

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: SUSTAINABLE WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE – UPDATE**  
**Meeting: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Date: 19 AUGUST 2014**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Members, at the Executive meeting on 25 February 2014 agreed to the implementation plan for the new waste collection system put forward by the Directors of Development Services and Corporate & Neighbourhood Services. The intention, as set out in the plan was that the first phase of the roll out of the new collection system would be a pilot covering Airth, Carron, Carronshore, Larbert, Letham, Stenhousemuir, Torwood and parts of Bo'ness.
- 1.2 This report provides a review of the activities involved during implementation and the results from the pilot. It also sets out the lessons learned and next steps.

**2. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Executive in February, Members agreed to the implementation plan that would allow for this project to be communicated effectively with the residents affected by the change. Full details are provided in Appendix 1 however, in summary, this involved:
  - Conducting community roadshows throughout April and May
  - Providing updated collection calendars and recycling information leaflets
  - Performing door-to-door visits
  - Information in the local media and Falkirk Council News
  - The provision of a dedicated email address for general recycling/waste enquiries
  - Engaging with affected Community Councils
  - Creating a Members pack containing example literature, a list of the properties affected and officer contacts during the service change
- 2.2 Resourcing the pilot effectively was a key part of the service change. The additional resources allocated to this project included; three Recycling Advisers involved in householder engagement (supported by funding from Zero Waste Scotland) and a recycling/waste specialist within the Contact Centre to deal with the expected increase in telephone enquiries.
- 2.3 An agreed way of working was established with the collection crews for the smooth transition from the old collection cycle to the new arrangements.
- 2.4 During the first collection cycle of green bins after three weeks, officers reviewed presentation for each of the fifteen collection routes. An officer from the waste

management team accompanied the crew in-cab which proved an effective method of engagement with the crew members.

- 2.5 Where green bins were noted as overfilled, it was important that Recycling Advisers were able to engage with the householders concerned in order to establish where the Council could help and support individuals through the change, taking each case on its own merits.
- 2.6 Officers in the three working groups (Project Board; Communications; Operations) have continued to meet on an ongoing basis in order to review and resolve any issues arising from the service change.
- 2.7 Officers have continued to receive guidance and support from Zero Waste Scotland during implementation and this has been welcomed throughout the last few months.

### 3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The key to the success of this project was the delivery of a sustainable waste collection service that would allow the authority to, not only, deliver on its recycling targets but to also limit the continual increases in the costs of landfilling household waste. The results to date are outlined in the following sections.

#### 3.2 Enquiries

- 3.2.1. At the start of the project officers planned for an increase in the number of calls that would be received at the Contact Centre and allocated a specific resource to handle the likely additional calls. The overall number of calls increased to the recycling enquiries number by 77% (3,671 versus 6,514) between April and June 2014 compared to the same period in 2013. While there was an increase in the calls received, the majority of the calls responded to were general enquiries about how to engage in the new service.
- 3.2.2. It was important to understand what the majority of the enquiries related to thereby ensuring we could continue to support residents through the change. Officers logged these enquiries and a general summary can be seen below:

Enquiry Type	April to June 2013	April to June 2014
Approved 360L Green Bin	6	49
Waste Audit Sent	103	393
360L Blue Bin Upgrade	118	830
Black Box Request	724	1361
Food Caddy Request	517	1898
Enquiry - Medical Waste	Not recorded	14
Enquiry - Unhappy with Change	N/A	22
Enquiry - General 3-Weekly Enquiry	N/A	42
Enquiry - Green Bin Full After 2 Weeks	Not recorded	13
Recycling Advisor Visit Required	N/A	78

From the table it is noted that the majority of enquiries were requests for additional recycling capacity or to participate in the recycling collections, which highlights again the communities affected engaging with the change.

- 3.2.3. One of the key success aspects of this project has been the placement of a dedicated employee to the Contact Centre and the ability to resolve enquiries at the initial point of customer contact. Despite the increase in calls, all enquiries have been dealt with speedily and the support of the other staff within the Contact Centre has been crucial in the delivery of this service change.
- 3.2.4. A dedicated email address has also been set up and used on the service change literature ([zerowaste@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:zerowaste@falkirk.gov.uk)) for householders to contact the Council. This has also proven effective at handling customer queries. Officers have responded to approximately 250 emails received via this address between April and June 2014.

### 3.3 Waste Collected: Green Bin, Blue Bin, Grey Food Caddy

- 3.3.1. An important outcome to this project has to be that we end up collecting less waste in the green bin and subsequently have an increase in the recycling collections. To summarise, our starting point was as follows;

- Green Bin (non-recyclable): 7.62 kg per household per week (kg/hh/wk)
- Blue Bin (co-mingled dry recyclate): 3.30 kg/hh/wk
- Grey Food Caddy (food waste): 0.66 kg/hh/wk

- 3.3.2. Following two collection cycles in the pilot area, the results of the weight of the green bin (kilograms per household per week, in descending order by overall average) is provided below:

		28-May to 17-Jun	18-Jun to 8-Jul	OVERALL AVERAGE
		1st Cycle	2nd Cycle	
Beat	Area	kg/hh/wk	kg/hh/wk	kg/hh/wk
Z311	Carronshore	6.62	6.02	6.32
Z314	Lower Stenhousemuir	6.33	6.21	6.27
Z213	Bo'ness: Newtown Area	6.36	6.12	6.24
Z113	The Inches and North Broomage	6.37	5.89	6.13
Z211	Bo'ness: Maidenpark Area	5.55	5.74	5.65
Z115	Airth, Torwood, Letham, Bellsdyke Rd	5.51	5.63	5.57
Z215	Bo'ness: Grahamsdyke, Drum Area	5.80	5.32	5.56
Z313	Lower Stenhousemuir / Carron	5.69	5.36	5.53
Z312	Carron	5.20	5.62	5.41
Z214	Bo'ness: Harbour Rd / Muirhouses	5.39	5.22	5.31
Z114	Upper Stenhousemuir	5.35	5.18	5.26
Z212	Bo'ness: Kinneil/Crosshill/Braefoot	5.18	5.21	5.20
Z111	Kinnaird	5.33	5.04	5.19
Z315	North Broomage and South Broomage	5.33	5.00	5.17
Z112	Antonshill	5.18	5.00	5.09
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE KG/HH/WK FOR TWO COLLECTION CYCLES</b>				<b>5.59</b>

- 3.3.3. It has now been a number of weeks since the changes have come into force and officers have assessed that the weight of an average green bin in the pilot area (kg/hh/wk) is at least 2kg lighter than the average weight for the Council area as a whole for 2013.

3.3.4. Also between April and June 2014 in comparison to the same period in 2013, the following results have been noted:

- 29% increase in the food waste collected
- 6% increase in co-mingled dry recyclate collected

3.3.5. If the performance in the green bin was replicated across the district, the Council would see a reduction in the tonnage to landfill of almost 9,000 tonnes. The majority of the material no longer going to landfill will be through the increases in both the food waste and blue bin collections. This improvement in performance if maintained, would see the authority reach its recycling target of 60%.

3.3.6. While this is a positive step forward, the authority is still only seeing a circa 30% participation in its food waste collection service and could still benefit from a major upturn in the use of this service. Indeed, the areas where we are still collecting a large tonnage of green bin waste correlates to poor presentation in the food waste collection.

#### 3.4 Waste Analysis

3.4.1. In order to better understand the material still being sent to landfill, officers conducted a further waste analysis to see where additional improvements could be made in recycling performance. This analysis included areas of low, medium and high performance. The analysis highlights that while we have reduced the tonnage collected there still remains a significant weight of recyclable material within the green bin that could and should have been placed within the available recycling collections. Initial results are summarised as follows;

- Around 30% is food waste that could have been placed in the food caddy
- Around 13% is dry recyclate that could have been placed in the blue bin

3.4.2. The results highlight the improvement across all the recycling collections and are in line with the projections contained within the Waste Services review as reported to Council in December 2013. If this performance was mirrored throughout the district the Council would see a net saving of £385,000 and achieve its goal of reaching 60% recycling in its first full year of implementation.

3.4.3. While the improvement is in line with projections, the waste analysis continues to highlight that the Council could achieve further benefit should the food waste collection in particular be further utilised.

## **4. LESSONS LEARNED**

- 4.1 The pilot phase has been in place for a number of months and it is considered that the communication plan that was utilised has been effective. This has been confirmed by the independent review by Zero Waste Scotland which suggests that the findings of the pilot project reinforces the Council's approach to the implementation and commitment to conduct robust engagement with its community. The review confirms that the communication plan has been implemented successfully and supports the council's approach to implement the pilot.
- 4.2 The independent review goes on to state that "Falkirk Council had a strong, cohesive team with established lines of communication, a clear chain of command and clarity of the respective roles of each team member involved in the service change."
- 4.3 The review also suggests lessons that could be learned. These will be taken into consideration together with the following;

- The project must continue to be adequately resourced in order to help and support residents through the change and to enable officers to deal with queries in an effective and timely manner.
- Currently the blue and brown bins are collected on the same week as each other. In order to prevent all the containers being presented at the same time officers propose to split this collection so that they are collected on separate weeks (while retaining the same day). This would see the following collection pattern;
  - Week 1 – Blue bin, black box and food caddy
  - Week 2 – Brown Bin and food caddy; in addition to the 3 weekly green bin collection

Officers propose that this change comes into effect in March 2015 following the winter break for the brown bin collection.

- The recycling calendar will only contain the symbols that are relevant to each household collection.
- The green bin weights, and therefore the yield per collection vehicle, can be assessed and used for planning current and future collections.
- Providing a 'frequently asked questions' section on the Council website regarding the service change.

## **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 Since the Council made the decision in December 2013 to move to a three weekly collection of non-recyclable material, a number of other Councils have also made various announcements regarding non-recyclable waste collection. These include;
- Aberdeen City (180ltr non-recyclable bin emptied every two weeks)

- Angus (140ltr non-recyclable bin emptied every two weeks)
- City of Edinburgh (140ltr non-recyclable bin emptied every two weeks)
- Perth & Kinross (a trial of a 140ltr non-recyclable bin emptied every two weeks)
- Gwynedd (moving to 3-weekly collection of non-recyclable material)
- Bury (moving to a 3-weekly collection of non-recyclables)

Fife Council has operated a fortnightly collection of non-recyclable material in a 140ltr bin in the Markinch area since 2009 and in the process of rolling out a similar collection to other areas.

5.2 Based on the results and the outcomes of the pilot phase officers would recommend completing the implementation of the three weekly collection of the green bin (non-recyclable material) to the remaining suitable locations as follows;

- October 2014 phase 2 to 22,000 properties
  - Ward 1 Bo'ness and Blackness: Complete Bo'ness
  - Ward 3 Denny and Banknock: All locations
  - Ward 5 Bonnybridge and Larbert: Complete remaining areas
  - Ward 7 Falkirk South: Lionthorn only
  - Ward 9 Upper Braes: All locations
- March 2015 phase 3 to the remaining 25,000 suitable properties
  - Ward 2 Grangemouth: All locations
  - Ward 6 Falkirk North: All locations
  - Ward 7 Falkirk South: Complete remaining areas
  - Ward 8 Lower Braes: All locations

5.3 In order to look at the resource implications of completing this project, officers have entered into discussion with ZWS to see if they would continue to fund the three recycling adviser posts as per the pilot phase. They have confirmed that the funding would only be available to support two advisers for the remaining areas and, should we wish to have the same resources to complete the implementation, the authority would need to fund one recycling adviser post. This funding offer is open until 31 March 2015. Officers feel that the resources utilised for the pilot phase was a key aspect to the success of the project and would recommend that the three advisers are retained. The costs to the Council for the third adviser could be met through existing waste strategy budgets.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

### Policy

6.1 The new collection service is in line with national zero waste policy and legislation and will assist in the delivery of the Councils Zero Waste Strategy.

### Financial

6.2 If the performance of the pilot area is repeated the Council would achieve the savings target of £385,000 by 2015/16. Further savings could be achieved by increased participation in the food waste collection service.

- 6.3 Zero Waste Scotland have committed to continuing to fund two recycling adviser posts until March 2015. To keep the resources consistent with the pilot phase the authority would require funding the third post. This cost could be met through existing Waste Strategy budgets.

### **Legal**

- 6.4 The new collection service will ensure compliance with the Waste (Scotland) Regulations and assist in meeting the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan and European Union Waste Framework Directive recycling/composting targets.

### **Personnel**

- 6.5 Temporary staff will be employed to assist with the implementation of the service change. These posts are partly funded via Zero Waste Scotland.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The sustainable waste collection pilot had two primary objectives. Firstly, to reduce the council's landfill cost burden and secondly to increase the authorities recycling rate towards the 2020 target of 60%. Based on the findings of the pilot both of these objectives could be achieved if the performance of the pilot areas was mirrored throughout the rest of the Falkirk Council area.
- 7.2 Throughout the pilot area we have seen a drop in the amount of residual waste collected and subsequently landfilled while at the same time seen positive increases in the amount of recycle collected through the range of collections provided.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is recommended that the Executive:**

- 8.1 **note the results and lessons learned to date from the pilot phase**
- 8.2 **agree to complete the roll out of the sustainable waste collection service as per paragraph 5.2**
- 8.3 **note the funding available from Zero Waste Scotland for two Recycling Adviser posts for the remaining phases and agree to fund one Recycling Adviser post through existing budgets**

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**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**DATE: 5 August, 2014**

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of Communications and Engagement Activities

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Scotland's Zero Waste Plan
2. Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012
3. Falkirk Zero Waste Strategy 2012-2022
4. Falkirk Council Report 11 December 2013
5. Falkirk Council Executive 25 February 2014
6. Zero Waste Scotland: Review of Council Service Change Communications



## Sustainable Waste Collection Service – Update

### Appendix 1

#### Details of Communications and Engagement Activities

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Those affected by the change to the green bin collection every three weeks were engaged using scheduled activities and communication channels as summarised below.

#### March

- Content of communications material finalised with Zero Waste Scotland
- A Contact Centre Liaison Officer, with specialist experience in dealing with recycling/waste related enquiries, was in place in March to deal with the expected increase in calls during the change.

#### April

- Elected Members were issued with a pack containing example literature, the location of the properties affected and key contact information at the beginning of April.
- A letter was delivered to all selected households in the first week of April containing information about the changes. Community road shows were conducted in April and May in the pilot phase areas on weekdays, evenings and weekends.

#### April: Roadshow Record with Approximate Number of Resident Engagements

No.	Day	Date	Time	Venue	Approx No. of Residents Engaged With
1	Thu	3 April	10am-4pm	Asda, Stenhousemuir	75
2	Fri	4 April	9.30am-3.30pm	Falkirk Farmers' Market	80
3	Wed	9 April	10am-11.30am	Letham Playing Field	2
4	Wed	9 April	11.30am-2pm	Airth Community Centre	15
5	Sat	12 April	9.30am-1pm	Market Square, Bo'ness	40
6	Tue	15 April	11am-2pm	Torwood Garden Centre	40
7	Wed	16 April	9am-1pm	Dobbie Hall Market, Larbert	25
8	Thu	17 April	9.30am-12pm	Co-op, Carronshore	13
9	Thu	17 April	1pm-3.30pm	Carronshore Community Centre	5
10	Fri	18 April	10am-2pm	Lidl, Bo'ness	45
11	Tue	22 April	2am-7pm	Tesco, Bo'ness	42
12	Sat	26 April	10am-4pm	Stenhousemuir Shopping Centre	80
13	Sun	27 April	12pm-3pm	Kinneil House, Bo'ness	50
14	Wed	30 April	10am-2pm	Sainsburys, Kinnaird Village	20
<b>TOTAL APPROX. NUMBER OF RESIDENTS ENGAGED WITH</b>					<b>532</b>

- Presentations were conducted at each affected Community Council (Airth Parish was visited on 18 June).

- A dedicated email address for general recycling/waste enquiries ([zerowaste@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:zerowaste@falkirk.gov.uk)) was also set up to provide an additional channel for householders to engage directly with Waste Strategy officers to ensure any recycling advice could be given speedily.
- **May**
- Residents were provided with updated collection calendars, recycling information leaflets and branded 'Recycle for Falkirk' give-away items at all community engagement events. Requests from householders for additional and larger recycling containers were also processed by Waste Strategy officers.

**May: Roadshow Record with Approximate Number of Resident Engagements**

No.	Day	Date	Time	Venue	Approx No. of Residents Engaged With
1	Thu	01 May	10am-4pm	Asda, Stenhousemuir	100
2	Tue	06 May	11am-2pm	Spar, Jamieson Avenue, Bo'ness	31
3	Thu	08 May	2am-7pm	Asda, Stenhousemuir	95
4	Fri	09 May	11am-2pm	Drumpark Avenue, Bo'ness	20
5	Fri	09 May	10am-4pm	Co-op, Carron Village	72
6	Tue	13 May	10am-4pm	Lidl, Bo'ness	51
7	Wed	14 May	9am-1pm	Dobbie Hall Market, Larbert	34
8	Sat	17 May	10am-5pm	Callender House, Museums Festival	150
9	Thu	22 May	11am-2pm	Co-op, Linlithgow Road, Bo'ness	5
10	Fri	23 May	10am-4pm	Co-op, Carron Village	69
11	Sun	25 May	12pm-4pm	Victorian Street Fair, Bo'ness	103
12	Tue	27 May	11am-2pm	Torwood Garden Centre	30
<b>TOTAL APPROX. NUMBER OF RESIDENTS ENGAGED WITH</b>					<b>760</b>

- In total, approximately 1,292 residents were engaged with over the two month period, an average of 50 residents per event.
- Detailed information packs were sent to all residents to highlight all the key information relating to the change.
- Presentations to pupils at Larbert Village, St Bernadette's Primary, Bo'ness Public Primary, Carrongrange and Airth Primary Schools
- Talks at relevant local Scout, Guide and Boys' Brigade groups.

## June

- Participation assessment of householders' food waste containers and incidence of excess green bin waste has been monitored by officers in bin routes affected by the change. Officers then lettered households to encourage greater participation in recycling. This was followed by extensive door-to-door visits to offer further support for recycling and, where appropriate, attendance at close meetings for householders in flatted properties in conjunction with Housing Officers or Housing Association staff.

- Information informing householders of the changes and promoting recycling was published in the local media and Falkirk Council News
- Updated recycling information has been provided on-line through the recently re-launched Council website. This includes a postcode 'look-up' facility which enables householders to find their bin collection dates and download their bin collection calendar.