

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 16 AUGUST 2022

REVIEW OF THE KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ABSTRACT

This report proposes how a review of the kerbside recycling service will be implemented and a community engagement exercise carried out. It provides background on the factors that need to be considered and updates on the current performance of the kerbside recycling service.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:

- (i) progress the review of the kerbside recycling service on the basis set out in this report;
- (ii) implement a community engagement exercise on the kerbside recycling service as detailed in section 5 of this report;
- (iii) the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth bringing a report to Committee on the outcome of the review and an options appraisal.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 The proposals contained in this report align with the following Council Plan priorities:

Priority 1: We want Angus to be a 'go-to' area for businesses.

- We will make Angus a low-carbon, sustainable area.

Priority 3: We want our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens.

- We will continue to reduce the council's carbon footprint with the aim of reducing our net carbon emissions to zero by 2045.
- We will engage with citizens and communities to deliver the right services in the right place at the right time.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The agreed Change Programme (reference Report [55/22](#)) includes a project to review the kerbside recycling service and there is an associated £230,000 revenue savings target.

3.2 The current kerbside recycling service (KRS), as detailed in paragraph 4.1, was introduced during 2014. As well as providing the KRS to households, the council also provides the KRS for a charge to businesses and has approximately 1,300 commercial customers.

3.3 The KRS was amended during 2016 (reference report [144/16](#)) when a subscription charge for the garden waste service was introduced and the geographical coverage of the food waste service was reduced to only town and villages (approximately 3,500 households had the food waste service withdrawn). These changes were implemented in order to make the financial savings required.

3.4 A redesign of the recycling centre provision in Angus was implemented during 2019 (reference Report [264/18](#)) that indirectly affects the KRS. This retained all seven recycling centres in

Angus, but only the three best equipped centres would now accept non-recyclable waste. The driver was financial savings, but the changes also aimed to increase recycling rates.

- 3.5 Table 1 shows the household recycling rate for Angus from 2013 to 2020 (the latest published SEPA figure) with reasons for any significant increase or decrease to the recycling rate provided.

Table 1 – Angus Council Household Recycling Rate

Year	Recycling rate	Comments
2013	43.2%	
2014	52.4%	New kerbside recycling system rolled out in phases
2015	59.2%	
2016	56.7%	Garden waste charge and contraction to food waste service
2017	55.2%	
2018	54.7%	
2019	59.1%	Redesign of recycling centre provision
2020	57.9%	COVID-19 restrictions impacted services

- 3.6 Angus has been in the top quartile of Scottish local authorities for household recycling rate since the current KRS was rolled out, and in 2015 and 2020 had the highest recycling rate in Scotland.
- 3.7 Although 2021 figures are not published yet, a reduction to our recycling rate is expected due to advice by SEPA that recovered timber sent to a biomass plant for generation of electricity cannot count as recycling. A proportion of timber collected at our recycling centres is now sent to a biomass plant after sorting as this is the most economical option.
- 3.8 The Scottish Government have confirmed that the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for Scotland will begin on 16 August 2023. The DRS will require people to pay a 20p deposit when they buy a drink that comes in a single-use container made of PET plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans or glass bottles. The deposit will be paid back when a person returns the empty container to one of the thousands of return points scheduled to be introduced. Further information on how the DRS will work is available at <https://depositreturnscheme.zerowastescotland.org.uk/>
- 3.9 The DRS has a target to collect 90% of eligible containers by the second year of operation (2024). Plastic bottles, metal cans and glass bottles are a large proportion of what the council collects in grey (mixed recycling) household bins. If the DRS meets its target, it is estimated that approx. 29% by weight of material will be diverted from household recycling bins to the DRS.
- 3.10 New legislation known as the Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations for packaging is expected to come into force from 2024 that aims to shift the cost of collecting household packaging from local authorities to producers. A UK government consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) recently closed and detail on how the scheme will operate is not confirmed yet, but it is known that EPR will lead to payments from producers to local authorities for collecting packaging and should financially incentivise producers to use packaging that is widely accepted for recycling by local authorities.
- 3.11 The Scottish Government have also released a consultation on a Circular Economy Bill that could have implications for the materials local authorities are required to collect at the kerbside in the future.
- 3.12 The Household Recycling Charter and associated Code of Practice was introduced by the Scottish Government and agreed by COSLA Leaders in 2015. Angus Council are a signatory to the Charter (reference Report [27/17](#)) and therefore obliged to review their practices against the Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is to be reviewed and revised due to the pending introduction of the DRS, EPR and Circular Economy Bill. The council do not currently comply with the Code of Practice mainly because paper and cardboard are collected together with other recyclables in the grey household recycling bin.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Table 2 details the kerbside recycling service provided to the majority of households in Angus. Households outwith towns and villages do not receive the food waste service and more rural areas are not provided the option of the garden waste service. The Angus Waste and Recycling Bin Policy (Report [312/21](#)) details in full how the service is provided in Angus.

Table 2 – Current Kerbside Recycling Service to majority of households

Service	Bin size	Colour	Frequency
Mixed recycling	240 litres	Grey	Fortnightly
Garden waste	240 litres	Green	Fortnightly
Food waste	23 litres	Brown	Weekly
Non-recyclable waste	140 litres	Purple	Fortnightly

- 4.2 Angus is one of the best performing councils in Scotland for recycling but a 'do nothing' approach will see performance stagnate and possibly reduce comparative to other local authorities. A review of the KRS provides the opportunity to consider how recycling performance can be improved in addition to delivering financial savings.
- 4.3 A survey of household satisfaction levels with refuse collection is a statutory performance indicator for local authorities. The latest data for 2020 shows that 80.7% of Angus households were satisfied with the service, which compares favourably with the national average of 74.3%.
- 4.4 A waste composition study of household purple (non recyclable waste) bins was last carried out in 2017 and showed that approximately 65% of the contents of the average household purple bin could have been recycled, and 33% of this was food waste. This highlights that while Angus has been one of the best performers for recycling there is still significant room for improvement.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government previously set a 60% household recycling target by 2020, however no Scottish local authorities are currently meeting this target.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the review of the kerbside recycling service will include an options appraisal exercise that considers how best the KRS can be redesigned to deliver financial savings and improve recycling performance taking into account the forthcoming introduction of the DRS, EPR and revised Recycling Charter as detailed in section 3.
- 5.2 The options appraisal will consider sociological as well as technical, legal and environmental factors. To assist with consideration of the sociological factors, it is proposed that a community engagement exercise is carried out prior to the options appraisal.
- 5.3 A new Communication, Engagement and Consultation policy is being developed along with an Angus-wide engagement portal. We intend to use this platform and its various tools to engage the citizens of Angus with support from the Vibrant Communities team to include the seldom heard voices. This will include face to face engagement. We will also use Angus Council's social media platforms to promote the engagement and will provide paper copies of the survey to community centres, libraries, ACCESS offices and other accessible council buildings, and also via community councils, community groups and any other key partners. We will explain why we are seeking to review the KRS and ask residents what they would and would not prefer in a revised collection system, with context provided for each question.
- 5.4 The aim would be to complete the community engagement exercise by the end of 2022 and thereafter progress the options appraisal. The target would be to bring a report to committee on the outcome of the community engagement exercise and options appraisal before the commencement of the DRS on 16 August 2023.
- 5.5 It should be recognised that any change to the KRS could take a significant period of time to fully implement. A larger scale change, such as the roll-out of new household bins, would be a significant logistical challenge and require a phased implementation that could take up to 18 months to fully roll-out.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report however as stated in paragraph 3.1 the Change Programme includes a £230,000 revenue saving target from the review of the kerbside recycling service.
- 6.2 The options appraisal to be carried out will estimate the revenue and capital costs for each option. As highlighted in paragraph 5.5, there could be a significant delay to when the savings can be realised depending on the scale and phasing of the changes to be made. The options appraisal will therefore also include the estimated roll-out dates for each option.
- 6.3 The Scottish Government announced a five-year £70 million Recycling Improvement Fund for local authorities to take forward projects that can demonstrate an increase to both the quality and quantity of recycling. The options appraisal will consider the availability of this fund to support implementation of any service change.
- 6.4 The introduction of the DRS from 16 August 2023 will see materials diverted from household bins to DRS collection points. Based on our current gate fee for processing mixed recycling and a DRS collection rate between 50% to 90%, it is estimated the DRS will lead to a saving of between £52,000 and £92,000 from less material collected in grey household recycling bins.
- 6.5 The expected implementation of the EPR from 2024 (see paragraph 3.10) should deliver a further saving in terms of payments from producers to the council. As the detail on how the scheme will operate has not yet been announced it is not possible at this stage to estimate the saving that the EPR will deliver.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

9. CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance and Director of Legal and Democratic Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report No [55/22](#)
- Report No [144/16](#)
- Report No [264/18](#)
- Report No [27/17](#)
- Report No [312/21](#)

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Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

Review of kerbside recycling service

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment

No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people

No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics

Yes/No

(iii) It is for information only

Yes/No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year

Yes/No

(v) It is technical

Yes/No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment

Yes

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment

No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.
If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i) Lead Directorate/Service:

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

(iii) What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

To review options for revising the current kerbside recycling service with the aim of increasing recycling rate and delivering financial savings.

(iv) Is it a new proposal? Yes OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? Yes/No Please indicate

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees	Yes
Job Applicants	No
Service users	Yes
Members of the public	Yes

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

Other (general information as appropriate).

The purpose of the review will be to consult widely on the current kerbside service and on the possible options for change. Consultation will therefore take place as part of the review.

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age

Impact

It is proposed that a community engagement exercise is carried out as part of the review.

We will collaborate widely to ensure everyone, including all protected characteristic groups, has an opportunity to have their voice heard. Paper copies of the survey will be available at community centres, libraries, ACCESS offices and other key council buildings, and also via community councils, active community groups and any other key partners. We will work with social work and the third sector to ensure that those who are vulnerable and rarely have their voices heard can be listened to, and will carry out focus groups in each locality to reach those who wish to use verbal or audible/sign language or those who prefer face-to-face contact to share their opinions.

Disability

Impact

See above.

Gender reassignment

Impact

Neutral.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact

Neutral.

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact

Neutral.

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact

Neutral.

Religion or Belief

Impact

Neutral.

Sex

Impact

Neutral.

Sexual orientation

Impact

Neutral.

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

Community engagement will be carried out according to the National Standards for Community Engagement which encompass good-practice principles to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result. We will use their established model to carry out our community engagement exercise to ensure everyone, including all protected characteristic groups, has an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

This proposal will advance equality of opportunity through taking steps to try to make sure everyone, especially those more vulnerable groups, will have a chance to have their voices heard.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?

Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.

Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.

Low and/or No Wealth (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

Impact

Material Deprivation (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

Impact

Area Deprivation (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport).

Impact

Socio-economic Background i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

Impact

Other – please indicate

Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Graeme Dailly, Service Leader – Environmental Services

Reviewed by: Susanne Austin, Team leader – Waste Strategy and Compliance

Approved by: Alison Smith, Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable growth

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.
