

Agenda Item	14
Report No	CP/20/21

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Communities and Place Committee

**Date:** 12 May 2021

**Report Title:** Waste Projects Update

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

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with information on the development of waste transfer station infrastructure which is supported by the Council's current capital programme; and updates the position regarding the Household Waste recycling Centre in Fort William.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- i. the positive progress in awarding two contracts to construct waste transfer stations in Inverness and Aviemore;
- ii. the continuing efforts of officers to provide the opportunity to develop similar infrastructure in Fort William;
- iii. the parallel efforts of officers to secure a new lease for the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Fort William; and
- iv. that the Members' Waste Strategy Working Group was updated on these matters on 23 April 2021, as reported separately in the minute to this Committee meeting.

### 3. Implications

#### 3.1 Resource implications

The waste transfer station developments identified in this paper are supported by the Council's existing capital programme. Should it not be possible to negotiate a new lease for the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Fort William a capital resource pressure would arise.

3.2 Until the Council's own infrastructure is in place there is a continual reliance on private suppliers for the transfer of waste. Extending or re-negotiating contracts can create

budget pressures. Contract increases for 2021/22, for example, require a budget feed of £147k, as approved at Council in March 2021.

### 3.3 Legal implications

The Council's Waste Management service operates in a highly regulated environment. This regulatory regime covers the type of collection services that must be provided to households and businesses, the operation of our landfill sites and other facilities, and how material can be processed. Currently the most significant regulatory issue that the Council currently faces is the ban on landfilling our waste as introduced through the Waste Management (Scotland) Regulations 2012. There is to be full compliance by the end of 2025.

### 3.4 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) implications

The implementation of waste management services is undertaken in accord with Scottish Government legislation and takes community factors appropriately into account.

### 3.5 Climate Change implications

The infrastructure developments highlighted in this paper are intended to contribute to the effective management of waste in the Highlands. Highland Council is very much aware that its investments should have positive climate/carbon impacts, lowering the area's environmental footprint.

### 3.6 Risk implications

There are risks most particularly with the Inverness waste transfer station development and in the two infrastructure projects in view at Fort William.

- Inverness
  - Programme delay due to increased badger activity on the site. Concern this may also have financial impacts. Current monitoring will better inform the necessary actions.
  - Whilst there have been considerable ground conditions investigations in preparing for a planning application and tender specification, once drilling work commences for piling supports, unknowns may emerge.
- Fort William
  - Securing a new lease for the Household Waste Recycling Centre in good time to negate the need to look at a new site and hence an investment project.
  - Securing a suitable site and associated planning permission remains less than straightforward for the waste transfer station before the waste management contracts with commercial providers conclude in December 2022.

3.6 These risks can create budget pressures in both revenue and capital budgets.

### 3.7 Gaelic

The are no Gaelic implications.

## 4. **Waste Infrastructure Projects**

### 4.1 Inverness Waste Transfer Station.

4.1.1 The contract for the construction of the new waste transfer station has been awarded. During the latter part of 2020 increased badger activity at the site was noticed. Surveys are taking place to ascertain the extent of this activity and discussions taking place with NatureScot to secure a protected species licence, exclusion zones and what work can progress on site. There is a potential delay to the programme from late 2022 completion to January 2023 completion. Highland Council is working with the contractor to ensure

any delay is minimised. Whilst these surveys are underway detailed design work is progressing and invasive species plant spraying will be undertaken during May and June.

## 4.2 Aviemore Waste Transfer Station

4.2.1 The contract for the construction of the new waste transfer station (WTS) has been awarded. The schedule completion is mid-August 2021. The Aviemore WTS is a far smaller scale (circa 30mx20m), with simpler specification, than the Inverness facility.

## 4.3 Fort William Waste Transfer Station

4.3.1 There are two issues to resolve at Fort William:

- The need for a new lease to be negotiated for the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC). The HWRC is located at Ben Nevis Industrial Estate land owned by Jahama Estates.
- Establishing a waste transfer station as part of the strategic infrastructure investment supported by the Council's capital programme.

4.3.2 HWRC - although the existing sublet agreement expires in February 2023, there is a recognised urgency to confirm agreement for a new lease to allow time if required to pursue any other potential options should a new lease with Jahama Estates not be possible. Estates Team has been instructed to commence the negotiation process with Jahama Estates.

4.3.3 Securing a suitable waste transfer station site in Fort William is problematic. There are no straightforward options. Officers are working on different possibilities:

- Participating with Transport Team colleagues seeking investment from the Bus Partnership Fund to locate a park and ride operation at a site which is for sale adjacent to Carr's Corner Depot. If the funds can be secured and the site purchased there would be an allocation of space to develop the waste transfer station. The Council's application was submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> April and Transport Scotland expects to decide upon awards during June 2021, when it will select projects for development (proposals to be further developed through the proportionate application of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) and implementation.
- Looking at developing the waste transfer station within the current confines of Carr's Corner. This would impact present operations at the depot and require some relocation of materials to a third-party site. There has been helpful dialogue with staff at Carr's Corner but there will be substantially more interaction should this option be taken further.
- Leasing land adjacent to the HWRC to construct the waste transfer station. This is the preferred site but its availability for this use is not confirmed. It is further complicated by the uncertainty surrounding the parent company's financial security. This places the prospect of securing an agreement to locate at this site into the doubtful category at this time.

## 5. Conclusions

5.1 Key infrastructure projects, supported by the Council's capital programme, are underway at Inverness and Aviemore which is positive news following much planning and preparation.

5.2 Securing a suitable site upon which to create new a waste transfer station and securing the future of existing recycling infrastructure in Fort William are of vital importance for waste operations in the Lochaber area. The timelines are becoming critical. As there is

uncertainty about some options there may need to submit a planning application in advance of securing a site to avoid further delay. There will be significant preparation involved in creating a planning application given the site options.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place

Date: 23 April 2021

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