

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Waste Strategy Working Group** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 29 November 2019 at 2.00 pm.

### Present:-

Mr J Gray  
Mr A Henderson (Chair)

Mr H Morrison  
Mr G Ross

### In attendance:-

Ms C McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities  
Mr M MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer Environment and Infrastructure  
Mr A Summers, Head of Environmental and Amenity Services, Community Services  
Mr S Graham, Project Manager, Corporate Resource Service  
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr J Bruce, Dr I Cockburn, Mrs L MacDonald, Mrs T Robertson and Ms M Smith.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 3. Waste Projects Update

There had been circulated Report No WS/05/19 dated 20 November 2019 by the Executive Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment during which he updated Members on the Longman Waste Management facility, developments regarding the Landfill Transition Period, the new waste facilities at Aviemore and Fort William and Scottish Government proposals for the Deposit and Return Scheme, Packaging Producer Responsibility System and the review of Household Recycling.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- in relation to the site search for the location of an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant in the Inner Moray Firth, it was confirmed that officers were continuing to assess all possible sites taking into account the necessary criteria. Apart from the importance of transparency this process was also necessary for any future Environmental Impact Assessment;
- the collection and processing of Household Recycling was explained. Collection rates in Inverness were disappointingly low and the costs involved were significant. If this was to be rolled out to other areas then the costs would undoubtedly increase. In an effort to increase take-up it was suggested that the service be re-advertised;

- in response to a question, the Deposit and Return Scheme was explained. There would be implications for Highland Council, especially in Council-run premises where there were vending machines, but there were also potential opportunities if the Council was selected to run one of the three Validation Centres that the Scottish government would set up;
- there would still be a need for Bottle Banks for the disposal of non-compliant materials. In response to a query, it was explained that bottles were recycled as opposed to being reused. The Bottle Bank Collection contract had recently been awarded but was due for review when the Deposit Return Scheme came into force during 2021;
- it was possible that blue bins might move to monthly collection, especially in rural areas, as there would be less waste to collect. While this might appear to be a saving it was important to bare in mind that the high value recyclate, i.e, plastic bottles and cans, would have been removed;
- the decision to delay the landfill ban to 2025 had not been taken lightly by the Scottish Government and there would be no further extension past this date. The cost of sending rubbish to landfill was prohibitive and would the incentive local authorities needed; and
- Members would be kept informed, both at the City of Inverness Area Committee and the Communities and Places Committees.

The Working Group:-

- i. **NOTED** that the Scottish Government had announced a landfill ban transition period to 2025, with new requirements and incentives on compliance yet to be announced;
- ii. **NOTED** that work was underway on developing infrastructure as previously agreed at Committee and Council to ensure compliance along with operational reviews of waste management contracts;
- iii. **NOTED** that the work underway was being managed as a corporate project with Programme Management Office support;
- iv. **NOTED** the progress being made on the earlier Committee decision to develop a facility at the former Longman landfill site and to assess the feasibility and viability of an energy-from-waste plant in the Inner Moray Firth; and
- v. **AGREED** that a report be presented to a future Communities and Place Committee on the implications for the Council of:
  - a. the Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020 (draft laid before the Scottish Parliament on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019);
  - b. the extension of the Packaging Producer Responsibility System (consultation on specific regulatory measures anticipated during 2020 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs);
  - c. the review of the Code of Practice on Household Recycling in Scotland; and
  - d. any operational change proposed from contract reviews that require Member governance.

#### 4. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled for 19 February 2020.

The meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.