

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Zero Waste Management Sub-Committee
DATE	1 December 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Code of Practice – Household Recycling in Scotland
REPORT NUMBER	ZWSC/7629
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose to this report is to update the Zero Waste Sub Committee on the development of the Code of Practice on Household Recycling in Scotland and to highlight some of the potential implications for Aberdeen City Council.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Sub-Committee notes the contents of the report and provides feedback to officers which can be help inform the process and the ultimate decision on whether the Council will sign up to the Code of Practice.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

It is highly likely that there will be significant policy and resource implications for the Council in the future if the authority decides to commit to the Code of Practice. The main implications are outlined later in this report.

### **5. CODE OF PRACTICE – HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING IN SCOTLAND**

#### **5.1 Background**

- 5.1.1. The Zero Waste Taskforce developed a Charter for Household Recycling in August 2015 aimed at achieving more consistent recycling collection services and standards across Scotland. The Charter is a one page document which sets out high level principles for recycling service delivery (see Appendix 1). It falls in line with the principles of the waste hierarchy (waste prevention,

recycling and re-use) and strives to encourage commitment to increased participation in services, improved resource management, sustainable employment and investment in the economy.

5.1.2 Supplementary to the Charter is a Code of Practice which is currently being developed and is expected to be finalised by late 2015. Officers from the authority attended a 2 day summit meeting which was facilitated by representatives from the Scottish Government, Zero Waste Scotland and CoSLA in September 2015. This event was attended by 31 of the 32 Scottish local authorities where the potential contents of the Code of Practice were discussed. Options for a single collection method were presented at the meeting. Following this event a draft Code of Practice document was produced for consultation in October 2015 (Appendix 2). Officers prepared and submitted a response to this consultation.

5.1.3 It is expected that the final Code of Practice will be produced and approved by the end of 2015 and that the Charter and Code of Practice will be sent to all local authorities to consider whether they wish to sign up to it.

## 5.2 Draft Code of Practice

5.2.1 The Code of Practice is based on achieving seven defined outcomes. These are not prioritised in any particular order. The outcomes are:

1. Achieve high quantities of recycling and minimises non-recyclable waste.
2. Support the circular economy through maximising high-quality materials.
3. Cost effective services for local government.
4. Keep citizens, staff and contractors safe and healthy.
5. Services that encourage participation from citizens.
6. Comply with regulations.
7. Services that support Scottish and local employment.

5.2.2 The Code of Practice is a comprehensive document and covers design and operation of services, materials collected for recycling, policies, communications and workforce development.

5.2.3 Any authority signing up to the CoP would be required to commit to a number of mandatory essential commitments and work towards a further set of desirable commitments. The list of the essential and desirable commitments is lengthy but those essential commitments that are of particular significance are:

1	Separate containers are provided to each property for: Paper & card Metals, plastics & cartons Organic Waste
2	Separate containers for glass shall be provided to each property or alternatively

	within the community.
3	Weekly container volume for recycling for kerbside collection should exceed: Paper/card – 40 litres Metals/plastics/cartons – 70 litres Glass – 35 litres Food waste – 20 litres
4	At the point of collection, the contents of each container will either be sorted into constituent parts or placed in separate compartments or vehicles for sorting at site.
5	Separate containers for the same materials as above provided for communal collections also.
6	Households with kerbside access should be limited to a maximum capacity for residual waste of 80 litres per week
7	Communal collections limited to a maximum of 70 litres per week for residual waste.

The basic requirement of the Code of Practice is for provision of a kerbside sort service, keeping glass separate from all other materials. There is a clear conflict with this approach and Aberdeen City Council's Waste Strategy where the planned service is to provide a fully co-mingled recycling service, including glass in a single 240 litre wheeled bin.

5.2.4 We have concerns about the approach that is being taken with the Code of Practice in terms of its promotion of a kerbside sort system for the following reasons:

1. Health & safety: kerbside sorting is higher risk due to the increased manual handling requirements.
2. Capacity: from experience, we know that householders do not produce recyclables in similar volumes for each material stream, therefore any kind of multiple container approach leads to capacity problems.
3. Practicality: a kerbside sort collection or multi-container collection is not possible to provide in many high density areas due to space issues both internally and externally.
4. Convenience: a single container is easier and simpler to use and therefore is likely to yield higher participation rates and can be provided in many areas where multiple containers cannot.

Whilst it is fair to say that the overall quality of materials collected from a co-mingled collection is lower, this is offset by higher yields and the quality issues can be mitigated by a high-quality materials recycling facility of the type that is planned for Aberdeen.

## **6. IMPACT**

This report does not recommend any changes to services at this stage and therefore has no impact, however, the following provides a brief outline of what the potential impacts of signing the Charter in its current form would be.

Improving Customer Experience – many residents in the city would not have access to a kerbside collection service for glass and would be required to store multiple recycling containers within their properties.

Improving Staff Experience – the increased manual handling requirement of a kerbside sort collection will have impacts on staff.

Improving our use of Resources – a kerbside sort service would result in higher quality materials being collected but the volume collected would likely be less and the cost of collection would be higher. There will be significant costs associated with making a transition to new services as well as the impact on investments already made in respect of MRF capacity in Aberdeen.

Corporate – the Charter is not in line with the Council's Waste Strategy and this would require to be redrafted or amended.

Public – this change of direction would require to be communicated with the public and would mean a change of service to those households who have recently moved to a co-mingled collection. Additionally, the Council's Waste Strategy is a public document and has been communicated widely – further communication would require to be done for a change of approach of this nature.

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) form is not required for this report, however, if the future services were to change in the manner described above an EHRIA would be required.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

- 7.1 No risk register has been completed for this report. At this stage there are no direct implications for the Council from the policy developments outlined in the report.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1. Draft Recycling Charter

Appendix 2. Draft Code of Practice

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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