

RECYCLING AND RECOVERY PERFORMANCE

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 coming years.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

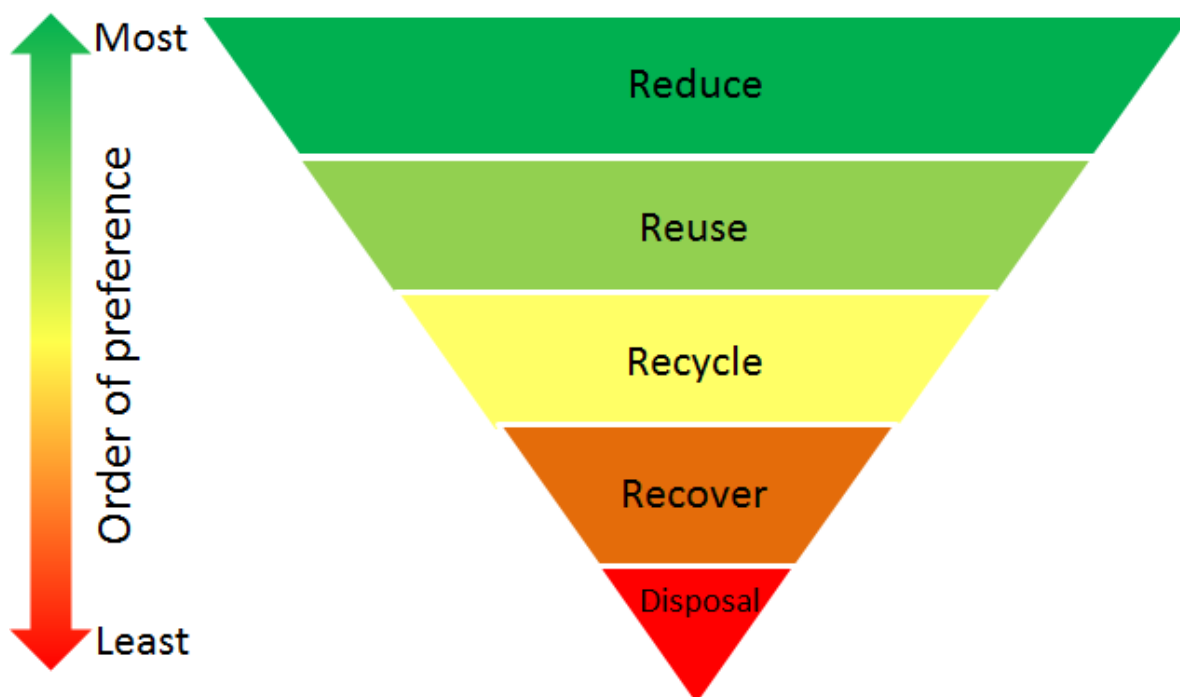
- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council is both a waste collection and waste disposal authority. Recycling, composting and recovery (i.e. other landfill diversion) statistics are reported quarterly within the council's performance system Pyramid. Statutory returns to SEPA e.g. licensed site tonnage, landfill tax 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 in this report and the national policy drivers that will likely impact over the coming 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 in Figure 1 below.



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, 2020 and 2021

		2019	2020	2021
Argyll & Bute wide	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	48.4%	43.7%	49.3%
	% waste recycled and composted	35.4%	27.8%	36.2%
	% waste recovered	13.0%	15.9%	13.0%
	% waste landfilled	51.6%	56.3%	50.7%
	Tonnes of municipal waste to landfill	29,488	29,261	29,875
Waste PPP	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	46.6%	45.1%	50.6%

	% waste recycled and composted	28.5%	23.6%	33.0%
	% waste recovered	18.1%	21.5%	17.6%
	% waste landfilled	53.4%	54.9%	49.4%
Helensburgh & Lomond	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	53.0%	43.9%	50.8%
	% waste recycled and composted	45.3%	34.6%	42.7%
	% waste recovered	7.8%	9.3%	8.1%
	% waste landfilled	47.0%	56.1%	49.2%
Islands	% of waste recycled, composted and recovered	44.4%	33.8%	36.3%
	% waste recycled and composted	44.4%	31.7%	34.8%
	% waste recovered	0.0%	2.1%	1.5%
	% waste landfilled	55.6%	66.2%	63.7%

4.3 Some points to note are as follows:

- There was a drop in recycling performance in 2020 due to Council kerbside recycling services being suspended and recycling/civic amenity sites were closed during the early months of the first COVID lockdown. In 2021, all recycling services returned to normal throughout the year which is reflected in the increase in recycling rates compared to 2020.
- During these first 3 months of the pandemic in 2020, Recycling/civic amenity sites, which were required to close Scotland wide. The site were re-opened in early June 2020. There were no closures in 2021 which contributed to an increase in recycling compared to 2020.
- The combined recycled, composted and recovery rate has increased from 43.7% in 2020 to 49.3% in 2021. This is mainly due to the reasons described above.
- The combined recycling, composting and recovery rate in 2019 was 48.4%. The 2021 combined rate of 49.3% would indicate that our

overall recycling and landfill diversion rates in 2021 returned to pre-covid levels. There are some disposal area differences when comparing 2019 and 2021, e.g. most of the glass collected in the Helensburgh/Lomond and the PPP areas is serviced by a dedicated glass collection vehicle and staffing based in Helensburgh. Depending on collection volumes and routes, the vehicle will sometimes discharge the glass at PPP sites and on other occasions at the Helensburgh site which varies the location where the glass is registered as being recycled. In 2021, there was significantly more glass discharged for recycling at the PPP sites (and subsequently less at the Helensburgh site) compared to 2019 levels. In the Islands disposal area, there was a drop in recycling from 2021 compared to 2019, this is mainly due to a large reduction in wood delivered for recycling at our Mull and Islay facilities.

- The recovery in the Waste PPP area is carried out by Renewi through residual waste mechanical biological treatment plants based at their waste facilities near Oban, Dunoon and Lochgilphead.
- The recovery in the Helensburgh and Lomond area is mainly carried out by Barr Environmental at their Auchencarroch waste facility, near Alexandria.
- There was an increase of circa 13% in overall municipal solid waste tonnages in 2021 compared to 2020. Tonnages in 2020 were much lower than normal mainly due to the sharp reduction in visitors and the closure of many commercial premises during the first lockdown in 2020. However, it is noteworthy that the 2021 tonnages were still higher by circa 3% compared to 2019. The overall tonnage increase in 2021 is likely due to the high number of staycation visitors during the year plus some new housing developments have come on stream e.g. Dunbeg (Oban).
- The overall percentage waste to landfill in 2021 (50.7%) was lower than 2020 (56.3%) again mainly due to the suspension of most recycling services for circa 3 months during the first lockdown in 2020.
- The tonnage of municipal waste to landfill in 2021 (i.e. 29,875 tonnes) was slightly more than in 2020 (i.e. 29,261 tonnes). This was mainly due to the overall tonnage drop in 2020 plus the 2021 tonnage increase as previously described.
- Recycling and composting is mainly from recycling collections, bring sites and segregated wastes from recycling/civic amenity sites. Recovery is predominantly moisture and process loss/use and/or compost like output from mixed waste treatment plants operated by the council's Waste PPP partner and 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 was welcomed by the Council and gives more time for alternative solutions and funding to be sought. An update report on the Waste PPP/Landfill Ban can be found at the September 2022 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

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 (DRS) for drinks containers including PET plastic drinks bottles, drinks cans and glass bottles. During the COVID-19 outbreak the implementation date was delayed by the Scottish Government until July 2022 and then subsequently until August 2023. Circularity Scotland have since been appointed by The Scottish Government to administer and operate the scheme throughout Scotland.
- 4.7 The DRS scheme may result in an overall Scotland wide increase in recycling including other environmental benefits e.g. current non-recyclers may use the scheme plus there should be less littering of such items. The scheme may however, see a reduction in Council recycling performance if items such as glass drinks bottles are no longer handled by Council glass collections albeit they should still be recycled in future via the DRS scheme. The DRS scheme aims to capture 70% of such items during the first year of implementation then rising to 90% in future years. Much will depend on how the scheme is implemented by the Scottish Government and Scheme Administrator in the coming years and public participation in the scheme.

Scottish Government Circular Economy Proposals

- 4.8 During the summer of 2022, The Scottish Government published its Circular Economy proposals which included 31 existing and proposed new measures up to and beyond 2025. These included existing measures such as the 2025 landfill ban and the DRS scheme as previously mentioned. There were also a number of new proposals which will likely impact on future recycling and recovery rates. Further details on these Scottish Government proposals will be reported at future ED&I Committees as they progress. Some of the main proposals are as follows:
- The Incineration Review recommendations will be actioned by the Scottish Government;
 - The rural food waste exemption will be reviewed by the end of 2022;

- Garden waste collections may become mandatory in 2023;
- Textiles collections may be made mandatory in 2025;
- Hazardous household waste collections may be made mandatory in 2025;
- The Household Recycling Charter may be made mandatory in future;
- Statutory Recycling Targets may be placed on individual Councils in future.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Steady progress was made on recycling and composting performance during 2021 after being affected during the early months of the pandemic in 2020. Since council kerbside services returned and recycling/civic amenity sites re-opened in June 2020, more normal recycling levels have returned throughout 2021. National Policy drivers such as the ban on biodegradable waste to landfill, the Scottish Deposit Return Scheme and the circular economy proposals will have significant implications for future recycling, composting and recovery performance.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - National policies and regulations will likely impact on future recycling, composting and recovery performance. The council's policy is to reduce landfill.
- 6.2 Financial - The 2025 ban on biodegradable waste to landfill will have financial implications. An update report can be found in the September 2022 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.
- 6.3 The landfill ban (delayed until 31st December 2025) is a legal requirement under the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Other legal requirements may result following The Scottish Government Circular Economy proposals.
- 6.4 HR – None.
- 6.5 Equalities – None.
- 6.6 Risk - Risks to the council on the landfill ban and any other future statutory requirements 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 – None at present.

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