

Committee: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7 February 2019

Title of Report: Response of the Acting Executive Director to the Scrutiny Review - Waste and Third Sector Task and Finish Group

Report by: Angela Jones, Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

Cabinet Member: Celia Tibble, Cabinet Member for the Environment

What is the Report About? (Executive Summary)

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 response to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on the recommendations of the Reuse and the 3rd Sector findings.

Recommendation of the Executive Director

2. To accept and note recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Task and Finish Group, and that recommendation 2 is noted and not accepted.

Background to the Proposals

3. 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.
4. 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.

5. The Task Group held two sessions in October 2018 (4 and 12 October 2018). 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.
6. The over 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

Recommendations

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

7. **Recommendation 1**

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

Response: 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.

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.

Recommendation 1: *To agree the recommendation.*

8. **Recommendation 2**

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

Response: 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 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.

Recommendation 2: *That the recommendation is not agreed.*

9. **Recommendation 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.

Response: 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.

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.

Recommendation 3: *To agree the recommendation.*

10. **Recommendation 4**

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

Response: 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.

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.

Local Committees will be encouraged to consider this matter as an agenda item for a future meeting.

Recommendation 4: *To note the recommendation.*

11. **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.

Response: The recommendation of a Reuse Forum is 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.

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.

Recommendation 5: *To agree the recommendation.*

12. **Recommendation 6**

The Council will develop an internal engagement programme to explore opportunities to maximise the benefits of waste reuse across its strategies and plans.

Response: 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').

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.

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.

Recommendation 6: *To agree the recommendation in part – the County wide strategies are reliant on partnership working to achieve.*

Risks

There are a number of risks identified with the recommendations:

- Potential impact on the current Waste Contract (with Renewi) – recommendation 1
- Unable to reverse a formal Strategic Planning/MTFP decision – recommendation 2
- Requirement to develop close working in partnership - recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 6

Reasons for the recommendation / Key benefits

The recommendations would enable the Council to demonstrate its effective collaboration with partners to ensure a County-wide approach to the waste hierarchy – maximising resources available. This would also ensure that the Council is

compliant under its obligations of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, with regards to waste.

Financial – What Resources will be needed and how will it be funded?

The benchmarking review should not have any direct financial implications from the recommendation contained within this report (recommendation 1), however future options as a result of the exercise may have both financial and contractual implications. These will become clearer as the process progresses.

Recommendations 3-6 could have potential financial implications, however, these would need to be met from existing revenue budgets.

Legal Aspects – What needs to be considered?

Any changes under recommendation 1 is likely to result in significant legal consideration under the Contract Change procedure.

Council Plan Priority – How do the Proposals Contribute to the Delivery of the Council's Stated Objectives?

In line with the vision of the Council Plan the Council will work with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources. The proposals ensure that places in Cumbria are well connected and thriving and that the economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone.

What is the Impact of the Decision on Health Inequalities and Equality and Diversity Issues?

The Council is committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty in order to provide equality of opportunity through access to services for all and delivering services which meet the needs of the Council's customers; foster good relations by understanding the communities the Council serves and deliver meaningful engagement; eliminate discrimination through the Council's operational and work place policies and procedures.

Appendices and Background Documents

None

Key Facts

N/A

Electoral Division(s): All

Executive Decision	Key Decision Included in Forward Plan	Exempt from call-in	Exemption agreed by scrutiny chair	Considered by scrutiny, if so detail below	Environmental or sustainability assessment undertaken?	Equality impact assessment undertaken?
Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No

Previous relevant Council or Executive decisions

- None

Consideration by Overview & Scrutiny

- None

Background Papers

- None

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