

Waste Diversion Re-Use

Report by Derek Oliver, Chief Officer - Place

Report for Noting

1 Recommendations

Council is recommended to note the current position with diverting material from waste streams for re-use and that:

- (i) Waste Services will provide a container at Stobhill Recycling Centre to act as a Re-use Cabin;
- (ii) An Expression of Interest is currently being drafted for advertisement in January 2022 to assess local charitable / third sector demand for furniture and household items.

2 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the position of diverting material from waste disposal at Stobhill HWRC for re-use in response to the Motion approved at the meeting of Midlothian Council on 16th November 2021.

Date: 25 November 2021

Report Contact:

Name: Derek Oliver, Chief Officer - Place

Email: derek.oliver@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background

- 3.1 Following an idea submitted to the Chief Executive from a Council employee in the Make A Difference scheme in early 2019, staff in the Partnership and Communities Team entered an arrangement with MARC (Midlothian Advice & Resource Centre) to offer a reuse cabin at Stobhill Recycling Centre.
- 3.2 This was put in place as a pilot arrangement from April 2019 and diverted around 500kg of waste each month. Around 500 tonnes of bulky waste, scrap metal and wood are collected at Stobhill Recycling Centre each month so the scheme diverted around 0.1% of these waste streams.
- 3.3 In terms of savings in disposal costs, the Reuse Cabin saved the Council around £20 a month. The figure is low as the majority of items diverted were wood furniture which would have instead been placed in the wood recycling stream for which the disposal cost is relatively low - not the bulky waste stream. There was also some income lost from the reuse of scrap metal items.
- 3.4 All waste put in the bulky waste skip undergoes secondary treatment to remove card, plastics, metals and wood and only items unsuitable for incineration are sent to landfill.
- 3.5 Due to COVID-19, the Recycling Centre closed in March 2020. Although the site re-opened in July 2020, continuing restrictions on the quarantining of waste materials meant that the re-use cabin could still not be used.
- 3.6 As MARC were continuing to pay for the rental of the cabin, the decision was taken by them to remove this in August 2021.
- 3.7 The Service Level Agreement with MARC was intended to ensure that both furniture and household bric-a-brac was reused. In practice, MARC's primary focus was on furniture that could either be sold to raise funds, or reused as part of the furniture voucher scheme for start-up homes. Because of this their waste acceptance criteria for the quality of donated furniture was, understandably, high.
- 3.8 It also meant that household items donated for reuse were routinely removed from the Reuse Cabin by Recycling Centre staff, to ensure adequate room was available for larger furniture items, with these items instead placed in the appropriate skip for disposal / recycling.
- 3.9 To address this, MARC were encouraged to engage with other local charity sector partners to take the furnishing and other household items for reuse but no partnership agreements were put into place and no other organisations arranged to collect bric-a-brac from the Reuse Cabin.
- 3.10 Waste Services also experienced issues in receiving timely waste data reports of the items being removed.

4 Current Re-use Arrangements

- 4.1 Bicycles in suitable condition are refurbished / reused separately by Loanhead Bike Workshop and RUTS.
- 4.2 Electrical items are not included in any reuse arrangement. Under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, all WEEE brought to the site falls into the ownership of the Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS) who fund the collection and recycling of electrical items. Our PCS has funded one local organisation to register as a WEEE authorised treatment facility for Henry branded vacuum cleaners but space at the Recycling Centre limits storage of multiple separate waste streams.
- 4.3 Hand tools are currently collected separately for refurbishment / reuse by the Scottish Prison Service at both Stobhill and Penicuik Recycling Centres.

4 Immediate Actions

- 4.1 MARC's removal of their own container has resulted in Waste Services taking ownership of the project from the Partnership and Communities Team.
- 4.2 Waste Services will procure a new container to be in place at Stobhill Recycling Centre to act as a Re-use Cabin, with appropriate awareness signage in place for service users at site.
- 4.3 As only part of Penicuik Depot is licensed to accept waste, there is insufficient room for a re-use shed at this location at this time.
- 4.4 An Expression of Interest (EoI) is currently being drafted to assess local charitable / third sector demand for furniture and household items. To maximise reuse of items, potential Service Partners must have Revolve, or equivalent, accreditation and commit to regular visits to the Recycling Centre to remove items for reuse / refurbishment. No income or charge for donated items is expected. It is intended that this EoI is advertised early in January 2022.
- 4.5 Waste Services is aware of an organisation that is currently working successfully with a neighbouring authority and anticipate interest from local charities. The Service will also promote to organisations aiming to refurbish items.
- 4.6 Submissions will be evaluated against set criteria and awarded with the intention that new agreements will be operational from April 2022. Associated communication and marketing activities will take place to promote the arrangement at this time.
- 4.7 As part of the EoI, potential Service Partners are being asked to be explicit in outlining the items they would have a need for to take as part

of this service and in detailing their waste acceptance criteria so that both parties, as well as local residents donating suitable items, can be confident that items donated for re-use will, in fact, be refurbished / reused and not simply sold.

5 Future Actions

- 5.1 The redevelopment of Stobhill Depot offers the potential for a “re-sale” cabin to be located close to the Recycling Centre to divert items before they enter the Recycling Centre, subject to Planning and SEPA licensing consents etc. It would be intended that this facility would be operated by an external organisation with relevant experience in relevant legislation such as Trading Standards relating to the preparation and sale of goods – separate to the Council management of the Recycling Centre itself.
- 5.2 Any future re-development of Penicuik Depot will include a re-use and/or re-sale facility.

6 Report Implications

6.1 Resource

The provision of a container for storing materials will incur costs to Waste Services, which will be met within existing budgets.

6.2 Digital

Not applicable at this stage.

6.3 Risk

Not applicable at this stage.

6.4 Ensuring Equalities

The subject of this report has a positive impact in the environment and as such does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant detrimental impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6.5 Additional Report Implications

See Appendix A

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The route map outlines the phases of service recovery and transformation which will underpin the Single Midlothian Plan.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

The report aims to deliver best value.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Consultation with charities and third sector.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The report aims to measure progress through outcomes.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The report is based on the creation of a wellbeing economy which prioritises prevention, fairness for people, the economy and the environment.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development