



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

**CLIMATE CHANGE, FRONTLINE SERVICES
& PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

29th September 2022

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF
PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND
FRONTLINE SERVICES.**

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Agenda Item No:

**REPORT ON GREEN WASTE
COLLECTIONS**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on green waste collections following the implementation of sack collections and the 'RCT's Got A Brand New Bag' campaign. Please note all figures quoted are as of 7th September 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report:
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any further matters.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This Council as have all Councils in Wales has statutory targets set by Welsh Government. This year the target is again 64%, failure to meet these targets will result in the Council receiving a substantial fine. The fine is based on performance

with every tonne we miss the target by, will result in a minimum fine of £200 per tonne. Welsh Government has set all Councils a recycling target of 70% by 2024/2025.

- 3.2 However looking forward and to support the Council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral Council by 2030, Waste has been set a recycling target of 80% by 2024/25. As well as launching various campaigns and awareness/education initiatives to increase quality participation, Waste will also commit to reducing single-use plastic bags and carbon footprint.
- 3.3 In November 2021, Waste launched the new re-usable sack that replaced the standard recycling bag for the disposal of green waste (both domestic and trade). It was estimated that the Council will save 3 million recycling bags by switching to a re-usable sack. Waste also required residents and trade waste customers to register their sacks to ensure our collection rounds are as efficient as possible and our carbon footprint is kept to a minimum.

4. UPDATE /ISSUES ENCOUNTERED/ CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 We have 49,122 households, 93 businesses and 4 allotments who have registered with 92% just registering two sacks (first two sacks are free with additional sacks at £3 each). This has equated to approximately 42% of RCT properties who have registered for green sacks with high numbers remaining in the Taff (in total 33% of Rhondda residents, 42% of Cynon residents and 57% of Taff residents). It is also noted that 89% of registrations were conducted online with 11% being either via the call centre or One4All.
- 4.2 The request for sacks currently stands around 400 a week and Waste are delivering within the 20-day performance indicator. There have been a few occasions whereby residents state sacks have not been delivered/taken but other sacks have been delivered with benefit of the doubt. We have also received 161 cases where sacks have been reported as stolen and again we have replaced free of charge with benefit of the doubt. Lost and stolen sacks do not appear to be a concern considering it was one of the main complaints when the campaign was launched. To date 105,555 sacks have been delivered. If these sacks were put out for collection on a weekly basis, this would be the equivalent of over 12.5 million single use plastic bags.

- 4.3 The following shows a comparison of the summer months of 2019, 2020, 2021 (bags) and 2022 (sacks) in terms of tonnage collected.

Green waste collected in tonnes

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Week 21	170.94	225.54	205.06	155.62
Week 22	209.24	146.52	86.23	117.8
Week 23	266.44	254.08	162.54	199.87
Week 24	191.78	217.86	146.2	179.29
Week 25	172.18	218.24	238.6	182.82
Week 26	187.96	198.8	351.42	223.66
Week 27	170.05	189.04	286.08	180.78
Week 28	139.14	225.62	248	220.08
Week 29	279.4	231.76	211.38	155.82
Week 30	283.54	252.82	176.49	155.82
Week 31	269.84	220.6	185.32	162.36
Week 32	218.16	386.38	218.13	213.12
Week 33	166.1	312.64	216.64	118.94
Week 34	234.69	218.78	184.74	130.88
Week 35	209.05	275.12	180.24	157.08
Week 36	196.34	317.47	148.86	186.03
Week 37	187.55	250	181.04	111.2
Week 38	319.13	257.9	265.3	155.61

- 4.4 It has been decided to include 2019 tonnages as 2020 and 2021 may not be regarded as reliable comparisons due to lockdowns and restrictions. The 2022 tonnages are generally lower and the apparent missing tonnages are not reported to be at the HWRC's. It has therefore been discussed where these missing tonnages are. Possible suggestions may either be that more residents have removed organic areas from their gardens or green waste is being put into wheelie bins. Some crews have not been able to move wheelie bins due to them being too heavy with green waste. There are concerns that some residents are placing green waste in wheelie bins to avoid purchasing any additional sacks (£3 each). There have also been no reported increases in fly tipping of green waste since the changes.
- 4.5 Since the beginning of sack collections, there have been over 5,000 reported issues. The main issues reported are:

Sack not out	67%
Contaminated with turf and soil	14%
Recycling bag in sack	7%
Contaminated with other	7%
Non RCT sack	5%

- 4.6 This table shows that the majority of residents are not putting out green waste on a weekly basis. This is not surprising but for the first time, Waste has statistics on how often residents put out green waste. In time, this may assist Waste to become even more efficient. It also helps us target our communications to reduce contamination e.g turf and soil.
- 4.7 There were some early concerns that some of our vehicles are not suitable for sack collections, and this will be addressed as and when vehicles are due for renewal. In the meantime, crews have been trained in 2-person handling and some vehicles have had temporary modifications. Waste is also in discussions with Dennis Eagle to remove some of the rave rails (lowering the height needed to lift contents into the rear of the collection vehicle).
- 4.8 The Streetcare Communications Group have continued to meet to review the continued roll out of the sack collections. We are due to fall back to fortnightly winter collections on 31st October with the normal break at Christmas where we only collect real Christmas trees. We are also hoping to launch our new collection calendars by Christmas to avoid repeat complaints regarding confusion over green collection dates over this period.
- 4.9 Waste have early concluded that the campaign was successful in terms of most residents are now aware of the collection changes, either by normal communications, seeing the sacks in their area or receiving an awareness sticker on their recycling bag. Waste will continue with communications throughout the Autumn with focus on the switch to fortnightly collections and the break for Christmas/Real Christmas Trees.
- 4.10 Waste will also be more vigilant regarding reporting green waste in wheelie bins and plan to include this within our digital recording systems. This will then be passed to Enforcement who will initially have awareness discussions with these residents.
- 4.11 Waste will also need to look out the depot split for collections as Taff registrations continue to be very top heavy as well as the majority of housing development planned over the next few years, in this area. This has caused late

collections this summer not helped by the HGV driver shortages the sector has been experiencing.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Equality or Diversity implications aligned to this report

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no Consultation implications aligned to this report

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are Financial implications in failing to achieve the statutory targets.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no Legal Implications aligned to this report

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

9.1 The recycling processes we adopted align itself to the Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities.

9.2 This clearly is linked with the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, helping to create a resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 RCT Council are proud of its recycling services and how it continues to improve and support carbon neutral initiatives.