

## **Place Scrutiny Committee**

In Depth Scrutiny Project 19/21: To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough

DRAFT

DRAFT

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report highlights the results of a review of the level of household waste recycling in the Borough and considers what influences residents in terms of their recycling habits and what the barriers are to achieving a higher rate of recycling and to explore ways of working with residents to improve household waste recycling.
- 1.2 Provision and access to recycling services across the borough is important to ensure the community can fully engage with this key service. Levels of participation often vary between wards and there is a great deal to be learnt from other Local Authorities, particularly those that are high performing.
- 1.3 The Council is able to contribute to the climate change agenda and reduce waste disposal costs by achieving high recycling. There is a positive reputational impact for the Council by improving recycling.
- 1.4 The Councils 2050 agenda is supported by becoming a green city with outstanding examples of recycling. The Council has also declared a climate change emergency and recycling is widely accepted as a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions as it avoids the need to use virgin materials in the production of goods.
- 1.5 I would like to thank all Councillors, Officers and external organisations for their contribution to the in-depth review

**Councillor Alex Bright**  
**Chair of the In-Depth Scrutiny Review Project Team**

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to collect household waste and are free to choose the method of service delivery, e.g. by using sacks or bins and varying the frequency of collection e.g. weekly or fortnightly
- 2.2 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC) currently collects household waste in the following way:

Waste Type	Residual (non-recycling)	Mixed Recycling (except paper and card)	Textiles	Food Waste	Garden Waste
Frequency	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Container	Sacks (unlimited)	Sacks (unlimited)	Sacks (unlimited)	Caddies	Wheelie Bin, chargeable

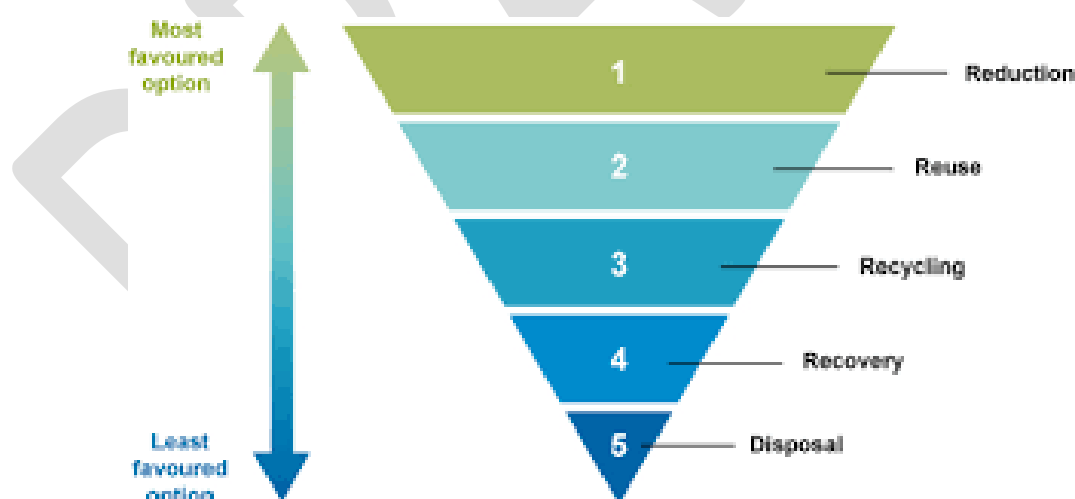
2.3 SBC as well as a Waste Collection Authority is a Waste Disposal Authority and therefore responsible for dealing with the disposal of waste that is not sent for recycling. Traditionally this disposal route has been landfill which is well known in the industry as environmentally unsustainable due to its contribution to greenhouse gases and therefore climate change.

2.4 Since 2007 SBC has been working in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC, under the banner of the Essex Waste Partnership) to secure a sustainable waste disposal solution which recovers waste, so the resources are not lost (as per the landfill option). Between December 2014 and June 2020 partnership residual waste was being sent to a Mechanical Biological Treatment facility in Basildon (Tovi Eco Park), owned by ECC and operated by Urbaser.

The facility treats residual waste by breaking down biodegradable matter, recovering recycling with the remaining output being able to be used as a fuel (Solid Recovered Fuel)

Due to performance and contractual issues the plant stopped accepting waste in June 2020 and Urbaser have gone into receivership. The partnership waste is being disposed of in landfill until a new alternative disposal solution is procured.

2.5 Reducing waste, recovering recycling and treating the remainder of residual waste in an environmental sustainable way is in line with the SBCs waste strategy and widely known as the waste hierarchy, see below;



2.5 Reported performance for household waste recycling in SBC is as follows including a comparator for England:

Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21*
% SBC	45.7	46.0	47.1	48.3	46.8	43.7
% England **	43.9	44.2	44.4	43.8	44.6	n/a

\*unaudited and impacted by Covid -19 due to increased waste volumes being generated at home

\*\* source DEFRA

From these figures it can be seen that recycling rates have been fairly consistent over the last few years

Recycling rates also vary from ward to ward across SBC and below is a snapshot of the data which highlights this and the challenge of ensuring all households engage with the service.

Ward	Domestic	Recyclate - Mixed	Food waste	Green waste	Cardboard	RecPerformance
Thorpe	9.85	3.58	1.80	11.31	0.94	52.27%
West Leigh	15.23	7.12	2.99	9.28	2.17	50.74%
Blenheim Park	9.16	4.62	1.22	8.28	1.34	49.86%
Southchurch	10.85	3.31	1.62	15.46	0.67	49.85%
Belfairs	12.71	5.24	2.15	9.77	1.41	48.27%
St Laurence	9.05	3.42	1.45	8.80	0.97	48.19%
West Shoebury	11.38	3.20	1.88	12.78	0.90	48.15%
Eastwood Park	11.30	4.20	1.96	6.80	1.48	47.21%
Prittlewell	9.67	4.23	1.19	8.76	0.76	46.75%
St Luke's	9.50	3.56	1.29	13.88	0.67	46.57%
Leigh	8.56	3.47	1.12	8.20	0.87	43.36%
Chalkwell	9.63	4.35	0.93	8.24	1.07	41.97%
Westborough	8.60	3.46	1.04	7.45	0.66	39.65%
Shoeburyness	13.57	3.23	1.80	8.88	0.82	33.79%
Milton	10.03	3.32	0.78	9.28	0.53	30.52%
Victoria	14.52	4.16	1.38	10.64	0.75	28.30%
Kursaal	11.68	3.20	1.04	12.53	0.61	27.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.95</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>1.46</b>	<b>10.10</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>42.48%</b>

SBCs household waste recycling target for 2020/21 is 50% which has not been achieved.

### 3. Framework of the Review

- 3.1 At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Place Scrutiny Committee agreed (Minute 153 refers) that an in-depth scrutiny review be undertaken to consider what influences residents in terms of their recycling habits and what the barriers are to achieving a higher rate of recycling and to consider ways of working with residents to improve domestic waste recycling.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny project group comprised of Councillors: A Bright, K Buck, L Burton, A Chalk, S George, D Jarvis, S Wakefield and P Wexham and an Officer Core Team comprising Carl Robinson, Imran Kazalbash and Tim Row. The scope of the project was agreed by the project team to include :

- To review current strategies, initiatives and methods of waste recycling/collection and their effectiveness
  - To consider best practice from exemplar Local Authorities (e.g. Tendring, Rochford) including incentive schemes
  - To examine operational and cultural barriers to domestic waste recycling and how these may be overcome
  - To identify and consider recycling measures and initiatives to increase the amount and type of domestic waste recycling in the Borough
  - To investigate how the community be educated and encouraged to increase domestic waste recycling levels reduce the level of waste sent to landfill
  - To investigate the potential alternative uses of suitable residual waste after recycling as an alternative to landfill
- 3.3 The review was set in the context of the Councils 2050 ambition and priorities and the following proposed outcome was the vision:
- “To improve and increase domestic waste recycling in the Borough”*
- 3.4 Progress in 2019/20 when this project was originally planned for was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic with officer time being diverted to other priorities. Completion of the review was in the first quarter of 2020/21.

#### **4. Methodology**

- 4.1 The project Group met on 6 occasions between September 2019 and February 2021
- 4.2 The review was undertaken using a mixture of evidence and intelligence gathered by
- Scrutiny of relevant documentation, data and intelligence
  - Structured interviews with selected groups/industry
  - Site Visits
  - Review of current and alternative operational models, initiatives and strategies
  - Survey and engagement with residents

#### **Experience of other Local Authorities; Rochford District Council and Tendring District Council (see Appendix x for Officer Presentations)**

- 4.3 The project team would like to extend thanks for Officers attending from these Essex authorities who shared an insight to alternative household recycling collection models different to that of SBC.

Both authorities operate schemes with the use of wheelie bins (maintaining sack collections for those who cannot accommodate a bin) which unlike SBCs system limits the amount of waste that can be placed out for collection. Both Authorities also operate collections whereby residual waste is collected one

week and the recycling the following, reporting that this improves recycling levels as residents change their behaviour to manage their waste capacities. Improvements in the level of food waste are also reported, again to free up capacity to ensure the limited amount of residual waste that is placed out every fortnight is managed.

Separate weekly collections of food waste are likely to be mandated by Government following the implementation of the Environment Bill. Both Authorities report participation in these schemes are essential for overall recycling rates to be improved.

Rochford reported an overall recycling rate of 61.3% in 19/20 (with a ranking of 8<sup>th</sup> out of all Local Authorities) with the following service configuration:

Waste Type	Residual (non-recycling)	Mixed Recycling	Food Waste & Garden waste
Frequency	fortnightly	fortnightly	Weekly, mixed
Container	Wheelie bin	Wheelie bin	Wheelie bin

Officers reported that it is important to have a strict no side waste policy to ensure all waste is managed within the wheelie bin and drive behaviour change.

Both Authorities report as waste and recycling is managed within bins there is less demand for street cleansing as sacks being scavenged is avoided.

As previously mentioned not all properties can accommodate bins and these Authorities maintain a sacks collection service where storage space is limited. Assisted collections are also in place to ensure residents have support in presenting their wheelie bins if required.

#### **Site visit to Southwark Materials Recycling Facility (MRF)**

- 4.4 Some members of the project group attended a site visit to the MRF, the facility at Southwark is owned and operated by Veolia and currently accepts SBCs mixed recycling. Feedback from the group included

- Appreciation of scale and volume of operation
- Technology used to separate materials
- Importance of reducing contamination
- Confidence in recycling processes and end markets

#### **Reward Schemes in the Community to enhance recycling (see Appendix 1 for presentation)**

- 4.5 Through research it is understood that a number of Authorities use incentive schemes to overcome barriers to recycling and improve participation.

The project group received a presentation from a company called Greenredeem who deliver environmental behaviour change programmes.

The vision is to:

- Engage, motivate and help residents to understand how to take positive action
- Use less waste, recycle more

Delivered by:

- Tailored campaign content, across a range of environmental topics
- Education and having fun
- Offering incentives e.g donations, competitions, discounts

Greenredeem reported the following case study results:

- Wokingham Borough Council – an increase of recycling of 21.3% per household
- Redditch Brough Council – a 4.5% reduction in household waste
- Thames water – 21% decrease in water consumption

It must be noted there would be a cost to implementing and maintaining such as scheme which is mainly digital based

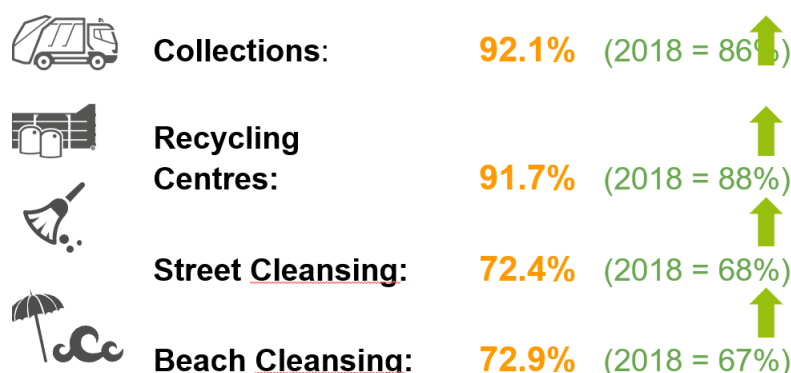
### Resident Engagement and Surveying

- 4.6 Veolia (SBCs current waste collection contractor) carry out regular engagement with residents through their Customer liaison Group. As part of this project in November 2019 a meeting was held to feed into the scope and aims of this review. A summary of the output is below itemised against the key discussion points.

What communication methods are most effective to encourage recycling?	How could residents be incentivised to recycle more?	What could be a barrier to people participating in recycling?	What works well with the recycling service now
Awareness Days	All residents need a stake in the area	different languages	Street Champions
Hard Hitting Posters	Give out shopping vouchers	New flats need more bins /lack of facilities	Dual recycling
Via School children	educate landlords	limited space in homes	pink weekly collections
Face book community events	engage with schools	lack of storage	street cleaned in 6 week cycles
Eco fair	credit awards	mis understanding of plastics	weekly service works well please keep
TV adverts & news papers	poster campaigns	new residents unfamiliar with how to recycle	posters to promote recycling
face to face	educate children and parents		flat recycling promotion
leaflets in libraries	more door to door		mysouthend reporting
Competitions			promotion of composting champions



- 4.7 In October 2020 Veolia via a third party carried out a satisfaction survey of waste and cleansing services in SBC and the results were fed back to the project group. A summary of the results are below and see Appendix 2 for the presentation



From nearly 6000 responses it can be seen that satisfaction levels with the current service particular waste collection are very high, in all cases when benchmarked against Local Government Association data SBCs ranked higher than quarterly averages from a selection of other authorities. The presentation provides further detail on actions and areas of focus that arise out of the surveying with a view to improve services. SBC also carries out Boroughwide surveying which include specific questions on recycling and waste services.

#### **Alternative Treatment to landfill and energy recovery**

- 4.8 SBC has declared a Climate Change Emergency and as such needs to contribute to the Government targets of reducing UK carbon emissions to the following
- 34% by 2020
  - and by at least 80% by 2050

when compared to levels in 1990.

Recovering waste by turning into it energy avoids landfill and can contribute to carbon emission savings. The energy is typically used to power homes locally.

A presentation was given By Veolia covering the overview of the technology, geographical locations, emission control and energy generation. A number of case study examples of high recycling authorities were referenced by Veolia who use Energy from Waste as a disposal option.

## Legislative and Strategic context

- 4.9 In December 2018 the Government published its Resources and Waste Strategy setting out how we will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England.

A key factor in the delivery of this strategy is resource recovery and waste management and the following key principles below are consistent with this review:

- improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection, subject to consultation
- improve urban recycling rates, working with business and local authorities
- improve working arrangements and performance between local authorities
- drive greater efficiency of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants
- address information barriers to the use of secondary materials
- encourage waste producers and managers to implement the waste hierarchy in respect to hazardous waste

In May 21, the Environment Bill was taken back to Parliament for a third reading. Through the Environment Bill, the Government aims to clean up the country's air, restore natural habitats and increase biodiversity. The Bill will also outline how the government will reduce waste, make better use of resources, and improve management of water resources in a changing climate. The legislation builds on this Government's decisive action to protect the environment as [set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan](#) and the binding commitment to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

## 5 Recommendations

- 5.1 By way of providing some context to and delivery of the recommendations it was noted that during the review Officers updated the project group on the ongoing work to assess whether an extension to the current waste collection contract is viable, which would take the end date to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2031. Dialogue in the process has focused on improving recycling rates, reducing environmental impact and contributing to carbon savings.
- 5.2 The following is recommended:
- Options for a service change that improve recycling rates should be considered during the extension dialogue for the current waste collection contract and/or a new procurement. This should draw on best practice from high performing authorities and consider potential legislative impacts from the forthcoming Environment Bill. For clarification this could mean

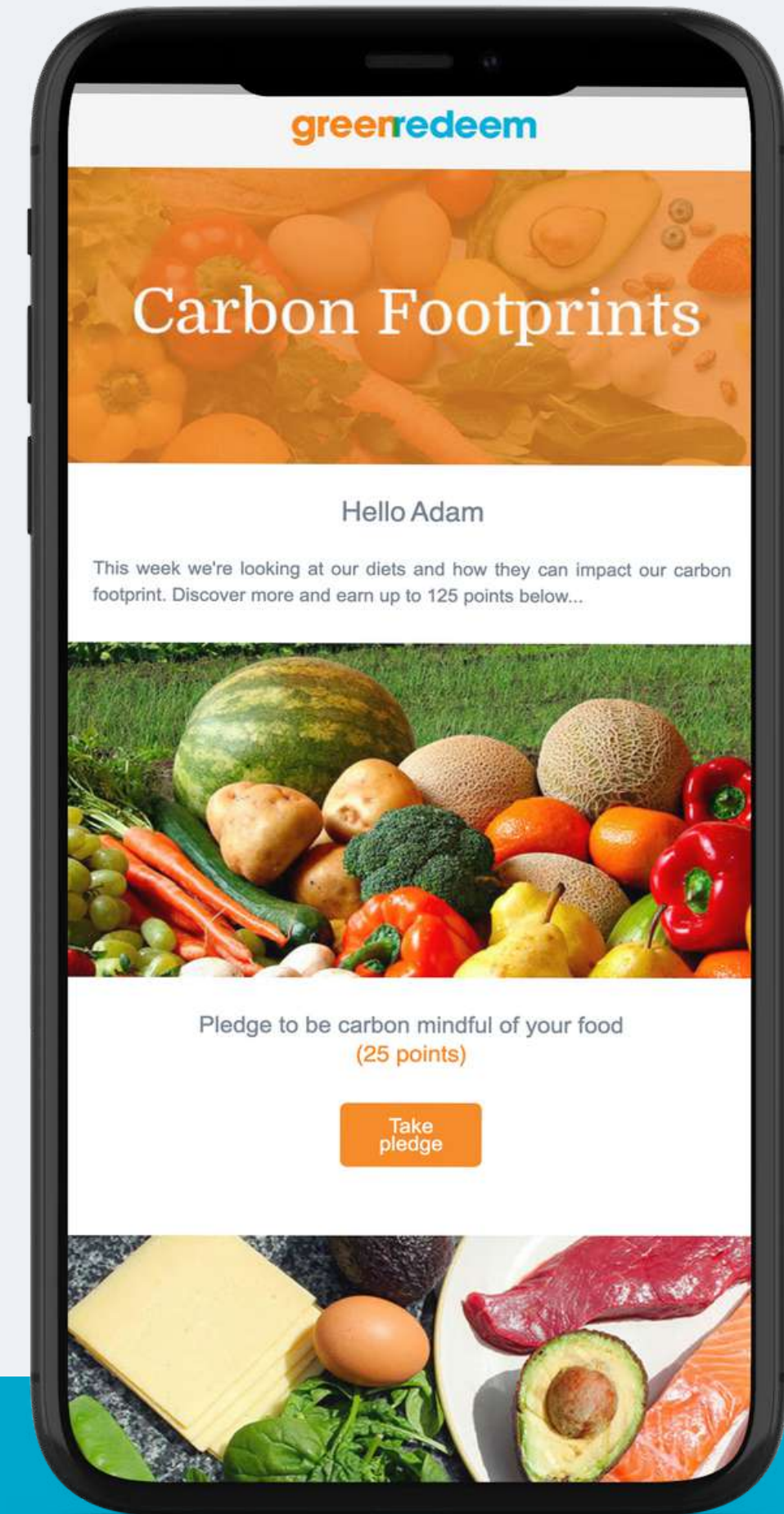
operating services other than on a weekly collection frequency and in sacks.

- Engagement with communities is ongoing to encourage participation in recycling services. This should be through targeted communication campaigns on a local and national level which focus on low performing areas; use of reward schemes subject to funding (and further investigation), regular customer surveying to inform service design and satisfaction levels.
- The Council should explore disposal arrangements for residual waste other than landfill, possibly to recover energy and in the context of the waste hierarchy

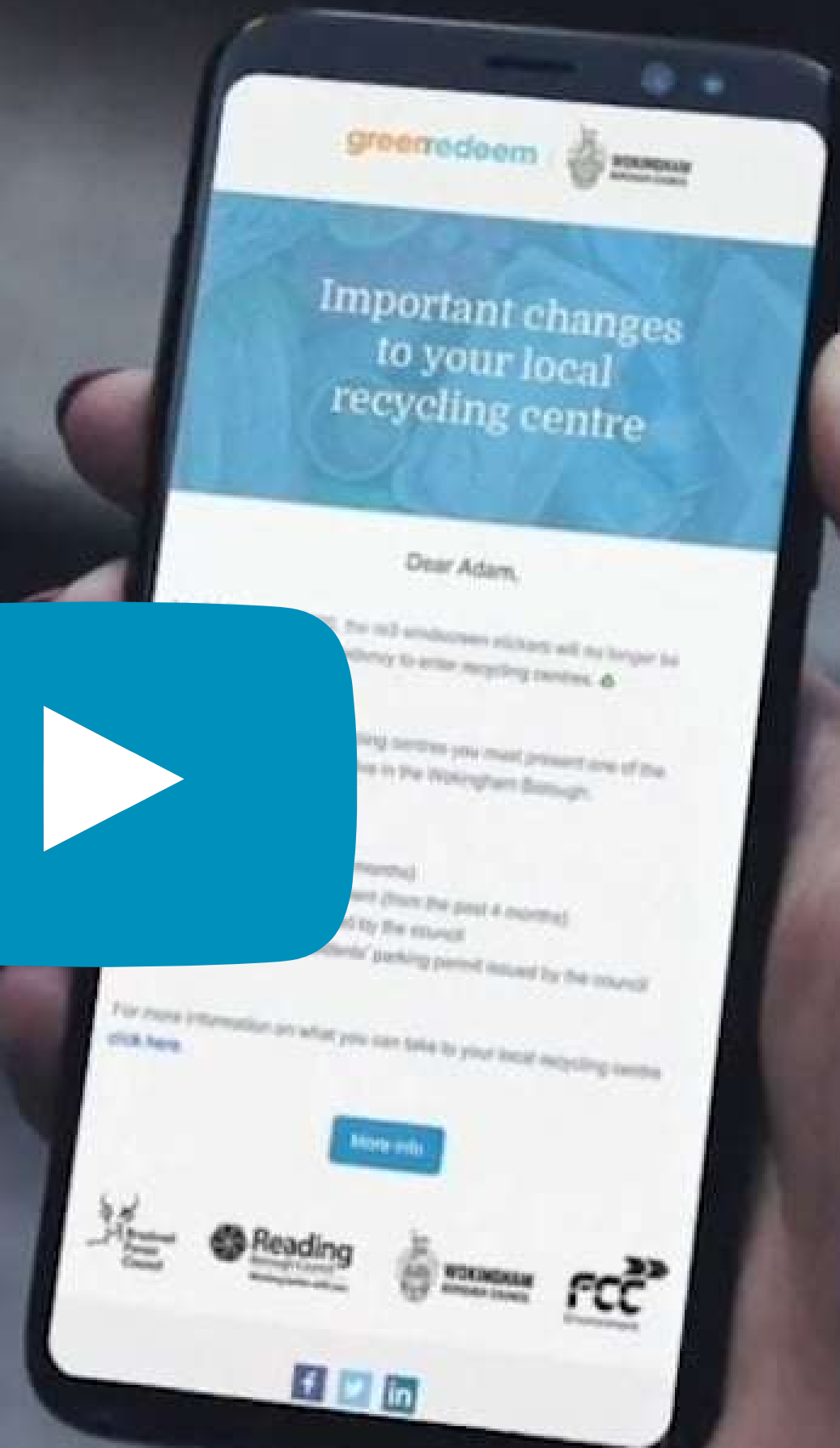
DRAFT

# Greenredeem's environmental behaviour change programme

Engaging and motivating residents to change their behaviour and help them understand how they can contribute by taking positive action.



# 11 years of engaging residents to waste less & recycle more







# Behaviour change is at the heart of our digital communications

Behaviour change does not happen through a one-off action or campaign, instead it is achieved through a gradual and sustained process, helping to engrain the adoption of new habits, bringing with it tangible results

# Our 4 step approach to sustained behaviour change

1



Build &  
grow a  
community

2



Engage them  
behind a  
cause

3



Reward  
participation &  
improvements

4



Make the  
change  
habitual



# Why investing in content is important to us

**We create innovative communication campaigns through which residents can be motivated, educated & inspired in a fun, engaging way**

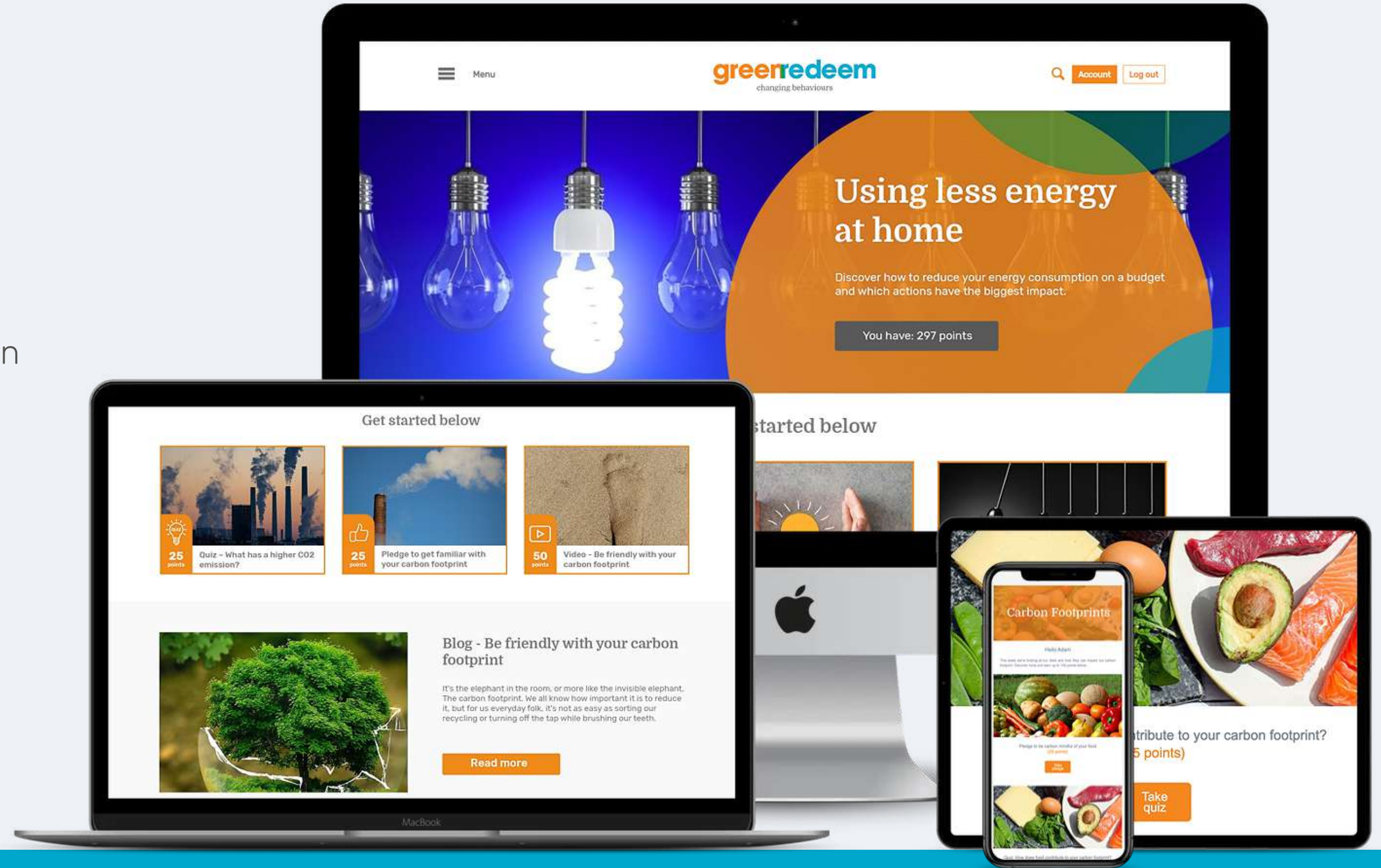
In collaboration, we will create a marketing plan & content strategy which will take residents through the journey of understanding how to waste less and recycle more. All content is accessed by residents through your bespoke Greenredeem digital channel





# Tailored campaign content

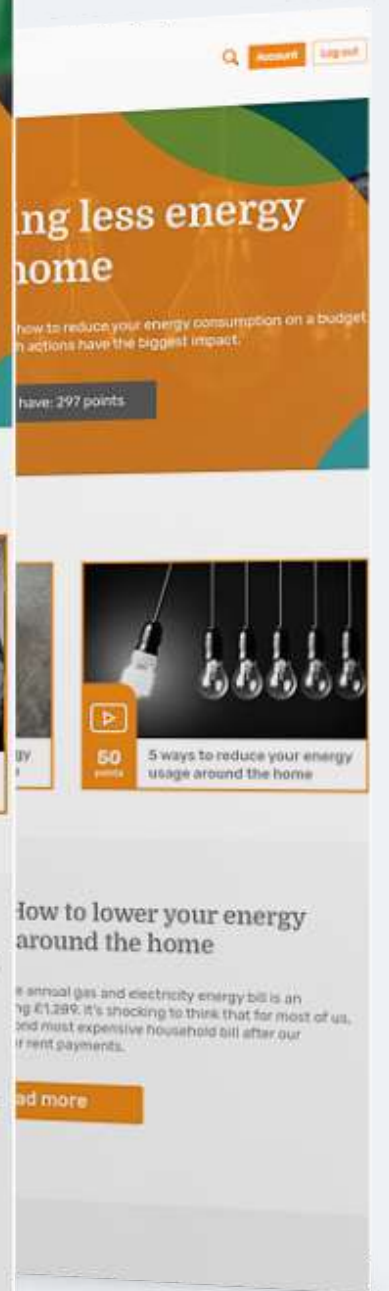
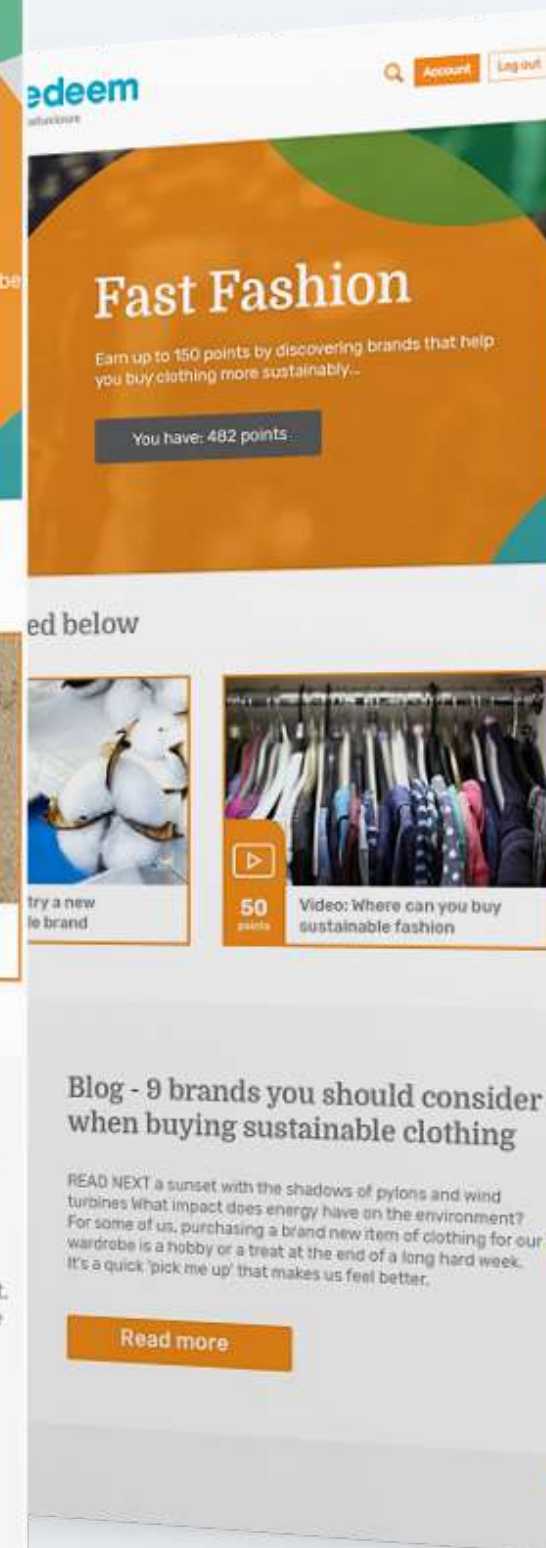
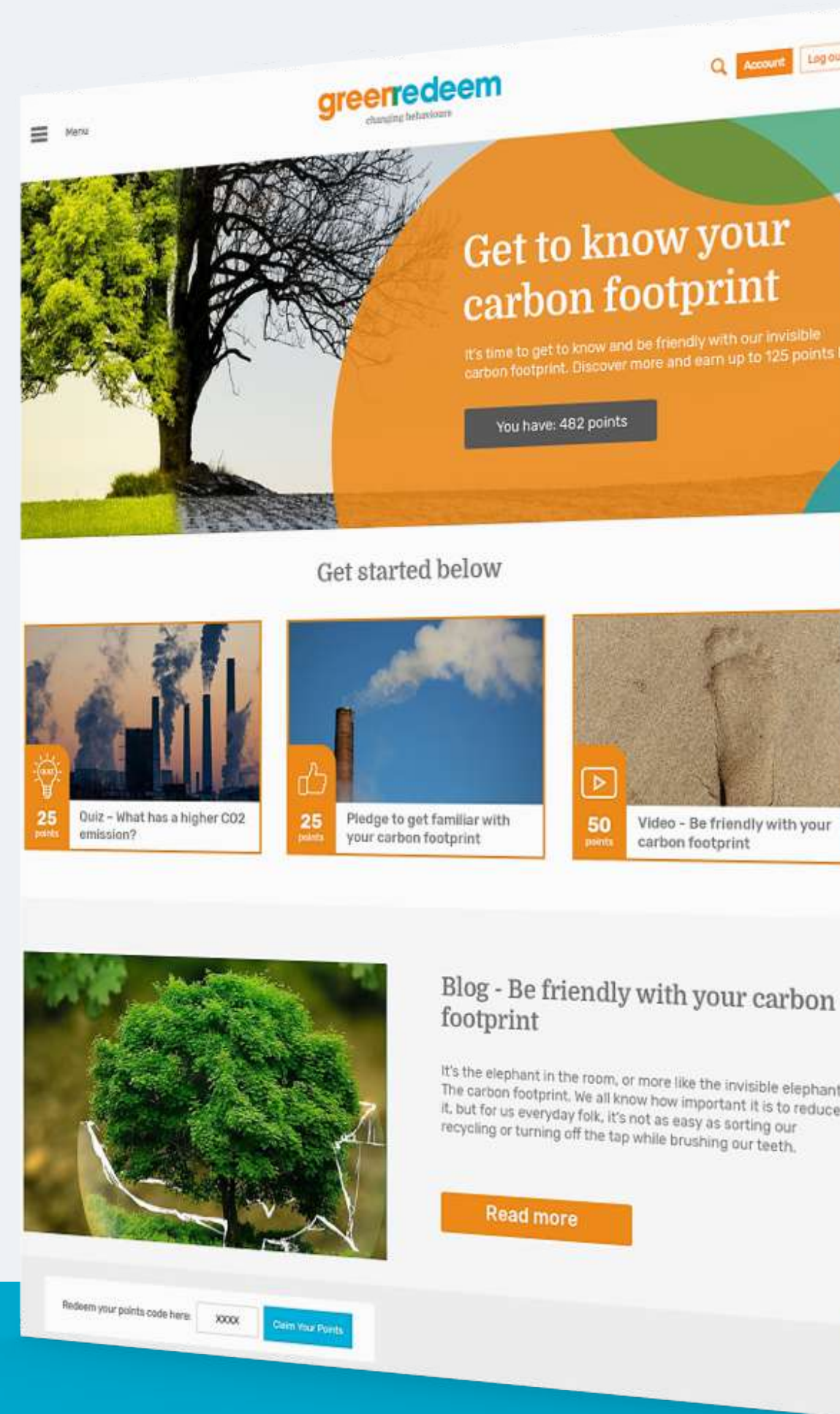
Every week we will focus on an agreed environmental theme which will be supported with activities e.g. email, blog pledge, video & quiz



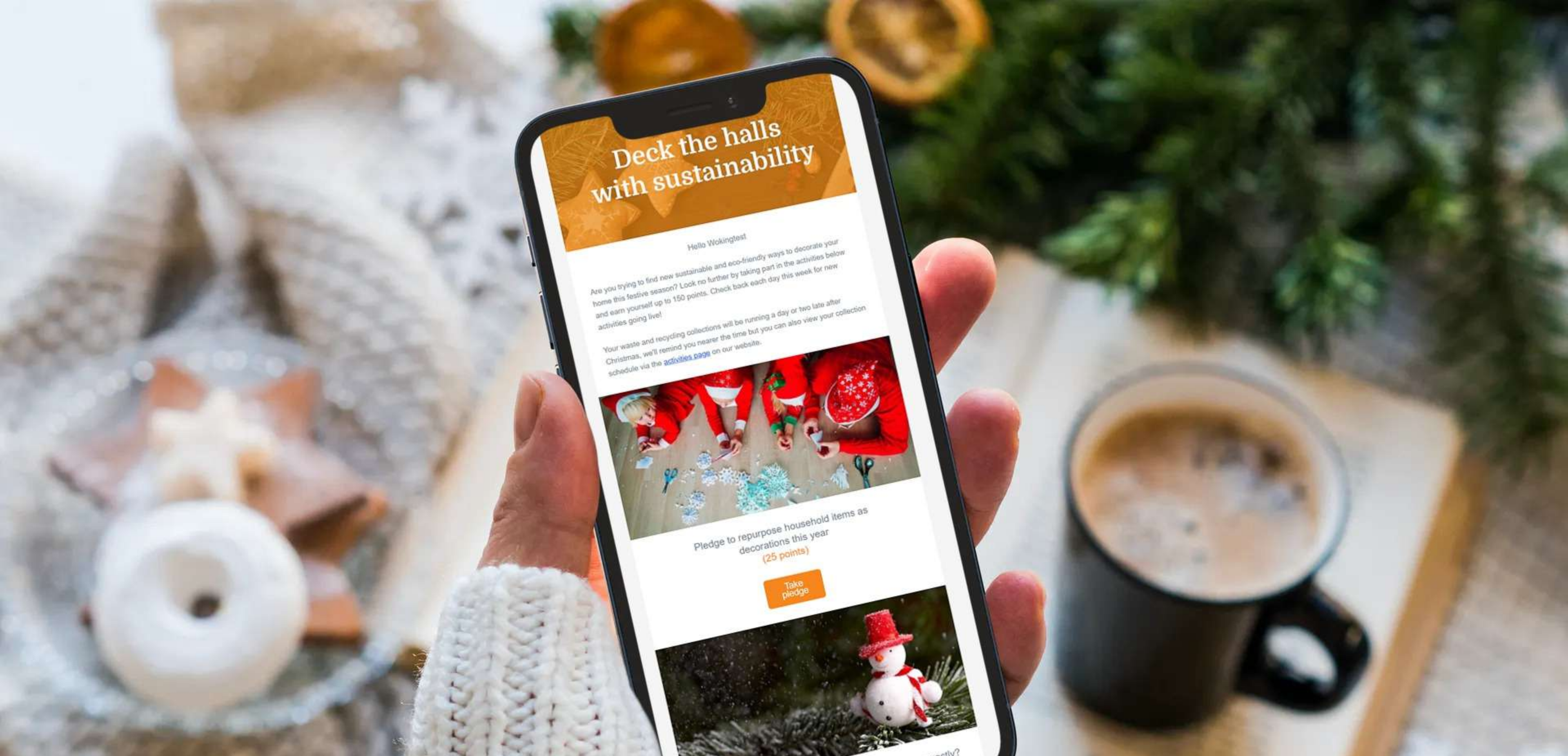


# Weekly campaigns

We will deliver 52 weeks of uninterrupted continuous campaigning to include environmental & climate change topics such as waste, food, transport, energy and fashion







Live campaign activities





## Get started



 +25 points

Pledge to buy an experience gift this Christmas



 +25 points

Quiz: How eco-friendly is your gift idea?



 +25 points

Pledge to buy from small businesses this Christmas



 +25 points

Quiz: How should you discard these unwanted gifts?



 +25 points

Pledge to give less and spend time together this Christmas



 +50 points

Video: Greenredeem's eco-friendly gift guide



### Blog - Eco-friendly gift ideas for everyone this Christmas

Christmas is the most wonderful time of year. Unless you've got the task of Christmas gift ideas for the most impossible person to buy for. Finding the right gift can be quite the challenge, especially when you're buying for the person who has everything....



# Motivating residents with choice and a variety of incentives

We recognise that people have different motivations, so we offer a choice in how your residents are rewarded for their efforts



## Donations

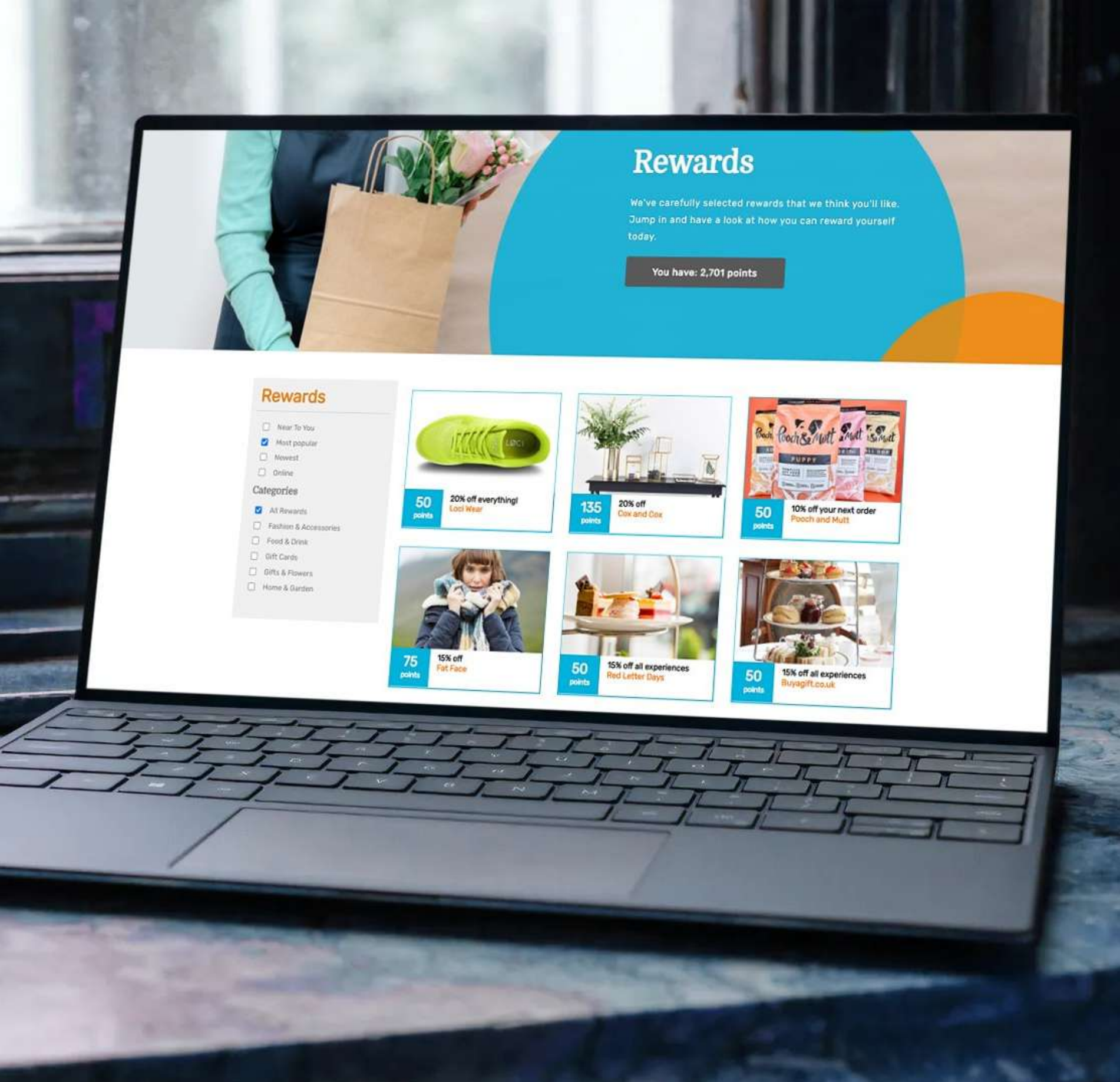


## Competitions



## Discounts

## Member Rewards







Personalised dashboard





# Tracking effectiveness & ROI

---

We will demonstrate a direct correlation between engagement with activities taken i.e. email, blog, pledge, video & quiz and achieving environmental & climate change goals for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

For example, to measure reductions in waste & recycling increases, a baseline will be defined by route and by day each week (or total tonnages figures, depending on what data is available) and the amount of residual waste and recycling collected will be compared to this baseline



# A direct increase in recycling tonnages of **24.2kg** hh/yr for registered residents

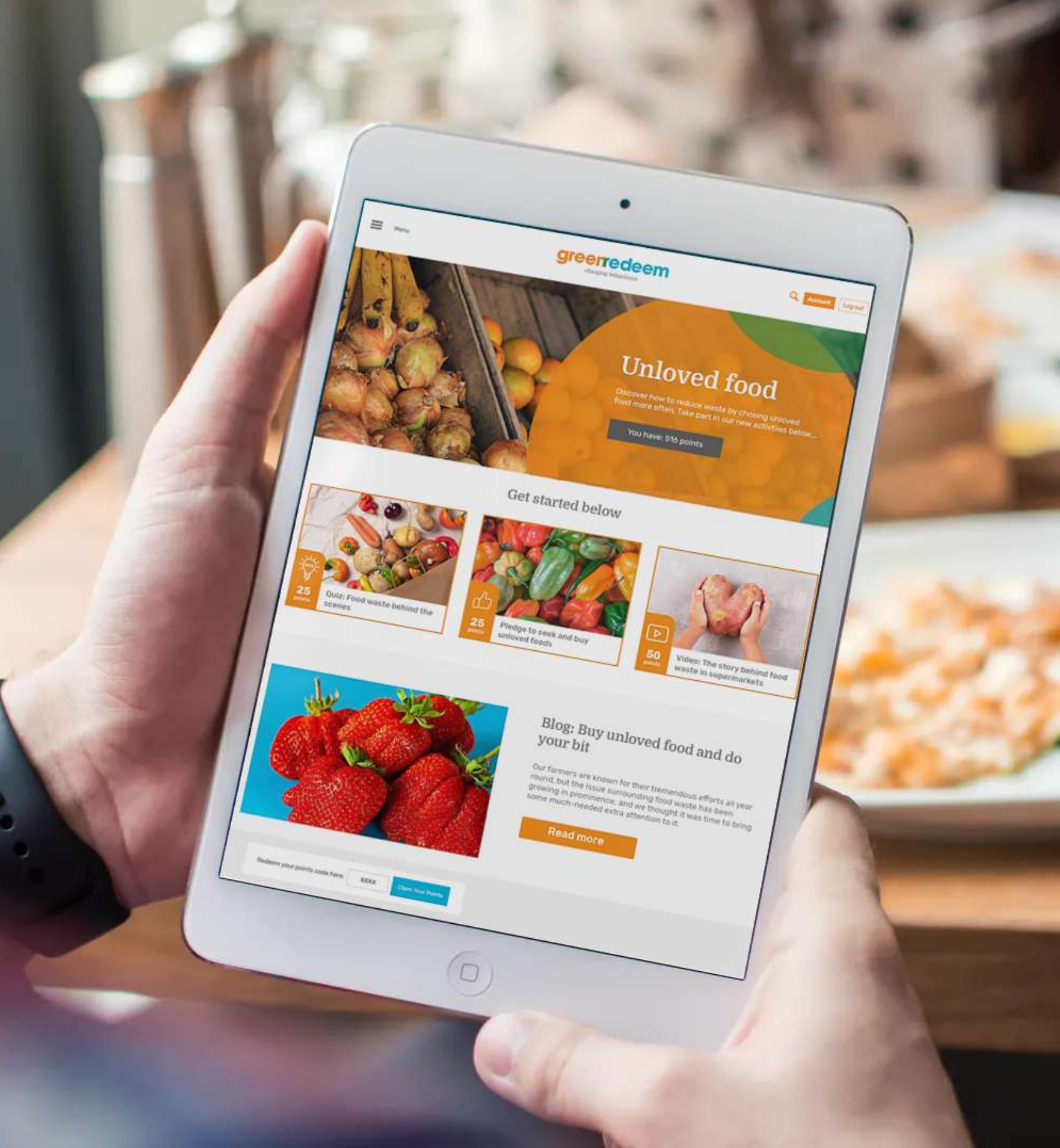
- Recycling incentive scheme
- The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- Contract period: 2009 to 2019

Registered members **recycled twice as often** as non-registered members; presenting their bins on average 2.23 times a month vs 1.17 for non-members. throughout this period there were no service changes.

**Waste reduction (halo benefit):** Residual waste saw an average decrease over 10 years of 714T per annum, reflecting an absolute reduction of 16.64% across that period.







## An increase in recycling of **21.3%** or 23.1kg per household per year

- Recycling & residual waste
- Wokingham Borough Council
- Contract period: April 2012 – to date

**Waste reduction (halo benefit):** As with all campaigns our messaging follows the waste hierarchy. Residual waste collected across the Borough reduced by 4.3% or 17.1 Kg per household per year

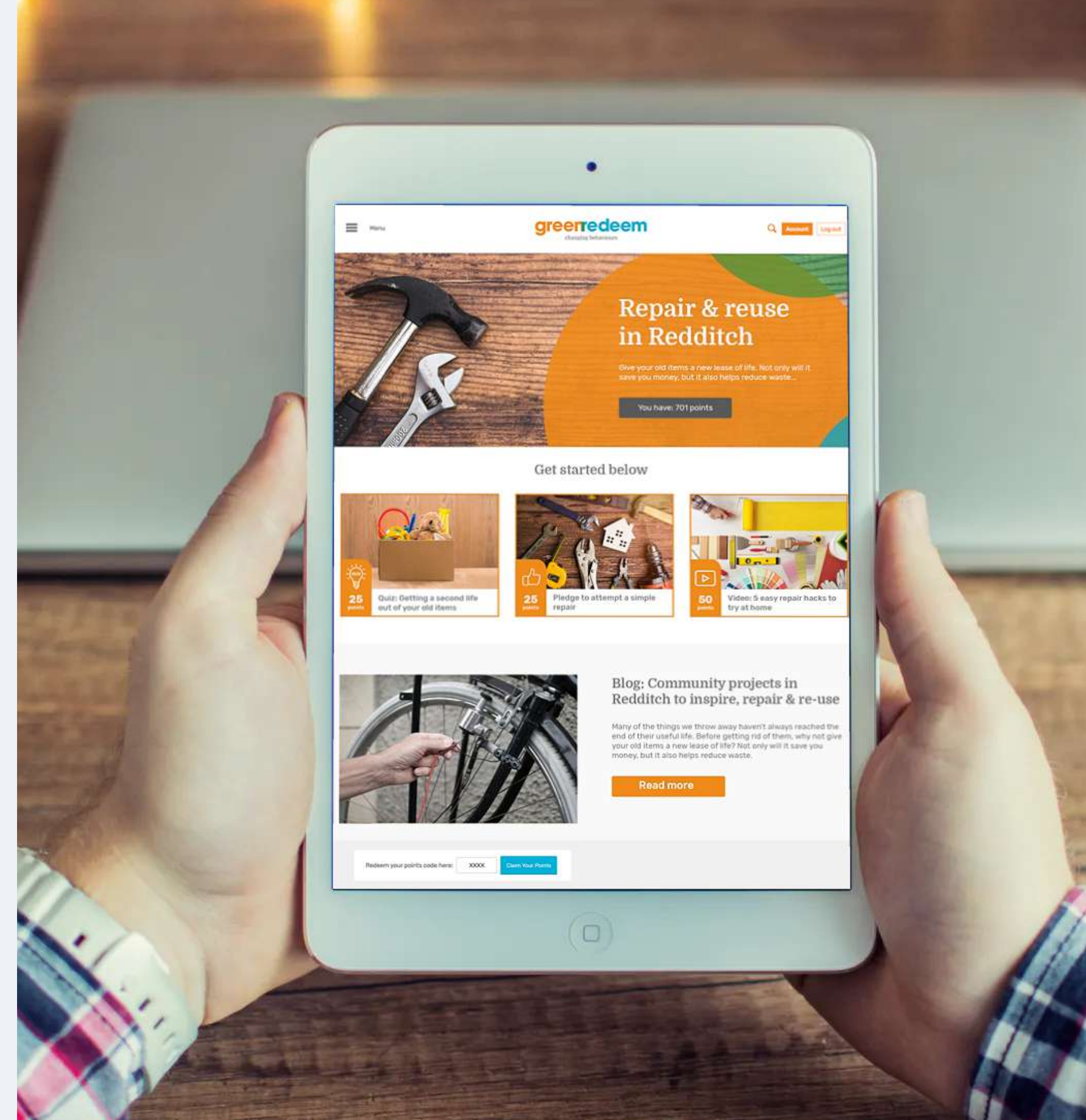




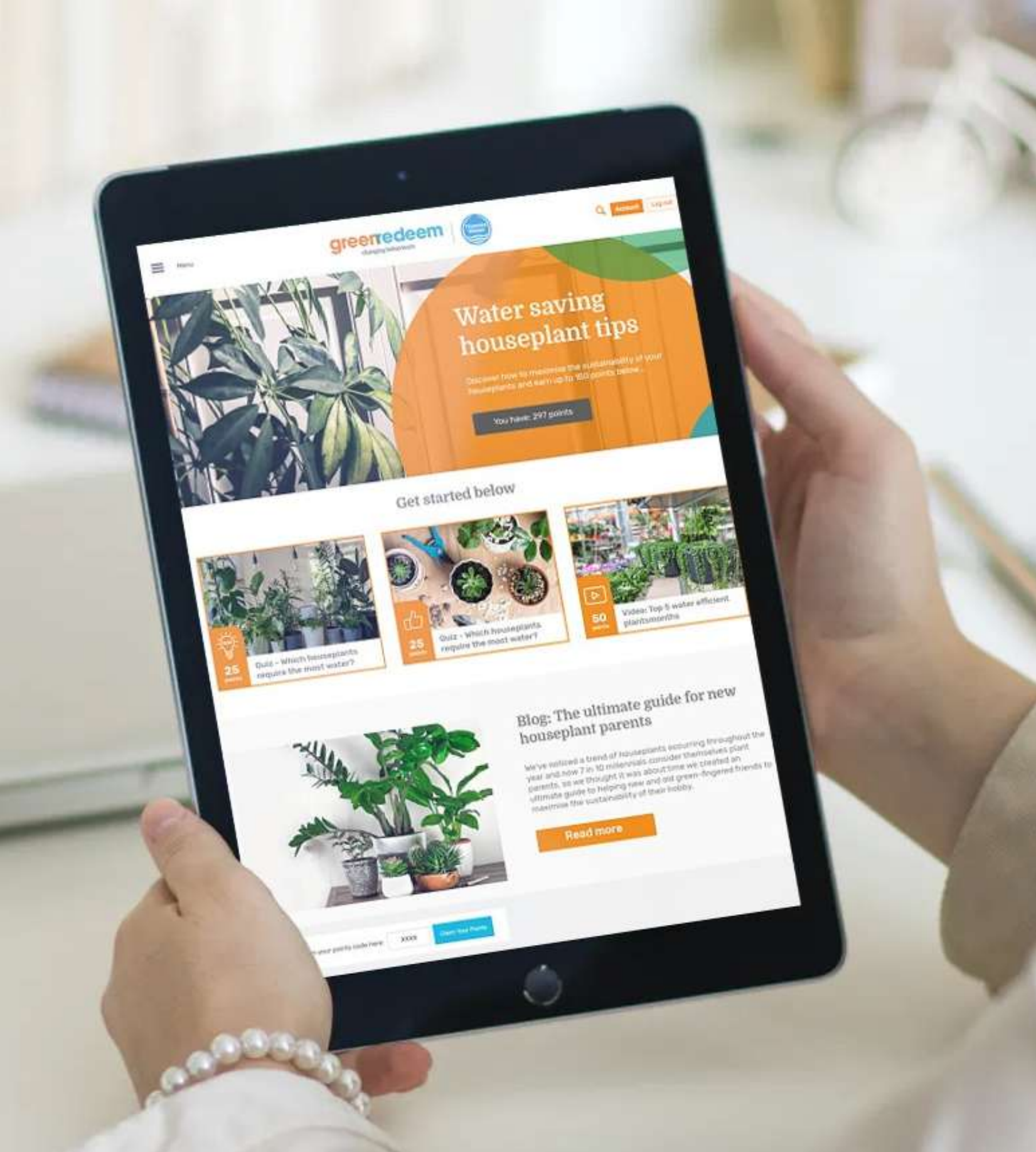
# 4.5% reduction in household waste

- Waste reduction campaign
- Redditch Borough Council
- Contract period: 2017- 2018

This was 2.5% higher than their surrounding boroughs/districts for the same period with no other service changes







## 21% fall in water consumption per person per day

- Rewarding households for using less water
- Thames Water
- Contract period: March 2018 – to date

**Campaign mechanic:** By taking a sample of 200,000 meter reads and linking the number of completed interactions that each household took, we were able to evaluate the impact on their water usage

# Initial set-up



## Setting SMART goals

Consultation to assess & re-evaluate Southend-on-Sea BC's environmental needs and agree SMART goals



## Yearly marketing plan

Creation of a bespoke content strategy, breaking down your yearly goals into different campaigns helps achieve your targets



## Launching to Southend-on-Sea

As well as organically growing the resident membership through council owned channels we would look to do specific launch campaigns – social media, local radio & press and offline marketing



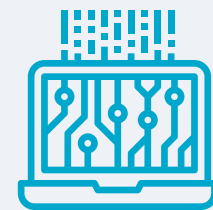
## Building a digital community

Our web developers will set up the community for your local authority, ensuring all members can register quickly & receive localised content on their own personalised interactive dashboard



## Multi-channel comms

SBC will have full control of the digital platform, enabling relevant (& covid proof) communications to residents who can interact & respond to this content



## Data Entry Portal

Bespoke for eligible households. The Portal allows for the calculation of points and bonuses based on reductions in residual waste and recycling improvements



## Data handling

ISO 9001 & 14001 adherence to all GDPR regulations. All data is stored securely in the UK. Residents will review a membership agreement and privacy policy and can update email preferences at any time



## Reporting capabilities

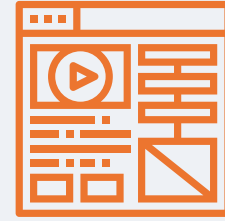
All data relating to the activities of Southend's residents will be available to analyse in our Management Information (MI) system. Specific data sets and reports will be prepared to allow access to MI 24/7

# Scheme running



## Campaign creation

52 weeks of content & activities incorporating localised, relevant & topical information to meet council objectives



## Content design

Our in-house team of digital designers and copywriters, tailor communications and provide brand personalisation to ensure we become a trusted source of information with residents



## Account management

Each quarter we will provide you with a full set of KPI reports that show the impact Greenredeem is having & improvement feedback



## Customer care

Our UK based customer care team will support your residents 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on all aspects of Greenredeem. Alternatively residents can send an email 24/7



## Gamification

Residents will stay motivated with interactive games and points for increased & sustained behaviour change



## Rewards

Support local economy: food & drink, days out, entertainment & recreation. Residents can redeem these digitally or print off at home



## Prize draw

Residents can enter into Greenredeem's fortnightly prize draw to win 4k TVs, iPads, Apple Watches, staycation holiday vouchers



## Supporting charities

Residents can donate points to local schools & initiatives plus Cancer Research, RNLI, Help the Heroes or Marie Curie

# Incremental forecasted savings

Working on the assumption that Southend-on-Sea's environment & climate change goals include reducing waste and increasing recycling. The below calculates potential annual savings following the introduction of Greenredeem:

## Residual waste – based on a 4% reduction

- 2018/19 residual = 38,749 tonnes. Reduced by 4% = 1,549 tonnes saved
- Incineration/landfill charges at £150 /tonne x 1,549 tonnes = £232,494 saved

## Recycling – based on a 30kg increase in recycling per household

- Target 33% membership take up of 60,000 Southend's households
- 20,000 households x 30kg = 600 tonnes additional recycled material
- Recycling rate = 49.7% (up from 48.3% in 2018/19)\*

\*Associated increase in rebate revenues and a reduction in incineration/processing costs





## In summary Greenredeem will:

- Provide a highly accessible digital platform to deliver environmental & climate change communications directly to residents
- Evidence positive behaviour change by engagement & measured improvements against agreed baselines e.g. reduce waste & increase recycling
- Demonstrate a robust financial & environmental return for Southend-on-Sea and a platform for continuous improvement







# Background, methodology and sample size

## Objectives

- second in series of bi-annual surveys (2018, 2020, 2022)
- to assess level of satisfaction of the waste and recycling services
- benchmark performance against 2015 and results from 2018 survey
- target response rate 3,500

## Methodology

- external supplier used - ARP Research
- distribution of paper-based postal survey and link to an online form
- responses to ARP for data processing, coding, analysis and reporting
- all survey responses treated anonymously
- results from combined data

# Response Rate

Total Responses = **5,932**

**72.9%** House  
**6.4%** Other



**18.5%** Flat



# Overall satisfaction



**Collections:**

**92.1%** (2018 = 86%) 



**HWRCs:**

**91.7%** (2018 = 88%) 



**Street Cleansing:**

**72.4%** (2018 = 68%) 



**Beach Cleansing:**

**72.9%** (2018 = 67%) 

# Use of Services

## Core Collection Services:

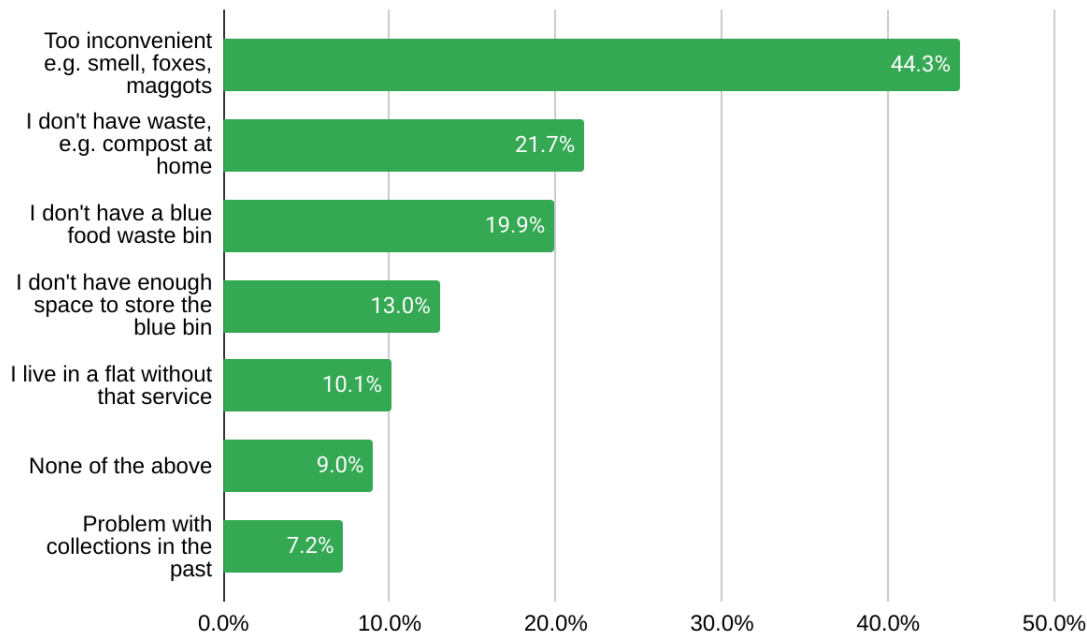
	Every Week	Fortnightly	Never
Recycling (pink)	93.7%	2.7%	1.4%
General Waste	84.3%	7.8%	1.1%
Food	67.7%	2.2%	22.2%
Paper & Card	63.0%	7.2%	18.3%

## Other Services:

	Used	Never
Textiles	64.1%	28.1%
Garden	50.0%	42.8%
Bulky	28.9%	55.7%
Small WEEE	27.8%	61.8%

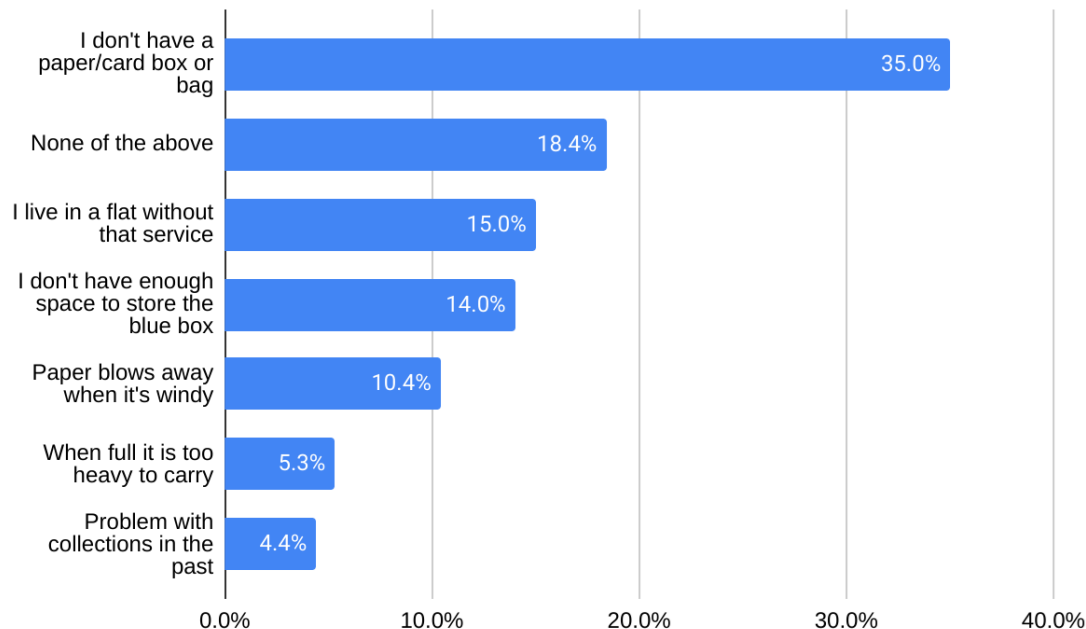
# Why do you *not* use the service?

## Food Waste Collections



# Why do you *not* use the service?

## Paper & Card Collections



# Why do you *not* use the service?

## Garden Waste Service

