

To: Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board

On: 28 August 2019

Report by: Director of Environment & Infrastructure

Heading: Waste Service Change – Improving Recycling in Renfrewshire – Progress Report

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the January 2019 Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board, the Director of Environment & Infrastructure was asked to bring back to this Policy Board an update report in connection with the impact of the service changes implemented in respect of waste services.
- 1.2 In December 2018 Renfrewshire Council delivered a transformational waste and recycling service change which significantly altered the way that waste and recycling is collected from households. The service changes completely re-routed collections across the whole of Renfrewshire, affecting 90,000 households, 1200 commercial waste customers.
- 1.3 The objectives of the Council's waste strategy and associated changes to the waste collection service as set out in the report to Policy board in November 2017 were to:
 - Reduce the amount residual waste produced by households
 - Increase the amount of waste that is recycled
 - Segregate recycling material to improve the quality and quantity of recyclate, which would in turn make it easier and more cost effective to process for recycling.
 - All of the above supporting transition to compliance with the Scottish Government's objective of recycling 60% of household waste by 2020.

- 1.4 The Service Change was implemented in December 2018, with householders transitioning over December from a two weekly to a three weekly residual waste collection for around 67,000 households; Provision of an additional recycling bin for all Renfrewshire households to separate their recyclate into two distinct streams of paper & cardboard, plastics, cans & glass.
- 1.5 The Service Change is progressing well, delivering positive outcomes, supporting the strategic objectives of the service change through the approach taken by Renfrewshire's households to reduce their residual waste and presenting more recyclable waste shown through:
- Residual waste tonnage from households dropping by 11.5%
 - 42.5% increase in waste presentation from households in their food and garden bins
 - Overall increase in recycling, with a 4.4% increase in recycling over the same time period in 2018, taking the recycling figures to June 2019 to 52.3%
 - Processing costs of the separated recyclate streams is less than the mixed recyclate, delivering the cost efficiency agreed by Policy Board.
- 1.6 Following the implementation of the phase 2 rollout for parts of Erskine in August 2019, the service will now focus on supporting householders to increase their recycling further and to reduce contamination, and in some non-standard properties revise the recycling Infrastructure to suit the needs of residents.
- 1.7 The service is also tendering to introduce an in-cab digital routing system to support crews in the collection of household waste and this will, over time, link directly with the Customer Service Centre. Communication will continue and be tailored to support greater recycling and quality of recycling by households.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the content of this report and the overall success of this Renfrewshire wide service change and the ongoing activities to support and improve recycling across Renfrewshire.
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3. Background

3.1 In 2017, Renfrewshire Council set out a number of challenging external drivers which impacted on the Council's waste strategy.

- National policy to strive for improved recycling rates of 60% for household waste by 2020. At that time, Renfrewshire Council household recycling rate was 48% and changes would be required to progress to the national target.
- Global markets for recycling dictated that it was essential to improve the quality and quantity of recyclate and further separate comingled recyclate materials. High quality, cleaner recyclates are easier and more cost effective to recycle, achieving a higher value in global market through reduced processing costs.
- To progress towards the requirements of The Scottish Government's Household Waste Charter. At the Leadership Board of 8 June 2016, the Council's commitment to the Charter was approved. This is a commitment to transform waste services to achieve a more uniform waste collection service nationally, reduce the amount of residual waste collected and to improve recyclate collection rates and create a consistent stream of high quality recyclate.

3.2 The planned waste service changes agreed by the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board on 8 November 2017 were:

- Move from two weekly to three weekly residual waste collections (grey bins) for around 67,000 households
- Provision of an additional recycling bin to allow Renfrewshire householders to separate their recyclate into two distinct streams, namely:
 - Paper and cardboard
 - Mixed plastics, cans and glass.
- Householders residing in tenemental, maisonette type or high flatted properties would be provided with additional recycling infrastructure to allow further recyclate segregation to approximately 27,000 households.
- The comingled food & garden waste (brown bin) remained unchanged by the service change, retaining a fortnightly collection cycle.

3.3 Households where medical circumstances prevailed were provided with individual arrangements to suit their circumstances.

3.4 For those tenemental, flatted and maisonette properties, around 27,000 households, that did not receive a standard collection it was necessary to make changes to the recycling infrastructure provided. Prior to the service change, considerable focus was placed on planning to provide these residents with the means to allow them to

participate in recycling services. This involved reconfiguring container numbers, introduction of shared bins, provision of communal bins. Most of these changes were made, as planned, in advance of the new service going live.

- 3.5 The change to the new dual stream recycling collection service also resulted in changes to the Councils Commercial Waste Collection service (including Council properties such as schools, libraries, community halls etc).

4. Service Change

- 4.1 Considerable public engagement took place ahead of the launch of the service through planned “roadshows” at various locations across Renfrewshire. The service, in conjunction with the Communications Team also held a series of live social media question and answer sessions, with social media being a key method of communication to engage and support residents in addition to traditional leaflets to every property and public roadshows.
- 4.2 To facilitate this transformational change project, considerable work was required to re-route collection services across Renfrewshire. This was required not only because a new service type was being introduced, but as a result of demographic growth, there had been a 6% increase in households since 2012. Existing collection routes did not reflect this; therefore, an exercise was undertaken to ensure rebalance requirement of the new properties over the 7 working days.
- 4.3 The new recycling and waste collection service was implemented, as planned, on the 3 December 2018. During November and December 2018, green wheeled bin containers were delivered to households throughout Renfrewshire in advance of the new service starting. Calendars and information packs were also sent to all Renfrewshire households. The calendars provided to residents were very different to those provided in the past, with the aim of making easy to interpret the bespoke bin presentation information for each property.
- 4.4 A new webpage went live ahead of the change, this allowed residents to check their next bin for collection and the date. Residents are able to view or download their bin collection calendar to their smartphone, tablet or computer. Residents can also sign up to receive email reminders the day before their scheduled collection date of what bins to present on that day.
- 4.5 In December 2018 around 35,000 of Renfrewshire’s households had grey and/or blue bin transition collections to their new recycling and waste collection service. These were households where an extended gap would have existed to the new collection cycles, so no householder went longer than the new service standard.
- 4.6 Customer Service staff and Environment & Infrastructure worked closely ahead of and during the launch and continue to work closely following the implementation. A range of actions were developed to deal with the anticipated impact of the service changes. These included a dedicated email address (mybins@renfrewshire.gov.uk) and social media messaging.

- 4.7 Following the implementation, the service, as expected and planned for, received an increase in requests for blue, brown and food bin infrastructure as well as larger and / or smaller bins which were provided to households.
- 4.8 The second and last phase of the service change was to roll out a revised service to the Park Mains, North Barr, Bargarran and Rashielee areas of Erskine. This phase covers some 3,500 households, each of which are unique to the location and housing type such as access, demographics and lack of space for bin storage, requiring solutions that meet the needs of the householder and the service.
- 4.9 Similar public engagement exercises have been undertaken again, with 6 roadshows having taken place for these residents. Similar literature to that of Phase 1 has also been issued to all residents, and Waste Advisors were on hand to respond to any eventuality as the new service commenced on 19 August 2019.

5. Waste Service Change Outcomes

- 5.1 The service rollout went as planned with all new bin infrastructure, householder calendar packs, transition collections and communication plans occurring as planned with the service commencing as per the scheduled date for each householder.
- 5.2 Early indications would suggest that Renfrewshire's households have embraced and support the new approach to waste collection and recycling in Renfrewshire. The table below sets a very positive change in the household waste tonnage presented by Renfrewshire's residents against the same time period last year. This is evidenced in the undernoted table

Waste Stream	Jan – July 2018	Jan – July 2019	+ / - %
Dry Recyclate	7328.00	6867.40	-6.20%
Food & Garden Waste	4082.86	5825.40	+42.6%
Residual Waste	17163.44	15187.75	-11.5%

which shows shifts in the key waste and recycling streams summarised as follows:

- There has been a large reduction in residual waste tonnage presented by households, dropping by 11.5%.
- 42.6% increase in food and garden waste presentation from households in their food & garden bins. As set out in the communications to households, on average 30% of all grey bin material was food waste. It is clear residents have been proactive in removing food waste from their residual bin to their food bin infrastructure, which is very encouraging.
- Overall there has been a decrease in recycling materials presented by householders. This initially was a surprising result, however on viewing the national picture this is being replicated across Scotland with less packing/ plastics being presented by householders across Scotland, reflecting the focus on the

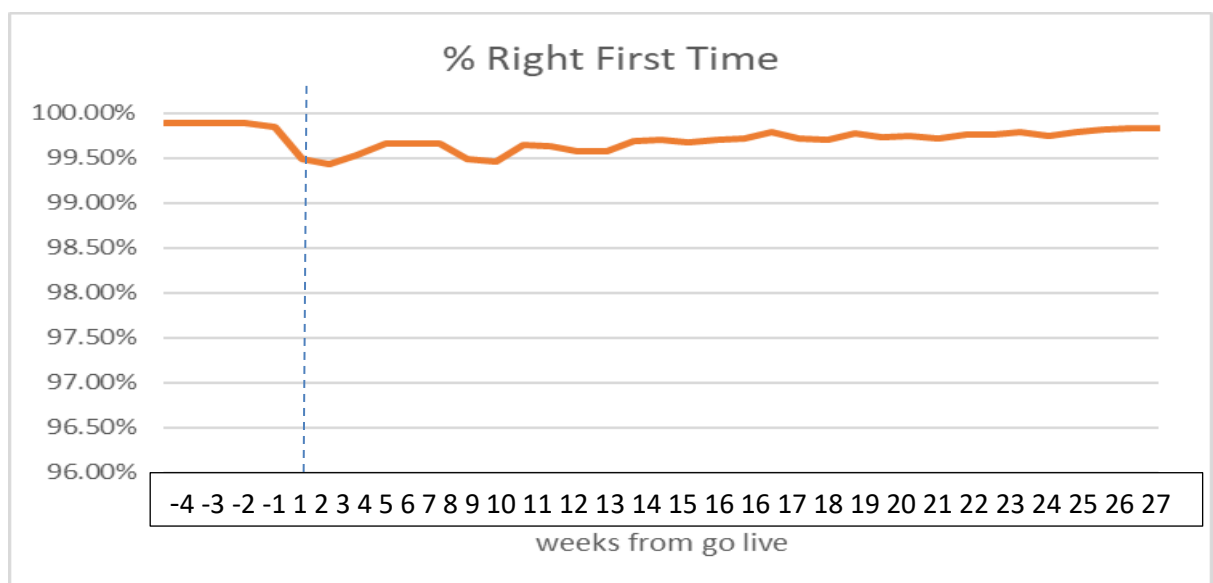
back of the national campaigns and reduction in packaging materials used by manufacturers of goods. Overall this has resulted in an increase in amount of household waste recycled, with a 4.4% increase in recycling over the time period January 2019 to July 2019 against the same time period in 2018, taking the overall year to date recycling rate to 52.3%

- The tender prices received for processing the separated recycle streams of paper & card, and plastics, cans and glass is less than the comingled dry recyclates, resulting in the service being on course to deliver the cost efficiency agreed by Policy Board in November 2017.
- The success of the communications campaign has supported and informed residents who are embracing the new service arrangements and doing their bit to support the service objectives of reducing residual waste and recycling more effectively.

6.0 Service Improvements

6.1 In a service change of this magnitude, involving every Renfrewshire household there were inevitably teething problems with a small percentage of households experiencing an inconsistent service over the first 1-3 months of service delivery.

6.1.1 The graph below sets out the collected “right first time” performance of the waste collection service before, during and after the change, with the dotted line indicating “go live”. The 141,500 bins collected each week “right first time” collection rate has now returned to a consistent performance level of picking up 99.8%.



6.1.2 During the months of January and February the reasons for performance dropping were due to:

- all collection routes were new and also new for the waste collection crews, who required to become familiar with these routes, in particular if there were difficult to

access/ local arrangements.

- Vehicle access issues, in particular in the rural aspects of Johnstone and Villages area where the size of vehicle, day of the week or time of day had changed and this presented challenges in consistently accessing some properties.

- 6.1.3 Going forward for any future changes a digital in cab platform will be available to support collection crews removing the need to have detailed localised knowledge/ period of time to become familiar with routes and this will allow new and changes to specific properties to be highlighted to crews as they approach the address, to support the waste collectors to undertake their duties.
- 6.2 Despite the success and level of communications the number of residents who contacted the Council to ask questions and receive assurances around what should be undertaken to support the new service arrangements were during the months of January and February exceptionally high, stretching the resources available within the customer contact centre, despite the resourcing of additional and dedicated advisors for increased call volumes, this resulted in occasional delays in answering reduction on the service performance standards to the answering to calls as set out below. This has shown corporately that with such a significant change affecting all residents despite the success and engagement through social media and traditional communications the public still wish to speak to the Council and this would be reflected into any largescale change involving residents across the Council area going forward.
- 6.3 The service undertook an innovative approach to survey all non-standard properties, (flats, tenements etc) in advance of the service change to determine what bin infrastructure was currently provided and what space was available to provide appropriate infrastructure. This in the vast majority of properties worked well. There were a small number of locations where the desk-based planning vs what worked in reality did not match and the service during the first few weeks of the new service supported these properties to amend their bin infrastructure provision. This significant area of work continues to be the focus for waste advisors in the months ahead to support residents with communal bins to recycle and to place the recyclate in the correct containers. Additionally, an exercise is being undertaken to identify property locations where there is a mix of brown bins and food only bins, to standardise the collection type at these locations.
- 6.4 Whilst residents have embraced and are using the new recycling infrastructure, there is work required to reduce contamination with recyclates being placed in the wrong container. This is particularly important for paper and card where the quality requirements for reprocessing are high and contamination of this material makes it more difficult and costly for processing.
- 6.4.1 The types of contamination ranges from non-target materials being placed in the blue bins (such as cans, plastics and glass) to food waste and residual waste. Similarly, contamination is being identified in the green bin mix also. Contamination is not

universal and householders must be thanked for the diligent approach taken by the majority to recycle effectively.

- 6.4.2 The level of contamination has a direct bearing on the charge imposed on the Council for the processing of this material therefore it is crucial that measures are taken to minimise contamination levels as far as is practicable.
- 6.4.3 Reducing contamination is a key service activity and from 2nd September 2019 will focus on the locations and property types where contamination has been identified to be higher. This will involve universal and localised communication campaigns and the tagging of contaminated bins. Where a bin is tagged as contaminated, it will not be lifted by the collection crew. Residents will be asked to contact the Customer Service Centre within 48 hours to have the bin emptied, with contaminants removed.

7.0 Future Improvements

- 7.1 The transformational waste service change has been successfully implemented, delivering very positive outcomes. However, work will continue to ensure that long lasting benefits are achieved and maintained. This will involve work from all work streams of the project and some of the planned further improvements involve:
- Continuing to work with householders and businesses across Renfrewshire to ensure quality waste and recycling services are delivered that meets the needs of individuals.
 - Utilising technology by implementing a fully integrated waste management system to manage the front and back office of waste services, to support the collection crews in undertaking their job effectively.
 - Continued effective communication to all households, including calendars later in the year, to ensure that recycling quality and the level of recycling is sustained and improved, moving closer to the Scottish Government's target of recycling 60% of all household waste.
 - Residual waste transferring to the Council's new energy from waste facility in December 2019, to reduce further the amount of waste sent to landfill, recovering more recyclates and generating electricity.

Implications of the Report

- 1. Financial – None**
- 2. HR & Organisational Development – None**

3. **Community/Council Planning** – Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy – improving the quality of recyclate material collected and sent for processing and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill
 4. **Legal** – None
 5. **Property/Assets** - None
 6. **Information Technology** – None
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - the recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report
 8. **Health & Safety** - None
 9. **Procurement** - None
 10. **Risk** – None
 11. **Privacy Impact** – Not required
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable
 13. **Climate Risk** – a positive impact on the climate as increased recycling results in less materials being landfilled and valuable resources being recycled.
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board on 8th November 2017 entitled Waste Management Strategy Progress Update & Refresh – Improving Recycling in Renfrewshire.
 - (b) Report to Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board on 29th August 2018 entitled Waste Management Strategy Progress Update & Refresh – Improving Recycling in Renfrewshire – Implementation, Progress Update
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