

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: ZERO WASTE UPDATE**  
**Meeting: ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
**Date: 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The purpose of this paper is to inform members of the Council's progress in relation to European Union & Scottish Governments (SG) landfill diversion and recycling targets.
- 1.2** Previous reports brought before members highlighted the proposed introduction of Zero Waste Regulations. This paper will highlight the Council's current position in relation to recycling performance as well as discuss the potential impact of the regulations.

**2. RECYCLING PERFORMANCE**

- 2.1** Previous reports to this Committee outlined the obligations placed upon the Council to meet the targets set out in the Zero Waste Plan. The headline targets relate to the need to increase levels of recycling and composting of waste and reducing the level of waste sent to landfill. They can be summarised as follows:-
- 50% recycled/composted by 2013
  - 60% recycled/composted by 2020
  - 70% recycled/composted by 2025
  - No more than 5% to landfill by 2025
- 2.2** In 2010/11 the authority achieved a recycling rate of 49.25% an improvement of just under 7% on the previous year, which is one of the highest rates in Scotland. At the present time officers anticipate that for the period 2011/12 the Council is likely to achieve a recycling rate of c52% which will see the Council achieve the 2013 target ahead of schedule.
- 2.3** In addition to the normal weight based data recording SEPA and the Scottish Government (SG) have also released a Carbon Metric, with the aim of demonstrating the carbon benefit of recycling. This will also introduce carbon targets that Councils are encouraged to achieve. This proposal is currently under review and will likely be implemented over the coming months.

### **3. ZERO WASTE REGULATIONS**

- 3.1** Members may recall from previous reports to Committee that the Scottish Government plans to release a set of regulations that will help Scotland become a Zero Waste Society. These regulations are not due to be released until later this year, but early indications are that it will likely require further actions on the Council's part to remain fully compliant moving forward. The area where this proposal is likely to impact on the Council is in the regulatory requirement for all authorities to provide a separate collection of food waste from households by 2015.
- 3.2** With this in mind officers have commenced work in conjunction with Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) to produce a business case that explores the options for collecting food waste from households. At this time the following four options are being explored:-
- **Option 1** – Fortnightly collection of food waste using existing kerbside box vehicle, allowing food waste to be collected at the same time as black box collections.
  - **Option 2** – Weekly collection of food waste using the existing kerbside box vehicles every fortnight then using small 7.5t RCV to collect the other week.
  - **Option 3** – Weekly collection of food waste using completely separate vehicles.
  - **Option 4** - Fortnightly collection of food waste using the existing brown bin collection.

All of the above options will require householders to receive another container. For options 1 to 3 this would involve a small kitchen caddy and an external caddy (25ltr) being provided, where option 4 would require only the provision of the small internal caddy.

- 3.3** In addition, a 'do nothing scenario' is also modelled to compare costs. This option is not really a valid alternative due to impending regulatory requirement to introduce a collection. However this will be used as a baseline in comparison to the collection options discussed above
- 3.4** In order to assist the introduction of food waste collections the Scottish Government have committed funding in the region of £4m that is available through ZWS. In order to access funding the Council must first complete the business case and then submit it to ZWS for consideration. It is hoped that the Council will have an offer of funding by November this year at which time officers will bring back a detailed report to members highlighting the preferred option and amount of funding that has been allocated subject to approval.

### **WASTE STRATEGY PLAN**

- 3.5** In addition to the above piece of work officers, as agreed at Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011, have commenced work on updating the Council's existing waste strategy to ensure continual compliance with the Zero Waste Plan and the subsequent release of the supporting regulations.

- 3.6 This project is again being supported through ZWS who have provided funding to the Council to help complete this project. The updated plan is likely to take around 6 months to complete and will require intensive consultation before completion. In addition, the Council will also have to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) exploring all the options open to it.

### **Residual Waste Treatment**

- 3.7 Another key component of the regulations will be the likely ban from landfill for some materials before 2020. This will require all waste to be 'pre treated' allowing for maximum diversion before landfilling residues from the treatment process.
- 3.8 The Council is in a fortunate position regarding residual treatment with the process at Avondale due to be ready within the next few months. It is hoped that the facility will be in a position to be viewed by members early in the New Year and will also allow for the further recycling and diversion of significant volumes of waste in 2012/13.

## **4. PLASTIC BAG FREE FALKIRK**

- 4.1 At previous committee meetings, members have requested information regarding a campaign on making Falkirk a plastic bag free town. Officers have, therefore, reviewed the issue of plastic bags and schemes of a similar nature from around Scotland.
- 4.2 Plastic bags can often be seen as a major littering problem within local communities and can take anything up to 20 years to biodegrade in landfill. 6.4 billion single use plastic bags were used in the UK in 2010 and while still high this represents a drop of over 4 billion from the peak of plastic bag use in 2006. A significant factor in this reduction was the signing in 2005 of the Courtauld commitment by all the major retailers with the aim of reducing the major environmental impact of their services and a commitment to reduce the number of single use carrier bags by 50% and as can be seen from the figures significant progress has been made in this regard.
- 4.3 Officers have discussed the matter with colleagues in East Ayrshire and Perth where similar campaigns have been in operation. They have confirmed that this was not a Council run campaign but run by a local organisation with little input from the authority, although in the case of Perth some funding was made available for the community project.
- 4.4 While the authority does not have a specific campaign to reduce plastic bags the major focus of all our campaigns is to reduce all waste which includes the use of single use carrier bags. Since 2007 at most roadshows the authority has provided interested residents with a free bag for life and this is also the case with the new Waste Watchers campaign with people who complete their challenge receiving a pack that includes a reusable bag.
- 4.5 It has recently come to the attention of officers that Zero Waste Scotland will shortly be launching an initiative called Zero Waste Zones with the intention of highlighting areas that demonstrate exceptional environmental performance. Full details have not yet been released but officers have had initial discussions with the Falkirk BID project who are keen to explore the initiative upon release of further details.

- 4.6 The Scottish Government have announced that they will issue a consultation on ways to reduce dependence on single use carrier bags. Officers will review the consultation upon its release.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS

### Financial

- 5.1 The potential cost of introducing a food waste collection subject to the business case and a further decision.

### Legal

- 5.2 Potential impact of Zero Waste Regulations

### Policy

- 5.3 As per Forth Valley Area Waste Plan

### Personnel

- 5.4 None.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

**It is recommended that Members:-**

- 6.1 note the continual improvement in recycling performance;
- 6.2 note the potential requirement to introduce separate food waste collections
- 6.3 note development of a new waste strategy by the Council.

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**Director of Development Services**

**Date: 14 October, 2011**

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Ref: DSWS1-4

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Forth Valley Area Waste Plan 2003.
  - 2 Scotland's Zero Waste Plan.
  - 3 Environment & Community Safety Report 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011.
- Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 590437 and ask for Robin Baird.