



APSE Scotland Waste & Recycling

Striving for Excellence Award Winner

**Reusing Mattresses and providing local Social
Benefits**

14 March 2025



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Zero Waste Strategy

- North Ayrshire Council's Zero Waste Strategy was developed back in 2014 to prioritise the waste hierarchy, which focuses on preventing and reducing waste in the first instance, encourages the reuse of items to prevent them becoming waste (such as mattresses)
- Recycling as much waste as possible, prior to utilising energy recovery to treat non-recyclable waste to create renewable energy in the form of heat and renewable electricity.
- The Council's recycling contracts are all specifically geared to deliver maximum reuse and recycling performance where possible.
- The Strategy supports local circular economy opportunities such as bike reuse schemes, real nappies, bulky furniture redistribution, mattress reuse and compost giveaways.

The Project

- The mattress project was part of a new innovative initiative to promote opportunities for reuse, funded through a successful bid to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund (£36,583.35). This element was added to an existing contractual partnership arrangement with Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company (CFRC) which is in its 11th year.
- RIF supported the procurement of specialised industrial cleaning equipment for CFRC to be able to sanitise mattresses to enable their reuse.
- To ensure a sufficient supply of mattresses' flow through the sanitisation process, CFRC collect mattresses from containers at HWRCs (funded through RIF) and also operate an on-demand collection service from customers in North Ayrshire. The collection services are supported by funding from the waste disposal budget.

The Project

- Worked in collaboration with Circular Communities Scotland to use Scotland Excel Reuse Framework to deliver & stimulate demand to align with our collection & supply approach.
- The re loved goods are procured through the framework by NACs - Customer Services (People and ICT), who are responsible for the overall administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), which has been developed to support the most vulnerable within our communities.
- This new initiative also included extending reuse collections to the Island of Arran for the first time since the partnership commenced.
- The sale of mattresses provides approx £45k income per annum to our partner CFRC.

Mattress Reuse Partnership

Mattresses are diverted from Bulky Uplifts
and Reuse Hubs at Recycling Centres



Training and
employment
opportunities

North Ayrshire Council



Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company



210 tonnes diverted / 17 jobs supported

Vulnerable
Residents
Supported



Reloved
Household
Items



Low cost
affordable
household
items



Training and
employment
opportunities

Outcomes, Challenges and Opportunities

- Difficult to deal with waste – mattresses are diverted from disposal in compaction at HWRC or RCVs to be cleaned and reloaded.
- Just under 1,000 mattresses are projected to be collected in 2024/2025 for sanitisation, processing, and reuse or recycling.
- During this period, 96% of the mattresses are projected to be sold for reuse, with the remaining 4% being recycled by Kingsize, a partner organisation.
- The project supports training and employability opportunities to 17 adults in North Ayrshire.
- The initiative supports around 800 families annually through the provision of affordable mattresses and beds.

Outcomes, Challenges and Opportunities

- Facilitated the efficient use of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget to support more vulnerable families. Offers better value than EFW or WUDS disposal for the Waste Service.
- The collaboration contributes over 180 tonnes of reusable furniture and 30 tonnes of mattresses which are diverted from final disposal annually.
- The mattress project should divert over 30 tonnes of waste from disposal; and 80,000 kg carbon will be saved during the full year.
- A national approach could divert over 1,000 tonnes of waste mattresses from disposal annually, supporting over 40,000 families to receive low or no cost mattresses and over 2,800,000 kg carbon could be saved each year.

Circular Economy Benefits for LA's

- Delivering better social, environmental and financial outcomes for the wider community.
- Growing our economy by stimulating local investment and increasing employment and regenerating local areas.
- Helping local people obtain skills for learning, life and work.
- A collaborative approach through an innovative partnership working with public, private and 3rd Sector partners.
- Creating opportunities for income generation and cost avoidance in a time of unprecedented economic challenge.
- Avoiding public health concerns by protecting and enhancing the local environment through sustainability and maximising circular resource reuse and recovery.

Future Discussions advice

Finally, Zero Waste Scotland have published guidance.

Reuse Guide 2024 - Making reuse happen at HWRCs available on Zero Waste Scotland website

APSE Scotland Striving for Excellence Awards 2025 - Fleet, Waste & Grounds Seminar 20/23 May - Aviemore