

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ACTIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

SERVICE:	Streetscene and Transportation
INITIATING OFFICER:	Ruth Tulley
SUBJECT:	Grant funding application to promote repair and reuse initiatives

**TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN THE DELEGATED POWERS REPORT TO CABINET
(Brief description):**

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 recycling or disposal.

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

This report requests delegated authority to implement a pilot scheme to deliver a reuse pilot scheme 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.

FULL DETAILS:

In an effort to promote repair and reuse, we wrote 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, while increasing our reuse performance to enable us to minimise waste disposal.

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." 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.

In all, five charities expressed an interest in becoming involved in the project; however, due to the pandemic in 2020, the exercise was halted.

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.

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.

As we are keen to re-institute this initiative, which is an action under the circular economy priority in the Council Plan 2022/23 and 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.

The following solutions have been considered as a basis for the pilot scheme:-

- 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.

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.

Items expected to be included in the initial scheme are, but not limited to, children's toys, children's clothing and sportswear, adult clothing, board games and jigsaws, computer games, DVDs and CDs, and decorative ceramics and pictures. The list of items can be developed as the demand is better understood.

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.

The fund is open to any organisation for projects focusing on one or more of the following themes:

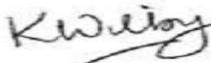
- **Biodiversity** – create resilient ecological networks for the benefit of a range of habitats and species
- **Waste minimisation and the diversion of waste from landfill** – promote awareness and best practice to reduce the amount of waste produced
- **Wider environmental enhancements** – bring wider community benefit through improving quality of place

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.

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. 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.

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. Refurbs Flintshire worked with officers in the waste strategy team to develop the grant application. The outcome of the grant application will be announced in February 2022

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:	There will be no financial implications to Flintshire County Council as the pilot will be funded via grant funding.
HR IMPLICATIONS:	There are no HR implications

APPROVED BY CHIEF OFFICER:	
DATE:	25 January 2022
APPROVED BY CABINET MEMBER:	
DATE:	
DATE SUBMITTED TO CABINET:	

