



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management

Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel – Tuesday 11th September 2018

Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2017/18

Purpose:	To monitor and challenge performance and action plan for meeting statutory targets.
Content:	This report explains the statutory recycling and landfill targets, performance to date and actions to meet statutory targets.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the report
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1. Background

- 1.1 The Waste (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Welsh Governments National Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste' sets out a 70% recycling and composting target for 2025. It also sets out targets to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.
- 1.2 Council adopted a Waste Strategy in 2012 which sets out a range of principles and actions to achieve the statutory targets set out in Welsh Governments plans. In addition the service was subject to a comprehensive 'Commissioning Review' in 2016 which looked at how the service can move forward in the most cost effective manner whilst meeting the statutory targets.

- 1.3 In 2017/18 the Council exceeded the statutory recycling target of 58% by achieving 63.56%; this was a slight drop of 0.14% on the previous year. The drop resulted from changes to the classification in wood recycling. The magnitude of this drop was counteracted by continuing to expand recycling systems offered at HWRCs and improving the percentage of available recycling collected at the kerbside.
- 1.4 Whilst this performance exceeded the statutory target it meant that the Council provisionally sits 10th in a league table of performance for the whole of Wales. As in previous years, it should be noted that most LAs in Wales are sending their residual waste for incineration, which means that they are also able to claim recycling tonnage for the residue ash produced. This usually increases the recycling rate by around 6%, so as we are incinerating very little at this time, our ranking is artificially low. Once we fill Tir John and then send our residual waste to Energy from Waste, our ranking will improve into the second or first quartile, although we are unlikely to be able to compete with the rural LAs such as Monmouth, Ceredigion, and Pembroke etc. as we have a number of factors which adversely affect our recycling rate. These include:
- A large commercial sector being a city authority
 - A large student population
 - A large number of flats and other high density housing with less room to recycle.
- 1.5 Based on provisional figures, the Council currently sits in 21st position within Wales with regards the PI relating to the percentage of residual waste it sends to landfill. This again is solely due to the fact that we are one of the few LAs who still run a landfill site, with most LAs sending waste for incineration. The PI is not an indication of “good” performance, more a result of disposal strategy. This has been recognised by Welsh Government and this indicator is no longer being measured.
- 1.6 We need to fill Tir John with material to achieve the planned profile prior to closure and landscaping. Diverting all our residual waste from landfill to Energy from Waste would not only leave the landfill site short of material (which would subsequently need to be bought in), it would also cost approx. £750K per year. We are currently engaged with other Councils and Welsh Government to procure a long term regional solution for the disposal/treatment of our residual waste.
- 1.7 The current statutory recycling and composting target which rose to 58% in 2015/16 will remain at this level until 2019/20. In addition to these targets the Authority also has a target to meet in relation to the amount of biodegradable waste it can send to landfill. Should either of their targets not be achieved the Authority could face fines of £200 for every tonne that the target is missed, which represents £250k for every 1% short of the target.

- 1.8 Based on our current recycling and composting rate for the first half of this year the authority is likely to achieve a full year figure of around 63% for 2018/19. However, the markets for wood and plastic recycling remain volatile so there may be a reduction in the current prediction.
- 1.9 The statutory recycling target increases to 64% in 2019/20. The priority improvement areas to enable the Council to meet the increased targets will include the implementation of the recommendations of the Commissioning Review together with increased focus on:
- Getting more recycling out of the black bags. Whilst this has successfully been achieved at the HWRCs we need to target black bags at the kerbside.
 - Improving recycling participation.
 - Segregating nappies and adult hygiene products out of the residual waste stream.
 - Continuing to investigate new and improved recycling technologies
 - Waste minimisation
 - Increasing the recycling rates of waste collected from commercial premises.
 - Energy from waste

2 How did we meet our targets last year?

- 2.1 Restrictions on residual waste continue to play a major role. The three bag limit positively impacts recycling participation at the kerbside; converting three HWRCs to recyclable only and the policy of no recyclable items in the non-recyclable skip significantly improved recycling performance at HWRCs.
- 2.2 The Council continues to look at options to get more recycling out of non-recyclable waste. Last year we managed to source a re-processor which could recycle nappies. Whilst it's not financially viable to roll out nappy collections at the kerbside we have added nappy recycling stations at the HWRCs, and are separately collecting exemptions due to nappies and from some nurseries.
- 2.3 An on-going advertising and communications plan is in place together with a range of initiatives to encourage more participation in the extensive kerbside collection services that are provided. This will have medium and long term benefits by changing attitudes towards recycling for those who do not yet participate.
- 2.4 The Council entered into a long-term regional food waste treatment contract.
- 2.5 Commercial waste customers have increased their level of recycling, particularly food waste, and work to increase this further is on-going.

- 2.6 Rubble collection facilities continue to make a contribution to our overall recycling figures.
- 2.7 The permit scheme for vans continues to contribute to restricting the levels of Commercial waste being presented at the sites.
- 2.8 The Reuse Shop continues to generate more throughput and provides essential household items for low income families.

3 What's next?

- 3.1 The Commissioning review approved by Council in July 2016 contained recommendations to enable the council to meet the statutory targets. The majority of the recommendations have now been implemented.
- 3.2 In order to meet the statutory recycling target increase to 64% in 2019/20, initiatives which will be explored/implemented in 2018/19 and beyond include:
 - The continued implementation of a comprehensive communications campaign and enforcement strategy to increase recycling participation and seeking behavioural change and increased community engagement.
 - Continue work on leading the procurement of a regional energy from waste solution.
 - Investigate options for getting residents to divert more recyclables from their black bags into their recycling bags to improve both recycling performance and the budget position.
 - Continue to review the commercial waste service offer/pricing structure so it is appropriate for all customers.
- 3.3 The service will continue to monitor recycling performance and levels of residual waste. The service will continue to review new recycling technologies and markets to ensure it maximises recycling performance within available budgets.
- 3.4 Welsh Government are reviewing the definition of what is considered recycling. This may negatively impact the recycling performance for each Welsh LA.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no additional legal implications to those already set out in the report.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Without continual review and change the service would require an increase in annual budget. The service has a circa £12.2m annual budget comprising of £19.5m costs and £7.3m income. £5.0m income is generated through commercial contracts or the sale of certain recyclables; £1.3m of the income currently comes via grants from Welsh Government. The £19.5m costs principally comprise of staff, vehicles and waste/recyclable treatment/disposal costs.
- 5.2 Welsh Government have provided notice that the level of grant will be reducing year on year thereby reducing overall income. The grant will reduce by a further circa £300K for 19/20. The level of income from the sale of certain recyclables fluctuates on a monthly basis as they are commodities traded on a global basis. The £19.2m in costs are liable to rise each year due to inflation etc.

Background papers: Waste Management Strategy, Waste Management Commissioning Review

Appendices: None