

RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council is both a waste collection and waste disposal authority. Waste and recycling collections are delivered mainly by Council staff with some recycling collections carried out by third sector groups.
- 1.2 Waste disposal is dealt with by 3 separate models across the council as follows:
- island sites e.g. on Mull and Islay which are operated directly by the council;
 - a 25 year (2001 – 2026) Waste PPP contract which covers the rest of Argyll and Bute with the exception of Helensburgh and Lomond;
 - Helensburgh and Lomond area where waste is disposed of at sites outside of Argyll and Bute.
- 1.3 The Council's combined recycling, composting and recovery (which includes other landfill diversion) rate has risen gradually from 41.7% in 2012 to circa 49.4% in 2017.
- 1.4 Recycling and composting has risen from 33.9% in 2016 to circa 36.5% in 2017 with the combined recycling, composting and recovery rate rising from 46.5% in 2016 to circa 49.4% in 2017.
- 1.5 Overall landfill has reduced from 53.5% in 2016 to 50.6% in 2017.
- 1.6 National policy decisions, guidance and regulations e.g. relating to the 2021 biodegradable landfill ban will likely have a significant impact on future recycling, composting and recovery performance.
- 1.7 In recent years the council has introduced co-mingled recycled collections (2013/14) and also 3 weekly general waste collections (2016/17). These initiatives have had a positive impact on increasing the percentage of material recycled and reducing waste to landfill.
- 1.8 It is recommended that Members note the details, as outlined in this report, and the national policy drivers that will likely impact over the next few years.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council is both a waste collection and waste disposal authority. Recycling, composting and recovery (i.e. other landfill diversion) statistics are reported quarterly within the Council's performance system Pyramid. Overall the council's performance has improved from 2016 to 2017 with an increase in material recycled and a reduction in material to landfill. Statutory returns to SEPA e.g. licensed site tonnage, landfill tax and waste data flow vary from quarterly to annual.
- 2.2 This report provides details on the Council's recycling and landfill diversion performance along with national policy, targets and regulations which are likely to impact on future performance.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members note the details, as outlined in this report, and the national policy drivers that will likely impact over the next few years.

4.0 DETAILS

- 4.1 Argyll and Bute Council operate a performance management system 'Pyramid'. Quarterly recycling/composting, recovery and landfill percentages are included - split between the Islands, Waste Management PPP and Helensburgh/Lomond areas. These details include:
- percentage of waste recycled and composted;
 - percentage of waste recovered e.g. other landfill diversion;
 - combined percentage of waste recycled, composted and recovered;
 - percentage of waste to landfill;
 - tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill.
- 4.2 The combined recycled, composted and recovery percentage in 2012 was 41.7% and this has risen gradually since then to a rate of circa 49.4% in 2017. The 2017 figures are caveated at this stage as it is only when SEPA publish the annual statutory returns in September that Council waste figures can be classed

as official figures. Also it should be noted that when SEPA publish the annual statistics, the focus is mainly on the recycling and composting for household waste. A table showing the various percentage figures is shown below.

**Percentages Summary of Landfill, Recycling, Composting and Recovery-
2016 and 2017**

		2016	2017
Argyll and Bute wide	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	46.5%	49.4%
	% waste recycled and composted	33.9%	36.5%
	% waste recovered	12.6%	12.9%
	% waste landfilled	53.5%	50.6%
	Tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill	20,949	18,556
Waste PPP area	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	52.6%	52.8%
	% waste recycled and composted	33.9%	34.9%
	% waste recovered	18.6%	17.9%
	% waste landfilled	47.4%	47.2%
Helensburgh and Lomond	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	39.3%	44.9%
	% waste recycled and composted	35.2%	38.6%
	% waste recovered	4.1%	6.3%
	% waste landfilled	60.7%	55.1%
Islands	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	28.4%	40.4%
	% waste recycled and composted	28.4%	40.4%
	% waste recovered	0.0%	0.0%
	% waste landfilled	71.6%	59.6%

Some points to note are as follows:

- From 2016 to 2017, overall combined recycling, composting and recovery percentages have increased (from 46.5% to 49.4%) and landfill has decreased

(from 53.5% to 50.6%).

- Recycling and composting is mainly from recycling collections, bring sites and segregated wastes from recycling/civic amenity sites. Recovery is predominantly moisture process loss and/or compost like output from mixed waste treatment plants operated by the Council's Waste PPP partner or other waste contractors.
- The tonnage of biodegradable waste landfilled is estimated at 63% of the total tonnage landfilled.
- In percentage terms, the Waste PPP area has the highest level of combined recycling, composting and recovery (at 52.8%), followed by Helensburgh and Lomond (44.9%) then the Islands (40.4%).

5.0 NATIONAL POLICY DRIVERS

In 2010, The Scottish Government produced the Zero Waste Plan and in 2012 the Waste (Scotland) Regulations were published. Since then further national policy drivers e.g. return deposit schemes have been announced. This section details some of the national policy drivers and possible implications for future recycling, composting and recovery performance.

5.1 Zero Waste Plan Targets

The Zero Waste Plan was produced by the Scottish Government in 2010 and includes the following non-statutory targets:

- 50% recycling/composting from households in 2013
- 60% recycling/composting from households in 2020
- 70% recycling/composting from households in 2025
- No more than 5% of all waste should go to landfill in 2025.

While the Council's combined recycling, composting and recovery rate is approaching 50% (circa 49.4% in 2017) it is still some way short of the 50% and 60% mark on purely recycling/composting (circa 36.5% in 2017).

When considering recycling and composting rates, the top performing Scottish Local Authorities have comprehensive separate organics collections to households i.e. food waste and garden waste collections.

Argyll and Bute Council does not provide garden waste collections although there is provision at civic amenity and recycling sites where green garden waste can be deposited by the public for onward composting or recovery. Home composting is also encouraged where possible to avoid such materials entering the waste stream.

A food waste collection is provided only in the Helensburgh and Lomond area (food waste collections are a statutory requirement in the Helensburgh area).

A modelling exercise was carried out to estimate the costs of extending a food waste recycling service throughout the Argyll and Bute area and the additional costs were estimated at circa £1million per annum. Within the current financial climate it has not

been possible to extend any food waste recycling collection beyond the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

As part of the transformation work being carried out in Roads and Amenity Services a work stream has been identified to assess the practical and financial viability of providing a paid for (by residents) green waste collection service, which is likely to be expensive if full cost recovery was to be achieved. The work stream will also compare promoting and marketing the benefits of home recycling to help communities become more resilient.

5.2 Waste (Scotland) Regulations

The Waste (Scotland) Regulations were introduced by the Scottish Government in 2012. The regulations included the following key objectives:

- Local Authority provision of recycling services to domestic properties and businesses (charges can be levied for business collections) in 2014.
- Local Authority provision of food waste collections to domestic properties and businesses (exemptions exist for food waste collections in rural areas) in 2014/15.
- High quality recyclates producing 'closed loop' recycling.
- Restrictions on inputs to Energy from Waste Facilities (EfW); and
- A ban on biodegradable municipal waste to landfill from January 2021.

A Waste Strategy Committee Paper was produced and approved in October 2012 by the Council. The Committee Report detailed how the Council intended to comply with the majority of the regulations' objectives which were required within the early compliance years i.e. 2014 and 2015. A Waste Strategy update paper which also flagged up future financial challenges was presented and approved at the ED&I Committee in April 2016.

With the January 2021 ban on biodegradable waste to landfill now just a couple of years away, draft guidance on the ban is expected shortly from The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Thereafter, it is vital that the Council has detailed plans in 2018/19 for this significant change in national waste policy. A Waste Strategy Project Manager has recently been appointed to take forward much of the planning required which will likely include:

- Preparation for the possible provision of waste transfer sheds at the Council waste and recycling facilities at Glengorm on Mull and Gartbreck on Islay. It is likely that the landfill elements at both facilities may have to close by the end of 2020 if not before. The current landfill cell at Glengorm may be full by early 2019 and therefore a transfer shed may be required by then assuming a new landfill cell is not constructed.
- Contract negotiations required with Waste PPP partner Renewi (formally called Shanks) as the landfill ban will be a significant change to the current contract which runs up until 2026.
- Preparation of a suitable residual general waste treatment contract for such waste from the Helensburgh and Lomond area. Any such waste treatment contract would have to ensure compliance with the landfill ban prior to the end of

2020.

5.3 Deposit Return Scheme for Drinks Containers

In 2017, The Scottish Government announced the intention to introduce a Deposit Return scheme for drinks containers which is likely to include plastic bottles, aluminium cans and glass bottles.

While this will hopefully have an overall positive environmental impact on littering and recycling, this may reduce Council recycling rates if such containers are no longer collected within Council recycling schemes. Glass bottles in particular, being one of the heavier recycling materials, provides a significant element of recycling tonnage (circa 3,000 tonnes per annum).

Also, with regards to plastics recycling, plastic bottles are one of the more 'valuable' recycling materials which have a proven end market. If these are also removed from Council collections, this may leave only lower grade plastics e.g. pots, tubs and trays for Councils. Such lower grade plastics which have minimal or no value could result in higher recycling processing or 'gate fee' costs.

It would appear that the intention is to introduce a Deposit Scheme in 2019/20 and the Council will require to keep an eye on the proposals as they develop from the Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Progress has been made on recycling, composting and recovery performance with almost 50% of waste diverted from landfill in 2017. National Policy drivers such as the 2021 ban on biodegradable waste to landfill will likely have significant implications for future waste treatment and landfill diversion performance.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy	National policies and regulations will likely impact on future landfill diversion performance.
7.2 Financial	The 2021 ban on biodegradable waste to landfill will have financial implications. A Waste Strategy Project Manager has been appointed to review the Council's waste strategy in light of this change.
7.3 Legal	The Zero Waste Plan recycling targets are not statutory. The 2021 landfill ban is a legal requirement under the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The ban will also likely result in changes to the Waste PPP contract.
7.4 HR	None

- 7.5 Equalities** None.
- 7.6 Risk** Risks to the Council on the 2021 landfill ban are mainly financial. A national deposit scheme for drinks containers will hopefully have overall environmental benefits although it may impact negatively on the Council recycling rate.
- 7.7 Customer Services** None at present.

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