1.0 Situational Analysis

Establish where you want to be

This section looks at how to develop a situational analysis using the information you gathered in Section 1. A situational analysis takes a snapshot view of your organisation or situation and where things stand at a particular point in time. This phase enables you to understand the context for your communications and identify the strategic goal you are working towards, for example reaching the 40% statutory recycling target in 2010. The information gathered in Section 1 will now be used to:

- Look at the wider context for your communications, what is driving it and what it needs to achieve
- Review the actions being undertaken to meet your local authority's waste management service targets
- Identify what you need to do and by when

The first stage is to analyse your current position by reviewing the demographic, operational and the communication information you have gathered. Once you have come to some conclusions about what the information tells you, you need to work out where you need to be ie what you need to achieve and by when. Finally, you need to look at and describe (briefly) the initiatives your local authority will take to reach its goals.

1.1 Analyse your current position

Start by reviewing all your research and information and what it tells you:

Demographic analysis

- What does the demographic information tell you? Are there any unusual or unique characteristics, for example, does your LA have above average terraced housing, areas of deprivation or high population turnover, significant numbers of elderly people, or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities?
- What implications might the demographic information have for service delivery and your communications? For example, do you have large numbers of elderly people who might need assisted collections? Do they know about the service? How will you communicate it to them?
- Are there areas with relatively high population turnover which might require basic recycling information on a more frequent basis or at specific times of the year eg in October when students start at college or university? Seasonal workers? Tourists?

Operational Analysis

- What is your current performance across different parts of the service?
- Analyse the feedback you have about your service, for example from crews, call centres, satisfaction or other surveys etc. Look at levels and types of complaints, satisfaction levels etc. What does this information tell you?

- Where is the good performance, for example, high participation levels, large amounts of materials collected? Can good performance be replicated elsewhere?
- Where is the low performance, for example low participation, low amounts of materials collected, high contamination levels etc. Do you have any low performing areas?
- Identify any operational issues. Are there any significant operational issues in particular areas eg crew access to properties or containers? Are recycling sites clean and tidy or are they constantly overflowing and untidy? Are staff helpful and pleasant to the public? Can your helpline deal adequately with the number and types of enquiries?
- Are there any operational barriers to participation? E.g. not all households having a container, containers not large enough
- Are there any other issues?

If any service issues are identified, you need to look at how to address these *before* you begin your communications. If the service, *in the opinion of your residents*, is poor then communications alone are unlikely to succeed in raising participation. To achieve a good recycling rate, services must be convenient to use and easy to understand as set out in The Waste Collection Commitment.

Communications Analysis

- Are residents aware of your service? Do they understand how to use it?
- What results have previous communications achieved? Identify what ensured they achieved their objectives and whether that success could be replicated or used in future communications
- Have you developed a strong brand for your recycling communications?
- Do you have the staff capacity to manage a communications campaign?
- Are there any communications barriers that need to be addressed by your communications?
- Which operational areas or services would benefit from additional communications support?
- Are there any other issues?

You can undertake a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) and/or SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with colleagues to help identify and highlight key issues. Once you have completed your investigations, draw up a list of your main findings and review them:

- What issues have you identified? Are they new issues or were you already aware of them?
- What do they mean for your communications?
- How will you address the issues you have identified (through service changes or communications)?
- Have you uncovered any gaps in your knowledge? What are they? How will you fill them?

Before you go any further, it is important that you have thought carefully about your approach so far in order to develop improved communications. Remember to look beyond the issues you identify first of all to gain a complete picture of what is happening. Look for facts and do not rely on unsubstantiated opinion alone. If you have insufficient information you will need to think carefully whether you are currently in a position to develop your communications or whether you need to do additional research to explore any issues you have identified.

For more information about PEST and SWOT analysis - see Expert Briefing No5.

For more information about operational solutions – refer to your waste management strategy and talk to colleagues or contact WRAP'S team of Recycling and Collections Advisors for advice (LAsupport@wrap.org.uk).

For more information about people's barriers to recycling - see Section 4.

I want to know more about Low Performing Areas – see the specific guide developed by WRAP to help users identify areas of low participation, examine why they experience low participation and to develop effective communication solutions. The document is available on the WRAP website

www.wrap.org.uk/lpa

1.2   Outline where you need to be

Where you need to be depends partly on where you are now and what your future targets and plans are. Once you have looked in detail at where you are, list any implications for your communications based on the findings of your demographic, operations and communications analysis. Good practice needs to be continued, any issues identified should be addressed and successful communications continued in your new communications plan.

Next, consult your local authority waste strategy or colleagues for detailed information about your targets, operational plans, timescales and deadlines. These will give you a broad overview of what your local authority needs to achieve and how it intends to do it. You need to pay particular attention to any plans which have a communication dimension, for example: any future operational activities which need communicating to householders such as service changes, revised collection dates or new recycling sites. Depending on your situation, you may need to pay particular attention to the following in your plan:

- Any deficiencies highlighted in your current or past communication activities which need to be addressed
- Any deficiencies in operational performance which targeted communications might address
- Any targets that need to be met through communications activity as no service changes are planned

For more information about strategic targets – refer to your local authority waste management strategy or the Defra waste strategy which can be accessed here: http://www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/waste/strategy/.

Examples of what you may need to achieve:
- To reach recycling rates of 40% in 2010, 45% in 2015 and 50% in 2020 to meet government targets
- Need to communicate new service changes to all residents

1.3   Explain what you will do to get there

Once you have identified the issues and where you need to be, you need to describe what your council intends to do to meet its targets. If you intend introducing further new services:

- What new services will be launched and when. For example when do you plan to introduce a new food waste collection service?
- How will your communications support new and existing operational activities? For example, running a campaign to support current collections of dry recyclables at the same time as the introduction of a new food waste collection service

If you do not have any plans to introduce further services or improvements:

- What will your communications do to address any issues identified in your situational analysis such as low capture rates or LPAs?
- How will your communications help you reach unattained recycling targets?

If you have reached a high recycling rate, are there other opportunities that you would like to explore, such as running a waste prevention campaign?

Once you have described your operational plans and what communications can do to help, you should, in consultation with your colleagues, look at your service plans, draw up a list of actions and prioritise them in terms of the:

■ Major issues that need to be addressed
■ Biggest potential gains
■ Quickest potential gains
■ Least resources required
■ Greatest alignment to corporate priorities

1.4 Planning your Communications

The following section shows an extract from a typical communication plan to show how the situational analysis could be developed and written.

2.0 Situational Analysis

2.1 Operational Issues

As Moving Forward Council (MFC) has already exceeded its 2020 recycling targets, its key operational considerations from the 1st April 2013 are to reduce the amount of residual waste being delivered to the 'dirty MRF' with the aim of reducing its gate fee for disposal. The gate fee will be £100/tonne from the start of the new contract and increasing recycling could show considerable savings. This could be achieved by:

■ Increasing the dry recyclables collected in the blue bin scheme – this will also generate an additional income of £20/tonne; and
■ Increase the food and garden waste collected in the brown bin organic collections.

The blue bin dry recycling scheme already takes a comprehensive range of recyclable materials and the only option is to use communication to increase tonnage through increased participation and capture of materials which, based on Waste Dataflow, is clearly available in the residual waste stream. In particular the low capture of glass and mixed metals, which should be in the region of 70-80%.

The brown bin organic waste collection could be improved by providing all households with a kitchen caddy and liners to collect their food waste. This would encourage householders to dispose of more of their cooked and uncooked food waste using the brown bin and increase the tonnage collected. An opportunity to bid for additional capital funding exists to improve recycling; a bid should be made to this fund for the supply of kitchen caddies and liners.

Increasing the amount of recyclables and organic waste collected and the additional contribution to the amount recycled from the dirty MRF and the contribution of waste recovery as fuel should make a recycling and recovery rate of 70% feasible.

2.2 Communications

Over the years, householders have received very little communication to inform them what they can and cannot recycle in their blue and brown bins; this should be addressed as soon as possible. The recycling schemes should be relaunched by developing a recycling guide to be sent to all households with the collection calendar. This key communication should be repeated every year.

If the Council is successful in its bid to fund kitchen caddies and liners the food waste collection element of the brown bin collections should be relaunched in the autumn of 2013. Promotional material would be based on the [WRAP food waste recycling promotional material templates](#), which are available for download from the Recycle Now Partners website.

Internal communications should also be undertaken to ensure all MFC staff understand the food waste and dry recycling services and are aware of them being relaunched.

HWRC sites and recycling bring sites should also be promoted so that householders know where to take excess recyclables, recyclables that are not collected at the kerbside and residual waste.

2.3   Longer term

Making the following changes to existing services could make further improvements and reduce the amount of residual waste:

- In the longer term, consideration should be given to changing the collection rounds so that all kerbside collections are made on the same day of the week. This will make it easier for householders to remember to put their bins out for collection;
- Schools should be provided with the equivalent of blue and brown bin collections as soon as practicable and create a seamless link between school and home; and
- The Council should investigate the costs and benefits of providing a commercial recycling collection. Currently all commercial waste is taken to the dirty MRF as residual waste and any recycling collected from commercial premises would reduce the tonnage.

2.4   Monitoring

It is critical that MFC regularly monitors participation rates and levels of contamination to assess the impact communications are having on recycling. This will help identify low, medium and high performing areas, which will enable future communications to be more targeted.

Becoming an Expert No5: PEST and SWOT analysis

There are two main methods used to analyse issues for organisations (or communications):

- A **PEST analysis** - used to look at external issues that may affect an organization or, in this case, a campaign. PEST stands for Political, Economic, Social and Technological
- A **SWOT analysis** - used to look more closely at your current situation. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

These techniques are useful for working in teams or groups to look at the current situation and analyse it. This will then help when you come to develop your strategy later on in the planning process.

PEST Analysis

Best used with a group of people (e.g. in a workshop), the PEST analysis template is a grid, comprising four sections, one for each of the PEST headings: Political, Economic, Social and Technological (see example below) which can be used on a computer screen or flipchart. A PEST analysis uses these four themes to undertake a general audit of external influences that are likely to have an impact on an organisation or campaign. The basic model can be expanded to include Legal, Environmental and Ethical implications if you want. The approach encourages creative thinking and can help you to understand in more detail the implications of a project or help you to choose between projects based on the implications.

PEST analysis template
The template includes a number of question prompts (see below), the answers to which can be inserted into the relevant section of your empty PEST grid. The issues highlighted are examples and you should make up your own PEST questions and prompts to suit the issues and the situation being analysed, the experience and skill level of whoever is completing the analysis, and what you aim to produce from your analysis.

Subject for PEST analysis – (insert)		
political Government policies Government term and change Council policies Council term and change Funding, grants and initiatives Lobbying/pressure groups	**economic** Local and national economic situation and trends Cost of waste disposal Cost of LATS fines Markets for recyclables	**legal (optional)** Current and future UK/EU legislation Regulatory bodies and processes
social Lifestyle trends and demographics Consumer attitudes and barriers Media views Law changes affecting social factors LA image and communications brand Seasonality/weather issues Major events and influences Ethnic/religious factors	**technological** Use of new technology/ equipment Replacement technology/ solutions New waste disposal technology Innovation potential	**environmental (optional)** Ecological/environmental issues Climate change & carbon reduction **ethical (optional)** Ethical issues LA own recycling performance

Here's an example of a completed PEST analysis:

Subject for PEST analysis: (insert eg Communications to support kerbside recycling)		
political EU Directives Waste Strategy for England	**economic** Cost of landfill increasing Don't want to miss LATS targets and be fined Need to keep spending on waste under control	**legal (optional)** Fines or other action for poor performance or missing targets
		environmental (optional) Recycling has lower carbon footprint – reduces impact of climate change
social Increased public awareness about environmental issues, especially climate change Recycling has widespread public support Some groups within society have barriers to recycling which need to be addressed	**technological** RFID tags for containers New collection containers and vehicles	**ethical (optional)** Council should use recycled products wherever possible, ideally from material recycled & remanufactured in the UK

It is important to clearly identify the subject of a PEST analysis, because if the subject is blurred you will produce a blurred picture - so be clear about the issue you use PEST to analyse. Also, be sure to describe the subject for the PEST analysis clearly so that people contributing to it and those seeing the finished work properly understand it and the implications.

When you have completed the PEST analysis you should review the information and use it to develop your communications plan.

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is a useful tool for developing understanding and helping decision-making for all sorts of situations. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It consists of internal (organisational) strengths to maximise and weaknesses to minimise such as available resources, expertise, partners and issue priority. Then, a similar list is made of external forces in the marketplace that represent opportunities you should plan to take advantage of, or threats you should prepare for.

The SWOT analysis template

The SWOT analysis template is normally presented as a grid, comprising four sections (see next page).

Subject of SWOT analysis: (define the subject of the analysis here)		
strengths Advantages of idea? Do we have the capability (resources, people etc)? Do we have the experience, knowledge, or information? Campaign awareness or branding?	Location? Environmental benefits? Ease of use (is it convenient to use and simple to understand)?	**weaknesses** Disadvantages of idea? Do we have gaps in our capabilities? What are our known vulnerabilities (eg reliability issues due to old collection fleet breaking down)? What are the timescales, deadlines and pressures? Do we have the necessary budget? What effects will there be on workload? Will we be distracted from core activities?

opportunities	threats
Societal, community or lifestyle trends (eg public attitudes to recycling and consumption of resources)?	Political or legislative effects (eg of not reaching LATS targets)?
Technology development and innovation (eg RFID tags)?	What will be the media/stakeholder reaction?
Good news or new issues (eg reaching 40% recycling target)?	Will waste continue to grow?
	Are there any environmental impacts?
What can we surprise people with?	What about public apathy or disillusionment?
What does our information and research tell us?	Will new technologies, services, ideas emerge that will be better?
How could we use any partnerships?	
Are there any seasonal opportunities?	What are the barriers?
Economic downturn may reduce consumption and waste	Will there be insurmountable weaknesses?
	Economic downturn affect on material prices

The example template has questions, or discussion points that can be altered depending on the subject of your SWOT analysis. When doing a SWOT analysis, remember that weaknesses should be able to be turned into strengths and threats into opportunities.

An example of a completed SWOT analysis is shown below:

Subject of SWOT analysis: Launch of new recycling service	
strengths	**weaknesses**
Recycling will be more convenient for householders	Additional container – householders may have storage issues
New scheme collects more materials and will increase recycling substantially	Overall scheme may be becoming too complex
Collections will be kept as simple as possible	
Relatively easy to implement new scheme	
A new fleet of collection vehicles	
opportunities	**threats**
Public support recycling and want to do more	People don't use the service properly because they don't understand it
They are familiar with the current service and use it well	
A new targeted communications campaign will explain the new services adequately	

Use the information generated by the SWOT analysis to develop your communication plan.