

To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

On: 29th May 2024

Report by: Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure

Heading: Waste and Recycling Performance

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Renfrewshire Council's waste and recycling performance and progress against national waste and recycling targets. While the council is performing relatively well, we will need to change to meet future government targets. There are several challenges that impact and could limit progress towards meeting these targets if new approaches and improvements aren't implemented.
- 1.2 The Waste service have identified a package of measures that aim to increase recycling, optimise service delivery and enhance recycling provision and access to services for residents whilst also ensuring service resilience against a rapidly changing policy landscape.
- 1.3 The Service has applied to the Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) to cover the cost of the capital infrastructure required to implement package of measures for improving recycling performance. This application is currently progressing through the assessment process and should funding be awarded seeks authorisation to accept a funding offered, to allow interventions set out in the section 6 of the report to be commence over the summer period before the next cycle of this board.

2. Recommendations

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

- 2.1 Notes the good progress the Council has made towards achieving national waste and recycling targets and the current challenges that impact on improving recycling performance.
- 2.2 Notes the measures to be taken forward to improve the quality and quantity of recycling, reduce our carbon footprint and optimise and improve the performance of the waste collection service set out in section 6 of this report.
- 2.3 Subject to an offer being made to Renfrewshire Council, authorises the Director of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure in conjunction with the Convener of the Infrastructure Land and Environment policy board and the Head of Corporate Governance to accept an offer from the Recycling Improvement Fund to cover the

cost of the capital infrastructure required to implement the package of recycling improvement measures as set out in section 6 of this report.

- 2.4 Notes that the Policy Board will be updated at the next cycle of the Board on the status of the application.

3. Background

Policy Context

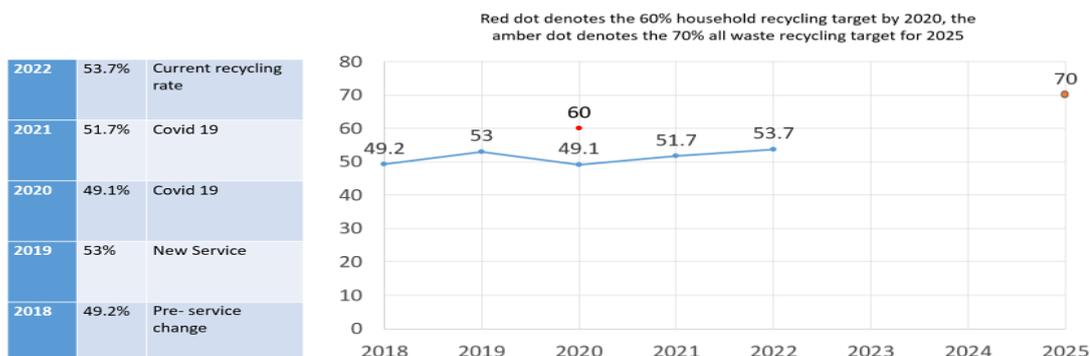
- 3.1 Waste policy has been evolving over the last few decades and the industry is preparing for extensive changes. The Programme for Government 2020-21 and Climate Change Plan update 2020 made commitments to develop a new Circular Economy Route Map. This aims to reduce waste and meet recycling targets through the identification and development of major policy interventions that will drive forward Scotland's zero waste and circular economy ambitions.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council has committed to Net Zero by 2030 and achieving a zero-waste society with a circular economy by minimising waste and maximising reuse, recycling, and recovery of resources. A key priority for the Council is to ensure recycling is accessible for everyone, including non-standard properties and work to resolve problem areas such as storage space, stairs, communal bins, lack of participation and fly-tipping.

Current Recycling Performance

- 3.3 The Scottish Government has set ambitious waste and recycling targets of 70% recycling of all waste and a maximum of 5% of all waste going to landfill by 2025. Renfrewshire's current recycling rate is running just under 54% which is in the top quartile of all Scottish Councils and from all waste only 2.3% was landfilled.
- 3.4 Many Local Authorities recycling rates dipped dramatically due to COVID 19 and have struggled to recover to the levels seen previously, this was caused by councils stopping or reducing their recycling collections through the period of the pandemic. Renfrewshire Council, however, have sustained and improved, bucking the national trend of decline, partly due to stopping of recycling services.

Renfrewshire Council Recycling Rates:

Renfrewshire Council Recycling Rates



Renfrewshire Council Local Government Benchmarking Performance Figures

Indicator	Rank (of 32) (2021/22)	Rank (of 32) (2022/23)	Trend	2021/22 data	2022/23 data	2022/23 Scottish Average
The % of total waste arising that is recycled	8	6	↑	51.7%	54%	43.3%

Waste Composition Analysis (WCA)

- 3.5 A recent Waste Composition Analysis of Renfrewshire Council's residual waste (grey bin) for the period 2022-23 shows that 61% of the material should have been recycled / disposed of elsewhere. Of this, 33% was food waste, 1% was garden waste, 15% plastic, cans, and glass, 6% paper and card and 6% should have been disposed of at a Household Recycling Centre.



- 3.6 Of the total food waste generated in Renfrewshire, 74% ended up in the grey residual bin and not recycled, 7% ended up in the wrong recycling bin and only 19% was in the correct bin.

4. What is limiting our progress in increasing our performance

- 4.1 The Waste Operations Service is presented with several challenges which impact recycling performance and limit progress towards meeting national targets.
- 4.2 Renfrewshire Council has a high number of flatted properties which make up approx. 43% of household dwellings. Participation in recycling from communal areas is often low due to lack of ownership and 'buy in' to recycle and this often leads to high contamination.
- 4.3 Food waste collection services are provided to 98% of properties, including communal properties however participation is very low. The majority (74%) of the total food waste generated in Renfrewshire goes in the grey residual bin.
- 4.4 There are approximately 4750 difficult to access properties that do not have access to the brown bin collection service.

5. Opportunities to improve recycling performance

- 5.1 The Service has identified a package of recycling improvement measures that aim to ensure the Council is able to meet future policy requirements and deliver improved environmental outcomes including improving the quality and quantity of recycling, reducing our carbon footprint, and optimising the performance of the waste collection service, the package includes:

Food Waste

- 5.2 Increase participation and recycling of food waste and divert food waste from the residual stream by placing an A6 size 'no food waste' sticker on the residual waste bin. Recent evidence from trials at 3 other local authorities has demonstrated that this recycling intervention can increase food waste recycling by up to 30% in some areas. This would be applied to all existing residual bins across Renfrewshire along with free food liners and indoor food caddies where required.
- 5.3 An annual supply of free food liners will be distributed to all households across Renfrewshire to encourage engagement and participation in food waste recycling. Currently residents can request free food liners on demand by tying a liner to their brown bin or by collecting in person from household waste recycling centres and libraries. Engagement with the current service is limited and residents who are already recycling food waste are likely to continue to do so. Implementing an annual distribution of food liners to all households provides an opportunity to engage directly with all households across Renfrewshire to share key messaging that promotes positive recycling behaviours in place of an 'on demand' service that has limited reach. Should residents require a top up of liners these would still be available for in person collection from HWRCs and libraries.

Communal Properties

- 6.3 Food waste recycling is a key focus and forms part of a package to enhance recycling services and increase recycling from communal properties. New food waste recycling containers with restricted lids to reduce contamination from non-target material will be provided to all communal properties as well as free food waste liners and indoor caddies where required.
- 6.4 Recycling infrastructure for plastics, cans and glass and paper and card will be reviewed to ensure all communal areas have the correct recycling capacity. Where required, additional recycling capacity will be provided either by increasing recycling collections or by providing additional containers where space allows. Recycling of these material streams will be encouraged by providing reusable sacks for short term storage of recyclables indoors and to carry out to appropriate bins. The sacks will be provided to each household and will be designed to include key messaging to promote and encourage positive recycling behaviours.

Brown Bin

- 6.5 Enhance recycling provision at properties that do not currently have access to the full range of recycling services by extending the brown bin collection service to include these properties. These 4750 properties will be offered either 240l or 140l brown bins to increase their recycling capacity for food waste and encourage them to recycle garden waste.

Drive Overall Recycling Improvement

- 6.6 All the above measures will improve the consistency, reliability and overall quality of the collection service received by residents and will maximise operational efficiency.
- 6.7 Our Marketing and Communications Teams and Zero Waste Scotland will develop a comprehensive plan which supports increased participation in recycling and effectively communicates any service changes and service improvements. This will include a campaign to improve food waste recycling and be tailored to the different audiences and operational changes.

7. Recycling Improvement Fund

- 7.1 The Waste Service has identified the recycling improvement measures that are required to improve the quality and quantity of recycling and optimise the performance of the waste collection service. The cost of implementing the recycling improvement measures is significant and external sources of funding have been explored. The Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF) has been identified as a suitable source of funding.
- 7.2 In 2021, the Scottish Government launched the £70m Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF), a 5-year programme (currently in year 4) providing capital funding grants to local authorities for improving recycling infrastructure and services across the country.
- 7.3 The Waste Service submitted an application to the Recycling Improvement Fund to cover the cost of the capital infrastructure required to implement the measures for improving recycling performance outlined within section 6. The application is in the final stage of the assessment process and the Council expects to be advised of the outcome in the coming weeks. In order for the Council to progress planning and early implementation over the next 3 month period before the next board cycle in August, board will be asked to authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure in conjunction with the Convenor of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment policy board and the Head of Corporate Governance to accept a funding offer in relation to the interventions set out in section 6 of the report.
- 7.4 Should the application for funding be successful and the recycling improvement measures and offer of funding approved in principle, the project delivery would start from June 2024 and likely to last around 12 months. A programme of proposed timescales for implementing measures will be provided to a future board, should funding be awarded.

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** – Any funding award would be reported to a future board and funding monitored through revenue and capital reports brought to the policy board.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** –
- Community Planning** –

3. **Legal** – Renfrewshire Council will be committed to a contract if awarded grant funding for the capital infrastructure costs.
4. **Property/Assets** – This project will include significant investment in recycling infrastructure including containers, stickers, food liners, indoor caddies and sacks.
5. **Information Technology** –
6. **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. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council’s website.
7. **Health & Safety** - Staff are trained on handling and manoeuvring of waste and recycling containers.
8. **Procurement** – Existing Framework contracts will be utilised.
9. **Risk** – Risk Register and project management arrangements will support the programme of measures to manage and mitigate risks.
10. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.
13. **Climate Risk** – These interventions aim to improve recycling and support Renfrewshire’s progress towards net zero.

List of Background Papers - None

Author: *Gavin Hutton, Head of Operations and Service Development*
Email: Gavin.Hutton@renfrewshire.gov.uk