

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**  
**Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel**  
**November 2017**

**RECYCLING AND LANDFILL**

<b>Purpose</b>	To monitor and challenge performance and action plan for meeting statutory targets.
<b>Content</b>	This report explains the statutory recycling and landfill targets, performance to date and actions to meet statutory targets.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the report.
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet member for Environmental Services
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**1. Background**

- 1.1 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.

In 2016/17 the Authority exceeded the statutory target of 58% by achieving 63.70 %, an increase of 4.17% on the previous year. Whilst this performance exceeded the statutory target it meant that the authority sat 12<sup>th</sup> in a league table of performance for the whole of Wales. It should be noted however 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 complete 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.

1.3 The authority also currently sits in 22<sup>nd</sup> position within Wales with regards to 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. 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, it would also cost approx. £750K per year for the next 2 years. Work to procure a long term solution for the disposal/treatment of our residual waste is currently on-going.

1.4 The current statutory recycling and composting target which rose to 58% in 2015/16 will remain at this level until 2019/20 when it will rise to 64%. 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.

1.5 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 61-62% for 2017/18. This overall result is being impacted by the tightening of guidelines regarding the recycling of wood.

1.6 The priority improvement areas to enable the Authority to try and meet the increasing statutory targets will include the implementation of the recommendations of the Commissioning Review together with increased focus on:-

- Waste Minimisation
- Increasing Participation
- Energy from Waste
- Getting more recycling out of the black bags.
- Segregating nappies and adult hygiene products out of the residual waste stream.
- Increasing the recycling rates of waste collected from commercial premises.

## **2. How did we meet and exceed our targets last year?**

- 2.1 The benefits gained from the introduction of the three bag limit continued to play a major role in assisting the Authority meet the current target.
- 2.2 The introduction of restrictions on the deposit of residual waste at HWRCs has also started to impact positively on our recycling performance.  
Initiatives introduced include:
  - Converting 3 of the sites - Tir John, Garngoch and Penlan to Recycling Centres only through the removal of the residual skips.
  - Only allowing non-recyclable waste to be deposited in residual skips at Llansamlet HWRC and Clyne in line with the aims of the Environment (Wales) Act.
- 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 Commercial waste customers have increased their level of recycling and work to increase this further is on-going.
- 2.5 Rubble collection facilities continue to make a contribution of our overall recycling figures.
- 2.6 The permit scheme for vans continues to contribute to restricting the levels of Commercial waste being presented at the sites.
- 2.7 The Reuse Shop has been expanded with the aid of Welsh Government funding and provides essential household items for low income families.
- 2.8 It should be noted that the authority has recently picked up 2 National Awards for its innovative improvements to the Household Waste Recycling Centres and the expansion of our Re-use Shop, which have ensured that we continue to exceed WG targets and be the best performing city LA in Wales.

### **3. What's next?**

The Commissioning review approved by Council in July 2016 contained recommendations' to enable the Authority to meet the statutory targets many of which have now been implemented.

Initiatives that are being implemented during 2017/18 include:

- The trailing of a nappy collection service at 2 of the HWRCs and a drive to segregate nappies and adult hygiene products at the kerbside via the '3 bag' exemption scheme.
- The implementation of a comprehensive communications campaign and enforcement strategy to support the above actions in seeking behavioural change and increase community engagement.
- Completion of the implementation of reusable pink bags across the Authority for the collection of plastics at the kerbside.

Work is on-going to measure the impact the measures will have on recycling rates and the levels of residual waste. Initial indications are that the changes could see this year's recycling performance at around 61-62%, and next year's performance at around 62-64%, despite the pressure surrounding the recycling of wood.

Work to procure a long term treatment facility for food waste has now been completed and a contract for an initial term of 15years has been entered in to. Work to procure an 'Energy from Waste' solution for our residual waste is on-going. This when implemented will increase our recycling performance, improve of PI position in relation to the percentage of residual waste being landfilled.and most importantly reduce our reliance on landfill.

Once the changes detailed above have been fully implemented and evaluated decisions can then be made in relation to other possible measures that can be taken to ensure targets are met.

Background Papers: Waste Management Strategy, Waste Management Commissioning Review

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