



From mountain to sea

Waste Strategy 2019-2023

Approved

May 2019

 **recycle** for Aberdeenshire



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1 Introduction

Aberdeenshire Council collects around 60,000 tonnes of recyclates and 80,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste annually from 120,000 households and business customers across the region. In 2017 Aberdeenshire’s recycling rate was 43.7%, slightly below the Scottish average of 45.6%.

Aberdeenshire Council first introduced a kerbside recycling service to households in 2005-2006, and rolled out a more user-friendly kerbside recycling service to all households in Aberdeenshire in 2013-2015. Whilst the new service significantly increased the use of the kerbside recycling service by households, the recycling levels have now plateaued.

To understand what is still being put into non-recyclable waste bins by households, Aberdeenshire Council undertook extensive waste analysis of non-recyclable waste in 2016-2017. The research showed that if all recyclable materials were recycled effectively through the existing recycling services, Aberdeenshire’s recycling rate could be well over 70%.

The graph below shows the type of materials put into non-recyclable waste bins in Aberdeenshire.



In addition to the missed environmental and local benefits, not making full use of the recycling services does not make best use of the taxpayers' money. This is because recycling is generally less than half the cost of landfilling it and the sale of some recyclable materials even generates an income.

In line with the European Union [Circular Economy Package](#), Aberdeenshire Council supports the Scottish Government's ambition¹ for moving towards a more circular economy where materials are considered as a resource and such resources are used efficiently.

The new Waste Strategy 2019-2023 has been developed to ensure Aberdeenshire maximises the environmental, community and financial benefits from the waste it produces.

The new strategy will also help the Council to comply with the statutory obligations set out in the [Waste \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#) which ban landfilling of biodegradable waste by 2021 (effectively this bans landfilling of any non-recyclable waste collected by the Council), and work towards meeting the reuse and recycling targets set by the Scottish Government (60% by 2020 and 70% by 2025).

This document replaces the Council's Integrated Sustainable Waste Management Strategy 2001-2020 which was last reviewed and updated in 2014.

2 Strategic direction

The Waste Strategy 2019-2023 sets the strategic direction and objectives for waste management in Aberdeenshire for the next five years and will work as a road map for achieving those goals.

The waste strategy is set to deliver the following seven objectives:

Objective 1: Support the move towards a more circular economy

Aberdeenshire Council supports the Scottish Government's ambition for moving towards a more circular economy where materials are considered as a resource and such resources are used efficiently.

We will play our role in creating a more circular economy by promoting waste prevention and enabling materials that are being discarded by households in Aberdeenshire to be used as a resource again, through providing services that maximise opportunities for reuse and recycling of materials, and recovering energy from the rest.

Objective 2: Provide a cost-efficient service

We will provide an efficient waste service which will maximise reuse and recycling whilst minimising the cost to the taxpayer. This approach will ensure we will strike the

¹ Scottish Government, 2016: [Making Things Last. A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland](#).

right balance and provide a cost-efficient solution delivering environmental and local benefits without increased costs to the taxpayer.

Objective 3: Meet statutory obligations

We will meet our statutory obligations in line with our duties as a local authority, including complying with the statutory requirements set out in the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which ban landfilling of biodegradable waste by 2021.

Objective 4: Provide the same collection service across Aberdeenshire

We will treat householders equally and continue collecting the same materials from all residents, whether they live in urban or rural areas, in flats or houses.

Objective 5: Provide an easy to use service for customers

We will ensure the services we provide are easy to use for householders and enable householders to maximise reuse and recycling of materials.

Objective 6: Reduce carbon emissions

We will ensure the services we provide are resource-efficient in terms of the vehicles we use, the fuel we need and the reuse, recycling and recovery options we procure to reduce carbon emissions.

Objective 7: Operate a safe and efficient waste service

We will operate in a safe manner and deliver operational efficiencies where possible whilst providing an effective service to the householders.

3 What we will do

Changes are required to ensure Aberdeenshire meets these strategic objectives. The following five measures will be taken to deliver the strategy:

- Deliverable 1: Encourage householders to treat materials as a resource.
- Deliverable 2: Maximise the quality and value of recyclable materials collected.
- Deliverable 3: Maximise recycling through reduced non-recyclable waste capacity.
- Deliverable 4: Improve the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- Deliverable 5: Recover energy from waste that cannot be prevented, reused or recycled.

All of the deliverables work as a package and together deliver the objectives of the strategy, ultimately ensuring Aberdeenshire maximises the environmental, community and financial benefits from the waste it produces.

Details of each deliverable are provided in the sections below.

Deliverable 1: Encourage householders to treat materials as a resource

Whilst the Council has no regulatory tools to control the amount or recyclability of packaging put on the market by producers, we will continue lobbying local and central governments and support any extended producer responsibility initiatives, including the Scottish Government's [Deposit Return Scheme](#) for drinks packaging.

We will continue promoting waste prevention and efficient use of resources to householders in line with our commitment to circular economy. We will put in place an effective communications and engagement strategy to promote opportunities for using resource-efficient services and resource-efficient behaviours.

Deliverable 2: Maximise the quality and value of recyclates collected

We will continue working with householders to ensure householders know what materials can be reused and recycled and how they need to be prepared for reuse and recycling. This will help maximise the quality and value of the reusable items and recyclates collected. We will put in place an effective communications and engagement strategy, and provide household-specific advice through a home visiting service provided by our team of Community Waste Officers.

We will look for operational solutions to maximise financial value from the recyclates collected to reduce the cost of the recycling and waste services to the taxpayer.

Deliverable 3: Maximise recycling through reduced non-recyclable waste capacity

Based on the waste analyses carried out on the waste sent to landfill by residents in Aberdeenshire in 2016-2017, over half of the waste put into non-recyclable waste bins is actually recyclable through the recycling services currently available to residents. If all this waste was recycled using the existing recycling services, Aberdeenshire's recycling rate could be well over 70%, instead of the current 43.7%, providing significant financial savings in addition to the environmental and local benefits.

Research across the UK² shows that one of the most effective ways to encourage residents to use the recycling services available to them is to reduce the quantity of non-recyclable waste collected from households. By 2018 over a third of the Scottish local authorities had already taken measures to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste collected, either by reducing the size of the non-recyclable waste bin, collecting it less frequently, or both, resulting in significant increases in recycling. Based on an online survey carried out in Aberdeenshire in 2018, 50% of respondents said they use $\frac{3}{4}$ or less of their weekly non-recyclable waste capacity, with 28% of respondents managing with $\frac{1}{2}$ a bin or less.

Reducing the non-recyclable waste capacity available at kerbside is a key component of Aberdeenshire's waste strategy to encourage householders to make

² WRAP 2015: [Analysis of recycling performance and waste arisings in the UK 2012/13](#).

better use of the recycling services available to them. Accordingly, we will use the existing bins in a 3-weekly cycle to improve recycling rates, with the non-recyclable waste bin emptied once and the recycling bin twice in 3 weeks.

The new kerbside service will be rolled out in 2020-2021.

We will continue to provide additional recycling bins and food waste containers to households free of charge. Additional non-recyclable waste bins can be requested by households that fully use the recycling services and meet the criteria for additional non-recyclable waste bin capacity.

We will work with householders prior to, during and after the roll-out to help residents adapt to their new kerbside service. We will provide information to all households about how to use the recycling services available to them, provide tips on how households can reduce the amount of waste they produce and provide household-specific advice using our team of Community Waste Officers.

Garden Waste

Councils are not required by law to collect garden waste from the kerbside.

To provide a 'free-for-all' garden waste collection from the kerbside would involve running a separate fleet of garden waste collection vehicles and the provision of garden waste bins to households at a significant additional cost. Whilst such a collection would be popular amongst residents, there is no funding available for the introduction of a garden waste collection service. Whilst some residents would be happy to pay for a garden waste collection service, such proposals do not have enough support from the community to justify additional expenditure on additional collection vehicles and garden waste bins.

Home composting is the best environmental option for recycling garden waste. It does not require any vehicle transport and provides householders with free mulch and compost to help their garden grow. The Council will continue to provide advice on home composting and sell discounted home composting bins to residents. The Council will also continue to support community composting initiatives residents may wish to run for their local communities. Providing unstaffed garden waste skips in villages is not an option as they end up being filled with all sorts of waste.

We will continue collecting garden waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres throughout the year. In addition, we will increase the number of seasonal village garden waste collection points from the current six to 12 to help residents recycle their garden waste during the summer months. Whilst many would like to have a garden waste point in their village, providing a garden waste point in every Aberdeenshire village is simply not financially and operationally feasible.

The seasonal collection points will be provided on Saturdays (either morning or afternoon) from April to October in settlements where the service is already operating and also in settlements with 1000 or more domestic properties (based on 9/9/2017 property count) and which are more than 2 miles (as the crow flies) from a Household Waste Recycling Centre or another seasonal collection point. This approach

maximises the number of residents with access to a seasonal garden waste collection point in their village.

Based on the above, seasonal village garden waste collection points will be provided in the following locations:

- Aboyne
- Ballater
- Balmedie (new)
- Blackburn (new)
- Inverbervie
- Kemnay (new)
- Kintore (new)
- Mintlaw
- Newmachar (new)
- Newtonhill
- Oldmeldrum (new)
- St Cyrus

Glass

Colour-segregated glass will continue to be collected through the network of over 400 local glass recycling points and Household Waste Recycling Centres. This is because collecting glass separately on the kerbside would require a new fleet of glass-only vehicles or kerbside sort vehicles to be purchased which would be costly and also reduce the flexible multi-use of the collection fleet.

Based on the waste analysis undertaken in 2016-2017, residents are using the network of glass recycling points effectively, with a glass capture rate exceeding 70%. Only relatively small amounts of glass are landfilled (4% of the non-recyclable bin contents) which does not justify running a separate fleet of vehicles.

Residents can request a local glass recycling point to be installed in their neighbourhood.

Deliverable 4: Improve the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres

The network of Household Waste Recycling Centres will be improved to ensure that householders can maximise the reuse and recycling of those materials which are not collected through the kerbside collection service.

The measures below together as a package provide a cost-neutral basis for improving the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres.

The following measures will be taken to improve the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres:

1. **Increase the number of materials that can be recycled through Household Waste Recycling Centres** as recycling technologies develop and become financially feasible. Feasibility studies will be undertaken for mattresses, carpets, polystyrene and dense plastics, and other materials will continue to be assessed as recycling facilities become available.
2. **Improve customer service and segregation of incoming waste** by ensuring there is a sufficient number of appropriately trained staff at each Household Waste Recycling Centre to help and provide advice to customers.
3. **Provide opportunities for reuse** by providing reuse areas at Household Waste Recycling Centres and working in partnership with other organisations to best redistribute the items collected.

We will also continue promoting the use of charity shops and online reuse forums, such as Ebay, Preloved and Gumtree, as these are well-established and readily available reuse services benefiting the local area. The reuse areas at Household Waste Recycling Centres will provide the last resort for redirecting reusable items back into use.

4. **All Household Waste Recycling Centres will accept the same range of materials** to ensure households across Aberdeenshire can maximise recycling at the Household Waste Recycling Centre nearest to them.

To make this possible, we will need to do the following:

1. Make space for additional recycling skips and reuse areas by:
 - Diverting trade waste from Household Waste Recycling Centres to Council's waste transfer stations.
 - Diverting tyres from Household Waste Recycling Centres to commercial facilities.
 - Diverting asbestos from waste transfer stations to commercial facilities.
2. Improve the infrastructure and layout of Household Waste Recycling Centres gradually by applying funding from the Capital Plan.
3. Close the smallest Household Waste Recycling Centres, which meet the following criteria: 1. only have space for very limited recycling facilities 2. handle less than 300 tonnes of waste per year and 3. are within 10 miles (as the crow flies) or approximately 20 minutes car travel from another Household Waste Recycling Centre. On this basis the following three sites will be formally closed:
 - Gardenstown (closed in 2015 due to a landslide)
 - Hatton
 - Whitehills

Residents currently using these sites can take their waste to the other 15 Household Waste Recycling Centres at Alford, Banchory, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Insch, Inverurie, Laurencekirk, Macduff, Peterhead, Portlethen, Portsoy, Stonehaven, Turriff and Westhill where it can be recycled more effectively.

5. **More consistent opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres and at times convenient to households** to make reuse and recycling as easy and convenient as possible to householders. Based on current usage, the opening hours will be as follows:

Recycling centres	Opening hours	Summer Tuesday evening opening (1st April - 30th September)
Banchory Ellon Fraserburgh Huntly Inverurie Laurencekirk Macduff Peterhead Stonehaven Turriff Westhill	Mon-Thurs & Sat-Sun 9am-4.30pm Fri 9am-4pm	Tue 4.30-7pm
Portlethen	Thurs, Sat, Sun & Mon 9am-4.30pm Fri 9am-4pm	n/a
Alford	Fri 9am-4pm Sat, Sun & Mon 9am-4.30pm	n/a
Insch Portsoy	Tue & Sat 9-12pm & 12.30-4.30pm	Tue 4.30-7pm

The above opening hours will be implemented at Alford once the recycling centre has been extended. Additional service provision is currently not justified at Alford, Insch and Portsoy due to the size of the population served and at Portlethen due to other 7-day Household Waste Recycling Centres located nearby.

We will continue monitoring the use of recycling centres through visitor numbers, and may amend the above opening hours to better fit with customer and operational demand, whilst maintaining the level of service provision.

Deliverable 5: Recover energy from waste not prevented, reused or recycled

The strategy is aimed at maximising reuse and recycling of waste. Whilst taking measures to promote resource-efficient behaviours and services, and ensuring opportunities for reuse and recycling are maximised, we will continue working with Aberdeen City and Moray Councils to build a joint facility for recovering energy (heat and power) from non-recyclable waste.

In addition to its environmental benefits, the energy from waste facility will also enable us to comply with the statutory requirements set out in the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which ban landfilling of biodegradable waste by 2021 (effectively this bans landfilling of any non-recyclable waste collected by the Council), and the Scottish Government's target, set out in [Scotland's Zero Waste Plan](#), to reduce landfilling to 5% of all waste by 2025.

4 How we will measure our success

The following targets and performance indicators have been put in place to monitor and manage the progress to achieve the strategy objectives:

Strategy objective	Target	Indicator
Objective 1: Support the move towards a more circular economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce total waste arisings per household by 5% by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total waste arisings per household.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Aberdeenshire's recycling rate to 55% by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling rate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease the amount of food waste placed in non-recyclable waste bins by 20% by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of food waste placed in non-recyclable waste bins.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase recycling rate of Household Waste Recycling Centres to 75% by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling rate by centre.
Objective 2: Provide a cost-efficient service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the cost of waste and recycling service provision by 2% by 2023 through savings in landfill disposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of service provision per household per year.
Objective 3: Meet statutory obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop landfilling biodegradable municipal waste by 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill.

Strategy objective	Target	Indicator
Objective 4: Provide the same collection service across Aberdeenshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same recyclables collected from all households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of households with full service provision.
Objective 5: Provide an easy to use service for customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Objective 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Objective 1.
Objective 6: Reduce carbon emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce carbon emissions from the collection, disposal and reprocessing of waste by 15% by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon emissions from collection vehicles. Carbon emissions from disposal and reprocessing of waste.
Objective 7: Operate a safe and efficient waste service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise accidents and incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of accidents and incidents per 1,000 households serviced. Number of accidents and incidents per 1,000 tonnes of waste handled.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Objective 2 for efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Objective 2.