

Household Waste Charter

Report by Ricky Moffat, Head of Commercial Operations

1 Purpose of Report

At its meeting of 9 February 2016 Council were provided with an update on the Household Recycling Charter for Scotland.

Further to this a meeting was held on the 25 February 2016 with senior officials from Zero Waste Scotland to discuss the Household recycling Charter and the potential benefits for Midlothian and its residents.

As a consequence Council is being asked to sign up to the Charter which will allow a detailed analysis of its waste collections to be carried out to provide options for due consideration in the future.

Historic recycling performance is as follows:-

Year	Recycling Rate
2012	45.29%
2013	42.34%
2014	46.92%
2015	47.85%

2 Background

2.1 The Household Recycling Charter for Scotland is a collaborative piece of work recommended by the Zero Waste Task Force which was agreed by COSLA leaders on the 28 August 2015. The Charter sets out 21 key principles and referred to the development of a Code of Practice that establishes the key principles required in the collection of waste materials. A copy of the Household Recycling Charter for Scotland is appended to this report.

Accordingly Scotland has two cornerstone documents that aim to deliver consistency in the delivery of waste and recycling services across Scotland with the intention of;

- Stimulating inward investment and subsequent job creation in recycling and reprocessing industries.
- Retaining and enhancing existing jobs in waste collection industry.
- Generating and retaining the best collective value from waste streams whilst increasing recycling rates across Scotland.
- Providing Councils with a strong voice in the procurement market and enabling local authorities to manage market conditions to their collective advantage.
- Demonstrate the innovative thinking resulting from empowering Local Government to develop solutions.

2.2 Zero Waste Scotland Meeting

At the discussion with Zero Waste Scotland on 25 February 2016 it was explained that there was a desire by Zero Waste Scotland to ensure a level of consistent waste collections across Scotland. This primarily focuses on separate paper/card, plastic/metal/carton and glass collections to maximise the value from these materials. In addition the approach to waste collections should consider collection cycles and bin sizes for other waste streams. However, there would always be a need to consider local issues and as a consequence there is the likelihood of local variations across Scotland.

The key point was made that both signature to the Charter and implementation of the Code of Practice are voluntary and that councils will not be committed to implementing non-cost effective services.

Following signature of the Charter, councils will be able to access support from Zero Waste Scotland to develop a transition plan that will scope out the cost-effective changes required to move to the system detailed in the Code of Practice. Councils will then be further supported to develop an implementation plan which will detail the timescales and scope of the necessary changes, together with the expected cost profile.

It was also confirmed at the meeting that Zero Waste Scotland that they would support the Council in looking at options to consider how best to process its dry recyclate material.

2.3 Signing of the Charter

If Midlothian Council were to sign up to the Household Waste Charter Zero Waste Scotland outlined the following timescale of events;

Event	Timescale
Midlothian Council provide base collection data	Six weeks
Scenario planning/option appraisal	Four to six months
Council report	Four weeks
Funding application	Six weeks
Vehicle/container delivery	TBA
Implement new arrangements	TBA

2.4 Governance

The following is an extract from a recent COSLA report on the expected governance of the Household Waste Charter project;

“It is important that, as councils sign the Charter and begin the work of identifying how best to implement the Code of Practice, we adopt the necessary controls and scrutiny to ensure that the high-level strategic approach is maintained and that focus is rigorously kept on the overall benefits to both Scotland and local government.

The proposed approach described below represents the expected process, although this is not yet formally adopted and so members’ comments are welcome.

As described above, following signature of the Charter the next step is the development of an implementation plan, with the support of Zero Waste Scotland.

A working group will be convened in order to scrutinise each implementation plan, checking its compliance with the Code of Practice and ensuring that cross-council issues and opportunities are identified. This group will be largely concerned with technical issues and will not have the final responsibility for approving the implementation plan. It will likely consist of a core group of waste managers, together with COSLA, Scottish Government and ZWS representation, similar to the group which developed the Code of Practice.

Clearly, the financial implications of each implementation plan will need to be addressed, and suitable funding streams identified. It is not considered appropriate for the working group to have this responsibility. Instead, it is suggested that COSLA and the Scottish Government work together to address this issue and, assuming that a suitable solution can be found, councils be given an in-principle offer, subject to final ratification of the implementation plan. It should be noted that the Scottish Government has indicated its intent to support this initiative and recognises that funding has to form part of this support.

Following development of the implementation plan, and the in-principle offer of funding, the plans will be scrutinised by a high-level, strategic oversight panel. The purpose of this panel will be to offer strategic challenge, ensuring that plans across Scotland are joined-up, consistent and achievable. In addition, the panel will investigate the integration of the plans with the third-sector and with the support on offer from external stakeholders.

Membership of this strategic oversight panel is yet to be fully defined but is likely to comprise senior representatives from COSLA, the Scottish Government, ZWS, SOLACE, SEPA and CIWM together with a representative from the third sector and from the Packaging Recycling Group Scotland (PRGS) who have offered strategic and financial support to the implementation of the Charter and Code of Practice. There has been a very strong steer from the DES Executive Group that this panel should be chaired by COSLA, in order to maintain local government ownership of the initiative.

This panel will ensure that implementation plans are considered within the wider Scottish context of developing and promoting the circular economy and that they are designed to achieve the overall aims and benefits identified by the Zero Waste Taskforce. They will identify strategic opportunities for co-operation between councils or for consistent approaches and advise on integrated strategic communications.

Following scrutiny by this strategic panel, and assuming their approval, the specific funding required will be released and councils can begin implementation.

To assist with identifying total likely funding required, and the profile of this funding over future years, councils are encouraged to develop transition plans at the earliest opportunity, even in situations where they are unlikely to begin the actual implementation of any changes for a few years. This will help all funding partners to develop appropriate funding streams and budgets."

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

As outlined in the table in 2.3 the time required to evaluate the various existing and proposed waste collection systems is in the region of 10 months. However Zero Waste Scotland will have provide resources necessary to carry out this work with support from Midlothian Council officers.

As such any staff costs for Midlothian Council will be met from existing resources.

Recommendations that arise from this work will be reported back to Council in due course. Crucially however, Council are not bound to introduce any changes to its collection systems.

If Council does agree to introduce changes as a result of the review a bid would be made to Zero Waste Scotland for financial support to introduce these changes which would contribute towards the capital costs e.g. vehicles and containers.

3.2 Risk

There is no risk to the Council in signing up to the Household Waste Charter having to introduce changes to its collection systems.

However, given the challenging budget position facing the Council it is prudent to examine waste collection systems to determine if there is a more cost effective way of delivering these services particularly in light of the recent introduction of a food waste service resulting in reduced waste remaining in the residual bin.

Council are aware of recent issues with dry recyclate material. Part of the work which would be carried out in conjunction with Zero Waste Scotland is to look at material processing arrangements and to examine what options are available, perhaps in partnership with other local authorities to provide a sustainable processing solution.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

One of the main drivers behind the Household Waste Charter is to generate and retain the best collective value from waste streams whilst increasing recycling rates across Scotland.

Following the recent introduction of a food waste collection service it is a prudent time to review the various collection systems both from a budget perspective and how best to further increase material for recycling including options for reducing the capacity for residual waste.

By the end of 2016 the Council will have a recycling rate of over 50% with potential changes allowing it to work towards a rate of 60%.

Additionally evaluating options for the processing of dry recylate material will allow Council to be provided with options for a more sustainable long term option for treatment of this waste stream.

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

By reviewing the various waste streams Council will be best placed to consider the optimum collection systems to maximise its recycling rate.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

An initial meeting has been held with Zero Waste Scotland to outline the support available should the Council sign up to the Household Waste Charter.

At this meeting it was suggested that a small working group comprising of officers, Zero Waste Scotland and up to 4 elected members could meet to consider the potential options prior to presenting these to full Council.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

There are no equality issues identified as a result of this report.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The collection and processing of the various collections diverts valuable resources from landfill per year. Recycling is therefore a key cornerstone towards the Zero Waste vision in Midlothian.

Reviewing its collection systems will allow Council the opportunity to consider the optimum collection systems to maximise its diversion from landfill.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no direct IT issues as a result of this report.

4.0 Summary

This report seeks Council approval to sign up to the Household Waste Charter. Whilst not committing the Council to make changes it will;

- Attract support to review the various waste collection services,
- Provide a range of options for consideration,
- Allow an opportunity to submit a bid for funding support should it wish to introduce changes,
- Attract support to review dry recycling processing options.

5.0 Recommendations

Council is requested to:-

- Agree to sign up to the Household Waste Charter;
- Nominate up to four elected members to participate in a working group to consider potential collection options;
- Instruct the Director Resources to come forward with a report in due course outlining the recommendations of the working group for consideration by the Council.

2 March 2016

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Background Papers