

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE 12 APRIL 2016

REVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

REPORT BY HEAD OF REGULATORY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report updates members on the outcome of the strategic review of waste management within Regulatory and Protective Services with a focus on recommendations of the cross party Scrutiny and Audit review "Progress Towards Zero Waste".

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (I) Agrees to the strategic review of recycling centres and subsequent development of new and existing recycling centres as detailed in this report;
- (II) Notes the proposals for how the garden waste subscription service will be implemented and will operate;
- (III) Agrees to the withdrawal of the food waste collection service from a number of rural areas as specified in **Appendix 1**;
- (IV) Agrees to the closure of the unattended public conveniences listed in this report;
- (V) Agrees to Brechin and Kirriemuir Superloos changing from full time attended facilities to unattended facilities; and
- (VI) Remits the Strategic Director – Communities to bring back a report on the feasibility of introducing a comfort partnership scheme as detailed in this report by 30 September 2016.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant
- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed
- Our carbon footprint is reduced

3. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to Report no. 328/14 agreed at the Communities Committee held on 19 August 2014. The Communities Committee agreed the report by the Scrutiny Panel entitled "Progress Towards Zero Waste" (agreed by Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 24 June 2014). Recommendation 3 from that report read as follows:

“A service review of recycling centres should be undertaken. This review should be timed to allow the kerbside roll-out to be completed and embedded. It should consider the need for the current number of recycling centres; assess the fitness for purpose of each centre; look at options for extending the range of materials that can be recycled at the centres; and highlight investment needed to create an appropriate number of centres to complement the kerbside recycling service.”

Recommendation 5 from that report read as follows:

“Recycling levels should be monitored by route to indicate effectiveness and identify any variances that arise”.

Reference is also made to the special Angus Council meeting held on 18 February 2016 and Report no. 61/16 – Provisional Revenue and Capital Budgets 2016/2017 and Beyond - Provisional Revenue Budget and Savings Proposals Volume. At the meeting the following saving proposals were agreed.

- Introduce a charge for the garden waste collection service on a cost recovery basis (£378,000 ongoing saving identified).
- Review provision of food waste collections within rural areas (£88,000 ongoing saving identified).
- Redesign delivery of recycling centre provision (£175,000 ongoing saving identified. This is in addition to £75,000 ongoing saving previously identified).
- Review of unmanned public toilet provision (£60,000 ongoing saving identified).

In order to identify exactly how these savings can be delivered, a strategic review of recycling centre provision, public toilets provision, the food waste collection service and the garden waste collection service has been completed. It is acknowledged that the primary driver for these reviews has been the requirement to achieve significant financial savings, however the aim has also been to protect statutory functions, and maintain and improve front-line services as far as reasonably possible.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Recycling Centres

There are currently seven recycling centres in Angus located in each of the largest towns (Arbroath, Brechin, Carnoustie, Forfar, Kirriemuir, Monifieth, Montrose). The Centres are open from Monday to Friday 9.15am to 5pm, and Saturday and Sunday 9.15am to 4pm. There is no charge for residents disposing of household waste however charges are applied for business customers disposing of commercial waste via a pre-paid waste disposal vouchers purchased at ACCESS offices

The Edzell Village Improvement Society (EVIS) currently manage a recycling centre in the village. They are the SEPA licence holders and are responsible for the daily monitoring and maintenance of the site. The council however provides and services skips and containers for general waste and other materials.

The strategic review identified a number of significant design/operational issues with all of the current recycling centres and while the extent of the problems varies from site to site, none are considered completely fit for purpose for the reasons summarised below.

- Traffic congestion – when the current seven recycling centres were designed there were far fewer skips and containers on the sites than there are today. Over time the range of materials collected at centres has risen substantially to keep pace with a greater emphasis on recycling, and therefore so has the number of containers. These extra containers have significantly reduced the space on site for vehicles and this has in turn led to congestion and traffic management issues.
- Delays for customers – unlike modern facilities, the current centres are not designed in such a way that operational and customer traffic are separated, meaning there is the need to close the site when a skip is full and requires transferred off site. This can happen

up to 4 times per day and can lead to customers experiencing significant delays when visiting a centre. At some centres the closure of the site gates while skips are being serviced also means cars queuing onto main, busy carriageways.

- Limitation on range of materials that can be recycled – the lack and varying amount of space between centres means that it is not possible to provide the same range of recycling containers at each centre.
- Lack of opportunities for reuse – the lack of space on site has reduced the opportunities for introducing reuse areas where items could be accepted for reuse rather than recycling or disposal. This has restricted opportunities for partnerships with charities, social enterprises and community groups looking to accept donated items.

The table below shows the amount of recycling (cans, plastics, paper, cardboard, glass) collected at each centre before (2013) and after (2015) the roll-out of the new kerbside recycling service. This highlights that more residents are now recycling at home rather than visiting recycling centres.

Reduction in kerbside recycling bin materials (cans, plastics, paper, cardboard, glass)			
Recycling centre	2013 (tonnes)	2015 (tonnes)	% Reduction
Arbroath	349.64	210.74	39.73%
Brechin	216.02	114.79	46.86%
Carnoustie	214.95	97.71	54.54%
Forfar	495.30	231.58	53.24%
Kirriemuir	157.14	67.49	57.05%
Monifieth	161.37	102.39	36.55%
Montrose	368.27	229.61	37.65%
Total	1962.69	1054.31	46.28%

Accurate waste tonnage data is available and the amount of general and garden waste collected at each of the seven centres during 2014/15 is shown in the table below. This provides an indication of how busy each centre is in comparison to each other.

Recycling Centre	General Waste (tonnes)	Garden Waste (tonnes)	Combined Total
Arbroath	2,972	797	3,769
Montrose	1,731	503	2,234
Forfar	1,601	491	2,092
Brechin	1,363	418	1,781
Carnoustie	1,011	392	1,403
Monifieth	847	432	1,279
Kirriemuir	696	210	906

Garden Waste

There are approximately 45,500 households currently receiving a kerbside garden waste service within Angus. Only those households not deemed suitable (i.e. no garden) and those accessed via private roads do not currently receive the service. The service was rolled out to the majority of households between 2004 and 2006 and was then expanded to a further 6,000 households during 2014 when the new kerbside recycling service was introduced.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 put no obligation on the council with regards to garden waste collection; therefore there is no statutory requirement for the Council to provide a collection service. The Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 meanwhile allow a charge to be made for the collection of certain types of household waste, including garden waste.

An options appraisal for the household garden waste service identified that there were only two options that would allow the overall savings target for waste management to be delivered – stopping the service completely or introducing a charge for the collection of garden waste. The latter was considered the preferred option as it would still allow the council to offer the service to households, and it was subsequently agreed at the Angus Council meeting held on 18 February 2016 to introduce a charge for the garden waste collection service on a cost recovery basis.

Charging for the collection of garden waste is common practice in England and Wales but there are no councils in Scotland that currently do so, although one council did take the decision to remove their garden waste collection service completely during 2014 as a cost saving measure.

The amount of garden waste collected from households varies significantly throughout the year due to changes in seasonal weather. During the summer months the amount collected per month peaks at approximately 1,200 tonnes per month. During the quietest winter months only approximately 100 tonnes per month is collected.

Food Waste

In accordance with Recommendation 5 of the Scrutiny Panel Report a review of recycling routes was carried out during 2015 to assess effectiveness and identify any areas for improvement. This review highlighted issues with participation and capture rates on certain rural food waste collection routes.

A kerbside food waste collection service was rolled out to all parts of Angus as part of the new kerbside recycling service during 2014 and there are now approximately 52,000 households receiving the service. Only households accessed via private roads or on a 'road end' collection do not currently receive the service.

The Waste (Scotland) Regulations require Councils to provide a food collection from households in urban areas. Only our seven main towns and Barry fall into the Scottish Government's definition of urban, therefore there is no legal requirement to collect food waste from any other areas.

Public Toilets

There are currently 22 unattended public convenience buildings in Angus and 6 attended facilities referred to as Superloos. The Superloos are open 7 days a week from 8.30am to 5.00pm all year round while the unattended facilities have longer opening hours in the summer typically 8am – 7pm, Seven sites are open on a seasonal basis only, from April to mid-October.

Report 611/13 was brought to committee in November 2013 and resulted in the closure of 10 unattended facilities, mainly because there was acceptance that these facilities did not meet modern standards or expectations. A further review of all attended and unattended facilities has now been carried out in order to identify the additional savings agreed at the Angus Council meeting on 18 February (Report 61/16).

5. PROPOSALS

Review of Recycling Centres

In accordance with Recommendation 3 of the Scrutiny Panel Report a comprehensive strategic review of Recycling Centre Provision within Angus was completed during 2015. An options appraisal exercise was carried out to identify the most effective and sustainable way forward, and taking into account the location and fitness for purpose of each facility, the following preferred option was identified.

Recycling Centre	Proposal
Arbroath	Retain and re-develop to improve facilities on site
Brechin	Close (once improvement works complete at Montrose)
Carnoustie	Close (once improvement works complete at Arbroath)
Forfar	Close and replace with a new recycling centre to service Forfar and Kirriemuir areas. Former site to be made available to Economic Development for employment creation.
Kirriemuir	Same as above. Former site to be made available to Economic Development for employment creation.
Monifieth	Close and examine possibility of making former site available for community use.
Montrose	Retain and re-develop to improve facilities on site

This above was identified as the preferred option for the following key reasons:

- Retains the three busiest Centres and provides a reasonable geographic coverage of Recycling Centres within Angus.
- Three facilities considered a more appropriate number of recycling centres for a council with the population size of Angus.
- There would be no requirement to reduce opening hours or change from seven days opening.
- It would be possible to provide consistent and improved facilities at all the retained centres.
- Meets the budget saving target.

The option outlined above recommends the closure of five of the existing centres, Brechin, Monifieth, Carnoustie, Forfar and Kirriemuir. Each of these centres suffer from all of the design and operational issues highlighted in section 4 of this report, namely traffic congestion, delays for customers, and limitation of opportunities for reuse and recycling of materials. None of the centres nominated for closure offers a particularly positive customer experience in their present condition, nor do they lend themselves to the significant level of refurbishment necessary to bring them up to an acceptable modern day standard.

In the current financial climate, Angus Council can no longer afford to provide a recycling centre in each burgh town, and accordingly the overall number of facilities has to be significantly reduced. For comparison, Edinburgh and Glasgow each provide three centres within their districts, whilst our neighbours in Dundee provide just two. It was felt, therefore, that three facilities within Angus was the right number going forward.

Central to the preferred option, is the development of improved facilities at the remaining three centres. It is proposed that major improvement works are undertaken at the existing Arbroath and Montrose recycling centres in order to allow a wider range of recycling containers to be provided, including reuse areas. The works would also introduce the separation of operational and customer vehicles on site enabling centres to remain open while skips are being transferred and avoiding significant time delays to visiting customers.

There is sufficient available land at (and around) the Arbroath and Montrose recycling centres to enable redevelopment and improvement of these facilities. This is not possible at either Forfar or Kirriemuir recycling centres due to lack of available land. For this reason it is proposed that a new centre is developed that can provide the same range of facilities that will be provided at the improved Arbroath and Montrose recycling centres.

In addition to reducing from seven to three council operated recycling centres, it will only be possible to realise the reduction in staffing and transport costs required by stopping the servicing of skips from the facility maintained by EVIS in Edzell. EVIS will be consulted and the most likely outcome would be that the site would change from a recycling centre to a Neighbourhood Recycling Point (recycling bins would continue to be serviced).

Garden Waste Subscription Service

It is proposed that a garden waste subscription service is introduced during summer 2016 and is offered only to those households currently receiving a kerbside garden waste collection.

Householders would be requested to make an annual payment either online or by telephone. After providing their details and making payment, a sticker would be sent to the householder and they would be required to display it on their bin to indicate to collection crews that they are included on the scheme. The sticker would clearly display the address of the property. This system has been used successfully elsewhere in the UK. Other options using evolving technology will be kept under review to ensure an efficient and effective system.

The charge per bin would be based on full recovery of costs for operating the collection service and the annual charge per bin for the first year of the service would be £25. This figure would be reviewed annually to ensure that full cost recovery was being achieved. Householders could choose to have multiple bins but will be charged full rate for each additional bin. Uptake of the service has been forecast at 33% based on a survey of 15 English authorities that have rolled out a similar service. Any significant deviation from the forecasted uptake % would result in an associated decrease or increase in vehicle and staffing requirement so should not significantly influence the required charge per bin.

Annual renewal payments would be due by 31 March each year in full. The option to pay via direct debit and have auto renewal with notifications via email will be investigated as this would provide convenience for customers and potentially reduce administration costs. In year one the annual subscription will be reduced on a pro-rata basis to reflect that a full year service will not be available.

After the scheme has been launched, households which choose not to subscribe to the service will be informed in writing of when they can put out their empty bin for removal. Unwanted bins will be stored and used as replacement stock. Damaged or excess bins will be sent for recycling.

As already highlighted the amount of garden waste collected from kerbside garden waste collections varies significantly between summer and winter months. It is estimated that during winter months some collection vehicles could only be collecting around 1 tonne per collection round (compared with 11 tonnes during summer) but will still be using the same approximate amount of fuel to complete rounds. It is therefore not considered environmentally or financially prudent to continue collections all year round and it is proposed to stop collections during December and January. Households could store the smaller amounts of garden waste generated over these months for collection in February. This would mean that customers subscribing to the service will receive 22 collections per year.

Review of Food Waste Collection from Rural Areas

In accordance with recommendation 5 of the Scrutiny Panel report, the amount of food waste collected from each area and the associated costs have been closely monitored since the service was introduced during 2014. The service can be considered as performing well when benchmarked against other local authorities in terms of kg per household per week, however set out rate (number of bins presented on each collection round) is estimated at only 55% on average.

Due to the excessive distances travelled on some routes, it has been concluded that continuing the service in rural areas does not offer value for money and is no longer considered to be either environmentally or economically sustainable. It is estimated that the cost of collecting food waste (staff and transport costs) from the areas that would have the service removed is £31 per household per year. This compares with £9 per household per year for all other households. Consequently it was agreed at the Angus Council meeting held on 18 February 2016 to review provision of food waste collections within rural areas in order to realise an ongoing annual saving of £88,000.

It is proposed that the food waste collection service is only provided to households in towns and larger villages. A list of the towns and villages that would continue to receive the service, and a list showing where the service will be withdrawn is provided in **Appendix 1**. It is estimated that this will result in the food waste service being withdrawn from approximately 3,500 households, a reduction of 7% in the number of properties serviced.

A detailed waste composition study carried out in 2015 has shown that on average 18% of the waste going into household purple general waste bins are materials (glass, paper, card, cans,

plastics) that could easily be recycled within the existing recycling infrastructure. It is therefore not considered necessary to provide a larger general waste bin for households that will have the food waste service withdrawn, and instead they will be encouraged and supported to make best use of their grey recycling bin. For households with five or more permanent residents there will remain the option to apply for a larger general waste bin.

To assist those that have had their food waste service withdrawn but still wish to recycle their food waste, 'bring sites' will be introduced and communal food waste containers provided at suitable locations such as existing recycling centres and neighbourhood recycling points.

Review of Public Toilet Provision

A breakdown of usage figures for Superloos is provided below to show how busy each facility is in relation to each other. This shows that the Brechin and Kirriemuir facilities are significantly less well used than the other sites.

Average number of visitors per year from 2010/11 – 2014/15	
Superloo	Number of visitors
The Buttermarket, Forfar	31,257
Market Place, Arbroath	30,728
Baltic Street, Montrose	17,873
Reform Street, Kirriemuir	9,812
Church Street, Brechin	9,195

A costing exercise carried out using visitor numbers revealed the cost per visit at each Superloo, as tabled below. This highlights that the less well used Brechin and Kirriemuir sites cost considerably more per visit than similar facilities elsewhere.

Averaged cost per use during 2012/13 and 2013/14	
Superloo	Cost per use
Market Place, Arbroath	£1.65
Buttermarket, Forfar	£1.70
Baltic Street, Montrose	£2.71
Church Street, Brechin	£4.41
Reform Street, Kirriemuir	£4.71

The visitor numbers clearly show that the Brechin and Kirriemuir Superloo facilities are not well used in relation to other facilities, and given current financial constraints the costs for running these as attended facilities are not sustainable. It is therefore proposed that these two Superloo facilities change from a full time attended facility to an unattended facility with cleaning being contracted out to Tayside Contracts. It is expected that cleaning once per day will be sufficient to allow for a good standard of cleanliness to be maintained but an extra check per day can be provided if required.

A detailed evaluation exercise of all unattended facilities was carried out and all the facilities were assessed in relation to the condition of the building, costs associated with cleaning, energy and water consumption, repairs and maintenance costs, vandalism and evidence of anti-social behaviour. The proximity to amenities that might attract visitors and presence of alternative nearby facilities were also taken into account.

After consideration of the findings, the following five unattended toilet facilities are now proposed for closure

1. The Den, Kirriemuir
2. Dall's Lane, Brechin
3. Norries Road, Westhaven
4. Arbroath Road, Forfar
5. Tay Street, Monifieth

Prior to closing the above facilities, consultation with any relevant local groups will take place and the opportunity for any alternative option for service provision, such as community asset transfer, will be investigated. It should be clear that if community asset transfer is to be

considered then the Council will not be in a position to make a contribution towards any future operating costs as the full saving has been accounted for.

Agreement has been reached with Angus Alive that members of the public will be permitted to use the toilet facilities located in any of their facilities such as sports centres and libraries, this applies to the library in Tay Street, Monifieth which will effectively replace the adjacent unmanned facility.

Several local authorities in Scotland now operate comfort partnership schemes, which involve local businesses being paid an annual fee to open up their toilets for public use. Members of the public are able to use the toilet facilities at these premises during opening hours without any need to make a purchase.

It is proposed that a further review to investigate the possibility of comfort scheme partnerships to replace some existing public toilet facilities is undertaken. This could potentially provide cleaner, safer and more accessible public toilets in convenient locations for residents and visitors at a significantly reduced cost to the council compared with current arrangements. A further report on this proposal will be brought back to committee by 30 September 2016.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Review of Recycling Centres

The implementation of the proposals included in this report relating to recycling centres would result in an estimated on-going saving of £258,000 from the Communities Directorate's revenue budget. The table provides a breakdown of how this will be realised.

Description	£'000
Saving from reduction in staffing costs	160
Saving from reduction in transport costs	28
Saving from reduction in licensing and property costs	70
Estimated total saving	258

Provision is included in the capital budget plan for the development of new and existing recycling centres as proposed in this report, and a separate report will be submitted to committee providing more detailed proposals.

Garden Waste Subscription Service

The implementation of the proposals included in this report relating to the garden waste service would result in an estimated ongoing saving of £393,000 from the Communities Directorate's revenue budget. The table below provides a breakdown of how this will be realised.

Description	£'000
Saving from reduction in staffing and transport costs	162
Income from subscription charges	375
Additional residual waste disposal costs	124
Additional administration costs associated with operating the scheme	20
Net estimated total saving	393

Consultation with councils that have stopped the garden waste service or introduced charging suggests that the majority of the garden waste that is not collected via kerbside collections will either get taken to recycling centres or home composted. There will, however, still be a proportion that will be diverted into the general waste bin and this has been accounted for when calculating overall financial implications. Members will appreciate however that as this is a new arrangement the financial implications are a best estimate in year 1.

Review of Food Collection from Rural Areas

The retraction of the food waste collection service to only households in towns and larger villages would result in an estimated on-going saving of £91,000 from the Communities Directorate's revenue budget. The table below provides a breakdown of how this will be realised.

Description	£'000
Saving from reduction in staffing and transport costs	102
Reduction on food waste disposal costs	12
Additional waste disposal costs from food waste going into general waste bins	(23)
Net estimated total saving	91

The above disposal costs are based on the assumed amount of food waste collected from each household per year. This has been calculated using available data on the current performance of the food waste collection service.

Changes to Public Toilet Provision

The closure of the five unattended toilet facilities and the change of two attended Superloo facilities to unattended would result in an estimated ongoing saving of £74,000 from the Communities Directorate's revenue budget. The table below provides a breakdown of how this saving will be realised.

Description	£'000
Saving from changing Brechin and Kirriemuir Superloos to unattended	65
Saving from closure of the five unattended toilet facilities	35
Loss of income and additional costs for cleaning and increased maintenance at the current Brechin and Kirriemuir Superloos	(26)
Net estimated total saving	74

The reduction in the staff establishment resulting from all the proposals in this report will be managed mainly through natural turnover of staff and the ending of temporary contracts. Any costs related to redundancies or early retirements will be contained within the existing revenue budget for Regulatory and Protective Services.

7. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Strategic Director – Resources, Strategic Director – People, Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance and the Chief Executive Officer of Angus Alive have all been consulted on the terms of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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