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STRENGTHS

- Cost saving
- Transferable model and toolkit
- Sustainability

PROJECT TITLE

Waste Management in Barking and Dagenham Council

CLIENT

Design Business Association, London, United Kingdom

DESIGN SUPPLIERS

Barking and Dagenham Council, London, UK

LAUNCH DATE

2011

USEFUL LINKS

www.lbdb.gov.uk

Waste Management in Barking and Dagenham Council

SUMMARY

The Barking and Dagenham Council was eager to understand how to use design to become more innovative and user centric. In 2011, it turned for help to the Design Council's Design Leadership Programme and Design Associate David Townson. Barking and Dagenham addressed the issue of environmental waste – a major and costly concern for council and residents alike. The project resulted in improved information about waste management and a local recycle and re-use pilot scheme, saving an initial cost £20,000.

INSIGHT

The Barking and Dagenham Council knew it needed to challenge traditional methods of service delivery, but was wary of second guessing end users' wants and needs. Demand from service users was rising fast but budgets for service provision were falling. Meanwhile, all departments had to find new ways to respond to the move towards greater personalisation of, and end user involvement in, public service design.

APPROACH

The Design Associate led a workshop with external design experts and council representatives to brainstorm key issues. The design agency Uscreates was commissioned to undertake detailed end user research. Uscreates, filmed vox pop interviews with local people as they went about their daily lives providing a powerful visualisation of their concerns. Barking and Dagenham staff were then asked to film themselves explaining their roles and daily challenges. The film material highlighted 70+ ideas to improve council services. Ten of these ideas were shortlisted and briefs were written for each one. Staff and residents were invited to find solutions to these briefs in a co-creation session. After the session, results from one brief were selected to prototype.

OUTCOME

The Barking and Dagenham Council introduced improved information about how to dispose of items, new signage directing people to appropriate facilities, increased enforcement and a local recycle and re-use pilot scheme enabling neighbours to swap items before having to dispose of them. An initial cost saving of £20,000 was re-invested into new services. The model is now being rolled out in other council departments and will soon generate further new service prototypes.