

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Environment	Report Number: JAC36
To: Joint Audit and Standards Committee	Date of meeting: 1 September 2014

TEXTILES RECYCLING BAG SCHEME

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members requested information on the Suffolk Waste Partnership textiles scheme.
- 1.2 To update Members on the work being undertaken with LMB to trial their patented textiles collection sack in Babergh.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That information on the SWP textiles scheme and the trialling of LMB's patented textiles bags in Babergh be noted.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications identified from this report.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 Key risks are set out below:-

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Failure to proceed could affect the success of the Suffolk wide textile collection scheme and the trial will confirm the preferred bag to use in conjunction with the contractor	Low	Low	Measures are in place to trial the bags in the Babergh district once the bags have been provided by the contractor

5. Consultations

5.1 Consultation with the Suffolk Waste Partnership.

6. Equality Analysis

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed because this report does not raise any equality issues.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

7.1 The Suffolk-wide textile scheme is a joint scheme with other collection authorities in Suffolk and has been endorsed by the Suffolk Waste Partnership

8. Key Information

8.1 The Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) undertook a waste composition analysis in June 2011. This analysis outlined four material streams which should be targeted for greater diversion. These were glass, organic waste (specifically food waste), plastics and textiles.

8.2 The SWP tasked the Suffolk Waste Management Group to create a kerbside collection of textiles which would be simple for the householder and reduce the estimated 7000 tonnes of textiles disposed of in landfill each year.

8.3 Following Member approval, the trial SWP textiles scheme was launched countywide in July 2012. The scheme provided residents with a specially created textiles bag which could be placed into their kerbside recycling bin for collection. Each Suffolk home was supplied with 2 textiles bags and full instructions at the outset of the scheme with the refuse crews tasked with providing a new bag each time a full bag was placed in the bin for collection.

8.4 In November 2012 the SWP submitted a bid to Waste Resources Action Partnership (WRAP) for funding to analyse the successes and challenges of our scheme. This funding stream was part of a WRAP objective to develop national guidance on kerbside textiles recycling.

8.5 In total, £52,000 of WRAP funding was secured and this allowed for the following work streams to be undertaken in March 2013 by two separate consultancies, MEL and Resource Futures:-

- A waste composition analysis – specifically analysing the amount and type of textiles remaining in Suffolk’s residual waste stream (MEL).
- A residential doorstep consultation (MEL).
- A financial analysis of the schemes costs and incomes (MEL).

8.6 A residential doorstep promotion (Resource Futures - part funded by the SWP).

Tonnage, Costs and Income

8.7 The following gives details of the tonnage, costs and income of the scheme from commencement in August 2011 until the end of May 2014 when the last analysis was undertaken:-

- The tonnage collected to May 2014 is 856 tonnes.
- Set up costs of the scheme were £101,916 – bags.
- Publicity - £50,000 budgeted.
- Income received £304,168.
- Operational expenses £111,587.
- Balance / Surplus £40,665.

8.8 The initial target set was 2000 tonnes per year. It is clear that the scheme has not achieved its pre-launch target. It should however be noted that we were the first county area in England to launch a textiles scheme. Our projections were based on professional judgement and the available tonnage of textiles present in the residual bin rather than any specific evidence gained from similar schemes operating elsewhere.

8.9 In addition, our kerbside textiles scheme has had a relatively low impact on tonnage of textiles collected at bring sites. Since the launch of the kerbside scheme, bring bank tonnages have declined by approximately 8%. Further work would need to be undertaken to fully understand the reason for this decline but it could simply be due to annual fluctuations rather than as a direct consequence of the kerbside scheme.

Customer Survey

8.10 The WRAP funding allowed for 2 separate pieces of work to be undertaken.

- MEL undertook a detailed residential doorstep questionnaire of 1,100 households – 275 households each in IBC, SEBC, MSDC and WDC.
- Resource Future undertook a doorstep promotion over one round area in each WCA (approximately 7000 households). This promotion included a number of simple questions that could be numerically recorded. This piece of work was part funded by the SWP.

8.11 In terms of resident awareness of the textiles scheme, the MEL research found that 60% of respondents were aware of the scheme whereas Resource Futures figure was slightly higher at 68%. However, the Resource Futures research also found disparities between districts from 78.7% awareness in Babergh to 58.5% in Waveney. MEL also found that awareness levels were slightly higher in homes where two or fewer people lived.

- 8.12 The scheme is predicated on refuse crews providing residents with an empty textiles bag when they collect a full one. Users of the scheme were therefore asked how often they received a replacement bag when placing a full bag for collection. 67% of respondents to the MEL survey stated they regularly received a replacement bag. The Resource Future survey however was notably different. In this case only 46% of respondents stated they got a replacement bag.
- 8.13 The Resource Future survey also found only 33% of respondents knew where they could get a replacement bag from if one was not left by the crew (collection from libraries, by dedicated telephone number or email). The MEL results were even lower with only 14% of respondents stating in the positive. In addition, MEL found that only 34% of respondents were willing to collect, ring or email for a replacement bag.
- 8.14 Regular users of the textiles scheme were also asked where they took their textiles prior to the launch of the scheme. 64% of MEL respondents stated they used charity shops, with 28% using textiles banks and 25% using charity collections. By comparison, Resource Futures survey found that 75% of current scheme users had previously used charity shops or textile banks.
- 8.15 In terms of overall scheme satisfaction, 94% of MEL respondents stated they were either fairly or very satisfied with the scheme. Of the remaining 6% of dissatisfied users, most stated the non-return of bags was the main reason for their dissatisfaction.
- 8.16 Resource Future also asked residents if they used their general recycling bin collections. 99% of respondents stated they did. As a final question, MEL showed residents a list of material not currently recycled at the kerbside and asked them to rank which they would most like permanently added to their recycling bins. The materials for consideration were glass, aerosol cans, textiles, tetra pacs and plastic bags or film (textiles were part of the list on account that they are only currently a trial). Glass ranked the highest with 68% of respondents ranking it number 1. Textiles were ranked the lowest with 34% ranking it their number 5 priority.

Service Changes

- 8.17 In July 2013 we changed our textiles merchant from Wilcox to LMB. LMB were keen to work with us to improve the quality of the textiles received. They are providing 50,000 of their patented textiles bags free of charge. They have also agreed to work with our refuse crews to stress the importance of textiles and improve the low return rate of bags.
- 8.18 The LMB sacks differ from our current textiles sacks in a number of ways. They have a valve which allows air to escape the bag when under compression without letting liquid in. This could be an advantage when the bags are under compression inside an RCV. The bags are made of a thicker plastic. They have an adhesive strip at the top of the bag. Residents do not therefore have to tie them up.
- 8.19 A trial will be undertaken in Babergh in September. Babergh was chosen for the following reasons:-
- Babergh's material is direct delivered to the Great Blakenham MRF. This allows us to identify the bags collected to the round.

- Babergh has a household population of approx. 39,000. LMB will therefore provide enough bags for the entire district with 11,000 left over for replacements.
- Babergh had the lowest bag return rate. It is therefore hoped trialling the new bags in Babergh will increase participation.
- LMB will work with Babergh's waste officers and crews to stress the importance of supplying replacement bags.

8.20 In addition to the LMB trial, officers have also been working to ascertain ways to improve the return of bags to residents. An in-house campaign has been launched with the crews to raise awareness of textiles recycling and to stress how fundamentally important their role is. Posters are going up in staff rooms and all refuse collection vehicles will have reminders placed into the cabs.

8.21 At the current time, officers are working towards the LMB and refresher campaigns commencing in tandem in November 2014.

9. Appendices

None.

10. Background Documents

10.1 None.

Authorship:

Brigitte Dawson
Corporate Manager – Waste Services

01449 778621
brigitte.dawson@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Chris Fry
Head of Environment

01449 724805
Chris.fry@babergh.gov.uk