

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	10
Report No	CP/18/25

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 14 August 2025

Report Title: Waste Management Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on the Household Recycling Code of Practice as set out through Scotland Circular Economy Bill and Waste Route Map to 2030.
- 1.2 In addition, the report provides updated information on the introduction of service change in Lochaber, the construction of essential waste transfer facilities and an update on the progress being made to procure industrial waste shredders.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to **note**:-
 - i. the National work being undertaken to introduce a new Household Recycling Code of Practice;
 - ii. updated information on the introduction of Waste Service change in Lochaber, including collection route optimisation;
 - iii. the progress being made on the new Waste Transfer Station infrastructure in Portree and Fort William; and
 - iv. the position on the introduction of Industrial Waste Shredders.

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 performance.

The expansion of food waste collections will have a revenue implication; however, the service changes are essential to achieving a sustainable 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 by reducing residual waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling. Proposals within Scotland's draft Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030 provides additional powers and statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities.
- 3.3 **Risk** - Within the service change project there are a number of ongoing risks that require to be carefully managed for the successful delivery of the service transformation. Of particular importance is Householder and business engagement and providing new and improved Waste Transfer Station infrastructure.
- 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. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 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.

5 Household Recycling Code of Practice

- 5.1 The provisions in the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act gives Scottish Ministers powers to develop a statutory code and set out steps to be taken by local authorities regarding household waste/recycling services.
- 5.2 The new Code, which will build upon the existing non-statutory Code will set out the standards expected of local authorities in delivering household waste and recycling services.
- 5.3 The design of the new code includes a series of national Co-Design workshops which Highland Council's waste management attend. Stakeholders in the Co-Design process will likely have differing priorities, but as set out through Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030, the Scottish Governments priorities in this area include:-
- increasing recycling rates;
 - emissions reduction; and
 - quality, consistency and affordability of service

- 5.4 A target date for completing this national work has been set for the end of 2026 and although the outcome is still unknown, the introduced service changes has placed the HC in a strong position.

6 Service Change and Route Optimisation

- 6.1 Lochaber waste and recycling collections will be re-routed at the beginning of September 2025 at the same time as the new twin stream recycling collection system is introduced. The majority of households in Lochaber will be given a new waste and recycling collection day and a large number of business waste customers will also see a change to their collection day.
- 6.2 The new collection routes in Lochaber will be routed to tip non-recyclable waste and the twin stream recycling collected at the new Waste Transfer Station in Fort William from September.
- 6.3 All households will be sent a Teaser Letter detailing the changes prior to implementation and the Waste Aware Team will be carrying out Community Engagement events at local shops, Service Points and Leisure Centres to help residents with the changes.
- 6.4 From September approximately 4,700 households in Lochaber will be provided with a weekly food waste collection service and a new 140 litre non-recyclable waste bins which will be collected fortnightly. The remaining 6,500 properties in Lochaber will be given new 180 litre non-recyclable waste bins which will be collected fortnightly.
- 6.5 For future route optimisation, Inverness will be the next waste operational area to be rerouted. This area has the largest number of households with substantial housing growth projected over the next 5 years. The Inverness reroute project will design new and more efficient non-recyclable, recycling and food waste routes to help manage the demands from the housing growth, along with balancing the number of household properties on each collection route. The new routes in Inverness are expected to go live in during Spring 2026.

7 Waste Transfer Station Projects

- 7.1 The site being developed in Fort William for the waste transfer station is adjacent to The Highland Council's household waste recycling centre within the Ben Nevis Industrial Estate.
- 7.2 The construction programme commenced in late January of this year, and it is expected that the facility will be handed over to The Highland Council by the end of August 2025 and will be fully operational towards the end of September. Three new members of staff are being recruited to operate the waste transfer station, with two being on-site at any one time.
- 7.3 The new facility is being provided to receive, aggregate and dispatch recyclable materials and non-recyclable materials to contracted processors.
- Plastics, tubs, containers, steel and aluminium cans will be sent to Perth.
 - Mixed paper, light card and cardboard will be dispatched to Glasgow.
 - Food waste will be taken to Cumbernauld.
 - Non-recyclable residual waste will be delivered to Dunbar.

- 7.4 The new facility is being built through The Highland Council's Capital Investment Plan. The development supports the Council's waste management improvements to meet legislative requirements. Importantly, it provides critical infrastructure to enable the rollout of new kerbside collection services in Lochaber, as part of the Highland-wide programme of change funded through the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund, supporting the nation's and the Council's, circular economy ambition.
- 7.5 The new waste transfer 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. The construction of the new building is fully funded through the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund.

8 Waste Shredders

- 8.1 The Council has been steadily diverting increasing amounts of waste away from landfill to ensure that it is meeting the statutory requirements to prevent waste contaminated with Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) and biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) from being disposed of at such sites.
- 8.2 Non-recyclable waste from kerbside collections can be delivered through the Council's contractual arrangement direct to an Energy from Waste facility (via the Council's Waste Transfer Stations) but large items of waste, such as from bulky waste collections and Household Waste Recycling Centres, currently requires prior pre-treatment.
- 8.3 To reduce the revenue costs and maximise haulage efficiencies associated with such a pre-treatment stage, the Council is investing in two industrial shredders, one to be located at Longman Waste Transfer Station and the other at the Seater Landfill Site.
- 8.4 The procurement process is now at an advanced stage, the award of a contract is expected before the end of July, with the Shredders then being delivered over the next few months. Following a period of familiarisation and commissioning, the Shredders are expected to be fully operational during the Autumn of 2025.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 15 July 2025

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None