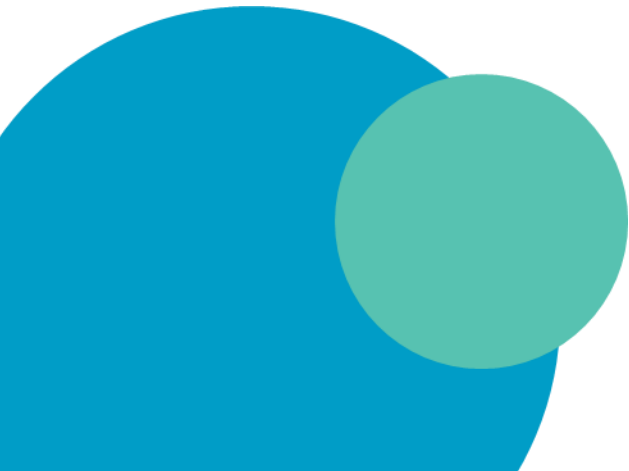


South Ayrshire Council Food Recycling

Iain Martin - Waste Management Strategy Team Leader



Why focus on food waste interventions?



- Problem: Food waste is the largest single element of residual waste collected at the kerbside at over 31% of the total.
- Opportunity: Increase residents' level of engagement with the aim to increase the levels of recycling of household food waste.
- Are there cost effective ways to increase residents' engagement with the food waste collection service?



South Ayrshire Council & Zero Waste Scotland trial approach

- Intervention areas aligned with food waste collection rounds in Ayr.
- Rounds had a high proportion (between 84-96%) of ‘own-door’ properties and similar levels of deprivation.
 - Every household in each intervention area received one intervention.
- An introductory letter was delivered to all households which included information about the trial what intervention they would receive and instructions for requesting a new internal and/or external food waste caddy. To ensure residents could easily request relevant equipment a dedicated automated phone line was provided.

Interventions

- Communications Campaign
 - Free food caddy liners
 - No food waste sticker on residual waste wheeled bin



Project Findings

Yield (kg/hh/yr)



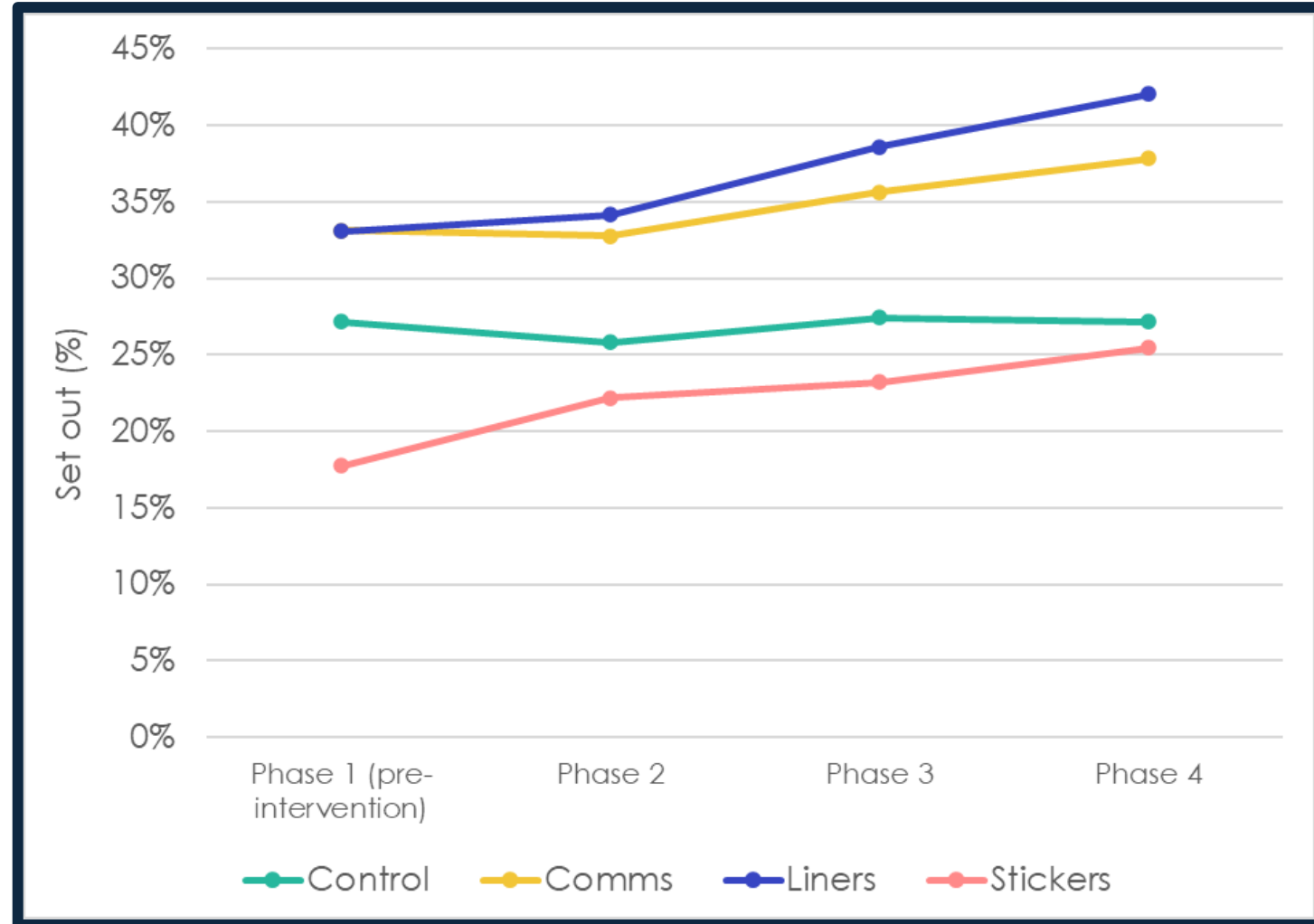
All intervention areas showed an increase in food waste yield.

Intervention area	Pre-trial yield	Average yield phases 2-4	Average yield increase from pre-trial	Percent (%) change from pre-trial
Control	38.7	39.4	0.7	1.6%
Communications	56.6	62.5	5.9	10.4%
Linens	47.7	54.5	6.8	14.4%
Sticker	28.1	39.9	11.8	42.1%

Set out (%)

All intervention areas showed an increase in set out.

- Liners: +9.0%
- Stickers: +7.7%
- Communications: +4.7%



Survey and interview findings



- After the completion of the South Ayrshire trial, a residents' survey, followed by qualitative interviews, was carried out by ZWS.
- The online survey was open to all residents in each intervention area and collected 343 responses.
- The survey was then used to recruit 12 participants from each intervention area for in-depth qualitative interviews (36 interviews in total).

Communications Campaign

- The most well-remembered of the three interventions (89% of respondents).
- But survey results show they were more likely than other areas to report that there had been “no change” in the amount of food waste they generated.
 - Backed up by trial data - had the lowest increase in food waste yield
- However, some residents were receptive to the communications campaign.
 - Of survey respondents who reported a reduction in the amount of food waste they were generating, more people within the communications intervention thought that the intervention was the “main influence” behind their change in behaviour.



Free liners

- Respondents expressed the most positive views of their intervention compared to the other areas, with both new and existing users reporting positive reactions.
- Liners were also remembered by a high proportion of respondents from the intervention area (76% of respondents).
- Free caddy liners seemed to be the most popular intervention overall.
 - Interviewees in other intervention areas questioned why caddy liners were not distributed to them as part of the pilot.



Bin stickers

The most poorly recalled intervention of the three.

- A high proportion of interviewees said that they did not recall the intervention at all, and survey findings show under a third (32%) said that they remembered the stickers.
- However, recall and efficacy don't necessarily match. Despite having the lowest recall, the stickers area showed the largest increase in yield.
- Both survey data and interviews indicate that the stickers seemed to work best for both existing and lapsed users of the recycling service. This is supported by the trial data – yield increases were likely driven by households separating more of their food waste for recycling rather than increased set out.



Additional findings

Interviews revealed that the ability to easily obtain or replace a food waste caddy greatly encouraged residents to recycle food waste. Suggesting it removed a cost barrier for many lapsed or non-users.



Trial Conclusions



What impact did the interventions have?

- **All interventions increased the amount of food waste yield**
- **Food waste captures increased across all the intervention areas, meaning less food was placed in the residual collection**
- **All interventions increased the number of households setting out food waste caddies**
 - **As set out rate increases, so does food waste capture**

Next Steps



Following the positive outcomes and conclusions of the project, it was agreed to expand the approach and target all South Ayrshire households receiving a kerbside collection.

As all three interventions had a positive impact during the trial project, we were keen to use a combination of each intervention to have the greatest impact so funding for the project was key

We managed to secure budget from the money received from EPR Payment which allowed us to plan to use all three interventions across the full authority.

The funding also allowed us to employ two additional Waste Awareness Officers and a dedicated administration assistant to work on the project.

Project Delivery



- To support effective delivery of the project, the Authority has been divided into five zones, with each zone targeted over a specific time frame over a two-year period, beginning in the north of the authority in March 2026 and progressing southwards.
- For Each Zone, an introductory letter along with a recycling leaflet specific to Food Recycling will be delivered before receiving the sticker and free roll of liners. This is designed to limit the amount of customer enquires.
- We have updated the South Ayrshire website to include food reduction and recycling information, along with a dedicated online form and phone line where residents can order internal and external caddies

 recycle for South Ayrshire



Taking charge of the future through food recycling



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Making a Difference Every Day

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AYRSHIRE
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Introductory letter

The introductory letter thanked residents for helping to achieve a recycling rate of 53.3% in 2024. It also highlighted that a significant amount of food waste is still being placed in residual waste, noting that the disposal cost of residual waste is five times higher than the cost of food waste disposal.

To support residents in reducing food waste, links to the Love Food Hate Waste campaign were included, offering practical tips and advice.

In addition, QR codes and a dedicated phone line were provided to make it easier for residents to request food recycling caddies.

As well as QR codes to the My Bins App to encourage as many residents as possible to download the app, the app provides them with their collection Callander and we can also send push notifications via the app regarding the importance of recycling their food waste

Information Leaflet

- The information leaflet outlines what happens to food waste once it has been collected, helping residents understand the recycling process.
- It also clearly explains what materials should and shouldn't be placed in the food caddy to minimise contamination.
- In addition, the leaflet provides links to the website where residents can request free food caddies, along with details of a dedicated food recycling telephone line for further support and enquiries.



Reminder sticker



Free Caddy Liners



Communication campaign



To ensure comprehensive coverage across South Ayrshire, a range of communication methods has been implemented as part of the campaign. These include:

- vehicle livery,
- advertising on the rear and sides of buses,
- local radio and TV adverts (Sky TV),
- targeted social media campaigns.

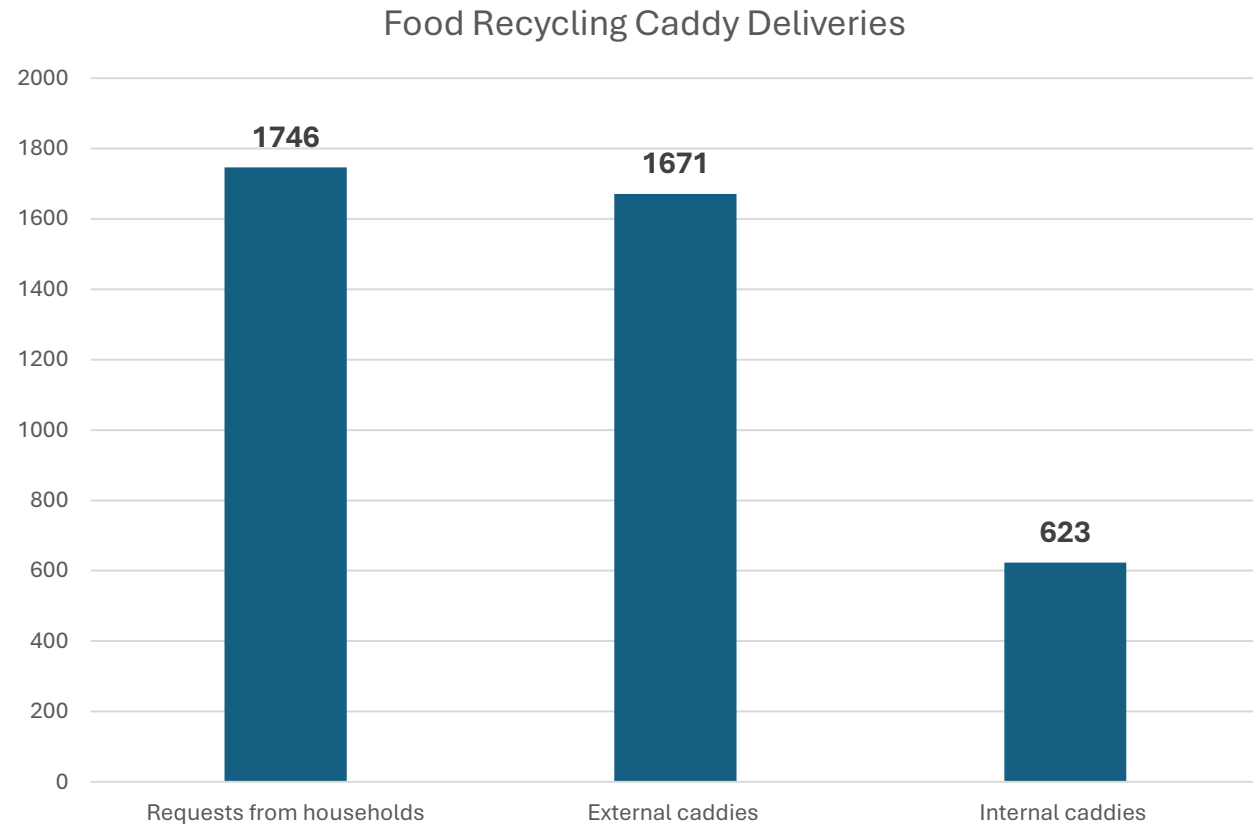
In addition, display banners will be placed in prominent public locations, alongside pull-up banners within Council buildings, to maximise visibility and reinforce key messages.

These measures will be delivered in phases over a two-year period to ensure a coordinated and effective rollout across all zones.

Progress to date

Since the commencement of the project in March 2026, approximately 8,900 households have received an introductory letter, information leaflet, and a roll of liners, with reminder stickers also applied to their residual waste bins.

The chart opposite highlights the quantities of deliveries made since project inception.



Food recycling tonnage

Zone 1 comprises small villages and rural properties located in the north of the county. Collection services in this area are primarily delivered by recycling route FW5.

Prior to the introduction of this project, several properties were excluded from the weekly collection service due to their rural location. However, all properties have now been offered this service, and to date approximately 100 additional households have opted in to receive weekly collections.

Analysis of tonnage data before and after the service introduction indicates an increase in collected material, as shown in the table opposite.



Route	Month	Tonnes
FW5	Feb-26	17.78
FW5	Mar-26	18.22
FW5	Apr-26	19.14

Participation monitoring & food tonnage data



- Participation monitoring will be undertaken in several areas both before and after each intervention to assess changes in household engagement with the food recycling service and measure overall participation levels.
- In addition, the quantity of food waste collected on each route will be monitored throughout the duration of the project, providing valuable data to assess trends, measure impact, and identify areas for further improvement.

Conclusion SO FAR!!!!



- We are only just over month into the project, but the signs are all very positive
- We have received positive feedback from residents especially regarding the free liners
- Residents who have started to use the service had commented that they realise now how much food they are wasting and are taking steps to reduce.
- All South Ayrshire Properties with front doors will have received the Letter, leaflet, sticker on the bin and Liners by May 2027 which will total 54,346.



Thank you for listening
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My Bins App Website

