1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider signing up to the Household Recycling Charter and associated Code of Practice.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is invited to note:-

2.1 that, in 2014, the Zero Waste Task Force, consisting of Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, Zero Waste Scotland and the Waste Managers Network, reviewed waste management practices;

2.2 that, following the review referred to at paragraph 2.1 above, objectives have been developed into The Household Recycling Charter and associated Code of Practice (the Charter), attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to this report, approved by COSLA and introduced by Scottish Government in December 2015;

2.3 that, in February 2016, the COSLA spokesperson for Development, Economy and Sustainability and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment issued a joint letter, requesting that local authorities sign up to the Charter;

2.4 that, should the Council agree to sign up to the Charter, the Council would commit to investigating how to adopt systems in the Code of Practice, even if it is not in a position to make immediate changes to collection systems; and

2.5 that, signing up to the Charter would increase the opportunity for the Council to seek external funding support in respect of any significant transitional plan costs, including new waste facilities.

It is recommended:-

2.6 that the Council should sign up to The Charter for Household Recycling and associated Code of Practice.

3. **POLICY ASPECTS**

3.1 Signing up to the Charter to Household Recycling Scotland and associated Code of Practice will contribute to four of the Council’s values:

3.1.1 **promoting sustainability** – to make sure economic, environmental and social factors are balanced.
3.1.2 **working together** – to overcome issues more effectively through partnership working.

3.1.3 **working with communities** – to involve community councils, community groups, voluntary groups and individuals in the process.

3.1.4 **working to provide better services** – to improve the planning and delivery of services.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 Historically disparity in the methods and types of recycling collections exist across Scotland. This is a popular issue in the media and is viewed as a reason for poor participation and performance in recycling in some areas. At a Local Authority delivery level this can impact on the overall cost of disposal of domestic waste and income generated from recyclables.


4.3 A drive for consistency, via the provision of similar recycling services across Scotland, was believed to be vital in establishing high quality and sustainable feedstocks of recyclates, to provide an input resource to drive the development of a circular economy for Scotland.

4.4 The Zero Waste Task Force recommended the development of a charter, in a bid to drive the development of more consistent recycling. With final approval by COSLA, The Household Recycling Charter and accompanying Code of Practice (CoP) was announced on 9 December 2015.

4.5 In February 2016, a joint letter from the COSLA spokesperson for Development, Economy and Sustainability, and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, was issued, asking that local authorities sign up to the charter.

5. **HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CHARTER AND CODE OF PRACTICE**

5.1 The Household Recycling Charter, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, was introduced by Scottish Government in December 2015 and sets out 21 commitments from local government that will achieve the outcomes listed below:-

5.1.1 to improve household waste and recycling services to maximise the capture of, and improve the quality of, resources from the waste stream, recognising the variations in household types and geography to endeavour that services meet the needs of all citizens;

5.1.2 to encourage citizens to participate in recycling and reuse services to ensure that they are fully utilised; and
5.1.3 to operate services so that staff are safe, competent and treated fairly with the skills required to deliver effective and efficient resource management on behalf of communities.

5.2 The Code of Practice (CoP), attached as Appendix 2, contains a more detailed set of outcomes that will deliver the aspirations of the Household Recycling Charter. Additionally the CoP aims, where practicable, to establish common collection systems across Scotland. The six outcomes that the CoP aims to deliver are:-

5.2.1 to achieve high quantities of recycling and minimise non-recyclable waste;

5.2.2 to maximise availability of high-quality materials;

5.2.3 to support cost effective services for local government;

5.2.4 to deliver services that encourage participation from citizens;

5.2.5 to keep citizens, staff and contractors safe; and

5.2.6 to support services that support employment.

5.3 While common collection systems are encouraged, provision for departure from this for Rural and Island properties is made within the Charter and the CoP where considerable logistical challenges are faced. Significantly, no timescales for changes to services are set within the Charter or associated CoP.

6. IMPPLICATIONS OF SIGNING THE CHARTER

6.1 The Charter and CoP set out ambitious changes; these would be challenging, without additional funding, to deliver in Orkney’s remote island areas. The Charter caters for this via a ‘variation’ process allowing local authorities to make the case for why some elements of the Charter and CoP cannot be implemented.

6.2 Such variations would be evidence based submissions, for example a rationale for not providing co-mingled kerbside recycling collections, reducing bin sizes or introducing additional collections like food waste.

6.3 On sign up to the Charter, the approach for implementing the CoP is as follows:-

6.3.1 the authority will be expected to develop a transition plan detailing service changes required in order to follow the principles contained within the Charter and associated CoP;

6.3.2 where there is a funding shortfall, to introduce changes compared to costs and apply to the Scottish Government for support. If the application is rejected, no service changes would result; and

6.3.3 where funding is agreed, develop an implementation plan for service changes in line with the authorities’ requirements with Zero Waste Scotland support.
6.4 Officers are currently developing proposals to improve waste and recycling infrastructure, with potential needs to replace Chinglebraes and further develop services on the mainland and outer islands. The Charter aims are in line with this progressive work, in seeking significant changes to raise performance and opportunities to lower costs.

6.5 Grant funding from Zero Waste Scotland may be available to the Council to assist in future roll out of services to comply with the CoP, provided it signs up to the Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland.

6.6 It is for these reasons in terms of managing any potential risk, but not losing sight of the opportunity to seek wider funding support for the Council’s significant transitional plan cost, including new waste facilities, that the recommended course of action is for the Council to sign up to the Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no negative financial consequences anticipated from signing the Charter; the Council will not be compelled to change its current collection and recycling operations, however by signing the charter there may be an opportunity to secure funding and support for mutually beneficial activities from Zero Waste Scotland that would otherwise not be available.

7.2 At present the integrated waste facility investigation is not a funded project on the capital programme, therefore any funding support available through this Charter has the potential to reduce Council costs, should the project be progressed.

7.3 Zero Waste Scotland has indicated that no ZWS funding will likely be considered for authorities that have not signed the Charter with any resource available likely to be directed towards authorities who have signed the Charter.

8. **LEGAL ASPECTS**

8.1 The Charter and associated Code of Practice are signed up to on a voluntary basis, and would not impose any additional legal obligations on the Council.

9. **CONTACT OFFICERS**

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10. **APPENDICES**

10.1 Appendix 1 – Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland
10.2 Appendix 2 – Code of Practice, Household Recycling in Scotland