



To:
Councillor Cyril Anderson
Cabinet Member for Community
Services

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Overview & Scrutiny

Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

01792 636292

e-Mail
e-Bost:

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

BY EMAIL

Date
Dyddiad:

4 January 2022

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Community Services. The letter concerns the meeting held on 6 December 2022 and the Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring 2021/22 and Recycling of Business Waste Briefing.

Dear Councillor Anderson,

On the 6 December, the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met to discuss the Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring 2021/22 and Recycling of Business Waste Briefing. The Panel are grateful to you and Matthew Perkins, Group Leader for Waste for attending to discuss and answer questions.

We were informed that the Welsh Government minimum recycling target is 64% this year and every year up to 2024/25, when it increases to 70%. Your officer told us that last year Swansea Council achieved 65.07% which is an increase of 0.58% on the previous year. We were also made aware of the new Waste Strategy which sets out the Council's plan for achieving the Welsh Government statutory targets.

We were pleased to hear that from February the Council has moved away from landfill towards energy to waste which contributed to a jump in recycling performance from 65% to over 70% subject to validation. This will help towards a move up the recycling performance table of the 22 Councils in Wales. Prior to this, Swansea have remained relatively mid table in regards to recycling. The officer explained it is difficult to move up the table due to the make-up of student population, high rise buildings and the amount of commercial waste in Swansea. We were also informed that Swansea Council will meet all of the Welsh Government recycling targets for this year.

We asked for further information about the energy to waste contracts and were told that after some initial local sifting, a quarter of the waste goes to Scandinavia and the three quarters goes to an energy to waste plant in Bedford. We expressed disappointment that this could not be carried out more locally but understand that

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SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

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these decisions were ultimately due to which energy to waste plants had space. We look forward to space becoming more available in a closer plant in the future so that a move can be considered.

We asked further about commercial waste and whether commercial waste recycled through a private contractor counts towards our target but you informed us that it doesn't. It would be interesting to know how we compare to private providers especially as we would want to encourage commercial enterprises to use the Council services so that this recycling can be counted towards our targets. We also asked whether cardboard and plastic recycling rates have changed and your officer informed that cardboard did double during the pandemic but has gone back down to pre-pandemic levels and plastic levels remain static.

We are concerned that there is only one location for the recycling of wood in Swansea now and this has been contentious. The officer explained it is essentially an issue of space as wood is now required to be sorted into hazardous and non-hazardous and not all sites have spaces 2 bins.

The officer also informed us of the imminent legislation from Welsh Government around mandatory recycling for all non-domestic premises, deposit return schemes and extended producer responsibility. The impact of these on the Council is unknown as yet.

Your Response

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but in this instance, we require no formal written response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk