



News Release

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Aberdeenshire pursues higher recycling rate through changes to waste services

A consultation is now open seeking residents' views on a package of changes proposed for Aberdeenshire's recycling and waste services.

The proposals include reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste collected at kerbside, improving the network of recycling centres, collecting paper and card separately at kerbside, increasing the number of seasonal garden waste recycling points and providing better information on how to recycle.

Two options to change kerbside waste collections are proposed as part of the revamped collection system and people are encouraged to share their views with the council on this.

Responses to the consultation will feed into a new waste strategy being developed, aimed at ensuring the area maximises the environmental, local and financial benefits from the waste it produces as a community.

Aberdeenshire's current recycling rate is only 43.5%, but services currently available to residents should allow a recycling rate of 70%.

Over half of the materials put into local non-recyclable waste bins are actually recyclable through existing services – equating to around 30,000 tonnes of recyclable materials being binned at a cost of £3.5million a year.

Sending biodegradable waste to landfill will also be banned from 2021. This includes non-recyclable household waste currently landfilled, so an alternative has to be found. Aberdeenshire Council is working together with Aberdeen City and Moray Councils to create a joint Energy from Waste plant to handle all of this waste.

The proposed changes as part of the new strategy have been informed by the views of residents who took part in The Big Recycling Challenge Survey – in which one of the most striking results showed that landfill bins are not used to capacity.

The introduction of a paid-for kerbside garden waste collection was widely rejected by respondents and composting at home remains the preferred way for residents with gardens to dispose of it.

As part of the proposals, the number of seasonal garden waste points would be increased from the current six to 11.

As part of the proposals to improve the kerbside service, residents would get an extra recycling bin and a smaller bin for non-recyclable waste to maximise recycling at home and to align the service with



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the type of waste households actually produce. One of the options also involves collecting non-recyclable waste every three weeks.

Residents would be asked to start separating paper and card from metals, cartons and plastics to allow a small income to be made from the sale of paper and card, to buffer against the varying prices of other recyclables.

As part of the strategy a small number of recycling centres would close too as they would not have the space to accept the same range of materials for recycling as the larger sites, with any savings reinvested in providing better service at the other centres.

Sending waste to landfill costs twice as much as recycling, so not only does maximising the value of a material benefit the environment, it also frees up money for other council services.

“We have been talking about reducing waste sent to landfill and increasing the reuse and recycling of valuable materials for some time, but we can’t go on simply talking about it and ignoring the fact that we as a society are failing, so this new strategy seeks to tackle that,” said Peter Argyle, chair of Aberdeenshire Council’s Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC).

“The time has come to make physical changes which will support the urgent need to do something about our attitude to the waste we produce through our consumption, we all need to make big changes to the way we view our responsibilities in this regard.

“We need to find the best approach as a community to deal with this issue, which will become ever more pressing in years to come.”

ISC vice chair, John Cox, said: “A lot of thought has gone into the draft strategy to try to make sure we have the right infrastructure in place to maximise recycling without costing the taxpayer any more money.

“Aberdeenshire’s recycling rate in recent years has clearly plateaued, despite the introduction of new services making it even easier to do, so clearly we need to do more to make the most of the waste we produce.

“Other local authorities have had success taking the route proposed for Aberdeenshire, reducing the opportunity for landfill waste disposal while providing a wide range of recycling services, but we would encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation and give us their views.”

If approved by councillors, changes to kerbside services in Aberdeenshire are not expected to be introduced until 2020-21.

Consultation on Aberdeenshire’s new Recycling and Waste Strategy runs from September 3-28 and you can take part here: (<http://bit.ly/AshireWasteConsult>)

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

The Big Recycling Challenge Survey showed that of nearly 4,000 survey responses:



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- 75% put their food waste bin out for collection weekly or every second time. 19% never use their food waste bin. Only 28% fully use their weekly food waste bin capacity (or require a second bin).
- 88% put their blue recycling bin out for collection every time. 59% already fully use their weekly recycling bin capacity (or require a second bin).
- 90% put their landfill bin out for every collection. Half manage with 3/4 or less of their weekly landfill bin capacity, and 28% even with less than half a bin.

More information about the NESS Energy project is available at <http://www.nessenergy.co.uk/>

Endsnotes

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