

# The Highland Council

Agenda Item	13
Report No	SR/15/25

**Committee:** Isle of Skye and Raasay

**Date:** 30 June 2025

**Report Title:** Waste Management Service Update

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive - Place

## 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with updated information on the implementation of the Recycling Improvement Funded Waste and Recycling service change project.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Note** the information connected to new waste and recycling collection services; and
- ii. **Note** the progress being made on the essential waste management infrastructure project that will support service change in Skye.

## 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The Highland Council secured significant capital investment finance from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF). The £7.1m award is supporting a range of improvements to the Council's waste and recycling services across all Highland.

Service changes are essential to achieving a sustainable waste/recycling collection service model. An overall forecasted positive position will be achieved through a reduction in costs associated with residual waste treatment and through improving the quality and quantity of recycling that we collect.

- 3.2 **Legal** - The Council's relevant legal obligations for waste collections are from the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Furthermore, the ongoing service change project regarding waste and recycling collections supports climate change legislation and the Circular Economy Bill by reducing residual waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling.

- 3.3 **Risk** - Within the service change project there are risks that require to be carefully managed for the successful delivery of the service transformation. Of particular importance is:-
- i. achieving a good level of understanding from householders and businesses on the new service; and
  - ii. delivering an infrastructure project that is essential to support service change in Skye:-
    - Portree Waste Transfer Station
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - The safety of staff undertaking waste management duties is a statutory obligation for local authorities. The effective management of waste is essential to the health and safety of all householders and other service users.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

#### **4 Impacts**

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required. Impact assessments were completed for the relevant changes made to the Council's Household Waste Policy in advance of the commencement of the service change project.

#### **5 Waste and Recycling Service Project**

- 5.1 Members will recall £7.1m was awarded to the Council from the Scottish Governments Recycling Improvement Fund to deliver a more sustainable waste and recycling collections by reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste sent for disposal and improving the quality and the amount of the recycling we collect.
- 5.2 In advance of Service change, residents of Skye and Raasay were provided a letter that explained how and when existing blue and green bins would be changed, it also informed households in the area that a new 180 litre grey non-recyclable waste bin would be provided.
- 5.3 The roll-out of new bins to householders commenced on the 10 February and was completed on the 16 March 2025. Bin deliveries to business customers were completed on the 31 March 2025.
- 5.4 In addition to the letter and booklet information provided with the new bin, 8 social media messages went out between 14 January 2025 – 20 March 2025 with information on the new recycling services changes and advertising community engagement sessions.

- 5.5 The updated figure from all areas shows service change has achieved a reduction of approximately 7,500 tonnes of non-recycling waste collected from bins at the kerbside and sent for disposal in the last 12 months compared to the previous period.
- 5.6 The new twin stream recycling collections is achieving a significant drop in contamination of the material collected in the recycling bins from both householders and businesses, this has resulted in an overall increase of 1000 tonnes in the output of recyclable material after it has been processed at the recycling facilities.

## **6 Portree Waste Transfer Station**

- 6.1 The building at Portree is being constructed within the grounds of the current operational waste transfer site. The construction programme commenced mid-January of this year, and it is expected that the facility will be handed over to The Highland Council during mid-July 2025. Existing personnel will manage operations across the site and through the new facility.
- 6.2 The new facility is being prepared specifically to receive, aggregate and dispatch recyclable materials to contracted processors. Plastics, tubs, containers, steel, and aluminium cans (circa 415 tonnes per annum) will be sent to Perth; while mixed paper, light card, and cardboard (circa 840 tonnes per annum) will be dispatched to Glasgow.
- 6.3 The fully enclosed facility, with three vehicle access doors, will significantly enhance the quality of recyclable materials compared to the current on-site arrangements. This improvement will provide The Highland Council with an opportunity to benefit from variable commodity rebate values for recyclable materials.
- 6.4 The new recycling reception building at Portree supports the Council's, and the nation's, circular economy ambition and facilitates service collection changes financed by Scottish Government-funded Recycling Improvement Fund. The objectives, ultimately, are to improve both the quantity and quality of recycling within our area.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 15 May 2025

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None