

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Zero Waste Management Sub-Committee
DATE	28 November 2017
REPORT TITLE	Waste Service Update
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/296
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on progress with the Waste Service in relation to the Altens East Recycling and Recovery Centre and the collection service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- a) That the Sub-Committee note the report.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 In 2010, Aberdeen City Council approved a Waste Strategy that identified a need to find a mechanism to significantly increase the coverage of recycling collections in the city in order to minimise long term costs to the council, improve environmental performance and comply with anticipated regulatory requirements (subsequently enacted through the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The business case also considered the short term (until 2021) requirement to manage non-recyclable waste.
- 3.2 The best value solution was identified as the development of a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) facility at Altens East and associated collection service changes designed to increase recycling in the city.

3.3 Current Status

3.3.1 Altens East

3.4 Construction of the Altens East facility started on site in January 2016 and civils construction is now complete with minor snagging items outstanding. The installation of the MRF and RDF plants is also complete and both plants are now accepting Council waste and producing outputs. The facility was officially opened on 20th October 2017 by Councillor Jenny Laing and David Palmer-Jones, CEO of Suez.

3.5 In relation to the MRF, the quality of the products is high and Suez is reporting that there is no current difficulty in finding markets for the products from the plant. Early feedback from reprocessors is that the quality of the materials are comparable and, in some cases, better, than those collected from source segregated collections (where materials are separated by the householder or at the point of collection instead of at an MRF). Suez is continuing to work with Bulk Handling Systems (BHS), the MRF and RDF equipment supplier, to address some outstanding issues in relation to the operation of the plant and as a result, formal handover of the plant has not been accepted to date.

3.6 All general refuse from the city's collections are being managed through the RDF facility and a number of shiploads of fuel have now been sent to plants in Sweden via Montrose port that provide heat and power for households and businesses. There also remain some performance issues in relation to the quality of metals removed during the process (with respect to the purity of material that is being separated for recycling through the magnetic extraction system) and Suez again have not yet formally accepted handover from BHS for the plant. As a result of these issues, the commissioning period for the plant has been extended.

3.7 Public tours of the MRF have now commenced and there have been a number of parties who have taken up this opportunity and further tours are planned over coming weeks. Bookings for tours are being managed by the Waste & Recycling Team. A promotional video has also been produced which will be used to showcase the facility to residents, businesses, industry and others and an additional "virtual reality" tour is also under development. These resources will be available on the Council website in due course.

3.8 Collection Operations

3.8.1 The facility at Altens East was undertaken to facilitate the introduction of new waste collections across the city. A detailed report on the progress of the new service introduction and issues associated was presented to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee, however, it is evident that there has been a significant boost in recycling as a result of the new services with latest figures indicating a 10% increase in the Council's overall recycling rate recycling since the new service commenced in March (2016 recycling rate was 39%, unconfirmed recycling rate for period March-September 2017 is 49%).

- 3.9 Members will be aware that there have been difficulties in certain areas arising from the rollout with particular challenges in the food and garden waste collection where unprecedented demand along with a complete reorganisation of routing to match in with recycling and refuse collection days has resulted in unbalanced routes and non-completion of rounds. In addition, staff and vehicle availability and the settling of operations from the new depot at Altens East have contributed to service disruption.
- 3.10 A review of these routes has now been undertaken and consideration is being given to the changes required ahead of the peak garden waste season in 2018. In addition to this, awareness raising of the existing policy that households should not present more than 2 brown bins for collection will be undertaken over the coming months ahead of next Spring.
- 3.11 Additional work has been carried out to consider areas of the city where narrow streets have caused accessibility issues for LGVs and adjustments have been made to the routes in order that these areas can also be safely serviced – this issue also contributed to some of the missed bin complaints.
- 3.12 With respect to the number of complaints and enquiries received, latest data from October shows that the level of these has dropped significantly and is currently back to “normal” levels (levels similar to before any service changes were implemented). In addition, the backlog of bulky uplifts which was causing delays has also returned to normal levels and the majority of collections are currently being carried out within the 10 working day target. This is being monitored closely.
- 3.13 With respect to recycling collection, a recent participation study showed an average participation rate of 80% across a sample of households in the city, this is very encouraging. However, there continues to be challenges with keeping the quality of materials high and as such the Recycling Team are working hard on those identifiable pockets where contamination continues to be an issue. The team are working closely with the operations team to work to reduce levels of contamination in the recycling containers. Crews continue to use the Collective system to report issues in real time and this information is used by the team to identify where their input is required.
- 3.14 In addition to the contamination work, it is evident that there is an issue with the number of bins being left permanently on city streets and this has been exacerbated in some areas by the addition of the extra bins that were delivered as part of the new service. In some areas, work is ongoing to convert these individual bins to communal bins where this is identified as the best solution – this work is expected to be completed by the end of March 2018.

- 3.15 To address those areas where communal bins are not suitable, the team have devised a plan to address the issue of multiple bins being permanently left on the street and a pilot project was carried out in Midstocket Road recently. This involves working to identify which bins belong to which household, liaising with residents to ask them to remove their bins from the streets wherever possible, and then ultimately removal of any remaining bins which are then deemed to be “orphan”. Appendix A gives more detail on the procedure being adopted.
- 3.16 Work is also progressing on the “Unadopted Roads” policy. Letters have been drafted and a list has been drawn up of those properties that require to be contacted on this issue. The implementation of this will further assist with improving the efficiency of the service. A checklist for the process has also been drawn up (see Appendix B), which includes informing local elected members in order that they are aware when there are properties affected by this change in their ward.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 4.2 The projected costs associated with the design and build of the Altens East facility are included in the Council’s approved capital plan.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 No new risks have been identified arising from this update report.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

- 7.1.1 Development of the Altens East facility will provide the most cost-effective and low risk solution to the management of recyclable waste. The facility has created approx. 30 new full time posts. A significant piece of high standard infrastructure has been developed for the benefit of the city for many years to come.

7.2 People

- 7.2.1 There are no new impacts arising from this report. A EHRIA has been developed along with the Aberdeen City Waste Strategy which includes this project.

7.3 Place

- 7.3.1 The introduction of significantly enhanced recycling services for all households across the city and the associated sorting and separation of these materials in the city significantly improves the environmental impact of the city and encourages a more responsible approach to our amenity. The work to reduce the number of bins left on streets further enhances the amenity of the city. The interim RDF solution for non-recyclable waste to landfill will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the disposal of waste.

7.4 Technology

- 7.4.1 The Altens East facility utilises the best available techniques for the management of recyclable waste. It has been described as the highest quality and most advanced MRF in the UK.

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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