

Briefing11/64 December 2011

Scotland's Recycling Performance

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and Email Contacts (Scotland)
cc All Chief Executives, Main Contacts (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

This APSE briefing provides more information on the recently produced Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) report which highlights the Scottish Local Government sectors performance with regard to recycling. The information used is in line with recently produced Zero Waste Plan, and relates to the period April to June 2011.

Key Issues

- The Zero Waste Plan established a new approach to the management and disposal of waste, in Scotland.
- A new methodology was established with regard to measuring recycling performance with particular targets established. For 2013 all Councils will be required to recycle 50% of all waste.
- Currently, a significant number of Councils are recycling more than 50% of waste with many on track to hit the 50% target by 2013. 12 out of 32 local authorities recycle more than 50% of household waste during this quarter.

Background

The Scottish Government published its Zero Waste Plan which provides details of how in partnership with Local Government it aims to reduce the amount of waste produced, reuse valuable resources and increase recycling levels to help Scotland become a "Zero Waste Society". Further details are provided in APSE briefing 11/47. The drive towards zero waste means rethinking the use of resources and not just considering them to be waste. It implies eliminating the unnecessary use of raw materials through:-

- Sustainable design
- Increasing resource efficiency
- Preventing waste
- Re-using products wherever possible

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan described a package of new complementary measures including ambitious recycling targets and the use of carbon metric to encourage the recycling of materials which will result in the greatest benefit to the environment. To support these changes SEPA produced new guidance for Local Authorities with regard to the Zero Waste Plan. The guidance reflects the new targets and reporting conversions. Performance reports will be produced by SEPA four times a year.

Methodology

As part of the Zero Waste Plan the Scottish Government via SEPA established a new methodology for measuring the recycling and composition of waste. Only household waste is now used to measure Scotland's progress towards the recycling targets. In previous years the recycling and composition rate was based on Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMN) household waste which included household collection rounds, other rounds such bulky waste collections, waste deposited by householders at household waste recycling centres and recycling points. There is also a new definition for recycling, which sets out in detail what does and does not count. There is a move away from a focus on landfill divesting towards high quality recycling count.

Zero Waste Targets

The Scottish Government through the Zero Waste Plan established stretching targets for the recycling and composting of municipal waste. Highlighted below are the respective targets.

Calendar Year	Recycling and Composting Targets
2010	40%
2013	50%
2020	60%
2025	70%

As part of the reporting process Councils are required to report on progress on a quarterly basis to SEPA.

Initial Results

SEPA has now produced its first quarter report which details the performance made to date by Scottish Local Authorities since the introduction of the revised methodology. The figures suggest that there is a national recycling rate of 43.6% throughout Scottish Local Government. Across Scotland from April 2011 to June 2011 some 719,000 tonnes of household waste was created with 313,000 tonnes being recycled or composted.

The returns indicate that a number of Councils namely North Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire and Falkirk were recycling nearly 60% of all waste which exceeds the national target of 50% which relates to 2013. A significant number of Councils (12) are currently well ahead of the 2013 target of 50%, with many others making solid progress towards attaining the target.

Highlighted below are the respective figures on a local authority basis.

Household Waste Data, April to June 2011

Local Authority	Waste (tonnes)	Waste recycled (tonnes)	Waste recycled (%)
Aberdeen	27,201	10,021	36.8
Aberdeenshire	40,757	14,827	36.4
Angus	17,497	7,928	45.3
Argyl and Bute	12,074	3,405	28.2
Clackmannanshire	8,618	4,786	55.5
Dumfries and Galloway	24,793	5,141	20.7
Dundee City	18,926	6,203	32.8
East Ayrshire	16,402	8,269	50.4
East Dunbartonshire	16,423	6,940	42.3
East Lothian	14,421	6,995	48.5
East Renfrewshire	11,814	6,963	58.9
City of Edinburgh	51,173	17,945	35.1
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	4,905	1,323	27.0
Falkirk	21,698	12,742	58.7
Fife	59,519	33,838	56.9
Glasgow City	66,117	17,743	26.8
Highland	35,486	17,258	48.6
Inverclyde	9,168	4,118	44.9
Midlothian	11,878	6,361	53.6
Moray	14,000	6,760	48.3
North Ayrshire	20,881	12,292	58.9

Local Authority	Waste (tonnes)	Waste recycled (tonnes)	Waste recycled (%)
North Lanarkshire	45,275	20,559	45.4

Orkney	2,776	999	36.0
Perth and Kinross	23,241	12,995	55.9
Renfrewshire	20,249	10,300	50.9
Scottish Borders	14,680	6,959	47.4
Shetland	3,144	552	17.6
South Ayrshire	17,560	9,383	53.4
South Lanarkshire	43,728	16,478	37.7
Stirling	12,344	6,768	54.8
West Dumbartonshire	11,065	5,770	52.1
West Lothian	21,391	10,639	49.7

CONCLUSION AND APSE COMMENT

APSE acknowledges that the management of waste is a key strategic issue for Scotland and its respective Council's it needs to be effectively managed particularly in relation to its impact on climate change issues and the environment in which we live. The local government sector has a key role to play in ensuring that the nation as a whole combats climate change and builds a more sustainable future for communities. APSE has well developed policy and strategies with regard to sustainable development and encourages local authorities in this regard. However, APSE recognises that the global financial situation together with the demands to reduce public spending in line with the UK Governments deficit plan places a further challenge on local government to deliver national initiatives including the recycling agenda.

APSE would advise local authorities to put in place their own plans for meeting all the relevant targets and requirements including those in relation to SEPA's Waste Data Strategy. The success of recycling programmes depends on the active and sustained participation of citizens in the correct operation and collection of recyclable waste. Effective approaches need to augment people's involvement in recycling programmes. Recent research concludes that the influence of attitudes, incentives, and the presence of children in households impact on participation rates.

Performance Management Tools such as APSE performance networks, maybe helpful in not only establishing a baseline for how Council's compare but also for identifying good practice from other Councils that can be learned from.

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