



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES AND PROSPERITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

15th NOVEMBER 2018

CURRENT POSITION AND IMPROVING RECYCLING REPORT

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND STREETCARE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Scrutiny on the current position on recycling, our current problem materials and what we need to do to improve the recycling rate to achieve future targets.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the content of the report; and
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any further matters contained in the report

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council, like all other Councils in Wales, has statutory targets to meet on recycling. Failure to meet these targets will result in significant fines for every percentage not achieved.
- 3.2 The Council has made various changes over the past few years in order improve the recycling rate and these changes have been fundamental in the Council's recycling rate improving year on year to the extent that we achieved over 64% in 2016/17.
- 3.3 In order to achieve the next significant target set at 70% by 2024/2025, the Council needs to implement some further changes as the Council has seen the recycling percentage plateau in 2017/18 despite continued awareness

campaigns on both food and dry recycling and no change to our collection system.

- 3.4 In 2016/17 the Council disposed of 35,636 tonnes of residual waste which meant that 36% of waste produced in the County Borough went to either landfill or Energy from Waste.
- 3.5 A WRAP compositional analysis in 2015, highlighted that over 70% of that residual waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture just 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target
- 3.6 The Council at present, provides a weekly twin streamed/co-mingled recycling service, food waste service, green waste collection service, an opt in AHP (Nappy) collection service and a fortnightly residual waste collection service via either a bag system (former Rhondda) or a bin system (former Cynon & Taf).
- 3.7 This service is available to all residents and through various consultation exercises over recent years, it is clear our residents like the system and hold it in high regard due to its simplicity.
- 3.8 Despite this, there are still residents who do not take part in the scheme at all or on a very limited basis and due to this we still are disposing of over 35,000t in 2016/17 through either landfill or Energy from Waste.
- 3.9 A WRAP composition analysis in 2015 highlighted that over 70% of that waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target.
- 3.10 A number of Welsh Councils have already or are looking to reduce the residual waste collection frequency to three or four weekly collections, as there is clear evidence that by reducing residual collection frequency the recycling percentage increases. There is also clear evidence that by reducing the number of bags a resident can put out or by introducing a 'no side waste' policy recycling performance also increases.
- 3.11 Cabinet have always been clear that they will not reduce the frequency of residual collection less than fortnightly for two main reasons
- it penalises residents who are recycling fully; and
 - it is a clear reduction in service provision.
- 3.12 Due to the above, we recently changed the residual collection levels within the County Borough to:-
- Rhondda – was reduced from **4 bag** allowance per fortnight to **2 bags**;

- Cynon & Taf - a '**no side waste**' policy was brought in regardless of bin size, with the provision that the bin lid has to be closed.

- 3.13 In Cynon and Taf, there are mainly two bin sizes, that is 240 litre or 120 litre bin. In lieu of removing all 240l bins and replacing with new 120l bins, it was agreed that the Council continued with its policy of when a bin is requested, to only provide a 120l bin. This policy has been in place for 30 plus months and we anticipate that well over 65% of bins in use are now the 120l bins and in time the amount of 240l will gradually reduce further. The Council continues to provide support to households who for various reasons may struggle with these proposals eg households with ash waste and large families.
- 3.14 The reason for this approach is rather than a change in collection frequency which affects all residents, the change recommended ensured that there will be no adverse affect on our many residents who fully engage in the service, as the change was aimed at engaging with residents who either took no part in the recycling scheme or took part on a limited basis.
- 3.15 Over the Christmas period, there is a relaxation of the restriction, whereby in the Rhondda there is a **4 bag limit** whilst in Cynon and Taf, any resident with a 120l bin could have **one bag of side waste** whilst there will be no change to the policy for any resident with a 240l bin for the Christmas period.
- 3.16 In past years, the Council has had no powers to tackle residents not prepared to engage in the recycling scheme but in conjunction with Welsh Government and all Welsh Councils, we are now in a position under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and Clean Neighbourhoods Act (CNA) to tackle this issue.
- 3.17 The EPA Sec.46 allows a Waste Authority to specify what may/may not be placed in any specified container, by way of a notice. It is recommended that by way of a notice we inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag.
- 3.18 If the Notice is breached, and following a warning, then a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £100 can be issued under Sec.47ZA of the EPA as inserted in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act.
- 3.19 The Council has since its inception always stated that enforcement is a last resort, and it is the same in this case, with the team initially raising awareness with residents on this matter and only issuing a FPN if and when all other avenues have been exhausted
- 3.20 The Council used to collect green waste on a **weekly** basis all the year round, even in the winter months when the growing season has ended. In order to improve the efficiency of the service, that between 1st November and the 1st March the service reverts to a **fortnightly** service and revert back to a **weekly** service thereafter, whilst there has been no real term financial saving, it has reduced wasted travelling time.

- 3.21 In order to raise awareness with our residents, it is important to continue to run an awareness campaign on recycling issues, we are currently working with WG on a national behavioural change campaign and a localised awareness campaign, both totally funded by WG
- 3.22 Despite all our efforts, we still have problematic areas not taking part and problematic materials which we are finding difficult to find outlets, these are in the main some plastics, and this is mainly down to China closing its doors and the market place being flooded with this material, we have been fortunate that as we have been loyal they have stayed loyal to us.
- 3.23 The other real problematic material is wood, and the wood issue has hit our recycling figure by nearly 4% so the improvement due to the side waste has had minimal impact due to the wood issue
- 3.24 The council as stated run a twin stream/co-mingled collection service with all material going through the Material Recycling Facility at Bryn Pica, we are in the process of procuring a brand new state of the art new plant which will improve both efficiency and productivity, this will result in improved recycling output and also allows us to partner with neighbouring councils and process their material.
- 3.25 Due to these problematic materials, we are still looking to develop the Eco Park at Bryn Pica, although access the funding is proving challenging. Planning permission is being sort in December and we continue to liaise with WG and other potential partners about future funding.
- 3.26 We have engaged Capita/Redstart as our design consultant, and have undertaken both an Ecological and Geotechnical Survey on the area and have further ground investigation works to be undertaken in January, once to have removed the line of trees on the land.
- 3.27 We have engaged a Energy Consultant through WG funding to work with us in identifying how we capture and utilise the green energy from the AD Plant and ensure there is enough energy on the site for all users

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 No consultation is required.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment scoping exercise has been undertaken that indicates that there would be no such implications.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 There will be no significant budget implications and any funding needed can come from within existing budgets

- 6.2 Funding to support the awareness campaign is available from within existing budgets.
- 6.3 If the Council does not improve its recycling rates by 6% from the current recycling rate of 64% to 70% by 2025, Welsh Government will levy significant penalties on the Council. These penalties are significant, and if no further progress is made in terms of improving the recycling rates, the cost to the Council could be in excess of £xm.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005
Environmental Protection Act 1990

8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular *“Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work”*:

- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment will be clean and attractive...*
- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces will continue to be valued by residents...*

- 8.2 These proposals are also consistent with the Well-being Goals under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- *A healthier Wales – a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities – attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.*

9. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Council has to meet its statutory recycling targets to avoid financial penalties. The fines are significant, and without some change to the current service provision, it could struggle to achieve the recycling targets. Therefore doing nothing is not really an option and as in previous changes the recommendations outlined in this report look to allow the Council to achieve those targets whilst not adversely affecting the residents already fully engaged with the service.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Comm