



Solutions for stuff

Local authorities as enablers of change,
making waste prevention happen

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to share this waste prevention guide with you, our customers, peers and the wider waste and resource management sector. I encourage you all to put some time aside to be inspired by the successes that have already been achieved in reducing and preventing waste.

The idea for this guide was born of our customer conference last year. Every year, we come together with our customers to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the resources sector. At these annual events, our sector experts take to the stage to share our latest insights and innovations – but they are also busy listening, to learn from our customers, to understand their priorities and how SUEZ can work with them to overcome the challenges of the day.

At our 2022 customer conference, we launched [‘The stuff of life’¹](#), which is one of the most downloaded of all our reports and has featured in numerous on-line workshops and webinars. I hope you have all had a chance to read this report, which shows how we can all make better decisions at key times and locations in our lives, to reduce our resource consumption and contribute to decarbonisation – at home, at work and when at play.

Coming away from our customer conference, it was clear that waste prevention was high on the agenda for our local authority customers, with many seeking to drive change and empower their local communities to adopt more circular models to reduce waste and combat climate change. Although the will to act was there, it was being frustrated by the lack of clarity over central government policy in this area, and an absence of guidance and targets. Feedback from our customers suggested that they wanted more practical guidance about what they (as local authority officers) could do to drive down waste arisings from the households they serve, their own activities and with the local businesses that they support.

As a result and to build on our ‘The stuff of life’ report, which looked at ways we can reduce consumption, we commissioned Beasley Associates and Intelisos to create materials to support local authorities in their decision making around waste prevention. This guide is the result of their work – designed with practicality in mind, it contains useful context, sets out the factors to consider when selecting between different waste prevention activities, provides a searchable menu of interventions available to you and illustrates what good looks like through a series of case studies.



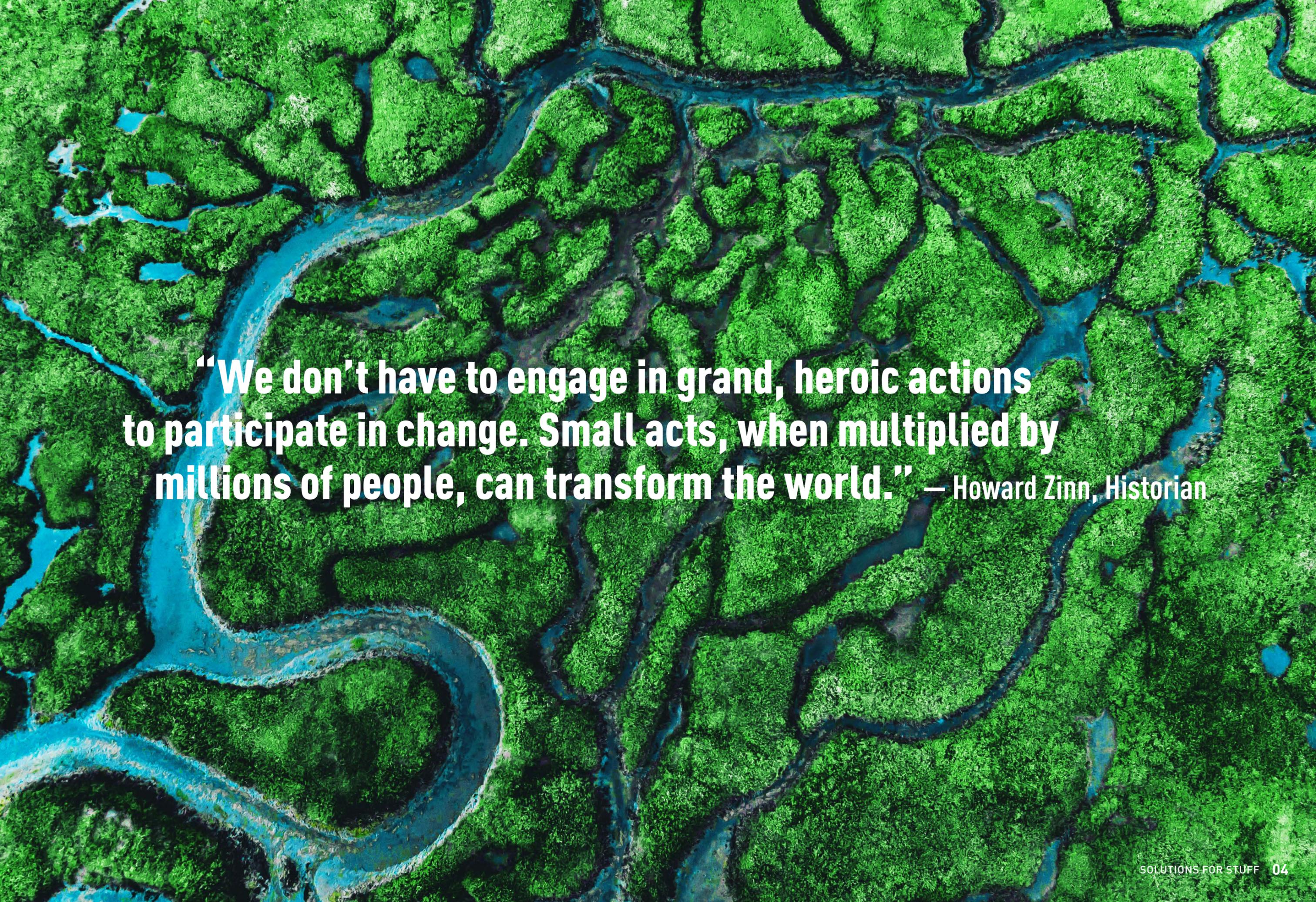
This report is the fruition of almost nine months of scoping, research, interviews and testing with our customers and the wider sector. I hope you find the report invaluable when scoping out future waste prevention campaigns, projects and interventions – we will certainly be using it with our existing customers, as we look to drive down waste arisings and improve materials management.

You are the changemakers in your communities – use this guide on your journey to a more circular economy in your local area. Against a backdrop of growing awareness of the impacts of climate change and rising living costs, the circular economy and waste prevention make both environmental and financial sense. The case for taking action in the here and now has never been clearer.

John Scanlon

Chief Executive Officer
SUEZ recycling and recovery UK

¹ www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/news/press-releases/220929-the-stuff-of-life-new-suez-report-sets-out-asks-of-government-to-reduce-consumption-and-help-households-reduce-expenditure



“We don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.” — Howard Zinn, Historian



The challenge of reducing consumption

'The stuff of life'², addressed the challenges we face in relation to consumption and consumerism, identifying steps we can take at government, business and consumer level to change our habits and make more sustainable choices. This report builds upon the steps proposed and focuses on what local authorities can do to effectively prevent waste, drive circularity internally and support residents and businesses as they look to the very top of the waste hierarchy.

Local authorities (and their waste industry partners) bear the brunt of what we throw away. The more we dispose of, and the more complex the item is to recycle or treat, the more it costs and the greater the potential damage to the environment. Reducing consumption and transitioning to more circular practices is vital for the future in terms of resource security, decarbonisation and biodiversity, while reducing the cost of the resources we manage through our current system.

This report focuses on all aspects of local authority activities, rather than being confined to waste related services, and considers where local authorities and their partners and contractors can:

- + have a **direct impact** on consumption, waste generation and resource use
- + **facilitate change** through enabling activities
- + **signpost and raise awareness** of opportunities and options for their customers to do things differently

We focus throughout on providing practical solutions, using examples to illustrate specific actions and case studies to provide more detail. The intention is to encourage officers and political decision makers to think systemically about how to support and promote better resource use and reduce costs, whether this be costs for local authorities or costs for local authority stakeholders.

It is not intended as the final word on how to approach and deliver action on waste prevention, but as an inspiration for those considering waste prevention interventions and a guide to what might suit and what to expect in terms of outcomes and impacts.

It is worth noting that the circular economy is a systems solution framework³ which tackles global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, resource scarcity and pollution. It is (or should be) part of everything we do and everything we impact on. Throughout the report, we use a number of terms including consumption reduction, waste prevention, re-use, repair and recycling, but these should all be considered part of the circular economy system.



² www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/news/press-releases/220929-the-stuff-of-life-new-suez-report-sets-out-asks-of-government-to-reduce-consumption-and-help-households-reduce-expenditure

³ ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circular-economy-introduction/overview



Waste prevention – easy right?

Well, not quite.

Since we started managing waste, there has been a focus on trying to prevent waste arising, reducing the amount of waste produced and, where that's not possible, deriving value from it through re-use, recycling, composting, etc. Our sector has been implementing waste prevention on an ad hoc basis for years, with varying degrees of success – or at least success that can't easily be measured and demonstrated.

The benefits of waste prevention are obvious and easy to explain from an environmental perspective. Where it can become more challenging to make the case is where waste prevention efforts are focused on waste streams that do not represent large tonnages, or where proposals to reduce consumption via asset sharing or use of circular procurement require potential system change or 'invest to change' options. However, the shift in focus towards broader environmental concepts such as the 'circular economy' provides an opportunity to refresh the role and potential of waste prevention actions and activities. In short, the steps required to champion the circular economy provide an opportunity to reframe and refocus attention on waste prevention activities which may have been tried in the past, but for various reasons failed to get traction. These activities potentially resonate better now as we face societal demands for reducing emissions, protecting our resources and reducing costs for householders.

It is evident that for local authorities to lead the way in using resources more effectively, and thinking more systemically, all aspects of their activities and responsibilities need to be considered in terms of how things can be done differently.

This is not an insignificant task. Whilst there may be evidence of good practice in relation to waste prevention activities, data is not always readily available and where it is available it can be greeted with a degree of scepticism. Indeed, there are excellent examples of waste prevention initiatives that date back almost 30 years, but if we don't showcase them and provide data about their costs and impacts, how can we really expect authorities to consider implementing them now?

It can be challenging (and costly) to isolate and monitor waste prevention activities effectively, particularly when surrounded by big societal (COVID, cost of living crisis), business (evolving business models) and policy (extended producer responsibility, greenwashing, etc) influences.

Time for a rethink

So, how can we capitalise on the changing landscape we find ourselves in, to secure traction for waste prevention?

Crucially, residents and businesses are increasingly aware of the climate crisis, they understand the need to recycle and are becoming more conscious about consumption, for example by swapping single use to reuse and refill. This provides a perfect foundation for, raising awareness and focus on different ways to prevent waste and move towards more circular practices.

It's an opportunity to refresh and redirect approaches, bringing forward different schemes, signposting opportunities and facilitating next steps.

**After all, if not now,
then when?**



Signposting and facilitating opportunities to redistribute food and prevent waste generation

Use of community hubs, education and awareness raising to support food waste reduction

The primary aim of this pilot was to reduce food waste within kerbside residual bins across West Sussex and to encourage uptake of existing surplus food rescue services. Working closely with food waste charity, UKHarvest, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) identified areas with the highest tonnage of food waste within the residual bin and trialled a number of community hubs to support food redistribution and prevent waste generation.

In addition to the hubs, various social media campaigns and education sessions were developed and delivered in partnership with community groups and local organisations.

Development

Following a waste composition analysis carried out in 2021 – which showed around 40% of the contents of residual kerbside bins being food waste, with 27.7% of that being edible food – West Sussex County Council, working with the districts and boroughs, and UK Harvest developed a trial to reduce the amount of food waste generated by residents. Bognor Regis, Crawley and Southwick were identified as the areas considered to have the greatest need for the trial based on the tonnage of food waste generated.

The pilot ran from October 2022 for six months in the three areas, hosting a UKHarvest Community Food Hub once per month where for a suggested small donation, residents were able to pick up a wide selection of surplus foods which would have gone to waste. A number of education sessions were also hosted providing residents and a youth charity (YMCA) with cookery advice, focusing on using leftovers, making meals from food available and how to safely store and freeze food. In addition, West Sussex County Council ran an online campaign on West Sussex Recycles social media channels, highlighting the economic and environmental impacts of rescuing food, promoting food rescue organisations and sharing food waste prevention hints and tips.

Other supporting services were invited to attend community food hubs with information stands including wellbeing teams, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Early Help Team. This provided residents further support, with many booking appointments for further assistance. The West Sussex County Council recycling and waste team, waste prevention team and volunteers also attended with a stall providing advice on food waste minimisation and reminding residents of what can and can't be recycled.

Results

A survey created in partnership with UKHarvest and the community's team covering various themes – including use of community food hubs, food waste prevention, wellbeing and food poverty – was completed by residents, measuring the impact of the pilot. 85% of those surveyed said the hubs had helped them reduce food waste and provided new ideas for recipes and uses, as well as improving their sense of wellbeing.

Through 18 hubs, a total of 7,825kg of food was saved from going to waste, with a total retail value of £21,600, feeding 2,916 people.

Inspiration

The six-month pilot cost a total of £13,023 and is considered to have not only changed residents' behaviour on using up food and reducing their food waste, but has also increased residents' social value, improved their wellbeing and sense of belonging in the local area.

It has now been approved that the community food hubs will be rolled out to all districts and boroughs in West Sussex, one community food hub per month for a year. Each area will also have one education session. The new programme, run in partnership with West Sussex County Council, Biffa West Sussex and UKHarvest, started in May 2023.

UKHarvest is confident that the programme will make a significant impact.

“We are thrilled to announce the expansion of this successful project with West Sussex County Council and our new partnership with Biffa. We believe that by sharing this rescued produce we can bring the community together to all tackle food waste.”

Sarah Morison
UKHarvest Partnership Manager

“Reducing food waste is central to our council plan, we are committed to rescuing surplus food across the county, and our extended partnership with UKHarvest and Biffa will help us achieve this goal.”

Deborah Urquhart
West Sussex Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

What are the drivers – policy, environment, social and economic?

Making the case for delivering change is an important part of what the public sector does, particularly evidencing economic, social, environmental and compliance benefits. Going circular can deliver numerous gains (figure one) and it's important to demonstrate these beyond traditional weight-based metrics.

It is evident that whilst policies touch on the principles and potential ambitions to address waste generation and challenge consumption, there is currently a lack of coordination in policy approach or even a solid policy foundation to build upon. We have seen ad hoc responses targeting specific problematic single-use plastic products for example, which when not part of a broader strategic approach to single use and consumption can lead to unintended consequences. Across Europe, we are seeing evidence of different approaches being taken on waste prevention and reduction – such as alternative business models, like refill or leasing and subscription-based consumption being supported strategically. Whilst individual examples of these approaches can be highlighted across the UK, they are mostly being driven by committed stakeholders and groups, rather than through coordinated policy.

This may be addressed, at least in part, when much awaited responses to the suite of waste and resource consultations come to fruition, giving greater clarity on the potential that extended producer responsibility and product stewardship could offer in terms of reduction in material use and potential for re-use and repair.

Until then, there is more pressure on local government to overcome the policy void through local actions and priorities. The case studies and examples referred to throughout this report are testament to the drive and ambition of local government in responding to the very significant need to address our resource use and consumption patterns.

The relationship between waste prevention and climate change policy commitments and targets is one that has been recognised by a lot of local authorities and one that can be capitalised on, particularly when persuading political decision makers to invest in interventions which are not always easy to measure in terms of their (weight-based) impact and value for money. Many local authorities have developed climate action plans and strategies which incorporate circular economy activities, particularly those which target carbon intensive materials such as food waste and textiles. Demonstrating how waste prevention and circular activities help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (particularly scope 3) can help support an authority's overall climate targets (and the UK's target of net zero carbon by 2050) and ambitions. The Local Government Association has a wealth of case studies available which include circular economy and climate change within [their climate hub](#)⁴.

Figure one: The benefits of going circular



4 www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change-hub

Protecting the environment must go beyond carbon. By going circular, demands on the finite resources of our planet can be reduced, critical raw materials can be captured from items at end of first life and procurement processes can take into consideration hazard reduction and alternative business models. Going circular also incorporates the regeneration of our natural resources, which can align well with some of the 'waste' materials we have to deal with such as food waste, garden waste and topsoil re-use from landscaping projects.

Social benefits can be generated from involving local communities (e.g. creating training and employment opportunities, and facilitating surplus food redistribution), supporting activities that promote wellbeing (e.g. teaching circular skills, repair cafes) and providing opportunities for poverty alleviation (e.g. school uniform re-use, give and take days, furniture re-use and upskilling local people). Signposting local businesses that provide circular services can also support local economic activity (e.g. repair directories) and help build momentum that these solutions are deliverable locally and can bring tangible benefits.

The economic returns from some projects can be difficult to quantify or will take a longer period before returns are apparent, but they are there. Changing to alternative business models can also require a change in budget lines from capital to revenue or need an invest-to-save model. Indirect financial savings can also be gained from investing in other services, for example supporting smoking cessation and bans may lead to a reduction in cigarette litter (as well as health and financial benefits), whilst supporting local landlords may deliver a reduction in fly-tipped mattresses and an increase in the purchase of reused furniture, and reviewing internal assets such as building stock may identify opportunities for spaces to be used by the local community or businesses for community good. It's important to look for alternative funding sources that may be able to support intervention delivery and really build on the potential that the wider benefits can bring.

One activity can have many benefits (figure two) and it's important to capture each of the drivers for change when making a case. It's also important to recognise that the traditional waste prevention benefits (tonnage diversion) may be low, however, an activity may yield a large number of equally important benefits.

Figure two: Multiple benefits of a single activity

Surplus food redistribution – community fridge

- ✔ **Carbon savings**
diversion of food waste from disposal/treatment
- ✔ **Community cohesion**
bringing the community (residents and businesses) together in a single purpose
- ✔ **Social impacts**
supporting people in need
- ✔ **Waste prevention**
surplus food does not enter the waste stream
- ✔ **Cost reduction**
potential reduction in collection and disposal costs including fuel use (depending on approach)
- ✔ **Economic regeneration**
residents may be inspired to shop locally and support the businesses donating surplus food



Exploring opportunities to manage unavoidable food waste in rural areas

Residual waste reduction through food waste diversion in rural areas

The Hotbin project is a small-scale trial, developed in partnership between the climate change team and the waste team at Northumberland County Council, targeting food waste in rural areas. With food waste under scrutiny by the authority, a number of different trials are underway, including a separate kerbside food waste collection service. However, it is recognised that in more rural areas, collection costs and transport implications in terms of carbon emissions pose a significant challenge. Therefore, other options are being explored, including the use of home composting for unavoidable food waste alongside garden waste. As a trial, a small number of properties have been issued with a hot composting bin to dispose of their food waste and garden waste, and evidence is being collated from the residents on their success in overall waste requiring collection.

Development

Following their declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, Northumberland County Council recruited a number of Assistant Project Managers to take forward specific activities addressing climate change across the county. A joint initiative between climate change and waste services was identified to address the carbon challenges posed by collection, treatment and management of food waste.

For residents in rural areas who do not have the option of a food waste collection service, a small-scale trial was proposed to consider the impact of home-based food waste composting. With a budget of £18,000 to purchase and distribute Hotbin and Green Johanna composters, the trial commenced in Autumn of 2022 with over 40 households across three villages (who are not currently serviced by garden waste collections) issued with Hotbins. To promote the events, several in-person meetings were held at village halls and community spaces and volunteers were sought to take part.

With the trial currently underway, ongoing communication via a newsletter takes place each quarter to share progress, data and provide ongoing promotion of the project. Communication is seen as a vital element of the trial to ensure engagement is maintained. The intention is that Green Johanna composters will be distributed to allow a comparison with the Hotbins in terms of ease of use, acceptability and impact of a different composter, as there is a price differential between the products.

Results

Monthly feedback is secured via self-reporting from residents using the Hotbin on average kilogrammes placed into the Hotbin and their general waste bin, as well as the levels of compost produced by the unit. The reported diversion to date is equivalent to around 7kg a week per household, which compares well in terms of expected diversion as a [result of composting bins](#)⁵.

It is anticipated that once the trial is complete there is the potential to re-examine the residual collection service in terms of frequency or volume, potentially reducing vehicle movements in rural areas and also generating longer term cost savings in relation to collection and treatment.

“The home hot composting pilot project is providing valuable data regarding the feasibility of rolling out a larger scale scheme across rural parts of Northumberland not currently serviced by garden collections and where food waste collections might not be economically feasible. We have received some great feedback from residents, and we are really pleased to be able offer this unique pilot in Northumberland.”

Dr Wendy Fail

Senior Waste Management Officer,
Northumberland County Council

Inspiration

The trial is recognised as just that, a testing process to consider whether the investment is appropriate and the impact proportionate, specifically in terms of any future roll-out. Whilst initial reporting is positive in terms of achieving a reduction in residual waste, the full potential of the project has yet to be realised, specifically as it has not run through the summer months as yet and launching in autumn posed some early challenges in terms of getting the bin up to temperature.

In terms of wider benefits, it is evident that joining forces with the climate change team has provided new opportunities to access communities that have been difficult to engage with previously and it also provides the opportunity over time to extend messaging and to build on communication and behaviour change interventions.

It is worth noting that the use of the bins by the residents has not posed any particular challenges to date, and the modular design of the Hotbins means that it is relatively straightforward to replace broken parts as necessary, rather than replace the whole bin.

Next steps are considering the potential for more commercial sized units, specifically for farms – a 650 litre version of the Hotbin is available and the climate change team is focused on building relationships with the farming community to explore this option further. Schools are also being considered as potential sites.

⁵ wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/waste-prevention-activities/garden-waste/home-composting



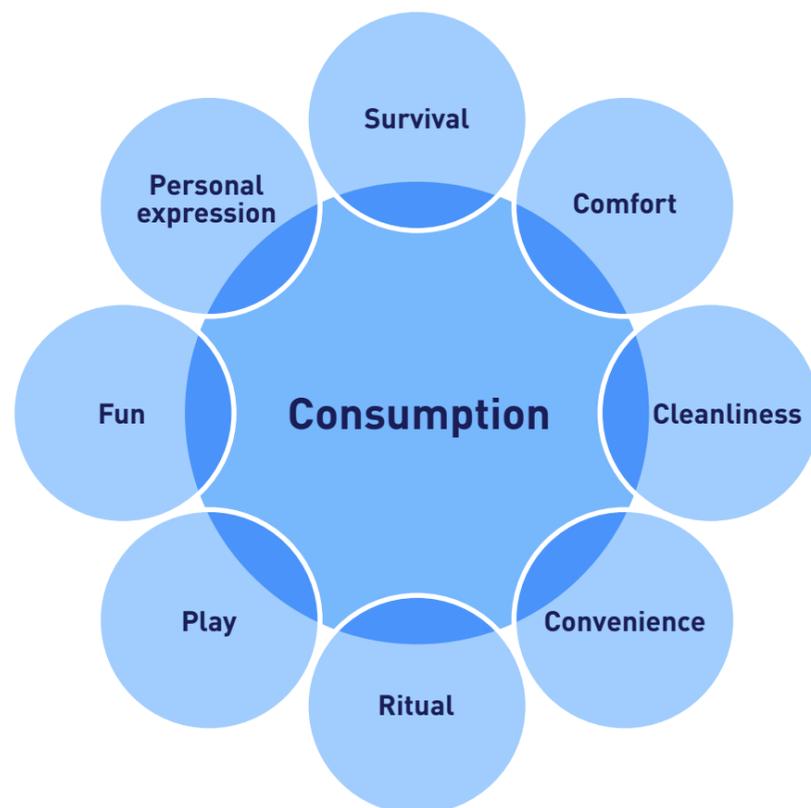
**“The greatest threat to our planet is the belief
that someone else will save it.” — Robert Swan, Author**



What are the behaviours involved and how do you drive the right behaviours?

When considering how we can stimulate the behaviour changes required to prevent waste, we must acknowledge the role of consumption and all the challenges that brings in terms of people's needs and desires in relation to how and why they consume. This was covered in detail in the first Stuff of Life report, but as seen in figure three, the drivers behind our consumption behaviours are varied and complex.

Figure three: Drivers for consumption



When implementing waste prevention interventions, these can require a significant change in behaviour in relation to consumption, requiring individuals to ignore, overcome or replace the historic, embedded habits they have in relation to consumption.

For example, if a behaviour change requires the use of refill containers, then potentially a different motivation or driver may be needed to overcome the desire for convenience if this is a dominant factor. Also, with an activity such as refill, the 'fun' or novelty factor may dominate for a short while, but this may not be sustained for long enough for the behaviour change to become habitual and replace the previous patterns. Brands are recognising that in order to embed new behaviours with their customers they either need to make it convenient (e.g. the [Refill Return Cup](http://www.refill.org.uk/refillreturncup) returnable cup scheme in Bristol⁶) or incentivise behaviour via [reward points or discounts](http://www.costa.co.uk/sustainability/cups-and-packaging)⁷.

Making habits stick is difficult. There are a lot of claims around how long it takes a habit to stick, varying from 21 days through to almost a year. However, there are too many variables involved to be accurate. Approximately two months is an average assumption, but it very much depends on what generated or motivated the change, the frequency of the new activity and the reward factor. For example, making the changes involved to use refill consistently may take longer as the activity may not be undertaken every day, and these rewards may be very different to more regular behaviours such as changing food consumption habits to reduce waste. Habits can be broken due to external factors, such as a shift away from re-use towards single use as a result of COVID measures – returning back to pre-COVID re-use habits can be more challenging and building up the habitual behaviour may take more time.

Recycling is more embedded and more habitual for large proportions of the population than waste prevention or reduction measures. If access to services is provided and instructions are clear, then recycling rates demonstrate that reasonable levels of positive behaviour can be achieved. This is in part a response to the lengthy period of service provision, media attention and communications campaigns. Early statutory targets also meant that there was increased public sector support for residents to do the right thing. With recycling, there's also the visible factor – an overflowing recycling bin is a visible confirmation of doing good for the environment.

A resident that focuses more on reducing consumption and waste prevention will not have the same quantities of recycling on collection day, but will be doing more for the environment – just not visibly to their neighbours.

In addition, with waste prevention there is no comparable single activity being promoted, rather there is real variability in terms of the effort required, the scale of behaviour change to be delivered, and also the levels of motivation, awareness and understanding needed to successfully implement the range of waste prevention activities. This can make securing a sustained behaviour change more challenging.

Plus, whilst recycling is a visible action, which predominantly takes place in the home with minimal effort, it does not require a change in consumption behaviour and potentially can be replicated in the workplace. The same cannot be said for interventions focused on achieving waste prevention.

⁶ www.refill.org.uk/refillreturncup

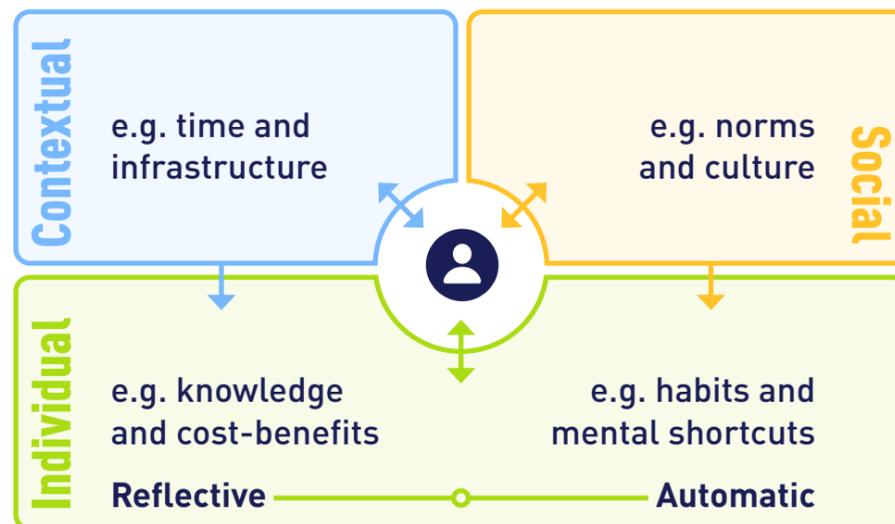
⁷ www.costa.co.uk/sustainability/cups-and-packaging



What are the different factors influencing circular behaviours?

Focusing on and understanding the different factors that are influencing circular behaviours is critical. Figure four illustrates three types of influences: contextual, social and individual factors.

Figure four: Factors which influence circular behaviour⁸



For example, contextual factors impacting on repair behaviour include access to and availability of appropriate repair centres. So, if this was an intervention being promoted by a local authority, ensuring that access to existing facilities didn't become a negative factor could be as simple as signposting bus routes or car parking close to the facility, [producing maps of repair facilities across the local area⁹](#) or working with repair providers to deliver alternative options for those with time pressures, such as [mobile facilities¹⁰](#). Social factors could include acceptability of and perception towards repair rather than replacement of products.

Different approaches to normalising repair behaviour and consistent messaging and engagement can help address any negative associations. Finally, individual factors can include lack of knowledge and understanding in terms of the 'value' of repair and the effort required to undertake this activity. Supporting knowledge development and highlighting individual benefits, such as financial savings, could also help overcome individual challenges.

To add to the complexity of delivering waste prevention behaviour change, different initiatives can be motivating for varying reasons. For example, donating to re-use may result in a sense of satisfaction, but there is no guarantee that purchasing through re-use will generate the same feeling, particularly if the individual sees second hand as second best. Social factors can play a part here in terms of normalising re-use as a valued activity, either in the sense of economic savings or environmental concern.

Recognising existing behaviours

For an individual to recognise their existing opportunities to prevent waste, and as a result be open to understanding what changes could be made, can also be a challenge. Some local authorities who shared their experiences as part of this research highlighted the difficulties in engaging with residents over food waste, where there was a reluctance to admit that this was an issue they faced. However, the same residents appeared to be open to discussing opportunities to switch to reusable products and be more open with regards to the number of plastic or single-use waste items they were generating. Local authorities should therefore consider different routes of engagement to take.

Local authority interventions which have a direct impact on waste generation, such as service changes to restrict residual bin size or reduce frequency of residual waste collection, are potentially more comparable to the behaviour changes associated with recycling. Clear messaging, access to services and understanding (instructions) of what is required should ensure householders respond positively. This can be built upon to deliver more nuanced messaging associated with consumption, providing a foundation for local authority engagement which potentially may ask for more concerted effort on the part of the householder to do things differently.

Using and building upon community groups and partnerships can support behaviour change activities, facilitating change and providing ongoing messaging, motivation and engagement to reinforce and normalise different ways of consuming and using products and services.

Signposting and raising awareness of the many opportunities to do things differently can be a fundamental role of local authorities in driving behaviour change in this space. This needs to be ongoing and sustained to maintain the messaging.

Internally within a local authority, understanding what the asks are, and being clear on what barriers there may be to making progress, is fundamental to ensuring that waste prevention/circularity is being incorporated across all departments, not just waste and environment. There is real value in joining forces with Climate Change teams for example, as shown in some of the case studies, to help amplify messaging and provide different routes to engagement.

⁸ Fred Dorsimont, Behaven : Reuse and Repair Behaviours, delivered at the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform workshop 'Reuse & Repair in the Circular Economy', January 2023. projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/since-afc/news/news-article/15672/reuse-and-repair-in-the-circular-economy

⁹ www.nlwa.gov.uk/reducereuserecycle/reduceandreuse/repair-directory-and-services

¹⁰ www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/fixy



Collaborative working to maximise the power of community groups to achieve change

Optimising the impact of community-based organisations through coordinated support and empowerment

The Community Action Group Oxfordshire, which has been in place since 2001, is a well-established network of community action groups working across Oxfordshire. From its inception, Oxfordshire County Council made a commitment to support the network, which had its origins in recycling activities, but now covers an extensive remit including waste prevention and re-use, food security, biodiversity, tree planting, active travel, low- and zero-carbon initiatives, and social justice. There are currently 104 active groups across the county and the equivalent to 2.5 full time employees working to support the network. For Oxfordshire County Council, a key focus is to ensure the reach of the Community Action Group is as extensive as possible, linking across council departments and building on the activities and outputs of the Community Action Group to help meet its own key performance indicators.

The network staff issue a weekly newsletter for Community Action Group members to ensure everyone is kept informed and potential for further collaborations are optimised. A fortnightly newsletter is issued for wider publication.

Development

Originally, when the network was developed, Resource Futures was contracted by Oxfordshire County Council to support and facilitate the work of the Community Action Group.

Over the years, as the network has expanded, they continued to support and champion the value and benefits of the network. Over the last few years, it became apparent that in its original format the network was restricted in terms of generating its own income and becoming less reliant on Oxfordshire County Council for funding and growth. As attention turned to exploring new governance and administration systems, Resource Futures played an integral role in shaping and transitioning to a new model of operation. Community Action Group Oxfordshire is now a Community Interest Company (CIC) and as a measure of its support and in recognition of the value it places on the network, Oxfordshire County Council has doubled its investment, requiring a move to a new three-year grant model for 2023/24, as opposed to contract funding.

Each Community Action Group member is a shareholder in the Community Interest Company, with an annual general meeting (AGM) held each year. The grant funding covers staffing and is also, in part, distributed across the groups to support their activities. Individual community action groups can receive individual staff support if needed, but also set up collaborative groups that focus on specific issues and meet regularly to share best practice and apply for joint funding.

Results

The network covers an extensive range of activities. It is fair to say that it continues to be a challenge to measure the full impact of the projects being delivered, particularly in the waste prevention space and this is an ongoing issue when applying for funds. However, the network does quantify activities as far as possible using measures such as number of events, volunteer hours, etc.

For 2021, the network reported the following outputs¹¹:

<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Events</u>
7,300 volunteers	7,000 events
650,000 hours	43,500 attendees
43 full time employees	50 repair cafes held
<u>Food surplus redistributed</u>	<u>Plastic containers refilled</u>
82,500 kg	1 million
<u>Material waste upcycled, reused, recycled</u>	
1.5 million kg	

Inspiration

Waste has been a successful focus for network activities in the past, bringing groups together, securing funding and corraling activities to maximise benefits. Now the network is looking to do this as successfully across a broader range of issues and is also looking at how it can optimise working geographically across the county

as the number of groups who are part of the network is extensive. There is real variability in group size and experience, but the network empowers and enables all groups, really utilising the power of the collective to drive through change. In addition, Community Action Group supports funding applications from groups within the network, as a named partner – it has the track record and security, providing reassurance to funders.

For Oxfordshire County Council, getting the Community Action Group network sighted across the breadth of departments is crucial to optimise its impact and ensure connections are maximised across the authority. The council remains committed to the network and the value it can bring. However, it is worth noting that aligning priorities as the grant funder with priorities of those who are members of the Community Action Group network is not always straight forward, particularly as the network has grown – maintaining a level of balance and understanding, being clear on sensitivities and setting agreed boundaries is considered to be key.

Looking forward, Oxfordshire County Council have not set the network targets in terms of growth, as the impact of the groups on making progress against a wide range of environmental and social challenges, demonstrated as outputs of the network as a whole, remains the priority.

¹¹ www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk/social-impact

Selecting the right activity

So, how do you go about selecting an activity or intervention that is right for your authority? There are a number of principles you need to consider ...

► Get the basics right

Waste, recycling and/or re-use services should be available and accessible (to all) and functioning well if you want residents and businesses to use them. New activities need to build on strong foundations. This doesn't mean that trials can't be delivered, or bespoke activities implemented, but some residents may be easily put off participating in something new if existing services aren't consistently delivered – food waste recycling is a common example here.

► Make it easy

This can be challenging, but it's important that you make your intervention easy to understand and participate in (remember the 'reward' requirements of behaviour change). Consider focusing on one action at a time, or if delivering multiple activities make them diverse to tap into different motivations and/or interests (e.g. food waste prevention and furniture re-use). Think about what you're already doing well and build on this to amplify your impact.

► Work collaboratively

Building good relationships with residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders will ease implementation. You may also find that you can facilitate activities or support other groups allowing you to make limited internal budget and resource go further. There may be existing groups with strong community relationships that you can work with.

► Understand your internal priorities

Being clear on what interventions would align with organisational priorities is key. If your authority is championing climate action, then selecting activities that focus on high carbon materials would support this. If priorities are local economic regeneration, then activities that support businesses and rejuvenation of the high street could be selected. If priorities are community and health based – such as tackling food poverty, lack of access to period products etc – then love food hate waste, surplus food redistribution and reusable period products could be a focus. Examples of the types of activity you could implement aligned to material type can be found in figure five.

Next, drill down further to identify potential activities most relevant to the specifics of your local authority. Table one provides pointers to help you narrow down your approach and you can use these to develop a shortlist.

Figure five: Examples of activities aligned to material streams

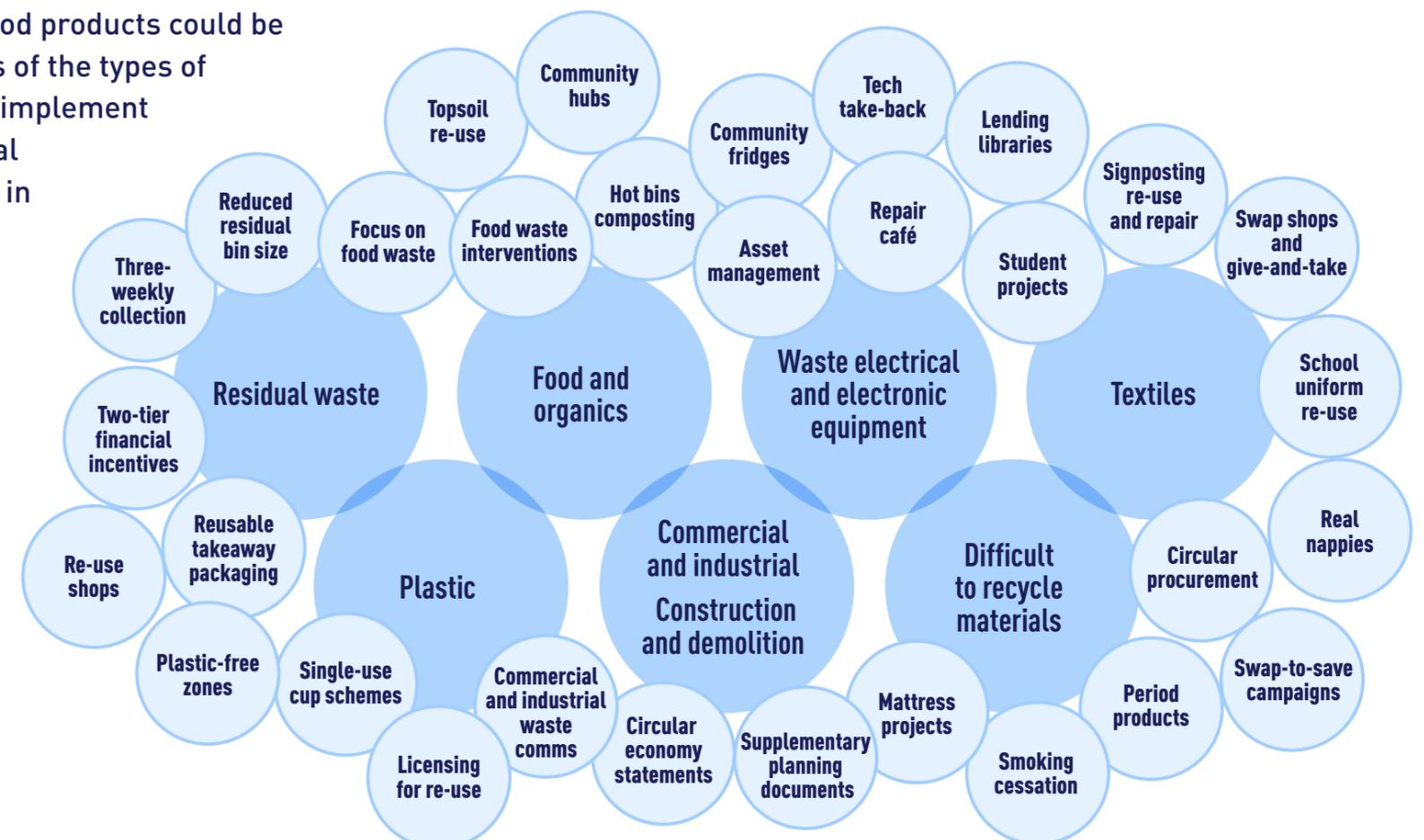




Table one: Guide to selecting an activity

Question	Points to consider	For example
What is your starting point?	Do you have existing activities in place that you'd like to build on or do you want to consider something new?	It may be easier and more cost effective to expand an existing scheme than to implement something new – e.g. expanding participation in a local cup re-use scheme through engagement, facilitation, signposting and other support.
Have you undertaken situational analysis?	Understanding what activities are happening both within your authority and in the community will help to reduce duplication of effort and could allow you to amplify your impact.	Reaching out to community networks and staff will help you to map existing activities. This could help with signposting, network development or targeting future activities.
What do you want to achieve?	Is your primary focus tonnage reduction, emission reduction, community engagement, social value etc? Although you're likely to get a number of benefits from an activity, understanding what you want to achieve can help you focus your efforts.	If your primary focus is emission reduction, you may want to target materials such as food waste or textiles. You may also be able to gain funding from your authority's climate team or work with climate volunteers.
What funding do you have available?	Understanding how much money you have, whether it's capital or revenue and whether it's available in-year or multi-year, will help you to consider whether you can implement an activity directly, work with partners or signpost. If the intervention has climate or health benefits, it may also be possible to gain funding from other departments.	If smaller budgets are available, you may want to consider investing in data gathering and analysis activities, such as waste composition. This will allow you to better target future activities. In addition, tapping into other funding sources may be possible if broader benefits can be demonstrated.
What staff resources do you have available?	Will you be able to deliver a project using capacity within your team or will you need to gain support from other stakeholders? Will you need a lot of volunteers? Over what timeframe will you need support?	If staff resource is an issue, then working with other stakeholders and allowing them to lead an activity may enable you to deliver more.



Nudging behaviour change to reduce consumption of single-use items

Signposting and promoting financial benefit of alternatives to single-use products

Norfolk County Council launched its Swap2Save campaign in March 2021, focusing on small changes residents make in the way they consume which will generate less waste and provide them with direct financial benefits. Targeting a range of single-use items, the messaging is clear, swapping out single-use products for more sustainable alternatives is all about ‘saving money and the planet’. For Norfolk County Council, the single-use items targeted by the campaign generate approximately 30,000 tonnes of waste annually, costing £3.47 million to dispose of every year¹² – so any reduction in waste will also generate savings in disposal costs for the authority.

A series of short films and a dedicated web page provide examples of everyday swaps which will generate financial savings for residents and through the swap mitigate against environmental consequences of the single-use item.

“We know what a huge burden single-use plastics and products place on the planet. With a global problem it can seem tough to know where to start to help make things better. Swap2Save helps us to think about some of the few small choices we make every day that cumulatively have the chance to make a really big difference.”

Kate Murrell

Waste Reduction and Recycling Manager

Communication around the campaign is ongoing, with various pushes on the messaging at different times of the year and targeting different groups across Norfolk.

The breadth of the campaign means different products can be used as the focus of the Swap2Save messaging, depending on the target audience.

There is also a dedicated initiative targeting single-use items in schools, with education packs of activities and an award scheme, building on the Swap2Save campaign. Initially launched for primary schools, packs have now been made available for secondary schools.

In addition, there is a resource for businesses, developed by Surfers Against Sewage and signposted through the Swap2Save campaign, providing guidance on changes they can make to address the use of single-use products. A case study of changes made at the council premises is also highlighted on the website.

Development

Research was conducted to review what single-use items residents were throwing away and consideration was given to what alternatives would be easily accessible in order to swap out the single-use item. Key to the swap was whether it would be economically viable – there had to be demonstrable financial benefits to make it likely for a significant proportion of residents to consider making the change.

For Norfolk County Council, in developing the campaign, a lot of care and consideration was taken over the accuracy of the claimed saving, to build up trust and ensure that any challenge to the messaging could be met with evidence and clear rationale.

The campaign was seen as a means to effectively nudge behaviour change, to build on the goodwill and interest of residents to make different choices in how they consume and the impact this has on the quantity of waste they generate for collection and, in turn, the environment as a whole.

The campaign has been running for two years and the focus for this summer is to continue to build on the messaging and to launch Refill Norfolk to facilitate further swaps away from single-use containers, particularly refilling drinks bottles, reusable coffee cups and food containers.

Results

The campaign was very positively received and generally perceived as a win-win scenario. Direct responses to social media posts, local radio interviews and events pointed to the fact that people were undertaking swaps and were inspired by the campaign. The films themselves were nominated and won a local media award.

Whilst it was relatively easy to monitor the outputs of the communications activities, it remained challenging to measure any direct outcomes of residents’ swaps in terms of recycling and disposal of waste and associated savings to the taxpayer. As recognised with many initiatives in this space, it is difficult to measure behaviour change and waste data is a complex picture influenced by a huge number of factors, that often cannot be attributed to a single campaign.

It’s worth noting overall that at an individual level, the benefits are realisable and direct, with clear and immediate outcomes. For Norfolk County Council, it is anticipated that as the Swap2Save campaign gains momentum and uptake amongst residents increases, this will have an impact on waste tonnage requiring collection and also littering of single-use items across the county.

Inspiration

Swap2Save is part of a suite of waste prevention and reduction activities in place across Norfolk. It provides signposting to residents and allows small changes to be made which collectively have the potential to have a significant impact on resource management and associated costs. The campaign remains ongoing, with the messaging constantly reiterated and the videos re-run time and again. This summer, the project is evolving further to include a focus on refill opportunities which requires further engagement with businesses and organisations operating across Norfolk and will also require engagement with visitors to the county. The Refill Norfolk campaign will bring its own set of challenges in terms of the engagement needed to ensure it’s a success, but it is considered that the Swap2Save campaign provides a strong foundation.

¹² www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2021/03/12-ways-to-swap2save-new-campaign-launching-today-aims-to-cut-single-use-product-waste

The importance of data

The importance of data cannot be understated. However, when budgets are tight and there's a political desire for action, it can be tempting to implement an activity without investing in data capture and analysis. A balance must be achieved, between visible action, making progress and securing data and information to underpin future planning and learning. It is well understood that good data will allow you to focus your efforts and potentially be more resourceful through targeting spend going forward.

The basics can be gathered through some simple low resource activities including:

- + Scrutiny of existing data including waste data flow, general returns, materials recycling facility (MRF) analyses, residual waste composition etc.
 - » What does a review of headline composition and tonnages highlight?
 - » Are there any year-on-year changes – e.g. more of a certain material or item?
 - » Are there any anomalies or spikes – e.g. increases in certain material streams after a holiday period or festival?
- + Waste operational feedback and simple composition observations
 - » What have the collection crew noticed – e.g. are you getting a lot of garden waste in your estates' bins, are there a lot of textiles after holidays?
 - » What items frequently appear in fly tips or at your household waste recycling centre (HWRC)?
 - » Are you able to do any bag splitting for review at the household waste recycling centre to understand what could be segregated for re-use or recycling?
 - » Is your materials recycling facility highlighting any specific contamination issues – e.g. laughing gas (nitrous oxide) canisters?

- + Re-use statistics
 - » Do you have granular data on bulky waste collections – e.g. any item categorisation?
 - » Do you know where local re-use outlets are located, both local authority and other?
 - » Do you know what residents do if they can't access re-use outlets?
 - » Do you know the number and type of items sold at any re-use shops you own or support?
 - » Do you have any data on the number and type of items disposed of that are not fit for re-use?
- + Customer service
 - » What complaints or enquiries come in around circular activities?
 - » What do people search for on your website – e.g. are they looking for re-use, repair or circular advice?
 - » Are you getting enquiries from other teams?

These headline observations and data could help you to identify material or item priorities for household or commercial waste. Ideally, a waste composition analysis study should be commissioned to provide you with accurate data. A small study could cost £25,000 to £40,000.

West London Waste Authority

Waste prevention decisions are data led within West London Waste Authority. Priorities are driven by waste composition analysis and then overlaid by other metrics including carbon emissions, cost, social value etc. This approach is used to rank activities and direct investment.

For non-waste department activities, you may want to review the following:

- + Procurement data
 - » Goods and services purchased by department – highest spend / highest quantity.
- + Carbon emissions analyses
 - » Any carbon emissions analysis conducted, particularly of scope 3 emissions¹³, although scope 1 emissions associated with any inhouse collection systems maybe relevant.
- + Tonnage and composition of materials disposed of by office or team
 - » Are a lot of single-use items being used in a particular area?
- + Gain feedback on circular activities that have been trialled or are being used – e.g. asset sharing, leasing, repair etc
 - » What have the barriers and benefits been – e.g. insurance requirements and need for skilled drivers or operators for shared equipment, or lack of understanding of alternative business models?
- + Policies and guidance where circular economy has been incorporated
 - » Are departments inserting requirements into contracts or as part of planning processes?

Any data gathered can be used to help inform your baseline and narrow your focus on which activities should be implemented.



Monitoring and evaluation

It is clear that the narrative needs to change – buying and using less needs to become normalised, and to do these activities there is a need to cover a wide range of stakeholders and material or item types. It should be noted that **not every intervention will yield impressive results, but can be used as door openers or enablers for other interventions and ways of thinking.**

Monitoring and evaluation should be a standard part of every project. For waste prevention or circular projects, there may be a number of different metrics that could be used beyond the standards tonnage diversion. Depending on the activity, you may wish to consider:

- + Carbon saved
- + Composition change
- + Awareness and declared behaviour
- + Uptake of circular activities
- + Jobs and volunteer positions created
- + Reduction in procurement spend
- + Percentage of policies, strategies and guidance containing reference to circular activities
- + Percentage of staff members and members of the public trained

Remember that the timeframes involved for some activities may need to be considered as part of the monitoring and evaluation approach – for example, construction and development activities may take a number of years.

There are a number of tools available to support monitoring and evaluation, calculate carbon and the wider benefits of circularity (re-use, repair, recycling, etc) including:

- + **The international network for social enterprises** active in the circular economy notably in the fields of re-use, repair and recycling has a number of resources showcasing the benefits of re-use and provides access to [an emissions calculator produced by a number of funders](#)¹⁴. The calculator covers clothes, furniture, appliances and a number of other items and shows equivalency in CO₂ and water.
- + **Zero Waste Scotland's** carbon metric allows users to [measure the whole life impacts of waste](#)¹⁵.
- + As part of their Waste Prevention Hub **WRAP** provide a [Benefits of Reuse tool](#) which looks at the environmental, financial and social benefits of re-use¹⁶. The hub also provides links to WRAP's extensive guidance on monitoring and evaluation which is used frequently by local authorities.
- + Community groups and funders can access the [Resource Community Impacts Tool](#)¹⁷ developed by **Resource Futures**. The tool allows users to make an estimate of the effects they are having on reducing waste, carbon, energy use and in making cost savings for individuals and the community.
- + Many of the **Interreg** projects provide carbon factors for re-use and other circular economy activities¹⁸.

- + The **Repair Café**¹⁹ have a free and easy to use carbon calculator which reports CO₂ emission savings resulting from product repairs. The calculator covers a range of items including bicycles, electricals, furniture, clothes and jewellery.
- + The **Reuse Network**²⁰ provide a simple tool that covers bulky items such as white goods and furniture. The tool allows you to understand households helped, household savings and carbon savings per item donated.

When using these tools, remember that they provide an estimate only so are useful to determine the scale of saving rather than the specific amount (for example, there are many different types of sofas out there and each one will save a different amount). Indicating an approximate saving and comparing it to a unit of measurement that your stakeholders will understand can be beneficial for communicating the benefits of circularity (e.g. X trees, or X cars removed from the road) and the need for change. Your climate change team may be working on calculating authority emissions, so it's worth speaking to them to understand whether they can help with data analysis.

¹⁴ reutilizayevitaco2.aeress.org

¹⁵ www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/what-carbon-metric

¹⁶ wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/monitoring-and-evaluation/tools-benefits-calculator

¹⁷ resource-cit.co.uk

¹⁸ www.nweurope.eu

¹⁹ www.repaircafe.org/en/new-tool-repair-cafe-carbon-calculator

²⁰ reuse-network.org.uk/our-members/impact-calculator

**“We don’t need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly.
We need millions of people doing it imperfectly.”**

— Anne Marie Bonneau aka The Zero Waste Chef



Driving change by department

Whilst we recognise that the structure of every local authority can vary, within each department there are a large number of opportunities to implement waste prevention and circularity actions.

The following sections showcase ideas for different types of activities.

Taking a coordinated approach across an authority is beneficial. Some authorities have developed their own circular economy strategies and action plans²¹, some have implemented activities within a wider climate action strategy. Coordination removes potential duplication and provides opportunities to amplify impact. Whatever the approach taken, it's important that staff understand what the circular economy is and how they and their team or department can contribute.

Raising awareness through training, webinars and team meetings can help you to identify what's already happening (but hasn't necessarily been identified as a waste prevention or circular activity) and what's planned for the future. Understanding more about the activities of a specific department can also help with the identification of new opportunities, as can using a simple checklist to prompt discussion, such as the one shown in figure six.

Figure six: Checklist for circularity discussions *Figure adapted from the 9Rs framework Kirchherr et al 2017²²*

Refuse	Making a product redundant Do you need to purchase a product at all? Is there a different way of achieving what you need to? Could you procure a service instead of a product? Or lease, rent or borrow an item from a different team, partner, authority or contractor?
Rethink	Making a product use more intensive Is the product modular? Does it allow for multiple uses? Could it be shared with others to maximise use?
Reduce	Consume less through efficient use Could a concentrated version be purchased? Could the amount used be reduced? Are less hazardous alternatives available?
Re-use	Re-use of functioning discarded products intended for another use Could the item be reused? Could a reused item be purchased instead of new?
Repair	Repair and maintenance of defects to keep original function Is all equipment maintained and regularly serviced? Are repairs conducted regularly?
Refurbish	Restore and update Are buildings refurbished instead of being demolished? Are refurbished goods purchased rather than new?
Remanufacture	Use parts in a new product with the same function Are items sent for remanufacture at end of life (as part of service contracts)?
Repurpose	Use products or parts in a new product with a different function Could items be used in different ways?
Recycle	Process materials to provide the same (high or low grade) quality Can the packaging or product be recycled at end of life? Is it made of easy to recycle materials? Are there return or take-back systems in place for difficult to recycle items?
Recover	Recover energy from materials at end of life If recycling or re-use is not possible, can the material be sent to energy-from-waste for treatment? Can landfill be avoided?

²¹ www.islington.gov.uk/environment-and-energy/climate-emergency/circular-economy
www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/east-dunbartonshire-circular-economy-strategy
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/business-and-trade/brighton-hove-circular-economy-action-plan-2020-2035

²² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320074659_Conceptualizing_the_Circular_Economy_An_Analysis_of_114_Definitions

Waste and resource management – environment

Waste prevention has traditionally been led by the waste and resources team within a local authority who have statutory duties related to waste management. A [wealth of advice is available on how to run activities such as real nappy campaigns, food waste prevention, composting etc](#)²³.

This approach mirrors Government, with [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#)²⁴ taking the lead on waste management, but circular economy being driven by [Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero](#)²⁵, showcasing the economic benefits, new business models and the need for greater resource efficiency (not just waste management).

More recently, circular economy is being adopted and these departments (alongside climate change) are championing the cause with residents, businesses and also internally across local authority departments.

An important role that waste and resource managers have is the ability to gather and analyse data on how stuff arises and what happens to it at end of life. This can help to inform a range of activities from material specific campaigns through to implementing circular procurement.

Working with residents

Potential activities:

- + Extended frequency collection of residual waste and reduced capacity of residual waste bin.
- + Bag splitting (or a no black bag policy) at household waste recycling centres to encourage separation of recyclables and identify opportunities for item re-use and repair.
- + Food waste prevention and composting – using citizen panels and gamification²⁶.
- + Community events for re-use – e.g. fashion swap shops, give and take days, children’s toy and book exchanges.
- + Communicate how to do more than recycling for residents that [want to become more circular](#)²⁷, this could include promoting events such as [Plastic Free July](#)²⁸ or [food waste action week](#)²⁹.

#InTheLoopGM

Recycle for Greater Manchester has recently launched a campaign called [#InTheLoopGM](#) to raise awareness of the circular economy and highlight what steps residents can take to help. The message is that many people in Manchester are ‘doing the right thing’ in terms of recycling, but that the more items which are recycled, the more a circular economy is achieved.

recycleforgreatermanchester.com/in-the-loop



SUEZ produced a [series of three guides](#)³⁰ on re-use and repair which cover re-use at household waste and recycling centres, encouraging repair solutions and the scale of the opportunity available for re-use (including return on investment).

²³ wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/waste-prevention-activities

²⁴ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs

²⁵ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero

²⁶ hoopproject.eu/hoop-trainers-shaping-the-circular-bioeconomy-through-play

²⁷ www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/do-more-than-just-recycle

²⁸ www.plasticfreejuly.org

²⁹ wrap.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/wrap-announces-food-waste-action-week-2023

³⁰ www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/news/list-of-publications



Prohibition of recyclables from black bags at the kerbside

Direct action to maximise recycling at the kerbside

Swansea Council made it easy to recycle, but with the [Keep It Out](#)³¹ campaign they made it difficult to NOT recycle. The approach taken mirrored the prohibition of recyclables in black sacks at household waste recycling centres.

Development

Swansea Council operate an alternate weekly residual waste collection service and residents are permitted to put out three black sacks of residual waste per fortnight. A comprehensive recycling service is provided, but from waste composition analysis it was known that high levels of recyclables remained in the residual waste.

Swansea ran a campaign called 'Keep It Out!' to inform residents they weren't permitted to put recyclables in their black sacks. The initiative had a direct impact on non and poor recyclers, and was not focused on the odd mistake, people trying their best or effective recyclers. Prior to the ban, a two-month campaign across a range of media (including a letter drop) was run to ensure residents were aware of what would be happening.

Recyclables are easy to see within sacks – there's no need to open them. Initially, six teams of two operatives were used. They would conduct pre-collection checks on the street, pick up a bag and shake it to listen for recyclables (the 'clink test') and look for cardboard or plastic shapes and feel the weight of the bag to check for excessive food waste.

The initiative included a four-stage engagement (education/enforcement) process, with follow up checks after each stage and thank you letters for recycling improvements.

Results

Following the first set of on-street checks (2019) across the authority:

- + Over 5,000 initial letters were issued
- + Only 292 notices were issued
- + 128 final warning letters were issued
- + 2 fixed penalty notices were issued
- + Increased recycling by 1.9%, reducing both residual tonnages by ~3,000 tonnes and cost savings on disposal.

Inspiration

In the press, it was labelled as an enforcement initiative, but really it was a campaign to encourage recycling. If people were struggling, officers would provide support.

Swansea have saved within the region of £300,000 on disposal, so the scheme can be self-financing and provides a good opportunity for trainees.

The COVID pandemic halted the initiative. However, Swansea are now considering refreshing the campaign.



Working with businesses

Local authorities and their partners that provide waste and recycling services to businesses have a good opportunity to highlight specific waste prevention activities that could save businesses money. A common service provided within waste contracts is a waste audit.

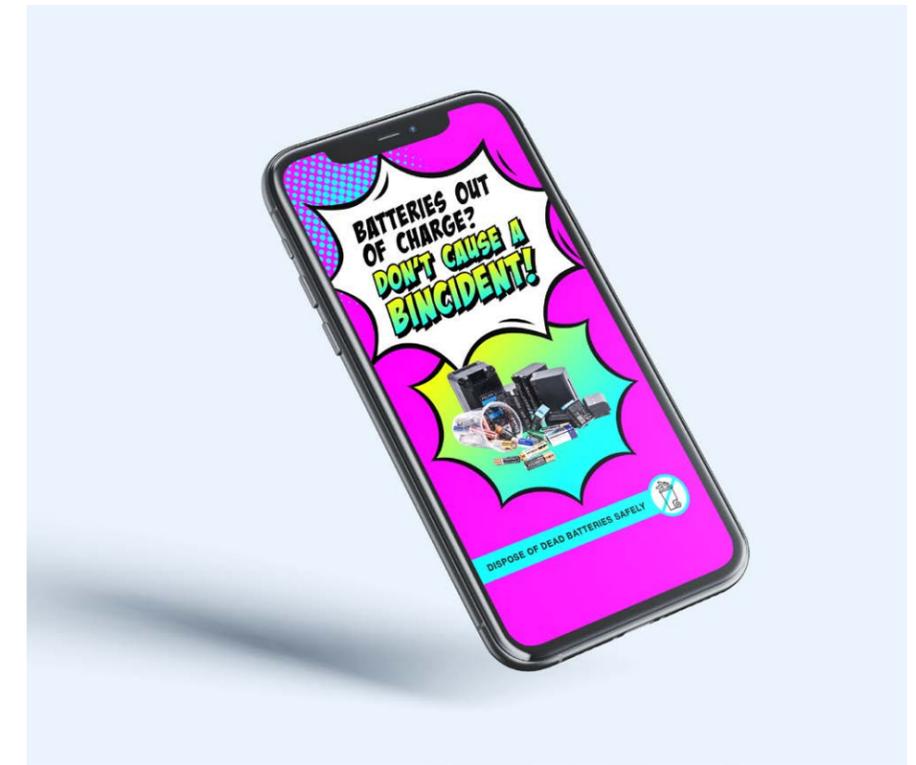
Even local authorities that don't offer commercial waste and recycling services can signpost opportunities for waste prevention with local businesses.

Westminster City Council provide waste prevention advice and guidance to their business waste customers via customer audits, downloadable playbooks and a monthly newsletter. This includes advice on employee engagement and sector specific information.



Potential activities:

- + Working with local business to provide support and advice on waste prevention and circularity.
 - » [Award scheme and support network](#)³²
 - » [Grants and support for local businesses](#)^{33,34}
 - » [Green markets](#)³⁵
- + Using waste composition and use data and operational insight to deliver better business waste management in town centres etc.
 - » [Creating standards](#)³⁶, working with [Business Improvement Districts](#), providing quick tips and audits³⁷ etc.
- + Signposting waste prevention / circularity advice – e.g. consolidating deliveries and using totes to reduce packaging waste.
- + [Sector specific](#)³⁸ or [regulation specific advice](#).^{39,40}
- + Event waste management – provision of services and advice to event organisers on waste prevention such as refill.



The **Environmental Services Association** launched a [summer fire prevention campaign](#)⁴¹ focusing on items that commonly cause fires when disposed of incorrectly, including batteries, flammable liquids, compressed gas canisters (including nitrous oxide), vape devices and barbecue or firepit ashes. These provide an additional opportunity to encourage waste prevention in businesses by shifting from single use to multi use (e.g. rechargeable batteries and refillable vapes) and by changing behaviour (e.g. returning canisters at end of life for refill, banning sale of disposable barbecues).

³² ccaslondon.co.uk

³³ www.islington.gov.uk/environment-and-energy/climate-emergency/circular-economy/circular-economy-grantees

³⁴ relondon.gov.uk/business

³⁵ www.westminster.gov.uk/licensing/markets-and-street-trading/greener-markets

³⁶ www.bristol.gov.uk/business/health-and-safety/business-waste-recycling/waste-improvement-for-businesses

³⁷ cleanstreets.westminster.gov.uk/services/general-waste-collections-westminster

³⁸ guardiansofgrub.com

³⁹ businesswales.gov.wales/sites/main/files/documents/NonDomesticPremisesRegulations-ResourcePack-EN.pdf

⁴⁰ relondon.gov.uk/business/news-events/food-that-doesnt-cost-the-earth

⁴¹ www.esauk.org/what-we-do/raising-standards/campaigns/summer-fires



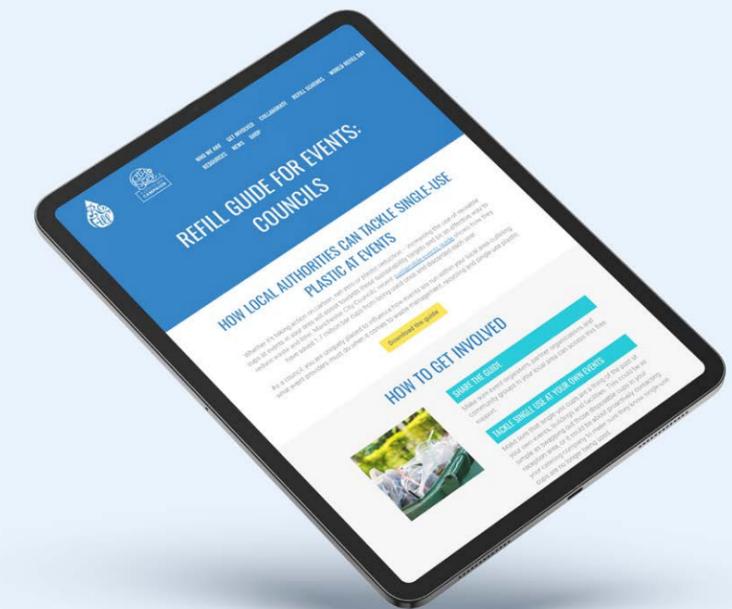
Licensing and environmental health

The scale of services provided by licensing and environmental health teams can vary widely. It's important to speak to the team to understand what day-to-day activities they conduct and identify opportunities for direct action, facilitating change or signposting and awareness raising.

Many professional bodies⁴² have resources available on environmental issues and the intersectionality with their discipline that can be signposted – for example, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health have recently developed a climate change hub and have included food waste and environmental protection on their website⁴³. Opportunities are also available to tap into existing forums and local business groups. It's crucial to seek advice on what activities are legally permissible, particularly for areas such as trading standards.

Potential activities:

- + Using licensing conditions to encourage circularity for premises and promotion, event and licensing activities.
 - » Reusables – e.g. reusable drinks containers, reusable or recyclable promotional and advertising items for events⁴⁴.
- + Signposting options for [takeaway packaging](#)⁴⁵ and providing waste prevention advice during environmental health inspections.
- + Identifying opportunities to reuse items seized by licensing teams or trading standards (where appropriate / legally permissible) – e.g. sale of hot food carts.
- + Encouraging housing landlords to be more circular.
 - » Signpost opportunities to [buy reused furniture](#)⁴⁶, work with local welfare assistance schemes, review opportunities to reuse items collected from void clearances, and consider providing vouchers for council run re-use stores to close the loop.
 - » Work with social housing providers to remove the requirement for [carpets to be changed for every tenancy](#)⁴⁷.
 - » Encourage methods to extend the life of mattresses and reduce fly-tipping or disposal – e.g. durability, mattress protectors, clean sleeping habits.
 - » Disseminating information via landlord forums, registration packs or [national organisations](#)⁴⁸.



[Refill – a City to Sea Campaign](#)⁴⁹ have some fantastic resources for local authorities on how to tackle single-use plastic and prioritise waste prevention at events.

The site has a number of case studies, downloadable templates and a savings calculator that can be used to build a business case. They suggest sharing the guide with licensing officers, so that they can incorporate appropriate licensing conditions for re-use.

⁴² instituteoflicensing.org, www.cieh.org, www.nationaltradingstandards.uk

⁴³ www.cieh.org/news/blog/2023/climate-change-hub-launched-to-support-environmental-health-professionals

⁴⁴ www.citytosea.org.uk/plastic-free-festivals

⁴⁵ www.citytosea.org.uk/takeaway-packaging-options

⁴⁶ reuse-network.org.uk

⁴⁷ www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-65596282

⁴⁸ www.nrla.org.uk/events/regional-meetings

⁴⁹ www.refill.org.uk/refill-guide-for-events/councils



Providing on-the-go alternatives to single-use at the point of sale

Trial of reusable cups within participating businesses in Hemsby

With funding from the Interreg 2 Seas FACET project, Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council introduced a reusable cup scheme in Hemsby. The design of the scheme is simple in that customers who chose a reusable cup as opposed to single use, pay a £2 deposit which is reimbursed when they return the cup to one of the participating cafes in Hemsby. The reusable cup is made from polypropylene which is durable and designed to be washed and reused many times and is fully recyclable. The lids are not part of the deposit scheme, mainly due to cost and hygiene considerations, and customers have a choice of purchasing a reusable silicone lid for £2 which is then theirs to keep and reuse, or 12oz recyclable take away lids are freely available and can be recycled following their use.

Councillor James Bensly, who runs the Beach Café in Hemsby, said

"The FACET community cup scheme for Hemsby is exactly what the tourism industry and local economy needs, a practical tool to help the visitors and local community in a more sustainable circular economy. This is a brave idea and one the businesses of Hemsby are embracing and we encourage others to follow suit."⁵⁰

Development

Following a notable rise in plastic waste, particularly takeaway packaging, coupled with a high density of food and drink outlets, Hemsby was identified as the ideal trial location for the reusable cup scheme. Delivered in partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council, supported by the University of Greenwich as a knowledge and research partner, FACET provided the funding to cover the costs of the reusable cups and lids, so that participating business had no upfront costs associated with the scheme.

Eight businesses signed up to the scheme – one dropped out in the initial stages due to washing concerns, but another business took its place. Each participating business was sent a starter pack which included 100 cups, 25 reusable lids and two posters to display within the business. The scheme launched in April 2022 and marketing assistance was provided by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Visit Great Yarmouth, who promoted the scheme via their social media outlets. Each business was also offered the opportunity to have their staff trained on the use of the cup.

Results

Participating businesses were asked to log the amount of disposable cups purchased over a period of time to develop a baseline against which the success of the scheme could be monitored. They were then asked to record how many transactions in relation to the reusable cups occurred – i.e. the number of deposits placed each day and the number of deposits returned – to track the use of the scheme.

There were some challenges in collecting the data, particularly during peak and busy times at the participating restaurants. However, it is estimated that over the six-month period of the trial, there was a 17% reduction in single-use plastic packaging used at the participating cafes and 10% cost reduction for the businesses involved.

Inspiration

The legacy of COVID made it challenging at first, as many businesses had shifted to single-use disposable cups, even for their dine-in customers, so the drive towards re-use was a real shift in behaviour for both the business and the customers. In addition, as a tourist area it wasn't straightforward to introduce the concept of deposit return – the communications had to be very clear in terms of where and how the cup could be returned and the deposit reimbursed. It was noted that as a concept it was simpler to introduce to locals and frequent users of participating cafes, as opposed to visitors to the town.

There was variability in quality and consistency of data recorded by participatory businesses. In addition, during peak and busy times staff often felt it was easier to serve drinks in single-use disposable cups rather than taking time to explain the scheme. In addition, the use of seasonal staff could impact on staff understanding and overall commitment. During an afternoon of data collection in August, it was found that staff had minimal awareness of the scheme, despite posters being displayed at business locations and featuring in the press.

After consulting with businesses towards the end of the project, consideration would be given towards a different model in any future trials or rollouts, offering a reusable cup that tourists can use during their stay and take home as a souvenir. This would address some of the return challenges experienced, but also provide the opportunity for the reusable cup to be retained for use outside of the Hemsby experience.

⁵⁰ www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/8406/Hemsby-Cup-launches-to-encourage-green-tourism-

Planning and development

Local development and capital build conducted by a local authority is a significant area of opportunity to influence in terms of waste prevention, re-use, recycling and increasing circularity. Providing advice on development can support residents and business (and internal teams) to rethink the development and construction process and implement more sustainable practices.

Planning authorities are already embracing the move to circularity, with London in particular leading the way with the requirement for Circular Economy Statements for referable developments which has been developed by the [Greater London Authority](#)⁵¹. A number of local authorities are developing supplementary planning guidance around sustainability themes that include waste and resources and circular economy principles.

Increasing circularity in local areas can also reduce total waste arisings which need to be considered as part of Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

Potential activities:

- + Development of [supplementary planning documents](#) or circular economy statement requirements to encourage developers to consider circularity⁵².
- + Developing or supporting a [materials exchange platform](#) for construction materials and items⁵³.
- + Procurement for [circular construction](#)⁵⁴.
- + Using [reclaimed construction materials](#) within developments⁵⁵.

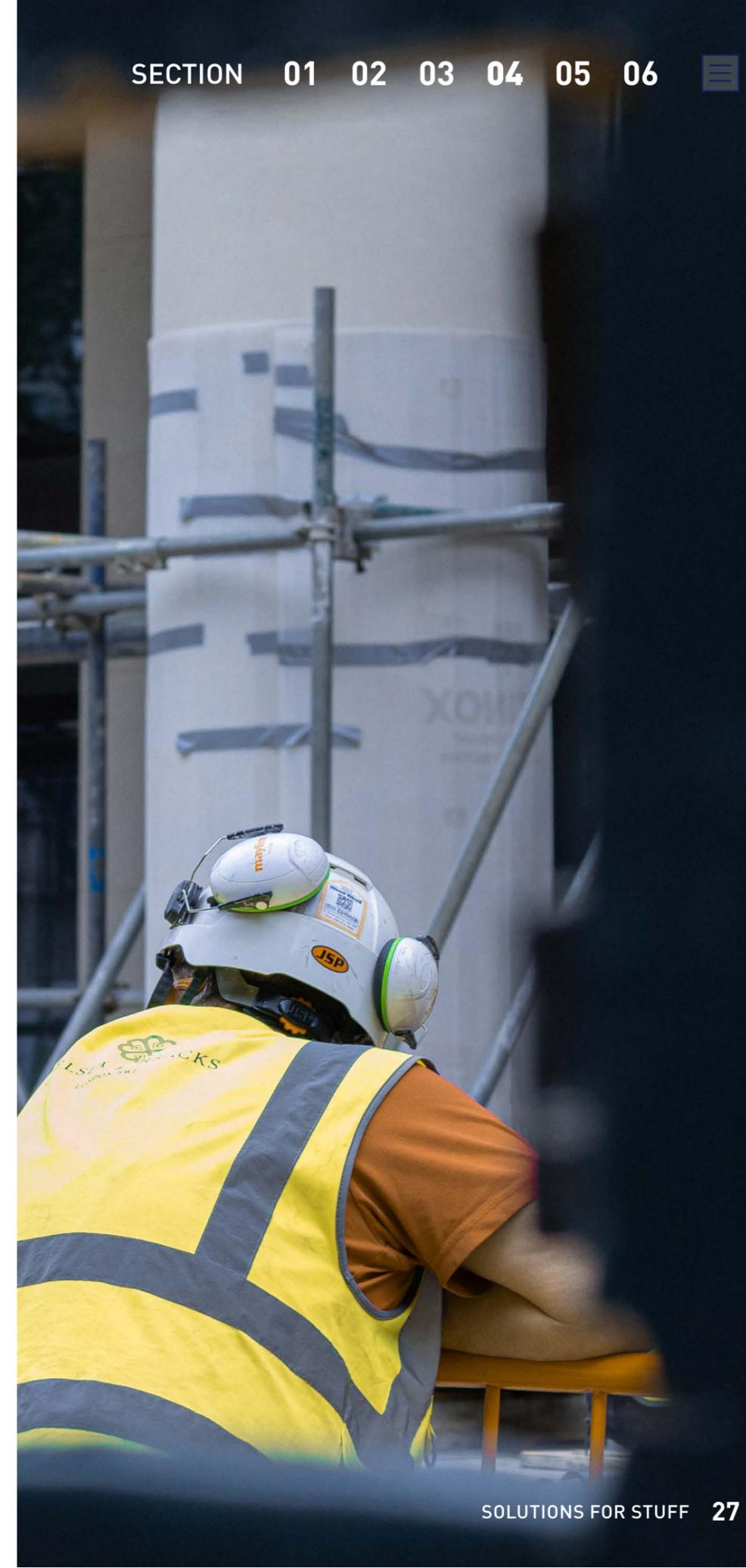
51 www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance/circular-economy-statement-guidance

52 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/planning_and_building_control/planning_policy_guidance/supplementary_guidance/supplementary_guidance.aspx

53 app.excessmaterialsexchange.com/mqUFWBvNwawg/7dlcKxtDyliQ

54 www.circuit-project.eu

55 relondon.gov.uk/resources/guide-sourcing-reclaimed-construction-materials



Place – public realm, highways, natural environment, grounds maintenance, regeneration

Place provides an opportunity to implement as well as showcase circular activities in a number of different ways.

Public facing services can provide an additional platform to raise awareness of what an authority is delivering, raise awareness of the issues and to showcase best practice. Services within this area are often delivered with partners, so it also provides the potential to procure circular services, develop joint initiatives and to trial alternative business models.

Potential activities:

- + Re-use of materials, items or parts to encourage resilience and re-use – e.g. using redundant fence posts or litter bins for planting beds.
- + Review existing specifications for materials to identify opportunities for re-use, including expanding colour pallet requirements (e.g. optimise opportunities for using reclaimed stock, such as reusable Portland Stone) and reviewing the quality requirements (e.g. recycled concrete).
- + Re-use of topsoil from building projects to protect biodiversity (note this requires suitable storage and may require soil testing).
- + Using multi-purpose modular vehicles – e.g. a street cleansing vehicle which can also be modified for winter services.
- + Using opportunities within the public realm to raise awareness of waste prevention and the circular economy – e.g. art installations, messaging on litter bins and collection vehicles, installation of water fountains.
- + Recycling street sweepings into added value material⁵⁶.



56 www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/our-offering/success-stories/our-references/a-concrete-solution-for-recycling-street-sweepings



Optimising re-use and repair of a problematic waste stream

Improving visibility and accessibility of repair and re-use of smart tech

Fixy is a re-use initiative in Somerset that raises awareness of the importance of using electricals sustainably. The project is delivered by Resource Futures on behalf of Somerset Council and works with Donate IT, a local community interest company that data-wipes and refurbishes IT for re-use and redistribution. Initial startup funding was provided by the Ecosurety Exploration Fund. Using a bespoke branded van, the Fixy project travels around the county raising awareness of and promoting repair and re-use opportunities. It supports existing repair groups and encourages the formation of new ones, signposts volunteer opportunities in this space and holds tech amnesties for donations of unwanted smart tech for re-use and recirculation back into the community.

“Repair and re-use is the way forward and it’s been great to see the impact that Fixy has had. We are committed to a greener, more sustainable Somerset. Our recycling rate has never been higher, but we want to move the conservation on to reusing and reducing.”

Sarah Dyke
Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change

Development

Following research into re-use funded by Somerset Waste Partnership (now Somerset Council), Resource Futures found that:

- + Community groups were often working at capacity, leaving little room for expansion.
- + Relevant skills and resources existed across the network, but due to poor inter-connectivity were not being best utilised.
- + For a rural county, transport was also a key issue for both the public and community groups.

The idea of the Fixy project, using a bespoke branded van as a mobile, awareness-raising opportunity for smart tech items, arose from the research. Through funding secured from the Ecosurety Exploration Fund, a pilot project was launched in May 2022. Resource Futures carried out initial meetings with those operating repair groups, assessing where and how they would like support, and the name of the Fixy project was chosen through a public vote to create early publicity and momentum. After ascertaining that a suitable electric vehicle that would fit the project needs was not available at the time, a second-hand Ford Transit was purchased. This was refurbished, customised inside and out including installation of roof solar panels to power tools needed for repair, and fully branded to create a moving showcase for the initiative. A full-time community coordinator was appointed to plan and attend events, deliver speaking engagements, liaise

with schools and businesses, and generally increase awareness of the opportunities of repair and re-use of electrical items. Through partnering with Donate IT, the project was also able to ensure the collection of many donated smart tech items from both new and established donation points, enabling items to be refurbished before being donated to those in need.

Results

To date, 3.7 tonnes of electrical items, equating to 1,500 products, have been collected via the Fixy project. Survey data has shown that public awareness of the importance of repair and re-use has been raised and that residents feel better informed about where and how they can get items repaired. In addition, residents have stated that they are more open to the idea of purchasing refurbished or second-hand items and are more aware of how old smart tech can be repaired and passed on to others. Next steps are to:

- + Expand the service to encompass more engagement activities targeted at youth groups.
- + Expand the service to reach beyond electricals.
- + Create more circular product loops using repair group activity to keep more items in use for longer.

Inspiration

This partnership project addresses many different issues, such as ensuring smart tech items are usefully retained in circulation for as long as possible, providing much needed assets to help address digital poverty and to drive more sustainable attitudes to electrical items across Somerset. Whilst the funding has come to an end, there is temporary funding in place to cover the next six months of operation and plans are in place to secure the support needed.

The project published a detailed [Impact Report⁵⁷](#) at the end of the pilot phase – this included details on how the project was set up, along with key results, lessons learned and best practice approaches to help others replicate project aspects to build positive change.

“Fixy provides an ideal tool to start new conversations and has proved itself capable of achieving high level impact in raising repair and re-use knowledge across a range of audiences. Through publicising the result of our work, we hope to help others make the repair and re-use of electricals more accessible and take this key topic from ‘niche to norm’.”

Sarah Hargreaves
Behaviour Change Lead
vat Resource Futures



Procurement

Under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, local authorities are required to consider how they can deliver additional economic, social and environmental benefits for the community when procuring goods and services, and how you can act to secure that improvement. Many have responsible and sustainable procurement policies and increasingly specific circular economy requirements are being incorporated.

Potential activities:

- + Develop a circular procurement policy for suppliers or include circular requirements within an existing policy.
- + Initiate simple circular and wider sustainable procurement activities, such as [banning the purchase of certain single-use items](#)⁵⁸, requiring recycled content, investing in collection containers and bins that can be refurbished, requiring staff to check the asset register prior to purchasing new items.
- + Review all contracts (e.g. education, information and communication technology, leisure) to understand whether there are circular opportunities and how they [align to climate action](#)⁵⁹.
- + Provide training for staff on circular procurement and opportunities for leasing or asset sharing agreements to raise awareness of what's possible – e.g. hook lift vehicles for underground bins, asset sharing equipment with other authorities.
- + Reflect on the financial changes on budget profiles required if capital spend on assets is replaced by revenue spend for leasing.

The [Interreg CircPro](#)⁶⁰ programme has a wealth of material available on procurement including training materials and guidance on procurement for furniture, textiles, construction, infrastructure, information and communication technology, and common single-use items. The [Blueprint Model pages](#) also contain several local authority case studies⁶¹. [Business in the Community](#) also has an easy-to-use guide which features case studies from local authorities and business⁶².



58 www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/our-offering/success-stories/our-references/supporting-surrey-county-councils-single-use-plastics-strategy

59 www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/lb-hammersmith-and-fulham-climate-implications-toolkit

60 projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/circpro

61 projectblueprint.eu/model/procurement

62 www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/circular-procurement

Asset and facilities management

Local authorities own a large number of assets ranging from buildings through to equipment and fleet. Priorities for a circular economy would be to maintain assets so that they last for longer, share (or lease) equipment where possible and maximise the use of existing assets.

Potential activities:

- + Signpost local repair and re-use organisations to residents and businesses.
- + Ensure regular maintenance and repair of equipment and fleet to extend life.
- + Maintain a [central register](#) of goods and equipment (asset register) that can be reused to prevent waste⁶³.
- + For building stock, consider whether underutilised assets could be used in a different way, including community spaces or space for storage of items for re-use, also consider opportunities for the night-time economy.
- + Review the estate to identify opportunities for storage of materials and items during redevelopment activities – e.g. covered storage.
- + Use concentrated cleaning products, reduce single-use items and implement green cleaning approaches that reduce water and material consumption.
- + Consider opportunities for sustainable uniforms and personal protective equipment including items designed for longevity – e.g. removable badge rather than embroidered logo – ease of repair, re-use and recycling.
- + For refurbishments, consider using [leftover paint](#), furniture and fit out equipment⁶⁴.

⁶³ www.warp-it.co.uk

⁶⁴ communityrepaint.org.uk





Development of a repair directory in Wales

Online web directory signposting local repair businesses

The Repair Directory⁶⁵ is an online tool to make it easy and quick for people to find a reliable 'repair shop' in their local area. The users can locate, within any of the 14 Collaborating Local Authorities in Resource Efficiency (CLAIRE) Wales Council areas, a 'repair shop' where they can take electrical and electronic items, bicycles, clothing, furniture and other equipment to be repaired.

The users input their postcode or town, a radius and an item to repair into the online platform and reliable repair shops will be displayed on a map with address, contact details, directions and information on what items can and cannot be accepted for repair.

Sharing this information will enable members of the public to avoid their items becoming a waste and will extend the lives of otherwise disused products.

Development

The Repair Directory is a direct outcome of the collaborative work between Resource Efficiency Wales (REW) and Welsh local authorities. Resource Efficiency Wales developed, maintains and updates the Repair Directory on behalf of Welsh local authorities.

The production of the Repair Directory was funded by the Welsh Government through the Green Recovery Circular Economy Fund 2020-21 (COVID Reconstruction: Repair and Re-use Activities in Welsh Town Centres). Ongoing maintenance and updating of the directory and site are met by Resource Efficiency Wales on behalf of all CLAIRE Wales Councils. The other partner on the directory is The Restart Project⁶⁶. They run a repair directory in London, focusing on repairers of electrical and electronic products. The Welsh directory makes use of the same software developed by The Restart Project. They also advised Resource Efficiency Wales on data collection, data quality and communication.

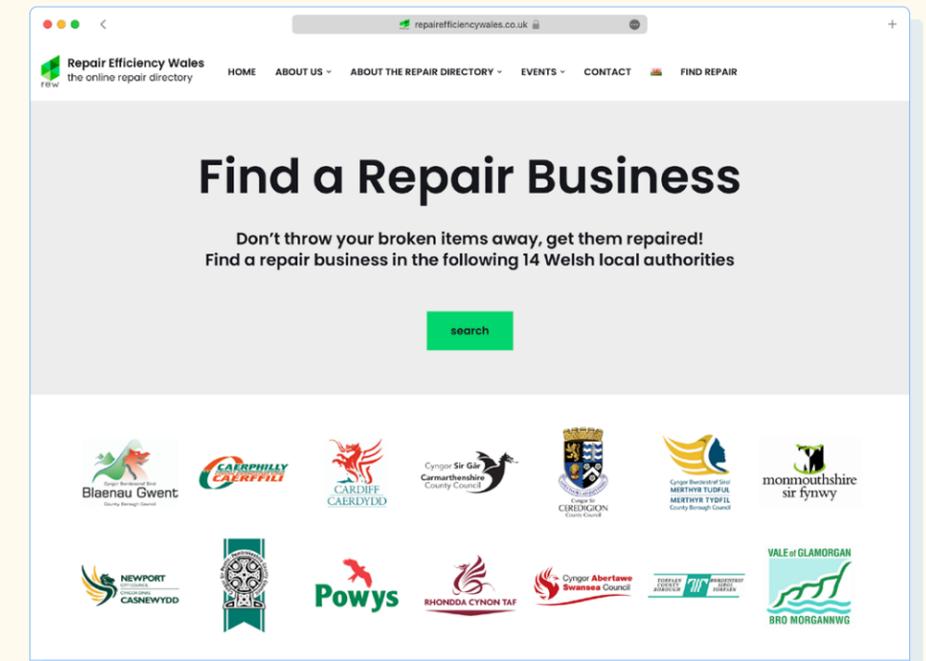
Results

The businesses listed in the Repair Directory are selected 'reliable' repair businesses, with the following set of criteria is used to gauge reliability:

- + The business has a trading address.
- + The business has 80% or more positive online reviews, with a minimum of five reviews. The directory aims to increase this to a minimum of 10 reviews.
- + A criteria on warranty should be introduced soon, so listed businesses provide at least a one-month warranty on repairs.

The participating councils identify the businesses listed from their authority area and promote the directory on their individual council websites.

The largest proportion of the funding required was used to develop the website and tailor the existing software. Some funding is used to maintain the site, promote it and administer it.



Inspiration

The directory was launched in April 2021, a period when there were still some COVID restrictions in place. Although traffic to the website can be quantified, there is currently no data on conversion – i.e. how many people identify a repair shop and go on to use their services. Options are being explored for user surveys and feedback from shops to assess usage.

For further information, contact support@repairefficiencywales.co.uk

⁶⁵ repairefficiencywales.co.uk

⁶⁶ therestartproject.org

Health and wellbeing

Teams that work across health and wellbeing aren't necessarily an obvious fit with circular economy activities, but they provide excellent opportunities to implement complementary activities.

In addition, there is the opportunity to build upon behaviour change initiatives across the different priorities and optimise their impact on a local level. The NHS sees [social prescribing](#)⁶⁷ – an approach that connects people to activities, groups and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing – as a key component of universal personalised care. This can include [green social prescribing](#)⁶⁸ which includes nature-based interventions and activities, such as community gardening and food growing.

Potential activities:

- + Smoking cessation clinics – provide litter pouches and encourage cessation to reduce cigarette litter. Work with local Business Improvement Districts to understand smoking litter patterns and where additional bins or smoking cessation advice would be beneficial. Add licensing conditions for night-time economy.
- + Active walking and exercise – encouraging litter picks, community garden support including compost training.
- + Healthy eating – promoting the Love Food Hate Waste campaign.
- + Promotion of surplus food redistribution apps and community projects, such as the [Peoples Fridge](#)⁶⁹.
- + Health facilities and sports centres – providing a circular approach to services and highlighting opportunities to asset share and lease – e.g. rental of sports equipment.
- + [Men sheds](#)⁷⁰, [repair café](#)⁷¹, knit and natter or other craft groups – provide opportunities to learn valuable repair skills and to reuse materials, as well as providing social wellbeing and intensive use of spaces – e.g. libraries.
- + Community outreach – work with schools and local police to raise awareness of the dangers of laughing gas (nitrous oxide) and vapes to reduce use and consequently littering.



Breaking Ground

Greener Together and Breaking Ground

[Hubhub](#)⁷² have used a co-creation approach to support communities to use green solutions to tackle social issues they identified, such as lack of community cohesion, lack of safe and more accessible spaces for play and exercise, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping. After a pilot project ([Greener Together](#)⁷³) with residents in Alma Street, East London, further projects have been developed in Camden, Ealing, Greenwich and Newham, with Hubhub supporting training of community leaders.

- ✓ Creating a beautiful wildflower allotment and installing raised beds for growing herbs and veggies.
- ✓ Securing funding to transform the neglected Alma Street Play Area into a state-of-the-art multi-use games area.
- ✓ Shining a spotlight on some of the environmental and social inequalities facing residents and steps taken to address these.

⁶⁷ www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing

⁶⁸ www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/green-social-prescribing

⁶⁹ www.peoplesfridge.com/our-partners

⁷⁰ menssheds.org.uk

⁷¹ www.repaircafe.org

⁷² hubhub.org.uk/breaking-ground

⁷³ www.greenertogether.co.uk



Education

Within education, there are a range of specific opportunities to work collectively to support more circular initiatives and to focus on better resource use through training, collaboration, facilitating and also direct action within the community.

There are also opportunities via direct service provision to educational establishments – e.g. using provision of a recycling service to highlight opportunities for waste reduction. Procurement teams can also provide advice on the inclusion of circular contract clauses within supply contracts.

Potential activities:

- + Promoting skills for a more circular economy to encourage future school leavers to work for local authorities or within the wider environmental sector.
- + Implementing educational outreach programmes – building on recycling to highlight waste prevention, circularity, re-use and refill and how these link to climate change.
- + Encouraging schools to organise uniform re-use events or expand this to costume re-use (world book day), clothing recycling or sports equipment re-use.

- + Using libraries as a multifunctional space to provide information, run community training and host tool libraries or a [library of things](#)⁷⁴.
- + Work with local universities and colleges to support with waste prevention activities, including end-of-term donation of items and resale, clothing swaps, tool libraries, surplus food redistribution – e.g. food waste prevention and sharing apps, such as [Too Good to Go](#)⁷⁵ and [Olio](#)⁷⁶.

Hackney Clothes Swap Shops are free community exchange events, which offer residents the opportunity to swap unwanted, but good condition, clothes and accessories in exchange for something else they need. The swaps are an effective way of encouraging textile re-use within the local community, preserving valuable resources and diverting clothes from direct disposal. Clothing repair sessions are also provided and sustainable fashion is promoted – e.g. using second-hand clothes shops, upcycling, the importance of organic cotton, rental schemes, etc.

Since 2019, 12 swaps have taken place which collected and exchanged approximately 8,000 pieces of clothing. This has prevented over 11 tonnes of good quality clothing items from going to direct disposal and saved 101 tonnes of carbon emissions. Nearly £112,000 savings have been passed to the community, with over 1,500 individuals participating in these swaps.

Library of Things

In 2021, an object-lending library – the Dalston Library of Things – was established by Hackney Council in partnership with the [Library of Things](#). Residents can hire items from this library that they would otherwise have to purchase. The scheme helps minimise unnecessary waste, reduces the ecological footprint of the borough, frees-up space in people's homes and avoids the need to purchase items that are used infrequently.

The Dalston Library of Things provides 49 high-quality items for residents to hire and is the largest of the six Library of Things across London. Residents can select items from categories such as cleaning, cooking, DIY tools, gardening, electronics, furniture, medical equipment, music, sports, toys and games, and hobbying. Residents hire items at an average of 7.5% of the retail price. The Dalston Library of Things provides a 25% concession rate discount to students, pensioners, people not working and households with no or low income. By March 2023, the Dalston Library of Things had recorded 200 borrows, the highest any Library of Things location has recorded in a single month.

⁷⁴ www.libraryofthings.co.uk

⁷⁵ www.toogoodtogo.com

⁷⁶ olioapp.com



Comprehensive targeting of further and higher education students to initiate behaviour change

Signposting and facilitation of positive waste prevention, re-use and recycling behaviours amongst 15 to 24-year-olds in West Sussex

The Higher Education Recycling Project, launched by West Sussex Waste Partnership, aims to improve engagement with 15 to 24-year-old residents, to inspire waste prevention and empower both students and staff to demonstrate positive recycling and waste reduction behaviours. Working directly with further and higher education establishments, the project got underway in February 2022 and ran until June 2023, supported by Chichester District Council and led by the West Sussex County Council Waste Prevention Officer and Senior Project Officer.

"At Chichester College Group, we are committed to taking steps to reduce waste and increase recycling across all of our campuses. That's why we're working closely with the West Sussex Waste Partnership to help us look at ways we can increase our understanding of waste prevention and highlight how we can all do our bit for our environment – whether that's here at college or at home."

Jon Rollings
Chief Operating Officer
for Chichester College Group

Development

Working collaboratively, West Sussex Waste Partnerships have supported the development of a comprehensive programme of actions and activities for implementation

across the participating further and higher education establishments, namely Chichester University and the Chichester College Group consisting of Brinsbury, Chichester, Crawley, Haywards Heath and Worthing. The actions and activities are a blend of operational interventions – such as improved allocation and location of collection containers, signage and instructions relating to optimising service use to increase diversion from residual waste streams – but also behaviour change and nudge interventions focused on consumption habits.

A project team was set up with sub teams reaching across services within these establishments, including student unions, catering and premises teams. Standardised services were introduced which mirror what is available to the residents across West Sussex, and specific waste streams – such as textiles and food waste – have been targeted with bespoke interventions. For example, the catering departments have imposed a 30p charge on takeaway containers and now offer reusable crockery as the default choice, events to promote clothes swaps are in place, and engagement to support re-use platforms and food sharing apps is underway. In addition, regular waste prevention information stalls are in place across all campuses.

Results

This project is still very much ongoing, but monitoring protocols include waste composition analysis of residual bins, with waste data recorded to review the quantity of different materials within the waste streams during and after the project. In addition, in-person surveys and online surveys are taking place to review behaviour change in terms of understanding, awareness, attitudes and to learn what motivates students to recycle more and waste less.

Initial results look promising, highlighting a decrease in edible food, garden waste, paper and comingled recycling at all sites. In general, most sites saw a decrease in total food waste, card, waste electrical and electronic equipment, and a significant drop in coffee cups.

The success of the bin stickers at Worthing College has resulted in one of the 1100L general waste bins being exchanged for a 1100L recycling bin.

"Since we installed the new bin stickers, we noticed a significant reduction in contamination and an increase in recycling."

Premises Manager, Worthing College

As food waste continues to be the highest material within the residual stream, the team aim to roll out phase two of the programme focusing solely on reducing food waste through trialling student-accessible food waste bins, increasing awareness and promoting food waste reduction behaviours.

Inspiration

Although there is a lot of experience in West Sussex of working with education establishments, this has been at the primary and, more recently, secondary level. The 15 to 24 age group is challenging to engage with, and waste prevention, re-use and recycling practices at further and higher education establishments have not always been a priority. The project focuses on working collaboratively across the organisations, removing barriers to participation by improving services and raising the profile of waste prevention and re-use opportunities. It's also worth noting that one of the principle goals behind the development of the programme of actions and activities, is that positive behaviours will become embedded in the staff and students at the further and higher education establishments, and these behaviours will be replicated in their homelife.



“The most environmentally friendly product is the one you didn’t buy.”

**— Joshua Becker, Founder
Becoming Minimalist**



Shared financial benefits driving change

Formal agreement to share financial savings between two-tier authorities working collaboratively to reduce treatment and disposal costs

The Devon Authorities Shared Savings Scheme is a financial based incentive for two-tier authorities, driven initially by the need to stimulate more concerted effort to improve recycling performances, reduce overall waste tonnages and reduce costs. It operates on a model whereby a tonnage baseline is set for each district council and the costs for managing that tonnage, through the relevant treatment/disposal contract in place, is agreed. Any significant change in waste collection service is remodelled and treatment/disposal costs reviewed, and any financial savings identified compared to the baseline are shared equally between the district and the county council. Service changes stimulated by the scheme have included an expansion of kerbside collection of dry recyclables, a reduction in collection frequency of residual waste and separate collection of food waste and garden waste.

Development

Acknowledging that whilst service changes at the district level require investment, the subsequent savings in treatment and disposal costs could be significant for the county council. The concept of a scheme to share savings generated was seen as a means to incentivise action at the district level, which would result in reductions in residual waste requiring management at the county level, as well as cheaper organic waste treatment options. Established in 2016, a working party was initially set up, consisting of officers across the two tiers, to negotiate and agree the principles which ultimately led to a legally binding agreement. With a lifespan of 10 years, the agreement aims to give district councils confidence to invest in new collection systems, providing financial assistance with making the necessary changes to secure performance improvements leading to reductions in residual waste.

Results

Over the first four years of the scheme, £6.8 million worth of savings have been made, of which £3.4 million has been shared back with the five district councils who have made use of the agreement. There has been a combined reduction in waste arisings of 25kg/person (6%) and a 7.3% increase in the combined recycling rate from 47.9% to 55.2%.

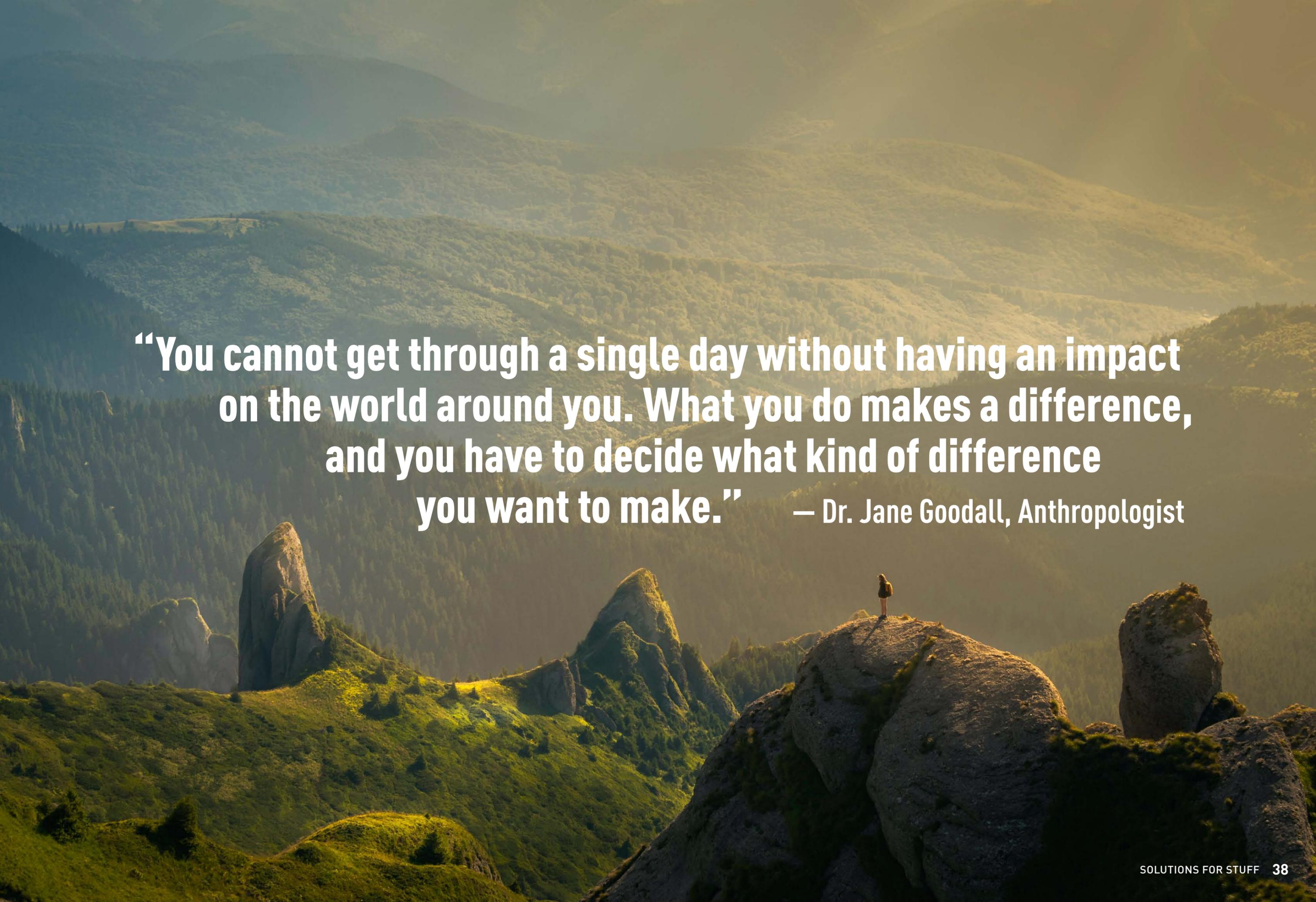
“The scheme has delivered service improvements for Devon’s residents as well as reducing costs to the public purse – a real win-win situation. It has also led to more collaborative working and enabled Devon Authorities to be well placed to meet the requirements of the Environment Act.”

Wendy Barratt
County Waste Manager,
Devon County Council

Inspiration

Two-tier authority areas can sometimes struggle to work together, as investment or service change made by one authority can significantly impact on the other and benefits of service change may not be shared. However, working collaboratively can produce a much better outcome for both authorities, as well as for the public purse. The scheme has given district councils the confidence to invest in performance improvements, knowing that there will be a level of county council financial support available as a result.

The model is set up such that it would be easy for other authorities to replicate once they have reached agreement in principle as to how the derived savings from their proposals are to be shared.

A person is standing on a large, rounded rock formation in the foreground, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range. The mountains are covered in dense green forests and are shrouded in a soft, golden light, suggesting either sunrise or sunset. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” — Dr. Jane Goodall, Anthropologist



Time for action

This report has focused on all aspects of local authority areas of responsibility and has provided a number of example activities, references and case studies where local authorities and their partners and contractors can:

- + have a **direct impact** on consumption, waste generation and resource use
- + **facilitate change** through enabling activities
- + **signpost and raise awareness** of opportunities and options for their customers to do things differently

Local authorities are **powerful changemakers**, each already delivering a number of circular activities as part of approaches to resources and waste management.

The circular economy provides the framework to think more systematically about 'stuff' and how we can reduce consumption. This challenges authorities to reflect internally beyond waste and resources services to identify opportunities for change.

Like many organisations, silos can exist, and it's crucial to break free from these and raise awareness internally of the benefits of going circular with other departments, as well as externally with residents and businesses. This report creates an opportunity to reach out to other teams, find out what circular activities are already underway and where new opportunities exist. Action right across an authority will ultimately have an impact on waste arisings, reduce costs and provide social and environmental benefits.

We recognise that there's an environmental imperative to act and bring about change, but local authorities face significant financial and resource challenges. Examples have shown us that diversity can stimulate innovation and drive the need to collaborate, underpinning action and progress towards a circular economy. Starting the journey by prioritising action where it's going to garner the most support, achieve the greatest visibility or make the most impact is key, as is maximising support across departments to make the most of opportunities.

**“If everyone is a changemaker,
there's no way a problem can outrun a solution.”**

— Bill Drayton, Social entrepreneur



References

The following table of references is designed to assist you in shortcutting your waste prevention research. It provides examples of new and more established waste prevention activities which are supported by detailed case studies or links to further information.

	Focus	Target group	Impact	Impact level	Reasoning	Ease of implementation	The why	Social value	Local economic development	References
Asset management Developing an asset management register and policy for sharing assets internally and with other authorities.	Circularity	Local authority	Re-use, consumption reduction	Medium	Reduced consumption of common office items.	Medium	Understanding existing assets can help to reduce new purchases. For bespoke or high value items, it also offers the opportunity of reducing costs through sharing.	Y	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Warp It The resource redistribution network ▶ Community RePaint
Construction and demolition resource sharing platforms Signposting / supporting platforms for construction and demolition materials and asset sharing / re-use.	Re-use	Businesses	Re-use of materials and items	Medium	Heavy materials and items commonly disposed of during development can be reused.	Low	Opportunities to reuse materials and items across developments.	N	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Marketplace Providers Material Reuse Portal ▶ Excess Materials Exchange
Circular economy statements / Supplementary planning guidance Adopting circular economy requirements as part of the planning process.	Circularity	Businesses	Reduction in construction and demolition waste, increase in re-use, design for circularity.	High	Direct action, potential for significant waste and carbon savings.	Medium	Proven long-term intervention for reducing construction and demolition waste and implementing circularity in the built environment.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ London Plan Guidance Circular Economy Statements ▶ Tower Hamlets Supplementary Guidance ▶ City Corporation to consult on carbon planning guidance article
Circular procurement Implementing circular procurement processes.	Circularity	Local authority	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	High	Impact dependent on item/service procured.	Low	Circular procurement will drive a reduction in consumption, use of alternative business models (asset sharing, leasing etc) and re-use of items.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CircPro Interreg Europe ▶ The BLUEPRINT Model ▶ Circuit Circular Construction in Regenerative Cities ▶ Business in the Community Circular Procurement ▶ ReLondon guide to sourcing reclaimed construction materials ▶ LB Hammersmith and Fulham: Climate implications toolkit
Commercial waste prevention advice Provision of advice and waste audits to commercial waste customers.	Residual waste reduction	Businesses	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Low	Strengthens relationship with customers and highlights cost saving opportunities.	N	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WRAP Optimising commercial waste collections



	Focus	Target group	Impact	Impact level	Reasoning	Ease of implementation	The why	Social value	Local economic development	References
Community fridges Signposting community fridges.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste.	Medium	Proven to be effective where it's been targeted.	Medium	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community fridge map ▶ The people's fridge
Community hubs Working with community hubs to divert surplus and rescued food, and teach cooking skills.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste.	Medium	Reasonable take-up evidenced in target group.	Medium	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Signposting and facilitating opportunities to redistribute food and prevent waste generation ▶ UKHarvest NourishEd ▶ WRAP Household Waste Prevention Hub ▶ Wen Food partnership
Developing sustainability supplementary planning documents for circularity Developing clear guidelines for developers on circularity requirements – e.g. re-use, refurbishment, limiting demolition.	Residual waste reduction	Developers	Reduction in residual waste, reduction in construction and demolition waste, increase in re-use, increase in recycling, product life extension, design for modularity, design for disassembly.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Medium	Outlining local authority expectations will help drive/require developers to consider circularity.	N	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ City of London Sustainable development planning requirements ▶ Waverley Borough Council Climate Change and Sustainability Supplementary Planning
Hot composting bin Divert food and garden waste from residual waste stream where no source segregated collection exists for these waste streams.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste.	Low	Restricted to rural areas / properties with large gardens.	Medium	Works well for rural areas where food waste collection is currently cost prohibitive.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Exploring opportunities to manage unavoidable food waste in rural areas ▶ East Sussex County Council Guide to home composting
Household waste recycling centre re-use shops Developing or facilitating an on-site re-use shop at household waste recycling centres	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Increased levels of reuse, reduction in residual waste.	Medium	Not everyone uses household waste recycling centres or purchases reused goods.	Medium	Increases accessibility for residents to buy reused goods. Diverts waste.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ SUEZ A central role for re-use
Licensing for hospitality re-use schemes Encouraging re-use / refill through provision of licensing guidance for hospitality.	Re-use / Refill	Hospitality	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Low	Targets single use.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Refill Guide for events ▶ Institute of Licensing ▶ Chartered Institute of Environmental Health ▶ National Trading Standards
Material specification Revisiting specifications for materials used in public realm/highways to encourage re-use – e.g. Portland stone.	Circularity	Local authority	Re-use, consumption reduction.	Medium	Frequency of requirement. Advice for developers, but intervention for local authorities.	Medium	High standards of specifications can mean that materials are wasted and cannot be reused. Changing specifications can help.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ellen MacArthur Foundation Circular Buildings Toolkit ▶ Croydon Council Public Realm Design Guide



	Focus	Target group	Impact	Impact level	Reasoning	Ease of implementation	The why	Social value	Local economic development	References
Period product advice Signposting advice on reusable period products.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Low	Targets single-use plastics.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Zero Waste Scotland Trial Period ▶ Wen Environmental Resources
Plastic free zones Encouraging local businesses to take part in single-use plastic free zones.	Residual waste reduction	Businesses	Reduction in residual waste.	High	Scalable	High	Targets single-use plastics.	N	N	▶ SUEZ Supporting Surrey County Council's single-use plastics strategy
Real nappies Providing nappy kits and signposting advice.	Re-use	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	Low	Take-up may be limited.	Medium	Provides opportunities for families to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	N	▶ WRAP Real nappies
Reduced frequency residual waste collection Reducing residual waste capacity to encourage waste prevention and increase recycling.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste.	High	Authority-wide intervention.	High	Proven intervention for reducing residual waste and increasing recycling.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Zero Waste Partners Recycle for Scotland Reduced Frequency Toolkit ▶ WRAP Comparing the cost of collection schemes ▶ Extended Frequency Residual Waste Collections
Reduced residual waste bin size Reducing capacity within the residual waste bin – e.g. reducing from 240l to 180l.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste.	High	Authority-wide intervention.	High	Proven intervention for reducing residual waste and increasing recycling.	N	N	▶ WRAP Driving greater consistency in household recycling
Reductions in litter as a consequence of delivering a smoking cessation campaign Working with health teams to provide information on littering and cigarette butt pouches.	Litter reduction	Residents	Decreased levels of littering, reduction in residual waste.	Low	Low intervention population.	Low	Litter prevention opportunity, targeted engagement.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ESA Fire prevention campaign ▶ City of London Give up smoking
Repair directory Searchable directory for local repair businesses.	Repair	Local authority	Product life extension.	Low	A referral may not result in action.	Medium	Highlights local opportunities for repair.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Repair Efficiency Wales ▶ Unbroken Solutions Resources
Reusable takeaway packaging Implementing deposit-based reusable takeaway packaging (cups / containers).	Re-use / Refill	Hospitality	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	High	Scalable	Medium	Proven intervention for reducing residual waste and increasing recycling.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Institute of Licensing ▶ Chartered Institute of Environmental Health ▶ National Trading Standards



	Focus	Target group	Impact	Impact level	Reasoning	Ease of implementation	The why	Social value	Local economic development	References
School uniform re-use Working with schools to encourage school uniform re-use.	Re-use	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Medium	Good take-up evidenced in target group.	Low	Provides opportunities for families to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uniform Reuse ▶ Zero Waste Leeds School uniform exchange ▶ SwopItUp
Shared financial savings Mechanism to ensure shared financial savings across two-tier authorities as a result of service changes which positively impact on residual waste tonnage.	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	High	Authority-wide intervention.	Low	Proven intervention for reducing residual waste and increasing recycling.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Shared financial benefits driving change
Sharing libraries – local authority infrastructure Using existing council infrastructure (e.g. libraries) to host sharing library infrastructure.	Circularity	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	Low	Take-up may be limited.	Medium	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Fashion swaps ▶ Library of Things
Sharing libraries – re-use sector Support sharing library infrastructure through signposting activities.	Circularity	Students	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	Low	Take-up may be limited.	Medium	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Development of a repair directory in Wales ▶ Repair Efficiency Wales Repair Directory ▶ Zero Waste Scotland What is a tool library? ▶ London Repairs
Single-use cup schemes Encouraging local businesses to take part in reusable cup schemes.	Re-use	Hospitality	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	High	Scalable	High	Targets single-use plastics.	N	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Providing on-the-go alternatives to single-use at the point of sale ▶ Refill The refill return cup ▶ Costa Coffee Cups and packaging
Students – end of term re-use Working with universities to facilitate end of term re-use give and take days.	Re-use	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Medium	Reasonable take-up evidenced in target group.	Low	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Bristol Waste Company Students on the move ▶ Imperial College London End-of-term reuse scheme ▶ Sustainability Exchange Promoting sustainable behaviours
Students – surplus food redistribution Signposting advice on surplus food redistribution – e.g. apps.	Residual waste reduction	Students	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Medium	Reasonable take-up evidenced in target group.	Low	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Zero Waste Scotland Surplus Food Redistribution Options ▶ Too Good To Go ▶ Olio
Students – swishing events Working with universities to promote clothes swap events.	Re-use	Students	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Medium	Reasonable take-up evidenced in target group.	Low	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Comprehensive targeting of further and higher education students to initiate behaviour change ▶ Swishing Clothes swapping



	Focus	Target group	Impact	Impact level	Reasoning	Ease of implementation	The why	Social value	Local economic development	References
<p>Swap shops Facilitating community events to enable clothes exchange.</p>	Re-use	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in recycling, increase in re-use.	Medium	Reasonable take-up evidenced in target group.	Low	Provides opportunities for individuals to reduce costs and consumption	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Fashion swaps ▶ PTA+ Step-by-step: swishing ▶ PTA+ FAQs second-hand sales
<p>Swap to save Provision of advice on targeting single-use items and encouraging swaps (e.g. reusables) to save money.</p>	Residual waste reduction	Residents	Reduction in residual waste, increase in re-use.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Low	Provides opportunities for families to reduce costs and consumption.	Y	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Nudging behaviour change to reduce consumption of single-use items ▶ MoneySavingExpert Quick ways to go green and save
<p>Top soil re-use Encouraging top soil re-use for capital development projects.</p>	Re-use	Developers	Waste prevented, increased biodiversity.	Low	Take-up may be limited. Soil may need to be tested.	Medium	Top soil is scarce and opportunities to preserve it should be seized.	N	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CL:AIRE Sustainable land re-use ▶ Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists Responding to the UK's soil crisis
<p>Waste electrical and electronic equipment takeback and repair Facilitating waste electrical and electronic equipment repair and donation for re-use.</p>	Repair	Residents	Re-use, repair, consumption reduction.	Low	Take-up may be limited.	Low	Encourages re-use and can help to develop repair skills.	Y	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case study Optimising re-use and repair of a problematic waste stream ▶ Tech-Takeback Sustainable solutions for unwanted electricals ▶ Material Focus
<p>Working with landlords on mattress and carpet waste reduction and recycling Using landlord forums to provide information on recycling and ways to extend the life of mattresses and carpets for tenants.</p>	Circularity	Businesses	Decreased levels of fly tipping, decreased levels of residual waste, product life extension, increased recycling.	Low	Advice, not intervention.	Low	Targeted messaging to defined group. Opportunities to save money.	N	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ North London Waste Authority Love your mattress ▶ Carpet Recycling UK case studies



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