

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PDSP

COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES PERFORMANCE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the PDSP with the latest performance information across the council's five Community Recycling Centres (CRC's) following the revision to operational practices implemented on 2 October 2023.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the PDSP:

1. Notes the performance information for the period 2 October 2023 to 30 April 2024;
2. Notes that across the five community recycling centres, 191,395 bookings have been made from 2 October 2023 to 30 April 2024 accounting for 87% of the available booking capacity across the seven-month period.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Caring and compassionate; open, honest and accountable; collaborate, inclusive and adaptive
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>All activities within Recycling & Waste Services ensure the council is compliant with statutory requirements at Scottish, UK and EU level with respect to the collection, recovery, treatment and disposal of household waste</p> <p>The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 requires that Local Authorities provide sites where a person can dispose of refuse free of charge. The exception to this is refuse generated by business activities.</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Performance in relation to recycling rates will be monitored across the five CRC's.
V Relevance to Local Outcome Improvement Plan	We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	A budget reduction of £336,000 from 2023/24 was approved by Council on 21 February 2023 and implemented from 2 October 2023.

A reduction of 9 FTE in staffing at the Recycling Centres has been implemented.

All five Recycling Centres have been retained.

VII Consultation at PDSP

A performance report on the period 2 October 2023 to 31 December 2023 was presented to the Environment and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 30 January 2024.

VIII Other consultations

HR Services, Financial Management Unit, Corporate Transformation Team, NETs, Land and Countryside Services

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

On 25 April 2023, Council Executive agreed to reduce the opening hours across the council's five Community Recycling Centres (CRC) from 280 hours per week to 144 hours per week. The changes were to deliver budget savings of £336,000 per year and came into effect from 2 October 2023.

Table 1: Operating Hours from 2 October 2023

Location	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
Oakbank	Open	X	Open	X	Open	Open	Open		
Whitburn	Open	X	Open	X	Open	Open	Open		
Blackburn	X	Open	X	Open	X	Open	Open		
Broxburn	X	X	X	Open	X	X	Open	Open	X
Linlithgow	X	Open	X	X	X	Open	X	X	Open

Bookings can be made to visit the CRC's between the hours of 10:00 – 18:00, with the exception of weekends at Linlithgow and Broxburn when bookings are accepted 10:00 - 14:00, or 14:00 - 18:00

Performance information on the first three months, October 2023 to December 2023, of the revised operating arrangements was reported to the Environment and Sustainability PDSP on 30 January 2024. In addition, performance information up to 31 January 2024 was reported to Council Executive on 12 March 2024.

With the revised opening hours having now been in place for over six months, this report provides performance information up to 30 April 2024.

D.2 Customer Bookings

As previously reported to the PDSP, the CRC booking system ensures customers have guaranteed access and reduced waiting times. It also enables the Council to manage and prevent unauthorised commercial use or use from households from outwith the West Lothian area.

The standard time slots for those visiting in a car are 30 minutes long. Each slot can be booked by between 20 and 30 customers, depending upon the capacity of the CRC. A 30-minute slot allows people the time to attend if they are delayed leaving or arriving at the site and allows operatives time to carry out operational tasks. This also minimises queueing

outside or inside the CRCs, as there is not space for all vehicles booked in each 30 minutes to arrive or park at the same time, and they may want to use the same containers. Capacity has to be retained to recover from closing the site to safely operate compaction equipment, enable containers to be exchanged, or external contractors to uplift materials or service containers.

The table below outlines the total number of booking slots that have been available across the five CRCs in the first seven months of the revised operating model. It confirms that there has been overall sufficient capacity available each month with bookings accounting 87% of the capacity that has been available.

These figures include booking 'no shows' where a booking has been made but a customer has subsequently not appeared for their slot.

Table 2: Summary of CRC Bookings October 2023 to April 2024

	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Jan24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	Total
Maximum slots available	29,404	30,328	30,805	30,458	31,110	34,595	32,990	219,690
Bookings Made	22,981	25,843	27,731	28,616	26,348	29,615	30,261	191,395
Remaining availability	6,423	4,485	3,074	1,842	4,762	4,980	2,729	28,295
No shows	1,987	1,319	1,900	1,906	1,843	2,286	2,360	13,601
% Slots booked	78%	85%	90%	94%	85%	86%	92%	87%
% Slots available	22%	15%	10%	6%	15%	14%	8%	13%
% Slots used (exc. no shows)	71%	81%	84%	88%	79%	79%	85%	81%

As previously reported to the PDSP, the maximum slots available at each site are based upon an observation of traffic flow and is monitored. Since first implemented in October 2023 there has been a number of adjustments to the booking availability at Linlithgow and Broxburn to increase the number of bookings available per time slot. Traffic will continue to be monitored across all sites and the number of bookings available per time slot increased where it is operationally feasible to do so and can be sustained.

The tables below provide details of booking availability, bookings made and no shows per individual CRC site between October 2023 and January 2024.

Table 3 – Total Slots available per CRC

	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Jan 24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	Total
Blackburn	6,652	6,652	6,435	6,250	6,652	7,015	6,652	46,308
Broxburn	1,356	1,994	2,215	2,132	2,942	2,935	2,912	16,486
Linlithgow	1,532	1,818	1,845	2,212	2,612	2,935	2,942	15,896
Oakbank	9,932	9,932	10,155	9,932	9,452	10,855	10,392	70,650
Whitburn	9,932	9,932	10,155	9,932	9,452	10,855	10,392	70,650
Total	29,404	30,328	30,805	30,458	31,110	34,595	32,290	219,990

Table 4 – Total bookings made per CRC

	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Jan 24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	Total	% slots booked
Blackburn	5,271	5,853	5,885	6,025	5,976	6,315	6,630	41,955	91%
Broxburn	1,279	1,947	2,182	2,123	2,542	2,548	2,553	15,174	92%
Linlithgow	1,511	1,793	1,814	2,096	2,192	2,530	2,686	14,622	92%
Oakbank	9,142	9,791	10,075	9,818	9,381	10,757	9,901	68,865	97%
Whitburn	5,778	6,459	7,775	8,554	6,257	7,465	8,491	50,779	72%
Total	22,981	25,843	27,731	28,616	26,348	29,615	30,261	191,395	87%
% slots booked	78%	85%	90%	94%	85%	86%	92%	87%	

Table 5 – Total No Shows per CRC

	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Jan 24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	Total
Blackburn	402	277	286	511	542	457	772	3,247
Broxburn	266	406	346	305	267	273	347	2,210
Linlithgow	135	135	297	168	166	202	150	1,253
Oakbank	756	214	557	209	298	476	345	2,855
Whitburn	428	287	414	713	570	878	746	4,036
Total	1,987	1,319	1,900	1,906	1,843	2,286	2,360	13,601

Table 6 – % of No Shows / Bookings made

	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Jan 24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	Total
Blackburn	8%	5%	5%	8%	9%	7%	12%	8%
Broxburn	21%	21%	16%	14%	11%	11%	14%	15%
Linlithgow	9%	8%	16%	8%	8%	8%	6%	9%
Oakbank	8%	2%	6%	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%
Whitburn	7%	4%	5%	8%	9%	12%	9%	8%
Total	9%	5%	7%	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%

All customers booking online receive a confirmation and a reminder email, both of which contain links to amend or cancel bookings. When a booking is cancelled the place automatically becomes available for someone else to book.

New slots are released on a rolling basis, one day at a time, for a fortnight ahead. This helps to minimise the number of no shows by ensuring bookings are made closer to the intended visit and based on an established need rather than a prospective requirement.

Across the first seven months of the changes, the average percentage of bookings made against slots available is 87%. Excluding no shows, the average attendance at CRC's over the four months is 81% of capacity. Officers will continue to engage with customers using our communication channels to encourage customers who don't intend to use their allocated booking slot, to cancel them on the booking system which has the potential to free up more available slots.

D.3 Recycling and Waste Collected

The table below provides a comparison of the total tonnages of waste collected at each CRC from October 2023 to March 2024, compared to the same period in 2022/23. The total tonnage reduction of 16% compares to a reduction in opening hours of 49%. The reduction in tonnages will contribute to the approved savings to be delivered from the operating changes.

Table 7: Tonnes Collected October 2023 – March 2024

	Blackburn	Broxburn	Linlithgow	Oakbank	Whitburn	TOTAL
Oct22 to Mar23	2,161	1,328	985	3,452	2,204	10,132
Oct23 to Mar24	1,653	701	661	2,495	1,848	7,359
Tonnage change	-508	-627	-324	-957	-356	-2,773
% change	-13%	-31%	-20%	-16%	-9%	-16%

D.4 Enquiries and Complaints

As outlined in table 2, there have been 191,395 successful CRC bookings during October 2023 to April 2024. The overwhelming majority of these are through the online booking system. Contact Service Centre advisors logged a total of 2,094 enquiries by telephone relating to CRC bookings from October to April.

A total of 221 CRC enquiries were raised in CONFIRM from October 2023 to April 2024 in relation to CRC sites, 41 complaints and 180 enquiries. This compares to a total of 191,395 bookings made. These are categorised as follows.

Table 7: CONFIRM Customer Enquiries and Complaints

Common issues	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Complaint reduced operating hours	8	6	5	5	3	6	3	36
Query van/trailer access	7	5	11	3	7	0	4	37
Query missing address/ postcode	6	4	1	4	5	2	3	25
Query access policy	3	4	1	4	5	4	5	26
Query booking confirmation	4	4	3	9	11	1	2	34
Query on materials accepted	2	3	2	3	1	1	2	14
Query to cancel booking	2	3	3	2	0	2	2	14
Vehicle details do not match DVLA database	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	7
Complaint- site closing early	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Complaint- can't get through on phone	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Complaint- abusive member of public	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Query to amend booking	1	0	4	2	1	1	2	11
Complaint- faulty QR code	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Query- order of booking system	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Query- lost items/other	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	9
	38	34	30	35	35	20	29	221

The total represents 0.12% of the total number of bookings made.

D.5 Other Actions

Automated Number Plate Recognition

A project is currently underway to install automated number plate recognition cameras (ANPR) at the CRCs. ANPR cameras would be integrated with the traffic barriers and the booking system to fully automate the entry and exit system to the CRC's. This will provide a number of benefits for both customers and operatives:

- Improved customer service- visitors will not have to wait for an operative to manually check their vehicle registration to match it with a valid booking on arrival.
- Ability to help determine how long a vehicle has been on site, which in turn will help refine the vehicle capacity per time slot.
- Replaces labour intensive check in system currently in place, freeing up operatives for other site management tasks
- Improved safety- ability to support staff and other service users when incidents occur on the sites where CCTV provides vital information and evidence.
- Improved operational efficiency- Remote access to the CCTV on sites allows logistical staff to actively review the container levels on site and dispatch the vehicles to empty containers appropriately.

Review booking system

The operation of the booking system is also kept under review. There have been no service disruptions to the system since it went live. There have been some customer requests for the ability to enhance booking slot visibility across all five sites on the booking webpage. Initial feedback from the software suppliers is that this is likely to lead to slower performance of the booking system. Regular feedback from customers will continue to be gathered and discussed with software developers to determine whether system improvements are feasible.

E. CONCLUSION

On 2 October 2023 CRC opening hours were reduced from 280 hours per week to 144 hours per week, and a 9.0 FTE reduction in staffing at the five sites implemented to make the £336,000 saving required. All five CRCs have been retained.

Across the five sites, 191,395 bookings were made between 02 October and 30 April 2024, from the 219,690 slots that were available. There has been a total of 13,601 no shows during the seven-month period. Officers continue to remind customers of the importance of cancelling their booking if they do not intend to utilise it.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Revision of Operational Practices at Household Waste Recycling Centres – Transforming Your Council – Report by Head of Operational Services to Environment PDSP 30 October 2018 and Council Executive 15 January 2019

Revenue Budget 2023/24 to 2027/28 - report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council 20 February 2023

Revision of Operational Practices at Community Recycling Centres – Report by Head of Operational Services to Environment and Sustainability PDSP 28 March 2023 and Council Executive 25 April 2023

Revision of Operational Practices at Recycling Centres – Report by Head of Operational Services to Environment and Sustainability PDSP 30 January 2024

Community Recycling Centres Performance – Report by Head of Operational Services to Council Executive 12 March 2024

Appendices: None

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