



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**For immediate release**

### **Furniture Re-Use Conference (FRN): Meeting the Challenge of Change**

FRN's 20<sup>th</sup> annual conference reaffirmed the findings of the "Investment for Growth" report that innovation, strategy and investment will ensure the furniture re-use sector is best-placed to meet the challenge of change.

The conference attracted over 160 people – mainly from FRN's 400+ strong membership base – and representatives from local authorities, consultancies and private sector organisations.

As well as sponsoring the event, IKEA UK's Environment Manager - Charlie Browne expanded upon its strategic development work with FRN Enterprises; a partnership through which FRN members can access good quality, re-usable furniture for people most desperately in need.

Crucially, the success of this private/third sector partnership hinges upon the kind of externally-verified quality assurance scheme that was identified by the WRAP-funded 'Investment for Growth' report; implementation of such systems will improve the confidence of commercial operators and local authorities who have not yet engaged with the sector, and will encourage future working partnerships.

It's also one of the essential requirements of the community waste sector in order to build capacity and reduce resource waste.

Furniture Re-Use Organisations will also need a portfolio of income streams – from sales, contracts, grant funding and most probably loans – in order to thrive in a post-recession, post-election Britain.

Recent OBE recipient - Nigel Kershaw, Big Issue Invest – echoed this theme with a brilliant, philosophically-fuelled rail against capitalism and turned loan financing into an attractive and real option for loan-nervous third sector organisations.

Re-use is rightfully gaining greater focus from Government – particularly in the challenge to tackle carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas impacts.

By meeting a desperate social need, FRN and its members are naturally and forcefully meeting the challenge of change – whether that change is climate, financial, organisational or social.

**ENDS**

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## Notes

**Photograph caption:** Charlie Browne, Environment Manager, IKEA UK, speaking at the 2010 Furniture Re-Use Network Conference

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Furniture Re-Use Network conference – “Meeting the Challenge of Change” - was held at Cranage Hall, Cheshire, 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

### Speakers:

- Nigel Kershaw, CEO of Big Issue Invest
- Sally Reynolds, Chief Executive of Social Firms UK who provided a post-election perspective for social enterprises.
- Dr Lesley Rowan, author of the WRAP-funded ‘Investment for Growth’ report.
- Charlie Browne, Environment Manager, IKEA UK.
- Andrew Hanratty, Veolia Environmental Services who talked about their WEEE Producer Compliance Scheme, and how it wishes to engage with furniture re-use organisations to maximise EEE re-use.
- Mark Cook, Partner with Anthony Collins Solicitors who highlighted the range of strategies, procurement frameworks and social clauses that furniture re-use organisations can easily respond to, and offer as best value benefits and a high Social Return on Investment (SROI) in public sector tendering and contracting processes.
- Sarah Gray, Research Analyst with WRAP who illuminated the conference about the national policy framework for re-use, and how WRAP sees the sector developing in the next 2-3 years.
- Nick Kightley, Partnership Manager, WRAP. He is responsible for WRAP’s Third Sector Capacity Building programme in partnership with Realliance CIC – of which FRN is a member.

## Workshops

- Marketing on a Shoestring
- Diversifying your business – A challenging opportunity?
- Influencing, responding to and winning public sector contracts/SLAs
- Profiting from audits
- Planning, financing and delivering future growth
- Furniture for social inclusion and business development
- Legal issues in managing employees, volunteers and trainees

The Investment for Growth report is the most up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the third sector contribution to saving resources. The report outlines the current value and future potential of the sector, finding that there are 700 active resource recovery organisations in England, who between them are saving 523,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>; diverting 248,000 tonnes of materials from landfill; and supporting 4,600 jobs with an additional 43,500 voluntary and training opportunities.

The Furniture Re-Use Network is the national body which supports, assists and develops charitable re-use organisations across the UK. This is done to reduce poverty by helping households in need to access furniture, white goods and other household items at affordable prices. In addition, FRN supports re-use organisations in providing training and work placement opportunities for people who are socially excluded.

FRN Enterprises Limited is a national trading company for the accrediting and authorising of its re-use organisations in order to support those members taking on contracts with furniture and electrical appliance manufacturers and retailers. It also supplies services to businesses discarding large quantities of product, under a nationwide service delivery programme. This will enable FRN members to increase their product supply and improve the quality and quantity of product distributed to low income families.