

Agenda Item	10
Report No	CP/7/23

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Communities and Place Committee

Date: 23 February 2023

Report Title: Update on Waste Strategy

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an updated position on the submission of a Recycling Improvement Fund application that is being submitted to Zero Waste Scotland to enable kerbside refuse and recycling service change as described within this report. The report also provides Members with updates on waste transfer station infrastructure in Aviemore, Inverness and Fort William.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the contents of this report
 - ii. Approve the acceptance of funding to enable service change should the Highland Council's application to the Scottish Governments Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) be successful.
 - iii. Note the updated position on Waste Transfer Station Infrastructure in Aviemore, Inverness and Fort William.

3 Implications

- 3.1 Resource
Part of the objectives of the Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) is to provide financial support to Local Authorities to assist with aligning waste and recycling collection services to the Household Waste Recycling Charter Code of Practice. RIF is currently the only external source funding that will provide capital to support recycling service improvement. New capital resource for service change may have revenue implications. This will be quantified for each element of service change to ensure affordability and sustainability. However, it should be noted any revenue costs associated with reducing residual waste and increasing recycling will also reflect a reduction in waste disposal and treatment costs. This is shown in section 13 of this report.

3.2 Legal
The Council's relevant legal obligations for waste collections are from the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Furthermore, the updated waste strategy regarding waste and recycling collections supports climate change legislation by reducing residual waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)
The public show a high satisfaction with waste and recycling collections, they are regarded among the most important services provided to the public. If we are successful in securing the RIF funding and implement the service change the Council will be able to improve recycling services further.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever
The bid to the Recycling Improvement Fund and the proposed service changes detailed in this paper will contribute to more effective sustainable waste management practices in the Highlands. Reducing residual waste and increasing the quantity and quality of collected recycling will have positive climate/carbon impacts.

3.5 Risk
The recycling improvement fund does not provide an allocation to each local authority. Funding is provided based on the quality of the application made. Securing funding is competitive and there is a risk of the Council not being successful with the funding application. This has been mitigated by working with Zero Waste Scotland to ensure a strong submission is achieved.

The current waste and recycling collection system is well established, the proposed service change will further move the balance of collections away from non-recyclable waste. The risks associated with the implementation of the service change will be mitigated by communicating the rationale clearly through a communication and engagement strategy that will assist householders maximise the use of the service change.

Market conditions for recycling material are influenced by political and legislative factors that impact on the accessibility of processing markets. If we do not implement service change, there is an increased risk of having less reprocessing options and reduced market value for comingled (mixed recycling) material. The proposed service change will ensure better access is achieved for re-processing options through improving the quality of our collected recycling.

3.6 Gaelic
If the changes to services are developed information will be refreshed to include Gaelic language in keeping with Council policy.

4. **Service Change during 22/23**

4.1 Significant change has been achieved during 22/23 and these are summarised below;

- Completion of Waste Transfer Station, Granish
- Completion of Waste Transfer Station, Inverness
- Progress of Waste Transfer Station, Fort William (target opening autumn 24)

- Increased customer base for business waste collections
- Service / collections review enabled via Route Optimisation.
- Waste Composition Analysis
- Securing vital contractual arrangements.

4.2 The proposed future service improvements will meet the Council's future statutory duty and accelerate progress towards national recycling targets through kerbside collection service change that aligns to future National Policies.

5. Household Waste Recycling Charter and Code of Practice

5.1 The Charter seeks to deliver more consistent recycling collections across Scotland, recognising the opportunities of a more circular economy and better resource management for the benefit of Scotland and its local communities.

5.2 The Charter outlines essential criteria for achieving a kerbside collection model that is in-line with the best practice recommendations set out within the Code of Practice.

5.3 Through support of Zero Waste Scotland, The Council has recently completed a detailed options appraisal with Eunomia which involved modelling a full range of potential service change scenarios with detailed assessment on the potential increase in yield of food waste and recycling. The assessment of best final options forms the basis of the Council's application to the Recycling Improvement Fund.

6. Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy - A Route Map to 2025 and Beyond

6.1 The Route Map consultation states under improving recycling from households: *"We will facilitate a process to co-design high quality, high performing household recycling and reuse services by the end of 2023, working with service operators and users. The co-design approach will ensure modern, efficient, affordable service standards for operators and more consistent service provision. We will particularly focus on opportunities to further improve food waste recycling services and participation rates and reduce contamination of recycling that is collected."*

6.2 The service change proposal outlined within this report represent a comprehensive package of measures which once implemented will deliver on the aims and ambitions set out within the Circular Economy Bill consultation for household recycling.

7. Food Waste Reduction Action Plan (2019)

7.1 The ambition within the Food Waste Reduction Action Plan is stated as breaking down barriers to food recycling by consulting on the current rural exemption and food separation requirements for food waste collections in 2022. The Scottish Government's urban rural classification influences where Councils have a statutory duty to provide food waste collections.

8. Food Waste - Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020

8.1 The Scottish Government updated Rural Classification 2020 has resulted in changes to the classification for some areas. Nairn has been assessed to no longer being covered by the rural postcode exemption policy and should therefore be extended the food waste recycling service, alongside existing Inverness communities. The Council has also identified that since the 2020 Scottish Government assessments, the town of Fort William and settlements within Ross and Cromarty are likely to be captured by the next review. For this reason, the proposals contained within the RIF application include the expansion of food waste recycling services to Nairn, Fort William and accessible settlements within the Ross and Cromarty area.

9. Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

9.1 EPR is legislation that makes the producers significantly more responsible for the packaging they place on the market, at the end of its life.

9.2 The packaging EPR is expected to begin from 2024, it is anticipated that the EPR will increase recycling rates for packaging materials to 76% by 2030. Funding will go to local authorities that can demonstrate an effective and efficient collection systems for household packaging waste. The proposed service change will reach a standard for being considered as being an effective and efficient collection system.

10. Summary of capital projects included in the Recycling Improvement Fund Application

No.	Project Description
01	Skye Waste Transfer Station Extension
02	Seater Waste Transfer Station
03	Supply and distribution of household 140 Litre bins (plus bin stickering)
04	Supply and distribution of household 180 Litre bins (plus bin stickering)
05	Supply and distribution of kitchen caddies
06	Supply of six food waste collection vehicles
07	Purchase of caddy liners
08	Design and purchase of bin stickers
09	Project staff/vehicles
10	Supply and delivery 5 x WEEE SDA banks

10.2 The total capital funding requested within the RIF application to support service change is £6,550,302

11. Service Change – Detail

11.1 Subject to a successful application to the Recycling Improvement Fund, from April 2024 the Council through a phased roll-out will introduce a twin-stream recycling service to all

households across Highland. The service change will require the introduction of an additional wheeled bin. The existing green general waste bin will be converted to collect the containers mix (plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays, cans, tins, foil, cartons and potentially soft plastics (under the EPR). The existing blue bin currently used for mixed recycling will be converted to collect the fibre mix (paper/card).

- 11.2 Residual (General) waste capacity will be reduced at the kerbside for all Highland householders as part of the service change. The application to the Recycling Improvement Fund includes the provision of replacement smaller general waste bins for all households. Households in receipt of the weekly food waste recycling service will be provided with a new 140 litre general waste bin while all other households will be provided with a new 180 litre general waste bin.
- 11.3 We will expand the weekly food waste recycling service beyond Inverness to include households within accessible conurbations across the Ross & Cromarty, Nairn, and Fort William areas. This change will take place alongside the roll-out of the twin-stream recycling service and will require the funded provision of both internal and external food waste caddies and the additional vehicles required to service the areas.
- 11.4 Residual (General) waste bins will continue to be collected fortnightly, with twin-stream recycling being collected 4 weekly, e.g.

Week 1	Residual (General) waste bin
Week 2	Fibre mix (paper/card) recycling bin
Week 3	Residual (General) waste bin
Week 4	Containers mix recycling bin

12. Waste Transfer Stations

- 12.1 Modifications to and additional Transfer Station infrastructure will be required to support the service change. The Council has fully funded through the Capital programme the building of new facilities at Aviemore, Inverness and has commenced the process of developing a new site at Fort William. Detail of these projects are further detailed in section 15 of this report.
- 12.2 The application to the Recycling Improvement Fund is seeking the further capital required to undertake the necessary modifications at both Portree (Skye) and Seater (Caithness) Transfer Stations to enable the accommodation of a twin-streaming operation.

13. Small Domestic Appliance Banks (SDA)

- 13.1 Through the Recycling Improvement Fund the Council is seeking funding for 5 additional SDA recycling banks for rural areas furthest from existing Household Waste Recycling Centres. The Council work in partnership with ILM (Highland) who operate a Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment reuse operation and undertake collections as the appointed provider by REPIC the Producer Compliance Scheme.

14. Summary of Finance Impact – Revenue

14.1 The table below details the estimated revenue savings and costs arising from this capital investment should the application be successful. The latest estimates indicate annual recurring revenue savings of £134k. As reported at 10.1, service change will be delivered on a phased basis, thus it is anticipated that the full year effect of these savings will be from April 2025.

14.2

Budget Item	Estimated Savings	Estimated Costs
Kerbside Residual Waste	£884k	
Income – Paper & Card	£15k	
Income - Mixed containers	£13k	
Income - Garden waste	£95k	
Income – Metals	£55k	
Income - Wood	£3k	
Garden Waste Treatment		£42k
Food Waste Treatment		£159k
Food Waste Haulage		£158k
Food Waste Collection		£350k
Kitchen Caddy's & liners		£34k
Operating skip costs		£188k
Totals	£1,065m	£931k

15. Waste Infrastructure Projects

15.1 Inverness Waste Transfer Station

15.1.1 The construction phase is now complete; handover of the keys to The Highland Council occurred on 19 December 2022. Council Members visited the facility over the 24 and 25 of January.

15.1.2 The target date for the facility to be fully operational is Monday 3 April 2023. A range factors will be worked through to prepare for the commencement of operations. These include: a TUPE process with staff of the current commercial provider; operational protocols development; and training for new operations staff.

15.2 Aviemore Waste Transfer Station

15.2.1 The new Aviemore facility began operating on 3 January 2023. Residual waste (that which isn't going to be recycled) being aggregated at this facility will be sent to the Dunbar energy from waste facility under The Highland Council's 2023-27 waste management contract with the facility's operator, Viridor. It is anticipated that the Aviemore waste transfer station will handle circa 4,300 tonnes of residual waste per annum.

15.3 Fort William Waste Transfer Station

15.3.1 There are two infrastructure requirements for Fort William:

- a. Establishing a waste transfer station as part of the strategic infrastructure investment supported by the Council's capital programme.
- b. 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 and the site is leased from a private landowner.

15.3.2 Officers are working to secure a ground lease for a development site upon which to construct a waste transfer station, with a view to a facility being in place and operational during autumn 2024. Officers are concurrently working on a planning application to seek approval for the proposed development, with the aim of submitting this during early 2023.

Designation: Allan Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 3 February 2023

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