

**RECYCLING PERFORMANCE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council is both a waste collection and waste disposal authority.
- 1.2 Waste disposal is dealt with by 3 separate models across the council as follows:
- Island sites e.g. on Mull and Islay where landfill sites are operated directly by the council;
  - Helensburgh and Lomond area where waste is disposed of at sites outside of Argyll and Bute;
  - A 25 year (2001 – 2026) Waste PPP contract which covers the rest of Argyll and Bute.
- 1.3 Waste figures for all four administrative areas have been summarised within this report. Due to the way the reporting is carried out it is not possible to accurately break down the information on an area by area basis for all data.
- 1.4 National policy decisions, guidance and regulations e.g. relating to the Biodegradable Municipal Waste landfill ban will have a significant impact on future recycling, composting and recovery performance.
- 1.5 It is recommended that Members note and give consideration to 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. Statutory returns to SEPA e.g. licensed site tonnage, landfill tax and waste data flow vary from quarterly to annual.

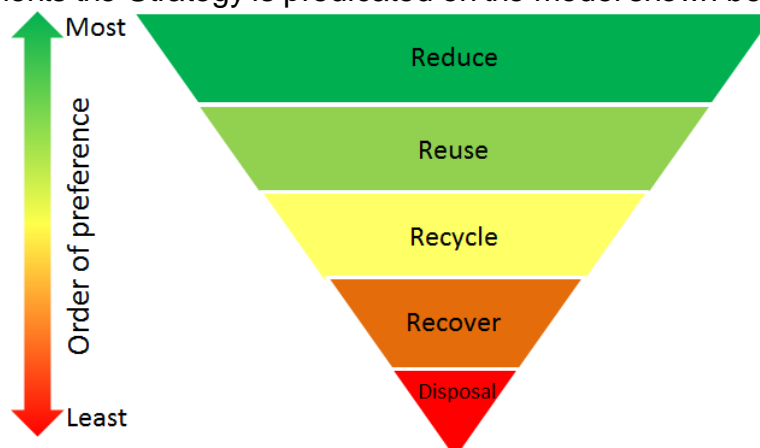
2.2 This report provides details on the council's recycling and landfill diversion performance along with national policy, targets and regulations which are likely to impact on future performance.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Members note and give consideration to the details as outlined within this report and the national policy drivers that will likely impact over the next few years.

**4.0 DETAILS**

4.1 The council's waste strategy was approved by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2019. Whilst this strategy will emerge in line with government guidance, regulation legislation, and contractual requirements the Strategy is predicated on the model shown below in Figure 1.



4.2 Argyll and Bute Council operate a performance management system 'Pyramid'. Quarterly recycling/composting, recovery and landfill percentages are included – split between the Islands landfill sites, 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.

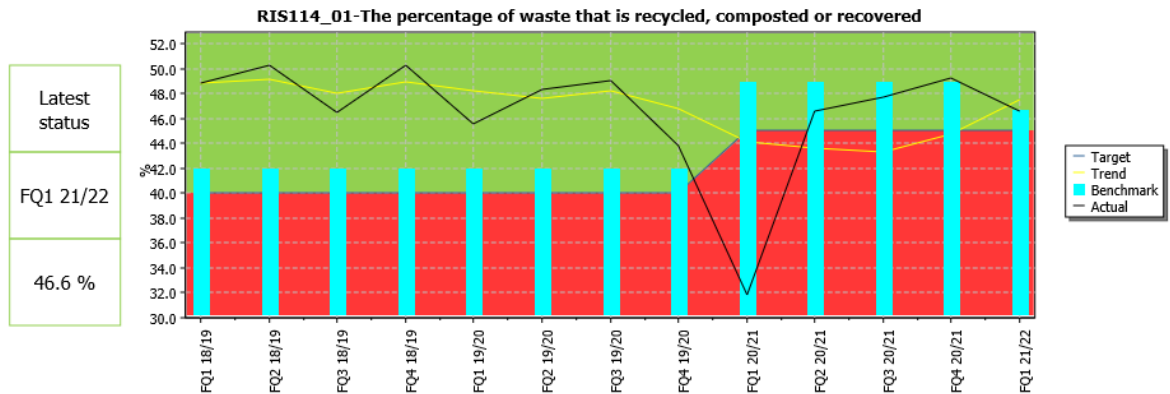
### Percentages Summary of Landfill, Recycling, Composting and Recovery 2019 and 2020

		2019	2020
Argyll & Bute wide	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	48.4%	43.7%
	% waste recycled and composted	35.4%	27.8%
	% waste recovered	13.0%	15.9%
	% waste landfilled	51.6%	56.3%
	Tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill	18,577	18,435
Waste PPP	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	46.6%	45.1%
	% waste recycled and composted	28.5%	23.6%
	% waste recovered	18.1%	21.5%
	% waste landfilled	53.4%	54.9%
Helensburgh & Lomond	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	53.0%	43.9%
	% waste recycled and composted	45.3%	34.6%
	% waste recovered	7.8%	9.3%
	% waste landfilled	47.0%	56.1%
Islands	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	44.4%	33.8%
	% waste recycled and composted	44.4%	31.7%

	% waste recovered	0.0%	2.1%
	% waste landfilled	55.6%	66.2%

4.3 Some points to note are as follows:

- There was a drop in recycling performance in 2020 due to the Council kerbside recycling services being suspended and the Recycling/Civic amenity sites being closed during the early months of the first COVID-19 lockdown.
- During the first 3 months of the pandemic, Council recycling services were minimal. Recycling/Civic amenity sites were required to close Scotland wide. Recycling/ Civic amenity sites re-opened in early June 2020 and most of Argyll and Bute Council’s kerbside recycling services re-started in late June. The council recycling performance has returned to more normal levels and it is anticipated that 2021 figures will be more in line with pre pandemic rates.
- The combined recycled, composted and recovery rate has decreased from 48.4% in 2019 to 43.7% in 2020. This is due to the aforementioned reasons which are noted above, this has therefore resulted in a sharp decline in recycling levels during the April – June 2020 quarter due to the pandemic and the fact that the Council had suspended recycling collections and moving to a fortnightly general waste collection. This is reflected in the graph below which is an extract from Pyramid.



- The recovery in the Waste PPP area is carried out by Renewi through mechanical biological treatment plants based at their waste facilities near Oban, Dunoon and Lochgilhead.
- The recovery in the Helensburgh and Lomond area is mainly carried out by Barr Environmental at their Auchencarroch waste facility near Alexandria.
- The percentage of waste recovered at Renewi and Barr mixed waste treatment facilities increased from the previous year.

- The overall percentage waste to landfill in 2020 (56.3%) was higher than 2019 (51.6%) again due to the suspension of most recycling services for circa 3 months.
- The tonnage of biodegradable waste to landfill in 2020 (i.e.18,435 tonnes) was slightly less than in 2019 (i.e.18,577 tonnes).This was mainly due to there being no tourists during the first lockdown plus most businesses were closed and tonnages dropped.
- Recycling and composting is mainly from recycling collections, bring sites and segregated wastes from Recycling/Civic amenity sites. Recovery is predominantly a 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.
- SEPA published annual recycling data for local authorities focuses mainly on recycling and composting from households.

### **Landfill Ban**

- 4.4 The Waste (Scotland) Regulations were introduced by the Scottish Government in 2012 and they included a landfill ban of biodegradable waste from 2021 .
- 4.5 The landfill ban planned for 2021 has since been rescheduled by the Scottish Government until 2025. This delay has been welcomed by the Council and gives more time for alternative solutions and funding to be sought.

### **Deposit Return Scheme**

- 4.6 The Scottish Government in 2019 set out a planned implementation date of April 2021 for a national deposit return scheme for drinks containers including PET plastic drinks bottles, drinks cans and glass bottles. Since the COVID-19 outbreak the implementation date has been delayed until July 2022 with the possibility of a further delay until early 2023.
- 4.7 The deposit return scheme may result in an overall Scotland wide increase in recycling. However, this may see a reduction in Council recycling performance if items such as glass drinks bottles are no longer handled by Council collections. Much will depend on how the scheme is implemented by The Scottish Government through the Scheme Administrator Circularity Scotland in the coming years.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Steady progress has been made on recycling, composting and recovery, performance was affected during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the council kerbside collection services returning and recycling/civic amenity sites re-opening in June 2020, a more normal recycling level has returned. It is hoped and anticipated that 2021 recycling, composting and recovery figures will show overall landfill diversion rates similar to pre pandemic levels,

approaching close to 50%. National Policy drivers such as the ban on biodegradable waste to landfill will have significant implications for future waste treatment and landfill diversion performance.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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|-----|-------------------|---|
| 6.1 | Policy            | National policies and regulations will likely impact on future landfill diversion performance. The councils policy is to reduce landfill.   |
| 6.2 | Financial         | The 2025 ban on biodegradable waste to landfill will have financial implications.   |
| 6.3 | Legal             | The landfill ban (now delayed until 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2025) is a legal requirement under the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Complying with the ban will also likely result in changes to the Waste PPP contract which is due to expire in September 2026. |
| 6.4 | HR                | None  |
| 6.5 | Equalities        | None  |
| 6.6 | Risk              | Risks to the council on the landfill ban are mainly financial. A national deposit scheme for drinks containers will hopefully have an overall environmental benefit, although it may impact negatively on council recycling rates.                                    |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | None at present.  |

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