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**Transforming recycling on Merseyside: a  
review of Merseyside Waste Disposal  
Authority's recycling credits scheme for  
textiles**

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## Executive Summary

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This project was commissioned by Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) to review the Authority's current payments scheme to third party organisations for the recycling of household textile materials.

The outcome of the project is intended to inform a review of the Authority's current recycling credit scheme for textile materials. The ultimate objective of the work is to produce a list of options for MWDA to consider as part of their review, options intended to either enhance or replace the existing recycling credits scheme in order to further incentivise household textile recycling and reduce the 22,000 tonnes of textiles that the most recent waste composition analyses show remains in the household residual stream.

The focus of the work is to:

- consider the status of other Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) recycling credit schemes,
- consult with the current and some potential beneficiaries of recycling credits across Merseyside and Halton<sup>1</sup>, and
- based on the findings of the above, conduct an assessment of options for MWDA and make recommendations for the best way forward.

The review of national WDAs showed that the picture across the UK is extremely mixed, and heavily dependent upon local circumstances. As such, there wasn't a stand-out example of 'best practice' for incentivising textiles recycling that could be directly applicable to MWDA's situation, although a range of unique approaches taken by a number of Waste Disposal and Collection Authorities were found.

There are also a number of incentive schemes currently operating, aimed at encouraging householder textile recycling, adopted by waste partnerships and wider stakeholders across the UK, including such examples as RecycleBank and Bags2Schools. When considered as part of the broader mix of measures, such schemes can prove useful in encouraging householder recycling of textiles.

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<sup>1</sup> The 5 Merseyside district councils are responsible for Local Authority collections services in their area and are known as Waste Collection Authorities. MWDA manages the treatment and disposal of Local Authority collected municipal waste across Merseyside. The Merseyside authorities together with Halton Borough Council for the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership and have responsibility for managing municipal waste across the Liverpool City Region. MWDA only pay recycling credits across Merseyside, and not in Halton.

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Consultation with charities, community groups and other similar organisations who could potentially benefit from recycling credits on Merseyside was undertaken. Questionnaires were sent out to 39 different organisations. The responses contained a useful range of feedback, pointing amongst other issues to concerns amongst such groups about the rise in ‘bogus collections’ and thefts of textiles from the doorstep.

Overall, the project has highlighted a number of key issues that need to be addressed in order for MWDA to realise greater recycling of household textile materials and improved diversion of textile from landfill:

1. Much of the textiles remaining in the residual stream is likely to be poorer quality materials, as indicated by other research which suggests that householders are generally more reticent to put their ‘poorer quality’ textiles (e.g. worn-out socks) into a charity bag. Further information on such work can be found in Appendix 1.
2. Most collectors of textiles, such as charities, focus on getting the more lucrative, ‘good quality’ materials. However, the majority of collectors will collect all textiles. Most do not heavily advertise this fact, and householders cannot therefore be blamed for placing their lower quality textiles in the residual stream.
3. Whilst there is no lack of opportunity for the householder to recycle, research suggests that the rise of thefts of donations from the doorstep and bogus, ‘so-called’ charities may be having a detrimental effect on householder participation.
4. Financial incentives for action are important. However, the current rate of recycling credit paid by MWDA to third party recyclers - £55.60 per tonne in the current financial year (2011-2012) – isn’t really the incentive to recycle that it is intended to be set against a background of a market paying in excess of £600 per tonne. There is no evidence of organisations becoming active in recycling household textiles because of the recycling credit payment, but plenty of evidence to demonstrate that the market is providing sufficient incentive.

MWDA’s objective is to further reduce the quantity of household textiles being disposed of in the residual stream across Merseyside, diverting these materials from the landfill stream into more beneficial re-use and recycling. This is an objective implicit within the Authority’s draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS), some of the most relevant key objectives of which being:

- Reduce the climate change / carbon impacts of waste
- Maximise waste prevention
- Maximise landfill diversion / recovery of residual waste
- Maximise sustainable economic activity associated with waste management
- Reduce the ecological footprint of waste management activities
- Promote behavioural / cultural change that delivers the Strategy objectives

Future options for addressing textile waste need to consider the draft JMWMS strategy objectives. A range of options are therefore open to MWDA to be considered in reviewing their recycling credits scheme for household textile materials, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Do nothing, keep the current scheme and maintain the status quo
2. End the current scheme, and don't replace it
3. Maintain the current scheme, but adapt it
4. Replace the scheme with an alternative or range of alternatives

This project assessed each of the potential options in detail, considering the pros and cons of each, along with the affordability, deliverability and value for money that each would offer. These options were also considered against MWDA's objectives and strategic aims, and finally, recommendations for MWDA's future strategic approach to incentivising further household textile diversion from the residual stream are made.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. End the current recycling credit scheme for textiles*
- 2. Engage more effectively with wider textile stakeholders*
- 3. Focus on improving information and education to householders and wider textile stakeholders*
- 4. Create a more effective funding mechanism aimed at diverting further textile material from the residual stream*

The subject of household textile recycling is diverse and dynamic, with many organisations involved from Government departments to local commercial operators. MWDA should maintain a keen awareness of the changes underway in the sector, and by adopting the above recommended approaches, can help to lead the way in creating best practice in household textiles management.

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# 1 Introduction

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Diversion of textile from the household residual stream is a significant issue for Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA). A waste composition analysis undertaken in 2010 suggests that an average of 4.5% of Merseyside's residual stream, a potential of over 22,000 tonnes per annum, is textile waste, the majority of which could be readily recyclable.

MWDA offer a 'recycling credit' payment to charities and community groups which is effectively the passing on of savings in MWDA's disposal costs, costs which have been prevented through the recycling of household textile materials. The third party recycling credit payment for recycling of household textiles (hereafter termed 'the recycling credit'), is a non-statutory, discretionary incentive mechanism initially defined in the 1990 Environmental Protection Act (EPA), and subsequently amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

The Authority currently (2011/12) pays £55.60 per tonne of textile materials recycled, calculated as a proportion of the savings made that would otherwise have been spent by MWDA on disposal.

Recyclers of household textile materials can today receive up to £640 per tonne for those materials from textile recycling companies on the open textile market (see [www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textile](http://www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textile) for up to date prices).

It is recognised that the recycling credit payment mechanism may therefore not be the incentive mechanism that it once was, and many disposal authorities across the UK have either ceased paying a recycling credit for textiles or have amended their schemes.

MWDA commissioned Envirolink Northwest to undertake a review of their third party recycling credit scheme for textile materials with a view to recommending a future strategic approach and course of action to encouraging further diversion of textile materials from the household residual waste stream.

## 1.1 Project Scope

The scope of the project is clearly defined as a review of MWDA's scheme for payment of recycling credits to third parties for recycling of household textile materials. It entails a review of the activities of disposal authorities across the UK and the views of charity and community group collectors of household textiles across Merseyside and Halton.

The project scope does not therefore directly address wider issues of the recycling credit mechanism with district collection authorities nor with the textiles management regime undertaken by collection authorities, although these elements are touched on through the project. It also does not consider the payment of recycling credits for any materials other than textiles.

## **1.2 Project Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the project is to review the current third party recycling credit mechanism with a view to analysing possible options and providing recommendations for consideration by MWDA that would:

1. better incentivise the diversion of household textile materials,
2. lead to a reduction in textile materials being disposed of via the household residual waste stream, and
3. provide MWDA with 'better value for money' than is currently achieved.

In undertaking the project, reviewing options and making recommendations, clear consideration was given to the wider strategic aims and objectives as set out in the Merseyside draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS).

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## 2 Project Methodology

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In order to achieve the project aims and objectives, the project was undertaken in the following way:

### *Step 1 Existing information was identified and reviewed*

An desk-based exercise was initially undertaken to identify and review existing research and guidance. A summary of some of the key documents reviewed as part of this exercise is included in Appendix 1.

### *Step 2 A review of approaches undertaken by waste disposal authorities across the UK*

A review of experience from Waste Disposal Authorities (WDAs) in the north-west and across the UK to ascertain activities and areas of good practice..

Web-based research, use of existing forums and direct telephone calls were made in undertaking this element of the work.

### *Step 3 Consultation with current scheme beneficiaries*

Consultion with the current and potential beneficiaries of the existing recycling credit scheme was undertaken to gather their opinions and ideas on better achieving the above defined objectives.

### *Step 4 Options Assessment*

Given the findings of the above work, the final stage of the project was aimed at compiling a list of potential options that would help MWDA better achieve their aims and objectives, and analysing these options as follows:

- Positives and negatives of each option (pros and cons)
- Affordability
- Deliverability
- Value for money
- 'Fit' with MWDA's priority objectives as defined in their draft Joint Muncipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS)

### *Step 5 Recommendations to improve diversion of textiles*

The options assessment identified the key elements to achieving better textile diversion, and the most effective mechanisms for achieving the objectives are presented for MWDA's further consideration. These recommendations are aimed at providing the best route for MWDA to get further textile material from the waste stream in the most affordable, deliverable and cost effective way.

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### 3 Recycling household textiles – the wider context

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There are a number of specific reasons why MWDA is now specifically focusing on the issue of diverting more textiles from the household residual stream and encouraging more beneficial use of these materials.

***Potentially recyclable textile material remains in Merseyside’s household residual stream.***

Waste composition analysis commissioned by MWDA on behalf of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership in 2010 found an average of 4.5% of the residual waste stream to consist of textile materials that could otherwise have been recycled.

For Merseyside, this figure represents a potential total of over 22,000 tonnes textile materials per annum remaining in the residual stream that currently ends up in landfill.

The composition analysis is in line with other waste composition analyses undertaken nationally. A report produced by Oakdene Hollins in 2009 for DEFRA went further, finding that over the previous decade, the level of used textiles in household residual waste had increased slightly whilst the quantity of residual waste itself decreased from 12.57 kg/hh/wk to 9.54 kg/hh/wk over the same period.

***Current incentivisation methods for textiles recycling is inefficient.***

MWDA pay a ‘recycling credit’ to organisations that can prove the diversion of certain materials (such as textiles) from landfill. The credit payment reflects the fact that these are materials that MWDA may have had to pay disposal costs for, and the payment reflects the savings made in disposal costs. The payment is a discretionary power provided under the 2005 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.

Over the period from 2008 to 2011, there has been a £15,756 reduction in the annual credit payment made to third parties, as follows;

Year	Textile tonnage	Third party credit payment
2008 /09	2151	£109,450
2009 / 10	1996	£104,617
2010 / 11	1736	£93,694 <sup>2</sup>

Over the same period, the recycling credit payment has risen by 2% each year from £50.88 in 2009/10 to £53.98 in 2010/11.

During this period, the same groups were also able to receive an average of £450 per tonne<sup>3</sup> on the open market from textile merchants for recycling of textile materials.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: data provided by MWDA

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textiles/textiles-prices-archives>

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Of the £93,694 paid out to third parties for textiles recycling in 2010/11, the following is the breakdown of the major recipients:

British Heart Foundation	£13,308	14.20% (of MWDA's annual credit payment)
Barnardos	£9,684	10.33%
British Red Cross	£9,344	9.97%
Oxfam	£9,220	9.84%
Roy Castle Cancer	£7,336	7.83%
Age Concern	£6,024	6.43% <sup>4</sup>

It can therefore be seen that almost 60% of MWDA's recycling credit payments made in 2010/11 were made to 20% of claimants. 5 of these 6 claimants are some of the UK's largest charity organisations. These are organisations that could be considered likely to continue textiles collections across Merseyside despite any loss of recycling credit (although this is an assumption based upon anecdotal evidence from other areas that have ceased paying recycling credits).

This may, however, not be the case with some of the smaller local charities (such as Claire House Hospice) who make credit claims, and who may rely more heavily (as a proportion of their total income) on the relatively small amounts of funding that they receive from such sources as the recycling credit.

In addition to the above Merseyside specific issues, there are wider drivers at work encouraging greater recycling of household textiles.

#### ***Further drivers for recycling of household textiles***

In addition to the above, there are other drivers and pressures encouraging further action by MWDA on improving textiles recycling rates, drivers which can be summarised as follows:

- ***Buoyant textile markets***  
The market is paying historically high rates for textiles, providing ample opportunity for diversion from landfill. Like any commodity, such markets are of course subject to fluctuation, and future rates will be subject to diverse, global influences.
- ***Legislative pressures***  
Such as the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC, national recycling targets and the Localism Bill, ensuring local accountability for failure to meet national recycling targets.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: all data provided by MWDA

- ***Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011***  
Proposing a number of specific actions to be implemented that support and encourage disposal authorities to focus on diversion from the residual stream, and recycling / re-use of textile materials.
- ***Draft Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy***  
Focussing on the reduction of textile waste within the residual stream, and diversion of the material from landfill to more beneficial use, aligns precisely with the draft strategy's prioritized strategic aims and notably Aim 1 – the carbon impact of waste.
- ***Carbon Metrics***  
Research suggests that textiles have the highest environmental impact, and notably carbon impact, of any other material. Focussing on the diversion of textiles from the residual stream, for re-use or recycling purposes, will therefore have proportionally the greatest impact in terms of carbon per tonne of material diverted.

The above pressures can therefore be seen, individually and in combination, to be encouraging disposal authorities to place much greater consideration on the diversion of household textile materials from the residual stream.

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## 4 Waste Disposal Authorities and recycling credits: a review of the national approach

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One of the aims of this project has been to understand what approaches other Waste Disposal Authorities (WDAs) are taking to recycling credits and the incentivisation of textiles recycling. The project looked at the current approach taken by all of the north-west region's WDAs and those amongst a number of WDAs in England.

For the purposes of this project, a number of methods were employed in gathering the information from desk-based research through to email contact and telephone discussions.

It is not surprising to note that given the complexity of Local Authority waste disposal and collection arrangements nationwide, the variety of waste partnerships, two-tiered authorities, Unitaries etc., there is no standard or straightforward approach to incentivising third parties to recycle textiles, all are based on local circumstances.

### 4.1 North-west Waste Disposal Authorities

All of the north-west's WDAs were contacted for the purpose of this project, and the following summarises the current position within these authorities with regard to recycling credits payments made to external third parties for recycled textiles.

#### ***Blackburn-with-Darwen – existing scheme***

Blackburn currently pay recycling credits to any organisation (including commercial) who can prove they have recycled household textile materials. They are not planning to review this scheme at this time.

#### ***Blackpool Council – existing scheme***

Recycling credits are paid to charity and community organisations who can demonstrate they have recycled textile materials. Currently, just 9 organisations claim the credit in Blackpool.

#### ***Cheshire East – existing scheme***

Cheshire East currently pay recycling credits to third parties for textile materials, and have no plans to review this at present as they don't operate a doorstep textile collection service. They did, however, state an awareness of the need to review their scheme, but a focus on rolling out a new collection service meant this is not a current priority.

#### ***Cheshire West & Chester – existing scheme, under review***

Cheshire West and Chester are paying recycling credits to historically registered applicants, but have closed the scheme to new applicants whilst it is under review. Groundwork have been commissioned to undertake a householder behaviours & attitudes study, the findings of which are due shortly and will be used to inform Cheshire West's scheme review.

***Cumbria County Council – existing scheme***

Cumbria have a well advertised and administered recycling credits scheme, offered to most charity and community groups demonstrating recycling of household textiles materials (and specifically excluding items for re-sale through charity shops). There are no plans at present to review this scheme.

***Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA)– no recycling credit scheme***

GMWDA have agreed to amend their recycling credit scheme for textiles, and will cease it completely with effect from September 2011. At its meeting on 21st January 2011, the Authority made a distinction between local organisation; where funds were used local benefit and national organisations where funds were centrally controlled and administered. The Authority agreed changes to the scheme, as follows:

From April 2011 - cease payments to national organisations

From April 2011 to Sep 2011 - credit payments to local organisations reduced to £25 / ton

From Sep 2011 - cease credit payments for textiles to all organisations.

However, savings made from the scheme were transferred into a dedicated fund. Initially £50k per annum, over-subscription of the fund meant that funds of £100k pa (2011/12) have been made available via the Community Waste Fund, intended to incentivise and support local recycling projects.

***Lancashire County Council (LCC) – existing scheme, under review***

LCC have historically paid recycling credits for textiles, but the scheme is under review. The situation in Lancashire is complicated by the inter-relationship between the County WDA, their Districts and the waste PFI operator. In addition to paying third-party groups for recycling of textile materials, LCC has a cost-sharing arrangement with the Districts, paying per household for collections that include textiles. Any review of the scheme and future incentivisation also has to take account of the PFI waste contract conditions.

***Warrington Council – scheme currently suspended pending review***

Warrington has historically paid recycling credits, but the scheme was suspended 'pending review' following recent budget cuts.

***Wigan Council – no current scheme***

Wigan does not pay recycling credits to third parties for textile materials.

## **4.2 A summary of Waste Disposal Authorities approaches to recycling credits for textiles across England**

A number of WDAs across England were approached to gather information on recycling credits payments. In reviewing the approaches taken by these disposal authorities, a wide variety of attitudes and strategies were found, all in-line with the experience of Councils across the north-west. The following summarises the approaches found amongst the different Councils approached for this project.

### ***Not offering recycling credits for textiles***

There are authorities (such as Oxfordshire County) that do not pay recycling credits at all and some (such as Sheffield City Council) stated that they have never paid recycling credits to third parties.

The Somerset Waste Partnership has a relatively unique arrangement. It currently pays recycling credits, but not for textiles, except to those organisations who have historically claimed credits. Somerset stated they currently plan to continue to honour these payments in future.

### ***Existing recycling credits scheme under review***

Some Councils are actively reviewing their recycling credits scheme.

Derbyshire County Council, for example, currently pay a recycling credit for textiles, but have just rolled out a County-wide kerbside textile collection service. They are awaiting the results of this roll-out which will inform their review as to whether or not to proceed with the recycling credit payments.

### ***Continuing to pay recycling credits for textiles as part of their recycling mix***

A number of Councils (such as Leeds City Council and Devon County) clearly stated that they are currently happy with their recycling credits scheme for textiles and have no plans to review them.

Dorset Waste Partnership stated they whilst they felt a review may be necessary at some point, this was some way off due to other priorities. They were keen to stress that in any review, their stated, strategic focus on supporting community groups and activities would remain.

### ***Have reviewed the recycling credit scheme, and made changes***

A number of Councils stated that they have already reviewed their schemes and made changes. Changes to schemes have usually occurred against a background of the relevant Council offering a suitable alternative such as a separate fund or Council-wide kerbside textile collections.

Some (such as Shropshire) have reviewed and ceased operating the schemes, citing financial pressures.

Northumberland Council reviewed their recycling credit payment scheme for textiles 2 years ago, and reduced the payment at that time to a flat £5 per tonne, which they currently pay.

### 4.3 Alternative approaches

Many WDAs and Waste Partnerships have adopted a range of alternative approaches to incentivise and encourage the recycling of household textiles. Some examples were included in the 'Merseyside Textile Recycling Project' undertaken by Lucy Day at LJMU in March 2010, and many are well known and active across the north-west.

A survey undertaken by the Waste Improvement Network (WIN) in 2009 entitled "*Recycling Credits: Innovative arrangements & cost sharing*" gathered responses from 19 County WDAs, examining the arrangements between WDAs and WCAs. This work focussed on the statutory system of recycling credits payments between disposal and collection authorities, and found a complex array of different arrangements between different authorities (further details can be found at [www.win.org.uk](http://www.win.org.uk).)

In terms of considering 'best practice', it is clear is that there is no 'one size fits all' solution, all Local Authorities adopt measures appropriate to local circumstances. Financial and resource pressures, local politics, contractual arrangements and highly diverse arrangements between disposal and collections regimes all affect how a disposal authority might approach the incentivisation of textiles recycling.

Two approaches taken by disposal authorities in the north-west did, however, stand-out as being relatively unique in comparison to many others, and of most relevance to MWDA and the Merseyside Partnership::

#### **Greater Manchester WDA – Community Waste Fund**

In recognising that the market is currently dealing with a great proportion of household textiles recycling, but that many local community and charity groups can still play a key role in encouraging householder recycling, GMWDA created the Community Waste Fund. This fund is specifically aimed at supporting projects that will positively impact on GMWDA's goal of 'zero waste to landfill' whilst also complying with the aims of the authority's Municipal Waste Management Strategy.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Cumbria County Council – banded recycling payment's to Cumbria's Districts**

Cumbria operate an innovative arrangement with their WCA Districts, aimed at optimising the efficiency of recycling. Again, a complex mix of arrangements between the WDA, WCAs and contract with their disposal contractor, Shanks, Cumbria County Council pay recycling rewards to each district for each percentage point of recycling (or composting) achieved, capped at £80 per tonne. The higher the rate of recycling, the greater the reward per percentage point, thereby financially incentivising greater recycling in District collections.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Further details can be found at <http://www.gmwda.gov.uk/community/community-waste-fund>

<sup>6</sup> Further details can either be found on [www.win.org.uk](http://www.win.org.uk) or by contacting Cumbria County Council

#### 4.4 Recycling incentivisation schemes

In addition to schemes operated by disposal authorities, there are many approaches adopted by WCAs and Waste Partnerships that are intended to encourage greater recycling of household textile materials. Many adopt the common route of kerbside collections, and the installation of Authority wide recycling banks, but some have adopted more novel approaches.

##### ***RecycleBank*** – e.g. Halton Borough Council / Windsor and Maidenhead

RecycleBank is a private rewards and loyalty company which works with local authorities to incentivise recycling services. This scheme is known to the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership, having been operated in Halton for the last 2 years and is an example of a ‘Reward and Recognition’ scheme, supported by the Government.

The organisation contracts with an authority and / or its waste contractor, and collects data from household recycling collections. Points are awarded to individual households according to the quantity of recyclate collected, and the householder can then convert these points into rewards in the form of vouchers. These vouchers can be spent at a variety of retailers / service providers.<sup>7</sup>

##### ***Bags2Schools***

Bags2Schools is a well known organisation, commonly adopted amongst local authorities and schools across the UK and probably needs little introduction.

It is a free fundraising scheme, working in partnership with schools, business, community groups, local authorities and charities to help raise money from the textile donations. Bags2Schools pay ‘market rates’ for textile materials collected by schools, currently amounting to a payment of £500 per tonne.

The organisation operates throughout the UK; collecting and selling unwanted textiles to importers and wholesalers in many countries of Eastern and Western Europe, Africa and Asia.<sup>8</sup>

##### ***“Textiles to Treasure” Schools Competition - Dorset County Council***

Schools across Dorset are invited to participate in a textiles recycling competition to ‘transform textiles into treasure’. The competitive challenge element is that the winning school receives £600 per tonne of all textiles collected. Every participating school receives £300 per tonne.

The competition is run between the local authority and a textiles recycling organisation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Further details at <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/newsroom/latestnews/1674866?a=5441>

<sup>8</sup> Further details at <http://www.bag2school.com/u/k/home/>

<sup>9</sup> Further details at <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/395248>

**Recyclatex** – Bonded textile recycling scheme

Recyclatex is essentially an accreditation body, set up by the Textile Recycling Association, with a membership of specialist textile recyclers who can conform to the high quality and service delivery requirements of the scheme. Only organisations who can comply with its strict rules and conditions can become members of the scheme.

The body offers local authorities a comprehensive textile reclamation service covering all requirements from textile banks to doorstep collections. The scheme ensures that services are provided to a high standard and will be maintained even where an operator ceases trading.<sup>10</sup>

***“Less in the bin, more in your pocket”*** campaign - Wandsworth Council

In 2009, Wandsworth Council undertook a high profile campaign urging residents to consider the direct connection between the amount of waste they put in their residual bin and the amount of Council Tax they paid. Their 2 key campaign messages were:

*“Less in the bin, more in your pocket”*

*“1kg less waste per household per week saves £500,000 per year”*

The campaign included advertising on collection vehicles, local press and council materials (websites, publications etc.)

Up to April 2010, Wandsworth showed a measurable decrease in residual waste collected from households, leading to savings of £300,000 on disposal costs in that year.<sup>11</sup>

Whilst the schemes detailed above may not necessarily be the sorts of schemes that MWDA would wish to consider directly, nor would any of them alone replace the recycling credits scheme, they are the sorts of schemes that the Partnership and wider stakeholders could consider adopting to help improve recycling locally. A number fall into the category of ‘reward and recognition’ schemes, and are the sorts of projects that the Government is currently supporting in order to help improve UK recycling rates.

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<sup>10</sup> Further details at <http://www.textile-recycling.org.uk/recyclatex.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Further details at [http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200084/recycling\\_rubbish\\_and\\_waste/463/reducing\\_waste/1](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200084/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/463/reducing_waste/1)

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## 5 Recycling credits beneficiaries consultation

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Central to the review of MWDA's recycling credits scheme was a consultation of the current beneficiaries of the recycling credit. This consultation was aimed at presenting to the beneficiaries some of the reasons for reviewing the current scheme and then gathering their thoughts, ideas and input to some specific key issues.

The initial aim was to hold a dedicated workshop, inviting beneficiaries to discuss in an open, facilitated forum the issues to be addressed. The workshop was subsequently replaced with a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was compiled based upon the workshop framework and was sent out to the same list of current and potential beneficiaries as were invited to the workshops.

### 5.1 Summary consultation responses

Questionnaires were sent to 39 organisations. Of those sent out, 10 completed questionnaires were returned. The list of organisations invited to participate is included in Appendix 3, along with a comprehensive summary of the responses provided in Appendix 4.

The following summarises the nature of the responses:

#### **Question 1: What do you consider to be the barriers and opportunities to encouraging greater recycling of textile waste from Merseyside's households?**

##### *Barriers:*

Lack of information

Poor householder understanding

Public apathy, general disposal is effort-free

Poor / confusing recycling infrastructure

Too much competition

##### *Opportunities:*

Provision of information to householders, educating & increasing awareness on the subject

Media campaigns / roadshows

Partnership working with existing, successful textile recyclers

Appealing to the public's desire to help a good cause

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**Question 2: How could MWDA best help you to incentivise the process of reducing textiles in the household bin and ensuring higher levels of re-use and recycling?**

Provision of information to the householder

Financial support to recycling organisations

Focussed financial support – a ‘moral’ focus rather than general support (which includes commercial)

Encouraging behavioural change – ‘nudges’

Supporting charities promotion & awareness campaigns

Always looking for ways to generate more funds!

**Question 3: What are the challenges your organisation currently faces in terms of collecting, receiving and recycling more household textile materials?**

Storage space for collected textiles

Resources generally

Theft of textiles at the kerbside

Householder’s lack of understanding of what is acceptable – lower quality textiles that could be accepted ending up in the bin

‘Unscrupulous competition’, bogus / illegal collections which damage public confidence

Contamination of collected textiles

**Question 4: MWDA would be grateful for any comments or ideas you may have as to how the organisation can best develop a strategy to help incentivise further household textile recycling across Merseyside. Please feel free to make any additional comments.**

Further cash incentives

Novel schemes such as ‘Bags to Schools’

Greater flexibility in locating recycling banks

Better advertising of the recycling credits scheme

Further sharing of experience & successes

Develop long-term, ‘healthy’ relationship with established textile recycling experts.

## 5.2 Consultation review

Whilst statistically, the response to the invitations exceeded 25%, this could have been improved. In reviewing the whole process, the following issues should be considered for future consultation.

### ***Poor response to both workshop and questionnaire***

On review, it can be suggested that some of the possible reasons for the relatively low response to both workshop & questionnaire could be the time of year (school holidays) and general apathy to what is perceived as just 'another workshop' of 'another questionnaire'.

It was notable that almost exactly the same organisations who accepted the invitation to the workshop also completed and returned the questionnaires suggesting that some organisations are much more engaged in the issue than others.

### ***Generally limited questionnaire responses***

The questionnaire was specifically designed with open questions, attempting to elicit thoughtful, detailed responses from participants. On further consideration, this was possibly a little ambitious for many time-pushed people.

Whilst certain information was provided to help people understand the context of the questionnaire and review, this was necessarily limited. It is recognised that this is much easier in a workshop session where participants can actively engage and ask questions in order to clarify understanding.

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## 6 Future opportunities: an assessment of options

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The overall aims and objectives of this project have been the creation and assessment of a range of strategic options that MWDA could consider by either adapting or replacing their current recycling credits scheme. The chosen options need to further incentivise textile recycling which would reduce the quantity of textile material in the domestic residual stream.

There is a significant body of existing research available to help inform MWDA's strategy for encouraging further textile recycling in the household waste stream, some of which is highlighted in Appendix 1.

In the present buoyant textiles market, a market which pays in excess of £600 per tonne for textile materials, the MWDA recycling credit does not demonstrably incentivise organisations to recycle textiles.

The market has created a plethora of 'charitable', commercial and 'bogus' charity collectors operating at the doorstep and there is a 'bombardment' of the householder with bags to collect textiles. There is recognition by many, including the Government, that the 'bogus' collectors are taking advantage of householders which may actually serve to discourage householders from recycling textiles in particular. This also adds to the confusion of householders as to who best to pass their textiles onto.

In addition, the complex behavioural patterns of individuals who may feel confused about the messages regarding poorer quality materials allied to the fact that many textiles collectors openly advertise for good quality textiles, and not all qualities of material, means that a lot of perfectly recyclable textile material may inadvertently end up in the bin.

### 6.1 Options assessment

The following options have been produced as the broad range of all possible, practicable strategies that MWDA could consider adopting for their future textile recycling incentivisation mechanisms..

These options do not consider any of the incentives or other recycling schemes that may ultimately be adopted by the waste collection authorities, community groups or other stakeholders with whom MWDA may choose to work in future. Such schemes were reviewed earlier in this work and represent the more front-line activity (including that of the Partnership) rather than the strategic framework which is the responsibility of MWDA.

Similarly, none of the options are necessarily 'stand-alone', and MWDA may consider a combination of the options going forward.

These options are analysed here for their suitability in terms of positive and negative effects for MWDA. Within each, issues of deliverability, affordability and value for money for MWDA have also been considered, along with how well they help achieve the priority aims outlined in MWDA's draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

**Option 1: No change, maintain the status quo**

**Reason:** 'No change' presents the least resistance to any potential changes. Whilst textiles are a key waste management issue, they may not be a priority activity for MWDA in the short term.

**Pros:** This option will cause the least amount of change related issues for the Authority and result in no change to organisational resource requirements. Maintaining this scheme in this format allows for continued data capture of household textile recycling.

The scheme as it stands is budgeted, and the Authority knows that it is affordable and deliverable in its current form.

**Cons:** It won't help MWDA achieve the objective of getting more out of the waste stream, and therefore does not work with MWDA's aims and objectives as detailed in the JMWMS, nor address any of the drivers identified earlier.

In reality, the current scheme is not an incentive and therefore the current payments could be considered as financially wasteful and therefore ineffective.

This current scheme does not necessarily provide 'value for money', as the market is paying 10 x more than the value of the credit.

The scheme evidently isn't working to capture the significant tonnage (over 22,000 tonnes) that the most recent analysis suggests remains in the residual stream, especially considering that credits were claimed for just 2,011 tonnes in 2009/10. This is some 22,000 tonnes of material that districts have to collect and dispose of, a significant financial and resource issue.

This scheme does not adequately or efficiently address the objectives set out in the draft revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, such as reducing the carbon impacts of waste management (Aim One) or maximising landfill diversion (Aim Three).

**Option 2: End the scheme, and don't replace it**

**Reason:** The reason for ending the current recycling credit scheme can be seen as all of the 'cons' set out in Option One. The current scheme doesn't incentivise high rates of textile recycling; claimants in 2009/10 recycled 2,011 tonnes whilst waste composition analysis showed 22,909 tonnes remaining in the bin. This scheme doesn't fit with the draft JMWM Strategy, and therefore can be suggested as not providing good value for money.

Pros: MWDA would make financial savings by not paying recycling credits; over £100,000 were paid out in credits in 2009/10. Ending the scheme would save the Authority this level of cash each year, allowing for the possible diversion of this budget into more effective and similarly affordable schemes.

Further administrative costs and resources would be saved from not having to operate the scheme and administer the claims, making this option more 'deliverable'.

Ending the scheme is highly unlikely to have any negative effect at all on textile recycling performance, as demonstrated by recent year's credits claims, and the market is currently offering a high price for textiles.

In reality, the majority of credit payment is currently going to the larger national charities. It could be suggested that larger organisations are more likely to continue to collect textiles irrespective of payment of recycling credits.

Cons: This could be somewhat detrimental to some organisations, especially the smaller local charities who benefit from credit payments at present. This payment, whilst small, may be proportionally greater to these smaller charities than it is to the larger ones.

It would also not assist in helping MWDA achieve the stated aim of getting further textile material out of the domestic stream.

The recycling credit scheme is operated by MWDA for the Merseyside districts.. The 'end the scheme' option would result in no increase in recycling rates.

### **Option 3: Maintain the current payment scheme, but adapt it**

By maintaining a form of recycling credit payment, it could be adapted to make it more 'fit for purpose', more flexible to suit changing situations (such as changing markets) and more targeted to achieve the Authority's strategic aims and the objectives of the draft JMWMS.

A range of scheme adaptations are open to MWDA, depending upon strategic aims and desired outcomes.

#### *Option 3.1 A target-tonnage based RC payment*

Such a scheme could work as follows; any claimant will have a tonnage-target based on previous year's collections. For all future years, no payment is made for any tonnage recycled *up to* that target amount, but a credit will be paid on every tonne *above* that amount. This amounts to rewarding claimants for continual, ongoing improvement in recycling tonnages rather than maintaining a steady-state approach.

- Reason:** In principle, this would help encourage and incentivise greater recycling of textiles, above the amount currently being recycled.
- Pros:** This mechanism recognises that the market is most likely producing current levels of textile recycling. To go a step further and produce higher rates of recycling than currently experienced therefore requires specific incentivisation.
- Depending upon the level of credit payment, there would potentially be a financial saving for MWDA with this option.
- MWDA would still get the tonnage figures for inclusion in waste statistics.
- Although a more restricted payment, this still serves to support local community groups and charities.
- If such a scheme were successful, and higher textile recycling rates were achieved, then this would represent much better value for money than the current scheme.
- Cons:** Alone, this isn't really an incentive (and therefore wouldn't offer value for money), *unless* the credit was set above the market rate on offer at the time of any given claim.
- There are other reasons that textiles end up in the residual stream (such as lack of information, householder behaviour etc.) that such a financial scheme alone would not help to address. To work well, this type of scheme would need to have a conditional element attached, such as the requirement to improve education and communication of information in-line with that that would support MWDA's strategic aims. It would also require working in close partnership with stakeholders to achieve the aims.
- Such a scheme may be more problematic to administer, and could be contentious amongst the current claimants. New claimants would potentially have an unfair initial advantage having no collection history recorded with MWDA.

*Option 3.2 A market-based recycling credit mechanism.*

As already highlighted, the recycling credit payment is not necessarily an incentive to recycle textiles in the current market. It remains merely additional revenue for those organisations that claim.

However, the textiles market is volatile, and hasn't always been at this peak. Over the last 10 years, the market rate paid for 'charity rags' has increased from £130 per tonne in 2001 to £600 per tonne in 2011.<sup>12</sup> Textiles markets are subject to a wide range of global influences, from cotton prices to the rise in demand from emerging economies such as China and India. Like any commodity, rates could rise further still, but predicting such changes is extremely difficult.

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textiles/textiles-prices-archives/prices> for further information.

In order to help ensure incentivisation of textiles recycling across all market conditions, a market-based payment could be structured to pay higher rates when markets are low, lower rates when markets are high (as now).

- Reason: To target public funds to incentivise recycling in the right way, and help encourage continued, sustainable, long-term recycling of textiles amongst all organisations even when market conditions are against them.
- Pros: It recognises that more powerful incentives to recycling exist, and therefore allows for MWDA to better target resources where they are both required and will produce the most benefit.
- Cons: This doesn't necessarily tackle the root cause of why so much of certain textile materials remain in the waste stream. It is highly likely that even in poor market conditions, certain organisations such as charities will continue to collect textiles for recycling as they always have (e.g. Salvation Army).

*Option 3.3 Attach conditions to recycling credit payments*

Future recycling credit payments could come with a caveat that (for example) any credits paid must be ring-fenced by the recipient organisation and used by them directly for improved communications and information for the householder that also fit with MWDA's aims & objectives (i.e. would help increase recycling of textiles).

- Reason: The findings of this project indicate that certain issues (such as householder understanding) are barriers to further textile recycling. This mechanism maintains an existing scheme, but serves to remove the indiscriminate nature of credits and also allowing MWDA to define how payments are spent to address some of the known barriers.

Note that recycling credit payments to third parties, whilst referenced in law, are non-statutory. MWDA would need to seek advice as to whether 'recycling credit payments' could have conditions attached.

- Pros: It would make recipients more accountable, and essentially earn their funding. It would allow MWDA an element of control over the use of their funds, and make that funding work better towards MWDA's strategic aims.

It would help address barriers to further recycling, making the credit work more efficiently.

It would help MWDA to identify those organisations most willing to work in partnership towards MWDA's aims, rather than just accepting the cash.

This mechanism provides MWDA with better value for money, in encouraging organisations to work harder and more effectively for the funds.

As it remains similar in nature to the current scheme, it remains an affordable way forward.

Cons: It would add a further element of administrative burden to MWDA's management of the scheme, with no guarantees of success., and MWDA would have limited control over a third party organisation's communications.

It would remain a fractured approach to improving textile recycling, based on engagement only with those organisations who benefit from the fund and is likely to have minimal household impact.

#### *Option 3.4 Reduce the recycling credit payments*

The market is currently incentivising textiles recycling, and payment of recycling credits is, to a degree, a 'bonus' to organisations receiving it. It can therefore be suggested that the present level of credit payment represents poor value for money for the Authority.

Reason: If it is accepted that the current level of credit payment does not sufficiently incentivise textiles recycling, this mechanism recognises that there are however other reasons that credit payments should be continued to be made to third parties. Payments could continue at a reduced rate with a lower financial burden on the Authority.

Pros: This is better value for money than the current scheme as it is much cheaper and would be expected to have no negative effect on household textiles recycling rates.

A continued (albeit reduced) payment maintains a relationship between MWDA and the textile recyclers, and provides the recyclers with additional income. This can be considered especially important for the smaller, more locally based charities and community groups.

It ensures that MWDA continue to benefit from the valuable textile recycling data which can be incorporated into MWDA's recycling statistics.

This is an affordable option for MWDA and would require no additional resources to those presently employed on the scheme.

Cons: It doesn't do anything to either incentivise textile recycling or encourage further recycling.

This *may* be data that the organisations would be willing to provide free in any case, although MWDA would need to actively approach as many organisations recycling textiles as possible to gather useful, auditable data.

Reducing the payment to too low a level may disincentivise certain organisations from engaging with MWDA and may ultimately be counter-productive in terms of stakeholder relations.

**Option 4: Replace the credits scheme with a more relevant alternative or combination of alternatives.**

This project has identified a number of activities that will be required to address the current barriers to getting more textiles out of the residual stream. In addition, it has identified opportunities for MWDA to better engage with textile recyclers, reduce disposal costs and achieve the aims of the JMWMS.

Ending the current recycling credit will not incentivise further textile recycling and will not help MWDA to address any of their strategic aims and objectives. However, this course of action would recognise that the recycling credit is not necessarily the incentive to recycling that it is intended to be.

A more effective set of alternatives to the recycling credit scheme are therefore required.

**Option 4.1 Enhance MWDA engagement with stakeholders**

Organisations involved in textiles recycling are diverse, highly active and extremely ambitious. MWDA can help to provide a strategic framework to develop partnership working and engagement with those organisations who can help MWDA achieve the aim of increased textile recycling and reuse.

Enhancing stakeholder engagement could, for example, involve the creation of a dedicated Textiles Partnership Forum. A Partnership Forum must be inclusive enough to cover the full spread of organisations active in textile recycling – Districts, charities, community groups, commercial organisations etc., - and be empowered to make a difference.

The Terms of Reference of such a group must be commensurate with the desired outcomes for MWDA and the Partnership. These would include helping to address the current barriers to further recycling, fitting actions with the draft JMWMS strategic aims and delivery options etc.

Reason: Effective stakeholder engagement is a vital activity. Before ending the recycling credit scheme, stakeholders need to feel engaged and involved to prevent a backlash and disengagement of participants.

MWDA can only do so much – the textiles collection infrastructure exists and is active, diverse and undertaken by many disconnected organisations. A partnership forum would bring these together to define a united approach to a)

tackle barriers b) share resources c) raise MWDA aims & objectives up the agenda.

There will be ideas, activities and opportunities in bringing these organisations together that MWDA or further studies alone will never uncover.

Pros: Research demonstrates that partnerships are highly effective, if not fundamental elements of any successful strategy.

The current beneficiaries of recycling credits have a vested interest, and future engagement will help smooth any changes (especially removal of funds) but also provide MWDA many opportunities to direct Merseyside-wide activities.

The draft Joint Municipal Waste Strategy identifies 'Joint Working' as Priority One in its ranked Delivery Options; enhanced stakeholder engagement would fit with this aim.

A textiles partnership forum would also help address one of the risks identified by MWDA in carrying out the review, that of *"failure to engage with stakeholders leading to implementation of schemes not supported by the relevant organisations and consequential reputational damage to MWDA."* The opportunity now exists for MWDA to build upon the consultation undertaken during this project.

The remit of any existing stakeholder groups *could* be amended to include the aims and objectives of a dedicated textiles forum.

This group would help in addressing the current barriers to further recycling, such as:

- Householder behaviours
- Communications
- A sharing of resources, new ideas and information
- A united approach, not a competitive one

Cons: This will require time and resources in an already time and resource pressured organisation.

Skilful management of partnerships is necessary to prevent unintended consequences – certain organisations will want to control the agenda.

Existing partnership forums already exist, and if this isn't well managed, could serve to confuse rather than improve.

An ineffective forum can be counter-productive, with no buy-in from stakeholders.

Such a forum cannot be fully-inclusive – there are too many organisations involved in textile recycling across Merseyside and Halton. Some organisations may therefore feel alienated, and this will require careful management.

## Option 4.2 Improve information and education across all stakeholders

One of the main barriers to further recycling that this work has identified is that of householder understanding and behaviour. Residents may understand that good-quality textiles can be given to charities, but not that all quality textiles are acceptable. It is expected that much of the textile remaining in the residual stream is lower quality material.

Many charities openly advertise their requirement for 'good-quality' textiles and neglect the less lucrative, lower quality materials (despite the fact that many are willing to accept *all* textiles).

Key to ensuring that householders put as little textile material into the residual bin as possible is to *inform and educate* them with clear, consistent and simple messages to help them to change *change their behaviour* and recycle more. Working in conjunction with the wider network of stakeholders such as charities and community groups, MWDA could help to produce detailed information for householders and in co-operation with the Partnership and stakeholders, undertake a wide-ranging and detailed campaign aimed at addressing householder perceptions and householder behaviour.

**Reason:** Householders need to have clear and consistent information and advice in order to adopt good textile recycling practices.

Knowing that they can recycle all textiles will be a key element in achieving MWDA's aims of getting more material out of the residual stream.

**Pros:** An effective, targeted information campaign undertaken in consultation and with the buy-in of wider stakeholders is likely to yield significant results.

A co-ordinated, joint campaign could include an element of cost sharing and there are potential sponsorship / Government funding opportunities.

There will be a cost to this, which may be significant. However, the cost of this activity is highly likely to be outweighed by the savings made on landfill disposals.

Such campaigns can be defined to address the specific barriers that this work has identified

**Cons:** Time, effort and money will be required to produce an effective information and education campaign that will have any effect on householder behaviour and ultimately the amount of textiles in the bin.

A cost / benefit analysis may suggest that this route would not necessarily yield significant results. Trying to effect behavioural change amongst the general public can be extremely costly and time consuming.

A Merseyside (and Halton, should they agree to be involved) -wide campaign produced in co-operation with the textile stakeholder group would create a unified message across the sub-region, helping to address some of the confusion that exists.

### Option 4.3 Create an alternative source of funding

Money is important, especially to charities and even more so during a time of so-called 'austerity'. MWDA could therefore use any financial savings made from ending the recycling credit scheme to extend the current Community Resource Action Fund to allow for bespoke textile recycling schemes or to create a new Textiles Diversion Fund aimed specifically at supporting new community / charity projects for textiles materials.

A fund aimed at schemes that directly encourage further textile recycling, and aimed at having the maximum impact for Merseyside, may be a method of more effectively addressing the objectives of the JMWMS.

**Reason:** Certain organisations rely on external funds to undertake their activities. MWDA have been a source of funding via the recycling credit, and simply removing the funding may have a detrimental effect on certain organisations.

Currently, some 62% of recycling credits are paid to just 6 of the larger, national charity groups, funds that are proportionally smaller to the large charities that the smaller, local groups and therefore potentially less effective at creating change *on Merseyside*.

**Pros:** A dedicated pot of money recognises the importance of funding to third parties, and would allow MWDA to focus the funding on defined activities to achieve specific aims (which the recycling credit doesn't do).

It allows much tighter budgetary control, ring-fencing an identified sum of money so is an affordable option.

Recycling credits are indiscriminate – a dedicated fund with specific aims can be targeted to achieve the specific aims as required by MWDA, the Partnership and any future stakeholder group. This would make such a fund better value for money than the blanket recycling credit.

A fund would help maintain buy-in from local community groups and charities. Small, local charities currently receiving limited funds could access greater funds to achieve higher recycling. This helps negotiate some of the political difficulties anticipated from scrapping recycling credits.

The objectives of the fund could be very clearly defined to link directly to the draft strategies priority aims (e.g. reducing carbon impacts of waste, maximising waste prevention, maximising landfill diversion etc.)

**Cons:** The effectiveness of a single pot of money will always be limited in scope. Whereas the recycling credit is essentially available to all, a fund will benefit a more limited number of organisations.

This mechanism ignores the benefits to MWDA of capturing the wider textile recycling data from the current beneficiaries.

Such a scheme also requires good levels of advertising and administration, and may therefore require additional resources from MWDA.

#### **Option 4.4 MWDA accreditation of textile collectors**

Working with Districts and textile recyclers (charities, community groups), create a 'textile recycling standard' or accreditation for household textile recycling whereby MWDA's logo could be used on certain charity's / group's collection bags to help identify organisations adopting good practice and acceptable standards.

**Reason:** This work has highlighted the fact that there are a myriad of different organisations operating across Merseyside who are undertaking textile collections and recycling of household materials. Whilst it presents great opportunity to recycle textiles, it can be confusing for the householder and create difficulties in understanding who is doing what for what reason.

Research also suggests that householders act on an emotional basis when donating clothing, and actively choose charities whilst potentially ceasing recycling in the face of 'bogus', commercial collectors.

**Pros:** MWDA is a trusted, public brand. By MWDA accrediting certain textile collectors, this would help overcome the perceived barrier that some householders have to recycling with bogus collectors.

It creates a clear, defined route and beneficiary and gives the household donor some confidence in donating items to which they are emotionally attached.

Certain WDAs / WCAs are already following a similar route, and are offering a collection service linked to a single charity beneficiary. For example, Warwick District link up solely with 'Guide Dogs For the Blind' for their kerbside textile collections.

**Cons:** Defining the accreditation criteria will be an extensive and potentially politically difficult process.

It also has to be linked to an information and education campaign, and raises questions of cost and benefit.

Whilst it may have some success, simply accrediting textile collections is unlikely to serve to further incentivise additional household textile recycling.

## 6.2 Options summary

All of the above options have been considered in detail, and assessed for their viability and practicality in achieving MWDA's objective of diverting further textile material from the household residual waste stream and sending more of the material to re-use or recycling.

Options that, when assessed, were impractical, delivered poor value for money, did not address MWDA's draft JMWMS strategy objectives or were considered unaffordable were ruled out.

Only those options above that could deliver on all of the defined requirements were considered as viable options and have therefore been taken forward as recommendations for adoption by MWDA.

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## 7 Concluding remarks

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Recycling of household textiles is a highly dynamic subject. The value of textile materials on the open market is leading to a significant and wide-ranging changes in the nature of household textile collections. A dramatic rise in the number of commercial and charitable collection organisations is being seen, along with a number of 'bogus' charity collectors and a rise in thefts of donated textiles from the kerbside.

Previously altruistic behaviour on behalf of landowners such as national supermarkets is changing such that land previously offered essentially free of charge to charities like the Salvation Army is now being tendered to the highest bidder with landowners taking a share of the textile revenue.

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and the wider Merseyside and Halton Partnership have a key role to play in encouraging positive recycling behaviours and educating people and groups to recycle better and recycle in a positive way.

By addressing the understanding and the long-term behaviours of the householder, by working closely with those organisations that collect textiles and are visible to the householder and by providing a source of support to help encourage organisations and groups to recycle more, MWDA will help householders reduce the amount of material they put in the bin, diverting this material from landfill with the commensurate carbon and financial benefits that follow.

This won't happen overnight, and many other organisations recognise the issues and are themselves taking steps to begin to address the underlying problems. The Government is providing support funding, organisations such as the Waste Resources Action Programme are producing best practice guidance for local authorities and many charities and local authorities are undertaking their own research to help uncover what will better help achieve their long-term aims.

That Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority are producing a unique, long-term strategy that recognises and defines the steps to improve management of Merseyside's household waste combined with their current efforts toward improved diversion of textiles from the household bin are both positive and significant steps along the road to the ultimate destination of zero textiles being sent to landfill.

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## 8 Recommendations

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The review of the existing MWDA recycling credits scheme for third party recycling of textiles has identified a number of key actions that the Authority could consider adopting in order to address the current barriers to further diversion of household textiles from the residual stream and to help achieve the aims and objectives of the draft JMWMS.

Having considered existing work on the issue, the experience of other Waste Disposal Authorities and feedback received from current credit beneficiaries, this report therefore recommends that MWDA consider adopting the following measures in order to:

- a) provide MWDA with best 'value for money',
- b) most effectively and efficiently deliver further diversion of textiles from the residual stream, in the most affordable and deliverable way, and
- c) individually and collectively provide the best fit with the objectives as set out in the draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

### **Recommendation 1: End the current recycling credit scheme**

MWDA should end the current scheme at the earliest reasonable point in time. The following further strategic recommendations should then be adopted.

### **Recommendation 2. Engage more effectively with the wider textiles recycling stakeholders**

MWDA should create and manage a dedicated, comprehensive forum of representatives from across the textile recycling spectrum. The forum must have the remit and responsibility to deliver MWDA's textile diversion ambitions, and include members able to effect and influence change amongst a wider group of relevant stakeholders. The forum should also have responsibility for influencing the final two recommendations.

### **Recommendation 3. Focus on improved information / education for householders and textiles stakeholders**

Efficient and directed education and information – for householders, collectors and other stakeholders – is vital to addressing the current barriers to further recycling.

MWDA should hold further discussion with the textiles stakeholders about the nature of information and education required to address the current barriers to further recycling.

The wider network should then be engaged (through the forum) in delivering a Merseyside-wide campaign.

Note: WRAP will be issuing guidance for Local Authorities on textiles recycling towards the end of this year. Information within this guidance will contribute to developing improved information and education across Merseyside.

#### **Recommendation 4. Create a more effective funding mechanism aimed at encouraging diversion of all household textiles from landfill**

MWDA should create a dedicated funding mechanism with clear criteria set against MWDA's objective of getting more textile material out of the residual stream. It should be open to any organisation able to demonstrate novel methods of diverting additional textile materials, and be specifically aimed at schemes and projects that will get further textiles out of the household residual waste stream.

The fund should be well advertised, supported by the wider stakeholders involved in the forum and be well administered, well monitored and have a feedback reporting process. It should be of a sufficient size to effect a range of change across Merseyside.

Resources currently allocated to the administration of the recycling credit scheme could be placed at the disposal of the administration of a new funding scheme.

The above recommendations will require time, resources and further consideration to implement, but as the options assessment would indicate, these are the recommendations that will result (if effectively implemented) in much more significant diversion of textile materials from Merseyside's household waste stream.

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## 9 Further work and areas of consideration

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The above measures are recommended as the fundamental, strategic first steps that MWDA should adopt in order to achieve their household textiles recycling objectives.

In addition to these strategic recommendations, we would suggest that MWDA consider undertaking a range of additional operational activities.

### ***Organise a feedback workshop for the consultees of the exercise***

MWDA will need effective stakeholder engagement to achieve their aims, and this exercise has highlighted a number of keen and engaged organisations. It would benefit developing relationships to hold a follow-up discussion with these groups explaining the exercise, outcome of the review and future actions.

### ***Hold further discussions with charity and community groups***

To further examine their capacity and willingness to actively collect more and 'all quality' of household textiles, and begin the longer-term process of more actively engaging with textile collectors.

### ***Consider further research to examine and tackle the currently perceived barriers to further recycling***

Some of the published work that already exists around householder textile recycling is provided in the appendices.

However, it would be extremely useful for MWDA to undertake Merseyside specific research into the attitudes, behaviours and opinions of householders around recycling of textiles.

In addition, with recycling of household textiles materials being such a dynamic issue at present, there are many organisations working on a variety of measures that MWDA should maintain an awareness of, for example:

### ***WRAP guidance for local authorities***

Guidance for local authorities and their partners is being produced by WRAP on householder textile recycling in due course. The stated aim of the guidance is to "*encourage the increased diversion of textiles for re-use and recycling by householders.*"

Further information on the tender can be found at:

[http://www.wrap.org.uk/wrap\\_corporate/tenders/textiles\\_collection.html](http://www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/tenders/textiles_collection.html)

### ***Cheshire West & Chester householder research***

As identified in Section 4 of this report, work is currently being undertaken on behalf of Cheshire West & Chester Council examining householder behaviours and attitudes in textile recycling. The findings of this work will inform Cheshire West's own review of their recycling credits scheme. Should Cheshire West & Chester be willing to share the work, MWDA could review the findings to see if there are any lessons to be learned. Alternatively, MWDA could conduct a similar exercise across Merseyside to inform future activities and provide comparative work.

### ***Waste Information Network / Waste Partnership Network***

Other Authorities, as highlighted by this work, are reviewing their schemes. MWDA could work in partnership with these to share research, ideas and experience. The WIN forum would be a good network for this, and there are existing discussion groups on the WIN network that focus on this issue.

### ***DEFRA Fund – household reward and recognition scheme***

Government have recently announced £500,000 of support for local authority recycling schemes such as RecycleBank and Local Green Points. The deadline for the first round of applications closed in July, but it is suggested that this is likely to be continued in future years. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/consumer/reward-scheme/>

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## Appendices

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## Appendix 1 – Useful sources of information

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### **Documents**

The following documents were reviewed as part of this project, and provide useful information that can be further considered in developing future household textile recycling strategies.

*“Barriers to recycling at home”*, WRAP August 2008

*“Carrots and Sticks: A review of waste financial reward and compulsory recycling schemes”*, Greater London Authority 2011

*“Cutting Costs and Improving Waste Recycling Services”*, Eunomia 2010

*“Evaluation of the Household Waste Incentives Pilot Scheme”*, AEA Technology July 2006

*“Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011: Action Plan”* DEFRA 2011

*“Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011”* DEFRA 2011

*“House to house clothing collections guidance”*, Institute of Fundraising, 2011

*“Maximising recycling rates: tackling residuals”*, Eunomia Research and Consulting 2002

*“Maximising Reuse and Recycling of UK Clothing and Textiles”*, Oakdene Hollins 2009

*“Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership: Kerbside Household Waste Composition Analysis”*, Entec 2010

*“Merseyside Textile Recycling Project”*, Liverpool JMU 2010

*“Sustainable Clothing Action Plan”*, DEFRA 2010

*“The Scottish Carbon Metric”*, Natural Scotland 2011

*“WIN Focus 13: Incentives, rewards and recognition”*, Waste Information Network 2011

*“WIN survey 2009. Recycling Credits: innovative arrangements and cost sharing”*, Waste Information Network 2009

*“WIN survey November 2009. Third party reuse and recycling credits”*, Waste Information Network 2009

### **Organisations**

The following is a list of organisations involved in supporting household textile recycling in one form or another:

Association of Charity Shops (Charity Retail Association) [www.charityretail.org.uk](http://www.charityretail.org.uk)

Community Recycling Network [www.crn.org.uk](http://www.crn.org.uk)

Institute of Fundraising <http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/>

Textile Recycling Association [www.textile-recycling.org.uk](http://www.textile-recycling.org.uk)

Waste Action Forum [www.bank-it.org](http://www.bank-it.org)

Waste Improvement Network [www.win.org.uk](http://www.win.org.uk)

Waste Resources Action Programme [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

### **Websites**

The following websites can provide useful background information regarding household textile recycling:

<http://www.charitybags.org.uk/>

A useful website containing a wide variety of information aimed at campaigning to reduce the problem of revenues lost by charities due to poor or bogus household collections.

[www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textile](http://www.letsrecycle.com/prices/textile)

Provides an overview of historic textile prices.

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## Appendix 2 – List of consultation exercise invitees

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The following organisations were invited to participate both in the consultation workshop and the subsequent consultation questionnaire.

Age UK	St John's Hospice Wirral
Barnardos	St Joseph's Hospice Association
British Heart Foundation	Willow Bank Hospice
British Red Cross	Woodlands Hospice
Cancer Research	Cats Protection
Claire House Hospice	CVS Halton
Community Recycling Network	EWR Recycling
Faiths 4 Change	Extracare
Hoylake Cottage Hospital	Halton Haven Hospice
KIND	Liverpool Charity Voluntary Services
Marie Curie Cancer Care	Liverpool MS Society
Newton Family & Community Association	Save The Children UK
North West Air Ambulance	Shelter
NSPCC	Social Enterprise Network
Oxfam	Sue Ryder Care
Queenscourt Hospice	Wirral Environment Network
Roy Castle Foundation	Wirral Waste Action Group
Royal School for the Blind	
Salvation Army	
The Samaritans	
Scope	
St John's Ambulance	

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## Appendix 3 – Consultation process supporting information

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### Appendix 3.1 Detail of communications with charity and other third sector organisations during the consultation process.

- **First email to consultation invitees 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

*“Good afternoon.*

*Envirolink has been commissioned by Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) to help review their recycling credits payments scheme for textiles.*

*MWDA is holding a workshop on the recycling credits scheme and, as an organisation that currently helps to recycle textile materials, you are invited to attend this workshop.*

#### **MWDA Recycling Credits Scheme Workshop**

**Venue:** *Holiday Inn, Liverpool City Centre, Lime Street, Liverpool L1 1NQ*

**Date:** *Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011, 09.00 – 13.00 hrs*

*The aim of this event is to explore methods for incentivising further textile recycling and how the recycling credits scheme (or any alternative) could best be employed to help divert the maximum quantity of textile possible from landfill. At the event, you will hear from MWDA about the current situation regarding the waste it handles for Merseyside and evidence of residents’ behaviour with regard to recyclable material including textiles, before together exploring options available to incentivise textile recycling.*

*Attendance at the event is by invitation only and is limited to one attendee per organisation. In order to accept this invitation and confirm your place at the event, please [register online](#) or call Ian Stephenson at Envirolink on 01925 855 775 or 07875 762 715. In order to ensure that your organisation is represented at this event, please forward this to the most relevant person within your organisation.*

*If you would like any further information about either the recycling credits payments scheme or attending the consultation event, please contact Ian Stephenson at Envirolink on either of the numbers provided.*

*Kind regards,”*

- **Follow-up reminder email sent to consultation invitees 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

*“Good afternoon.*

*We recently sent you an email inviting you to participate in a workshop on Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority’s (MWDA) recycling credits scheme for textile materials, details as follows:*

### **MWDA Recycling Credits Scheme Workshop**

**Venue:** Holiday Inn, Liverpool City Centre, Lime Street, Liverpool L1 1NQ

**Date:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011, 09.00 – 13.00 hrs

*This is an important workshop, seeking to gather ideas and feedback from a wide range of organisations on methods for incentivizing further textile recycling on Merseyside.*

*Your organisation's views and ideas are extremely important, and MWDA would welcome your participation in this workshop. In order to ensure that your organisation is represented at this event, please forward this to the most relevant person within your organisation.*

*Attendance at the event is by invitation only. In order to accept this invitation and confirm your place at the event, please [register online](#) or call Ian Stephenson at Envirolink on 01925 855 775 or 07875 762 715.*

*If you would like any further information about either the recycling credits payments scheme or attending the consultation event, please contact Ian Stephenson at Envirolink on either of the numbers provided.*

*Kind regards,"*

- **Email sent postponing the consultation workshop:**

*"Good afternoon.*

*You recently received an email from us inviting you to a workshop being held in Liverpool tomorrow morning aimed at reviewing MWDA's recycling credits scheme for textiles.*

*Unfortunately, the event has had to be postponed and is not now being held tomorrow.*

*If you registered for the event, you will have already been contacted directly to confirm this.*

*We will be following this email shortly with a communication from MWDA and a questionnaire aimed at gathering your organisation's input to the current review, a response to which would be most welcomed. Your organisation's feedback and input to this process is extremely important to MWDA.*

*If you would like any further information at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or on either of the numbers below.*

*Kind regards,"*

- **Email inviting charity organisations to participate in a consultation questionnaire:**

*"Good afternoon.*

*You were recently contacted regarding an event being held by MWDA at which they were to discuss with you their review of the recycling credits scheme for textile materials.*

*Although the event was postponed, MWDA are extremely keen to consult on the scheme with organisations such as yourselves and to this end, would be grateful if you could help by answering a few short questions contained in the attached questionnaire. Also attached is a letter from MWDA which provides some background to the review and your role in it.*

*The questionnaire is purposefully open and aimed at gathering a wide range of views and ideas about the best ways of encouraging further recycling of household textile materials on Merseyside. Instructions on where to send your responses (and who to contact if you would like to discuss the issue further) are contained within the attachments.*

*The deadline for return of the responses is Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011.*

*You organisation's views are extremely important to MWDA. Please could you forward this to the most relevant person within your organisation for response.*

*Many thanks in anticipation of your input to this important project.*

*Kind regards,"*

## **Appendix 4.2 Letter from MWDA included in the consultation questionnaire invitation**

### **"Textiles Recycling - Maximising the Benefits**

*As one of Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority's (MWDA) partners who are an active recycler of textiles and receive recycling credits for your efforts, or are one of the valuable influencers in the voluntary and social enterprise sector, we are interested in your views and involvement in a new project being established by MWDA.*

*Recycling of all kinds is now entrenched within the mindset of most communities and individuals, but we know that the amount of materials still being sent to landfill can be further reduced.*

*One of these waste streams is textiles, and we know from a Waste Composition Analysis undertaken by MWDA in 2010 that over 20,000 tonnes of textiles remain in residual bins, and are therefore sent for disposal to landfill. MWDA's focus is to try and maximise the environmental benefits of diverting these textiles from landfill including the carbon benefits and financial savings.*

*We are starting to look at a whole range of issues - from collection types and methods through to the perception and quality of textiles as a recyclable material. We want to involve as many of the organisations and groups as possible who deal with textiles on the frontline or as part of their work in our initial research.*

*Ultimately we want to establish and implement the best types of communications regarding textiles for a whole host of audiences; influence collection types as well as possibly incentivising further the collection of textiles for recycling and delivering best value for MWDA as part of our recycling credits scheme.*

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***So what do we need from you?***

*We'd like this to be the first step in developing ongoing communication between us and we recognise that success in performance and service delivery comes by working together, leading to a closer working relationship between Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and yourselves.*

*We've attached a simple questionnaire that we've put together with our partners in this project, Envirolink. We'd ask you to complete the questionnaire and either return it to Envirolink, Spencer House, 91 Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, Warrington WA3 7PG or email it to one of the addresses provided below. Please feel free to forward the details of the questionnaire and the project to other contacts within your organisation who may be interested in inputting into the project.*

*I want to emphasise that no decision has yet been taken with regard to making changes to the current MWDA recycling scheme and that the aim of this initial part of the project is to develop a range of options on the way forward so as to maximise the amount of textile recycling within the Merseyside area.*

*We'd be grateful if you would return your questionnaire by Friday 12 August 2011 and, of course should you have any questions regarding the project please do not hesitate to contact either of the following:*

*Katherine Burden (Principal Consultant) 07792 333 931or [K.Burden@envirolink.co.uk](mailto:K.Burden@envirolink.co.uk)*

*Ian Stephenson (Senior Consultant) 07875 762 715 or [I.Stephenson@envirolink.co.uk](mailto:I.Stephenson@envirolink.co.uk)*

*I hope that you'll feel able to help us in this worthwhile project to help get us all recycling more and ultimately make Merseyside a place where nothing is wasted.*

*Yours sincerely*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Beer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

***Carl Beer,  
Chief Executive  
Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority"***

## Appendix 4.3 - Consultation questionnaire

### Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

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### Review of Recycling Credits Scheme 2011

Envirolink Northwest has been commissioned by Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) to assist them with reviewing their recycling credits scheme for textile materials.

Your organisation's input to this review would be extremely valuable and therefore we would be most grateful if you could spend a little time in answering these short questions. The responses to these questions will help inform MWDA's future strategy and approach to incentivising textile recycling across Merseyside.

*All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence in full accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.*

Details of where to send your responses, or who you may contact for further information, are provided at the end of the questionnaire.

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#### Question 1.

**Recent Merseyside Waste Composition Analysis shows that some 4-5% of household residual waste is textile material, the majority of which is recyclable.**

***What do you consider to be the barriers and opportunities to encouraging greater recycling of textile waste from Merseyside's households?***

**Response.**

**Question 2.**

MWDA aim to get more textile material out of the household bin to reduce the amount that is sent to landfill. Your organisation can help play a key part in this whilst benefiting from the income from sale of textiles.

*How could MWDA best help you to incentivise the process of reducing textiles in the household bin and ensuring higher levels of re-use and recycling?*

Some examples of the types of incentives that you *may* consider of value could include:

- a single 'textile recycling' fund that organisations could apply to for specific schemes
- changes to the MWDA recycling credit payment system
- support with partnerships or collaborative working with other groups and charities to increase the range of textiles available for re-use and recycling whilst making efficient use of resources, thereby reducing your costs and providing potential for profit sharing.

**Response.**

**Question 3.**

MWDA wants to clearly understand the opportunities and challenges facing the sector in order to help support charitable organisations and community groups to recycle more textile materials.

*What are the challenges your organisation currently faces in terms of collecting, receiving and recycling more household textile materials?*

**Response.**

**Question 4 - Any other information.**

**MWDA would be grateful for any comments or ideas you may have as to how the organisation can best develop a strategy to help incentivise further household textile recycling across Merseyside. Please feel free to make any additional comments here.**

**Response.**

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If you wish to discuss any aspect of this questionnaire or MWDA's review of recycling credits for textiles recycling across Merseyside, please contact either:

Ian Stephenson (Envirolink Northwest) on 01925 855 775 or [I.Stephenson@envirolink.co.uk](mailto:I.Stephenson@envirolink.co.uk)

or

Katherine Burden (Envirolink Northwest) on 07792 333 931 or 01925 856 036 or by email on [K.Burden@envirolink.co.uk](mailto:K.Burden@envirolink.co.uk)

Once completed, please either email your response to one of the above email addresses or post to:

Ian Stephenson  
Senior Consultant  
Envirolink Northwest  
Spencer House  
91 Dewhurst Road  
Birchwood WA3 7PG

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to this questionnaire. MWDA aim to provide feedback to all respondents on the outcome of this initial exercise once the first stage has been completed.

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## **Appendix 4 – Summary of charity questionnaire responses**

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