

Waste on the Front Line – Challenges and Innovations

The impacts of austerity across local authority waste,
recycling and street cleansing services



Introduction

Over the past 15 years local authorities have made substantial progress in waste and recycling services, boosting recycling rates almost 400 fold.

However, measures implemented by UK and Republic of Ireland Governments to reduce public expenditure have touched everyone, because everyone relies in some small part on the services that our local authorities provide – 52 weeks per year our waste and recycling is collected and our streets are kept clean.

In these difficult economic conditions, the length and depth of the cuts have been a significant challenge for local officers, members and their service teams, and further reductions in local government funding are expected up to 2020. While challenging, the drive for greater efficiency offers local authorities a significant opportunity to think differently, implement new business models and engage with residents about the scale of the challenge.

There are a significant number of examples of true innovation in the way that services are being redesigned and delivered, with many authorities having taken a more strategic approach to their review of how to meet budget cuts.

The biggest savings delivered to date have resulted from major changes, such as re-letting contracts or making material changes to services, changing opening hours for household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) and charging for garden waste collections. Other savings have been identified through delivering efficiencies, benchmarking service performance, streamlining working practices, making better use of resources and buildings, buying services more effectively and maximising the benefits of new technology.

Importantly, the most successful authorities are continuing to think about the 'opportunities' afforded by the challenge from austerity. Rather than focusing on cuts, they are considering what could be done to innovate their services, their management and their operations.

Local authority waste services will never be the same again – built on shared experience and partnerships working they will continue to evolve efficiently and with the public at the heart of their design and delivery.

People taking part

226



individual officers
representing 183 local authorities

105

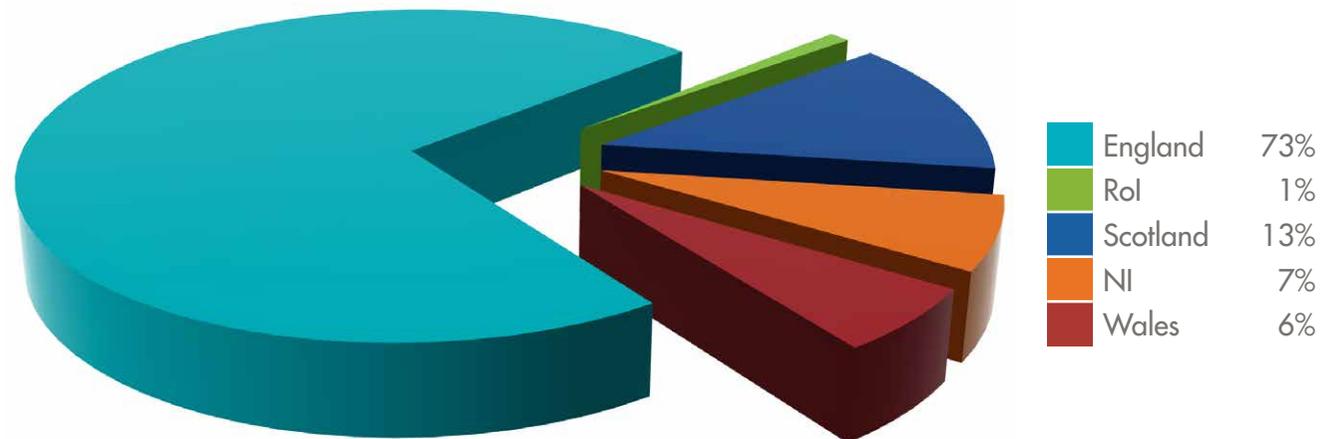


supply chain individuals

Do you work in partnership with any other local authorities?

	Yes	No	Total
England	120	43	163
Republic of Ireland	3	0	3
Scotland	12	18	30
Northern Ireland	14	2	16
Wales	9	5	14
Total	158	68	226

Breakdown of local authority respondents



Case Studies

Armagh City and District Council Transparent sack trial

A one-week trial using transparent bags for residual waste was tried at Armagh City and District Council's HWRCs. This had no impact on residual arisings; but it was a very short time period. The council is continuing to ask that residents use transparent bags and site operatives are encouraging the use of the kerbside collection, highlighting where items could be placed out for collection rather than taken to the HWRC for disposal. It is hoped that this will encourage residents to segregate their waste more effectively in the future, resulting in diversion from landfill.

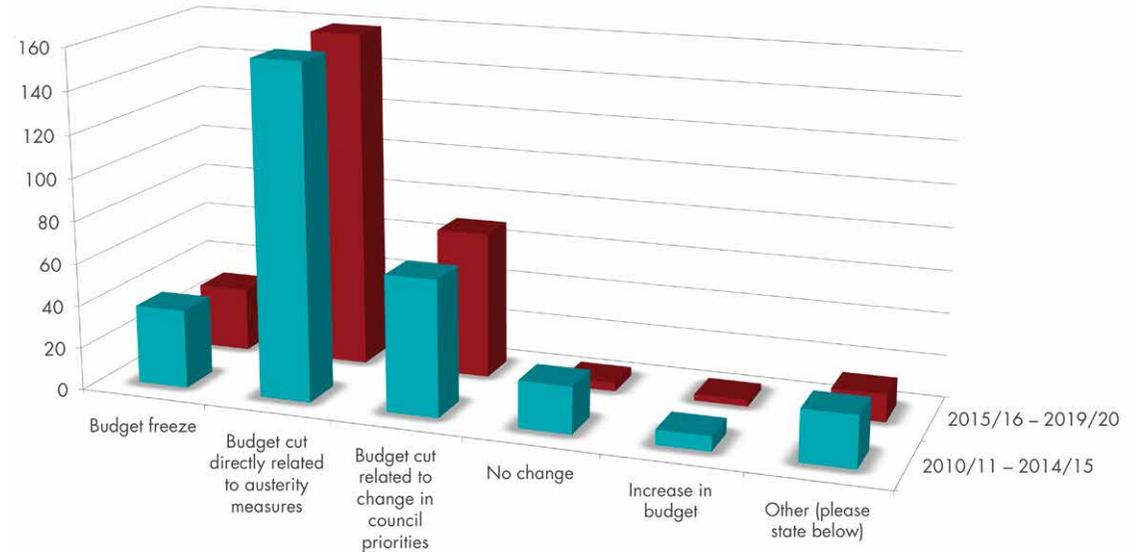
South Ayrshire Council Street cleaning – optimising shift patterns

South Ayrshire Council have a number of rural areas and also high levels of tourism and visitors to town promenades. The Council have studied and optimised shift patterns and renegotiated contracts to facilitate weekend street cleansing at agreed shift rates rather than overtime rates. Levels of cleanliness achieved in in 2012/13 were benchmarked as above average for Scottish Councils.

County Council, England Sale of spare capacity

Following a second EfW facility coming online in 2013, together with a reduction in residual waste achieved through increased recycling over the years, a small amount of capacity at one of the EfWs was made available to another local authority. This has benefited both authorities. The authority has reduced its landfill dependence to 2-3%, which has resulted in a reduction in disposal budget of approximately £5 million.

Effects on budgets of reductions in Government funding



What local authorities are doing:



Driving efficiencies and generating savings on collections

- Re-routing collection rounds to drive efficiencies
- Double shifting vehicles
- Charging for bulky and garden waste collections
- Partnership working with other authorities
- Reducing collection frequency of residual waste
- Decrease in residual waste bin size
- Renegotiation of contracts
- Extending equipment/vehicle life
- Rationalising bring bank provision

Driving efficiencies and generating savings for household waste recycling centres

- Introducing permitting schemes for vans and trailers
- Rationalising site opening times and days
- Re-procuring contracts
- Introducing contract incentives
- Charging for certain material streams
- Introducing re-use onsite, including re-use shops
- Introducing commercial waste and recycling services on site
- Cracking down on commercial waste abuse
- Introducing mobile HWRCs

Innovation in the face of austerity

Driving efficiencies and generating savings through strategic measures

- Use of secondments and consultants to address skills gap
- Automation of customer contact services and administrative processes
- Use of technology to reduce 'on the ground' monitoring
- Creation of multifaceted teams
- Partnership working
- Joint procurement and delivery
- Flexible job roles and hours, and shared posts

Driving efficiencies and generating savings within street cleansing

- Reduction in cleansing frequencies in low priority areas (low footfall)
- Reactive and scalable cleansing schedules
- Use of smarter technology and software
- Joint working with other departments
- Community based approach with local communities
- Bundling contracts ('public realm' contract)
- Double shifting mechanical sweepers

CIWM is keen to work on collaborative research projects with other partners across the waste and resource management industry. Enquiries should be sent to Tracy Moffatt at tracy.moffatt@ciwm.co.uk

Full report available: http://ciwm.co.uk/reports_and_research

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