

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CP/28/23

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 29 November 2023

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 waste projects. This includes a revised Household Waste Policy with changes connected to the Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) project, additionally an updated position regarding the phased introduction of collection service changes that are being funded through the awarded RIF capital funding. The report also provides detail on the planned development of a waste transfer station in Fort William and a proposed Household Recycling Centre trial concerning a change to the current control measures.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Approve** the amended Household Waste policy as described in section 4 and as shown in full on Appendix 1.
- ii. **Note** the updated position on the timeline for the phased introduction of Recycling Improvement Fund collection service changes and the highlighted progress that has been made.
- iii. **Note** comprehensive communications and engagement plan for the service change.
- iv. **Note** progress being made to secure a Waste Transfer Station in Fort William.
- v. **Approve** the introduction of a trial at a recycling centre as described in section 7.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

a. The Highland Council secured significant capital investment finance from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF). The £6.5m award will support a range of improvements to the Council's waste and recycling performance.

b. 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 though improving the quality and quantity of recycling that we collect.

3.2 Legal

a. 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.

b. The Circular Economy Bill as tabled by the Scottish Government makes provision for the Government to take new powers from the Waste Routemap. The Bill as presented moves the Household Recycling Charter from being voluntary to a statutory requirement for LA's. The RIF service changes represent a comprehensive package of measures which once implemented will deliver on the aims and ambitions set out within the Circular Economy Bill.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

a. The delivery of waste management services is undertaken in accord with Scottish Government legislation and takes community factors appropriately into account. A key aim of the Recycling Improvement Fund project is to extend recycling opportunities to all including rural areas.

b. Impact assessments have been completed for the amendments made to the Household Waste Policy, the policy detailed in section 4 of this report provides details of mitigating measures for those impacted by the planned service changes.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

Reducing the amount of waste in refuse bins and increasing recycling, will have a positive impact on the environment from a reduction in carbon emissions associated with waste.

3.5 Risk

Within the Recycling Improvement Fund activity to deliver the collection services changes there are a number of risks to be managed given the extent and complexity of the processes behind delivering the transformation and ensuring phased timings are achieved. Of particular importance will be:

- i. The timely delivery of new food waste collection vehicles.
- ii. An uninterrupted supply of procured wheeled bins.
- iii. Householder and business engagement.
- iv. Delivering infrastructure projects that are essential to support service change, these are:
 - Fort William Waste Transfer Station
 - Portree Waste Transfer Station
 - Improvement work to Seater Waste Transfer Station.

3.6 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.

3.7 Gaelic

There are no Gaelic implications at present. Where changes to services are developed, information will be produced to include Gaelic language in keeping with Council policy.

4. Household Waste Policy

- 4.1 The Household Waste Policy has been updated to reflect the change in service, and a draft was presented to the member's working group on 1st September 2023. Impact Assessments were completed prior to the policy update.
- 4.2 The main change to the policy reflects the future household bin provision and the circumstances where additional bin capacity can be provided.
- 4.3 The new policy is included as an appendix to this report. Sections 7 to 12 of this new policy contain the relevant information on bin provision.

5. Recycling Improvement Fund Project

- 5.1 Members will recall, the recycling improvement fund project will deliver improved recycling and reduce levels of residual waste through a phased service change that will introduce a new twin-stream recycling service to all households across Highland.
- 5.2 The existing green general waste bin will be converted to collect the containers mix (plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays, cans, tins, foil, and cartons). The existing blue bin currently used for mixed recycling will be converted to collect the fibre mix (paper/card).
- 5.3 Residual (General) waste capacity will be reduced at the kerbside for all Highland householders as part of the service change. 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.
- 5.4 There will be a significant expansion of food waste collections, detail of areas that are included in the expansion is included in section 6. of this report. Route optimisation work played an important part in creating efficient collection routes that will maximise the quantity of food waste collected.

5.5 Work to Date

- 5.5.1 A full Project Plan and Risk Register has been developed and shared with the funder, and the Service Change Project Manager post commenced on 7th August 2023. The RIF project working group meets weekly, and RIF Board Meetings, which include highlight reports, are held monthly. To date, two quarterly reports have been submitted to the funder, along with the first quarterly finance claim.
- 5.5.2 Procurement processes have been carried out for the supply of two-wheeled bins, container distribution services, food waste caddies and the Containers Treatment Contract.
- 5.5.3 A Planning application has been submitted for Seater Waste Transfer Station and procurement preparations have commenced. The Planning application stage for Portree Waste Transfer Station has commenced.

6. Phased Roll-Out

- 6.1 The timescale for the delivery of the service changes including food waste collection areas is shown in table 1 below.

Area	Month the new bins will start being distributed	Food waste collection service expansion
Ross & Cromarty (including Dornoch)	Apr-24	Approximately 14,500 properties will be provided a food waste collection service. This includes: Alness, Avoch, Conon Bridge, Culbokie, Dingwall, Evanton, Fortrose, Invergordon, Kildary, Maryburgh, Milton, Munloch, Muir of Ord, Rosemarkie and Strathpeffer
Nairn	May-24	Approximately 5,500 properties within Nairn and Auldearn will be provided with a food waste collection service
Inverness	May-24	A further 3,000 properties in Inverness-shire will be provided with a food waste collection service which will expand the service within the area to a total of 37,000 properties. New areas include Ardersier, Beauly, Croy, Bunchrew, Drumnadrochit, Kirkhill and Torngrain.
Badenoch & Strathspey	Aug-24	
Caithness	Sep-24	
Sutherland	Oct-24 / Nov-24	
Skye & Lochalsh *Linked to the timescale for building a new waste transfer station	Mar-25	
Lochaber *Linked to the timescale for building a new waste transfer station	Apr-25	Approximately 6,000 properties will be provided with a food waste collection service. This includes Fort William, Caol and Corpach

7. Communications

- 7.1 A comprehensive communications and engagement plan has been developed to support householders and business through the transition to the new waste and recycling collection service. A high-level plan with the key communication messages and activities is shown in table 2. This has been informed liaising with Zero Waste Scotland.
- 7.2 The Waste Management Service have an experienced Waste Awareness Team who will be responsible for the engagement and communications with the public and businesses across the region.

- 7.3 The communication and engagement activity will be aligned to the bin distribution schedule detailed in table 1. A range of communication channels and methods will be utilised to maximise the potential to engage with the target audience; this includes the use of information booklets, posters, FAQ's and bin stickers along with multi-media content such as digital assets for social media, advertising on local media websites and using QR codes.
- 7.4 The communications messages will be clear and concise, informing the public when the changes are being implemented in their area. Data from a recent Waste Composition Analysis in Highland will be used to help explain the environmental and economic benefits of the recycling collection services.
- 7.5 A guide will be developed to inform householders of the materials they can recycle using the new twin stream recycling collection system and will be delivered to all households with their new bins. In addition, there will be a focus on a range of topics including home composting, how to reduce food waste, the benefits of reuse along with information on Household Waste Recycling Centres and materials accepted at Recycling Points.
- 7.6 A professionally designed, market tested, Recycle for Scotland, communication toolkit will be used as a basis for the guides, advertising and bin stickers. This will help generate greater recognition and response from our target audience and will tie in with national recycling campaign brand.
- 7.7 Community Engagement activities to raise awareness of the service change will include delivering talks and activities to schools & community groups (including housing tenant forums), attending roadshows and local events. Advice and support will also be given to residents and business owners during the bin distribution phase and whilst the new collections are taking place.

7.8 Table 2 – Messaging, communications, engagement

Activity	Teaser campaign	Bin delivery campaign	Launch of new recycling service campaign
Press releases & social media	Key messages: Intro – benefits, why, how, when. 'Look out for your letter'	Key messages: Reminder 'to put bins out', 'bin distribution schedule', 'look out for your new bin and information booklet'	Key message: Reminder of 'new collections are starting' and 'how to use the new recycling system'
Printed information	Letters delivered by Royal Mail 4 weeks prior to bin deliveries detailing the changes	16 page guide & new collection calendar delivered with the new bins including information on how to use the new service, other recycling services & tips on how to reduce waste.	Posters in public buildings
Bin stickers		Material specific stickers will be applied to each bin prior to the new collections starting	
Website content	Updated information, FAQs, bin distribution schedules	Updates & new bin collection calendars	Easy to find collection service information
Advertising in local press	Key message 'Look out for your letter'	Key messages 'Remember to put your refuse bin out', 'look out for your new bin and guide'	Key messages 'reminder new collections are starting', and 'how to use the new recycling system'
Digital assets (videos) to be shared on Social Media platforms, websites and for community engagement	Key message: Help the public know what, why and when	Key message: 'Bin delivery information', 'what to do when you get your bin', 'tips on how to use the new bins'	Key message: 'Tips on how to use to new recycling system'
Community engagement - deliver school workshops & activities, community group talks, roadshows, events, assisting the public with their new collections	Key message: Help the public know what, why and when	Support for residents with bin deliveries	Support & advice for residents with new recycling collection system

8. Fort William Waste Transfer Station

8.1 Updated Position

- a. Highland Council's Waste Service is seeking to construct a waste transfer station on ground adjacent to the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre at Ben Nevis Industrial Estate.
- b. It is anticipated that determination of the planning application (23/02722/FUL accessible via <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>) will take place at the South Area Planning Committee on 12 December 2023.
- c. Negotiations are progressing for a long-term ground lease. Should these be positively concluded, and should the planning application be successful, Council officers will work towards the waste transfer station being constructed and operational by late 2024/early 2025.
- d. The advent of this development would support the introduction of service change for the Lochaber area as part of the Highland-wide Recycling Improvement Fund investment.

8.2 The terms and conditions for a new long-term ground lease for the site hosting The Highland Council's existing household waste recycling centre operations are almost concluded. A date of entry is to be agreed to finalise the lease details.

9. Recycling Centre Controls

9.1 The Highland Council operates 21 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) throughout the Highlands. The Centres are designed to accept a wide variety of waste and recycling most commonly generated by householders; this includes the acceptance of limited quantities of manageable DIY waste from cars.

9.2 The Council's current amended recycling centre policy was agreed at Highland Council Committee on 12 March 2020. The minutes for this Committee meeting can be found at the following link, under section 12(i):
https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4254/highland_council/attachment/76761

9.3 It was agreed "There would be a restriction on vans, trailers and other large loads of waste containing construction and demolition wastes". By limiting construction and demolition materials at recycling centres it reduced the costs connected to mainly unauthorised waste from business activities. An agreed budget saving of £300k was achieved over two years (2019/20 and 2020/21).

9.4 Maintaining the control around construction and demolition waste (DIY) connected to trailers and small vans is viewed by the service as being essential for providing a level of control that reasonably eliminates unlawful and costly business waste entering HC sites. The risk of commercial waste entering our sites is mainly through small vans and trailers.

9.5 A Notice of Motion concerning HWRCs was submitted to Full Council on 29 June 2023. Following discussion, the Council agreed an amended Motion as follows:

"The current policy on access with trailers to recycling centres is causing confusion, inconvenience and additional unnecessary cost to householders. For example, old bricks, broken slabs and rockery stones (aka rubble) are acceptable in a car but not by trailer or van.

We therefore ask that the Council conducts a review of the Entry Guidance, Recycling Centres (HWRC) Conditions of Entry for trailers and vans, with a view to making the centres more accessible to householders disposing of non-commercial waste on their own behalf, and that the outcomes of the review will be considered by a Communities and Place Committee in 2023.”

9.6 **Proposed Trial**

Any change to the Entry Guidance would have both an operational and budgetary impact. Allowing the acceptance of unlimited quantities of DIY waste in any load (even where limited to once per day) would undermine the previous policy to minimise unlawful business waste from entering HWRCs. Limiting quantities of DIY waste in any delivery by a van or trailer may continue to discourage unlawful business waste from being deposited at the HWRCs but it is not known whether such a restriction would be effective.

9.7 To understand the impacts of amending the Entry Guidance to allow vans and trailers to deposit limited quantities of DIY waste, a 6 month trial is being proposed at one HWRC. This should provide sufficient information to understand the operational and budget impacts of changing the Entry Guidance across the Highland area.

9.8 To ensure the trial provides as much information as possible, it is proposed that the trial will be undertaken at the largest recycling centre, that is Inverness HWRC. All other HWRCs will continue to apply existing controls for the acceptance of DIY waste in a van or trailer as per the current policy.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Communities & Place

Date: 10 November 2023

Author: Alan McKinnie, Strategic Lead (Waste Strategy & Operations)

Background Papers:

Appendices: Household Waste and Recycling Policy



HOUSEHOLD WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTION POLICY

Environmental Protection Act 1990
(Sections 45 & 46)

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the arrangements for the kerbside collection of household waste from domestic properties in Highland. The policy sets out the services that the Highland Council will provide to households to contribute to the efficient and cost-effective management of waste in Highland. It also outlines the actions and behaviours required of householders to contribute to the policy objectives of minimising waste and improving the quality and quantity of recycling at kerbside.

The Household Waste and Recycling Collection Policy does not apply to business waste. A separate policy pertaining to business waste and recycling is available on the Highland Council's website.

2. Household Waste and the Law

The Council's relevant legal obligations are prescribed in the Environmental Protection Act 1990:

- 45(1)(a) to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area, except waste (i) which is situated at a place which in the opinion of the authority is so isolated or inaccessible that the cost of collecting would be unreasonably high (and that adequate arrangements for its disposal have been or can reasonably be expected to be made).
- 46(1) Where a waste collection authority has a duty by virtue of section 45(1)(a) above to arrange for the collection of household waste from any premises, the authority may, by the notice served on him, require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified.

In making requirements as respects receptacles under subsection(1) above, the authority may, by notice under that subsection, make provision with respect to:-

- a) The size, construction and maintenance of the receptacles
- b) The placing of the receptacle for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them and access to the receptacles for that purpose.
- c) The placing of the receptacles for that purpose on highways or, in Scotland, roads
- d) The substances or articles which may or may not be put into the receptacles or compartments of receptacles of any description and the precautions to be taken where particular substances or articles are put into them; and
- e) the steps to be taken by occupiers of premises to facilitate the collection of waste from the receptacle.

3. Collection Operating Hours

All householders must present their bin by 7am on the day of their collection. Although routes tend to be fixed, unforeseen circumstances may result in changes to normal route operation. Householders can confirm their collection days by visiting www.highland.gov.uk/bindays or by e-mailing recycle@highland.gov.uk

During normal conditions bins may be collected at any time during the working week (Monday to Friday) between 7am and 4pm. In other circumstances collection may be provided out with these times.

Christmas and New Year collection arrangements may differ from standard arrangements. Changes to scheduled collections over this period will be publicised ahead of time and affected householders will be advised of their alternative collection dates.

4. Missed Collections

Missed collections may result from vehicle breakdown, temporary restricted access, adverse weather, refuse crew error or a householder failing to present their bin on the scheduled collection day/time.

In the event of a missed collection resulting from no fault of the householder, collection staff will return to collect a missed collection where it is practicable to do so. In the event of a remote missed collection, the service will offer to remove excess black bags up to the equivalent volume of the missed collection (ordinarily 180 litres) on the next scheduled collection day.

The service will not return to collect a missed collection in the event of a householder failing to present their bin on the scheduled day or time. Nor will any additional waste be uplifted on the next scheduled collection day.

5. Adverse Weather Conditions

It is foreseeable that during adverse weather conditions the service is at risk of widespread disruption.

During adverse weather, when on route, the driver in consultation with a direct supervisor will make a decision whether to access a road / street based on route safety. During extreme conditions, the waste manager will make a decision on the withdrawal of a complete route or service.

Interruptions to service delivery on individual routes will be notified to the Service Centre for dissemination to the public. During area-wide service disruption in addition to notifying the Service Centre, service updates will be issued through the Highland Council's website and social media channels.

6. Collection Point

The collection point shall normally be at kerbside, or where no kerbside exists, at road end at the nearest point of an adopted roadway. The bin will be returned to the collection point after uplift.

The Council recognise that from past agreements, a number of existing collections are on an un-adopted roadway. The Council may change these collection points if:

- The road surface presents an unacceptable risk to personnel, property or vehicles.
- Safe vehicular access and egress can no longer be achieved.
- Re-routing demonstrates efficiency to the service.

Any decision to change a collection point will be based on a risk assessment undertaken by the Waste Management Officer.

New Housing Schemes

Where new houses have been occupied and the access roads being constructed for Council adoption are incomplete, the Waste Operations Manager will determine whether or not there is safe access for collection vehicles. If access is not considered safe meantime, uplift shall be at the nearest agreed point on the adopted road system.

7. Domestic Residual Waste Collection

This service provides to householders a collection of a 140/180 litre bin for residual waste. The residual bin will be collected on a scheduled day, on the alternate week to the bin collection for recycling.

8. Domestic Kerbside Recycling Collection

The Council will provide householders with a kerbside collection of two 240 litre recycling bins on a scheduled day on the alternate week to the residual bin collection (blue bin every four weeks and green bin every four weeks). The range of materials collected in the recycling bin may vary as markets develop or alter.

Householders will be given advance notification of any changes to the collection system. The materials currently accepted in household recycling bins are detailed in [Schedule 1 \(Section 1\)](#) of this Policy document and made available on the Highland Council recycling webpage.

9. Domestic Kerbside Food Waste Collection (where applicable)

The Council will provide householders in applicable areas with a weekly collection of a 23 litre caddy of domestic food waste. Where practicable the collection days will be scheduled to take place on the same weekday as households' residual and recycling collections.

To order replacement caddy liners, please tie a liner to the handle of your 23 litre caddy when you put it out for collection.

Information regarding the service and areas eligible for collections can be found on the Highland Council's Food Waste webpage.

10. Flatted Properties and other communal collections

Larger capacity bins to serve multiple properties are provided in specific circumstances for residual, recycle and food waste collections.

11. Bin Charges

Occupiers of new houses are required to supply a grey coloured wheeled bin with a capacity not greater than 180 litres.

Bins should comply with British Standard EN840 to ensure that they are able to be emptied safely and efficiently by collection vehicles. The Highland Council is unable to collect bins which are not compatible with the collection vehicles. Consequently, it is in householders' interests to confirm that any bins they purchase are suitable. The Council can supply and deliver a residual wheeled bin for a charge.

This charge is detailed in Schedule 1 (Section 2) of this Policy document. The charge will increase annually in April of each year in line with inflationary indices or as agreed by Members.

No charge will be levied for the supply of recycling bins. Replacement bins to existing houses will be provided free of charge.

12. Additional Bins

The standard provision to the householder is:

1 x 140/180* litre Residual Bin
2 x 240 litre Recycling Bins

*140 litre where food waste collections are provided, otherwise 180 litre.

Additional Capacity can be provided to a household where they can demonstrate a need.

One additional 140/180l residual wheeled bin and additional 240L dry recycling bins can be provided to a household:

- with five or more persons in permanent residence;
- where a householder's medical condition demonstrates a need for additional bin capacity or;
- where there are two children in nappies

In areas which receive the service, one additional 23 litre food waste caddy can also be provided to households meeting these criteria.

An application form must be completed for all requests. Applications will be subject to at least biannual reviews or at a frequency directed by the Strategic Lead (Waste Strategy & Operations). Householders may be required to demonstrate that they are making full use of the recycling service to the best of their ability before an additional refuse bin will be issued.

Only additional bins with an authorised 2nd bin sticker affixed will be uplifted.

13. Excess Waste

A bin will not be uplifted in the following circumstances:

- a) Where the bin is overfilled with refuse or recycle preventing closure of the lid
- b) Where a bin or storage area is inaccessible due to side waste
- c) Where the material contained in a bin is too heavy to be safely manoeuvred by the collection crew without risk of harm or injury
- d) Where the weight of the material in a bin is too great to be lifted by the collection vehicle or considered to pose a risk of causing damage

The bin will not be uplifted until the situation has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Council.

Excess waste out-with the bin will not be collected.

An overloaded bin or side waste will be highlighted to the householder by a sticker being attached to the bin.

14. Assisted “backdoor collections”

The Council will provide an assisted backdoor collection where the householder can demonstrate that they are physically unable to present their bin and no other permanent resident at the address can assist, and where collection vehicle access is achievable.

An application form must be completed for all requests. Applications will be subject to at least biannual reviews or at a frequency directed by the Strategic Lead (Waste Strategy & Operations).

15. Additional Services Available on Request

Where it is practicable to do so, the Council offers the following additional chargeable waste collection services on request to householders:

Bulky Uplift Service

This chargeable service provides householders with an uplift option for the collection of certain household wastes including a range of domestic items that cannot fit into the standard residual bins provided by the Highland Council for kerbside collections. The Bulky Uplift Collection Policy can be found at www.highland.gov.uk/bulkyuplift .

Garden Waste Collection Service

This chargeable service provides householders with an uplift option for the collection of organic garden waste on a scheduled day fortnightly. Garden Waste Collection Service Terms and Conditions can be found at www.highland.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

16. Contamination of Recycling Bins

A sticker will be attached to a recycling bin to alert a householder of a contamination problem. A contaminated recycling bin will not be collected until the bin is in a satisfactory condition i.e. – only contains recyclable material detailed in the information provided by the Council.

Waste Management Assistants and Officers will engage with households to provide advice and guidance where a contamination problem has been highlighted. Consideration will be given to taking action under S46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Sections 10 & 11 of the Circular Economy Bill against persistent offenders.

HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION POLICY

SCHEDULE 1

1. Specified Recycling Materials –

Blue Kerbside Recycling Bin – Fibres

Paper & envelopes – e.g. paper, envelopes, newspapers, magazines, catalogues, unwanted mail, telephone directories, greeting cards, shredded paper

Cardboard – e.g. food packaging (no food debris), cardboard boxes, egg boxes, toilet roll holders,

Green Kerbside Recycling Bin – Containers

Food tins, drink cans & aerosol cans – e.g. steel tins, aluminium cans, empty aerosol cans

Cartons - cardboard-based food & drinks cartons (tetrapaks)

Plastic – plastic bottles e.g. milk bottles, fizzy drink bottles, water bottles, detergent bottles, plastic bottle lids, plastic tubs, trays & pots (food related) e.g. yoghurt pots, ice cream tubs, margarine tubs, veg trays

Aluminium Foils & Trays – eg clean aluminium foil from lids, baking sheets, food trays, etc

2. Bin Purchase Charge – 2023/24

Bins for new houses cost £61.20 to purchase (including VAT and delivery), and will include:

- Residual Bin (140l/180l)
- Blue Recycling Bin (240l)
- Green Recycling Bin (240l)
- Food waste caddies (7l internal and 23l external) where the service is available

The bins can be purchased through the Highland Council website.

A Brown Garden Waste bin is available as part of the chargeable permitted service where available