

**The Highland Council**  
**Community Services Committee**  
**6 November 2014**

Agenda Item	11
Report No	COM 37/14

**Improving Waste Controls and Diversion at Recycling Centres**

**Report by Director of Community Services**

**Summary**

This report updates Members on the project which was approved on 6 February 2014 by the Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee to improve waste controls and diversion at Recycling Centres. The objectives of this project were to improve license compliance, increase recycling, and drive down residual waste.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The 21 Recycling Centres in Highland take approximately one third of the household waste arisings in Highland. This excludes Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) collected waste going through transfer stations in Sutherland and Wester Ross.
- 1.2 Recycling rates at Recycling Centres with a full range of facilities vary from 43% (Alness) to 75% (Nairn).
- 1.3 Over the last 3 years, there has been a 9.5% rise in waste disposed to landfill from the network of recycling centres compared with an 11% reduction of overall waste to landfill.
- 1.4 Members will recall the range of measures that were approved to address the increase in waste to landfill from Recycling Centres as follows:
  - A pilot programme at Alness Recycling Centre to examine a range of ways in which we can identify and then eliminate the deposit of commercial waste;
  - A ban on the deposit of household waste which has arisen as part of a commercial operation (eg house clearance work);
  - The introduction of specific times/days for the deposit of waste by vans and trailers to ease congestion and “skip blocking”;
  - The introduction of an inspection system to ensure that residual waste brought to the site does not contain recyclable waste;
  - The re-organisation of sites to increase the provision (space permitting) of recyclable containers and of materials which can be recycled;
  - An application to Zero Waste Scotland was made to examine alternative ways to engage with the public and improve segregation of recyclable materials.

## 2. Alness Recycling Centre pilot project

- 2.1 The Alness Recycling Centre pilot project was introduced on 26 May 2014 to ensure that commercial waste is excluded from the site and that site users are encouraged to separate their waste into recyclable and non-recyclable.
- 2.2 Customers accessing the site with a van, liveried vehicle, pick up and/or trailer are required to complete a Household Waste Declaration form prior to arrival confirming their waste is of household origin.
- 2.3 Household Waste Declaration forms are available from Alness and Invergordon Service Points, Alness Library, Service Centre and the Council's website.
- 2.4 Site users were given a one month notification period prior to the pilot project starting. During this period, staff informed site users about the new procedures and information leaflets were handed out; adverts were placed in the Alness Times and posters were put up in Alness and Invergordon. The Council's website was updated with the new information and Members were issued with a briefing note.
- 2.5 Waste Awareness staff assisted Site Operatives at the Recycling Centre during the early stages of the project, providing advice and information to householders about the new Household Waste Disclaimer form procedure.
- 2.6 In addition, staff helped site users with bagged mixed waste to maximise the types and amounts of materials they recycle and to minimise the amount of materials discarded in the landfill skips..
- 2.7 The data collected shows there has been a reduction in waste to landfill and an increase in the recycling rate compared to the previous year at Alness Recycling Centre since the project began. Total waste through the site has reduced.

	Landfill (tonnes)			Arisings (tonnes)			Recycling rate (%)		
	2013	2014	% change	2013	2014	% change	2013	2014	% points change
April - September	883.2	618.7	-30.0%	1724.3	1376.4	-20.2%	48.8%	54.9%	6.2%

- 2.8 Waste sent to landfill was also down in Dingwall and Tain Recycling Centres compared to the same 5 month period in 2013-14.

## 3. Specific Interventions

### 3.1 Ban on commercial/trade activities

- 3.1.1 A ban on the deposit of household waste associated with commercial or trade activities (i.e. work carried out for business or profit) was introduced at all Recycling Centres throughout Highland on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

3.1.2 As a result, site staff now turn individuals and businesses away that attempt to deposit this type of waste. A leaflet detailing alternative disposal facilities is provided and a rejection notice is completed and forwarded to SEPA.

### **3.2 Prevention of “skip blocking” by vans and trailers**

3.2.1 It was not necessary to introduce specific times/days for the deposit of waste by vans and trailers to ease congestion and “skip blocking” during the pilot at Alness. However as changes in operating procedures at our Recycling Centres continue this measure may prove to be necessary to minimise the amount of residual waste arising at these sites.

### **3.3 Waste Inspection**

3.3.1 Prior to the Alness pilot project starting, an analysis of mixed bagged waste was carried out in Alness Recycling Centre in 2009 and March 2014. On both occasions around 20% of the waste going into residual skips was in mixed bagged waste (which included recyclables).

3.3.2 Samples of the black bags were taken and a basic waste analysis carried out. The largest fractions of the samples were of food waste and textiles making up 55% of the total.

3.3.3 More generally, we found that in other centres mixed bagged waste comprised: Wick - 30%, Fort William - 37% and Dingwall 39%.

3.3.4 The site users were provided with information leaflets on how to use the Recycling Centre - with the emphasis on separating their items for recycling prior to their visit rather than bringing mixed bagged waste destined for landfill.

3.3.5 When helping residents who brought bagged mixed waste, staff were also able to identify commercial waste coming to the site. This waste was not accepted and the rejection procedure was followed reducing the cost of disposal to the Council.

### **3.4 Re-organisation of the Site**

3.4.1 After a review of the site layout at Alness Recycling Centre a new plasterboard skip and 2 large blue recycling bins for mixed paper, cardboard, cans and plastic bottles were introduced to make it easier for householders to recycle more.

3.4.2 The Re-use area was also refreshed to make it clearer for people to understand what items are accepted for reuse. Staff also helped site users to identify what items were suitable for reuse rather than landfill.

## **4. Implications**

4.1 Where we reduce the waste to landfill and/or increase recycling and re-use

there will be a saving in the disposal budget.

- 4.2 There are no equality implications arising from this report.
- 4.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 Additional diversion of material from landfill will assist in reducing climate change implications and contribute to Carbon Clever.
- 4.5 There are no risk, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to note progress to date and to approve the following measures at all recycling centres all with the objective of reducing landfill and increasing recycling:

- i. Roll-out the programme to all recycling centres in Highland;
- ii. Ban the deposit of household waste by commercial/profit type operators;
- iii. The introduction of control measures and specifically a regime of prior notification to users with vans and/or trailers; and
- iv. The introduction of a challenge and inspection regime to ensure that users maximise the use of the recycling facilities and minimise the use of landfill disposal (this will include ongoing training for staff in this sensitive matter).

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 23 October 2014

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Background Papers: TECS Committee 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 ( TEC1/14) - Review of Recycling Centres