
WASTE & RECYCLING COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Report by Director - Infrastructure & Environment

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 December 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on communications with the public to encourage reduction in contamination of waste and recycling.
- 1.2 A number of activities have been undertaken since the Scrutiny update in June, including:
- Promotion of 'Recycling Week' and the digital 'Recycling Sorter tool'.
 - Schools Resource Pack introduced at 8 Primary Schools as part of a pilot project.
 - Kerbside Recycling Contract awarded, which includes a requirement for the supplier to provide support with public engagement and education.
 - Compositional Analysis of kerbside recycling and general waste bins
 - Development of stakeholder engagement questionnaire

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 **I recommend that the Committee:-**

- (a) Supports the delivery of a stakeholder engagement questionnaire to help inform future communications and education programmes**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 3 June 2021 the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were provided with an update on the effectiveness of the Council's Recycling and Waste Policies.
- 3.2 The update outlined a number of positives in relation to the performance of the Council's Recycling and Waste Services including; increasing recycling rates, reducing landfill rates, reducing carbon emissions, low numbers of missed collections, high satisfaction levels and relatively low service provision costs, compliance with the landfill ban well ahead of the 2025 deadline.
- 3.4 However, there were a number of areas that were identified as requiring improvement including:
 - The large quantity of potentially recyclable material that remains in the general waste bin i.e. 70%.
 - The increasing levels of contamination in the kerbside recycling material i.e. 25%.
- 3.5 The Audit & Scrutiny Committee were keen understand what could be done to increase awareness of what goes in each bin to maximise recycling performance and to reduce contamination of the kerbside recycling material. This note focuses on the work that has been undertaken in this area since the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

4 RECYCLING WEEK (20th to 26th September 2021)

- 4.1 Recycling Week is an annual celebration of recycling across the nation, promoted by Zero Waste Scotland.
- 4.2 This year's theme was '***Its Time to Get Recycling Sorted***', which focused on helping to make recycling easier, see link to television advert below:

[Its time to get recycling sorted | Recycle Week 2021 - YouTube](#)
- 4.3 As part of Recycling Week, Zero Waste Scotland launched a new [Recycling Sorter](#). The digital recycling tool is aimed at helping combat confusion and help Scotland meet future recycling targets.
- 4.4 The tool allows for residents to search what items can be recycled, and in which bin, in any Scottish Local Authority.
- 4.5 Interestingly research carried out by Zero Waste Scotland has shown that a third of Scots often aren't sure about which items can and can't be recycled and almost half of Scots admit that they could increase the amount of recycling they do. This supports the discussion at Audit & Scrutiny on 9th June and demonstrates that this is not just a local issue but a national one.
- 4.6 Ultimately the new Recycling Sorter aims to help simplify and bring clarity to recycling, ensuring that all households across the Scottish Borders are recycling more of the right things in the right places and preventing recyclable items from ending up in landfill.

- 4.7 Scottish Borders Council supported the campaign through a local press release and ongoing social media. This was delivered using information and downloads from the Recycling Week Toolkit, see following link [Recycle Week 2021 – Zero Waste Partners](#)
- 4.8 In addition to the work already undertaken we are working with the Communications Team to update the Council's website so that there is a direct link to the [Recycling Sorter](#) tool, along with further social media to raise awareness.

5 SCHOOLS RESOURCE PACK

- 5.1 The Council has been working with Levenseat Ltd to develop a Schools Resource Pack covering recycling, sustainability, and eco-friendly practices.
- 5.2 The [Schools Resource Pack](#) has been developed in partnership with the Council's Education Department to ensure that it aligns with the principles set out by 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and the emphasis on the coherent education from ages 3-18.
- 5.3 The recycling and awareness activities aim to lay the foundation for future learning for children and young people as they progress through the education system and provide an enjoyable and educational experience that will:
- Provide young people with key waste reduction and recycling messages and create a positive image of the waste management sector.
 - Offer real- life context for learning. Allow for opportunities to develop skills for learning and skills for life, in order to live a more sustainable life.
 - Develop young children's literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, whilst allowing them to learn about recycling, sustainability, and eco-friendly practices. Support children in developing the four capacities: confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners.
 - Ensure cross-curricular links are made on the general themes of waste management, recycling, caring for the environment and renewable energy
- 5.4 The Schools Resource Pack was rolled out to 8 of primary schools after the October break as part of a pilot project. Feedback from the Schools will be used to develop the final version of the pack for wider roll out in August 2022.

6 KERBSIDE RECYCLING CONTRACT

- 6.1 The Council very recently entered into a new contract for the treatment and haulage of its kerbside recycling.
- 6.2 Under the new contract the supplier (REGEN Ltd) is required to work with the Council to improve recycling performance and reduce contamination. This includes supporting the Council with public engagement and education. We will be discussing this in more detail with REGEN and the Councils communications department as part of the ongoing contract meetings.

7 WASTE COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The Council has been successful in obtaining funding from Zero Waste Scotland to undertake a waste compositional analysis of both the kerbside recycling and general waste bins.
- 7.2 The Compositional analysis was completed over a two week period finishing on 26 November.
- 7.3 Information from the Compositional Analysis will help identify the performance of the Council's current collection services and will be used to inform where further education and communications campaigns need to be targeted.

8 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 Officers are currently developing a stakeholder engagement questionnaire for issue in the first quarter of 2022. The aim of the stakeholder engagement is to gather information on customer awareness, opinion and behaviour in relation to the kerbside recycling service provided by the Council, including communications/guidance.
- 8.2 This information will be used to inform how we deliver future waste and recycling communications campaigns.

9 NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Once we have received feedback from the Waste Compositional Exercise and the Stakeholder Engagement, work with Zero Waste Scotland, Third Parties and the Councils communications department to develop a communications plan.

Approved by

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