

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 8th February 2022
Report Subject	Grant Funding Application to Promote Repair and Reuse Initiatives
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welsh Government's "Beyond Recycling" strategy provides local authorities with clear direction that the emphasis on positive waste management and the move towards a circular economy starts with ensuring that items are kept in use for as long as possible. This is achieved by adopting the waste hierarchy of reusing, repurposing or repairing items as the first option before choosing to recycle or dispose of them.

To embed this principle in council policy, options have been considered as to how to deliver a compliant service whereby items deemed as waste can be intercepted or diverted at the point of disposal and directed back to reuse.

This report details a pilot scheme to deliver a reuse project on the Household Recycling Centres in partnership with Refurbs Flintshire. This pilot scheme requires grant funding to be delivered so an application has been submitted to the Landfill Disposal Tax Community Scheme for consideration for their nationally significant project fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Scrutiny notes and supports the submission of a grant funding application to promote repair and reuse initiatives.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND FOR A FUNDING APPLICATION TO PROMOTE REPAIR AND REUSE INITIATIVES
1.01	<p>The Welsh Government's "Beyond Recycling" strategy gives local authorities clear direction that the emphasis on positive waste management and the move towards a circular economy starts with ensuring that items are kept in use for as long as possible. This is achieved by adopting the waste hierarchy of reusing, repurposing or repairing items as the first option before choosing recycling or disposal.</p>
1.02	<p>In an effort to promote repair and reuse, we wrote to all the charities registered in Flintshire in August 2019 to gauge their interest in working in partnership with us to introduce an initiative at the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs), whereby we would divert reusable items that were meant for disposal to reuse and resale in their charity shops. It was intended that this could offer a sustainable source of good quality, saleable items for charities to increase their income, whilst increasing our reuse performance to enable us to minimise waste disposal.</p> <p>It was the intention that a charity could either "adopt" or "sponsor" one of the five HRCs and be represented at their designated site by volunteers, who would be able to engage with residents and inform them of the benefits of keeping usable items in use and make them "think before they throw."</p> <p>The benefit to the charity would be to take those reusable items back to their retail shops for sale and investment into their charitable projects.</p> <p>In all, five charities expressed an interest in becoming involved in the project; however, due to the pandemic in 2020, the exercise was halted.</p>
1.03	<p>One of the charities that expressed an interest was Refurbs Flintshire, a long standing partner to the authority for the delivery of the bulky waste collection service, along with the waste deconstruction project at our Oakenholt HRC and the new Repair Centre in Buckley.</p> <p>The management team at Refurbs saw the opportunities and potential of the project and were keen to be involved, but did see some limitations with our initial ideas. Concerns raised were in relation to the idea that each charity would adopt a specific site and those items of reusable quality would be for that charity alone to use and not necessarily the items required. As many charities have differing needs and points of sale, not all items recovered may have been usable or useful, which would have meant that some items would still have to be disposed of through the usual channels. For example, some charities prefer clothing only, whilst others would want a wider range of items, such as bric-a-brac, books, computer games etc. Also, the logistics of storing, transporting and bulking items may have been a limiting factor for some smaller charities.</p>
1.04	<p>As we are keen to re-instantiate this initiative, which is an action under the circular economy priority in the Council Plan 2022/23 and was supported at the all member workshops in July 2021, further conversations have taken place with Refurbs Flintshire on a manageable way to implement a pilot scheme to prove concept and sustainability and trial the proposals.</p>

1.05	<p>The following solutions have been considered as a basis for the pilot scheme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a ‘set aside’ container at each Household Recycling Centre (HRC) where members of the public would be directed to place small household items that are still in usable quality; • Provide a collection service of the small household items from each HRC to one centralised ‘hub’, which would be manned and operated by Refurbs; • Sort and separate items into ‘lots’ which can be collected by charities for retail in their shops; • Create a library at the ‘hub’ of recorded media and books for loan to Flintshire residents; • The ‘hub’ would allow for direct donation from residents of Flintshire reducing the need to transfer from a HRC to site; • Provide a kerbside collection service for textile items (in the trial period), which could link with the Education Department’s School Uniform Exchange project.
1.06	<p>To promote the initiative, communications would need to be clear on all HRCs that the items are being reused and are benefiting local charities engaged with the project. Volunteers involved with the ‘hub’ would work on the HRCs alongside the existing site team in order to engage with residents and explain the project. It would also be welcomed if the charities accepting the goods could offer volunteer time back in this way.</p>
1.07	<p>Items expected to be included in the pilot scheme at the initial phase are, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s toys • Children’s clothing and sportswear • Adult clothing • Board games and jigsaws • Computer games, DVDs and CDs • Decorative ceramics • Pictures <p>The list of items can be developed as the demand is better understood.</p>
1.08	<p>To support the project, we have submitted a joint funding application to the Landfill Disposal Tax Communities Scheme for the nationally significant grant fund for projects of value from £50,000 to £250,000.</p> <p>The fund is open to any organisation for projects focusing on one or more of the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity – create resilient ecological networks for the benefit of a range of habitats and species • Waste minimisation and the diversion of waste from landfill – promote awareness and best practice to reduce the amount of waste produced • Wider environmental enhancements – bring wider community benefit through improving quality of place

	<p>This projects sits well within the waste minimisation and the diversion of waste from landfill category, which aims to ‘promote awareness and best practice to reduce the amount of waste produced’ with the aim of reducing the environmental and monetary costs associated with wasted resources and help bring about a circular economy where waste is viewed as a resource.</p>
1.09	<p>The application has been submitted requesting the full £250,000 grant available with the project to be overseen by the Council and day-to-day management and operation by Refurbs Flintshire.</p> <p>The project is proposed to run from April 2022 to March 2023, initially establishing the additional infrastructure needed to collect, sort and distribute items, then rolling out the service across the County.</p> <p>The grant funding will pay for staff to establish and run the project; premises for the hub; vehicle acquisition and running costs; promotion/marketing for the service; training for staff and volunteers; and volunteer expenses.</p> <p>Refurbs Flintshire worked with officers in the waste strategy team to develop the grant application. The application was submitted on 23 January 2022 and was approved by delegated authority in Appendix 1. The outcome of the grant application will be announced in February 2022.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The project will be funded following a successful award of the Landfill Disposal Tax Communities Scheme to the value of £250,000.
2.02	The scheme and resources will be managed by Refurbs Flint utilising the awarded grant funding.
2.03	There are no implications for the approved revenue budget for the service for either the current financial year or for future financial years as a result of this pilot project.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The project is reliant on the award of the grant funding. Without this funding, it will not be possible to provide such a comprehensive pilot scheme.
3.02	By enabling items to be reused and be seen as an asset with the potential to be repurposed, there will be a reduction in the demand for raw materials to make new products and reducing environmental impacts.
3.03	This is an innovative project, which will enable resources to be used efficiently and proportionately, and by reducing waste sent to landfill or for incineration will contribute to minimising climate change.
3.04	By increasing the availability of materials for reuse and repurposing this will encourage and enable people to increase their own knowledge, skills and creativity with the aim of minimising waste and promoting responsible procurement.

3.05	By increasing the availability and reuse of items and textiles to 'second users' the project will support those who are not as financially affluent or living in poverty.
3.06	The financial benefit received by charities will be used to further promote the good work that they do in our communities for our residents.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
4.02	All members workshops (6 th and 20 th July 2021)
4.03	Refurbs Flintshire management team
4.04	Various charities based in Flintshire (undertaken in 2019)

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Delegated Authority Form.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Cabinet report detailing members support for the development of repair and reuse initiatives working in partnership with local charities Target 70 A Review of Flintshire County Councils Waste Strategy.pdf
6.02	Welsh governments 'Beyond Recycling' Strategy' detailing the priority of repair and reuse in Council policies to achieve a Circular economy https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf
6.03	Landfill Disposal Tax Communities Scheme background information https://wcva.cymru/funding/landfill-disposals-tax-communities-scheme/
6.04	Council Plan 2021/23 https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Council-Democracy/Council-Plan-2021-23-Final.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 E-mail: ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Household waste and non-household waste are defined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>Reuse is the action or practice of using an item, whether for its original purpose or to fulfil a different function</p> <p>Circular Economy seeks to reduce waste, recover resources at the end of a product's life, and channel them back into production, thus significantly reducing pressure on the environment.</p> <p>The waste hierarchy is a ranking system used for the different waste management options according to which is the best for the environment. The most preferred option is to prevent waste, and the least preferred choice is disposal in landfill sites.</p>