

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 31 March 2022

Household Recycling Charter – Motion by Councillor Burgess

Executive Wards Council Commitments	Executive All 25
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Transport and Environment Committee is asked to agree:
 - 1.1.1 That the Council should sign up to the Scottish Household Recycling Charter; and
 - 1.1.2 To discharge the action arising from the approved adjusted Motion by Councillor Burgess from the Council meeting of 16 December 2021.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Household Recycling Charter – Motion by Councillor Burgess

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report responds to an adjusted Motion by Councillor Burgess from the Council meeting on [16 December 2021](#).

3. Background

- 3.1 The [Charter for Household Recycling](#) (the Charter) was developed by the Scottish Government and CoSLA in 2015.
- 3.2 It is a statement of intent which aims to support Councils to deliver high quality, consistent recycling and waste management services for household waste across Scotland.
- 3.3 The Charter is accompanied by a Code of Practice which prescribes in some detail, across six outcomes, how services should be shaped (including which materials should be collected for recycling and how they should be collected).
- 3.4 The Motion approved on 16 December 2021 requests a short report outlining the challenges to signing the Household Recycling Charter, details of what the implications would be for services and for information on how the Council is already meeting the objectives of the Charter.

4. Main report

Charter for Household Recycling

- 4.1 The Charter for Household Recycling was published in 2015, as a means of encouraging the development of high quality and consistent household recycling and waste collection services.
- 4.2 As the time of publication, City of Edinburgh Council did not sign up to the Charter because of concerns around complying with the accompanying Code of Practice

(which sets out in detail how services should be delivered, albeit with some variation to account for geographical and other factors).

- 4.3 The main concern was particularly in relation to the requirement to change recycling services to a “twin stream” system collecting paper and card separately from cans, plastics and drinks cartons to prevent contamination of the former by the latter.
- 4.4 As the Council had just moved to collecting these materials as a “single stream” (which was prevalent in the United Kingdom (UK) at that time) - replacing the previous system of using kerbside boxes and sacks, there was concern that changing again so soon would confuse the public, there was no funding in place to make that change and there were operational concerns about applying this in communal bin areas in particular and, to a lesser extent, kerbside collection areas with limited space (as an additional bin would be required).
- 4.5 All other Scottish Councils have now signed up to the Charter.

Policy Framework

- 4.6 Since the Charter was introduced, the policy framework for waste collection services has changed and the existing Code of Practice is being reviewed in Scotland.
- 4.7 The introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in 2023 will be followed by legislation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for packaging waste, and the implementation of aspects of the Waste Framework Directive.
- 4.8 Collectively these are likely to require changes to how household waste is managed in Edinburgh (and Scotland). The legislation on EPR, in particular, is likely to increase the funding available to Councils to manage the packaging parts of the household waste stream but will be subject to quality and performance standards. It is expected that compliance with the Charter in Scotland (and its equivalents across the UK) will be a means of demonstrating this to access the funding.

Compliance with the Charter

- 4.9 Currently, the Council is largely compliant with the Charter.
- 4.10 As stated in paragraph 4.3, the Council was concerned when the Charter was introduced about complying with the requirement for a “twin stream” system in communal and some kerbside areas.
- 4.11 The Scottish Government’s [Recycling Improvement Fund](#) has recently made funding available to some Councils to reorganise their collection services into a twin stream service. The City of Edinburgh Council was awarded £7.7 million to deliver its citywide communal bin review (CBR). This project is future-proofed to allow for the later conversion to a twin stream service (by siting two mixed recycling bins at each communal bin hub) under a future waste disposal contract. In addition, as part of the award, the Council was asked to reconsider signing the Charter.

- 4.12 Some areas of Edinburgh City Centre have household waste collected using gull proof bags for residual waste and/or recycling boxes for recycling. This current service would not be compliant with the Charter, as the capacity is biased in favour of residual waste and the recycling capacity is inadequate. However, officers are working with the local community on this as part of the Communal Bin Review.
- 4.13 The CBR project is therefore largely addressing the original concerns in the areas it covers. While there may still be some challenges associated with introducing an additional bin in some kerbside collection areas, this system is already in place in other Council areas (including Falkirk, Stirling, Fife, and Dundee) while it is being introduced in West Lothian and Aberdeenshire as a result of recent funding awards. These issues can therefore be overcome provided the correct supporting policies and procedures are adopted.
- 4.14 In view of the likelihood that the operational challenges can be addressed, and that participation in the Charter is likely to be a condition of future external funding, it is recommended that the Council should sign the Charter as a first step in committing to share the consistent service approach being introduced across Scotland.
- 4.15 Signing the Charter does not in itself commit the Council to making any specific service changes. Requirements for service change will not be known until the full implications of the legislative and policy changes outlined in paragraph 4.8 are fully clarified, and any service changes would still require to be agreed by Committee.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to agreement by Committee, the Council will sign the Household Recycling Charter.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no direct financial impacts arising from this report, but it is expected that being a signatory to the Household Recycling Charter will increase the Council's ability to access external funding in future.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Efforts to improve recycling collection services will support the delivery of the Council's Net Zero 2030 programme, reduce carbon emissions, reduce global resource consumption and contribute towards the delivery of the Circular Economy.
- 7.2 There are no health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications associated with this report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The Household Recycling Charter and the associated Code of Practice are published by [Zero Waste Scotland](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.