

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	19 March 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Expansion of Home Composting of Garden Waste
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/044
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Reilly
REPORT AUTHOR	Martina Klubal
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1 and 7

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To report on how the Council could encourage and support the expansion of home composting of garden waste, in accordance with the instruction from the Council Budget meeting of March 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Committee approve the communication plan (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) and associated actions to encourage and support the expansion of home composting.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 ACC operates a kerbside garden and food waste collection for households served by wheeled bins (approximately 77K). Flatted properties served by communal bins receive a food waste only collection, as they do not normally produce garden waste.
- 3.2 ACC operates a garden waste permit scheme where householders can purchase permits for collection of up to three brown bins. The first brown bin is collected free of charge.
- 3.3 Garden waste is accepted at ACC's four Household Waste and Recycling Centres free of charge.
- 3.4 Garden and food waste collected by ACC is sent to Keenans Recycling in Aberdeenshire for in-vessel composting. The process produces a soil conditioner that is sold on for agricultural and landscaping purposes.

Home Composting

- 3.5 ACC promotes home composting as an alternative to (or in combination with) the brown bin service for garden and food waste. Composting is a sustainable method to manage some organic waste materials at home; it produces a nutrient-rich, soil improver that can be used in the garden and supports growth of fruits, vegetables and flowers.
- 3.6. ACC provides information on its website about home composting including a video with tips and guidance, and a downloadable leaflet. [Home composting | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- 3.7 Seasonal messages are planned and delivered annually to promote home composting in spring and summer, and leaf mould in autumn, to tie in with the gardening season when there is increased garden waste. In recent years, these messages have primarily been communicated through social media channels including Facebook, X and Instagram.
- 3.8 Nationally, Zero Waste Scotland provides information and videos to raise awareness and knowledge about home composting. A series of short videos provide step-by-step guidance on how to set up a compost bin, what materials can be composted, how to manage materials in your compost bin and how to make best use of your compost when it is ready. [Easy guide to composting | Zero Waste Scotland](#).
- 3.9 Compost bins are widely available for purchase online or from in-store retailers such as garden centres and DIY shops. Alternately, a compost heap can be created using reclaimed materials such as pallets. Online videos provide step-by-step instructions on how to build a compost area in a garden or allotment.
- 3.10 The composting process requires heat to break down organic materials so they decompose. Compared to countries with warmer climates, composting in Scotland is a relatively slow process and can take 6-12 months. The volume of organic materials that city households produce can be greater than the capacity of a compost area in a small garden, and if space is limited then it is recommended that home composting is done in combination with ACC's brown bin service. Materials that are more difficult to compost (for example, branches) and materials that cannot be composted (for example, cooked food waste) can be recycled in the brown bin.

Home Composting Communication and Engagement Plan 2025

- 3.11 ACC has refreshed its home composting communication and engagement plan for 2025. Key messages will continue to promote awareness of what home composting is and how to do it, whilst a new, broader focus on sustainability will link home composting to food growing, soil regeneration, food waste reduction, biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions. Key messages will also include promoting the benefits of home composting including creating more space in wheelie bins. See Appendix 1 for home composting communication plan.

- 3.12 In addition to established seasonal messages, ACC will promote home composting locally by taking part in national campaigns including Compost Week UK (10 – 16 March) and Food Waste Reduction Week (17 – 23 March). Participation in national campaigns is expected to achieve a broader reach.
- 3.13 A rebranding of the former Recycle for Aberdeen Facebook page is underway, and it will soon relaunch as Go Green Aberdeen. The new page will continue to promote good waste management practices including waste reduction, reuse, repair and recycling. Building on these messages, a new broader focus will include messages about sustainability and climate action such as food growing, biodiversity, active travel and more. For home composting, a series of posts is planned, taking an in-depth look at the stages of the composting process, and will link to Zero Waste Scotland's step-by-step videos (see section 3.8).
- 3.14 Where appropriate, the new, rebranded Facebook page will also seek to promote community initiatives such as home composting workshops that One Seed Forward (a local community food growing initiative) is planning to deliver at Bonnymuir Green in 2025.
- 3.15 Discussions with community organisations, such as One Seed Forward and Bridge of Don Men's Shed, suggest there may be further opportunities to collaborate to promote seed libraries, community composting, local food growing initiatives and more. There may also be value in linking messages about home composting and broader sustainability initiatives, such as food growing, to promotion of health and wellbeing.
- 3.16 Digital and printed articles will be included in community newsletters including ACC's private landlord newsletter, Newsbite, Tilly Tattles, Mastrick Matters and others, to raise awareness and build knowledge of composting as a simple, convenient and sustainable method to manage garden and food waste at home.
- 3.17 Waste and Recycling Officers deliver a programme of community engagement as part of their role. As resources allow, they will continue to provide in-person advice on good waste management practices, including home composting, when attending community events. They will also make use of marketing materials, including leaflets and a new pop-up banner, to promote home composting at unmanned information stands in community venues such as libraries, community centres and learning centres.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Costs of the proposed Home Composting Communication and Engagement Plan 2025 can be met from within existing Waste Services budgets.
- 4.2 An increase in home composting levels may result in a reduced level of requests for garden waste permits, or a change in the volumes of green waste being sent by the Council for treatment and disposal. Any changes will be accommodated within the Waste Services revenue budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Home composting is a sustainable method of managing garden and food waste that requires no collection or transport to a treatment facility. Home composting reduces carbon emissions and contributes to ACC's Net Zero Ambitions.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Reduced tonnage causing drop in recycling rate.	Delivery of specific strategic plans and projects.	L	Yes
Compliance	None			
Operational	Inefficiencies in collection routes due to reduced organic materials presented for collection at the kerbside.	Continuous monitoring and evaluation of collection routes. Rerouting where necessary to achieve efficiencies.	L	Yes
Financial	Loss of garden waste permit income.	Promotion of garden & food waste collection and home composting as complementary messages.	L	Yes
Reputational	Reduced tonnage causing drop in recycling rate.	Delivery of specific strategic plans and projects.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Reduced organic	Continuous monitoring and evaluation of	L	Yes

	materials presented for collection at the kerbside.	collection routes. Rerouting where necessary to prevent unnecessary carbon emissions. Increased home composting is a low carbon alternative to kerbside organics collection.		
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to achieve Net Zero to deliver a city that is fit for future generations.
	<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The paper outlines current projects and future opportunities to increase household recycling and reuse.
Regional and City Strategies	The initiatives and opportunities outlined in this report support Aberdeen City Waste Strategy 2014 – 2025. Reducing carbon emissions contributes to delivery of the Net Zero vision for Aberdeen.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment is required at this time. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Mark Reilly, Chief Officer, Operations on 11/02/2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

Other	None
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10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 No background papers were used.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Home Composting Communications Plan 2025

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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