

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 21 March 2017

Redesign of Recycling Services in Tenements and Flats

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive Summary

Transport and Environment Committee on [7 June 2016](#) approved an outline strategy for the expansion of recycling services in tenemental and other flatted areas. It was however agreed that this would not take place until detail of the Scottish Government's Code of Practice on Household Waste Management was finalised.

This report outlines a proposed way forward to allow for the expansion of recycling services for households in tenemental and other flatted properties which will assist the Council in meeting its recycling objectives while allowing the Waste and Cleansing service to respond to future changes in collection systems should these be agreed with the Scottish Government.

The report also advises Committee of the development of a project by the Waste and Cleansing service that seeks to increase the frequency by which communal landfill and recycling bins are collected whilst reducing the number of bins located on city streets.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P44, P49, P50
Council Priorities	CP8, CP9
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Redesign of Recycling Services in Tenements and Flats

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Transport and Environment Committee
 - 1.1.1 approve the amended strategy for the siting of communal recycling bins in flatted properties, to specify the use of two mixed recycling bins in addition to separate bins for glass, food and landfill, so that the service can be “future proofed” to take account of the likely development of a national system for sorting waste across Scotland.
 - 1.1.2 notes the development of a communal redesign project and agrees to receive a further report towards the end of the calendar year that advises on the development of a communal bins redesign proposal, which outlines the feasibility studies that intend to shape the scope of a future project.

2. Background

- 2.1 Transport and Environment Committee on 7 June 2016 approved an outline strategy for the expansion of recycling services in tenemental and other flatted areas. It was however agreed that this would not take place until the details of the Scottish Government’s Code of Practice on Household Waste Management was finalised.
- 2.2 This report proposes an interim way forward to allow for the expansion of recycling services for households in tenemental and other flatted properties which will assist the Council in meeting its recycling objectives while allowing the Waste and Cleansing service to respond to future changes in collection systems should these be agreed with the Scottish Government.
- 2.3 The report also outlines a proposed project to increase the collection frequency of communal landfill and recycling bins and, by doing so, decrease the number of bins on city streets.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Following pilots in the Bellevue/ Broughton and Hillside areas an outline strategy was developed for recycling in tenemental areas, based on a number of principals:

- 3.2 This would replace the separate paper and packaging bins with the single mixed recycling bin used in kerbside recycling areas, enhance the bin capacity provided for recycling versus landfill, and expand the network of communal glass points.
- 3.3 The purpose of this is to enhance the opportunity for recycling in tenement areas, make the service as easy as possible to use for householders and to develop recycling services which as far as possible were uniform across the city regardless of housing type.
- 3.4 While this approach was agreed in principle it was known that the development of the Scottish Government's Code of Practice on Household Waste Management could impact on this strategy.

Challenges Arising from the Code of Practice

- 3.5 The Household Waste Charter and its associated Code of Practice seek to develop a waste and recycling service which is broadly uniform across the country in terms of service design, which materials are recycled, standards of performance, householder communication, staff training and health and safety standards. It is hoped that this would ultimately ensure that services are uniformly high quality across Scotland, and by ensuring a consistent approach, it is hoped this would lead to high rates of recycling and high quality/ low contamination materials which would easily find markets.
- 3.6 It is difficult to develop a completely uniform service across such diverse population and housing types as contained within Edinburgh and initial drafts of the Code of Practice raised particular challenges for this Council and its particular circumstances. The Council has engaged with Zero Waste Scotland since the development of the Code of Practice and achieved a number of changes to the drafts which overcame a number of our concerns.
- 3.7 For example, initial drafts would have required Councils to develop glass collection services for both kerbside and communal properties sorted into three colours. This is not practicable in tenemental areas because of space and siting constraints. However, the Council's strategy of (where necessary) collecting three colours of glass as a single, mixed stream and sending this through a high quality sorting process is compliant with the final versions of the Code of Practice and is considered to be more achievable in Edinburgh.
- 3.8 A briefing session was arranged to allow members of this Committee to engage with Zero Waste Scotland around these issues in November 2016. A number of issues remain which to date mean that the Council is not yet a signatory to the Code of Practice. These issues are outlined below.

Materials Split

- 3.9 In order to maximise the range and quality of materials collected it is proposed to collect certain materials across the country, but also to collect these in a particular way, e.g. it is proposed that paper and card should be collected separately from cans and plastics.

- 3.10 In terms of recycling in tenements this is problematic because the Council was seeking, and had started, to introduce a strategy based around collecting paper, card, cans and plastics in a single bin, to maximise the number of bins which can be allocated to recycling. It should however be noted that in many of the flatted areas within the city there are separate paper and packaging collections which had not yet been transferred to all materials in a single bin.

Capacities

- 3.11 It is proposed in the Code of Practice to rebalance the capacities provided for different waste streams; to reduce landfill/ residual waste and increase recycling. This Council is taking the same approach in Edinburgh and this is consistent with our strategy.
- 3.12 Edinburgh currently takes a more tailored approach which recognises that even where recycling facilities are provided, there are particular challenges involved in ensuring communal bins do not overflow.
- 3.13 This is particularly true in tenement areas, so the Council has slightly different approaches across bins sited on street, those in developments which are not open to passers-by, and those in purpose built student accommodation which is essentially comprised exclusively of single person households. The result of this is that in Edinburgh, the capacity provided for landfill waste from flats is considerably greater than envisaged in the Code of Practice. This is based on our considerable experience of providing these services.
- 3.14 The new capacities are outlined in Appendix 1. All new build properties should comply with these and as far as possible these will also be used to calculate bin capacities at existing locations (e.g. when enhancing recycling services at on street locations).
- 3.15 In some areas the Council started the introduction of a single bin for paper, card, cans and plastics. The Council may have to amend its strategy in future across the city to develop a two bin service (paper and card separate from cans, plastics and tetrapak type containers).

Funding

- 3.16 Meeting the objectives of the Code of Practice are challenging in parts of Edinburgh because of our building types, however the potential benefits of a uniform national waste collection system are understood. A fundamental issue is how these can be paid for. In Edinburgh, for example, more than 140,000 households who receive the current kerbside recycling service would require an additional bin (for paper and card) and there is currently no specific commitment on the Scottish Government's part to fund these costs to local authorities.

Proposed Way Forward – Communal Redesign

- 3.17 Waste and Cleansing services are currently considering how communal services can be improved for residents. These proposals are at an early stage and require some feasibility work to assess how deliverable the desired changes are. The

service intends to commence the feasibility work immediately with a view to reporting back to Committee before the end of this calendar year.

- 3.18 The proposed project will have implications for the continued expansion of services, particularly within tenemental areas. The scope of feasibility work will consider a number of things: the resource implications of increasing the frequency that communal containers are collected (most are currently collected twice per week); the likely impact on the number of bins therefore required on street, re-route communal services so crews and supervisors own, and are responsible for, a 'patch' of the city and the potential for creation of more formal waste and recycling points on streets rather than some of the current informal or ad hoc configurations. One of the main principles of the latter point is to ensure that from a customer point of view, the accessibility of facilities for recycling is as convenient as facilities for landfill disposal.
- 3.19 It is expected that the initial results of any feasibility assessment are completed around the summer period, if not before. If the results of the study are positive then Committee approval would be sought to commence the project. It is anticipated the consultation with residents would then commence to ensure the most practical solution is achieved.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The roll out of an enhanced recycling service will lead to a reduction in the use of landfill and an improved recycling rate, coupled with an expected increase in customer satisfaction.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 A reduction in the use of landfill or waste disposal and an increase in recycling would be expected to reduce landfill costs although there are no direct financial consequences arising from this report. This relates to the financial impact of changes to strategy for communal bin siting, not to costs of implementing a tenement roll out or to a daily waste collection.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The roll out of an enhanced recycling service will allow the Council to comply with the Waste (Scotland) Regulations, in particular with the provision of facilities for the collection of glass through an expanded network of recycling points.
- 6.2 The way forward outlined in this report allows for the expansion of recycling while future proofing services to accommodate a nationwide recycling collection system should the Council become a signatory to the Code of Practice.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) general duties will be accommodated through the provision of a service which is easier to use, and by enhancing the access to recycling facilities for residents who use communal bins.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The Provisions of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2013 will be met by providing an enhanced recycling service to residents in flats, reducing the use of landfill and enhancing the wider environmental, social and economic benefits associated with sustainable use of resources locally and globally.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation and engagement is not required at this stage. The Council continues to engage partners on the developing Code of Practice.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/charter-household-recycling>

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P44 - Prioritise keeping our streets clean and attractive. P49 - Continue to increase recycling levels across the City and reduce the proportion of waste going to landfill. P50 - Meet greenhouse gas targets including the national target of 42% by 2020.
Council Priorities	CP8 – A vibrant, sustainable local economy. CP9 – An attractive city.
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	1: Proposed capacities for different waste streams

Appendix 1: Proposed capacities for different waste streams (communal bins)

The table below sets out the capacities for the different waste streams as proposed in the Scottish Government's code of Practice, as well as those which the Council is currently using for flats.

In each case these would be the *weekly* capacity provided *per property*. In most cases these are derived from services receiving kerbside recycling services although the maximum 70 litres for landfill waste is specific.

These are used for new housing developments and as far as possible would be used at existing locations when changes are made to collection systems.

Different capacities are provided for bins at on street locations, off street locations (where bins are not used by passers by, and in managed student blocks).

At present the Council collects paper, card, cans and plastics as a single waste stream (mixed recycling).

Materials	Code of Practice (litres)	Edinburgh On Street (litres)	Edinburgh Off Street (litres)	Managed student blocks (litres)
Landfill	Max 70	240	170	140
Paper and Card	40			
Cans and Plastics	70			
Mixed Recycling		110	110	150
Glass	20	20	20	20
Food	20	20	20	20
TOTAL	220	390	320	290