

resourcefutures



Our
impact
2019-20

Why we are here

Our challenge

We live in rapidly changing times. The threats to our climate and ecosystems are mounting and our use of resources is far beyond the capacity of the planet to sustain. With global temperatures at 1C above pre-industrial levels, global resource use now exceeding 100 billion tonnes per year and only 14-18% of the waste plastics generated globally collected for recycling, it has never been more urgent to find lasting solutions to manage resources sustainably. Our vision of creating a sustainable world has never been more relevant and urgent and now is the time for change.

The transition to a circular economy is needed to keep global temperature rise as low as possible, as well as to stop the flow of waste into our fragile ecosystems. This gives us a huge opportunity to have a transformative impact.

As Greta Thunberg said in a speech in Bristol this year: "Change is coming". Indeed, change is already here. We are excited and inspired by innovative examples from around the world of circular systems in action – from companies making beer from waste bread, to the thousands of repair cafes.

Public attitudes and awareness of waste have changed hugely in just a few years. People are demanding change, and businesses and governments are responding.

Between our team, we've been finding solutions to waste problems for over 30 years. And as the world wakes up to the need to use the planet's resources sustainably, we are welcoming change and continuing to research, innovate and collaborate to have the greatest impact.



Introducing our impact 2019-20

As I write this, the world is in the midst of a pandemic that is having a dramatic impact on all of our lives. There will be far-reaching, and as yet unknown, changes to the way we work, connect with each other, and our ideas about what we value.

It is too soon to say how this will affect our work in the long term, but we are already seeing that in these challenging times we realise how much we value family, friends, connection, health and wellbeing. And we're seeing that businesses, public services and communities can meet huge challenges creatively through working together.

Collaboration and innovation are at the heart of Resource Futures and how we work. We deliver results for our clients through understanding their challenges, designing the most effective solutions and working across sectors and networks to inform and inspire meaningful behaviour change. From our fieldwork on the composition of recycling collections, to delivering options for government bans on single-use items, our high quality evidence and analysis enables our clients to understand their current impact and to make the changes needed to manage resources more sustainably.

We're pleased to bring you our first Impact Report, for 2019-20. It's our story of how we are progressing to achieve our vision of creating a sustainable world. As well as remaining focused on our vision we've been able to invest back into our work and into our people. They are our greatest asset, and I hope you enjoy hearing from some of them in this report.



We are so very proud to be a B Corp, part of a global community of businesses striving to do good in the world – whether that's around food waste, plastic pollution or the Circular Economy. We are never satisfied with the status quo and are striving to innovate and improve; this report finishes by looking ahead to our commitments for the coming year. We'll continue to innovate, share, learn and respond positively and effectively to the sustainability needs of an ever-changing world.

Sam Reeve
CEO, Resource Futures

Being the change

Since Resource Futures was founded in 2006 we have been driven by our purpose, values and ethics. So, when we heard about this incredible network of businesses committing to do good, we knew we wanted to join.

We became a certified B Corp in 2016 and achieved an impressive B Impact Score of 104.2. We are committed to continuous improvement and we invest a great deal of time, energy and passion into finding ways to create positive change.

Our latest B Impact Score of 117.6 reflects this effort. We're continuing to improve our environmental impact, including reducing our energy use and our emissions from travel. We're committed to creating a fantastic place to work and great conditions for our people whether they are investigating the composition of waste in the field, or analysing data in the office. We have gender balance in our senior roles, we pay all staff a living wage, and we offer a generous pension scheme and life assurance to all our employees.

Our purpose is embedded into our company's legal articles, which means we are making a public promise to prioritise environmental and social impact, no matter what changes might be made to Resource Futures' management or ownership in future.

Yeshim Longhorn
HR & Business Systems Manager, Resource Futures



How we got here



Our highlights



Community Action Groups (CAG) in Oxfordshire flew the nest

The CAG Oxfordshire project is the largest network of its kind in the UK. Managed by Resource Futures since its inception in 2001, and having had its most impactful year during its final year with us, we supported the project to become a community benefit society from December 2019.

Read about the [CAG Oxfordshire](#) project on our website.



Advising Government policy

Resource Futures is engaged globally in the analysis on key environmental policy issues. Our recent projects include economic, social and environmental impact assessments of bans on single-use plastics for Defra and the Welsh Government, analysis of creating a paradigm shift in reuse in Wales, and how to best support the private sector to tackle marine litter.

Find more about [our policy work](#) on our website.



Leading the way on tackling marine litter

Our research for the Scottish Government has revealed huge potential for the private sector to tackle marine litter. Co-designed with Marine Scotland, our innovative lifecycle approach maps the plastics value chain and identifies key leverage points and solutions for all involved whether in design, manufacturing, distribution, retail, product use or end of life.

Read more about the [marine litter](#) project on our website.



Providing trusted evidence around recycling change

Our evidence team delivered an extensive monitoring and evaluation programme to support Resource London's three-year, £1 million flats initiative, seeking to reinvigorate London's household recycling efforts for residents living in purpose-built flats. We monitored tonnages and conducted waste composition analysis of all waste and recycling produced by 1,600 households across 12 selected estates.

Read about our [London flats work](#) on our website.

Plastic pollution

Our research indicates that tackling plastic pollution requires action at key decision points in the value chain. Using life cycle thinking and material mapping, we work with business to demonstrate where small changes can have a big impact on plastics waste.

But the private sector also needs the support of the public sector to remove barriers and provide positive drivers. Through our close collaboration and understanding of private sector stakeholders and supply chains, we have assisted all levels of government to influence these key decision points. We have conducted a number of key global studies on the issue for international agencies and have worked with government throughout the UK as well as in Liberia, South Africa, Bangladesh and Ghana.

We worked with the International Solid Waste Association and the University of Leeds to create the ground-breaking Plastics Pollution Calculator which will help local government identify where to take action to reduce ocean plastics.



Circular Economy

This year we've worked with businesses, governments and communities to find circular solutions, to get the most value from resources with the least environmental impacts and waste.

We've provided expert research, modelling and business support to innovative start-ups, SMEs and large retailers and brands. In Scotland, we continue to advise the construction sector to find long-term solutions to reducing their waste and carbon footprint.

We continue to support the 25-year-old Community Repaint scheme and we're working with communities in Devon to run reuse and repair projects, keeping items from toasters to tables out of landfill and in use.



276

**tonnes of
waste & recycling**

hand sorted for analysis by our
teams, for **39** local authorities
in the UK



490

families

incentivised to make the
switch to reusable nappies
following **755** contacts made
in Gloucestershire



481,351

litres of paint

diverted from the waste
stream through our
network of **68** Community
RePaint Schemes
in the UK



350

tonnes of timber

Advising on a strategic,
sustainable outcome for the
decommissioning of the UK
Pavilion at DTI Expo
in Dubai

4,690

households

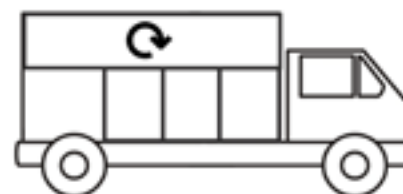
spoken to about waste
and recycling and
3,445 recycling
containers distributed
in Devon



£5,730,310

combined annual saving

across six local authorities, following
our modelling of waste and recycling
collections...



...leading to

11,200

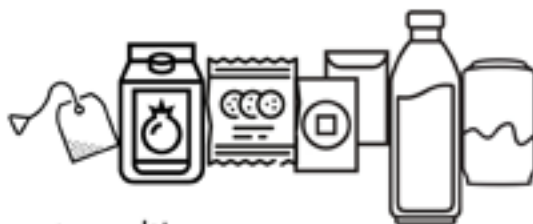
tonnes pa

diverted to recycling and reuse
across the six local authorities
in the UK

22,000

retail products

assessed as part of a materiality assessment, resulting in **140** practical solutions with case study examples, in **Central England**



1,514

kg of food

identified as wasted from cooked lunches in **5** schools over **4** weeks in **Scotland**



12

countries

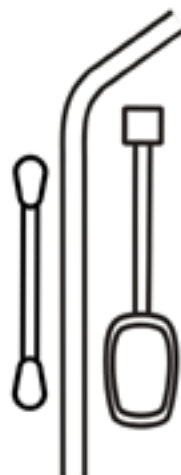
where we have investigated how resource and waste management issues can be improved, with on-going projects in **Ghana, Bangladesh and Liberia**



35

businesses

supported to become more circular through our circular business support work in **Scotland**



3

plastic products

straws, stirrers and cotton buds – due to be banned following our contribution to the research in the **UK**

5

categories of plastic products

identified using lifestyle thinking and based on **how long the product is used for**, helping decision-makers to make informed choices to reduce environmental impact.



17

categories

of packaged food items surveyed across **59** supermarkets to assess how information on product life and portion sizing is communicated in the **UK**



Resources and waste strategy

We work with public bodies and national governments around the world to seek efficient solutions to waste management and so help drive and inform ongoing waste strategy.

In the UK this has included supporting the Welsh Government to lead the way in greening the economy through the development of sustainable procurement; and providing strategic support to Lisburn and Castlereagh Council to model collection options and gathering waste and recycling evidence.

Farther afield we work with the World Bank on a range of strategic projects, including supporting the Liberian government to improve waste management services in what is one of the poorest nations in the world. In the last year this work has also taken us to South Africa, Ghana, Bangladesh and India.

Photo: Dave Lerpiniere



Food waste

Food is a dominant theme across all our work.

Collecting primary evidence helps build food waste behaviour knowledge – what food is being thrown away, who is doing it, how is this changing? We've looked at food packaging, surveying on-packaging data points like shelf life and portion size – to help inform best practice on how this influences food waste in the home.

Carbon footprint modelling enables us to advise on how new packaging innovations, intended to reduce food waste, stack up in terms of carbon. And we've modelled food flows to assess either key food wastage points or surplus redistribution challenges. In Bristol we've been working on a collaborative city-wide bid to achieve gold Sustainable Food City accreditation. Aiming to embed long-term and sustainable policy and strategy around food waste into the fabric of the city.



Our contribution

Over and above the projects we undertake, it is important to us that we feel we are contributing to the sector and wider world in a positive way.

We are active members of a number of organisations, including the Future Economy Network, CIWM (particularly in the South West and North West), the South West Waste and Recycling Forum, as well as the UK Green Building Council and Circular Economy Club. This has involved speaking at events and sharing insights from our latest work.

We also committed time to support various projects where we feel we can make a difference. This included a place on the Board for local initiatives – the Bristol Green Capital Partnership and SevernNet; contribution to working groups for the National Materials Database and City Funds Environmental Transformation Funding Priority Group; a place as an innovation champion for the CSIC (Construction Scotland Innovation Centre) and data support for the 2-minute beach clean movement.

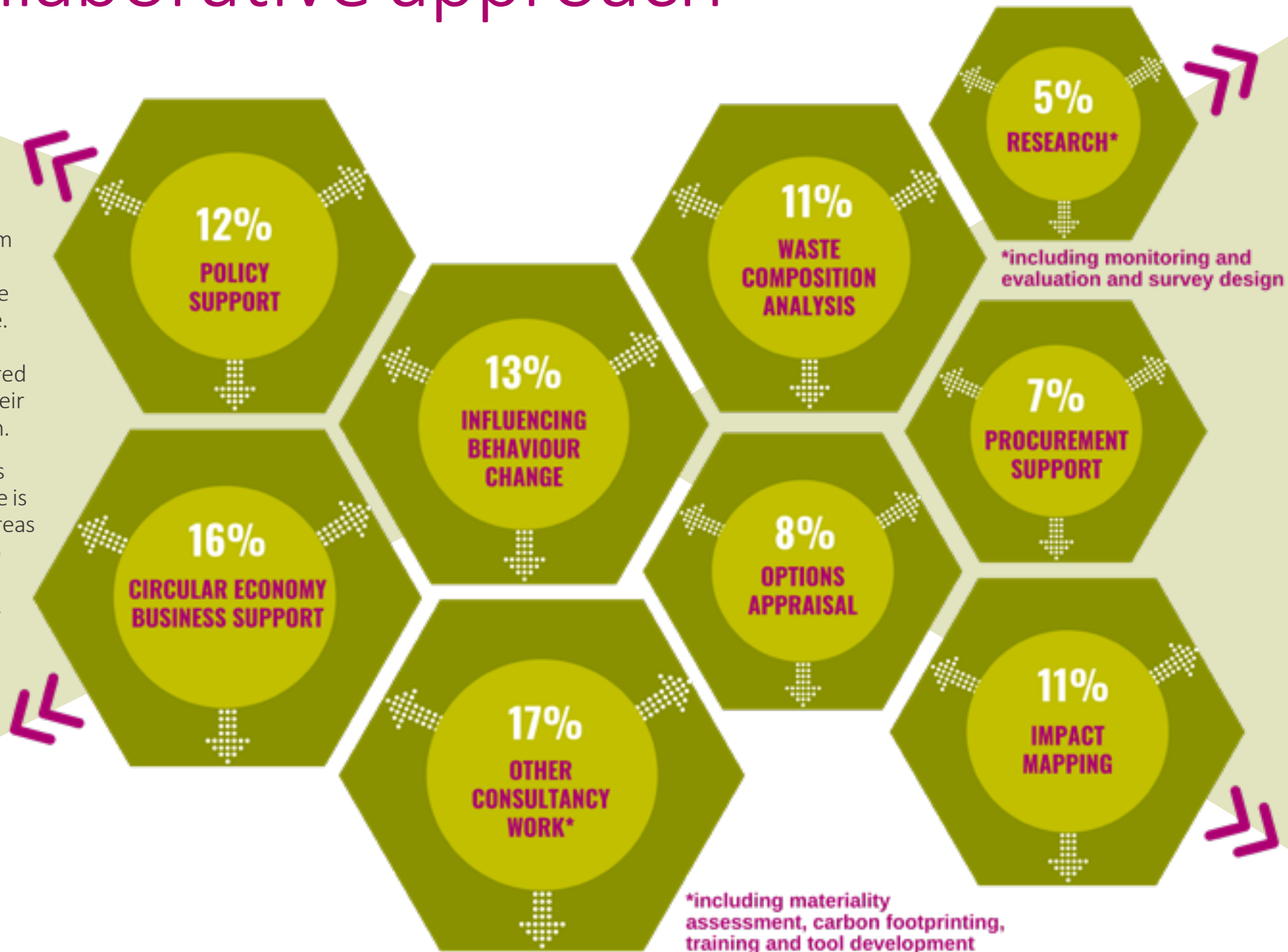
Our team presented at over 40 events across the year and attended many others. Delivering workshops, presentations or simply learning from and networking with our industry colleagues is something we feel is needed more than ever to help us collaborate and raise our collective impact.



Our collaborative approach

Our approach is collaborative – working together with clients from business to government to communities, to create the world we want to see. A world whose precious resources are valued, cared for, used wisely and to their full potential and lifespan.

The type of work we do is incredibly varied but here is a snapshot of the main areas we support our clients to move towards creating a truly sustainable world.





Working in a B Corp



Back in 2018 I was working an internship in Greece collecting and cataloguing marine litter, on sabbatical from my job as a hydraulic modeller. I had an idea of my perfect job – to research sustainability and have a real impact on the environment – but I didn't know whether that job really existed until I found Resource Futures. Working for a B Corp accredited company driven by our values and commitment to sustainability, I know that what I am doing makes a difference in the real world.

I started at Resource Futures as a paid intern, so the company's commitment to pay all staff a Living Wage made a real difference to me. I then came on board as a Junior Consultant and I have been well supported by colleagues to develop my knowledge and skills, which has helped me progress to Consultant level. I'm loving working with a great team of people who share many of my own values but who come from a whole range of backgrounds. There's always something new and interesting to learn while chatting and waiting for the tea to brew in our staff kitchen.

I'm one of over 75% of our staff who travel sustainably to work by walking, cycling or using public transport, and I feel proud to work for a carbon neutral company. I also love being part of the Consultative Group, our staff forum where ideas and questions are invited and put to our Executive Team. It's really valuable to have this safe space where we can raise issues. As a result of an open and honest discussion about staff mental health, we now have access to an employee assistance



programme. Importantly in this group we also organise the staff social calendar! This includes activities at our two annual all-staff days where colleagues from Scotland, Wales, London, Cumbria, Devon and Gloucestershire gather with the rest of the team in Bristol. We work, but we also have a lot of fun. In December we co-created a new version of the 12 days of Christmas with a green theme. And last summer we shared our own personal 'angelic actions' and secret sins' to inspire each other – and to acknowledge that even in the sustainability sector, nobody's perfectly green."

Katie Powell
Consultant, Resource Futures



Looking ahead

As well as committing to report on our impact each year, an important part of being a B Corp is reviewing where we could do better and putting in place actions to make that happen.


Over the next financial year, we will be focusing our efforts on the following things:

- ▶ We will collect and publish customer satisfaction information on our services.
- ▶ We will introduce targets for the amount of independent local purchasing we undertake.
- ▶ We will produce an accessible tool to help our customers measure their carbon impact and plan improvements to their business policies and operations.
- ▶ We will publish a Code of Ethics to give staff and clients a clear view of how we conduct business.
- ▶ We will update our working from home policy to minimise environmental impact and maximise wellbeing.
- ▶ We will conduct an inclusion survey amongst our staff and put in place measures to ensure recruitment reaches underrepresented groups.

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