

APPENDIX 1



Communities and Place

**Cumbria County
Council Waste Task
and Finish Group –
Reuse and the 3rd
Sector**

October 2018

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Introduction

On 27 November 2017, Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board commissioned a Task and Finish Group to focus on the role of the third sector in waste reduction. A key element of the commission 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.

There was agreement for the Task and Finish Group to focus on the following aims and objectives:

- To better understand the local composition of waste initiatives to prioritise targeted reduction of specific waste streams;
- To understand the scale, nature and history of community and voluntary activity in Cumbria in respect of reuse;
- To understand where it might be appropriate to build capacity within the sector and explore mechanisms for doing so;
- To provide information and suggestions that could increase the impact on reuse activity in Cumbria. To suggest mechanism for further engagement with local members around third sector and community based reuse and maximising use of local resources.

The Membership of the Task Group was:

- Cllr Neil Hughes (Chair)
- Cllr Val Tarbitt (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr Lawrence Fisher
- Cllr Trevor Allison
- Cllr Kevin Hamilton
- Cllr Hillary Carrick
- Cllr Carni McCarron-Holmes
- Cllr Patricia Bell (Left Task and Finish Group to take position on Cabinet)

Officer support was provided by:

- Tim Gale, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Project Officer
- Hani Cox, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
- Chloe Tringham, Waste Operational Manager
- Nick Wright, Area Manager (Eden)

The following witnesses gave presentations:

- Sarah Boyle, Impact Furniture Services
- Chris Cant, FREEGLE
- Hazel Graham, Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Paul Florentine, South Lakeland District Council
- Graham Millar, Barrow Domestic Appliances
- Ruth Ogden, Tools for Self-Reliance
- Peter Bradbury and Chris Pantechis, Right2Work

The Task Group held two sessions in October 2018; the first on 4 October in Cumbria House, Carlisle and the second on 12 October in County Hall, Kendal. Cllr Patricia Bell chaired these sessions. The purpose of these two sessions was to:

- Further understand the third sector organisations and their involvement in waste minimisation projects across the county;
- Examine the current problems faced by third sector organisations which could be addressed through better dialogue with Cumbria County Council;
- Explore third sector suggestions for overcoming key challenges.

The Members of the Task Group were impressed with the knowledge and expertise of the witnesses, and the Chair of the Task Group would like to thank everyone who supported and gave evidence to this review.

Overview of Findings

Members of the Task Group reflected on the witnesses' statements, and have incorporated the following themed findings into the overall outcomes arising from the two sessions.

Building financial resilience within the sector

- Early engagement of opportunities presented to the sector on Cumbrian waste strategic priorities – accepting the challenges presented by a two tier waste authority.
- Work closely with the Community Foundation and CVS to ensure that funding available is coordinated and communicated with relevant third sector organisations.
- Potential for longer-term funding
- While not within the scope of this Task and Finish Study, recognising the cost of recycling schemes for schools and small businesses.
- Potential for third sector organisations to utilise the apprenticeship programme to recruit staff, especially within the context of changes to the scheme.

Developing the capacity of third sector reuse

- Potential for third sector organisations to share skills, training and pool volunteers, facilitated through a reuse forum. This would enable a targeted reduction of the waste streams, and the ability to maximise local resources.
- Considering information and additional signage provided at HWRCs and promotion on social media could encourage a circular economy approach.
- Assess the appetite for a Communications function within the Waste Prevention Team, to support communications, share information and coordinate links.
- Developing more targeted and coordinated communication and engagement strategies for third sector organisations, especially for those without access to the internet.
- More coordinated approach to any reuse element to hardship support following emergency events, such as flooding.
- Working closely with district councils through the Strategic Waste Partnership to ensure that all sectors are made aware of the approach and plans for any service/contractual amendments.

Further engagement with members around third sector

- Local Committees should adopt an Asset-Based Community Development role to focus on waste reuse in their areas, supporting third sector organisations and local priorities
- Ensuring that the Task and Finish evidence base is built into refreshed strategies, such as the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy and the Compact agreement.
- Close partnership working with CVS to ensure that existing schemes, such as *Men in Sheds*, fully embrace waste reuse in their activities.

Linking waste reuse to the Council's wider approach

- Exploring discussions surrounding reuse shops at HWRCs or periphery within contractual obligations and capacity implications.
- Alignment of the Council's services to waste reuse. Ensuring the appropriate links to the Council's role beyond waste are made and how to support vulnerable and disadvantaged residents in the community through this, such as linking with its approach towards those with day services and care leavers for instance.
- Review how the Council works with schools to connect existing waste reuse activity, and explore utilising the Youth Parliament Scheme and School Councils as techniques to engage young people.
- Ensure that waste reduction is part of council's core narrative and service communications

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Explore the approach towards reuse at HWRCs or periphery within contractual obligations and/or, capacity implications.

Rationale: Members recognised contractual obligations, however the ability to negotiate and reflect on the long-term situation was emphasised. The aim would be for third sector organisations to reuse as much waste as is possible before it becomes “contractual waste” and subjected to contractual obligations.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure.

Recommendation 2

The Council should reintroduce the Waste Prevention Fund on the same level that it was previously available.

Rationale: Members recognised the role that Local Committees have in developing the capacity of third sector organisations in their area. However, there was emphasis on the need for financial support for these organisations to kick-start initiatives on a need basis. Members supported the idea of Local Committees having the Fund of £8300 per annum reinstated to facilitate this, whilst also acknowledging the Council’s financial constraints.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in discussion with the Extended Leadership Team and Area Managers.

Recommendation 3

To consider the role of the Waste Prevention Team in taking a more proactive co-ordination role in bringing together and strengthening the reuse activity across the voluntary sector and waste partners across the county.

Rationale: Members were supportive of the Waste Prevention Team providing more proactive engagement across the third sector reuse organisations offering, information, improving communication and co-ordinating projects and programmes of work. Members commented that more effective working with partners, such as District Councils and the waste sector, would assist the communication of existing and future initiatives to the wider public.

Members also noted that it was important to communicate the findings of this Task and Finish Group with leaders across the county to improve understanding around this area of work, and achieve buy-in and support to the general recommendations. It was agreed to share this report (once approved by Cabinet) and the results of the Waste Prevention Team’s mapping exercise with the Cumbria Leadership Board, Cumbria Chief Executives Group and District Councils.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in discussion with the Directorate and Executive Director Corporate, Customer and Community Services.

Recommendation 4

Local Committees take a more proactive area-based approach towards the promotion of waste reuse benefits and opportunities in their locality.

Rationale: Members emphasised the role of local committees in developing an area-focused approach towards waste reuse as currently not all third sector waste projects are well connected to Local Committees. There was support for ensuring it is part of their core business to promote this work. There was emphasis on linking in with Ways to Welfare or the Credit Union to ensure those that need access to re-conditioned good such as furniture are supported and made aware of what's available. As part of taking this work forward, Members agreed that it would be helpful to understand the level of demand for reused items in each area through Local Committees. The Waste Prevention service will list and map third sector organisations to better understand provision of waste reuse in each area. Members highlighted the need to keep this document under review so that the Council monitors the development of third sector groups in the county.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in discussion with the Extended Leadership Team and Area Managers.

Recommendation 5

The Council should work in 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.

Rationale: Members and witnesses both commented that a reuse forum would act as a 'golden thread' and facilitate 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. It would avoid duplication, support third sector organisations to work together and target the reduction of specific waste streams, such as bulky waste. A reuse forum may also enable greater use of the apprenticeship programme, in the context of recent changes to the passing down of the levy to smaller organisations.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in discussion with Executive Director Corporate, Customer and Community Services.

Recommendation 6

The Council should develop an internal engagement programme to explore opportunities to maximise the benefits of waste re-use across its strategies and plans.

Rationale: Members commented on the importance of waste reuse and the social benefits which can be attributed to this. It was recognised that the council has an integral role in ensuring its strategies and programmes recognise the benefits of waste reuse such as improving health and wellbeing and providing pathways to employment.

There are some key opportunities that Members would like to develop and explore such as in its approach towards day services and ensuring care leavers packages include information about 3rd sector waste reuse opportunities. This could also involve close multi-generational partnership working with CVS and Community Development Centres to ensure that existing schemes, such as Men in Sheds, Youth Parliament, Rubbish Rebels, School

Councils and Inspira, are expanded and developed in close liaison with third sector organisations.

Members emphasised the need to build the evidence base that supports the refreshed Cumbria Compact agreement and the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy.

To be actioned: Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure to work with waste team and engage with directorates.

Summary of Key Points and Findings

Building financial resilience within the sector

- Need for coordinated funding opportunities;
- Examining the Council's funding offer;
- Potential for third sector organisations to utilise the apprenticeship programme, especially within the context of changes to the scheme

Developing the capacity of third sector reuse

- Explore formation of a reuse forum to align strategic direction and services across the county;
- Promotion of sector at HWRCs and on social media;
- Change role of the Waste Prevention Team to better support local delivery

Further engagement with members around third sector

- Local Committees to support third sector organisations through schemes and reintroduction of Waste Prevention Fund;
- Exploring discussions surrounding reuse shops at HWRCs or Transfer Stations within contractual obligation;
- Building evidence base into the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy and the Compact Agreement

Linking waste reuse to the Council's wider approach

- Embed the cross-cutting social benefits of waste reuse within the county through its strategies;
- Align Council services with reuse;
- Cross generational approach - reviewing the Council's work with schools, Inspira as well as initiatives such as *Men in Sheds* to connect existing waste reuse activity

Recommendations

- Increase partnership activity and establishment of a reuse forum in Cumbria
- Carry out an internal engagement programme to embed social benefits of waste reuse in new policy and strategies
- Explore the reintroduction of the Waste Prevention Fund
- Local Committees to explore an area-based approach towards reuse in their area
- Explore reuse options at HWRCs or Transfer Stations within contractual obligations
- Waste Prevention Team to take a more proactive co-ordination role bringing together and strengthening reuse activity across the county

Outcomes

- Additional social value opportunities;
- A truly local approach towards waste reuse in Cumbria, empowering Local Committees to embed waste reuse projects in their core business;
- A more sustainable Cumbria with less waste being sent to landfill;
- Coordinated strategic direction and service delivery across the county

Background and Context

Policy background

National Policy

Waste Management functions for the UK were first defined in detail by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990), which requires district councils to provide a domestic waste collection service to households, while county councils must handle the management of that waste.

In recent years waste regulation has been strongly influenced by the European Union. The most recent example is the EU Circular Economy Package which sets out new recycling targets in five year stages from 2025 and separate collection requirements of bio-waste materials, textiles and small waste electrical equipment.

The management of waste in the UK has been continually evolving. The UK Government has in recent years allowed the devolved areas of the UK to implement EU Legislation using their own policies in the interpretation and setting of targets for diversion and recycling, with a 50% target set by 2020 for England.

The National Waste Strategy for England 2007 saw an increased emphasis on waste reduction and reuse, and highlighted waste prevention measures as a way of reducing global greenhouse emissions. The waste industry and local authorities have been frustrated with the lack of direction in waste management for England shown by the UK Government in recent years. However, in early 2018 the UK Government published their 25 Year plan; setting out goals and actions to improve the environment. The 25 Year Environment Plan includes targets such as:

- To achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by 2042.
- Reforming the Producer Responsibility (including packaging waste regulations)
- Reducing the demand for single-use plastics
- Banning problematic materials where alternatives exist
- Improve recycling labelling system on packaging
- Improve recycling by setting a consistent set of materials for recycling

Clarity on the Government's position is expected in a Resources and Waste Strategy. This Resource & Waste Strategy is expected in the autumn of 2018 and is also likely to reflect the requirements of the EU Circular Economy Package, such as a 65% recycling rate by 2035, separate 'bio-waste' collection, separate collections of textiles and small hazardous waste by 2023.

Local Policy

The Council's Mineral and Waste Local Plan 2015-2030 sets out the commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle waste as a first resort. This is in addition to the County Council and all six District Councils establishing the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership which is delivering the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for the period 2008-2020. This updated waste collection and recycling services and enabled the construction of the necessary infrastructure to treat the county's collected waste.

Cumbria County Council, through its contract with Renewi, currently has responsibility for or sub-contracts control of the following key facilities:

- 14 Household Waste Recycling Centres
- 2 Mechanical Biological Treatment Plants
- 3 Transfer Stations

Waste in Cumbria

Over the past decade, through a combination of service development, waste prevention initiatives and increased awareness, the overall amount of waste generated in Cumbria has been steadily decreasing. Nationally, in more recent years waste arisings have begun to increase. In Cumbria, due to local environmental factors, such as major flood events, has the potential to further increase waste arisings as it has done in the past.

There are the following key challenges in relation to waste reuse, reduce and recycling which have been considered as part of the Task and Finish Group:

- Plastics
- Food Waste
- Bulky Waste
- Paint Waste
- Textiles
- Fly-tipping/littering

A preventative approach towards waste is crucial for the Council as it is the most economically and environmentally sustainable solution for dealing with waste. As part of the aim to reduce waste, the service invests significant effort into partnership working and collaboration with the Strategic Waste Partnership on strategic waste issues.

Cumbria County Council has a deep history of engaging with third sector groups and community-based projects in relation to reusing and reducing waste. Established

relationships include Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS), Freegle and the Zero Waste Strategy. One example is the *Rubbish Rebels* initiative, which the Council commissions CAfS to educate primary schoolchildren about waste reduction and recycling.

Cumbria County Council previously paid third sector groups reuse credits to incentivise reuse activity. However, Cabinet and Council in February 2015 approved the removal of these payments, replacing them with the Waste Prevention Fund in which each Local Committee has an allocated sum of £8,300 per annum. The fund supports projects that diverts waste from Cumbrian waste treatment facilities, and also helps to achieve the Council's priorities and outcomes. In 2017, the Council withdrew the Waste Prevention Fund as part of the wider review of medium term financial planning.

Summary of discussion among the group prior to hearing from witnesses

A number of key points were raised in the pre-meeting, held on 13 August:

- Agreement to hold two sessions, one in both Carlisle and Kendal, to ensure a whole-county approach to the issue;
- Identification of third sector organisations/witnesses;
- Emphasis on the social value of third sector waste re-use in the county;
- Assurance of a District Council perspective on waste re-use and the role of the Strategic Waste Partnership

Summary of Witness Statements

- Emphasis on financial certainty and consistency, which includes the ability to access longer-term funding options and coordinate the funding available.
- Recognition of the social role that waste reuse can have, such as reduced loneliness, welfare savings, and increased employability and social skills for vulnerable people.
- The Council, along with CVS, has a role in supporting, publicising and coordinating the activities of third sector waste reuse organisations.
- Utilise existing waste reuse schemes and services to work increasingly more with schools to engage young people and vulnerable people in waste reuse, reduce and recycling.
- Ability to refocus the Council's position for the long term to explore reuse shops at Household Recycling Waste Centres (HWRCs).

Member discussion following witness statements

Member reflections

- The role of Local Committees in taking an area-based approach to waste reuse is important in implementing the objectives.
- The Council has a role in developing effective communication, training and pooling of volunteers in partnership with third sector organisations.
- Making appropriate links with the Council's support for vulnerable people, schools and care leavers to waste reuse.

- Engaging children and young people is important in ensuring a cultural shift towards the circular economy.
- Working closely with district councils to ensure that the county's bulky waste contracts are delivering wider social capital.
- Awareness of contractual obligations in approaching several issues, such as reuse shops at HWRCs.

Conclusions

The Waste Task and Finish Group welcomed the opportunity to engage with third sector organisations across the county. Two witness sessions were conducted each focusing on environmental, social and economic considerations of waste reuse. The sessions provided detailed information around which the recommendations in this report were formed.

The main findings are that the Council should further engage with the third sector and other waste partners to develop their capacity and ensure financial resilience. Members agreed that the County Council would be an important enabler in this through improved communication and better linkages between the waste agenda and wider council policy.

Appendix 1

Witness 1: Sarah Boyle – Impact

Background

Impact Furniture Services (IFS) was first established in 1994 as a social enterprise within the wider Impact Housing Association. It has three stores within Cumbria, in Barrow, Workington and Carlisle. As part of its collection and delivery services across the whole of Cumbria, it has a void clearance arrangement with Impact.

IFS also provide employment skills and work experience to its volunteers within the Re-Vamp team, its stores and with the Logistics team. Through its partnership work with Affinity Credit Union, it also provides access to furniture for those in severe hardship or who are fleeing domestic violence. They currently operate the bulky waste contract in Barrow.

Increased demand

Sarah commented that the increased demand for low cost furniture means that IFS's customer base now has a broader demographic than any time previously. This has therefore led to substantially more people approaching IFS for assistance. Sarah said that it was therefore important that IFS's position is robustly assessed to ensure that they can provide assistance to those who need it most.

Financial viability

Prior to their removal, IFS commented that the reuse credits were an important part of ensuring the organisation's financial viability. Funding and investment was especially important to assist with set up costs for training and recycling activities.

Sarah emphasised that the relationship that the Council has with the third sector is increasingly important due to the increased competition faced with national charities that may be able to access reduced or negotiated rents.

Members emphasised the need for a more joined-up and coordinated approach towards developing the capacity of third sector groups to help manage emergency events, learning the lessons from previous flooding events. Increased coordination would also reduce duplication.

Expanding capacity in future

IFS are currently exploring opportunities to develop the existing social enterprise, which will include working more closely with the businesses and the wider community to educate them on the actions they can take in relation to littering and reasonable enforcement.

In addition to the bulky waste service provided in Barrow, IFS will participate in additional Recycling Roadshows such as 'Give and Take Days', whereby residents can donate household items and choose to take items already deposited. The organisation will also look at developing its bulky waste activity across the county.

In order to increasingly address textiles and electrical waste, IFS are actively promoting the use of textiles and WEEE banks to investigate the opportunities to bring these services to residents. There is also the potential for IFS to increase the range of materials collected through the doorstep collections.

Social Value

Sarah highlighted that IFS currently have 43 volunteers with 12 of these securing work. Financially, this has saved £168,000 in terms of Jobseekers Allowance Payments; however this also has a social benefit, such as through employability and social skills. Members commented that there is the potential for third sector organisations to use the apprenticeship programme as well as work increasingly more with Jobcentre Plus to ensure a higher volume and impact.

The organisation has also contributed to 1,054 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill in 2017, which they assess has a total cost benefit of £75,888.

Witness 2: Chris Cant – FREEGLE

Background

Freegle are a predominantly online organisation which facilitates a free internet-based service where people can directly give away and ask for items which would otherwise be disposed. There are over 400 Freegle groups in the UK, with the six groups in Cumbria broadly reflecting the districts. Freegle, nationally, primarily operates from donations, and had an income of around £40,000 last year.

Social Value

The organisation currently has 4 volunteers, including those with learning disabilities and complex needs. Through the repair cafes, in which the public take otherwise damaged goods to Freegle volunteers to repair, this trains volunteers as well as the public to develop DIY skills in addition to greater social skills. However, due to their limited capacity, volunteers are not always available.

It was report that Freegle also builds a sense of community and assists those who are struggling financially or in furniture poverty. Members said that the *Ways to Welfare* programme could be connected with Freegle to link advice to refurbished white goods and furniture. The organisation has a need for additional day-to-day help for online users and at events. Members emphasised that Local Committees could take an area-based approach in respect to the focus on waste reuse, utilising its links with Citizens Advice and the Credit Union.

Chris commented that the Council has a role in publicising Freegle further to those who may be in need, such as the older adults and those on benefits. Members emphasised that the Council has a role in communicating its activity to a wider audience, such as placing signs at its Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) to educate the public on waste reduction. There is also a role in promoting Freegle to reduce fly-tipping. Members said that the Council intends to further develop the relationship with the third sector role in waste reuse more generally to wider Council strategies.

Expanding capacity

The Council has funded two of the local Freegle groups in Cumbria, in addition to support from the Council's Waste Prevention Team. They also receive funding from the Penrith Action for Community Transition (PACT) Refill Water Bottle project, which engages local communities and businesses to increase the levels of those refilling. The groups also benefit from the Big Lottery Fund which has helped Freegle and PACT run a Communities Living Sustainably project. The organisation is therefore benefitting from financial support.

In order to develop the number of items on its website, members commented that there may be a role in facilitating greater links with other organisations, such as IFS, which could share unwanted items.

Due to the online nature of the service, Members raised the possibility of engaging with the section of the population who do not access the internet. Chris said that it has previously participated in care boot sales, which have proved successful.

Witness 3 – Hazel Graham – CAfS

Background

Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) was founded in 1998 as Eden Local Agenda 21, and is a charity which works with individuals, businesses and communities to help them to become more sustainable. CAfS aims to drive a shift to a Zero Carbon Cumbria, and manages and delivers a wide range of low carbon projects across the county.

Social Value

Hazel said that CAfS' repair cafés, run by the organisation to fix broken items, develops employability skills, as well as facilitating greater socialisation and cross-generational engagement which in turn help to combat loneliness. These cafes also help to educate others in respect of sustainability and lifestyle opportunities, and build capacity in communities to bring back lost skills and resilience.

CAfS' other activities also help to strengthen relationships between parents and children when messages are communicated with school children and then back into the household, such as the *Rubbish Rebels* initiative. Members said that this was a positive project, and would encourage an extension of such. CAfS also hosts swishing events, such as clothes swapping or low cost sales, which enables communities to purchase affordable clothing.

Hazel said that council could help deliver greater social benefit by identifying the groups who would most benefit from services, so that CAfS can target services through all channels. As more long-term funding is an important component to deliver additional events and resources, members commented that it could explore greater awareness and support in respect of funding available.

Financial Viability

Hazel emphasised the importance of funding certainty and consistency in enabling sustainability for third sector organisations, as they rely heavily on grants. A component of realising this outcome would be the coordination of funding pots, as well as greater awareness of the increasing costs to third sector organisations as a whole.

The removal of reuse credits impacted on the ability of organisations to fund and support small community scale projects, and Hazel emphasised the possibility of the Council funding being accessed on a more regular basis.

Partnership Working

CAfS currently work with a network of sustainability groups across the county. They have previously funded Freegle to develop a national waste reduction app, as well as facilitating the county-wide sustainability network meeting which led to the initiation of Plastic Free Cumbria and refill schemes.

Hazel commented that the Council, as part of the commissioning and funding of the *Rubbish Rebels*, was helpful in facilitating contacts in targeted schools. CAfS also work with the Community Foundation, who communicates information of available funding, and accesses funding from the Lottery Fund and the University of Cumbria among others.

Expanding Capacity

In order for CAfS to expand further, Hazel said that it would be necessary to reduce barriers to accessing waste in the County. In addition to funding, ensuring schools focus on their role in the materials they use, contractual issues surrounding reuse shops at HWRCs and allowing smaller businesses deal with waste at HWRCs were cited as key local challenges.

Nationally, the rise in electronic goods, increases in packaging at all supermarkets and retail outlets, and the availability of cheap goods which are not intended to be reused or repaired were all cited as challenges.

Hazel confirmed that the recruitment of volunteers is not difficult as they experience high demand, however the effective management and support of volunteers is time-consuming, and would require a volunteer coordinator however there is currently no mechanism to fund such a post. Members said that a reuse forum would establish a 'golden thread' to better integrate waste reuse activity, including the pooling and training of volunteers.

Witness 4 – Paul Florentine – South Lakeland District Council (SLDC)

Background

As the Officer Chair of the Strategic Waste Partnership, Paul spoke to the Scrutiny Task Group in relation to SLDC's experiences in relation to waste reuse as well a wider district perspective.

Social Value

Right to Work currently operate a bulky waste contract on behalf of SLDC, which has recently been awarded a five plus five year term contract dependent on performance. Two requirements of the contract were to add social and reuse value in the district's waste activity. The contract is cost neutral and is currently working well, with the potential for this model to be explored further across the whole county. The contract also leads to the development of employment and social skills for those with learning disabilities and complex needs.

As Right to Work also gave evidence during the review process, members also received the supply-side evidence base.

Producer Responsibility

Paul commented that the Resources and Waste Strategy is likely to introduce the concept of extended producer responsibility. Currently, producers only contribute about £70m towards the collection and management of waste, whilst district and county councils spend, post-consumer, about £700m, thus meaning producers only cover about 10% of costs. This is likely to disincentivise producers from developing single-use materials, and increase the awareness of a circular economy.

Witness 5 – Ruth Ogden, Tools for Self-Reliance

Background

Tools for Self-Reliance are a UK-based charity working to help relieve poverty in Africa, and it has approximately 50 local organisations to enable sustainable change. Ruth Ogden is a volunteer with Windermere Tools for Self-Reliance, which consists of a small group of volunteers who aim to collect high-quality old tools and recondition these to a safe standard. These tools are then sent to certain countries in Africa, whilst working with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to arrange the collection and distribution. In order to ensure that the tools are being used effectively, Tools for Self-Reliance staff will visit these countries to follow up.

Ability to recruit and train volunteers

Due to the specialist nature of reconditioning tools to a safe and resalable standard, Ruth said that Tools for Self-Reliance often require a certain set of skills and experience. This therefore creates a particular challenge in relation to securing long term voluntary placements.

Members discussed the possibility of sharing and upskilling volunteers, especially in the fields of engineering and carpentry, which may be furthered through better partnership working with other third sector organisations such as CAfS and FREEGLE. There was the acknowledgement that these relationships could be strengthened to enable potential platforms for the sourcing and the resale and redistribution of appropriate items.

Expanding capacity

In order to further expand their capacity, Tools for Self-Reliance acknowledged the need to expand premises; however there are certain cost barriers to this. Nevertheless, Ruth mentioned that the *Men in Sheds* service, run by Age UK to support older men who want to share and learn new skills, could be utilised as part of the potential expansion. As with the ambition to collectively recruit and train volunteers, the role of the Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) would be integral in facilitating these links.

Not fully utilised by the organisation at present, members commented that social media could be used to ensure that Tools for Self-Reliance's services are effectively articulated to a wider audience. Whereas this could be explored, Ruth said that this may would dedicate time and possibly lead to less time for the organisation's core business.

Witness 6 – Graham Millar, Barrow Domestic Appliances

Background

Barrow Domestic Appliances (BDA) is a Community Interest Company which seeks to reuse donated unwanted electrical goods. These goods are then made available to local people at reduced rates, with further discounts for those on a range of welfare benefits. They reused 63.9% of items received in 2017/18.

Social value

BDA are based in Barrow's Central ward which is ranked as one of the most deprived areas of the country, based on the seven domains of the Index of Deprivation. The organisation employs local people as well as using volunteers and placements from local organisations. Other groups to benefit from its services are those who are referred to BDA through Children's and Adult Social Care, Women's Matters, Mind, The Well and others. As a Community Interest Company, they provide to clients first and foremost rather than generating profits.

Following the removal of the social crisis loan from the DWP, this has led to a higher level of repayment costs and interest rates being paid on new furniture. Graham said that BDA are able to help with furniture poverty matters by supplying affordable items.

Proximity principle

BDA emphasise the importance of the 'proximity principle', thus treating and/or disposing of bulky waste in reasonable proximity to their point of generation to minimise the environmental impact and cost of waste transport. Thus, the purpose of the organisation is to intercept all discarded white goods in the area and refurbish these items for the benefit of the local community.

Expanding capacity

BDA have in the past accessed the Barrow Local Committee Waste Prevention Fund, as well as grants from the Community Foundation and Hadfield Trust. The organisation would

like to expand further such as having a store within the local market, however financially this is not viable due to the increased rental costs. This is important as white goods are bulky and require a large storage space, as well as additional space to carry out servicing and repairs prior to reuse. Graham emphasised that greater volumes of reuse could be achieved by having a location close to Barrow's HWRC, to enable economies of scale, greater visibility and awareness.

Training and developing skills in respect of re-gassing fridges is also a particular issue due to the inability in funding this. Graham confirmed that communications is also an area for development, and it would be helpful for the Council to facilitate greater awareness. In order to assist with these areas, the Council will explore BDA being part of the Furness Waste Consortium.

Witness 7 – Peter Bradbury and Chris Pantechis, Right2Work

Background

Right to Work (R2W) is a Community Interest Company, part of the wider Oaklea group, which aims to create learning and employment opportunities for a range of different people including those with learning disabilities and mental health conditions. It operates the bulky waste contract with SLDC, in which it recycled and reused 70.8% of all bulky waste collected in 2017/18.

Social Value

R2W's driving motivation is that the bulky waste contract acts as a positive vehicle to enable support and employment training for those with learning disabilities. As part of the contract, R2W provides support to 292 individuals and has enabled 51 individuals, who were previously on welfare benefits, into paid work. This support involves; work experience and internships for 4-12 weeks, internships to get those with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) into work and participation in the DWP Autism Services working with 4 JobCentre Plus offices and work coaches.

R2W also works closely with the Council to provide day services, and members said that the Council has the opportunity through this to connect waste reuse with wider strategies, such as its support for children and young people, care leavers, and those with learning disabilities.

There was an emphasis on supporting and upskilling individuals with a sense of purpose and belonging as they are learning in a 'real' working environment. Skills achieved include; furniture refurbishment, upholstery, domestic appliance repairing, woodworking and general employability skills.

Members commented that R2W demonstrates the ability of an organisation which has the aim to support vulnerable people first and foremost, and it utilises waste reuse as an effective mechanism in doing this. Members commented that this could be replicated across the county through effective linkages with day services.

Targeted reduction of waste streams

In terms of Cumbria's six districts, South Lakeland has the lowest level of landfill per person. In 2017/18, R2W carried out 1,700 bulky waste collections, totalling 5,300 items. In addition to this, it diverted 125 tonnes of waste from landfill.

Expanding capacity

R2W acknowledged that start-up costs to a service are significant, and that the support they received from Oaklea Trust, which provided £78,000 initially, is not financially viable in many circumstances. Thus, support for third sector organisations at the initial phase is integral in ensuring their sustainability.

In terms of material challenges, R2W noted that that foam from sofas and mattresses are particularly difficult to dispose of or reuse. In addition to this, wood also poses a financial challenge as wood credits used to be paid but since these were withdrawn wood which cannot be reused costs R2W to send to the biomass Lockerbie Power Station. Members commented that there is the possibility to explore other options, such as a Community Wood Store.