

Agenda Item	11
Report No	CP/25/22

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Communities and Place

**Date:** 16 November 2022

**Report Title:** Update on Waste Strategy

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information on the current Household Waste and Recycling collection service and provides information on a proposed Recycling Improvement Fund application to enable future service change. The service change is designed to reduce levels of residual waste (non-recyclable waste) and achieve compliance with the Scottish Household Recycling Charter.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the contents of this report
  - ii. Approve the submission of a bid to the Scottish Governments Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) for capital costs connected to the implementation of service changes aligned to the Household Waste Recycling Charter.
  - iii. Note the changes in HWRCs restrictions from December 22 and the outcomes from the review of opening hours will be considered Members in early 2023.
  - iv. Note the updated position on Waste Transfer Station Infrastructure in Aviemore, Inverness and Fort William.

### 3 Implications

- 3.1 Resource  
Part of the objectives of the Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) is to provide financial support to Local Authorities to assist with aligning waste and recycling collection services to the Household Waste Recycling Charter Code of Practice. RIF is currently the only source funding that will provide capital to support recycling service improvement. New capital resource for service change may have revenue implications. This will be quantified for each element of service change to ensure affordability and

sustainability. However, it should be noted any revenue costs associated with reducing residual waste and increasing recycling will also reflect a reduction in waste disposal and treatment costs.

### 3.2 Legal

The Council's relevant legal obligations for waste collections are from the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Furthermore, the updated waste strategy regarding waste and recycling collections supports climate change legislation by reducing residual waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling.

### 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

The public show a high satisfaction with waste and recycling collections, they are regarded among the most important services provided to the public. If we are successful in securing the RIF funding and implement the service change the Council will be able to improve recycling services further.

### 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The bid to the Recycling Improvement Fund and the proposed service changes highlighted in this paper will contribute to more effective sustainable waste management practices in the Highlands. Reducing residual waste and increasing the quantity and quality of collected recycling will have positive climate/carbon impacts.

### 3.5 Risk

The recycling improvement fund does not provide an allocation to each local authority. Funding is provided based on the quality of the application made. Securing funding is competitive and there is a risk of the Council not being successful with the funding application. This will be mitigated by working with Zero Waste Scotland to ensure a strong submission is made.

The current waste and recycling collection system is well established, the proposed service change will further move the balance of collections away from non-recyclable waste. The risks associated with the implementation of the service change will be mitigated by communicating the rationale clearly through a communication and engagement strategy that will assist householders maximise the use of the service change.

Market conditions for recycling material are influenced by political and legislative factors that impact on the accessibility of processing markets. If we do not implement service change, there is an increased risk of having future reduced reprocessing options for our current comingled recycling material. The proposed service change will ensure better access is achieved for re-processing options through reduced levels of contamination within our collected recycling.

### 3.6 Gaelic

If the changes to services are developed information will be refreshed to include Gaelic language in keeping with Council policy.

#### **4. Current Collection Service**

- 4.1 The Council has a legal obligation to collect both waste and recycling in its area. The authority may require householders to place the waste and recycling in receptacles of a kind and number specified.
- 4.2 The current service level meets this duty by providing householders 1 x 240 litre bin for residual waste and 1 x 240 litre blue bin for comingled recycling, the bins are collected on a scheduled day on alternate weeks. The Council also has a statutory duty to provide a food waste collection to householders in Inverness only, a 23 litre caddy is collected weekly on a scheduled day.
- 4.3 Garden Waste collections are made available to approximately 70000 households in Highland, Garden Waste collections are not a statutory service. The current service is optional and where requested a charge is applied. Current participation in the garden waste collection service is around 33%. The fortnightly collections service on scheduled days are provided during the period March – November.

#### **5. Reason for Change – Household Recycling Charter and the Code of Practice**

- 5.1 The Highland Council has accessed a free service through Zero Waste Scotland to assist with a strategic options appraisal examining future waste and recycling collection options. The aim is to determine how Highland Council can achieve alignment with Scotland's Household Recycling Charter to which the Highland Council is a co-signatory.
- 5.2 The Charter aims to build upon recycling progress achieved to date, to ensure waste is considered a resource and to recognise the opportunities of a more circular economy.
- 5.3 The Code of Practice outlines essential criteria which are vital in the effort to achieve a level of consistency across waste and recycling services in Scotland.
- 5.4 Alignment with the Code of Practice requires a reduction in the capacity provided for non-recyclable waste in order to rebalance services and prioritise recycling. Adjusting our recycling collections so that paper and card is collected in one bin and another bin for other containers (plastic, metal and cartons) is essential for aligning our services with the Code of Practice.

#### **6. Reason for Change – Delivering Scotland's circular economy, a Route Map to 2025 and beyond**

- 6.1 The Route Map sets out the Scottish Government's intended delivery of the vision for Scotland's Circular Economy. The Key priorities are to:
- Promote responsible consumption and production (including reducing consumption of single-use items, promoting product design and stewardship and mainstreaming reuse)
  - Reduce food waste from households and businesses
  - **Improve recycling from households and businesses**
  - Embed circular construction practices
  - Minimise the impact of disposal of waste that cannot be reused or recycled

- Strengthen our data and evidence, sustainable procurement practices, and skills and training

6.2 The proposed new actions for Improving recycling from households and businesses include facilitating a process to co-design high quality, high performing household recycling services. It is likely additional legal requirements will be placed on Local Authorities regarding household collection services.

6.3 The Council currently has a statutory duty to provide food waste collections in Inverness only. The rural exemption and food separation requirements for food waste collections will influence a required expansion of food waste collections to some other parts of Highland. This will be planned into future service change.

## **7. Reason for Change – The Scottish Governments Waste and Recycling targets**

7.1 The Scottish Governments Waste and Recycling targets have set ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling. By 2025 the aim is to:

- Reduce total waste arising in Scotland by 15% against 2011 levels
- Reduce food waste by 33% against 2013 levels
- Recycle 70% of remaining waste
- Send no more than 5% of remaining waste to landfill

## **8. Reason for Change – The Scottish Governments Recycling Improvement Fund**

8.1 The five-year £70 million Recycling Improvement Fund running from 2021 aims to accelerate progress towards Scotland's ambitious waste and recycling targets and net zero commitment. Funding is being provided to increase recycling performance in Council areas.

8.2 The proposed submission of a Recycling Improvement Fund application will include capital costs connected to improving Highland Council's recycling performance:

- Additional food waste collection vehicles
- Wheeled bins
- Waste transfer Station modifications

## **9. Reason for Change – The Deposit Return Scheme**

9.1 The Scottish Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will launch across the whole of Scotland on 16 August 2023. The scheme will introduce a 20p deposit on single-use PET, steel, aluminium and glass drinks containers, which will be refundable once the container is returned for recycling. It is anticipated that the scheme will collect 90% of containers placed on the market by 2024. The introduction of DRS will have an impact on recycling collected by the Council, reduce items for recycling being placed into non-recycling bins and reduce litter.

## **10. Next Steps**

10.1 The proposed Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) application is required to be submitted by no later than the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, the date of the RIF board meeting for considering

applications is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. It is likely we will learn the outcome of the Highland Council's application in mid-March.

- 10.2 If the RIF application is successful a phased introduction of the service changes could commence from April 2024. Detail of the service change will continue to be brought to the Members Waste Strategy Working Group and a further paper with full detail of the proposed service changes will be provided at the next Communities and Place Committee.

## **11. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's)**

- 11.1 The current opening times (adjusted October 2020) of HWRC's reflect an agreed saving measure from a review of opening times for 2020/21, detail of all HWRC opening times together with additional background information is provided within appendix 1 & 2, (members briefing September 2020).
- 11.2 HWRC's operate certain agreed controls that are designed to prevent costly and unlawful business waste, this includes not permitting access to large vehicles of 3.5 tonnes and over. Small Vans (under 3.5 tonnes) and/or trailers are allowed into all recycling centres with permitted household items.
- 11.3 Householders can access our larger HWRC's with small vans and trailers through an online booking system, the system accepts bookings for a specified day, this is restricted in some sites to certain times in the day. This has been reviewed and as an outcome the service will remove the daily time restrictions from the 5 of December 2022. Householders using a small van or trailer for authorised household waste/recycling will be able to access HWRC's with a booking throughout normal opening times. Work is also ongoing to review opening times and any proposed changes including impact assessments in respect of finance and recycling for example will be reported to this Committee early in the New Year.

## **12. Waste Management Infrastructure**

- 12.1 In 2018 capital programme funding was secured to develop three new waste transfer stations to complete the network of such facilities operated by The Highland Council. Working to robust programme and project governance, the three new waste transfer stations intended are:
- a. Aviemore – the building is complete, the building completion certificate has been applied for, and operations within the facility are targeted to commence early in 2023.
  - b. Inverness – construction is nearing completion, with practical completion scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022. A visit to this transfer station, which will be the largest in the Council's network, will be provided for the Members' Waste Strategy Working Group and offered to other Members.
  - c. Fort William – working to secure a ground lease for a development site and to have a facility in place and operational for late summer/early autumn 2024.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 28 October 2022

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## Appendix 1

### Members Briefing Note

#### Title: Household Waste Recycling Centres Update

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, the Council has been progressively re-opening Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) in line with The Scottish Government's updated COVID-19 restrictions.

A phased approach to re-opening the HWRC across The Highland Council region has been developed, with strict controls to help manage social distancing and to ensure the high number of visitors and volume of waste of can be handled safely and efficiently.

In August the range of materials accepted was expanded at the majority of sites to include bulky household items such as carpets and mattresses, along with light bulbs and fluorescent tubes. Non-commercial vans and trailers were also permitted access to the sites in August, with an online booking system in place at the larger sites. To date the new booking system has been operating smoothly, enabling van and trailer owners across the region to access the sites in order to deposit household waste without large queues forming.

#### Extending opening hours

From Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October the majority of HWRC across the region will see their opening hours extended to include Saturday or Sunday for members of the public to dispose of their household waste. By extending the opening hours to include a weekend day it will make it more convenient for householders who work during the week to use the facilities and will help improve the flow of traffic during the week at the busier sites.

It will also be possible to re-open Kingussie and Grantown HWRC on Saturdays only from 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020. Please see Appendix 1 for a full list of HWRC opening hours.

The adjusted opening hours will enable budget savings agreed in February 2019 for 2020/21 to be achieved. Please see the link for the full details of the savings: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4084/highland\\_council](https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4084/highland_council) - detailed sheets, Item 1.21 (page 27, CS 29).

To help reduce the risk of spreading the Coronavirus, restrictions continue to remain in place to reduce the time spent at the sites by individuals, so that as many as people as possible can pass through the sites quickly and safely, enabling traffic to flow more freely.

#### Restrictions are as follows:

- Waste types restricted to the following: general household (including bulky household items), garden waste, cardboard, scrap metal, wood, light bulbs and household batteries. Some smaller sites are not able to accept the full range of materials – for full list please check [www.highland.gov.uk/recyclingcentres](http://www.highland.gov.uk/recyclingcentres)
- [Non commercial vans and trailers are permitted to the sites, with an online booking system in place at the larger sites](#)
- Revised opening hours to ensure appropriate supervision within the existing available staffing resource

- Strict limits on the number of vehicles and visitors permitted on sites will continue at any given time to ensure social distancing measures are adopted
- No commercial waste will be accepted.

**Safety measures at HWRC:**

- Site signage – Information signs will be located on the pavements/verges leading to the site and at the entrance. Social distancing signs will be clearly displayed in the sites.
- Staff will be in place at the entrance of each site to speak with visitors and advise on waiting times and procedures on site. If a queue is too large, some vehicles may be turned away and asked to return later.
- Traffic management plans will be in place along with road safety signage
- All site staff will be trained to operate the sites safely and efficiently. They will be issued with appropriate PPE.
- Guidance on where to find information will be given through all publicity information

**Communications**

- News release and regular social media messaging will be issued on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October
- Website - HWRC pages will be updated Friday on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October
- FAQs will be updated on the website – on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October
- Advertising in the local press

We do not for see the need to adjust the opening hours further this year unless required for COVID-19 or public health related reasons.

**Appendix 2**

List of HWRC opening hours from 3<sup>rd</sup> October

Area	Household Waste Recycling Centre	Opening Hours
Badenoch & Strathspey	Aviemore	Monday - Saturday 09:00-16:00
	Grantown	Saturday 09:00 – 15:00
	Kingussie	Saturday 09:00 – 15:00
Nairnshire	Nairn	Monday - Friday 10:00-16:30 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00
Caithness	Wick	Monday - Friday 10:00 – 17:00 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00 (closed for lunch 12:00 -12:30)
	Thurso	Monday - Friday 10:00 – 17:00 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00 (closed for lunch 12:00 -12:30)
Inverness	Inverness	Seven days a week 10:00 – 18:00
Lochaber	Fort William	Monday – Friday 10:00 - 17:00 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00
Sutherland	Brora	Monday - Saturday 09:00 -13:00

	Bonar Bridge	Monday 13:00 – 16:30 Thursday 09:00 -12:00
	Lairg	Monday 08:00- 1200 Tuesday 08:00-16:30 Thursday 13:00 -16:30 Saturday 09:00 – 13:00
	Lochinver	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 12:00-16:00 Saturday – 09:00 – 13:00
	Tongue	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 12:00-16:00 Saturday – 09:00 – 13:00
Ross -shire	Alness	Monday – Friday 10:00 – 17:00 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00 (closed for lunch 13:00 -13:30)
	Dingwall	Monday – Friday 10:00 – 17:00 Saturday 10:00 – 16:00 (closed for lunch 13:00 -13:30)
	Gairloch	Monday – Friday 09:00-13:00
	Tain	Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 – 17:00 (closed for lunch 13:00 -13:30)
	Ullapool	Monday – Friday 09:00-13:00
Isle of Skye	Portree	Monday to Friday - 9am to 3.30pm Saturday - 9.30am to 3.30pm Closed for lunch - 12 noon to 1pm