

**The Highland Council**

**Community Services**

**18 August 2016**

Agenda Item	<b>11</b>
Report No	<b>COM 30/16</b>

**Household Recycling Charter and Code of Practice**

**Report by Community Services**

**Summary**

The Household Recycling Charter and accompanying Code of Practice sets out proposals for Local Authorities in Scotland to adopt and then work towards a standardised and consistent collection system for waste and recycling. Members are invited to approve adoption of the Charter and implementation of the Code of Practice, and work towards the standards in the Code, provided the appropriate levels of funding are made available by the Scottish Government or its agents.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Scottish Government published the voluntary Charter and Code in March this year. The Code of Practice (CoP) sets out a number of requirements that signatories of the Charter are expected to follow.
- 1.2 These requirements do not replace any legal requirements placed on Councils *via* existing legislation.
- 1.3 Currently 16 of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities have signed up to the Charter.
- 1.4 Zero Waste Scotland will assist signatories with the transition through a modelling and reporting exercise.
- 1.5 It is anticipated that funding for the transition will be available but that it is likely to be capital rather than revenue – details are awaited.
- 1.6 The overall objectives are to improve the quantity and quality of recycle and to provide Scotland with a more consistent collection service.
- 1.7 Members should note that this is not a short-term plan and will take some years to implement if adopted and perhaps up to a decade where a wholesale change of the fleet is required.

**2. Code of Practice Requirements**

- 2.1 The CoP sets out the basis for a consistent approach to the provision of

recycling services (both in the type of wastes collected and in the way they are collected).

- 2.2 It references two sets of requirements: “essential” and “desirable”.
- 2.3 Essential requirements are regarded as vital in the effort to achieve consistency across waste and recycling services in Scotland.
- 2.4 Consequently their adoption is considered to be the minimum expectation placed on Councils signing up to the Charter.
- 2.5 Adoption of “desirable” requirements is something that Councils shall consider after they have met the essential requirements

### **3. Code of Practice - Outcomes**

- 3.1 The Code details outcomes that will deliver the aspirations of the Charter as follows:
- 3.2 **Outcome One: Achieve High Quantities of Recycling and Minimise Non-Recyclable Waste**  
Recycling more and wasting less is good for the economy and for the environment.
- 3.3 **Outcome Two: Maximise High-Quality Materials**  
High-quality recycling, typically defined as ‘closed loop’ recycling, generally achieves higher value in markets. There is also greater opportunity for investment in the reprocessing industry when there is a ready supply of high-quality materials available to the market in consistent formats and standards.
- 3.4 **Outcome Three: Cost Effective Services For Local Government**  
The Code supports Councils in delivering cost-effective services in the medium to long term.
- 3.5 **Outcome Four: Services That Encourage Participation From Citizens**  
It seeks to ensure that the services are easily understood and communicated to allow full participation.
- 3.6 **Outcome Five: Keep Citizens, Staff and Contractors Safe**  
It seeks to ensure that services are safe
- 3.7 **Outcome Six: Services That Support Employment**  
It supports services that support employment in Scotland and within local areas either through collection services or from the onward sorting or sale of materials.

### **4. What it means for Highland?**

- 4.1 The main (visible) changes will be to the collection services.

- 4.2 There is no doubt that the Code views kerbside sort systems as the optimum – a system that the Council originally implemented in 2004/5 (funded through the Strategic Waste Fund).
- 4.3 However it does not require kerbside sort; although it will be amongst a suite of options which will be modelled if and when the Council adopts the Code.
- 4.4 Where modification of the existing system was adopted the changes would/could be as follows:
- Blue Bins: the materials in the blue bins would have to be split into separate bins – one for paper and card and one for metals and plastics;
  - Glass Collections: Currently we collect glass through a network of bottle banks. Household glass collections need not be implemented where a Council can demonstrate that the same quality and quantity is diverted using the banks as through a kerbside collection. With the addition of glass banks to the network (perhaps a further 30 sites) a case could be made;
  - Food Waste: Collections are limited to Inverness. However this is under review at the present time and it is possible that other urban centres are brought into the regime and/or the boundaries are altered to increase the area which falls within the collections criteria.
- 4.5 In practice (as a minimum) for Highland the change would mean that an additional wheeled bin would have to be provided to each household.
- 4.6 *Appendix I* outlines the bin capacities/collection frequencies which might be adopted to strive to meet the Code with minimal change to the existing arrangements.
- 4.7 However they are simply an illustration and a suite of models will be used in the transition planning stage (with Zero Waste Scotland to produce a Transition Plan) to indicate which service options are best in terms of capture of recyclate and cost.
- 4.8 Members should note that full adoption of the Code is a strategic measure meant to instil through practical measures a long term cultural change within communities over the long-term to achieve real change in the way resource and waste is viewed and managed.

## **5 Costs & Benefits**

- 5.1 The modelling which would follow signing of the Charter will detail the costs and benefits of a suite of options which would meet the terms of the Code.
- 5.2 Grant funding may be available for changes which require capital.

- 5.3 Revenue funding for any additional costs is unlikely to be available. However it is equally likely that the modelling will show that the life costs – taking account of the cost of avoided landfill/treatment disposal due to increased diversion will indicate a neutral cost (or even a saving) to the Council.
- 5.4 Almost inevitably the choice will be between a modified existing system and a full kerbside sort system.
- 5.5 Modelling will explore in some detail the benefits and costs of each.
- 5.6 A further report to either the November 2016 or the first 2017 Community Services Committee will seek Members approval on a suite of policy changes which will assist in meeting the overall objective of increasing recycling and reducing residual waste.

## **6. Implications**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications**  
To meet the CoP Essential criteria will require as a minimum a capital outlay to purchase bins and containers. This may become available through the Scottish Government. However the full cost/benefit implications will only be known after the transition planning has taken place.
- 6.2 **Legal implications**  
There are no legal implications associated with adopting the (voluntary) household recycling charter
- 6.3 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever**  
Improvements in recycling and reduced waste to landfill reduces the effect of greenhouse gas emissions. Increased frequency of collections would have the opposite effect.
- 6.4 **Rural Implications**  
There are no immediate implications. However services could be aligned with urban areas depending on the outcome of the modelling and subsequent decision by Council.
- 6.5 **Risk Implications**  
A review of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in terms of using the most up to date urban/rural classification may require the introduction of new food collections.
- 6.6 The introduction of any changes will require to be made in accordance with the residual waste and recycle contracts in place at the time.
- 6.7 There are no Gaelic implications.

**Recommendation**

Members are invited to:

1. approve the signing of the Household Recycling Charter; and
2. adopt the accompanying Code, subject to approval of the transition plan and securing the required funding to undertake the required changes.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 4 August 2016

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## Appendix I

### Scenario of how a Service could be provided

1. The table below shows the existing situation in Inverness and the minimum modifications which could be undertaken.

Material	Scenario	Existing
Residual	70 litres per week (Collected fortnightly)	120 litres per week (Collected fortnightly)
Paper/Card	60 litres per week (Collected every 4 weeks)	120 litres per week Collected together fortnightly)
Metals/Plastic/ Cartons	60 litres per week (Collected every 4 weeks)	
Food	23 litres per week (Collected weekly)	23 litres per week (Collected weekly)
Where there are food waste collections a 140 litre bin for residual waste should be supplied and collected fortnightly.		
If the proposal to introduce 140 litre bins to Inverness was approved then the existing residual waste bin could be used for metals/plastic/cartons storage.		
Strictly according to the Code the weekly capacity for metals/Plastic/Cartons is 70 litres.		

2. Where no food waste is collected a new 240 litre bin would have to be provided. The same frequencies of collection and bin colours could be used as those in Inverness. The capacities available would be as follows:

Material	Scenario	Existing
Residual	120 litres per week (Collected fortnightly)	120 litres per week (Collected fortnightly)
Paper/Card	60 litres per week (Collected every 4 weeks)	120 litres per week Collected together fortnightly)
Metals/Plastic/ Cartons	60 litres per week (Collected every 4 weeks)	
Strictly according to the Code the weekly capacity for metals/Plastic/Cartons is 70 litres.		