be undertaken</p>	Discussed at length at Cabinet, not achievable

	that it was previously available	without finding an alternative budget saving to replace it. Such alternatives will be considered, however, at this point budget savings (other than those already identified for the service) cannot be identified.	in current budget.
Progress Made			
N/A			

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
3.	To consider the role of the Waste Prevention Team in taking a more proactive co-ordination role bringing together and strengthening the reuse activity across the voluntary sector and waste partners across the county	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>This function is a core part of the Waste Prevention Team’s remit and has been for a number of years. It is envisaged that the Waste Prevention Team will be effectively working with partners, the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership (and wider District Councils) and the waste sector, which would assist the communication of existing and future initiatives to the wider public. The Team is currently part of a reshaping programme and the effective provision of proactive engagement across the third sector reuse organisations offering, information, improving communication and co-ordinating projects and programmes of work, will be fully considered as part of this.</p> <p>The findings and recommendations of this Task and Finish Group will be shared with the leaders across the county (via the Leaders Group), as requested by the Group, to improve understanding around this area of work, and encourage buy-in and support to the general recommendations.</p>	Review of teams ongoing

Progress Made			
<p>The Waste Prevention Team are working with Districts via the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership (CSWP). Waste Prevention update reports are shared with the Districts at the meetings eg on community reuse events facilitated/attended by the Waste Prevention Team, home composting schemes and campaigns etc. Where the Districts have ideas for further waste prevention work these are shared with a view to joint working.</p> <p>Engagement with Local Committees – a programme of attendance over the next few months is scheduled. The Waste Operational Manager along with the Waste Prevention Team in conjunction with the Area Managers will be delivering a presentation on improving and communicating reuse – promoting engagement with Elected Members and then wider sharing of activities being undertaken.</p> <p>Resourceful Communities Grant – publicising via the Local Committees encouraging local communities to apply for a grant to utilise funding on initiatives such as repair cafes, swishing events. Example of Sustainable Carlisle who have applied and been successful in receiving funding for a number of events in 2019 – free stalls at markets receiving and offering household items to members of the Carlisle community, repair zones, clothes swapping etc. This will form part of the presentation to Local Committees to encourage more communities to apply – funding is still available and will be promoted again through</p>			

social media. Upon successful completion of a project, the community group will be officially endorsed as a Resourceful Community.

For more information about starting a project, please contact Katharine Smith, Waste Prevention Officer – katharine.banks@cumbria.gov.uk/07831 205382.

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
4.	Local Committees take a more proactive area-based approach towards the promotion of waste reuse benefits and opportunities in their locality	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>The importance of the role of local committees in developing an area-focused approach towards waste reuse is fully endorsed and encouraged as currently not all third sector waste projects are well connected to Local Committees.</p> <p>The Waste Prevention Team have strong relationships with Area Teams and Local Committees. The team will continue to promote these relationships and work with the wider area teams through an area planning approach. The Waste Prevention team will support local teams to list and map third sector organisations to better understand the provision of waste reuse in each area.</p> <p>Local Committees will be encouraged to consider this matter as an agenda item for a future meeting.</p>	

Progress Made

A project has commenced on producing a third sector organisations map for Cumbria. Many such councils work closely with Third Sector reuse organisations and charity shops to encourage reuse in their areas. One of the key tools provided by councils is a Reuse Map of third sector organisations and charity shops. A good example of this is that provided by City of Edinburgh Council, see link <https://changeworks.proggable.com/>

Project Progress to date

- Researched Third Sector organisations listing contact details and locations of charity shops and reuse organisations throughout Cumbria. This will be the list used for contacting organisations.
- Researched existing Reuse Maps. Web based research of existing reuse maps, identified Edinburgh as a proposed model - see link above
- Liaised with CCC Digital Team re: feasibility of creating reuse map. This has been agreed in principal, now working through the detail
- Drafted questionnaire for organisations, currently being reviewed/approved
- Drafted introductory letter/email, currently being reviewed/approved

See progress under Recommendation 3 on the programme of attendance at Local Committees. The third sector organisation map will be discussed at these meetings.

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
5.	The Council should work in	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>The recommendation of a Reuse Forum is</p>	

	<p>partnership with Cumbria Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) and district councils to encourage the establishment of a reuse forum for third sector organisations in Cumbria.</p>	<p>welcomed and would act as a 'golden thread' and encourage the sharing of skills, training and pooling of volunteers amongst third sector organisations, align services across the county for reuse and support sector wide funding bids.</p> <p>The Forum can be facilitated by Cumbria County Council initially but it is anticipated that one of the 3rd sector organisations would take the lead on this on an ongoing basis. The Forum would establish itself better with like-minded third sector organisations working together and target the reduction of specific waste streams, such as bulky waste – with the support and encouragement of the Council.</p>	
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Progress Made

This is a great opportunity to work together to help raise awareness of the organisations available to the public for them to donate/pass on their unwanted items. This could lead to increased footfall through charity shops, donations and perhaps generate more volunteers for the organisations.

In tandem with the Reuse Map (see Recommendation 4. above) the Waste Prevention Team are working with Third sector organisations to establish a Reuse Forum. A similar forum had been previously established in 2007/8 managed by Cumbria Community Recycling Network. This involved the large 3rd Sector organisations attending a face to face Forum. At the time Cumbria County Council provided administrative support but the forum ended because of various reasons, including poor attendance from Third Sector and cessation of funding/support.

The previous forum had a constitution outlining aims, objectives & duties and these will be proposed as a basis for the new Forum. The previous forum was formally set up with paid membership and regular face to face meetings. The proposed Forum will be voluntary, more informal and open to anyone from reuse organisations, with consideration of offering this on a digital platform, for ease of access.

The initial aim of this project has been to produce a questionnaire to establish the appetite for a forum and what type of format would be preferable to enable Third Sector organisations to engage, and for the forum to succeed and become self-sustainable. This initial consultation with the third sector organisations is key to the Forum's success.

Project progress to date

- Researched Third Sector organisations listing contact details and locations of charity shops & reuse organisations throughout Cumbria. This will be the list used for contacting organisations.
- Drafted questionnaire for organisations, currently being reviewed/approved
- Drafted introductory letter/email, currently being reviewed/approved
- Lessons learnt from previous Forum – lack of attendance due to geography of Cumbria resulting in lack of uptake from organisations. Not well attended by smaller Third Sector organisations. When CCC support and funding ended, the Forum folded.

No.	Recommendation	Original Executive Director Response	Cabinet Member
6.	The Council will	Recommendation agreed in part – the County	

	<p>develop an internal engagement programme to explore opportunities to maximise the benefits of waste reuse across its strategies and plans</p>	<p>wide strategies are reliant on partnership working to achieve.</p> <p>Internally - recycling campaigns have been implemented internally supporting corporate strategies such as improving recycling facilities, the removal of single use unnecessary plastics and communication messages (signing up to the 'Plastic Pledge').</p> <p>Within the Council there is recognition of the benefits of waste reuse in a wide range of strategies and programme such as health and wellbeing and providing pathways to employment.</p> <p>On a wider County basis, it is noted that there is a need to build the evidence base that supports a refreshed Cumbria Compact agreement and the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy.</p>	
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Progress Made

An internal (CCC) Waste Prevention group was introduced to look at waste reduction and reuse across the Council estate, specifically the reduction of Single Use Plastic (SUP). This included initiatives such as the largest 8 council offices surveyed for SUP usage as a first phase, single use plastic cups and plastic stirrers removed from all offices, awareness messages via communications to staff on SUP, reduction, and general waste reduction and a statement made to Full Council (5th September 2018) by the Cabinet Member for Environment re CCC's stance on Waste Prevention in the workplace and our intention to review our appropriate use of Single Use Plastics.

Other internal strategies include a commitment to the Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy Action Plan – including waste prevention and love food hate waste campaigns.

Externally, the Council has engaged with local initiatives. This has included:

- Funding towards Plastic Clever Cumbria campaign through successful partnership working with Penrith Action for Community Transition, (PACT), supported by sustainability groups across the county.
- Plastic Clever Cumbria Pledges hosted by PACT
- Pledges publicised by CCC Waste Prevention team through social media and roadshows in main libraries and council offices
- Green Spring Clean roadshows in libraries encouraging people to use homemade /natural cleaning products so reducing need to buy chemical cleaners in plastic bottles/packaging.
- Supporting Plastic Clever Penrith through publicity – initiative by Penrith Town Council.
- Supporting Plastic Clever Copeland initiative through CCC Area Support team – Copeland

Partnerships (externally) – there is a still a desire from CCC to commission (and jointly fund) a Partnership Development Officer along with the other 6 District Councils. On 29th July 2019 5 of the 6 Districts signed up to the joint funding at the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership so the role will be progressed now (Allerdale are still contemplating the decision). This role is pivotal to the progress to be made on the production of the Cumbria Joint Municipal Waste Strategy, identifying and implementing the impacts and opportunities

of the National Waste and Resources Strategy, as well as the recommendations made as part of the WRAP Consistency Report for Cumbria. These are key pieces of work that would shape waste management in Cumbria, and influence waste prevention activities going forward.

At the 29th July CSWP a presentation was made by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) and Paldeep Bhatti (Kent Resource Partnership Manager - KRP) – both very informative and demonstrating to the Board Members the importance of partnership working and how this can be achieved, the challenges and highlighting whether this could be successful for Cumbria. This has had a positive impact. Further liaison with Paldeep will continue as the Partnership Development Officer role progresses, including review of some of KRPs success reuse projects.

Chloe Tringham – Waste Operational Manager

21st August 2019

Appendices - No appendices

Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions:

Cabinet – 7th February 2019

Background Papers

- Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board report (Cumbria County Council Waste Task and Finish Group – Reuse and the 3rd Sector - October 2018)
- Response of the Acting Executive Director to the Scrutiny Review - Waste and Third Sector Task and Finish Group – Cabinet 7th February 2019

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