

**RECYCLING AND RECOVERY 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 coming years.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

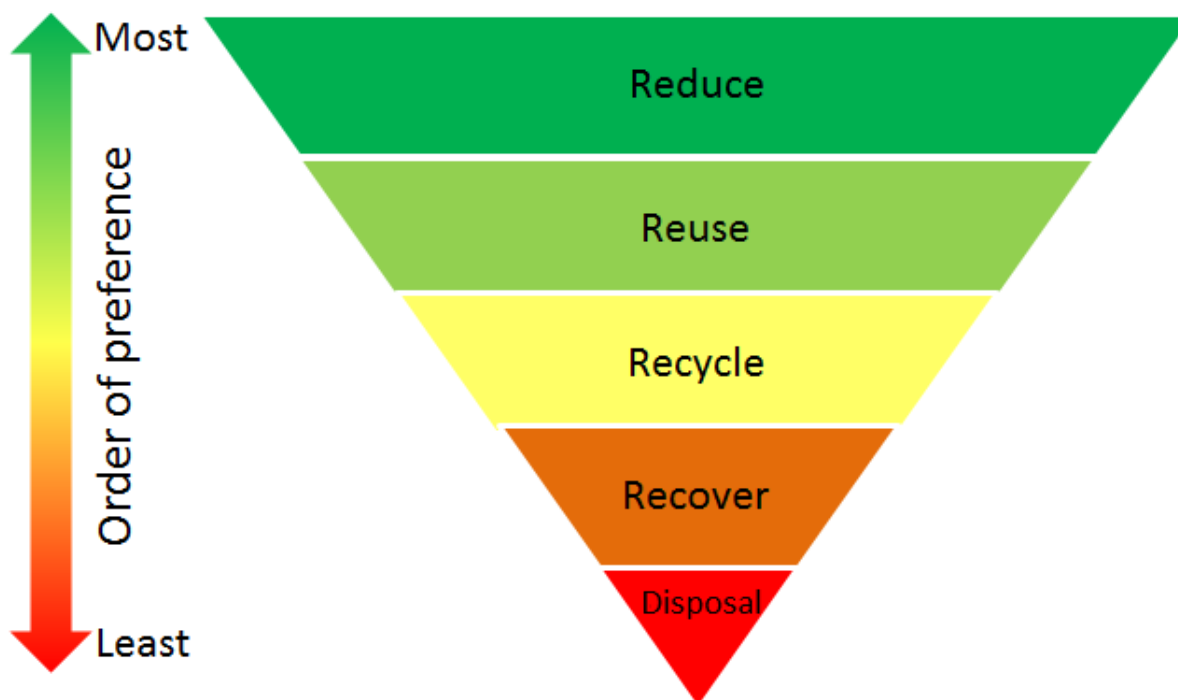
- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council is both a waste collection and waste disposal authority. Recycling, composting and recovery (i.e. other landfill diversion) statistics are reported quarterly within the council's performance system Pyramid which has recently been replaced. Statutory returns to SEPA e.g. 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 below in Figure 1.



4.2 Argyll and Bute Council operated 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  
2021 and 2022**

|                    |  | <b>2021</b> | <b>2022</b> |
|--------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| Argyll & Bute wide | % of waste recycled, composted and recovered | 49.3%       | 51.8%       |
|                    | % waste recycled and composted               | 36.2%       | 37.6%       |
|                    | % waste recovered                            | 13.0%       | 14.2%       |
|                    | % waste landfilled                           | 50.7%       | 48.2%       |
|                    | Tonnes of municipal waste to landfill        | 29,875      | 28,265      |
| Waste PPP          | % of waste recycled, composted and           | 50.6%       | 57.6%       |

|                      |  |       |       |
|----------------------|--|-------|-------|
|                      | recovered                                    |       |       |
|                      | % waste recycled and composted               | 33.0% | 36.3% |
|                      | % waste recovered                            | 17.6% | 21.3% |
|                      | % waste landfilled                           | 49.4% | 42.4% |
|                      |  |       |       |
| Helensburgh & Lomond | % of waste recycled, composted and recovered | 50.8% | 44.7% |
|                      | % waste recycled and composted               | 42.7% | 40.6% |
|                      | % waste recovered                            | 8.1%  | 4.2%  |
|                      | % waste landfilled                           | 49.2% | 55.3% |
|                      |  |       |       |
| Islands              | % of waste recycled, composted and recovered | 36.3% | 37.3% |
|                      | % waste recycled and composted               | 34.8% | 36.7% |
|                      | % waste recovered                            | 1.5%  | 0.6%  |
|                      | % waste landfilled                           | 63.7% | 62.7% |

#### 4.3 Some points to note are as follows:

- There was an overall improvement in recycling performance in 2022 which was mainly due to an increase in green garden waste and wood waste tonnages sent by Renewi from the PPP area for onward composting and recycling.
- There was also an improvement in recovery performance in 2022 mainly due to a trial carried out by Renewi in the PPP area whereby Renewi sent circa 1,500 tonnes of general mixed residual waste (mainly from their Dalinlongart waste facility near Dunoon) to an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant in the central belt.
- The Renewi energy from waste trial more than off-set the reduction in recovery from the Helensburgh and Lomond area following Barr ceasing operation of their waste treatment plant following The Scottish Government introduction of a Landfill Tax Amendment Order in July 2022. The Barr waste treatment plant was mothballed from July 2022 at their Auchencarroch landfill site near Alexandria. With no recycling or recovery occurring from the mixed residual waste at the Barr site, this had a negative impact on overall recycling and recovery rates from the Helensburgh and Lomond area compared to 2021.

- The overall combined recycled, composted and recovery rate has increased from 49.3% in 2021 to 51.8% in 2022. This is mainly due to the reasons described in the first two bullet points above.
- 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. In late 2022 Renewi also sent circa 1,500 tonnes of residual waste to an EfW plant in the central belt. Waste sent to EfW is also classed as recovery.
- The recovery in the Helensburgh and Lomond area was carried out by Barr Environmental at their Auchencarroch waste facility, near Alexandria. As described, Barr stopped operating their mixed residual waste treatment plant following The Scottish Government Landfill Tax Amendment Order which was introduced from July 2022. Since then Barr have landfilled all mixed residual waste although they have future plans to turn the currently mothballed waste treatment plant into a refuse derived fuel (RDF) facility. Such a facility assuming it comes to fruition, would shred and wrap residual waste for subsequent use in an EfW plant.
- Cardboard is now consistently the most prominent recycling material in the blue recycling bin overtaking paper which was the highest proportion pre pandemic. The increase in cardboard is likely due to more on-line purchasing since the pandemic while newspapers are not as widely purchased now compared to previous years.
- The overall percentage waste to landfill in 2022 (48.2%) was lower than 2021 (50.7%) mainly due to the EfW trial carried out by Renewi during the winter months of late 2022.
- The tonnage of municipal waste to landfill in 2022 (i.e. 28,365 tonnes) was less than in 2021 (i.e. 29,875 tonnes). This was mainly due also to the Renewi EfW trial.
- 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 compost like output from mixed waste treatment plants operated by the council's Waste PPP partner Renewi and Barr Environmental. In addition in 2022, there was circa 1,500 tonnes of recovery from the Renewi EfW trial.
- SEPA published annual recycling, recovery and landfill data for local authorities focuses mainly on recycling/composting from household waste and less on recovery in line with the waste hierarchy.

## **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 was subsequently delayed by The Scottish Government until the end of 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 is likely to be included in the August 2023 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 were subsequently appointed by The Scottish Government to administer and operate the scheme throughout Scotland. In June 2023, The Scottish Government decided to abandon the Scotland wide scheme after the UK Government refused to allow glass drinks bottles to be part of the Scheme. Circularity Scotland have subsequently been disbanded.
- 4.7 A UK wide DRS scheme is expected in October 2025 and may result in an overall 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 slight reduction in Council recycling performance if plastic drinks bottles and cans are no longer handled by Council recycling collections albeit they should still be recycled in future via the UK wide DRS scheme.

### **Scottish Government Circular Economy Bill**

- 4.8 During the summer of 2023, The Scottish Government published its Circular Economy Bill. Further details on these Scottish Government proposals will be reported at future ED&I Committees as they progress. Some of the main proposals which relate to local authorities recycling are as follows:
- A Duty of Care on households regarding their waste and recycling with new powers given to local authorities for the issuing of fixed penalties to enforce this;
  - Local Authorities will be required to comply with a statutory code of practice on recycling;
  - The Scottish Government expect to set mandatory recycling targets on Local Authorities from 2030.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Steady progress was made on recycling and composting performance during 2022. Recovery performance also improved in 2022 mainly due to an EfW trial carried out by Renewi from the PPP area. National Policy drivers such as the ban

on biodegradable municipal waste to landfill, the deposit return scheme and the circular economy bill 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 will be included in the August 2023 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.  |
| 6.3 | Legal             | The landfill ban (delayed until 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2025) is a legal requirement under the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Other legal requirements may likely result following The Scottish Government Circular Economy Bill 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 future UK wide deposit scheme for plastic drinks containers and cans will hopefully have an overall environmental benefit, although it may impact on council recycling rates. |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | None at present.   |

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