

KEEP
BRITAIN
TIDY

Love
where
YOU
Live



No time to waste

A Keep Britain Tidy discussion paper



Notimeto**waste**

A Keep Britain Tidy discussion paper

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Our track record

Keep Britain Tidy is an independent charity with roots tracing back to 1954. We may be best known for our litter campaigns, but today we do much more.

Our vision is a world where people understand and actively care for their environment.

A country with clean, green streets, beaches and parks providing the backbone for strong communities.

A society which preserves scarce resources, wastes less and recycles more, creating a healthier society, and a healthier planet too.

We set out to lead, challenge, educate, work with and inspire everyone in England to demonstrate their love for where they live.

We campaign and collaborate to improve environmental and social equality and for everyone's right to live and work in a place to be proud of. Our programmes work closely with communities, schools, businesses and governments to encourage people to love where they live by changing how they live. We run Eco-Schools in England, the world's largest environmental education programme that has so far reached over 17,000 schools in England alone. Over 1,200 parks and green spaces fly our Green Flag, and around 150 clean, safe beaches fly the Blue Flag or Seaside Award flag.





In 2011, we merged with Waste Watch, a national charity with 25 years experience of working with communities, local authorities, government and business to improve the use of resources and the management of waste.

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Waste Watch successfully lobbied government to introduce the first waste strategy for England, developed the *Manifesto for Market Development*, enabling recycling to become a commercially viable activity, ran the first national recycling campaign in the UK and delivered recycling and waste prevention campaigns for more than 150 local authorities across the country.

As a result of the work of organisations like ours, recycling is today an accepted feature of our daily lives and the need for careful management of the natural resources we all rely on is becoming increasingly recognised. But much more needs to be done.

This discussion paper charts the course for working with others and building on our achievements as Keep Britain Tidy transitions to an independent campaigning organisation with an integrated work programme that makes the connection between local environmental quality and global environmental stewardship, and between policy and practice.

We would welcome your views on the issues set out in this paper and on Keep Britain Tidy's proposed role in taking them forward by e-mailing us at waste@keepbritaintidy.org or visiting our website www.keepbritaintidy.org/waste

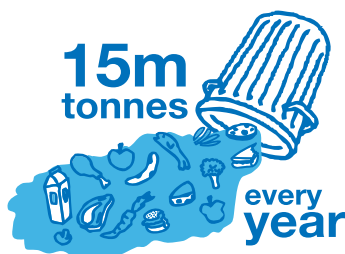
Our perspective

Resource constraints, evidenced by the rising cost of essential raw materials and concerns over their availability are becoming a reality. So too are the environmental impacts caused by our hunger for natural resources – biodiversity loss, climate change, land use pressures and marine pollution - to name but a few.

Business and government recognise this threat to the current economic system that creates wealth through maximising consumption and material usage. The circular economy concept, as an alternative to a linear buy, use and dispose economy, has entered common expression in the business sector. Individual companies have started rethinking the design of their operations and their supply chains to make them more circular. An increasing number of businesses are taking action to reduce their resource use and waste generation.

Yet, the sustained recession has revived the notion that economic growth, based on increased consumption, is the only way to economic recovery. The cost of environmental protection is considered damaging, rather than an essential investment to secure the long-term wellbeing of both future generations and our society today.

The myth of abundance that underlies our western lifestyles, has locked us into an ‘iron cage of consumerism’¹ – with far-reaching consequences for industrialised societies, for people in developing nations and for our planet.



- **Wastefulness remains the order of the day**

Almost 15 million tonnes of food is thrown away in the UK every year.²



- **Value within reuse is lost every day**

WRAP estimates that electrical items taken by the public to recycling sites would alternatively have a reuse value of approximately £220million.³



• Recycling is flatlining

England is at risk of missing its legally binding household recycling target of 50% for 2020, as the annual rate of increase in recycling has been slowing to 0.2% over the past three years.⁴



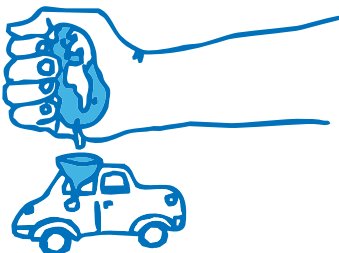
• We are not measuring the right things

For example in England we still only measure recycling collected and not what is actually recycled or its environmental benefit.⁵



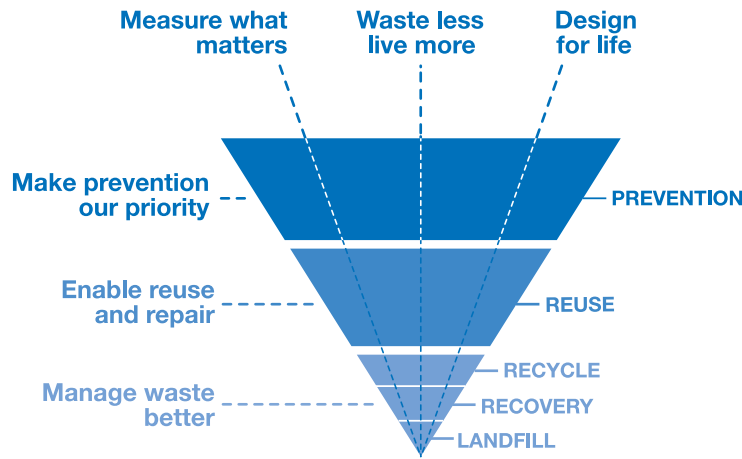
• Wealth does not equal happiness

In the UK, the percentage of people reporting themselves 'very happy' declined from 52% in 1957 to 36% in 2009, even though real incomes have more than doubled.⁶



• Our demand for resources continues to rise

The UN estimated that global consumption of natural resources will almost triple by 2050 unless nations take ambitious steps to cut back consumption.⁷



Our challenge

Make prevention our priority

In our society, wastefulness remains the order of the day. The real cost of our lifestyles remains hidden and we place insufficient value on the resources that underpin them.

We need to make it our priority to prevent waste from occurring in the first place, rather than dealing with it once produced. To do this we need to fully embrace the principles of the waste hierarchy.

Enable reuse and repair

Maximising product life creates the greatest value generated through manufacturing. But our society has yet to realise the full potential of repairing, reusing and remanufacturing the increasing number of products we own.

We need to support the development of the infrastructure and the skills needed to repair, reuse and remanufacture. As individuals, we need to rediscover the enjoyment of making our stuff last longer.

Manage waste better

Our society now sees recycling as commonplace and household recycling rates have risen from 8% to 43% in the past 15 years. Yet, we know that we could recycle over 80% of the waste we generate and recent data shows that national recycling rates are stagnating and urban areas still lag behind.

We need to invest in the right mix of waste collection and management infrastructure, underpinned by the waste hierarchy, that helps maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of returning quality materials to the economy. We also need to build trust with consumers and households, maximising their ability to minimise waste.

Household recycling rates have risen from 8% to 43% in the past 15 years. Yet, we know that we could recycle over 80% of the waste we generate.

Measure what matters

We remain locked in a mindset that views waste as separate from our consumption of resources and accounts for them in unrelated statistics. Without a better understanding of how resources flow through our society, we are not truly able to shift from the management of waste to the management of resources.

We need to design a different system for measuring our use of resources that helps us identify the opportunities for waste prevention, better product and service design, reuse, repair and remanufacturing and doing more with less.

Similar to the UK's carbon budget, we need a national resource budget that helps us live within our environmental means and takes account of the environmental impacts of our lifestyles that occur elsewhere in the world.

Waste less and live more

Our society has to challenge the popular belief that success, happiness and wellbeing are strongly linked with material wealth and ownership.

We need to create opportunities for people to experience different ways of enjoying life where our lifestyle doesn't come at the expense of the environment or the wellbeing of others. We need to reshape society to show how 'living more', waste prevention and sustainable consumption are an integral part of, rather than opposite to, the 'good life'.

Design for life

Our society relies on material consumption that assumes infinite availability of resources. Yet reality is catching up with us. The cost of raw materials, energy and commodities are on a firm upward trend, caused by the increasing environmental risk of resource extraction and global competition for manufacturing feedstocks.

To counter this trend, we need to design products and systems that use resources in a way that recognises and respects environmental limits. We need to facilitate transformational business models of providing the functions of the products that we have been used to owning and of getting the most from what we have.

We need to design products and systems that use resources in a way that recognises and respects environmental limits.

Our approach

Our work is underpinned by a set of common principles throughout.

We need to talk about values

We believe that values play a critical role in creating the kind of society we desire to live in. Our values drive political will and give us impetus as individuals to support change, volunteer our time and effort and to help others. Business and industry increasingly recognise that values matter to their consumers, employees and the communities within which they operate.

We will continue to develop our understanding of the role of values in influencing pro-environmental and altruistic behaviours and use a values-based approach to developing our campaigns, programmes and services.

We need to understand what makes change happen

Behaviours that lead to waste are numerous and complex, and understanding these behaviours is only just beginning. We will identify priority areas for action and better comprehend through market research what levers and approaches are necessary for change.

Research is at the heart of our strategy for innovation and for developing new ways to engage our supporters and the public at large with our programmes. Our current work in partnership with local land managers to prevent litter through behaviour change initiatives and social experiments exemplifies how we seek to trial, evaluate and, where appropriate, scale our work and share the insights we have gained.



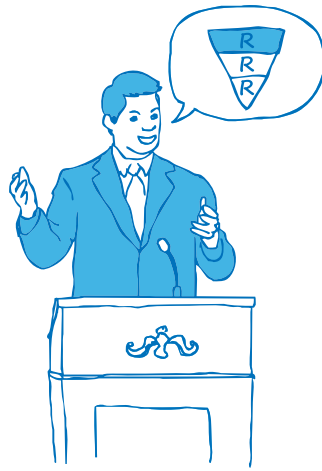
We can't do it alone

Many hearts and minds are needed to create meaningful and lasting change that tackles the core of the challenges our society faces today.

Keep Britain Tidy has a history of almost 60 years. From this experience we know that our approach not only needs to be relevant to today's world, but has to speak to several generations at once. We recognise the need to frame the debate and engage in a way that brings our supporters and the public along with us.



Our strength lies in our experience of bringing together individuals and communities to create change. We work with government at all levels, businesses, educational and academic institutions and other organisations in the sustainability sector. This partnership approach will remain at the heart of all we do.



Make prevention our priority

In our society, wastefulness remains the order of the day. The real cost of our lifestyles remains hidden and we place insufficient value on the resources that underpin them.

Although the waste hierarchy is enshrined in laws such as the European Waste Framework Directive, its application in daily life often still fails. Our society particularly struggles with the need to prevent waste from occurring in the first place. As consumers we are often too willing, or gently nudged by retailers and the government, to consume more and perpetuate our wasteful habits. This not only costs us money, but also squanders valuable resources and the value created in production. The cost of food waste is on average £470 for each household each year in England. And in the UK we throw away clothing worth over £140m.⁸

Waste prevention is both difficult to define and even more difficult to measure. When has waste truly been avoided? Lifecycle and systems analysis have an important role to play in highlighting hotspots where avoidable waste occurs and how systems and products could be redesigned to increase resource efficiency.

But such system-wide approaches need leadership and coordination if they are to secure the structural change that waste prevention requires. Voluntary commitments from industry have a vital role to play, but are prone to failure without an effective facilitator and invigilator and need to be backed up by regulatory alternatives to ensure high levels of ambition.

Political leadership remains a critical driving force in moving the UK from a society that manages its waste to one that fosters resource stewardship and seeks to avoid waste in all its forms. Ambitious national waste reduction targets will send a strong signal both to householders, businesses and public sector organisations to make waste prevention their priority. England should set clear targets to achieve year-on-year reductions. It could follow the example of Wales's 1.2% annual reduction target.⁹

Continued support needs to be given to programmes such as WRAP's Product Sustainability Forum, whose research provides a vital focus for action to business and government. We will actively participate in this forum through our programmes

such as our Top10 Energy Efficiency Guide for energy-using products.

Alongside producer responsibility, we see a need for a debate about consumer responsibility that starts to challenge the notion of limitless consumption. Together with others we successfully lobbied for the introduction of a carrier bag charge, which is a starting point for engaging consumers on the impact of their resource use.

We will follow this up by exploring other options for incentivising waste prevention at home, in school and at work. Central to this will be the role of values in influencing pro-environmental behaviours.

Through our annual 'Waste less, Live more Week'¹⁰ in partnership with private, public and third sector organisations, we invite individuals and communities to participate in activities that prevent waste by making changes to our daily lives.

System-wide approaches need leadership and coordination if they are to secure the structural change that waste prevention requires.



Enable reuse and repair

Maximising product life creates the greatest value generated through manufacturing. But our society has yet to realise the full potential of repairing, reusing and remanufacturing the increasing number of products we own.

Multiple benefits could be unlocked through enabling reuse, including repair, refurbishment, remanufacture and upcycling. The Furniture Reuse Network estimates that 2.7 million items of furniture alone are reused each year, employing 4,000 people, training 20,000 volunteers and saving £340 million on essential goods for 950,000 households.¹¹ The untapped potential for reuse remains enormous with the demand for reused furniture being more than double what is currently supplied through furniture reuse organisations.

We need to stimulate what has been termed the ‘next manufacturing revolution’. Evidence suggests reuse and remanufacturing could support an additional £5 billion in profits for manufacturers alongside over 300,000 jobs in the sector and innumerable benefits for the environment.¹²

Reuse has the potential to make the UK a more resource resilient nation. WRAP estimates that if the UK was to pursue all opportunities available for reuse, we could reduce our reliance on raw materials by as much as 20% by 2020.¹³

The low cost of replacing products, poor product design and perceptions of quality, cleanliness, reliability and safety of reused products¹⁴ present significant challenges to increased reuse and repair. Much of the skills and capacity for repair both by professionals and individuals have been eroded and are being undermined by manufacturers in the name of protecting their intellectual property. Economic incentives, such as reduced VAT on reused goods, are currently lacking.

Further untapped potential exists in recognising and harnessing the wider benefits of local authority-managed reuse collection services. When viewed from a waste management perspective alone, such services can easily be seen as an unjustifiable drain on dwindling financial resources. This misses the multiple value they create in generating local training and employment opportunities, in providing low-cost reused goods to lower income families and in fostering social cohesion and personal wellbeing through getting involved in a local community activity.

Reuse has the potential to make the UK a more resource resilient nation.

Part of our long-term vision for our Eco-Schools programme is to encourage social entrepreneurship among young people to follow the example of trendsetters such as eBay and Freecycle.

This could provide the next generation of collection and reuse platforms that help break down the cultural barriers associated with reuse. We will also campaign for the inclusion of practical repair skills within the National Curriculum, that equip the next generation with the competence to make more technologically complex products last longer.

Through our focus on fast food litter, we will investigate examples from other countries of how this type of litter¹⁵ can be reduced through better packaging design and the introduction of financial incentives that reward returnable or reusable packaging. Together with our business partners, we will explore the options for putting such measures into practice across the nation.



Manage waste better

We could recycle over 80% of the waste we generate and recent data shows that national recycling rates are stagnating and urban areas still lag behind.

Over the past 15 years, our society has made significant progress in embracing recycling as an everyday activity. National recycling rates have increased five-fold, virtually every single local authority in England now provides a collection service for at least three materials and the back-end reprocessing infrastructure provides jobs and generates economic opportunities.

Despite this success story, England is at risk of missing its legally binding household recycling target of 50% for 2020, as the annual rate of increase in recycling has been slowing to 0.2% over the past three years.¹⁶ This represents an enormous missed economic opportunity - the Environmental Services Association (ESA) estimates that on current recycling rates, the UK would lose out on a £1.4 billion boost to the economy between now and 2020 as only about 255 million tonnes will be recycled out of 395 million tonnes available.¹⁷

Even if we do get recycling increasing again, a recent analysis by Eunomia shows that residual waste treatment facilities already in the pipeline could limit the rate of recycling in 2020 for local authority collected wastes in England to no more than 60%.¹⁸ A growth in the export of refuse-derived fuel means the energy recovered from waste does not always contribute to UK renewable energy targets and is effectively a lost resource to the UK.¹⁹

The quality of recyclable materials collected remains a concern for industries relying on these secondary raw materials as their feedstocks. Local authorities also continue to face significant challenges tackling the persistent contamination plaguing some recycling collections. Not addressing these concerns places our nation at a disadvantage securing raw materials and becoming more resource resilient.

Our programme will focus on working with partners from business, government and local communities, to develop solutions that build on our expertise in delivering effective waste behaviour change campaigns that address issues such as contamination and low participation.

Householders play a critical role in the circular economy. Without their active support, it is virtually impossible to retrieve the products and materials for reuse and recycling. Our forthcoming Recycling Inquiry, in partnership with SITA UK, provides a unique opportunity for the public to contribute directly to the recycling debate. The inquiry will explore how we can increase urban recycling rates, inspire greater public trust and improve recycling quality. It will also allow us to explore how to frame messages that highlight recycling as an individual's contribution to national resource security. Many urban areas still lag behind the national average as recycling remains a low priority in less affluent communities faced with poor local environmental quality.²⁰ Our long-term programme, Our Common Place,²¹ is trialling innovative approaches to increasing recycling participation in deprived communities through making a tangible connection between local environmental quality and protection and personal wellbeing.

Every day, a huge quantity of material still ends up as litter on our streets, representing a waste of resources. In Scotland alone, litter is estimated to have a value of up to £1.2 million in reprocessors' fees if it was all recycled.²² The figure for England is expected to be over ten times this amount. We will work with our business partners to explore ways to capture this value, for example through more widely available and improved recycling-on-the-go facilities.

We will campaign for England to follow the aspirations of Scotland and Wales and set a 70% household recycling target for 2025. We will work with the government to develop a national plan, that outlines a mix of waste management infrastructure in support of the waste hierarchy, that increases the quality of recyclables collected from homes and businesses and that supports a reprocessing infrastructure that generates high-quality recyclates, skilled jobs and green growth for England.

We will speak out in support of landfill bans for recyclable materials that follow the recommendations of Green Alliance's research which estimates that landfill bans will create economic value of £2.5 billion through the recovery of materials and £1 billion in avoidable landfill costs for wood, plastics, textiles and food.²³

Householders play a critical role in the circular economy



Measure what matters

Without a better understanding of how resources flow through our society, we are not truly able to shift from the management of waste to the management of resources.

Our success in making recycling a commonplace activity has been underpinned by collecting data to inform national and local performance indicators. This has helped us build a picture of how much waste we produce, how much is collected for recycling and how much still ends up in landfills or incinerators.

Local authorities use participation monitoring, waste composition analysis and residents' surveys to understand the recycling behaviours of their residents and local businesses and to inform targeted communications campaigns.

But crucial pieces are still missing from the jigsaw to complete the picture. While WRAP's work has helped us understand the national potential value of reuse²⁴, this type of data needs to be available locally to help us unlock the value from reuse, repair and remanufacturing and to facilitate collaboration between different collection agencies – from local authorities and national charities to local social enterprises.

The data we have collected has informed us that we are getting better at collecting recyclable materials. But to get a true picture of the value created and the resources saved through recycling, we need to go one step further and measure what really gets recycled and to take account of material quality.

To move from a society that manages its waste to one that has the ability to reduce its resource use, we need to make the connection between the amount of stuff we consume and the waste we create. WRAP's analysis of material flows through our national economy and hotspots analysis²⁵ are starting to provide a critical focus on where to direct efforts for waste and resource use reduction.

This data allows us to formulate ambitious plans for waste prevention, which cut waste and resource use across the entire economy and go far beyond the government's current waste prevention commitments.

Most importantly, we need to better understand environmental limits and how to operate within them. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) predicts globally we currently use the natural resources of 1.5 planets, which will rise to three planets by 2050.²⁶

We welcome the leadership of visionary companies such as Puma that have started to explore the true cost of their products across the entire lifecycle, by using an environmental profit and loss model. We will explore with businesses like these, how we can effectively engage with “even those concerned only about bottom lines – and not the fate of nature”²⁷ that our lifestyles and our livelihoods - depend on the long-term availability of natural capital.

We will work with other non-governmental organisations, to support the uptake of existing models for measuring resource use such as Friends of the Earth’s four resource footprint indicators.²⁸

We will explore the role values can play in putting a value on our scarce resources, both monetary and intrinsic and in fostering resource stewardship, both globally and locally.

We need to make the connection between the amount of stuff we consume and the waste we create.



Waste less and live more

Our society has to challenge the popular belief that success, happiness and wellbeing are strongly linked with material wealth and ownership.

We live in a society where we are expected to work, spend and consume more and more to keep pace with other people and help improve the economy. This comes at huge cost to both the planet and to others.

If everyone on the earth consumed the resources of the average European, we would need three planets to sustain us. In addition to this, evidence suggests that this approach is not actually good for us and may in fact be damaging to our happiness and wellbeing.²⁹

At national and international levels, there is recognition of the failure of our current model to support not only our economic growth, but environmental and social wellbeing for all. This is evidenced through the introduction of international measures such as the New Economics Foundation's Happy Planet Index in 2006 and the first set of UK accounts of wellbeing published by the Office for National Statistics in 2012.³⁰

We continue to govern and develop policy in ways which do not sufficiently recognise and acknowledge the connections between our economic prosperity and our social and environmental wellbeing. As sustainability organisations we need to become better at framing our campaigns and programmes in ways which create a connection between social wellbeing and environmental wellbeing. There is a danger that people believe they are living sustainably just by recycling or participating in one or two sustainable behaviours.

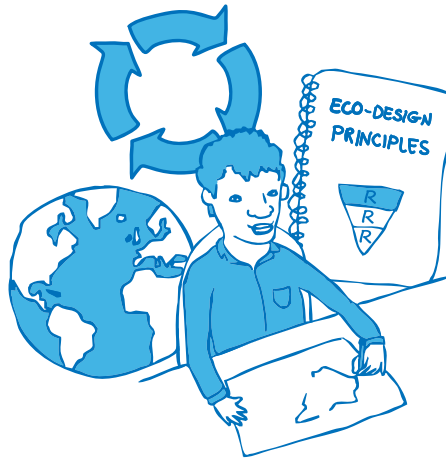
For us, wasting less and living more represents a different approach. It's about engaging with people about sustainability, resource and waste issues, through the notion of the values that shape our lives and our lifestyles. It's about creating practical opportunities to explore what it means to 'live more' and how waste prevention and sustainable consumption are an integral part of, rather than oppose, the 'good life'. It's about creating values-led campaigns and behaviour change models to create long-term change and stimulate a range of positive environmental and social benefits, rather than a single-issue approach which can have unintended consequences.

We see schools as a critical source of knowledge about environmental and resource issues, with numerous opportunities in every subject to educate for sustainability.

In our work with communities, we will build capacity, rather than deliver services to people, so that they are empowered to collaborate with each other to improve where they live and how they live. We will continue to develop our waste and resource programmes, such as Our Common Place, by making a tangible connection between local environmental quality and protection and personal wellbeing. We will measure not just the environmental benefits of these programmes, but also the benefits for participants' wellbeing.

We see schools as a critical source of knowledge about environmental and resource issues, with numerous opportunities in every subject to educate for sustainability.³¹ We are developing our long-term strategy for our education work, delivered through our Eco-Schools programme in England. This will place more focus on learning for sustainability alongside making schools more sustainable. We also aim to focus on secondary schools, often seen as missing gaps in sustainability. In particular, we will explore new approaches that better link environmental sustainability with social and economic challenges, through a focus on social entrepreneurship for young people.

We will continue to build on the success of our annual national 'Waste less, Live more Week', which to date has brought together over 100 public, private and voluntary organisations to showcase and provide the opportunity to participate in activity which is good for them and the environment.



Design for life

Our society relies on material consumption that assumes infinite availability of resources. Yet reality is catching up with us.

The prevailing economic model is based on generating wealth from maximising consumption and material usage. Our society is becoming better at making products more energy and material efficient. But efficiency gains are far outstripped by our ever-increasing demand for products and energy to power them. For example, in the 1970s, the average household owned a dozen electrical appliances – today’s average is over 40 electrical and electronic products (not including lighting).³²

We need to push for standards and minimum environmental performance requirements that enable wholesale market transformation and that don’t leave the choice to the consumer alone. In the realm of energy-consuming products, for example, we know that market transformation is taking place when more and more products on sale qualify for the highest EU energy efficiency label and the number of less efficient models is decreasing.

Through our Top10 Energy Efficiency Guide³³, we help consumers transform the market through increasing demand for the most energy efficient models and incentivise producers to make the best available technology available to more consumers at affordable prices. Currently product declarations required by manufacturers only cover energy efficiency and do not address material efficiency or recyclability. Through our collaboration with the European Environmental Bureau and others, we will explore and push for effective mechanisms for the consideration of material efficiency in environmental performance assessment and labelling, for example under the EU Eco-Design Directive.

For too long, dealing with waste has been seen solely as the responsibility of waste managers. This mindset makes us miss the greatest opportunities for preventing waste and reducing resource use, as around 80% of the environmental impacts of a product are determined at the design stage.³⁴

Business leaders and managers are often locked into success measurements based on quick results and short-term profitability. As consumers, we are all too often willing co-conspirators in a race to upgrade and replace the stuff

we own, in an effort to keep up with our peers and enhance our social status. This hampers bold and innovative steps to challenge business as usual and to break the cycle of consuming more.

WRAP estimate that changing how we design, make, buy and dispose of electrical and electronic equipment alone, could reduce our carbon footprint by up to 15% and add £800 million in GDP to the UK economy.³⁵ Designers, a key part of the UK's creative economy, are vital to bringing about this change, but they are held back by a combination of barriers including a lack of relevant skills and knowledge or the mandate to design products and services that not only reduce waste, but help us break our current consumption habits.

We need to facilitate a shift to design for transformational business models, that make the connection between the social, environmental and economic challenges facing society. An increasing number of businesses, enterprises and charities are beginning to bridge this gap. For example, the Restart Project, a social enterprise that fixes our relationship with electronics and Interface, a pioneering carpet manufacturer who design with purpose. Another example is Rapanui who developed their fashion business with ethical and environmental traceability built-in.

Through our community and volunteering projects and online platforms, we will explore the ever-increasing links that design and design thinking can contribute to benefit social and public impact.³⁶ We will support initiatives such as the Royal Society of Arts' (RSA) Great Recovery and the Design Council, through publicising them among our supporters and as part of our annual call to action during our 'Waste less, Live more Week'.

Alongside this, consumers need to be encouraged and allowed to reclaim their role, firstly as citizens, or members of the community. They should feel empowered and motivated to take part in a movement to a society that is mindful of the impact of its lifestyle on other people and the planet. Through awareness raising and practical campaigns, such as our Waste less, Live more priority area and annual week, their voice, demand and acceptance has to be grown.

We will continue working with other organisations, such as the New Economics Foundation, to better understand and shape the deep structural changes needed to transform our society to one which recognises and respects environmental limits and that focuses on wellbeing not consumption.

We need to facilitate a shift to design for transformational business models, that make the connection between the social, environmental and economic challenges facing society.

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We want to hear from you

This paper presents our current thinking on some of the major resource and waste challenges facing our nation and potential solutions that should be implemented or at the very least considered.

Keep Britain Tidy will be developing its waste and resource use strategy during 2014 to identify our role and contribution over the next five years to help England make the transition to using resources within environmental limits.

We would welcome your views on the issues set out in this paper and on Keep Britain Tidy's proposed role in taking them forward by e-mailing us at waste@keepbritaintidy.org or visiting our website www.keepbritaintidy.org/waste





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