

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023

REVIEW OF THE KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

REPORT BY GRAEME DAILLY, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

ABSTRACT

This report proposes a revised kerbside recycling service that would align with national policy, deliver savings identified in the Council's Change Plan, increase recycling and would be supported by grant funding from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund. A new procedure for tagging and not emptying purple household bins containing an unacceptable level of recyclables is also proposed. The report highlights that continuing with the current arrangement for kerbside recycling risks non-compliance with upcoming legislation and higher costs for processing of materials.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:

- (i) the implementation of a revised kerbside recycling service, as detailed in Section 5;
- (ii) authorise the Director of Infrastructure and Environment to accept the funding award of £2,843,473.36 from the Recycling Improvement Fund to support the implementation of a revised kerbside recycling service;
- (iii) apply the procedure that purple household bins are tagged and not emptied when an unacceptable level of recyclables (that should have gone in kerbside recycling bins) are found in the purple bin, as detailed in Section 5; and
- (iv) note that the Director of Infrastructure and Environment would bring a report to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee regarding procurement authority for the supply of goods and services associated with the roll-out of the revised kerbside recycling service.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

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

Caring for our Place

- We will take action to mitigate against climate change by delivering our Transition to Net Zero Action Plan: 2022 to 2030 and leading on the delivery of a Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plan (SECAP) for Angus to reduce area wide emissions.
- We will deliver efficient waste services and encourage more recycling and cleaner streets.

Angus Council is Efficient and Effective

- We will deliver our change programme.

3. BACKGROUND

Kerbside Recycling Service Review

3.1 It was agreed at the Communities Committee in August 2022 (reference Report [189/22](#)) to progress a review of the Kerbside Recycling Service (KRS), including a community engagement exercise, and to bring a report back to committee on the outcome of the review and an options appraisal. Background relating to the KRS and policy changes expected to influence the KRS were provided at that time and are updated in this report.

- 3.2 The Finance and Change Plan agreed at the special meeting of Angus Council on 2 March 2023 (reference Report [40/23](#)) includes a project to review the kerbside recycling service and there is an associated £400,000 revenue saving target.

Current Kerbside Recycling Service (KRS)

- 3.3 The current kerbside recycling service (KRS), as detailed in paragraph 4.1, was rolled out 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.
- 3.4 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 towns and villages (approximately 3,900 households had the food waste service withdrawn). The driver for these changes was financial savings however the cost of food waste disposal is now less than half of what it was in 2016.
- 3.5 Table 1 shows the household recycling rate for Angus from 2013 to 2021 (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
2021	54.7%	Timber disposal as biomass not counted as recycling

- 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; in 2021 we were the fifth-highest performing authority.
- 3.7 Although 2022 figures are not published yet, a reduction to our recycling rate is expected due to a further reduction in the amount of wood (from recycling centres) classed as being recycled, a reduction in food waste, and reduction in kerbside garden waste (this is simply weather related).
- 3.8 The amount of food waste collected reduced by 12.86% in 2017 following the removal of the service from households out with towns and villages. Tonnage has fallen slightly each year since 2017 and did so markedly in 2022 when a reduction of almost 270 tonnes was seen. Whilst there would ideally be a reduction in food waste through time due to households wasting less food, it appears that participation in the service is falling and this is borne out through waste composition analysis (WCA) where 34% of the contents of purple bins were found to comprise of food waste (as detailed in paragraph 4.3).

Table 2 Tonnes of food waste collected on a yearly basis

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tonnes	4116	3587	3515	3401	3350	3299	3031

- 3.9 The last full-scale communications campaign was the introduction of the Right stuff, Right bin messaging in 2017/18 where stickers were placed on each grey and purple household bin to show what should and should not go in the bin; opportunities to promote this messaging are used where possible e.g. on contamination tags and the council website and social media, and have been extended to recycling centres in Right stuff, Right skip messaging.

Kerbside Recycling Service Survey

- 3.10 A community engagement exercise was undertaken via the online kerbside recycling service survey which was open from 14 November – 11 December 2022; the survey was also available during this time as a paper survey that could be collected from libraries or provided through community councils or communities officers, and who could also provide assistance with completion.
- 3.11 2,464 responses were received, 51 of these in paper format. The survey asked residents questions about their preferences for potential changes to the kerbside recycling service in the context of the forthcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and the financial challenge facing the Council. The results are summarised as below.
- 50% of respondents disagreed with bringing their glass to a recycling point, and half either agreed (43%) or neither agreed nor disagreed (7%).
 - 82% of respondents agreed with having two recycling bins where glass continued to be collected at the kerbside.
 - 43% agreed with having two recycling bins and bringing their glass to a recycling point.
 - 49% of respondents were not willing to have their non-recyclable waste bin emptied every three weeks and just over half were either willing (47%) or neither agreed nor disagreed (4%).
 - 51% agreed that non-recyclable waste bins containing too many recyclable items should be tagged and left uncollected (7% neither agreed nor disagreed and 42% disagreed).

Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland and Code of Practice

- 3.12 The Scottish Government agreed Charter and Code of Practice (CoP) seek to maximise the quality of recycling and introduce a consistent approach to collections across Scotland. The CoP requires authorities to collect paper and card separately from metals, plastics and cartons, and to collect glass separately from all other materials, either at the kerbside or at recycling points.
- 3.13 Angus Council became a signatory of the Charter in 2017 (reference Report [27/17](#)) and as such is required to review their practices against the CoP – the Council's current KRS collection system is not Charter compliant because paper, card and glass are collected in the same bin as other materials.
- 3.14 The Circular Economy Bill in June 2023 introduced a requirement for the CoP to be reviewed by co-design with local authorities beginning in 2023 and a compulsory Charter to be implemented at a later date (it is expected to look similar to the current Charter).

The Recycling Improvement Fund

- 3.15 The Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) was launched in 2021 providing £70 million over five years (with allocations available each year) for capital funding grants to improve recycling infrastructure and services across Scotland. To date, £52.6m has been awarded to 17 authorities. The RIF fund's scoring matrix deems kerbside collection redesign projects that are not aligned with the Charter as 'not acceptable' and in such a case funding could not be awarded.

Deposit Return Scheme

- 3.16 Scotland's DRS has been delayed to align with aspects of DRS schemes across the UK and will now be implemented October 2025 at the earliest and will no longer include glass. The DRS is expected to place a 20p deposit on drinks containers including plastic bottles (except milk) and cans, leading to a significant decrease in these materials in kerbside bins.
- 3.17 Collecting recyclable materials in one bin incurs additional costs as materials have to be separated at a sorting plant to allow them to be recycled. DRS will remove some of the high value materials that help mitigate the sorting costs e.g., aluminium cans, thus post DRS, the cost of disposing of the contents of the remaining grey bin materials would rise.

Extended Producer Responsibility

- 3.18 The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations will shift the cost of collecting household packaging waste from local authorities to producers and should result in payments to Angus Council from 2025; payments will be dependent on materials being collected and disposed of in a cost-efficient manner. The test for efficiency is not yet known but communications to date indicate there will be a focus on material quality. Continuing with the current non-Charter aligned KRS risks lower or no payments to the Council.
- 3.19 There will also be a requirement to collect flexible plastics (films) by March 2027. Plastic films are currently difficult to recycle and need to be collected separately from paper as the two materials are not easy to sort from each other; industry/supplier research shows that films should also be collected separately from glass.

Circular Economy Bill and Waste Routemap

- 3.20 The Scottish Government's Circular Economy Bill was published in June of this year and is expected to be debated in January 2024 and considered for agreement in May 2024. The Bill will introduce local authority specific targets for recycling and reuse, and new mechanisms to increase reuse and recycling, such as charges for throw-away items which will begin with single-use beverage cups.
- 3.21 The Bill will require local authorities to comply with the Recycling Charter and Code of Practice (currently voluntary) and give them more enforcement powers, for example to tackle contamination of recycling bins, with further guidance on this to follow.
- 3.22 A consultation on the Scottish Government's "Waste Routemap to 2025 and beyond" was carried out in 2022. The Route Map will form the basis for the changes and interventions to deliver each of various packages in the Circular Economy Bill. The final Route Map may have implications for local authorities in terms of recycling targets and mandatory collection of specific materials for recycling.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Kerbside recycling service

- 4.1 Table 3 details the kerbside recycling service provided to the majority of households in Angus. Households out with towns and villages do not receive the food waste service and more rural areas are not provided the option of the chargeable garden waste service. The Angus Waste and Recycling Bin Policy (Report [312/21](#)) details in full how the service is provided in Angus.

Table 3 Current Kerbside Recycling Service to majority of households

Service	Bin size	Bin 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

KRS performance

- 4.2 Angus is one of the better performing councils in Scotland for recycling (as detailed in section 3) but a 'do nothing' approach is likely to see a reduction in performance, as borne out by the decrease in food waste recycling and the high contamination rate for mixed recycling.
- 4.3 Waste composition analysis involves taking a sample of bins and following a set procedure, sorting and categorising the contents. WCA of household bins in September 2022 showed that approximately 55% of the contents of the average household purple bin could have been recycled; this highlights that there is still significant room for improvement. The purple bin breakdown is tabled below and shows that the level of food waste in the purple bin is around the third mark; this issue is consistent nationally.

Table 4 Contents of purple non-recyclable (general) waste bins in Angus

Non-recyclable waste	Could have been recycled in/ at:		
	Grey bin	Food waste caddy	Recycling centre
45.4%	11.3%	34.0%	9.3%

- 4.4 The trend of reducing food waste recycling, as detailed in paragraph 3.8, is continuing with 180 fewer tonnes collected from January to July in 2023 compared to 2022; this combined with the WCA data, and the national picture, shows that additional intervention is required to improve food waste capture.
- 4.5 WCA data (from September 2022) revealed that 22% of the contents of grey recycling bins were non-target materials that count as contamination. This shows that too many of the wrong items are being placed in recycling bins and that more requires to be done to ensure we recycle as much as we can. Putting the wrong items in the recycling bin also significantly increases our costs as processing suppliers apply a penalty charge for excess contamination.

Table 5 Contents of grey recycling bins in Angus

Recyclable paper, card, cans and plastic containers	Should have been:		
	Disposed of in purple bin	Recycled in food waste caddy	Recycled at a recycling centre
78.0%	15.6%	3.7%	2.8%

Recycling Improvement Fund

- 4.6 As detailed in paragraph 3.15, 75% of the Scottish Government's Recycling Infrastructure Fund (RIF) has already been awarded to local authorities and it has been advised that much of the funding from the later years of the fund is already committed. It was therefore considered urgent to act and bid for monies that were available during 2023/24 and 2024/25 to assist with service redesign.
- 4.7 A bid was submitted for RIF funding for £2,843,473.36 to support the capital costs associated with revisions to the Council's KRS that would align it to the Household Waste Recycling Charter. The bid was accepted by the RIF board and ratified by the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, subject to confirmation of acceptance by Angus Council by 26 September 2023.

5. PROPOSALS

Revisions to the Kerbside Recycling Service

- 5.1 The Options Appraisal carried out is presented in **Appendix 1**. A long list of options was narrowed down to only two options that met the essential requirements to comply with the Recycling Charter for Scotland and deliver the savings target identified in the Change Plan.

Taking cognisance of the Options Appraisal, and giving due regard and consideration to the community engagement exercise, it is proposed the kerbside recycling service is revised as detailed in the table below.

Table 6 Proposed revised kerbside recycling service

	Materials accepted	Collection Frequency
Purple 140 litre bin	Non-recyclable waste (see paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 regarding new policy)	Fortnightly
Grey 240 litre bin	Plastic bottles & containers, cans (plastic film to be added when economical to do so)	Every 4 weeks *
Blue 240 litre bin	Paper and cardboard	Every 4 weeks *
Brown 23 litre caddy	Food waste (service extended to a further approx. 3,900 households)	Weekly
Green 240 litre bin	Garden waste (chargeable)	Fortnightly (suspended in winter)
Neighbourhood Recycling Points (NRPs)	Glass bottles & jars (the number of NRPs increased from 23 to approx.190)	As required

* Grey and blue bins would be collected on the same day of the week two weeks apart (alternate fortnights).

5.2 The revised KRS would better align and comply with the following national policies and legislation:

- The introduction of DRS (will make our current system less efficient).
- The introduction of EPR (payments to local authorities will be dependent on the quality of recycling collected and current system risks lower or no payments).
- The Circular Economy Bill (mandating local authorities to comply with the Recycling Charter).

As detailed in Section 6, the revised KRS would also deliver significant revenue savings and capital costs for rolling out the scheme would be fully funded by the Scottish Government's RIF.

5.3 The community engagement exercise which sought residents' views through the online survey, as per 3.11, showed that residents were not opposed to the principle of having to split their waste into two recycling bins (where this saved money) as 82% agreed to this where glass was accepted in the containers bin.

5.4 It is recognised that 50% of residents did not want to bring their glass to a recycling point however 43% were willing to do so (7% neither agreeing nor disagreeing) so overall 50% did not disagree with taking glass to a recycling point.

5.5 The option of collecting glass in the containers bin was not shortlisted as this would make the service non-compliant with the Recycling Charter and would disqualify the Council from RIF funding. It would not deliver the Change Plan saving target either. The option of a separate container and kerbside collection of glass was not shortlisted due to the significant expense this would incur (projected would mean little or no saving delivered).

5.6 In order to make it as easy as possible for residents to use recycling points, the current network of 23 points would be extended to provide comprehensive coverage across Angus. It is expected that there will be in the region of 190 recycling points. This will be dependent on finding suitable sites however there will be a funded project officer to progress this project.

- 5.7 Aberdeenshire Council recently changed from kerbside glass collections to recycling points which resulted in only a 4% reduction in the amount of glass collected. Based on this experience, changing to recycling points is expected to have a marginal effect on recycling performance, which will be more than mitigated by the measures outlined in 5.17. In addition, by collecting glass separately, the amount recovered for recycling into more bottles and jars is maximised because when glass is collected along with other materials, it is handled more and breaks into small pieces, which are harder to recycle.
- 5.8 It is proposed that the revised KRS be rolled out in three phases from March to October 2024. The provisional programme is shown below. This may be subject to change and a further Information Report for elected members (and posted on the Council's web site) will be provided if there is any significant change to the programme.

Table 7 Proposed phases for roll out of the revised KRS

Phase	Date of commencement	Area (including surrounding villages/areas)
1	March 2024	Arbroath, Carnoustie and Monifieth
2	June 2024	Montrose and Brechin
3	September 2024	Forfar, Kirriemuir and Sidlaw area

- 5.9 The roll-out of the revised KRS would include the following key elements, the majority of which the Scottish Government's RIF funding award would support.
- The delivery of a 240 litre blue bin to each household (or communal bin, where applicable) for paper and card.
 - Assessment of collection points at the end of private roads where space may be restricted and groundworks may be required to accommodate the blue bin (or communal bins).
 - Assessment of commercial customers bin requirements and provision of blue bins as required.
 - Procurement of two food waste collection vehicles to support the extension of the food waste service and additional participation.
 - The introduction of an extensive network of glass recycling points.
 - Two project officers to assist management and delivery of the project (both temporary, funded for fifteen months).
 - An extensive communications campaign.

Considering recyclables in purple bins as contamination

- 5.10 It is proposed that purple household bins are tagged and not emptied when an unacceptable level of recyclables (that should have gone in kerbside recycling bins) are found in the purple bin.
- 5.11 As detailed in paragraph 4.3, it has been shown that around 45% of the waste we collect in purple bins could have been recycled in household kerbside recycling bins. The failure to separate waste into the correct household bins costs the Council and therefore Council Taxpayers in Angus over £1 million per year as it is significantly cheaper to recycle the waste than send for burning at a Waste to Energy plant.
- 5.12 The current Waste and Recycling Bin Policy (Report [312/21](#)) states that "a contaminated bin is a waste or recycling bin that contains material that should not be in it" and that contaminated bins will not be emptied, and it is the householder's responsibility to remove the contamination before the next collection. In practice, this policy has only been applied to mixed recycling bins, garden waste bins, and food waste caddies. It is proposed this this is now equally applied to non-recyclable purple bins.
- 5.13 While some other Scottish local authorities do have bans on putting recycling in non-recyclable waste bins, we are not aware of any applying a contamination policy in practice. Officers have consulted with a local authority in Northern Ireland who have applied this successfully and there are also examples of similar being applied elsewhere in the UK.

- 5.14 It is recognised that applying the policy will be challenging when staff can only see the top fraction of the bin they are emptying. As noted above it will only be applied when there is an unacceptable level of recyclables found and a procedure will be developed that aims to educate and raise awareness before bins are left unemptied. It is proposed the new procedure is communicated and applied as the new service is implemented to each area of Angus.
- 5.15 As highlighted, participation in the food waste service is particularly low and this new procedure and approach aims to drive up food waste recycling in particular. This is considered essential to meet future recycling rate targets and reduce waste disposal costs.
- 5.16 Over half of respondents to the household recycling survey agreed that non-recyclable waste bins containing too many recyclable items should be tagged and left uncollected. It is considered this is a better alternative to reducing the frequency of purple household bin collections.

Increased recycling

- 5.17 The proposals are expected to increase the household recycling rate by 3% by extending the food waste collection service to approximately 3,900 households, through an extensive communications campaign covering all recyclable materials, and the new policy whereby if there are too many recyclables in purple bins they would not be emptied.

Procurement

- 5.18 Should the proposed revision to the KRS be agreed, it is proposed that the Director of Infrastructure and Environment brings a report to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee seeking authority to procure the supply of the following goods and services and detailing the procurement methods for each.
- Supply of approx. 65,000 blue 240 litre bins for households
 - Supply of larger bins for communal and road-end collections, commercial customers and neighbourhood recycling points
 - Supply of units to house 240 litre bins at Neighbourhood Recycling Points
 - Supply of 2 additional food collection vehicles
 - Separate contracts for processing/recycling of paper and card, plastic and metal containers, and glass bottles and jars.
- 5.19 The tender for processing Plastic and Metal Containers would be done in two lots to include an option where plastic film is also accepted by the supplier – in this way we can properly test the market on the price of adding film to the mix of materials. It is proposed that plastic film is added to the mix of materials accepted in the grey recycling bin when it is economically advantageous to do so.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of collecting and disposing of waste generated by households in Angus is the third largest area of cost in the Council's budget after Education & Lifelong Learning and the funding provided for Adult Social Care Services. The immense pressures on the Council's finances make it essential that such a large area of spend is reviewed to identify potential savings. Existing arrangements and the lack of compliance among some householders mean costs are being incurred that could have been avoided - it currently costs around 4 times as much to dispose of non-recyclable waste collected in the household purple bin as it does recyclable waste collected in the grey recycling bin. Food waste is approx. 10 times less expensive to dispose of when collected via the kerbside brown caddy collection scheme.
- 6.2 The Finance and Change Plan agreed at the Special meeting of Angus Council on 2 March 2023 (Report [40/23](#)) includes a revenue budget saving of £300,000 in 2024/25 and £100,000 in 2025/26 through the redesign of the KRS.
- 6.3 The total saving from the proposed revision of the KRS, as detailed in Section 5, relative to the cost of the current KRS is estimated to be £486,000. This is mainly achieved by a significant reduction in the costs for processing the recyclable materials we collect.

- 6.4 The processing costs for recycling will be greatly reduced by households separating fibre (paper and cardboard), containers (plastics and metal) and glass. The current system of co-mingling all the materials in a single household bin means higher processing costs and a more limited number of suppliers and facilities able to sort the materials.
- 6.5 It should be noted however that the projected savings are based on estimated 'gate' prices for processing of the new paper/card and containers waste streams and actual costs will not be known until tendering exercises are completed; experience has shown that the market is subject to fluctuations and influenced by global demand for recovered materials such as metals, paper and card.
- 6.6 Scottish local authorities currently collecting fibre and containers separately were surveyed and suppliers consulted to obtain the price estimates used for the cost modelling included in the options appraisal. The margin by which the projected saving exceeds the Change Plan saving target provides a degree of comfort that it will be delivered.
- 6.7 As noted in paragraph 4.7, Angus Council has been awarded £2,843,473.36 from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund. This funding will cover all the capital expenditure associated with the roll-out of the project, including:
- The supply of blue bins to every household in Angus.
 - The supply of additional blue bins to commercial customers as required.
 - The supply of approx. 170 additional glass recycling points across Angus.
 - The supply of two food waste collection vehicles to support the extension of the food waste service.
 - An additional two full time officers (on a temporary basis) to assist with the roll out of the bins.
 - Groundworks where required to accommodate additional recycling bins at communal and 'road end' collection sites.
- 6.8 As only capital funding is available through the RIF fund, communications materials must be paid for by Angus Council (bin stickers are treated as part of the bin and therefore funded). The cost of a 16-page leaflet and letter to be posted to all households has been quoted as £46,653 and will be a one-off cost. Other communications materials including advertising on vehicle sides is expected to cost in the region of £11,200. These additional costs for communication materials will be contained within existing budgets for waste services.
- 6.9 The Finance and Change Plan (Report [40/23](#)) also includes a revenue budget saving of £80,000 in 2023/24 and £50,000 in 2024/25 via the impact of the DRS and new household bin policies. The proposed implementation of the policy that purple household bins will be tagged and not emptied when there is unacceptable level of recyclables found in the bin is projected to deliver a £156,000 saving from reduced waste disposal costs.
- 6.10 To support the introduction of the 'no recyclables in the purple bin' policy it is proposed that an additional project officer is employed for a temporary 12 month period to support the introduction. This will carry a cost of approx. £33,000 which will be contained by the estimated savings to the waste services revenue budget application of the policy will generate.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 As detailed in paragraph 5.17, it is forecasted the proposals would increase the household recycling rate by 3%, therefore delivering environmental as well as financial benefits. "Waste, Recycling and the Circular Economy" is identified as a key theme in the Angus Council Transition to Net Zero Action Plan and the review of the kerbside service was included as an action in the Plan. Increasing our recycling rate would contribute towards our target for reducing emissions.
- 7.2 As referenced in paragraph 3.21, it is expected that the Circularity Economy Bill will lead to compliance with the Recycling Charter for Scotland becoming compulsory for local authorities. If it is determined not to proceed with the recommendations of the report, there would be the risk that revision of the kerbside recycling service would be required at a future date when external funding may no longer be available to support the significant capital costs involved.

7.3 It is also highlighted to members that if it is decided to continue with the current comingled mix of recyclables in the household grey bin, we will likely find very few suppliers capable and interested in bidding for contracts to sort the material going forward. The lack of suppliers (and therefore competition) to sort our material risks higher costs and a lack of contingency options in the event a supplier's facility is forced to close.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached to the Report.

9. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive, 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 [189/22](#)
- Report No [40/23](#)
- Report No [144/16](#)
- Report No [27/17](#)
- Report No [312/21](#)

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List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal



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 the Kerbside Recycling Service (KRS) with recommendation of a revised system.

It was agreed that the current KRS should be reviewed at the Communities meeting in August 2022 (reference Report [189/22](#)) to align the service with forthcoming national policy changes and also to make savings identified in the Finance and Change Plan (reference Report [40/23](#)).

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

Yes/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.

National Policy landscape

- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) which will see plastic bottles and cans widely recycled at locations other than in kerbside recycling bins thus making our current system inefficient.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging which will result (from 2025) in payments to local authorities that are likely to be dependent on efficient recycling schemes where both income and the quality of recyclables are maximised (current system costs money to sort materials for disposal so does not realise income).
- Circular Economy Bill which introduces a requirement for authorities to meet a recycling Code of Practice; this is expected to look similar to the current voluntary CoP which requires paper and card, and glass, to be collected separately from other materials – we do not currently meet this requirement.

DRS is enshrined in Scottish Law and is expected to be implemented in October 2025 (at the earliest); EPR is expected to be legislated in 2024 and secondary legislation from the Circular Economy Bill at an unknown date.

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

To review the KRS with recommendation of a revised system as below and to introduce a policy whereby purple bins containing too many recyclables would be treated as contaminated and would not be emptied.

New system:

- Paper and card collected in a blue recycling bin;
- Cans and plastics collected in a grey recycling bin;
- Glass collected at recycling points;
- Food waste collected at the kerbside (service extended to more households)
- Garden waste as is.

(iv)Is it a new proposal? Yes Please indicate OR

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

The need for service review agreed in August 2022 (reference Report [189/22](#)).

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

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees Yes/No

Job Applicants Yes/No

Service users Yes/No

Members of the public Yes/No

Positive employee impact as will require the recruitment of four new staff members to crew the two new food waste vehicles that are required for the extension of the food waste service. All Angus residents will be impacted by changes to the KRS.

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).

KRS survey

A community engagement exercise was undertaken via the online kerbside recycling service survey which was open from 14 November – 11 December 2022; the survey was also available during this time as a paper survey that could be collected from libraries or provided through community councils or communities officers, and who could also provide assistance with completion. Results published on [AC website](#). 2464 responses were received.

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)

Market research with suppliers who process recycling to see what is acceptable to them and investigate pricing, particularly the ability to achieve income for recycling (rather than disposal cost as per current system) through service change.

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

Research with local authorities already undertaking similar systems to that of proposed change to assess the likelihood of income generation from recyclable materials (and thus the ability to make savings as per the targets in the Finance and Change Plan), and also in terms of the quality of recycling achieved with regard to meeting national policy.

In addition data was sourced from a local authority that recently changed to collecting glass at recycling points rather than at the kerbside and found that glass tonnage was reduced by only 4%, indicating no significant barrier to participation.

Other (general information as appropriate).

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

Negative – refer to mitigation in Step 9.

Physically carrying glass

One of the proposed changes involves taking glass to a recycling point instead of placing it in a bin at the kerbside. Elderly people may be less physically able to carry glass to a bring site though some may potentially travel to a supermarket or other recycling point by car (in passing, as we would not advocate making separate journeys) and thus make it manageable to use a recycling point.

Disability

Impact

Negative – refer to mitigation in Step 9.

Physically carrying glass

One of the proposed changes involves taking glass to a recycling point instead of placing it in a bin at the kerbside. Those people with a physical disability that means they are unable to carry glass to a bring site could be disadvantaged; some people in this situation may potentially travel to a supermarket or other recycling point by car (in passing, as we would not advocate making separate journeys) and thus make it manageable to use a recycling point.

Understanding the changes

People with learning disabilities or conditions such as dementia may find it difficult to understand the changes and those with visual impairments may not be able to read leaflets or website information.

Gender reassignment

Impact

Neutral.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact

Neutral.

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact

Negative – refer to mitigation in Step 9.

Physically carrying glass

One of the proposed changes involves taking glass to a recycling point instead of placing it in a bin at the kerbside. Those who are pregnant may be unable to carry glass to a bring site; some people in this situation may potentially travel to a supermarket or other recycling point by car (in passing, as we would not advocate making separate journeys) and thus make it manageable to use a recycling point.

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.

The online and paper KRS survey gathered information relating to respondents' age. According to the National Records of Scotland, 25% of residents in Angus are over 65 – the survey response rate for this age group was 21% so is broadly representative. Of the over 65s who responded, 42.5% disagreed with taking glass to a recycling point and this percentage was mirrored by those aged 55-64. Just

under 50% of all respondents disagreed with taking glass to a recycling point, showing that elderly respondents were slightly less likely to disagree than younger residents.

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)?

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

For those that are physically unable to take their glass to a recycling point, there would be the option to place it in their purple non-recyclable (general) waste bin.

Where people with learning disabilities or conditions such as dementia find it difficult to understand the changes, we will ensure staff are available to communicate in a way that suits the person e.g. in person or by telephone. There may be a small minority of cases where mental disability means a resident is unable to sort their waste for recycling, and in such cases an exemption from the requirement may be given and residents may place all their waste in their purple non-recyclable (general waste) bin without fear of any repercussions.

Where visual impairment makes understanding leaflets or website information difficult, information can be adjusted to suit e.g. text provided in a format that is suitable for a 'text to speech' reading programme, or in Braille etc. Suitable formats will be produced in readiness for any such requests however all requests will be considered on an individual basis and any reasonable adjustments made to communications materials.

The use of a British Sign Language Video Link will also be considered.

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

Changing glass from a kerbside collection and asking residents to bring their glass to a recycling point

It is necessary to review our KRS for the below reasons.

1. Align with policy changes e.g. the:
 - a. Deposit Return Scheme which will see plastic bottles and cans widely recycled at locations other than in kerbside recycling bins thus making our current system inefficient;
 - b. Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging which will result (in future) in payments to local authorities that are likely to be dependent on efficient recycling schemes where potential income is maximised (our current system costs money to sort materials for disposal so does not realise income).
 - c. Circular Economy Bill which introduces a requirement for authorities to meet a recycling Code of Practice; this is expected to look similar to the current voluntary CoP which requires paper and card, and glass, to be collected separately from other materials – we do not currently meet this requirement.
2. Make savings as identified in the Finance and Change Plan.

The introduction of a separate kerbside glass collection was considered as part of an options appraisal however made the recycling system significantly more expensive to operate (as it requires additional vehicles to operate over and above the current system).

Data was sourced from a local authority that recently changed to collecting glass at recycling points rather than at the kerbside and found that glass tonnage was reduced by only 4%, indicating barriers to participation are not significant.

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?

The equality of opportunity for people with disabilities has been ensured by addressing the negative impacts as detailed in Step 9.

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

Not applicable.

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?

The EIA will be monitored by the revised KRS project implementation group to ensure issues are addressed as identified in the EIA and any as yet unidentified issues are responded to going forwards.

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

Will be published on Angus Council website along with committee report.

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

Prepared by: Susanne Austin, Team leader – Waste Strategy & Compliance.
21.08.23

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips, Equalities Officer. 25.08.23

Approved by: Graeme Dailly, Director of Infrastructure and Environment. 05.09.23

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