

**REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE -
30 MAY 2019**

**MEMBER PROMOTED ISSUE – PROMOTING AND IMPROVING
RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING RATES IN ABERDEENSHIRE SCHOOLS**

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.1 Consider the Member Promoted Issue attached at Appendix A; and

1.2 Consider and comment on the report “Promoting and Improving Recycling and Composting rates in Aberdeenshire Schools”, attached as Appendix B.

2 Background / Discussion

2.1 In accordance with Standing Order 4.2.8 in Part A of the Scheme of Governance, a Member Promoted Issue, “Promoting and Improving Recycling and Composting Rates in Aberdeenshire Schools”, was submitted to the Director of Business Services on 28 January, 2019. This is attached as Appendix A.

2.2 In response, officers have prepared a background report entitled, “Promoting and Improving Recycling and Composting Rates in Aberdeenshire Schools”, which is attached as Appendix B.

2.3 The Committee is invited to consider the issues raised and determine whether it wishes to progress the matter further.

2.4 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

3.1 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of its remit for Education in Part 2A – List of Committee Powers, E.1.1.b and E.3.4, and in terms of the Member Promoted Issue Guidance in Part 4F of the Scheme of Governance. The Committee has the power to scrutinise and review the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery in respect of any function within its remit, in terms of Part 2A – List of Committee Powers, E.6.1.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage as the issue is being brought for initial consideration and there is no impact upon persons with protected characteristics arising from this report.
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP006 Reputation management and ACORP010 Environmental challenges (e.g. climate change) - *link to Corporate Risk Register*. The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level: ECSR001 Peterhead Campus, ECSSR004 Support inclusive, healthy and vibrant communities and ISSR004 Climate Change - *link to Directorate Risk Register*.

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Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by:

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Claudia Cowie, Team Leader, Sustainability and Climate Change
Craig Clement, Head of Resources and Performance, ECS

8 May, 2019

Appendix A
Scheme of Governance

MEMBER PROMOTED ISSUE FORM

SUBMITTED BY MEMBER: Martin Ford – **WARD:** 12

FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE TO BE PROMOTED:

Promoting and improving recycling and composting rates in Aberdeenshire Schools.

IS THIS ISSUE CONNECTED OR RELATED TO ANY OTHER PROJECT CURRENTLY BEING PROGRESSED, PLEASE OUTLINE:

There is work being progressed through the carbon budget group in education.

HAS THIS ISSUE ARISEN AS A RESULT OF ANY REPRESENTATION BY CONSTITUENTS OR OTHER PARTIES, PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY INTERESTED PARTIES:

Recurring issue raised as a concern by some members of the public.

HAS THIS ISSUE BEEN CONSIDERED IN THE PAST AND IF SO, WHEN AND BY WHOM (OFFICER OR COMMITTEE):

I have discussed this with Claudia Cowie.

SIGNED: Martin Ford

DATED: 28/1/19

Appendix B

Promoting and Improving Recycling and Composting Rates in Aberdeenshire Schools.

1 Background

1.1 Aberdeenshire Council

A report was presented to Aberdeenshire Council on 8 February 2018 in relation to the Carbon Budget and proposed reductions in Financial Year 2018/19. It highlighted a range of carbon reduction projects within each service proposed for 2018/19. Since the Member Promoted Issue was first raised, the new Carbon Budget for 2019/2020 has been approved by Aberdeenshire Council.

1.2 Education & Children's Services (ECS)

It is recognised that, given the scale of ECS, and number of buildings, it is essential the service is pro-active in contributing to reducing carbon emissions.

In order to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the service, a specific group was set up comprising a range of officers from all areas of the service.

Three sub groups were initially set up to look at the following areas:

- Energy management
- Reuse of Items
- Waste and Recycling

The key focus of the Waste and Recycling group is to develop a consistent set of expectations and provide associate guidance and support to educational establishments. Accordingly, a key focus of the group is to contribute to the development of the Internal Resources and Circular Economy Framework. This is currently being developed by the Internal Waste Reduction Officer within the Sustainability Team in Infrastructure Services.

As well as improving recycling and composting rates, the Reuse of Items group's focus is primarily reducing the amount of resources we consume and reducing the waste we produce.

The Council's Sustainability Team have developed a Green Schools Programme with input from stakeholders in Education and Children's Services. The programme is linked to Eco Schools and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and links well to the principles of Learning for Sustainability. This was rolled out to 4 secondary schools as a 6-month pilot

in 2018 to gather feedback before an anticipated roll out across all 17 secondary schools.

The four schools involved in the pilot are:

- Banchory Academy
- The Gordon Schools
- Ellon Academy
- Kemnay Academy

These schools were chosen, in part, due to commitment from staff and pupils within these campuses to be involved. A number of activities/events have taken place. For example, a 'thank you' event was held in October 2018 where Ellon Academy pupils presented on the work, identified challenges around waste and recycling for further improvement.

The Gordon Schools are part of the Erasmus programme and are focusing on waste reduction. Kemnay Academy host a Learning for Sustainability event for their S2 pupils annually in May. In May 2018, Banchory Academy hosted an Eco Day for their S3 pupils focusing on the impacts of litter on the environment.

A review of current disposables used in the dining hall is ongoing to ensure that once the waste management systems are in place and recycling is being undertaken, the correct information/products are being provided and used.

It is planned for more secondary schools and, thereafter, primary schools to become engaged with the programme.

A key consideration is to ensure sustainability is a key feature of new buildings. For example, it is planned that the new Inverurie Community Campus is a flagship for resource management (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). The plans are progressing well, including arrangements for the P7 to S1 transition process to engage the pupils, who will be at the new campus right the way through their secondary school careers, and to develop a vision with them for what the new campus could be with regard to resource management and wider sustainability. Careful consideration will also be given to a 'sustainable transition' and will encourage pupil and community engagement.

The following are some examples of the projects currently taking place within Aberdeenshire Schools.

- Clothing Banks – set up by PTA Organisations for whole community access. There are also facilities for re-cycling uniforms.
- Recycling Bins - a class has set up terra cycling (for crisp bags) and washing and re-using yogurt pots from their school canteen. A school kitchen has also stopped using disposable cups when milk is on the menu using washable ones instead.

- Eco-School Groups – re-cycling bins are provided for plastic only and then is stored to make Eco bricks; with enough bricks being collected to make stools for classrooms, made from non-re-cyclable plastic/bottles.
- 'Global Goals' lessons - for example, children are asked to bring in a t-shirt from home and then investigating where it is made, the impact on the environment, 'fast fashion' transportation/shipping impact on the environment and talking about countries where factories are not regulated and the pollution in waterways, etc.
- Morning Press Conferences - where classes in a particular school look at the environment in relation to recent press coverage; for example, on 'air-pollution. The school has a Monday morning press conference with P7s where the children discuss issues from the press – often environmental and then hold a debate on them.
- Sustainable Travel/Smart Pack – where work is being developed with colleagues in the Transportation Team regarding 'Active and Sustainable Travel.
- School Gardens – where classes plant/grow their own vegetables and sell to the community promoting the use of natural products without the use of plastic.
- Saving Electricity – each class has an energy monitor who is responsible for ensuring any switches/smartboards, etc, that are not being used are switched off.

It should be noted that these are only a small sample of the many activities taking place in our schools.

1.3 School Curriculum

In context of school curriculum, there is an Eco-Schools programme which is part of the international initiative, managed in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful. It aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of the school for both pupils and for staff and to engage the wider community. The Eco-Schools programme can help schools to:

- Improve the school's environment
- Reduce litter and waste
- Reduce energy and water use
- Devise efficient ways of travelling to and from school
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Encourage active citizenship
- Build strong partnerships with a variety of community groups
- Develop international and global links

There are over 3,000 schools registered as Eco-Schools in Scotland, and 26% of local authorities, including Aberdeenshire, have attained the highest-level award – the Green Flag. 43 countries throughout Europe and Africa are involved in the programme. There is also much interest beyond, such as in New Zealand, South America and China.

Aberdeenshire's position is as follows:

172 schools have signed up to the Eco-Schools programme
123 schools have achieved the bronze award
14 schools have silver awards
69 have Green Flag awards

2 CURRENT SITUATION: - WASTE AND RECYCLING

One of the key issues identified is the collection of food waste from ECS establishments.

The Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 came into force on the 1st January 2014 which impacted on all businesses and organisations in Scotland with respect to waste management:

- Food businesses (except in specific rural areas) which produce over 50 kg of food waste per week to present that food waste for separate collection from 1 January 2014.
- Food businesses (except in specific rural areas) which produce over 5 kg of food waste per week to present that food waste for separate collection from 1 January 2016.

As a result, schools in Westhill, Banchory, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Kemnay, Portlethen, Inverurie, Stonehaven, Ellon, plus some additional schools have a food waste collection service. Currently there are food waste collections in 51 schools in Aberdeenshire.

There is currently a charge to the ECS budget of over £550,000 from waste removal, and the management of all aspects of this charge requires reviewing.

For example, a breakdown of the type of provision in 2 schools is set out below:

X Academy Campus:

- 16 x 1280L waste bins emptied weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 8 x 1280Ls mixed recycling weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 1 x 240L glass bin emptied quarterly i.e. 4 times per year.

Y Academy:

- 19 x 1280L waste weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 4 x 1280L mixed recycling weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 10 x 140L mixed recycling weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 2 x 120L food waste weekly (44 weeks per year)
- 3 x containers of Fluorescent tubes emptied quarterly (4 times per year)

Charges are based on the type and size of bins each school has and the number of collections per year. The arrangements are considered annually to ensure the service is meeting the needs of each establishment; general guidance is being developed to ensure the most effective arrangements are in place.

2.2 Next Steps

A holistic view is being adopted to ensure proposals are sustainable and align to other waste services (including domestic arrangements for some small schools). Careful consideration will require to be given to financial implications i.e. the cost of collecting General Waste (which is sent to landfill) compared to mixed recycling and/or organic waste.

Initially, the focus will be given to commencing food waste collection in all Academies (currently there are only 10 of 17 with food waste provision). Wherever possible, local Primary Schools and other establishments will also be included in this arrangement.

As illustrated below, carbon savings would be significant (as outlined in the 2017/18 Climate Change report on waste).

General Waste to landfill	588.9 kg CO ₂ e per tonne
Mixed Recycling	21.8 kg CO ₂ e per tonne
Organic – food and garden Waste	6.0 kg CO ₂ e per tonne

As an example, if one general waste bin was to be removed from one school and replaced with an extra recycling bin and food waste bin this would result in the following carbon savings:

<i>General Waste to landfill – 1 bin annually creates</i>	<i>2.7 tCO₂e</i>
<i>Mixed Recycling – 1 bin annually creates</i>	<i>0.08 tCO₂e</i>
<i>Organic – food and garden Waste – 1 bin annually creates</i>	<i>0.04 tCO₂e</i>
Savings	2.58 tCO₂e

The service recognises that there is need to ensure there are environmental, social and financial incentives in place to reduce waste. For example, the school/establishment producing the waste, could be responsible for the cost of its disposal, and benefit from savings when they reduce waste. This would provide an incentive to increase recycling rates across the school estate.

It is also recognised that, as recycling increases, it is important that roles and responsibilities of all staff, particularly catering, cleaning and janitorial staff are considered. While arrangements will depend on the particular

requirements/layout of each establishment, clear guidance is being developed for colleagues to manage the amount of waste being recycled.

The Waste Recycling Group has been asked to develop an Implementation Plan, including the performance indicators to improve recycling across the Learning Estate in a sustainable way. This will include engagement with appropriate stakeholders to ensure there is a wide range of representatives involved. The Group will also be asked to provide regular up-dates to the Education & Children's Services Leadership Team.

