

ZERO WASTE STRATEGY 2012-2022

JOINT MAIN ISSUES PAPER

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Main Issues Paper is to consult with key stakeholders at an early stage in the development of draft Zero Waste Strategies for both Councils. The aim of these is to set out the strategic direction for waste issues within each Council's control over a period of 10 years. A Joint Main Issues Paper has been developed because both authorities already work closely together and both face similar waste management challenges in order to deliver waste services.

The process for the development of a Zero Waste Strategy for each Council will involve a public consultation using this document and also a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the proposed strategies impacts, culminating in the publishing of an Environmental Report for each council area. This process, supported by Zero Waste Scotland, will occur prior to any finalised strategy being approved by each Council. Ultimately there will be a separate Zero Waste Strategy produced for each Council however these are expected to contain many common themes.

The need for the development of a strategy for each Council has arisen from the creation of a new national policy framework for waste issues. Waste is primarily a devolved matter and therefore the national policy framework is set by the Scottish Government; within the wider European Union policy context. The new national policy is contained in Scotland's Zero Waste Plan, launched in June 2010 by the Scottish Government. The launch of the Zero Waste Plan has meant that there is a requirement to prepare new local strategies to reflect the significant change to the national policy framework.

The Zero Waste Plan introduced a step change in the thinking and approach to waste within Scotland. The focus has moved away from addressing municipal waste through avoiding its landfill, to the more ambitious aim of moving towards a zero waste society. In this new policy context the creation of waste should ideally be avoided. Where waste prevention is not possible all waste should be considered as a valuable material resource that needs to be brought back into use within the Scottish economy at the highest level of value.

The new Council strategies must reflect this change in direction and maximise the potential benefits they can bring to the local economy and the environment.

2. Executive Summary

Background

The Councils' existing strategies are the Forth Valley Area Waste Plan (2003) and the Forth Valley Strategic Outline Case (2006). These plans addressed the strategic objective to reduce the amount of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) going to landfill and, in particular, to achieve European Union Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) targets to reduce Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) material being landfilled.

Both Councils have now implemented the majority of the actions agreed within these Plans. This includes, amongst other things, the harmonisation of kerbside collection services and the retaining of a flexible approach to the use of treatment processes for non-recyclable waste through their current waste disposal contracts.

It should be noted that in 2006 both Councils were at the forefront of zero waste thinking with their Strategic Outline Case (SOC) Plan. In contrast to many others this focused on waste prevention and maximising recycle & organic waste capture, before considering any treatment of the remaining fraction of waste in the form of non-recyclable waste.

Performance to date

Currently Clackmannanshire and Falkirk are the two top performers for recycling/composting within Scotland's 32 local authorities with rates of 49.8 % and 49.3 % respectively for the period April 2010 – March 2011¹. This compares to the Scottish local authority average of 38.2% for the same period.

Both Councils have successfully undertaken a range of waste prevention actions and in recent years the total waste arising collected by both authorities has peaked. For Clackmannanshire this was in the 2006/07 year at 38,004 tonnes and for Falkirk during 2005/06 at 115,257 tonnes. Thereafter the total waste declined for both to 31,368 and 90,122 tonnes respectively in 2010/11. This represents a reduction of nearly 18% for Clackmannanshire and 22% for Falkirk and compares favourably to an average reduction of 8.6% for Scotland's local authorities as a whole during the same period (derived from SEPA annual reports for all 32 Councils).

It is unclear whether the downward trend in waste generation will continue, given an increasing population and a rising number of households forecast for both areas. It is also unclear how much of the downward trend over the last five years is a result of the recent economic downturn, and how much is long term change due to the waste prevention actions taken by the Councils and national bodies such as Zero Waste Scotland.

Periodic analysis of non-recycled waste, often referred to as "black bag waste", is undertaken by both Councils with assistance from Zero Waste Scotland. The most recent analysis for both Council areas shows that a significant proportion of recyclates are still being placed in Green wheeled bins as non-recyclable waste and ending up in landfill. For example the analysis showed that, despite the paper and card collection offered via the Blue Bin service in Falkirk, around 14% of the waste by weight in Green bins is recyclable

¹ SEPA Waste Data – Local Authority Collected Waste reporting
http://www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data/waste_data_reports/lacw_reporting/lacmw_summary_reports.aspx

paper and card. Across the district this is equivalent to 4,945 tonnes of paper and card unnecessarily landfilled per year. In Clackmannanshire over 50% of the material found in the analysis of Green bins could have been recycled. The cost of this is estimated to be of the order of £75,000.

While both Councils have performed well it is clear from these examples that there is still more that needs to be done to ensure recyclable material is appropriately separated for collection and onward recycling.

Scope of the new Strategies

In line with the new national policy the new strategies will cover “all” waste collected and produced by the Councils, rather than just municipal waste as in the previous plans. Each strategy will summarise current arrangements for waste management and set out the actions that will be necessary for both Councils to move towards the vision for a zero waste society over a period of 10 years. The new strategies will be used to guide future decision-making by the Councils and successful delivery will require the engagement of all key stakeholders. This includes the support of a wide range of Council services, as well as Community Planning Partners, the Scottish Government, Zero Waste Scotland, the community sector, businesses and householders.

Key Drivers

There are a range of key drivers for the new strategies.

The Waste Framework Directive

In December 2008 the revised Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) came into force. This provides the overarching structure for waste policy and legislation across EU member states. The revised Waste Framework Directive (rWFD) also introduces the first EU wide recycling targets. By 2020 Member States must reuse or recycle 50 per cent of household waste (this includes composting of organic wastes) and reuse, recycle or recover 70 per cent of non-hazardous construction and demolition waste. There is also the requirement for nation states to produce a Waste Prevention Plan and to have a National Waste Management Plan (NWMP) in place. Scotland's Zero Waste Plan is our NWMP and this sets the national policy structure to implement the Directive in Scotland.

The Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011 translates the rWFD into Scots law, and notably provides a duty on local authorities to implement the waste hierarchy. The government is proposing to issue further guidance on this duty and how it may be discharged. However it is already clear that local authorities will have to ensure that recyclates and compostable material they collect can be redirected to the highest value use in order to comply with this guidance. This will have implications for the design of future collection systems and enforcement policy as new material standards are required to be met.

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan

The Zero Waste Plan for Scotland was published in June 2010 setting a new vision for how waste will be managed in the future. The Zero Waste Plan proposes treating the discarded

materials Scotland produces as a resource rather than waste, and introduces a range of radical new measures which go further than the rWFD. These include:

- landfill bans for specific waste types, such as organics, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capturing their value as a resource for the economy;
- mandatory separate collections of specific waste types, including food (to avoid contaminating other materials and ensure high quality recyclates for reprocessing) and commercial collections;
- new targets that will apply to all waste, a 70% recycling target and a maximum of 5% sent to landfill, both by 2025;
- restrictions on the material input to all energy from waste (EfW) facilities with mandatory extraction of dense plastics and metals prior to treatment;
- development of a Waste Prevention Programme for all wastes, making prevention and reuse central to actions and policies;
- measuring the carbon impacts of waste using a Carbon Metric to prioritise the recycling of resources which offer the greatest environmental and climate change mitigation benefits.

Zero Waste Regulations

The regulations will implement the landfill bans and recycle/food waste separate collection requirements proposed in the Zero Waste Plan and introduce:

- guidance on the application of the waste hierarchy for collections to ensure the quality of recycle material is maintained (including how comingled recycle collections should comply with quality standards and requirements);
- the provision for the government to develop further quality standards or codes of practice for recycling if required;
- the requirement for local authorities to offer separate collection of glass, metals, plastics, paper, card, and food waste to householders and businesses in their area;
- the mandatory separation of recyclates and food waste by businesses and other organisations;
- a biannual report for local authorities, developed in partnership with CoSLA and linked to the Councils' developing Climate Change reporting framework, in order to build understanding and trust with the public on waste management within their area.

Financial Drivers & Local Context

At a local level both Councils have developed and implemented their own strategies set out in the Area Waste Plan (AWP) and SOC. These plans have enabled both Councils to become top performers in Scotland and a continuation of this high level of performance is expected by local communities and other key stakeholders. However it is recognised that the next steps required will be very challenging. Budget constraints, increasing costs associated with transport, and ensuring that householders & businesses continue to receive an equivalent service regardless of their rural or urban location will all present challenges.

The landfill tax escalator increases the standard rate of landfill tax by £8 per tonne per annum until 2014 when Landfill Tax will reach £80 per tonne. The funding provided by the Scottish Government through the Revenue Support Grant makes no provision for increasing landfill tax costs to local authorities, therefore this places an increasing

expenditure pressure on the Councils; further driving the need to ensure all possible material is collected for recycling or composting.

The Scottish Government produced a Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) for the changes to be brought about by the Zero Waste Regulations and this shows that over the long term the financial costs of implementing the Regulations should be less than a Business as Usual scenario i.e. not implementing the Regulations. There are a number of assumptions involved in this BRIA and for the Councils there is also an underlying assumption that the optimum benefit will be gained from reorganising services to minimise non-recycled waste and maximise the value of the recycled material collected.

The Main Issues to be addressed by the Strategies

Issue 1- Optimising Services for the future

The current collection services for recyclates and organic material will require to be significantly improved in order to meet the new national targets set out Scotland's Zero Waste Plan and also the requirements of the Zero Waste Regulations. The Council is required to introduce Food Waste Collections for households in line with the requirements in the Zero Waste Regulations Policy Statement Section 5.3. The Regulations will also require the Councils to change their "Trade Waste" services to provide food waste collections for large business by 2013 and small businesses by 2015. The removal of this food waste material with a new collection would mean that the volume and weight of material in the average Green Bin would shrink substantially.

Given the new obligations on the Councils at time of general budget contraction the opportunities for savings are limited. However there are opportunities to use existing budgets to greater effect in an "invest to save" approach. In particular, reducing contamination and the amount of recyclates incorrectly landfilled will boost income from the material collected. Incentivising householders & businesses to use the correct containers by adjusting collection frequencies and container capacities will also help offset any cost increases.

Material quality is now fundamental to ensuring there are secure markets for recycled material, and also a high market value to offset some of the costs of collection. The Councils must ensure they can meet the emerging national quality and collection standards in the future or they risk being required to collect recyclate materials separately at greater cost. The Councils will need to strengthen their current approach to contamination by continuing to improve information to householders and using greater enforcement action on those residents who continue to disregard the separate collection systems. This may include treating recyclates in the Green Bin as contamination.

The requirement to develop more extensive collection services to meet the new targets and regulations, plus the need to ensure local residents fully utilise the collection systems and minimise any contamination, will result in increased expectations on both the Council and from householders & businesses. A clear statement of expectations is therefore a sensible way to address this issue and a Customer Charter is proposed.

The proposed objectives are:

- To meet or exceed the targets set in Scotland's Zero Waste Plan.
- To ensure that the Councils' waste collection services deliver the Best Practical Environmental Option and comply with the Waste Hierarchy and Zero Waste Regulations.
- To maximise the quality and value of material collected in line with the Waste Hierarchy.

The proposed actions are:

- A review of all household and business collections, focusing upon the introduction of food waste collections, the potential change of all waste collections to balance this, and ensuring that the high quality of recycle/compostable material collected is maintained.
- The development of a customer charter explaining the service standards customers should receive from the Councils and also the expectations and requirements of householders & businesses, linked to the Councils' Biennial Public Statement on performance.

Issue 2 - Waste and Resource Management Infrastructure

The move to a Zero Waste Society will require a range of infrastructure and facilities to ensure that the targets can be met. However the current infrastructure, locally, and across Scotland is focused on landfill disposal and on levels of recycling & composting lower than we can expect from achieving the Zero Waste targets. As more and more recycle material is returned to use within the economy there will be a greater need for the expansion of reprocessing facilities, high quality recycle sorting & bulking facilities, and treatment facilities for non-recyclable waste. The higher value of materials treated through recycling and reprocessing facilities will ensure greater economic benefit to communities and a key focus for the future will be to capture that economic benefit for both Council areas.

With the need to capture more materials for recycling there is also a need to ensure the existing council owned recycling infrastructure can be expanded & developed if required, particularly with regard to transfer and bulking facilities. Therefore it is proposed that suitable planning policies that recognise this situation are incorporated into the Local Development Plans for each Council.

Clackmannanshire's current arrangements for sharing Stirling Council's Transfer Station and Composting Site will also require to be kept under regular review to ensure this continues to meet Clackmannanshire's needs.

At a high level the Zero Waste strategies should raise awareness amongst decision makers of the infrastructure needed and steer & encourage investment primarily in reprocessing, high quality sorting, and recycling/composting infrastructure.

The proposed objectives are:

- To continue the Proximity and Self Sufficiency Principles applied to waste management within the Council areas.
- To use the Councils' influence, planning and economic development policies to ensure the right mix of waste infrastructure is developed to meet future targets, focusing upon the high value reprocessing and recycling opportunities.

The proposed actions are:

- The Councils' economic development and planning functions should develop an "open for business" economic strategy to encourage the development of new high value facilities where there are clear gaps in current recycling & reprocessing infrastructure.
- Through the Local Development Plan an appropriate screening process should identify potentially suitable sites for the different types of infrastructure in line with wider planning policies.
- Existing Council infrastructure should be safeguarded for future use.
- An annual update report on progress in developing the infrastructure to meet the capacity needs identified by SEPA and Zero Waste Scotland.

Issue 3 - Leadership and engagement on waste and resource use

The Councils have to continue to show leadership to their communities, as they did when the Area Waste Plans were first launched and the first recycling systems were introduced to households. The new strategies will be a further step change on the previous approach due to the new drivers towards a Zero Waste Society and the recognition that waste materials are actually valuable resources. Key to the future success of these strategies will be the Councils taking robust action on the waste they produce themselves and supporting their communities to tackle their waste issues. Key functions where action plans, targets and changes to meet the new obligations will be required include: Building Maintenance, Facilities and Estates, Architects & Design, Procurement, and Catering Services.

The Zero Waste strategies should link to other strategies, policies and plans on Local Development, Litter, Procurement, Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Service Plans and Outcome Agreements, as well as the Zero Waste Plan at a national level, to ensure they incorporate the Zero Waste objectives and help contribute to a Zero Waste Society.

The proposed objectives are:

- All future Council policies, strategies and plans should incorporate the new zero waste national policy framework.
- The Councils should continue to maximise the opportunities to attract funding to further support zero waste community projects.
- The Councils should continue to develop shared services opportunities with each other and also with other councils, Zero Waste Scotland, private and third sector partners.

The proposed actions are:

- A zero waste action plan should be produced for each council service with the relevant ZWP targets as a minimum requirement.
- Both Councils should continue to facilitate volunteering within their communities in tandem with the ZWS volunteer programme.
- The Councils should collaborate with and coordinate, where appropriate, relevant grant funding schemes, including the Landfill Tax Trusts, to ensure that their funding programmes and criteria reflect the move towards zero waste targets and where possible there is targeted support for zero waste projects.
- The Councils should encourage the Scottish Government to implement support for community level zero waste projects under any new tax regime post 2015.
- The Councils should adopt a common approach on the new policy & regulation framework with ZWS and the Scottish Government to ensure consistent messages are given to all stakeholders on the major changes ahead.

Issue 4 - Waste Prevention

Household waste, which is the main competent of the waste collected by the Councils, has shown a declining trend across both Council areas. However with the projected growth in population and the number of households this situation is unlikely to continue.

Previous waste growth estimates prepared for the Area Waste Plan suggested a 1.5% per annum growth in total waste arising in the medium to long term; although the total waste arising has stabilised across Scotland in 2010. In light of these previous estimates, and given the limited tools available to the Councils to prevent waste, the Councils may wish to set a waste arising reduction target based on waste per household, rather than an overall tonnage figure.

The proposed objectives are:

- To work with the Scottish Government, Zero Waste Scotland and waste producers to reduce the amount of waste created.

The proposed actions are:

- The Councils set a total waste arising reduction target, on a per household basis, after considering the actions and targets proposed in the national Waste Prevention Plan.
- The Councils support the Scottish Government's efforts on improved Producer Responsibility obligations and the introduction of Deposit & Return Schemes.
- The Councils adopt a zero waste policy for its own activities including service waste reduction targets.
- The Councils support greater levels of reuse for targeted materials through the design of its waste management services.
- The Councils exert influence on external stakeholders to adopt waste reduction targets and zero waste principles, for example by encouraging greater use of Site Waste Management Plans for new construction projects.
- The Councils work with Business Gateway and Zero Waste Scotland to help local businesses reduce the amount of waste they generate.

Issue 5 - Maximising the Economic Benefit from Zero Waste

In addition to the “invest to save” approach proposed in the design of waste collections there are also a range of partnership opportunities available to both Councils that should be further developed and explored. These include joint education and awareness campaigns, the continuation of joint procurement arrangements (for waste services), shared trade waste collections particularly with regard to food waste, and shared bulky uplift services. Partnership opportunities also include working closely with the Scottish Government, ZWS and Community Planning partners to further share the zero waste vision.

The proposed objectives are:

- To maximise the value of waste generated by minimising the amount of low value non-recyclable waste and ensuring that any waste is collected and reused/recycled/composted to achieve the highest economic value possible.
- To seek to maximise, where appropriate, the local economic benefit from the Councils' procurement processes and support the inclusion of recycled or reused content where ever practical.
- Create conditions that make it easier to invest in Zero Waste Opportunities in both Council areas.

The proposed actions are:

- Use the Councils influence to boost economic activity and reduce the costs to businesses of zero waste through working in partnership with Business Gateway, Scottish Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland and existing mechanisms e.g. the Forth Valley Environmental Business Partnership and BIDs.
- Improved signposting, through the Councils' waste and economic development functions, to ZWS Business Support services in order to assist local businesses.
- Both Councils should continue to work together on a range of joint working opportunities.
- Provide guidance and support for the Council's commercial collection customers to help them through the implementation of the Zero Waste Regulations.

Issue 6 - Climate Change

Over time the emphasis of performance monitoring on waste management will move from the current simple tonnage measurement approach to performance based on overall Climate Change impact, using the government's Carbon Metric. As a result of this new way of measuring performance there will be greater emphasis on the recycling of waste materials that have a high embedded carbon impact and which score highly on the Carbon Metric; examples of these materials are metals, plastics and textiles. This will require the Councils to be adaptable and flexible as they focus their collection efforts on capturing a high percentage of these materials within the mix of recyclates in order to meet the 70% target.

At the same time, in order to comply with the public duty under the Climate Change Act, emissions from the transport and collection of waste will need to be tackled through the efficient design of any new collections and the procurement of efficient vehicles. The Act also aims to encourage greater levels of recycling away from the home and workplace through "Recycling on the Go". In practice this means providing the opportunity to recycle materials in public places such as high streets, shopping centres and other public venues. This ensures that waste is treated as a resource in all locations and reinforces the behaviour change required in all of us to achieve a Zero Waste society.

The proposed objectives are:

- Adopt the Carbon Metric as a key performance measure.
- Minimise the environmental and climate change impacts from waste management activities.

The proposed actions are:

- Design and implement services to address the Carbon Metric and the CCA duty to reduce the overall emissions from waste collections.

- Ensure the ongoing procurement of more efficient vehicles.
- Support the development of new “Recycling on the Go” infrastructure based on best practice guidance from Zero Waste Scotland.

Issue 7 – Treatment of Non Recyclable Waste

The Forth Valley Councils proposed a flexible approach to the procurement of non-recyclable waste treatment in their SOC Plan, as opposed to the alternative option of entering into a major infrastructure investment in the form of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement. In a rapidly changing policy and regulatory environment this flexible approach has proven to be a prudent and successful tactic as EU and national policy has increasingly moved towards eliminating mixed non-recyclable waste in favour of greater separate collection of waste materials. As recycling and composting rates increase to meet the new targets the maximum level of non-recyclable waste treatment required by the Councils will continue to fall and should become 30% or less of their total waste arising.

The proposed objectives are:

- To minimise the amount of non–recyclable waste requiring treatment in line with the Waste Hierarchy.
- To adopt a policy of zero waste going directly to landfill (i.e. any non–recyclable waste must be treated to extract any remaining value before the residual element is landfilled).
- Continue the policy of a flexible approach to procurement of non-recyclable waste treatment, utilising short to medium term contracts to ensure that the Councils can respond to future changes in regulation and taxation.
- To reduce the environmental impact from the Councils’ waste management legacy sites where practical and feasible.

The proposed actions are:

- Investigate opportunities for methane gas flaring/capture and the generation of renewable energy on Council waste management legacy sites.

The Next Steps

Following consultation and receipt of comments upon this Main Issues Paper and on the accompanying Environmental Reports, which summarise the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for each strategy, a Zero Waste Strategy will be developed for each Council’s approval.