

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Environment Committee****3 June 2015****Evaluation Report of the Improved Recycling Service Trial****Report by Depute Director (Environment)**

The report evaluates the Improved Recycling Service Trial which was introduced following approval by the Environment Committee on 4 June 2014.

The trial has been evaluated on a range of measures – public reaction, tonnages diversion, improved recycling and increased participation. The evidence gathered has been encouraging and provides confidence that the service could be rolled out across Perth and Kinross.

This report seeks approval to roll out an improved recycling service in 8 phases to all householders in Perth and Kinross on the 3 bin kerbside recycling service, over a 23 month period.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The recycling and composting rate for Perth and Kinross council is in excess of 50%, however this rate has recently plateaued. Legislative targets placed on all Scottish Local Authorities require a household waste recycling rate of 60% by 2020. To achieve these targets, changes to the current kerbside collection service are required.
- 1.2 Following approval at the Environment Committee on 4 June 2014 to trial the Improved Recycling Service, Waste Services undertook a trial to just under 5,000 householders in parts of Oakbank & Western Edge, Perth and Auchterarder and Aberuthven, commencing early November 2014.
- 1.3 The six month trial, based on collection service review findings, involved modifications to the existing 3 bin system. The green-lidded general waste bin, blue-lidded Dry Mixed Recyclate (DMR) bin and brown-lidded Garden & Food Waste (GFW) bin continued to be collected fortnightly as per the current 3 bin kerbside service.
- 1.4 The blue-lidded bin trial also allowed the opportunity to recycle a greater range of materials at the kerbside. Food & drink beverage cartons (tetra paks) and soft plastics (film) were able to be placed in the bin alongside paper, cardboard, ridged plastic and cans.
- 1.5 The most significant change was the standard size 240 litre general waste bin which was replaced with a slim-line 140 litre green-lidded wheeled bin. This was issued to all households to use for the disposal of non-recyclable waste, reducing the capacity available for the disposal of domestic general refuse.

- 1.6 Waste Analysis and a Participation Study were conducted in parallel within the trial area, and outwith in a control area, for the purpose of evaluating the success of the new service. This quantitative information along with tonnage data was supplemented by more qualitative feedback from householders, bin roll out teams and other frontline staff. This information was used for the purposes of evaluating the new service.
- 1.7 This information has been used to make recommendations on how to develop and deliver kerbside recycling services in the future across Perth & Kinross. It also details the arrangements to rollout the new service further, subject to committee approval and funding availability.

2. PROPOSALS

Tonnage Results

- 2.1 The trial has been monitored over a six month period and has shown a 27% reduction in general waste uplifted at the kerbside and a 22% increase in kerbside recycling. These tonnage figures suggest that the slim-line green-lidded bin contains around 1.8kg less per household per week of waste. This can be accounted for by the increase of 0.6kg in the blue-lidded bin and 0.8kg of food waste in brown-lidded bin. The remaining 0.4kg reduction in general waste which is unaccounted for is likely to be captured through local recycling centres and points.
- 2.2 The decrease in general waste and increase in DMR has improved the overall recycling rate in all of the trial areas. Similar results have not been experienced in the non-trial control area (Invergowrie).
- 2.3 When the potential increase in the Kerbside Recycling Rate is looked at, together with the possible increase in recycling centres and points rate, it indicates that a fully implemented service would result in Perth and Kinross Council being on course to increase the Household Waste and Recycling rate beyond 60%.

Materials Accepted

- 2.4 One of the changes to the Improved Recycling Service trial was the addition of soft plastics (film) and Food & Beverage cartons (tetra pak).
- 2.5 While the increased material range helped the public's acceptance of the new service, very little tonnage of these new materials was actually diverted. Data from our reprocessors show that around only 0.3% of the blue bin material was made up of Food & Beverage cartons, while 2.15% of the material they received from the trial areas was soft plastic (film).

- 2.6 To include the additional materials, our current reprocessor charges a higher gate fee, due to their Material Recovery Facility not being set up to mechanically sort the new material streams. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of these materials when the service is rolled out further as the higher processing costs impact the financial viability of introducing the scheme.
- 2.7 Going forward it is hoped that, as part of the re-tender process, the extra items can be accommodated within the existing budgets for processing.
- 2.8 The volatile market position for items like soft plastic (film) leads to speculation that reprocessors will be unlikely to want soft plastics co-mingled with the other material streams.
- 2.9 However, early conversations with the current Material Recovery Facility suggest that Food & Beverage cartons could be included in the mix at the existing gate fee.

Householder Participation

- 2.10 A participation study was conducted in 2 of the trial areas (Auchterarder & Western Edge) and compared with a non-trial control area (Invergowrie). The participation rate is calculated from the number of householders presenting a bin at least once over 3 consecutive collection cycles.
- 2.11 The trial area results show a slightly higher participation in the blue-lidded bin, with 91% of households participating in the blue-lidded bin service in the non-trial control area; this increases up to 97% in the trial areas.
- 2.12 The brown-lidded bin has a smaller number of households participating. However this increased throughout the study as the weather started to improve and households started to produce more garden waste. The study was conducted throughout February – March 2014.
- 2.13 The participation rate in the Garden & Food Waste service is 5% higher in the trial area which could be attributed to householders being actively encouraged to recycle food waste through this service.
- 2.14 It is interesting to note that even though the size of the general waste bin has been reduced householders are not putting it out more. The set out rate for the green-lidded bin was lower in the trial area than in the control. This, matched with the increase in blue bin set out, is encouraging as it indicates residents may have begun to prioritise recycling over disposal.

Contamination

- 2.15 Contamination information received from the Material Recovery Facility reports a similar contamination rate (8.53%) from loads collected from the trial area and from non-trial areas. Waste analysis of the blue lidded bin in the trial area shows a lower contamination level of 6.5%, compared with 8% from control area bins.

Financial Assessment

- 2.16 A baseline figure has been calculated by factoring the current charges associated with disposal/reprocessing waste and recycling from households on the existing kerbside recycling service. When the 140 litre bins were introduced total savings from the baseline, based on the trial results of 27% landfill reduction and 22% Dry Mixed Recyclates increase, have been applied.
- 2.17 The net cost/saving takes into account this reduced spend and factors in the expenditure associated with introducing the service. The reduction in the annual cost from the baseline is a recurring saving, that year on year should reduce waste disposal expenditure.
- 2.18 To trial a roll out across Perth and Kinross would take 23 months. The costs associated with the 23 month roll out period have been taken into account in achieving the approved budget savings of £220k.
- 2.19 Waste analysis of the brown-lidded Garden & Food Waste bins suggests food waste from the general waste bin is being diverted into the brown bin. This increase when scaled up could result in a sizable shift of material and the associated processing cost has been factored in to any savings.
- 2.20 Zero Waste Scotland has been very supportive in assisting the Council, previously providing financial assistance to establish a project team who facilitated the introduction of the trial service. By regularly attending the trial co-ordinating group meetings, they have been kept up to date with the trial's progress. Discussions with them are ongoing and it is hoped that they can allocate support to help build on the trial's success. An evaluation report of the Improved Recycling Service Trial will be submitted to Zero Waste Scotland if the recommendations in the report are approved.

Provision of Second General Waste Bins

- 2.21 As part of introducing the trial service the current Household Waste & Recycling Bin Policy was reviewed. It was decided that households which produce excess non-recyclable waste could apply for additional capacity if they met the following criteria.
- i. There are five or more permanent residents in the household; or
 - ii. There are particular Healthcare Wastes; or
 - iii. There are 2 or more children aged 3 or under in disposable nappies.
- 2.22 It will no longer be possible for households to pay for additional capacity. Only households that meet the criteria and show that they are fully utilising the recycling service are provided with a second bin, free of charge.

Properties Excluded from the Service

- 2.23 Only households already participating in the 3 bin system will be invited to participate in the service. Householders concerned about the space required to store additional blue and brown lidded recycling bins were offered the opportunity to order additional recycling bins in 140 litre size to minimise the space required to store the bins necessary to fully participate.

Householder Feedback

- 2.24 Results from a door-step engagement survey conducted in the Auchterarder & Aberuthven trial areas showed high levels of awareness about the service change, with 85% of householders aware that they could now recycle more through the kerbside blue-lidded bin.
- 2.25 The service change was shown to be having a positive influence on household behaviour, with the majority of respondents (68%) stating that participating in the trial was encouraging them to recycle more.
- 2.26 The communication material had a high recall rate and was very well received with regards to both timing and content. 78% of people who provided feedback remembered receiving the mailing, with almost the same amount stating it was received in sufficient time before service introduction.
- 2.27 During inclement weather where bins were missed calls were received to prioritise the uplift of the blue lidded bin, however this may not be practicable for every household. If a green lidded bin is missed during severe weather, excess bags are collected on the next scheduled collections. Therefore, it is proposed to investigate the potential of collecting bagged recyclables in the event of a missed blue lidded bin. If this is feasible, the Severe Weather procedure will be reviewed.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Improved Recycling Service trial is working well on the ground and encouraging trends with regard to landfill diversion and overall recycling rates are being experienced.
- 3.2 As a result of the commitment of the residents in the trial area to embrace the new service and the hard work of the staff involved, real change is being achieved.
- 3.3 The success of the trial has been evaluated on a range of measures – public reaction, tonnage diversion, improved recycling and increased participation. The evidence gathered has been very encouraging and provides confidence that the service could be rolled out across Perth and Kinross.
- 3.4 Full implementation of the service will require resources if trends experienced in the trial area are to be mirrored across Perth & Kinross.

- 3.5 It is recommended that the improved recycling service is rolled out in 8 phases to all householders in Perth and Kinross currently on the 3 bin kerbside recycling service, over a 23 month period subject to committee approval and funding.
- 3.6 The introduction of the Improved Recycling Service provides the Council with an opportunity to meet budget savings targets, and meet the Scottish Government recycling targets for 2020.
- 1.7 It is recommended that the Environment Committee agree to:
- i) The introduction of 140 litre wheeled bins for the collection of general waste in 8 phases to all householders in Perth & Kinross currently on the 3 bin kerbside recycling service, over a 23 month period.
 - ii) Cease collection of unauthorised second general waste bins. Only householders meeting the set criteria will be entitled to additional capacity and no charge will be made for its provision.
 - iii) Review the trial area bin policy and implement amended version as part of the Service Change.
 - iv) Investigate the potential to collect bagged recyclates in the event of missed uplifts, and if feasible review the Severe Weather Procedure.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan /Single Outcome Agreement by reducing the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production by managing municipal waste and increasing recycling and composting rates.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted on the proposals contained within this report.

- 2.2 The full roll out of the initiative will achieve the approved budget savings contained in the 2015/16 revenue budget of £220k. Budget flexibility is being used to manage the approved saving in the short term until the full savings are realised.
- 2.3 A funding application has been made to Zero Waste Scotland, and it is hoped that they can allocate support to help build on the trials success.
- 2.4 If external funding for the Improved Recycling Service cannot be secured the Council will investigate how to fund the roll out, including approval to raise the additional £1m prudential borrowing to purchase the 140 litre bins.

Workforce

- 2.5 The Personnel Manager has been consulted on the proposals contained within this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.6 The Corporate Asset Management team have been consulted on the replacement bin programme and recycling of previously purchased 240 litre wheeled bins.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
 - (i) Assessed as relevant and positive outcomes expected as part of the Service implementation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. The proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the proposals contained within the report, in particular the ceasing collection of 2nd general waste bins previously purchased by householders.

Risk

- 3.6 The financial savings contained in this report are theoretical and are based on landfill diversion, not collection costs, therefore savings are reliant on the participation of the public.
- 3.7 Risks associated with the proposals will be identified and managed through the Service project management processes and procedures.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance, the Corporate Human Resources Manager and the Head of Legal Services have been consulted on the content of this report.
- 4.2 The Local Elected Members who represent the trial areas have been consulted on the contents of this report.

External

- 4.3 Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) will continue to be consulted in the development and implementation of the service.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communications plan will be developed as part of the project management of the proposed trial.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report:

- Waste and Recycling Bin Policy (Report No 07/405)
- Review of Kerbside Waste and Recycling Collection Arrangements (Report No. 11/103)
- Waste and Recycling Collection Service Review (Report No. 14/251)

3. APPENDICES

There are no appendices with this report.