

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Housing, Operations and Development
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 10 June 2025**

Subject: Waste Strategy 2021–2031 Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the annual progress report of the Council's Waste Strategy from 2021 to 2031 as per the action plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Panel considers the report and provides feedback to officers.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Since 1999 when the National Waste Plan was published the Waste industry, the collection of waste and the recycling industry has been constantly evolving with the ambition to minimise the amount of waste that cannot be reprocessed into a different product.
- 3.2 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a Statutory Duty upon the Council to arrange for the collection and disposal of household waste and, where requested, to arrange for the collection and disposal of commercial and industrial waste. The Act empowers the council to make arrangements it sees fit to facilitate this duty.
- 3.3 South Ayrshire Council started to positively develop its waste collection to maximise recycle in 2004 when the first recycling bins were issued to householders. In 2013 be provided food waste caddies to allow households to have a doorstep facility to recycle their waste. This service today sees South Ayrshire Council with a recycling rate of 54.7% which is the 5th highest in Scotland.
- 3.4 On 24 June 2021 Council approved the [Waste Strategy 2021–2031](#) and associated Action Plan to:
- Set policies and actions to meet the requirements as set out in the Environmental Protection Act (1990) and Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010 and align to the national Circular Economy Strategy 'Making Things Last' (February 2016).
 - Establish how to meet the ban on biodegradable waste to landfill in January 2026 as set out in the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012

- Build on the success of the Household Recycling Charter compliant service.
 - Meet the objectives set out in the Climate Change Act (2009) and the subsequent 2019/20 programme for government.
- 3.5 Since the approval of the Strategy progress has continued to be made on a number of action points as noted in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.6 In relation to Action Point 8 we are currently exploring the possibility of working in partnership with East Ayrshire Council. To use the Heathfield site as a facility for both authorities where recyclate can be sorted into their separate waste streams, including plastics & metals, which can be sold to the market and attract enhanced levels of income in comparison with co-mingled materials. A business case is being developed to see the viability of the proposal.
- 3.7 Waste Management have now introduced recycling facilities into 95% of all Council buildings to mirror our domestic collection streams, ensuring consistency throughout South Ayrshire. Action 19.
- 3.8 Over the past year the service has made progress in the delivery of the following policy objectives:
- Engage with digital and technological developments to improve service delivery and work towards zero waste in South Ayrshire.
 - Maximise resources to reduce the impact of on-street litter and detritus and increase the profile of South Ayrshire.
 - Maximise communication opportunities through conventional and digital platforms to inform and promote zero waste and encourage behaviour change.
- 3.9 In doing so, the service has progressed with the implementation and development of smart technology to reduce the impact of street litter and to encourage behaviour change.
- 3.10 Funding from Covid Recovery, specifically for Promenades, enabled the procurement of solar compactor litter bins for the four main promenades. The units can hold up to 7 times the waste of a 240l litter bin, thereby reducing the number of vehicle movements, saving resources, and reducing carbon. The increased capacity of the units also assists events such as the Air Show, the Pavilion Festival, the Open Golf tournament and Prestwick Prom. Action 12.
- 3.11 Four of the larger, more complex aspects of the Waste Strategy Action Plan that Waste Management have focused on in 2024 are:
- The continue development of our Heathfield site. Installation of new Weighbridge building solar panels have been installed on the roof of the building and we are on target to save 40% electricity costs. Working with Professional Design Services to design and plan a second waste transfer building, which will allow us to move all existing waste streams that are

being accepted at our Walker Road Facility to Heathfield. This will consolidate all waste reception, storage, sorting and transfer activities on one site.

Preparatory survey & groundworks have been completed and early discussions have taken place with Planning, Ayrshire Roads Alliance and SEPA . Action 5.

- Consolidate all of our waste management back-office functions onto a digital platform with our chosen digital partner. This will reduce the number of manual/administrative interactions and improve our customer experience.

To ensure that we obtain products that meet our needs there are regular meetings to discuss requirements, provide soft testing of product(s) to tease out any issues or additional requirements. We have included our ICT link officer in meetings and had discussions with the Transformational Team regarding this project. Action 12 & 26.

- Waste Management were approached by Zero Waste Scotland and asked if we would like to work with them to assess intervention strategies which would form the basis of a National Strategy to increase participation rates. This will help reduce disposal costs and increase recycling rate. Action 3.
- Working in partnership with Procurement to renew all waste/recycling contracts which are now index linked to current market prices, ensuring best value for the council. Action 14.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Members are requested to review the updates on progress towards implementing the outstanding actions relating to the Waste Strategy Action Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2 Officers will bring a progress report to the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel in May 2026.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Current financial commitments can be met within allocated capital and revenue budgets.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications related to the content of this paper at this time.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks from adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 There is a risk that in rejecting the recommendations the Council will jeopardise meeting legislative requirements over the next 10 years including meeting the ban on biodegradable waste to landfill in January 2026.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as this is simply an update report.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 There is no requirement for an Options Appraisal as this is simply an update report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council Plan, Priority One, Spaces and Places – Moving around and the environment.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council Yes ☐ No ☐

13.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council's transformation priority area(s): our workforce; our technology; our assets; our delivery model and will deliver cashable/ qualitative/ quantitative benefits .

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Martin Kilbride, Portfolio Holder for Buildings, Housing and Environment and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers [Waste Strategy 2021-2031](#)

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Date: 29 May 2025

Appendix 1

This w. Key Theme	Action	Measurable Action	Priority	Timescale	Progress	% Complete
Waste Reduction & Prevention	1	Develop and initiate waste aware campaigns to minimise the use of single use plastics within South Ayrshire.	Medium	Medium Term	<p>The ban on Single Use Plastics came into force on 1st June 2022. South Ayrshire Council Services and Departments are unable to purchase single use plastics through Oracle. There are exceptions e.g., medical items.</p> <p>A communication campaign was conducted to ensure all employees were aware that single use plastic should not be purchased or used.</p>	50%
	2	Develop a reuse plan to identify and co-ordinate reuse activities including supporting the development of partnerships with third sector organisations.	Medium	Long Term	<p>Consulted with Re-use organisations to develop relationship and highlight to residents what options are available to re-use furniture and other items rather than sending this to landfill. South Ayrshire Website updated to include this information and to give details of local charity shops and what they can accept.</p> <p>Facilities for books, furniture and bicycles now in place at HWRC in South Ayrshire and these are collected by various individuals.</p>	100%
	3	Engage with partner organisations to form and encourage strategies to reduce overall waste arisings	Low	Long Term	Waste Management have undertaken a Food Waste Project with Zero Waste Scotland completed end of 2024 we are awaiting the outcome report due May 2025. The project looked at 4 different incentives to increase	60%

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					<p>participation in food waste collections to see if any had an effect on participation rates.</p> <p>Waste Management will develop a programme to roll out the recommended actions throughout the area. The aim being to increase participation in presenting food waste caddies for collection and removing this waste from the green residual bin, which will decrease tonnage, resulting in reduced contract disposal charges.</p> <p>Approached by NHS Ayrshire and Arran Dietetics Team in relation to the Good Food Nation Bill and we will be working in partnership with them to carry out presentations to help residents to reduce food waste. Which will save families money and provide them with the tools to make good choices re food options and how to reduce waste.</p>	
	4	Conduct composition analysis for all waste streams and participation studies in relation to food waste.	Low	Long Term	<p>Services are procured to carry out Waste Composition Analysis in three separate areas – Household Waste, School Waste and Commercial Waste to enable us to ascertain the makeup of each collected waste stream.</p> <p>Waste Management is about to commission a</p>	60%

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					<p>second waste analysis for all waste streams to identify areas where we can target improvements / participation to increase recycling rate, increase income commodities and decrease disposal charges .</p> <p>As this is a 10 year plan it is likely there will be further composition analysis undertaken prior to 2031</p>	
Infrastructure and Development	5	Develop and build/procure infrastructure to meet South Ayrshire Council requirements for residual waste, recycling and garden waste treatment	High	Medium Term	<p>HWRC and Waste Transfer Station at Heathfield was successfully procured and we have successfully operated the site for just over two years. Significant upgrades have been undertaken and we are continuing to develop the site with plans to form a material recovery facility to the rear of the site. This will allow us to stop collecting waste at Walker Road which will benefit immediate neighboring residents of Walker Road</p> <p>Unfortunately, while a lot of work has been undertaken to progress the development of a green waste site, the identified site has not yet been purchased.</p>	60%
	6	Review service provision in line with the introduction of a deposit return scheme	Medium	Medium Term	Scottish Government rescinded its plans for this scheme wishing to align with UK plans which were scheduled to commence in 2025	0%

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Infrastructure and Development					but have been delayed until 2027. We have no guaranteed date when this initiative will become live and so this action will be archived until further clarity becomes available.	
	7	Consider options for Household Waste Recycling Centre provision for Ayr and Prestwick.	High	Medium Term	With the purchase of the Heathfield facility this action is now completed.	100%
	8	Prepare options appraisal/business case for the separation and resale of metals/plastics and cartons stream and direct sale of other recycling streams and review contractual arrangements for recycle materials	High	Short Term	With the purchase of Heathfield, we have six waste streams have been retendered and these contracts are generating income. Reviewing contracts on a regular basis has now become our business model to take advantage of fluctuating markets. We are currently discussing with East Ayrshire Council the merit of developing a Material Recycling Facility at Ayr Waste Transfer Station which would Service both Authorities. Business Case being developed to ascertain if there would be sufficient financial benefit that would merit the capital investment and ongoing revenue costs. This will be picked up as an additional action at the mid-term	100%

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					strategy refresh in 2026	
	9	Undertake options appraisal and business case relating to household and commercial waste bin infrastructure	Low	Long Term	To save wastage and procurement delays waste management have uniformed the bodies of the domestic bins' grey bodies with the appropriate colour lid. Waste management carries a stock of replacement lids. This change has resulted in savings and reduced delays in bin deliveries.	100%
	10	Work in partnership with the Planning service to forward plan operational requirements of new developments.	Low	Short Term	The partnership working has been in place for over 2 years and is working well. This action is now complete	100%
	11	Develop and implement a booking system for all HWRC's	High	Medium Term	Complete – The booking system has been in place since June 2022. We have seen a reduction of 3000 tonnes per annum of waste into our centers. East Ayrshire have both seen an increase. A saving of £300,000 in disposal costs. Since the booking systems have been in place, we have not had any requirement to review bodycam CCTV footage.	100%
	12	Consider new digital and technological platforms in service delivery and waste reduction.	Medium	Long Term	Developed partnership with Bartec Municipal Technologies to transfer all digital and technological platforms to them to streamline the work packages. Garden Waste Permit	80%

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					<p>system in place, Commercial Waste system aims to be operational by 1st April 2026. Currently working on a new routing system with Bartec.</p> <p>Investment has been made into solar compactor litter bins, units have been placed in high footfall locations. The units can hold 5 to 7 times as much waste as normal litter bins. Units can be remotely monitored to identify when they require to be emptied, reducing vehicle movement and carbon emissions. They form part of waste management of major events such as Prestfest, Summer fAYRe, Air Show, Tattie Fest.</p>	
Commercialisation and the Circular Economy	13	Develop a business plan for the commercial expansion of the green waste facility following any infrastructure investment	High	Short Term	Business plan has been updated & completed to reflect the change in tonnages from the implementation of the Garden Waste Permit collection service.	100%
	14	Collaborate with the Council's Procurement service to maximise material and contractual opportunities	Medium	Long Term	This is an ongoing process and since the purchase of Heathfield we are in a stronger position to secure better rates for our materials. Working closely with Procurement to ensure that we maximize income.	100%
	15	Review material acceptance policy at	Low	Medium	DEFRA have now confirmed that it is a	100%

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		Household Waste Recycling Centre's in relation to industrial waste		Term	mandatory duty upon the Authority to accept household waste that is industrial e.g., when someone builds an extension or fits a new bathroom or kitchen. Due to this confirmation the action cannot be progressed.	
	16	Develop business activity within commercial waste across South Ayrshire	Medium	Long Term	Our partnership with Bartec Municipal Technologies will result in our commercial waste collection system transferring to this software system. This system will provide customers with access to the interface, allowing the customer to amend their service requirements to suit their needs and make the commercial waste service more streamlined. We now accept business waste at our Heathfield site where customers are charged by weight and waste stream for waste they wish to deposit on site.	60%
Enhanced Environment	17	Conduct a service review of street cleansing with associated action plan	High	Short Term	This review has been completed and is now in place. Street Cleanliness Score for streets cleansed to an acceptable standard though the LEAMS	100%

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					<p>process increased from 87.5% in 2022/2023 to 94.2% in 2023/2024 because of the Service Review.</p> <p>For our arterial roads we are working in partnership with a local external contractor for a HGV Road Sweeper to remove leaves, detritus, sand and litter.</p>	
	18	Map all litter bin locations on our streets and in our parks to maximise resources and optimise routing	Low	Short Term	<p>With introduction of software from Bartec Municipal Technologies we will be able to record when bins were emptied, how full / well used the litterbin was used. This data will allow us to consider routing and collection need so saving resources. Additionally, we will be able to identify areas that would benefit from a larger bin or a second bin in the area.</p> <p>As per action 12 where new solar compactor litter bins have been installed we have decreased the number of 140 and 240l litter bins</p>	80%
	19	Develop a strategy and programme for all Council premises to be aligned to the household recycling charter	Medium	Medium Term	Due to funding from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Funding project to introduce recycling in every Early Years Centre, Primary School and	95%

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					<p>Academy was introduced during 2024. The internal and external recycling facilities provided are aligned to the household recycling charter.</p> <p>With this in place, we have almost 100% of all council buildings suitably equipped to allow employees to correctly recycle the different waste streams which aligns to the household waste recycling charter.</p> <p>There are constraints in providing recycling facilities that reflect the household charter to the remaining buildings. The first is funding as the grants are no longer available, the second the constraints of the building.</p>	
	20	Consider options and develop a plan for commercial bin infrastructure in our town centres	Medium	Long Term	Waste management have conducted a significant amount of engagement with different services. Success was achieved by positively engaging with each individual commercial customer and identifying an alternative storage solution for their bins. This helped reduce clutter in our town centers.	100%
	21	Develop options to transfer to an electric or ultra-low emissions fleet in line with the Council's Fleet Strategy	High	Long Term	The service continues to monitor developments in ULEV and what options other Authorities have adopted. The two main options are electric and hydrogen both	50%

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					<p>options would require a significant increase in the services fleet budget to procure the vehicles. Additionally, concerns identified regarding infrastructure, availability of hydrogen and maintenance of vehicles.</p> <p>It should be noted that Waste Management has one of the youngest fleets in Scotland and has a scheduled replacement system in place. All refuse collection vehicles have the Euro 6 engine standard which means they have virtually zero carbon emissions.</p> <p>We are exploring with Fleet the cost implications of moving from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for our HGV's as this would result in the vehicles having almost zero carbon emissions and using a non-fossil fuel however this will require a resource demand/increase in budget should we change to HVO.</p>	
	22	Deliver a solution for the ban on biodegradable municipal waste to landfill in 2025	High	Medium Term	<p>Contract has now been awarded to Biffa Waste Services for 10 years + 5-year contract for Energy from Waste (EfW) disposal process.</p> <p>This action is now complete.</p>	100%

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	23	Develop a contamination policy for both householders and commercial properties across South Ayrshire including other Council departments	Medium	Medium Term	A contamination policy for domestic waste, schools and other Council departments has now been implemented. Contamination of waste in terms of commercial customers is monitored by the commercial waste operatives and the commercial waste team assist commercial customers to prevent waste contamination.	100%
Communication & Engagement	24	Develop a Waste Engagement and Communications framework which outlines how and when waste management will engage with stakeholders and within the Council itself	Medium	Short Term	Annual communication plan is developed and we work closely with our communications team to ensure all stakeholders are kept up to date with relevant information. Website constantly updated to reflect any changes and communicate with our stakeholders.	100%
	25	Develop new communication methods for engagement with communities, businesses and partner organisations	Medium	Medium Term	This is ongoing as we are always open to new ways to communicate with our residents and customers.	60%
	26	Develop an online platform for commercial customers	High	Medium Term	Our partnership with Bartec Municipal Technologies will result in our commercial waste collection system transferring to this software. This will provide customers with access to the system to amend their service to suit their needs and make the commercial waste service more streamlined.	60%

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					Additionally, 70% of Garden Waste Permit customers ordered and paid for the service online	
	27	Develop educational videos and story boards for the promotion of the strategic objectives within the waste strategy	Medium	Short Term	<p>Our next project with schools and communities relates to the utilisation of 'Dennis to the Rescue' Educational Programme. This includes school visits, including, an educational bin lorry and educational workbooks which inform pupils on the waste hierarchy and recycling methods.</p> <p>There will be both school and community event visits.</p> <p>This facility will enable us show what happens to the waste once it is collected and passed to the processor. Videos are being produced to show the process for all waste streams.</p> <p>The Workbooks are being funded by BIFFA as part of their Community Benefit of their contract award.</p>	80%
	28	Actively promote the SAC MyBins app and continue to develop its functionality	High	Short Term	Promoted through Tenants & Residents Newsletter & SAC Live magazine and social media. Regular updates with App provider to ensure constant development to suit user	100%

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					requirement needs	