CASE STUDY

KERBSIDE TEXTILE COLLECTION FOR CHARITY:
LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY AND TRAID

INTRODUCTION

London Borough of Bexley

The London Borough (LB) of Bexley is a unitary waste authority in South East London. It has a population of 228,000 living in 95,100 households. It has the highest recycling rate of all 33 London Boroughs at 51%, and operates an alternate weekly collection for refuse and recycling.

Waste composition analysis in LB Bexley in 2009 showed that textiles comprised 2% of the residual waste stream. As a result, the Council wanted to investigate kerbside collections of textiles to help meet the Boroughs’ recycling target of 55% by 2014.

LB Bexley wanted to introduce a kerbside textile collection service that would ultimately cover the whole Borough and to maximise the volume of textiles diverted from residual waste.

In the initial phase in June 2011 Bexley sought a partner that was:

- willing to collect from all parts of the Borough (not cherry-pick the areas most likely to produce quality material);
- a third sector organisation that would bring socio-economic and charitable benefits;
- able to help deliver communications and education.

Having been approached by several organisations (both commercial and third sector), the Council felt TRAID was the only one that could meet their requirements.

About TRAID

TRAID is a UK registered charity, working in partnership with councils, businesses, schools and communities collecting textiles. TRAID provides a bring bank service for unwanted clothing and textiles with 1,400 banks located across 147 boroughs and districts nationwide, including 30 of the 33 London boroughs. TRAID also has a number of stores where residents can donate directly.

The profits generated by the collection and resale of textiles are used to fight global poverty in some of the world’s poorest communities. Since TRAID launched in 1999, the charity has raised over £2.2 million by collecting textiles for reuse and resale. TRAID provides fashion customisation workshops and waste education for schools as well as youth groups, church groups and community centres. Since 2004, TRAID has delivered waste education to over 60,000 children, young people and adults.

LB Bexley have progressed through three phases of textiles collections, learning
The approach

LB Bexley was keen to engage third sector organisations involved in textiles re-use and recycling. Following an approach and discussions with officers from LB Bexley, TRAID offered the Council a free trial collection service to approximately 8,000 households on one collection round. The specification was as follows:

- One collection each month at the property boundary within the pilot area. This equates to collecting from approximately 2,000 households per week.
- Six co-branded LB Bexley/TRAID bags and a leaflet explaining the scheme to be delivered through the letterbox of all households in the area, no less than one week before the first collection.
- Tonnage data to be provided to LB Bexley, no more than ten days after a collection. In addition, LB Bexley to receive a monthly tonnage report.
- Paper Round, TRAID’s existing collection contractor, was permitted (as a registered waste carrier) to carry out the distribution of the bags and undertake collections on TRAID’s behalf.
- All collection vehicles to be co-branded TRAID and Paper Round, to inform residents who is carrying out the collections and to make the identification of theft easier.

Key facts

- TRAID and the LB Bexley are working in partnership to deliver a kerbside collection service. The first monthly collection trial ran from June to November 2011 diverting over 2,400kg of textiles from landfill.
- The original trial area serviced 8,000 properties. A second trial, running for a further 6 months, covers an expanded area of 12,000 properties.
- TRAID funded the trials and receives the income from the sale of the clothes. The service is free to LB Bexley.
- Bags distributed to residents during the first phase of the trial were costly, accounting for up to 50% of the total cost of the scheme. Due to the high cost of bags, the second trial uses stickers, distributed to residents, to be applied to any bag put out for collection.

Communications

For the first 6 month pilot, TRAID used a variety of promotional activities including:

- co-branded LB Bexley and TRAID collection bags, with full instructions including what materials were acceptable and how the bags should be presented;
- 9,000 A5 full colour 2-sided fliers promoting the new collection and explaining how to use it, distributed at the same time as the 6 collection bags, with spare copies supplied to local authority outlets for example call centre, libraries, etc;
- a template article for publication in LB Bexley’s magazine and the Council website;
- press release for the local media;
- publicising the scheme on the TRAID website and via social media; and
- approaching local shops to put a poster in their window to promote the scheme.

Quantity Collected

The quantities, shown as kg’s, from the first phase of the trial is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month (2011)</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight (kg)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>4,351</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The total collected, 4,209kgs, is approximately 0.5kg per household. Tonnages collected increased monthly from June reaching a peak of 1,605kgs in August. However, the amount of material collected decreased to just 142kgs in November.

The trends could be explained by people having an initial clear-out of unwanted clothes, then not requiring another collection until the next season when they may have another clear-out. Alternatively, the initial increase may be due to the message being relatively fresh in resident’s minds, but after 3–4 months they need a reminder.

Residents were provided with 6 sacks at the start to last them for 6 months. TRAID believes a more regular collection may encourage residents to donate more.

**End markets**
The highest quality clothing is removed by an initial pre-sort and resold in TRAID’s ten shops in London. Material not suitable for resale in the UK is passed on to a wholesaler who sells to markets in the UK and also exports to Europe, West Africa and Pakistan.

**Finance**
- TRAID covered all collection and communication costs for the first trial and receives the income from the sale of the clothes. The service is free to LB Bexley.
- A significant proportion of the cost of the first trial was the collections (including staff and vehicles). TRAID was charged by Paper Round per tonne of material collected. This proved very costly for TRAID because the amount collected each month (as shown in Table 1) did not always reach one tonne of material. It is expected that the expansion of the trial to 12,000 properties will provide sufficient tonnages to reduce the cost.
- The bags, which are 125 micron thick to ensure they do not spilt when collected, were a high cost item. Due to their high cost and the associated distribution costs, they are not being issued to households in the next phase of the trial. There is a risk that residents’ own bags may split and this will be monitored.
- WRAP, as part of a pilot to test communication messages and designs, is covering the costs of producing and printing leaflets for the second phase of the trial.
Third Sector Added Value
The profits raised from the resale of textiles will enable TRAID to deliver waste education in schools across London, and to provide funding to projects in the developing world fighting conditions of poverty and abuse in the textile industry.

A third of TRAID’s total collected tonnage comes from London-based local authority banks. Of the textiles collected by TRAID (and its collection contractor Paper Round) 70% goes to re-use (14% goes to the 10 charity shops owned by TRAID), 22% non-textile products are recycled and 8% is contamination (other materials).

Savings
The savings achieved by the Council through the diversion of material from landfill have been minimal. TRAID found the trial beneficial in allowing them to explore different collections and sorting options which will inform further ventures in the future. They did not require additional staff to sort the extra tonnages of material.

Lessons Learnt
The initial scheme was designed with a 3 month break, after which another trial is running for 6 months from March 2012. For this second period the trial area will be expanded to cover a minimum of 12,000 properties.

As a result of the first trial, LB Bexley is now exploring ways to improve the level of service and participation in the service. The second trial will involve a higher frequency of collection, taking place on the same day as existing local authority recycling collections. This will make it easier for residents to know when to put out their textiles.

As part of the second trial, bags will no longer be distributed to residents, due to the high cost of both the sacks and their distribution. Instead, stickers will be provided to residents to be attached to any bag (e.g. plastic shopping bag). A leaflet providing information about the trial will be attached to the sticker so that residents do not lose either piece of information.

Key points:
- It is important to use as many local media / communications methods as possible to get the message across when running a trial.
- Theft of bags has been an issue. Collections have to be made early in the morning to reduce theft and all those involved need to be vigilant for suspicious behaviour. LB Bexley is working with TRAID and Neighbourhood Watch to reduce the occurrences of theft and increase awareness and vigilance amongst residents. There needs to be full buy-in from all parts of the Council to address this issue and take steps to reduce it.
- Clear and targeted information to residents regarding the details of the trial – in particular which streets are involved and why – in order to avoid confusion amongst those not involved.
- In TRAID’s view, the “everything delivered at once” approach was limited in its use, as the collection service was only at the forefront of residents’ minds at the beginning of the trial (they were given 6 sacks to last for 6 months). This may be a reason for the drop in tonnages collected later on and so the second trial has two areas: one a monthly collection and the second will be a fortnightly collection.
- Using vehicle adaptations (so the textile bags are separate on the vehicle to the AWC Recycling) can help LAs provide a regular service for small amounts and/or low levels of set out.

“A kerbside textiles collection service in Bexley will prevent up to 2% of household waste going to landfill or incineration. We are very pleased to be working in partnership with TRAID, and are eager to extend the trial to give more residents the opportunity to recycle their textiles from their doorstep.”

Andrea Cornwell at LB Bexley
**Moving Forward**

LB Bexley is currently working on a new trial textiles collection scheme (phase 3) September – July 2014. This phase informs residents how to donate small, medium and large amounts of textiles and minimises set up costs.

From September to February 2014, 10,000 residents received a leaflet promoting all textile reuse schemes: a kerbside collection for 1–2 carrier bags of textiles (using stickers provided); local charity shop/bank for 3—5 carrier bags and a ‘call and collect’ service for more than 5 bags.

LBB have continued to work with TRAID, but are also working with a local hospice, Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice. Clothes from the kerbside collection are donated to the hospice and residents have the choice of calling either TRAID or Greenwich and Bexley Hospice for larger collections.

Three small pods were attached to the far side chassis of two waste collection vehicles. Residents place up to two of their own carrier bags of textiles with a sticker on it (provided by LB Bexley) on top of their non-recyclable waste bin on the day of collection. This bin is collected fortnightly. So far the results have been positive and the amount of textiles has been as expected, peaking and then reducing in yield. Costs have been reduced significantly and theft has been minimised as non-branded bags contain have been used.

The aim is to extract small amounts of textiles on a regular basis (mainly the items that people may just throw away rather than donate to charity shops e.g. odd socks). A large proportion of the clothes collected will be sold in hospice shops in the borough. Any clothes not fit for re-sale will be sold as rags. To date the scheme has diverted approximately 2 tonnes of textiles.

The number of calls for the larger collections has been low and hard to track. It is hoped this can be measured more accurately in the future.

London Borough of Bexley is due to change their fleet of vehicles in the future so this may affect the ability to add additional pods for collection of materials like textiles. If the trial continues to run successfully it may be rolled out across the borough if the vehicle configurations allow for suitable adjustments.

### Achievements

- LB Bexley in partnership with TRAID has successfully implemented a kerbside collection service to residents in a trial area.
- 4.2 tonnes of textiles were collected from 8,000 households over 6 months.
- The success of the first trial has led the council to expand the textiles collection service from 8,000 household to 12,000 households.

### Acknowledgments

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**Case Study** – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit [www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide)
CASE STUDY
KERBSIDE TEXTILE COLLECTION: SOUTHWEND-ON-SEA

INTRODUCTION

Southend-on-Sea is the closest seaside resort to London and is located on the north side of the Thames estuary, approximately 40 miles east of central London. There are 79,150 households with a total population of 174,800.

Since 2004/05, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has provided a kerbside collection service for co-mingled dry recycling. This included textiles. In 2008/09, the Council decided to add glass to the recycling service, following research showing that some 60% of glass was being disposed of in householders’ residual waste sacks.

However, this meant that the risks of contamination to other recyclables increased, so the Council took the decision to introduce a separate sack for textiles.

The separate collection of textiles was in keeping with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s ethos of keeping recycling simple for residents, and as well as minimising contamination. This enables the material to be easily sorted and segregated at the delivery point.

Key facts

- Since 2004/05, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has provided a kerbside collection service for dry recyclables.
- In 2008/9, following the addition of glass, householders were asked not to place textiles in the main pink sack, but instead in a separate white sack.
- The amount of textiles collected at the kerbside reached a peak at over 500 tonnes, a significant peak when the scheme was first introduced.
- The tonnages collected have reduced considerably to a low of 23 tonnes per year in 2012/13. The Council believes the sharp reduction in textiles collected is due to increasing reports of theft.
- The Council has provided a non-emergency number to residents in case of theft or suspicious behaviour. The council is also working closely with the police in order to tackle the issue locally.

The Approach

Background

Cory Environmental Municipal Services Ltd is the recycling and waste collection contractor for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. The contract started in 2008 and runs until 2015.

Under the terms of the contract, Cory collects textiles from the kerbside as part of the weekly dry recyclables collection service. Textiles are collected in a white sack, while mixed dry recyclables are presented for collection in a pink

CASE STUDY – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide
sack. Transparent colours (for both pink and white sacks) were chosen to ensure that contamination could be easily identified. Textile sacks are co-collected with the pink sacks in the same compartment on the recycling collection vehicle, for segregation at a transfer station.

The clear and pink sacks are delivered to households as part of Cory’s contract. One roll of 6 sacks is delivered to households every six months, on the assumption that residents would put one full sack of textiles out for collection per month. In delivering the 6 x 20 litre sacks, the Council aimed to encourage residents to maximise the amount they put in the sack. If residents run out they can obtain further sacks from the outlets across the Borough (all libraries, the Civic Centre and at Cory’s depot).

Cory has a dedicated delivery crew that works full time delivering sacks to the whole Borough. It takes them 6 months to deliver to every household and then they start again.

The textile sacks are a thicker gauge (30 microns) than the pink sacks to prevent them splitting in the collection vehicle.

When the sacks are delivered to the transfer station in Southend, the bagged textiles are manually separated from the pink sacks, bulked and collected (still bagged) by a reprocessor. Once the textiles are collected and have been processed to determine whether they are suitable for reuse they are sorted, packaged and sold or donated to a variety of outlets in different locations within the U.K or abroad (e.g. Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe). The sale or donation, and the final destination, depends on market rates and demand in different countries at the time.

Cory also collects textiles from the Council’s Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

Contamination is not reported as being a big issue and the reprocessor has never rejected a load. However, garden waste does sometimes appear in textiles sacks as the garden waste sacks are also clear. Minor contamination may be removed by the collection crew. Where severe contamination does occur, it is stopped at source – contaminated bags are left with a sticker attached to the sack asking residents to be more vigilant.

**Communications**

The Council has not produced a dedicated leaflet to promote the textile recycling service, but it is included within its general recycling service leaflet which is sent to householders and given out at all events and roadshows. A section from Southendon-Sea’s ‘Guide to Recycling in Southend’ is shown below.
The Council is also involved in organising a one-off ‘make do and mend’ event at the Borough ecohub with local entrepreneurs. The event focuses on working with textiles, carrying out minor alterations to old clothes and includes a swishing event (clothes swapping). Promotional events run by the Council are on-going and they want to progress them further.

Recycling and reuse is promoted in a range of other ways, including newspaper wraps, website, articles in the council magazine. Service leaflets are sent out in new residents’ packs, are available on the website and distributed during events and roadshows.

**Participation**
Cory carried out participation monitoring in 2011 to establish baseline participation. Monitoring took place in 2 areas of the Borough which are referred to as the ‘High Performance Area’ and the ‘Low Performance Area’. In the Low Performance Area there was a 2% participation rate for clear textile recycling sacks. In the High Performance Area there was a 6.1% participation rate at the end of the monitoring, compared to 3% before it started.

**Tonnages**
The tonnage data provided for textiles collected at the kerbside shows tonnage reaching a high in 2007/08, but by 2010-11 had reduced to less than 100 tonnes.

**Table 1** Textiles Collected at Kerbside (tonnes per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>04/05</th>
<th>05/06</th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>08/09</th>
<th>09/10</th>
<th>10/11</th>
<th>11/12</th>
<th>12/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>117.70</td>
<td>121.06</td>
<td>452.34</td>
<td>502.27</td>
<td>221.46</td>
<td>33.24</td>
<td>92.68</td>
<td>66.28</td>
<td>23.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1  Low Participation Area Participation Monitoring Report March-April 2011, Sauce Consultancy

The Council puts the reduction in textiles collected down to theft of, and from, bags left out for collection. It regularly receives reports of theft from residents, so records are kept and the information passed on to the police. This joint approach has resulted in at least one successful prosecution. Residents are also encouraged to contact the police directly (an approach that has been agreed with the local police). The council also provides advice in the yearly Council tax booklet (in which there is a page covering all recycling collection services) which is delivered to all residents in the borough, providing details of the Police Non-emergency number to report thefts. The website also has this information in its recycling pages.

**Finance**
- The highest cost in this scheme is supplying the sacks: a thicker grade of sack is used to ensure the bag doesn’t split open in the vehicle. It also reduces potential contamination with the glass in the pink sacks.
- Delivering the collection sacks also has a high cost.
- As the collection crew visits each property to collect the pink recyclables sack, there is no additional cost for collecting the textile sack.
- There is a cost involved in sorting the sacks at the transfer station – one operative is employed full time to separate out the sacks.

**Economic benefits**
- The direct benefit to the Council is the reduction in waste to landfill, which in turn reduces landfill costs. In 2010/11, landfill tax was £48 per tonne; 92.68 tonnes were collected at the kerbside, generating a saving on landfill tax of £4,448. It is hard to put an estimate on what impact the kerbside collections may have had on the usage of the mini-recycling centres and the HWRCs, as it is possible that the provision of the service encouraged secondary usage elsewhere.
- An indirect benefit is that the contractor, Cory, receives revenue from sales. This may have helped to reduce contract costs.
Lessons learnt

Thieves of the sacks before collection is a big issue and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council regularly receives calls from residents about unknown vans taking the textiles sacks. The Council advises other local authorities to make sure residents are well informed about the scheme and what to do if theft is suspected. The Council provides a non-emergency number to call if a theft is suspected, and is working closely with the police to tackle the issue.

"The kerbside clear textile recycling sack scheme is part of the comprehensive kerbside recycling collection services offered to residents. Whilst the Council encourages residents to either re-use clothing or donate wearable items to charity shops wherever possible, the kerbside collection complements this, providing residents in the borough with a wide range of options for recycling their unwanted items. This in turn helps the Council meet its recycling targets, and contributes towards the diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill."

Miranda Valenzuela, Waste & Recycling Officer, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Acknowledgments

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Achievements

- At its peak in 2007/08, the council collected over 500 tonnes of textiles from the kerbside. This reduced to approximately 23 tonnes in 2012/13.
- Residents benefit from a weekly kerbside collection for textiles.
- The service has helped reinforce the value of reuse/recycling: the Council has found the textiles ‘reuse’ message is one that is readily understood by the majority of residents.
INTRODUCTION

The County of Suffolk is in the east of England and has a population of approximately 732,000 within 330,000 households. Waste services across Suffolk are provided by the 7 District and Borough Councils and the County Council who work together as the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP). The SWP comprises, Babergh District Council, Forest Heath District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council.

The SWP produced a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) in 2003. One of the major aims of the JMWMS was to provide every home in Suffolk with separate collections of residual, recyclable and organic waste using an Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) system. The recyclable element of Suffolk’s AWC collected paper, card, cans and plastics. However, a waste composition analysis undertaken in 2011 showed that the residual waste contained approximately 7,000 tonnes potentially recyclable textiles. The SWP therefore took the decision to introduce a fortnightly collection of clothes and other textiles using their existing AWC system. This scheme aimed to save £220,000 from the disposal budget and was introduced, as a trial, in July 2012. By introducing the scheme as a trial, the SWP retained the flexibility to withdraw the service at the end of its currently contracted MRF arrangements should circumstances change. The scheme also provided an opportunity to increase pan-Suffolk partnership working and solely aimed to divert textiles from landfill rather than from bring banks or charity collectors.

CASE STUDY

CO-MINGLED KERBSIDE TEXTILE COLLECTIONS USING A SURVIVAL SACK– SUFFOLK COUNTY

A Suffolk family show items to put in their textile collection sack.

Case Study – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide
Key facts

- Textiles information packs containing two sacks and a leaflet were delivered by post to every home in Suffolk during June 2012.
- Residents were asked to place textiles in the sacks provided, tie the sack securely and place it inside their recycling bin on top of the other recyclables – the slogan “bag it, tie it, recycle it!” was employed.
- The sacks were collected from inside the recycling bins every fortnight.
- Replacement sacks were left by the crews when they found a bin containing textiles.
- No side waste was permitted as this was contrary to SWP policy. This approach also removed any danger that the SWP may accidentally remove clothes the resident intended for collection by a charity group.
- Placing the sacks in the bin reduced the threat of the textiles being unlawfully removed by unlicensed individuals.
- All clothes and shoes were accepted as well as bed linens, blankets, pillow cases, curtains, handbags, belts and stuffed toys.

The Approach

The scheme commenced in July 2012 with a delivery of two, 150G (36 micron) clear plastic sacks per household, collected on fortnightly basis.

This grade of sack was chosen as it has been previously used for mixed recyclate collections across Suffolk and is recyclable itself. The SWP were therefore confident that the sack would prove durable and survive intact despite being compressed along with other loose recyclate when placed into a RCV. The sacks were printed with basic instructions in addition to the full instructional leaflet delivered during July 2012. The initial distribution of sacks to all householders countywide was via direct mailing.

The textiles collected are processed at 2 separate MRF facilities. 6 of the 7 Suffolk waste collection authorities [WCA] deliver to the Viridor operated MRF located in Gt Blakenham, Suffolk. The remaining WCA, Waveney District Council, delivers to the NEWS operated MRF located in Norwich, Norfolk. In both cases, the SWP agreed with the MRF operators to accept textiles until November 2014.

Communication

The communication of the new scheme stared with the delivery of an initial awareness raising leaflet to all homes across Suffolk in June 2012. Full instructions and the sacks themselves were then delivered in July 2012. A washing line graphic was utilised on both the initial and full instruction leaflets, designed to be colourful and eye catching. It gives clear instructions on how to fill, seal and present the sack for collections. The communications materials also included the partnership branding i.e. the recycle for Suffolk recycling swoosh.

In addition to the leaflets, the SWP undertook a media campaign to raise public awareness of the scheme. This campaign began in April 2012 and included press releases, roadshow events, radio and newspaper adverts and the creation of a specific textiles information page on the partnership website. The SWP continued to promote textiles at all public engagements throughout 2012 and 2013 and conducted a limited doorstepping programme.
**Tonnages**

**Table 1** Textiles Collected at Kerbside (tonnes per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aug 12</th>
<th>Sep 12</th>
<th>Oct 12</th>
<th>Nov 12</th>
<th>Dec 12</th>
<th>Jan 13</th>
<th>Feb 13</th>
<th>Mar 13</th>
<th>Apr 13</th>
<th>May 13</th>
<th>Jun 13</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the start of the scheme the amount of textiles was at its highest but this reduced over time with a notable peak in January, possibly as households had a clear out after Christmas.

**Finance**

The set up costs for the scheme equated to approximately £363 per 1000 properties. This covered the initial purchase of 2 sacks per property as well as the design, production and distribution costs associated with the information packs and all the other additional comms. There was also a small cost associated with installing 2 hoppers at the MRF.

In terms of operational costs, the Suffolk Waste Partnership incurred additional MRF gate fees and staff costs. There was also an operational cost associated with the purchasing of replacement sacks and the disposal of any contaminated textiles.

Both the set up and operational costs (for the first 12 months) were offset by the sale of textiles to the merchant. This per tonne income ensured the scheme had covered its costs by February 2013.

**Case Study** – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit [www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide)
Lessons Learned

- **Charities** – At the outset of the scheme, the SWP encountered a certain level of opposition from local charities despite all scheme literature including a statement asking people to continue to use charity groups and bring sites where they would normally do so. This opposition was based around the charities concern that the scheme would divert textiles away from their respective organisations. This culminated in one charity going to the press. However, the press coverage was even handed and this opposition ceased only a few weeks after the scheme launch. No further opposition has been voiced to date. Anecdotally, the SWP were later informed that charity donations of textiles had increased but unfortunately, there is insufficient data to ascertain whether or not this was due to the SWP scheme raising the general public awareness of the different options for recycling textiles.

- **Theft of materials** – This has not been a major issue for the scheme with only a limited number of incidents of textiles theft reported by residents. This could be due to the SWP asking residents to place their textiles inside their bins and out of sight.

- **Replacement sacks** – Potentially the biggest challenge has been the provision of replacement sacks. WRAP funded research has shown that the average return rate of sacks is approximately 50%. Therefore, a diminishing number of sacks remain in circulation thus increasing the amount of loose textiles being placed into residents recycling bins. The SWP has looked to combat this by undertaking extensive crew training on the importance of sack replacement and by increasing the number of replacement sacks delivered to households from 1 sack to 3 sacks.

- **Loose textiles in recycling bins** – Loose textiles in the recycling bins create a number of issues. Firstly, the materials are unprotected and can become wet, dirty or damaged and secondly there is a higher MRFC processing cost due to the increase need for checking and sorting the delivered materials.

- **Transfer Stations issues** – Any additional handling of the sacks increases the risk of the sack becoming damaged. This is particularly prevalent for those SWP authorities who do not direct deliver to the MRF.

- **On going Communications** – Not only is it important to keep repeating the scheme messages to residents but it is also necessary to work closely with collection crews. Without the diligent support of your crews the scheme is very difficult to maintain.

“**The SWP believe the scheme has been a great success. Residents have engaged with the scheme and it has diverted over 700 tonnes of materials from landfill in its first year. That’s not to say there haven’t been challenges but with careful planning a textiles recycling collection can provide both environment and economic benefits for the authority**”

Rob Cole, Waste Partnership Manager, Suffolk County Council

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**Achievements**

- First UK county wide roll out of commingled AWC textile collections using survival sacks.
- Over 700 tonnes collected in first twelve months of the scheme.
- Both the set up and operational costs (for the first 12 months) were offset by the sale of textiles to the merchant. This per tonne income ensured the scheme had covered its costs within the first seven months of the scheme.
- A survey six months after the scheme launch found 68% recognition of the scheme amongst Suffolk residents.
- 94% of scheme users either satisfied or more than satisfied with textile collection

**Acknowledgments**

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CASE STUDY

“RECAP – WEAR IT, LOVE IT, SHARE IT!”

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (also known as RECAP) was formed in 1999, bringing together seven authorities: Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Peterborough City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. There are currently limited kerbside collections of textiles, although there are textile recycling banks at bring sites in all districts and a collection service in Peterborough.

RECAP decided to focus on textiles reuse and recycling with the following aims:

- to decrease the tonnage of reusable textile waste going to landfill across the county by 10% by November 2011;
- to encourage textiles reuse and recycling by running community events with local charities, community groups and businesses; and
- to promote use of charity shops by the target audience and the wider community.

Engagement with local residents to encourage reuse and recycling of unwanted clothing.

Case Study – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit [www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide)
Key facts

- RECAP engaged with 16 different charities at various stages of the project, 14 of which provided direct support for events e.g. providing clothes for fashion shows and running charitable stalls.
- Charities reported increased levels of sales and donations directly after the events.
- Surveys of people at the events revealed that 44% said they would start donating or donate more often to charity while 33% would start repairing or restyling clothes.
- Across the five over £1,500 was raised for participating charities and 130 kg of clothes were donated.

The Approach

In March 2011, WRAP funded a research project to produce a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough-specific Textiles Route Map. The study found that 2,900 tonnes per year of reusable or recyclable textiles are disposed of in the residual household waste stream. This cost the local authorities over £220,000 annually in disposal costs and, based on the value of these materials at the time of the study, this material has a value of £450,000. The research indicated that joining forces with current textiles collection providers and providing information and promoting existing outlets for textile reuse and recycling would be the best and most cost-effective action for RECAP. The research helped focus the campaign as well as justifying its objectives to members and senior officers in the next financial year.

The aims of the campaign were to engage with residents who typically throw away higher volumes of clothing, to encourage them to reuse or recycle unwanted clothes by donating to and buying from charity shops, and to reduce the amount of textiles being thrown away.

Figure 1 The approach to the campaign.

Project team with a charity rep on board outlines the project

Meeting with charities:
- discussing project outline and format for events
- agreeing monitoring
- signing MoU

Branding development

Events delivery (ongoing review and improvements)
- Development of online resources (including online map of charity shops and textiles banks at www.recap.co.uk

Review workshop with charities

The target audiences for the campaign were lower, yet aspirational, socio-demographic groups. These groups were selected as Defra research revealed that they discard the greatest percentage of textiles in residual waste.

The project outline was developed by the RECAP project team with input from a representative of Sue Ryder. RECAP then held a meeting with representatives of local charities (predominantly regional managers) in September 2011 to explain the concept, discuss concerns and sign everyone up to a Memorandum of Understanding. All charities in the area selling clothes in shops were invited to take part in the project.

Surveys of the public were carried out to find out what activities people would like to see at the events. Interested charities were also surveyed about their ideas and preferences. Through joint working, RECAP developed the brand for the campaign and created the format for each event. The communications focused on specific local communities where the target audience was prevalent. This limited the need for broadbrush marketing techniques.

The format of the events was fairly similar: each event brought between three and six local charities together under one roof to accept donations from the local community and sell second-hand goods, predominantly clothing. Charity shop clothing was showcased in catwalk shows to address the stigma surrounding second-hand clothes and to create a fashionable and good quality image of the clothing. All the models were volunteers, and makeup was provided by fashion students from local colleges and local stylists.

While sales and fashion shows were the core elements of all the events, most events also featured sewing skills and craft workshops, to enable people to repair and revamp old clothes and encourage them to keep garments for longer. The events offered activities for the whole family, including competitions for children so that parents had the time to watch the fashion shows and browse the charity stalls. Prizes were on offer for donations, attendance and completing a feedback survey.

2 Special thanks to Kay Barnes of Sue Ryder for participating in the project team, providing insights regarding charity perspective on the project and helping us deliver all Wear it Love it Share it! events

Communications

Each event was promoted through:

- information on public notice boards in locations close to the target area and in local commercial centres;
- leaflets and posters in community “hot spots” at town centre locations such as shops, cafés, community centres and children’s centres;
- leaflets and posters at local charity shops;
- information on the Cambridgeshire County Council and RECAP websites (a link was included on the leaflets);
- events listings on numerous local events websites (e.g. www.cambridgeshire.net, www.wereallneighbours.co.uk);
- information on a dedicated RECAP Facebook page, as well as through the Facebook pages of people involved in the events. (Facebook is well-used by the target audience so was a good vehicle for communication);
- press releases which triggered interest from local media e.g. BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Star Radio, community radio stations in Cambridge, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, Cambs Times, Hunts Post and Peterborough Telegraph; and
- word of mouth by staff and people involved in the event

RECAP also trialled a number of different approaches to running and promoting the events:

- For a city-based local neighbourhood event (Cambridge), it used direct leafleting. 150 residents attended the event which received 99% positive feedback.
- For town-based local neighbourhood events in St Neots and Wisbech, promotions included direct leafleting, Twitter, local websites and blogs, meetings with local community groups (e.g. WI, Children Centre) and YouTube. 60 residents attended

3 Leaflets were delivered to homes matching the target demographic.
each event, and feedback was 100% positive.
For a high-profile shopping centre event (Peterborough), information was disseminated through various “green” community organisations, local radio and press, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, local websites, and A1 posters at the shopping centre for 2 weeks preceding the event. Over 1,000 residents attended the event, generating 100% positive feedback, as well as increased sales and reduced donations in comparison with previous events. There were no sewing workshops, children activities or competitions run at this event.

![Figure 2](image1.jpg) Back page of the Wear it Love it Share it leaflet, containing information about clothes reuse.

Figure 2

Online resources
Project resources included materials explaining the environmental and social issues related to clothes production and disposal, as well as a range of options for clothes reuse, including links to exchange websites, sewing and mending resources on-line, and a web-based map of local outlets for unwanted clothing, i.e. charity shops and textiles banks at [www.recap.co.uk](http://www.recap.co.uk).

Results
The Wear it Love it Share it! campaign was successful in engaging with local communities, gaining support from numerous volunteers, charities and businesses.

![Figure 4](image2.jpg) Facebook pages run by people involved in the event. See [www.facebook.com/Wearit](http://www.facebook.com/Wearit).

Figure 4

Case Study – For the full Textiles Collection Guide visit [www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/textile-collection-guide)
Almost 10,000 residents directly. This number does not include those who heard about the campaign through various media coverage (radio, press, Facebook or Twitter, etc).

Charities reported that they experienced increased levels of sales and donations directly after the events and gained new customers (in particular in Peterborough).

The events not only provided a vehicle to encourage reuse of clothing, but also to extend the life of existing clothing through repairs and alterations. Sewing workshops from a local business and needlecraft demonstrations from local groups enabled skills sharing and take-home practical advice. Public feedback showed many people liked the community feel of the event and the opportunity to find out about local groups as well as grabbing a bargain.

Surveys (self-completed) at the event showed people considered changing their behaviour after the event:

- 44% (said they) will start donating or donate more often to charity;
- 33% (said they) will start repairing or restyling clothes;
- 28% (said they) will start buying or buy more often from charity; and
- 15% (said they) will start using textile recycling points.

Third sector added value
RECAP encouraged volunteering and widely advertised opportunities. During the campaign RECAP promoted local community centres and activities/groups which the local public could actively join and use. Choosing models from the local area to be part of the fashion show increased the confidence of a number of local volunteers.

Lessons learnt

Venues
The idea of bringing the events close to where the target audience live meant holding most of the events in smaller, neighbourhood-based venues (i.e. community centres).
These were not always central enough to attract passing trade on the days of the events resulting in limited attendance despite the communication activities. However, in Peterborough the venue located at the heart of the target audience area – the shopping centre – guaranteed high footfall. Results showed that the target audience was likely to come to the local shopping centre on a weekend and engage in activities as part of a shopping trip.

**Broader impact of the campaign**

Efforts were made to put clothes re-use into perspective of broader environmental and social issues.

The community venues, although experiencing lower footfall than the shopping centre, were effective in terms of engaging residents in the wider issues related to textiles. While the shopping centre was a good venue to present reuse as an alternative to high-street shopping. RECAP officers recognised that the event did not offer as many opportunities to up-skill residents with sewing skills or engage with other motivations for reuse activities (other than saving money).

Further research into how effectively messages about broader issues are understood and then acted on by target audiences would be helpful.

**Collaborative approach**

The charities’ main driver for attending the events was sales, rather than attracting donations or raising awareness. Therefore, their feedback revolved around the need for more central locations with high footfall and taking a less targeted approach.

In the campaign review workshop (organised with charities’ representatives after all the events were delivered), it was noted that a more collaborative approach from the outset – allowing charities to have more say in shaping the objectives as well as the events – would have resulted in more joined-up working and stronger support from them throughout the campaign. Ideas for possible future actions were also developed:

- to continue running high-profile events with fashion shows and sales;
- attend established summer festivals, involve local schools and professional designers;
- to establish a reuse membership card, where residents could get stamps for reuse activities, like donating or buying second-hand goods, and repairing garments. Points could be redeemed at local venues (e.g. gyms, cinemas etc).

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**CASE STUDY**

**JOINT CONTRACT FOR TEXTILE COLLECTION**
**BRING SERVICES**

**Introduction**

The S Wales Regional Waste Group, a collaborative group of unitary authorities, has worked together on a variety of issues since 1996. Initially, the Group addressed issues arising from new legislation, draft consultation papers and Government strategy papers.

In keeping with this long standing collaboration, nine of the authorities (Torfaen [lead authority], Cardiff, Newport, Monmouthshire, Powys, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil) worked together to commission the first regional textiles bank contract in 2011. It was awarded to JMP Wilcox and commenced in June 2011.

**Key facts**

- Nine local authorities in South Wales established a joint contract for textile collections.
- Coordination for the contract is provided by Resource Efficiency Wales (REW).
- The contract was awarded to JMP Wilcox for three years, with an option to extend for a further two years.
- The contract covers 100 sites (bring sites and HWRCs).
- It aimed to achieve a minimum collection of 1,000 tonnes of textiles per year.
- In its first 6 months, the scheme collected around 1,000 tonnes of textiles and this is expected to increase.
- Textile recycling is now cash-positive and able to generate at least £300,000 annually, for distribution amongst the local authorities involved.
- Previously, the councils received no income from bring bank textiles.
- In the early part of 2012, Pembrokeshire County Council joined this contract adding approximately 50 new sites to the contract.

**The Approach**

The initiative was coordinated by Resource Efficiency Wales (REW) – a not-for-profit resource efficiency consultancy in Wales. REW has a dedicated SE Wales local authority funded co-ordinator to investigate opportunities to improve resource efficiency and achieve financial savings.

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REW was approached by the Heads of Service of the nine local authorities to explore the idea of joint collections from textiles bring banks. The councils had collections run by a number of different charities and companies and received no income from the sale of the textiles collected.

REW undertook market testing to find out likely levels of interest from suitable textiles recyclers, and after confirming that there was interest, recommended a formal procurement.

**How the contract works**

The contract is based on a single provider collecting textiles from all bring banks in the nine local authority areas, and reselling them. The councils receive payments based on the tonnage collected.

The contract covers 100 sites (both bring sites and HWRCs), which together are expected to provide at least 1,000 tonnes of textiles a year. The availability and locations of textile banks are communicated to the public through the general suite of council recycling services information.

A minimum collection frequency was set, based on existing collection arrangements and bank sizes. However, individual authorities can request more frequent collections.

The contractor is required to provide, service and maintain the banks, undertake collections and deliver materials to a fully licensed UK site for recycling / reprocessing. It is also required to provide details of textiles collected by date and location, as well as data on the net weight of textiles collected on a monthly basis.

The income for the textile material is determined on an index linked market set every six months. This ensures that the rate the councils receive is fair and proportionate to the overall textile bank market.

**Procurement process**

The procurement exercise was carried out by the Joint Procurement Unit, a collaborative procurement division of Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council. The process involved an OJEU notified restricted tender due to the threshold value of the contract. This resulted in 30 EOIs, followed by 9 proposals. The procurement process was conducted in conjunction with the Welsh Purchasing Consortium and provides an option for other Welsh local authorities to join at a later date.

The evaluation criteria weighting was split 70% price and 30% quality. JMP Wilcox was selected because, amongst other reasons, they: offered to pay a competitive price per tonne for the textiles; and operated an impressive vehicle fleet and sorting facility. JMP Wilcox will operate all the textiles banks on council property across the partnership for three years from June 2011 with the option for a two year extension.

In the early part of 2012 approximately 50 new sites were added to the contract, including additional sites in the original local authority areas together with banks in new local authorities who hope to join the contract.

**The contractor: JMP Wilcox**

JMP Wilcox has been reprocessing and reclaiming textiles for over 100 years and has over 40 trucks nationwide collecting textiles. At its reprocessing facility, each vehicle is weighed and each local authority provided with monthly and yearly reports on collection tonnages for their textiles. The textiles are hand sorted on picking lines and baled in various grades for international export or for recycling.

In addition, JMP Wilcox have agreed to provide additional value to the local authorities by offering a media bank service to residents. This service operates at some of the busier HWRC sites and allows residents to deposit books, games, DVDs and CDs for reuse and recycling.

The company sorts 100% of the material it collects in the UK, with 95% being reused or recycled and exported to over 30 countries. Figure 1 shows the destination of textiles collected by JMP Wilcox.

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In its first 6 months, the scheme collected around 1,000 tonnes of textiles.
Textile recycling is now cash-positive and able to generate approximately £300,000 annually for distribution amongst the local authorities involved.
The ten local authorities work together in partnership, co-ordinated by REW.

Key Learning Points
The key lesson for REW and a recommendation for future contracts would be to include in the tender process an option for the bidder to state a minimum floor price they would adhere to, should prices drop in an economic downturn.

Acknowledgments
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Social and economic benefits
Before this contract, the local authorities received no income from textile recycling, but now there is an economic gain for all those involved. This contract has safeguarded jobs in the JMP Wilcox headquarters in the West Midlands and also created new posts in Wales.

According to Maria Challenger at Torfaen, “The service received to date has been second to none, with the added benefit of bringing in revenue for Torfaen Council. We have a uniform and consistent presence across the borough, giving an easily recognisable method of recycling old clothing.”

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