

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 6 October 2020

## Recycling and Waste Collection in Schools

Executive/routine	
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Notes the changes proposed to improve recycling provision in schools;
  - 1.1.2 Notes the impact of COVID-19 on the introduction of additional recycling services in schools; and
  - 1.1.3 Notes that any additional FM cost can be contained within budgets for 2020/21 and that any future resource requirement will be considered in the context of wider, COVID related, additional cleaning costs for 2021/22.

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## Recycling and Waste Collection in Schools

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report responds to an approved Council motion on recycling and waste collection in schools.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Waste (Scotland) Regulations require that businesses put in place comprehensive segregated waste collections for a defined range of materials.
- 3.2 The Council's policy for waste services in Council buildings is included in Appendix 1. All schools and other Council buildings should have separate collection arrangements for paper, card, cans, a defined range of plastics, glass, food (where appropriate) and confidential paper.
- 3.3 The legislation does not require the provision of a food waste collection to premises which are not food waste producers. This means that only Council buildings which produce food require a food waste collection, however the service can also be provided to other premises where there is a demand.
- 3.4 Some schools do not use the glass collection service because they do not allow glass on site. However, they may have relatively small amounts of glass from other sources such as kitchens and staff rooms, and the Waste and Cleansing Service is working directly with schools to ensure this is in place where required.
- 3.5 A comprehensive education programme is delivered in schools by Changeworks. This includes delivering assemblies and workshops as well as providing support for teachers, via email, on waste prevention, reduction and recycling. This is part of an annual contract to deliver waste prevention community engagement and educational activities. Examples of the work being undertaken can be found in Appendix 3.
- 3.6 Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions in schools relating to the Covid-19 pandemic Changeworks will not be able to deliver their educational programme this academic year.
- 3.7 There are three elements to recycling and waste collection for schools:

- 3.7.1 Currently school Business Managers (or other building managers) are responsible for deciding on the provision of recycling bins in each building, in consultation with Facilities Management (FM);
  - 3.7.2 FM have responsibility for collection of waste from internal bins and their transfer to the external bins for onward collection. The service also has a responsibility, with the entire school community, to ensure that cross contamination is kept to a minimum; and
  - 3.7.3 Waste and Cleansing are responsible for the uplift and disposal of waste from schools.
- 3.8 PPP schools have their own arrangements under the terms of those contracts for waste collection.
- 3.9 On 6 February 2020, the following adjusted motion was approved, to note that:
- 3.9.1 In Edinburgh schools the end to end recycling and refuse procedures, from item use to pick up by council waste services, were often broken and inadequate to meet current needs and expectations of the school communities;
  - 3.9.2 The services were provided by several departments and responsibilities;
  - 3.9.3 To recognise the importance of minimising the need for recycling in all council buildings in order to meet the council's ambitious 2030 carbon neutral target;
  - 3.9.4 To congratulate the leadership and ownership that already existed in school communities across the city;
  - 3.9.5 To acknowledge the role of Changeworks in supporting 'make do and mend' projects in schools such as St Mary's Primary, in order to facilitate and standardise recycling best practice more widely across the school estate; and
  - 3.9.6 To therefore request:
    - 3.9.6.1 All council services involved, including Schools, Estates: Facilities Services and Catering Service, and Waste Services work together to review and provide fit for purpose recycling services in each of our schools to be completed before the start of the 2020/21 academic year within policy and current budgets, and reporting any financial challenges in doing so to the report requested; and
    - 3.9.6.2 A report to the Policy and Sustainability Committee outlining the service provided for each school at the start of the 2020/21 Academic Year and including plans for a Carbon Neutral Edinburgh 2030.
- 3.10 As a result of COVID-19 this activity was delayed, while the focus remained on ensuring schools could reopen safely in August 2020.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 As a result of COVID-19, priority has been given to reopening schools safely and therefore it has not been possible to provide improved recycling services in schools in time for the 2020/21 academic year.
- 4.2 However, a review of the requirements for school recycling services has been carried out. Appendix 2 outlines the service which is expected to be provided for a 'typical' school.
- 4.3 It is intended to work directly with each individual school and with FM to ensure that the 'typical' school arrangements are introduced. This will also identify if there are any schools where 'typical' arrangements would not be suitable.
- 4.4 Bins and facilities to support the effective segregation of waste within each school will be put in place.
- 4.5 FM have confirmed that in the current financial year, with the additional resources allocated to support the reopening and operation of schools, they will be able to undertake the additional collection of internal waste for recycling in schools. For future years this will be considered as part of a wider report on the cost of cleaning.
- 4.6 Waste and Cleansing will be able to collect any additional recycling waste from schools as part of their normal service.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Engagement with school Business Managers will be undertaken to identify any service gaps, with reference to the 'typical' school resource requirement. In the current financial year, FM will ensure that additional waste is collected and stored appropriately.
- 5.2 Waste and Cleansing will continue to work with schools to address any issues with glass collections.
- 5.3 It is proposed to introduce increased collection arrangements in schools to the end of this financial year (FY). Provision of services from 2021/22 onwards will form part of a wider review of cleaning services.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The main financial impact of these proposals are on FM, where additional resources will be required to empty internal bins.
- 6.2 On 25 June 2020, the Policy and Sustainability Committee approved a report on the reopening of schools that indicated additional FM costs of £2.33m between June and December 2020. There should be sufficient resource within this provision to absorb any additional costs with FY 2020/21. It is recognised that some of this overall cost may be recouped from the Scottish Government.

- 6.3 In the slightly longer term, if existing conditions continue, a wider resource requirement will be required to meet the additional cost of cleaning in schools (and other properties) for FY 2021/22 and beyond. It is therefore proposed to consider an any additional resource requirement for recycling in the context of a wider report on the costs of cleaning for 2021/22.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The delivery of enhanced recycling facilities within school buildings serves to meet the expectation of school communities and supports the delivery of the Council's waste and recycling strategy.
- 7.2 The provision of enhanced recycling facilities within school buildings supports the Council in demonstrating environmental leadership and compliance with all relevant legislation.
- 7.3 The delivery of comprehensive recycling services to its own estate, alongside measures to prevent waste arising in the first place, forms an integral part of the Council's own commitment for Edinburgh to become a carbon neutral city by 2030.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 **Appendix 1** Council policy on waste from Council premises
- 9.2 **Appendix 2** Planned provision of school recycling services
- 9.3 **Appendix 3:** In School Waste Education Programme Case Studies.

## **Appendix 1: Council policy on waste from Council premises**

- It is the Council's policy that all of its premises must comply with the internal Resource Use Policy, as well as the Waste (Scotland) Regulations and all other relevant legislation.
- The Resource Use Policy requires the waste hierarchy to be applied, to reduce, reuse and recycle, and in addition as a minimum to ensure that facilities are in place to recycle: paper, card, cans, plastics, glass and food, as well as to collect non recyclable waste for energy recovery.
- Procedures must be put in place to manage specialised waste streams not covered by general household waste provision (e.g. engine oil).
- It is the responsibility of building managers, in partnership with the Facilities Management team covering that building, to ensure compliance on a site by site basis, and to arrange collection of the above materials by the Waste and Cleansing Service.
- All steps must be taken to maximise use of the recycling services and prevent their contamination with other materials, through the use of adequate signage, the use of correct coloured sacks, and staff training.
- It is expressly forbidden to mix separately collected and mixed waste streams.

## Appendix 2: Planned provision of school recycling services

The following table explains how the service should work within a “typical school”. The streaming outlined below would be used throughout but the number of bins in each location would vary depending on the size and usage of the space.

<b>Room</b>	<b>Streams</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Classroom	Residual and mixed recycling Confidential waste	
Catering and kitchen areas	Food, residual and mixed recycling; glass*	*glass provided unless can demonstrate not used, e.g. in kitchens
Staff rooms	Residual and mixed recycling; glass*  Confidential waste	*glass provided unless can demonstrate not used, e.g. coffee jars
Corridors and external spaces	Residual	

### **Appendix 3: In School Waste Education Programme Case Studies.**

Schools are being encouraged to engage with the service in a more meaningful way rather than just a single assembly or a single workshop so that they can measure the impact that the engagement has had in reducing waste across the school.

In Leith Academy, Lorne PS, St Mary's PS and Trinity Academy, Changeworks are piloting regular engagement with all stakeholders in each school community, taking action to change behaviour and improve infrastructure in and around the schools.

Each school has selected the key topic(s) that they are particularly interested in focussing on:

- St Mary's RC Primary is focussing on recycling and is keen to promote snack recycling in the playground;
- Lorne Primary is focussing on improving the paper recycling
- Leith Academy has litter in the local area as an aim but is now looking to improve recycling and use of disposable packaging in the canteen;
- Trinity Academy is keen to kick start efficient recycling and reduce packaging waste in school. The service met with the eco coordinator and the eco committee to plan future activities.

#### **Leith Academy**

Changeworks met with the pupil eco committee now known as the 'climate group' to discuss their priorities and how Changeworks can support them. They are keen to set up a recycling station in the canteen which will be supervised by the climate group in the first instance to ensure good practice.

The recycling system is now in place. The climate group also fed into research on which disposable items could be replaced in the school canteen and the best way of communicating subsequent messages to the student body. This research, although part of a separate project, has highlighted a number of opportunities to work via the whole school approach to reduce waste. A meeting was arranged for February 2020 to discuss next steps.

#### **Lorne Primary**

The eco committee conducted a partial waste audit (waste from three classrooms) to monitor how effective current practice of recycling paper is and to assess which other materials could be recycled.

- Key actions that emerged from the waste audit findings were:
- Reminder that paper towels should not go in the recycling bin
- Suggested food caddies for each classroom or each floor of the school
- Set up a mixed recycling bin for each classroom or each floor of the school

The lead teacher wrote a plan of action with the eco committee but has indicated that any engagement with Changeworks will start in the new year.

#### **St Mary's RC**

Overall, St Mary's eco committee have embedded mixed recycling in school and staff are regularly recycling food waste.

## **Trinity Academy**

Progress is underway setting up the new recycling system within the school. The new bins have been sourced but there has been a delay in rolling out the system as the school is in discussion with FM as to who should empty these bins. The school is keen that this is not left to the pupils to do and that the cleaning staff who currently empty the general waste bins in classrooms, empty the recycling bins too. This good practice would ensure that this is embedded and becomes routine and does not fall away if there is a change of staff leading the eco initiatives.

The lead teacher has sourced recycling bins for crisp packets but wishes to roll out both recycling initiatives together in a series of assemblies. The school is keen to work to reduce disposables in the school canteen and has sourced money for refillable water bottles for students who don't currently have one.

The Clever Canteen project seeks to reduce single use items by use of these water bottles, lunch boxes and beeswax wraps, supported by environmental and other improvements including

- Loyalty scheme and prize draws
- Grab and go and pre orders
- Improved outdoor seating
- Standing benches and tables both inside the kitchen