

Budget Proposal for 2017/18

Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect

Recommendation: It is recommended that

- (i) the Committee recognise the contribution to waste prevention, re-use, recycling and composting that all of the previous projects supported by the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee have made;**
- (ii) the proposed 2017/18 Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee budget is allocated as in Appendix I to this report with project details given in Appendix II;**
- (ii) a contract is procured to commence in April 2017 for a proposed Waste Reduction and Education Project with the contract to be funded for a 2 year period.**

1. Summary

Previous projects supported by the former Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC) budget have made a valuable contribution to managing waste towards the higher end of the waste hierarchy and in particular supporting community led initiatives. However in times of severe financial constraint it has been necessary to review all aspects of the previous budget and only continue to support those projects which continue to deliver value for money, as well as look at the provision of support in a different way. As a consequence it is proposed that only 'Re-use credits' and 'Don't let Devon go to waste' continue to be supported. It is further proposed that the remaining funding be used to deliver a new waste education/enforcement project through the procurement of a contract for a two year period.

2. Introduction

For many years the DAWRRC budget has supported the community sector and other initiatives with the aim of reducing the amount of waste disposed of in Devon and increasing recycling rates. A review of all of the projects supported in 2016/17 by the budget has been undertaken with each being assessed in terms of value for money, current method of delivery, impact on waste arisings and wider community benefits.

3. Assessment of previous budget allocation

Devon Community Recycling Network (DCRN)

DCRN is an independent company which has been funded by the previous DAWRRC for more than 15 years to promote sustainable waste management within the community sector of Devon. In February 2016 it was agreed with DCRN that they would research opportunities and apply for external funding for DCRN to operate beyond 2016-17. They appointed a new coordinator in June 2016 and it is understood that the post will be funded for approximately 18 months to December 2017 and will aim to be self funding from January

2018. It was also agreed with DCRN Directors that this network needs to invigorate itself and become self sustaining. In recent years it has supported a number of valuable initiatives but it is no longer visibly making a difference nor appearing to be achieving the original aims of the network. Consequently it is proposed that this project be no longer funded.

Devon Community Composting Network (DCCN)

DCCN has been funded by the previous DAWRRC for more than 15 years during which time it has built up a highly regarded reputation for assisting the development of community composting groups. In recent times it has focussed more so on assisting schools on how to use their composting infrastructure.

The DCCN Coordinator and assistant are funded directly by the previous DAWRRC budget with the DCCN Co-ordinator employed directly by the County Council. Whilst the work that is undertaken is commendable, it is hard to evaluate what impact it is actually having. Hence it is considered that composting education will be delivered through home composting campaign work and the post of DCCN Coordinator will no longer be supported.

Re-use Credits

Reuse Credits are paid to 15 groups across Devon who repair furniture for re-use, whilst training the long term unemployed to do this work and selling the products to those on lower incomes at a reduced cost. It is still felt that that this was a valuable and tangible project showing value for money in terms of tonnes of waste reused and having an added social value. Hence it is proposed to continue to support Re-use Credits but with a cap on funding of £49,000. See Appendix II for more detail.

Don't let Devon go to waste campaign work and online communications

This campaign forms the backbone of waste management communications in Devon and Torbay – it includes social media, website, road shows, radio and bus back advertising and editorials in local newspapers. All the work is monitored and campaigns targeted and researched to ensure maximum impact. An important element is supporting each authority with their initiatives and this work will continue through the element funded by the County Council. However, it is considered that the element of this work financed by DASWC should focus on the important area of food waste reduction with an allocated budget of £40,630. See Appendix II for more detail.

Devon Real Nappy Network

Currently a team of 12 volunteers run nappy events raising awareness of the possibility of choosing real nappies instead of disposables, saving parents money and reducing their environmental impact. Trial kits are offered along with money off vouchers. Although the impact of this work is favourable to those who use it, it is a small number of people who are attracted to the scheme. It is therefore proposed that it will no longer be possible to directly support the network of volunteers other than by signposting their events via websites and social media.

Schools Grants

A small amount of money has been made available to support schools to recycle and compost. They received workshops from the Waste Educators and then find small amounts of money useful for transport to a recycling centre, or to put towards a composter or recycling bins. Although schools appreciate this fund it is not considered essential and hence this funding could be reallocated.

Innovation Fund

This has not proved very successful in terms of innovative bids for funding and it is proposed that this funding could be reallocated.

Audit

There was a requirement for an external audit of DAWRRC accounts costing up to £4,000, however only an internal audit is now required at a cost of approximately £1,000. It is proposed the remaining fund could be reallocated.

Reuse officer

The underspend from 2015/16 was allocated to support the Reuse Officer post once WRAP funding came to an end. Whilst this post has been critical to raising the profile of re-use in Devon and Torbay it cannot continue to be funded from an underspend. Unfortunately it is also very difficult to measure the impact of this work other than by number of workshops held or number of items mended for example. It is therefore considered that although elements of this work are valuable any element of reuse funded by the DASWC budget will be limited to measurable initiatives.

4. Proposal

It is proposed to continue to support Reuse Credits and Don't let Devon go to waste initiatives directly through the DASWC budget for 2017/18. After audit requirements there will remain approximately £85,000 if the 2016/17 budget is used as a baseline. All DASWC authorities recognise the need to focus on waste prevention, re-use and recycling and it is considered that the best way to ensure accountability, visibility, efficient measurement and monitoring, and value for money, is via a contract. Although there will be overheads in any contract there is also back office support and wider knowledge and experience to support front line staff.

It is therefore proposed that a 2 year contract, as set out in Appendix II with potential to extend for 2 years, is let to the annual value of £85,000.

5. Conclusion

It is concluded that value for money will be provided for the £175,000 DASWC budget by further investing in Don't let Devon go to waste and reuse credits along with a new 2 year contract to promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling.

6. Financial Considerations

The proposed budget allocation is detailed in Appendix I. Supporting the proposed projects leads to waste being dealt with in line with the waste hierarchy. Reducing, reusing and recycling and composting bring cost savings for both collection and disposal. Managing an element of the budget via a contract will give more accountable financial control over budget expenditure.

7. Sustainability Considerations

All the proposals should result in waste being managed higher up the hierarchy and therefore meet sustainable waste management objectives. The long term sustainability of DCRN needs to be consolidated through the company finding alternative sources of funding.

8. Carbon Impact Considerations

Reduced tonnage to landfill and energy from waste means a decrease in carbon emissions.

9. Equality Considerations

There are no equality considerations relating to the recommendation.

10. Legal Considerations

Legal advice will be taken in relation to any personnel affected by the proposal.

11. Risk Management Considerations

The DASWC Risk Register will be amended in light of recommendations being agreed. Risk management will also be built into the new contract. There are no risks envisaged with the Reuse Credit and Don't let Devon go to waste budget allocations.

12. Public Health Impact

There are no impacts to public health identified.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
Nil		

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**Appendix I
To HCW/16/73**

Proposed budget allocation

	16/17	17/18	17/18 transfer to "new contract"
Devon Community Recycling Network (DCRN)	£18,350	0	£18,350
Devon Community Composting Network (DCCN)	£34,000	0	£34,000
Reuse Credits	£48,812	£49,000	-£188
Don't let Devon go to waste (DLDGWTW)	£45,900	£40,630	£5,270
Nappies	£11,850	0	£11,850
Schools	£11,000	0	£11,000
Innovation	£1,718	0	£1,718
Audit	£4,000	£1,000	£3,000
Total	£175,630	£90,630	£85,000
Underspend 15/16: Reuse officer	£18,000	0	0

Proposals for the 2017/18 budget

Re-use Credits

Not-for-profit and charitable furniture reuse groups continue to divert large quantities of household goods from disposal enabling the provision of furniture to people on low incomes, the creation of opportunities for the training and development of staff and volunteers, and enhancing employment opportunities. In 2015/16 more than 800 tonnes of furniture were distributed by the projects. Assuming a disposal cost of £118/t for 2015/16, it would have cost £94,400 to dispose of the furniture that was reused, which shows the value for money from the reuse credits payments and a saving of £50,400 for the year.

Reuse credits are an important contribution to the work of community reuse projects across the County and also demonstrates a real commitment from the local authorities supporting them. It is proposed that DASWC continues to pay reuse credits on furniture for 2017/18. The bid for 2017/18 amounts to £53,696 but it is proposed that the funds available are capped at the current level of £49,000. The reason for this is that each year this budget is underspent by an average of 16% equating to £10,000 a year (over the last 5 years, on an average budget of £61,000) due to the unpredictable nature of the groups' progress each year. The budget includes a contribution to the cost of work carried out by Refurnish to support and advise existing and developing/new projects.

These funds should only be available to Community Sector Reuse projects that are members of Refurnish Devon or the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) and meet national good practice standards. Local Authority Officers validate project claims through regular audit in accordance with the Reuse Credit Guidance. If reuse credits were not paid, or paid at a reduced level many projects that rely heavily on this funding would close or provide a reduced level of service reducing the quantity of goods diverted and increasing costs to customers on low incomes.

Don't let Devon go to waste

Over the years the Committee has supported the Don't let Devon go to waste campaign work and the money has been spent on wide ranging support for a number of initiatives each year, for example in 2016/17 it supported/will support an 18-24 year olds hard to reach campaign, home composting work, Love Your Clothes (textiles) campaign, a Christmas campaign and the Thank you awards. The funds are also spent on keeping the excellent joint website Recycledevon.org up to date, on market research and on the popular E-newsletter.

It is proposed that these latter activities continue to be funded but that the bulk of the budget allocation, instead of being spread thinly on a number of initiatives, is used to focus on food waste reduction initiatives and encouraging home composting. The proposed expenditure is highlighted below.

Proposed expenditure 2017/18	Estimate
Food waste reduction initiatives including Love Food Hate Waste and home composting promotion	£27,630
E-newsletter	£1,000
Recycledevon.org annual hosting fee	£480
Recycledevon.org Search Engine Optimisation fee	£3,000
Income generation administration fee	£720
Online continuous creative development	£3,000
Monitoring and evaluation research	£4,800
Total	£40,630

Waste Reduction and Education Project

The aim of the project will be to reduce the Local Authority Collected Waste arisings and increase recycling by setting up a contract to:

- Pro-actively promote waste prevention, reuse and recycling
- Increase participation and capture rates of recyclable materials
- Increase levels of home composting and reduction of food waste
- Improve awareness levels of residents around contamination and recycling
- Assist each authority to enhance its recycling rate to maximise its income and reduce its costs
- Decrease the amount of material in the residual waste stream for recycling/composting as a result of waste reduction measures and improved capture of materials for reuse, recycling and composting
- Report progress, monitor and evaluate the impact of the work undertaken
- Communicate with Recycledevon

It is proposed that the contractor will be asked to provide 3 full time equivalent personnel who will each operate in a defined area of Devon/Torbay to minimise travel. The authorities will confirm the areas in the contract. At the beginning of each contractual year the parties will agree on area specific work plans in order to measure progress towards the desired outcomes and overall aims of the project.

It is proposed that the County Council would let this contract on behalf of the partnership. A Partnership Working Group will measure the contractor's performance via quarterly contract meetings, and there will be regular meetings with relevant districts/Torbay, providing information on the progress of the project and upcoming events and activities. The contractor will work with district and Torbay officers, the Recycledevon lead and the County Council Waste Education Team to ensure the work delivered under the contract is in keeping with the broader Don't let Devon go to waste/Recycle Devon's behavioural change work. The contractor will complete an end of year report highlighting performance, feedback, good practice, and recommendations for the following year.