



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 11 September 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P Downing
M H Jones
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
P K Jones

Councillor(s)

L James
J W Jones

Officer(s):

Chris Howell
Matthew Perkins

Head of Waste Management and Parks
Group Leader Waste Management

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): I E Mann and D W W Thomas

Co-opted Member(s):

Other Attendees:

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

- None

2 Notes

- Approved

3 Public Questions

- None

4 Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring 2017/18

- Welsh Government has a national strategy for waste and interim targets until they place a 70% recycling target
- Swansea Council exceeded its target for last year but it was a slight dip on the year before due to the reclassification of wood recycling

- Swansea Council are around 10th in the league table for Wales which is really positive due to some restrictions e.g. commercial waste, students and high density housing which limits space for recycling
- Swansea Council don't benefit from incinerated tonnage like some other Councils keeping their scoring position artificially low
- Next year (2019/2020) recycling targets will increase from 58% to 64%. If these targets are not met, there is potential for Welsh Government to issue fines
- Priority areas were identified in the Commissioning Review and are being worked on
- There is still substantial amounts of recyclable waste going into black bags and this needs to be tackled at the kerbside
- The service are encouraging waste minimisation e.g. food and plastics
- The 3 back limit has impacted positively on the kerbside
- Changing to recycling only centres has really improved recycling – Swansea Council are leading on recycling centres in Wales with other authorities coming to visit to see good practice examples
- There is a regional food waste project with Bridgend
- Rubble recycling facilities contribute to the recycling figure and restricts commercial waste at recycling sites
- The service must continue a strong communication strategy with the public
- Must also encourage any residents who don't currently recycle to start recycling
- Some review in Welsh Government over what is considered as 'recycling' currently and some definitions may change in the future
- Financial pressures include paying for disposal of certain products, cost of which varies greatly and is always changing in line with the market and the grants from Welsh Government which will be decreasing going forward
- **Question 1 – Plastics are an increasing concern. Not being able to recycle soft plastics is problematic and increasing black bag numbers. Can you comment?**
- Plastic increases are a concern as 'flimsy' plastics are not currently practically recyclable due to sorting difficulties and costs – processors say that processing flimsy plastics is problematic and not cost effective for companies to process
- There is a new group called Plastic Free Swansea who have links with Swansea Environment Forum and Welsh Government is working with processors in this area
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- **Question 2 – How is Garngoch Recycling Centre performing? Timescales and details on Tir John closure? Cost of disposing of food waste?**
- Feedback on the trial of the reintroduction of black bags at Garngoch. Broadly the reintroduction has gone smoothly although there are low numbers using it, queuing has increased due to the loss of parking, and satisfaction of the site has dropped significantly.
- The aim is to landfill Tir John landfill site until 2022 when it will be closed. The site will then be sealed and landscaped by 2024
- Food waste costs around £20 per tonne to dispose of

- **Question 3 – Can you clarify the position on wood recycling reclassification?**
- High quality wood can be recycled for animal bedding and the lower quality used for worktops etc. The Wood Processor was recycling 100% of our wood, but this has changed
- NRW and Welsh Government believe the wood to be too low quality to be all recycled, now require the poorest quality wood to be removed, so it is now at 70 – 80% recycling, contributing less to overall recycling figures
- **Question 4 – Can you clarify the position on nappies, is there kerbside collection?**
- Nappies are now recyclable and can be taken to recycling centres, are collected if separately if required through the Exemption Policy, however there is general no kerbside collection as this is not affordable
- Plastic can be extracted from them
- Some nurseries are trialling having theirs collected and having a specific nappy bin for this purpose. Parents using the nurseries are encouraged to bring their nappies in and use the specific nappy bin too
- **Question 5 – Why is there a restriction on the number of garden waste bags?**
- The reason garden waste is limited to 10 bags is a time issue – the team have to complete the round and emptying all of the garden waste bags can be time consuming
- **Question 6 – what is the plan after Tir John Landfill site closes?**
- After Tir John landfill closes long term solutions are needed, we are working with WG and neighbouring Councils to see if a South West hub the best way forward
- A consultant is currently looking at options ranging from a new plant to using existing ones – being mindful that residual waste is reducing as a result of increased recycling
- **Question 7 – What is the policy on business recycling and disposal of waste? Do you feel this has led to fly tipping? What is the education strategy?**
- There is a statutory duty to provide commercial waste service when requested but this is chargeable
- Businesses which recycle can dispose of rubbish more cheaply and tradespeople should go over the weighbridge to ensure they pay for the disposal of waste properly
- Figures do not show that this had led to an increase in fly tipping
- Waste in standard litter bins is not sorted for recycling but litter pickers do sort litter for recycling
- Education needs to be widespread and social media used more
- The inclusion of Councillors when disseminating information would be very helpful so they can pass it on to their wards
- **Question 8 – what are you doing to increase the base income figure to relieve the financial pressure?**
- Income is always being reviewed in order to generate more, however the cost of disposing of and selling waste is subject to volatile and constantly changing market prices

- **Question 9 – some commercial food waste is perfectly usable, what do we do to ensure it isn't wasted e.g. from supermarkets?**
- Supermarkets have national contracts to deal with that kind of food waste
- **Question 10 – Would it be wise to remove dog bins and replace with litter bins given that dog waste can now go in these?**
- It isn't in the plans but this will likely happen over time
- **Question 11 – Could the Council look at skip collection on a commercial basis?**
- Swansea Council currently operate a commercial skip service for caravan parks and farms. Potential to look at winter skip collection for items which would contribute to recycling figures
- There is a balance between gaining income and adversely affect recycling performance which needs to be achieved for this to be viable

5 Work Plan 2017/18

- Add end of year item with Ben Smith

The meeting ended at 11.10 am

Chair