



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management

Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel – Monday 21 October 2019

Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2018/19

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
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet member for Environment & Infrastructure Management
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Chris Howell Matthew Perkins Tel: 01792 796886 E-mail: matthew.perkins@swansea.gov.uk

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 2018/19 the Council exceeded the statutory recycling target of 58% by achieving 62.88%; this was a slight drop of 0.68% on the previous year. The drop resulted from changes to the classification in wood recycling which were in place for the full year this time. The magnitude

of this drop was partially counteracted by the commencement of the Keep it Out campaign reducing recyclable material being sent to landfill.

- 1.4 This performance far exceeded the statutory target and 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 potentially into the 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 The Council continues to send the highest percentage of residual waste to landfill, as opposed to Energy from Waste, in Wales. 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 has been replaced by a measure of the residual waste produced per head of population.
- 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 Last year’s statutory recycling and composting target of 58% has risen to 64% this year. 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 targets 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 quarter of this year the authority is likely to achieve a full year figure of around

64 - 65% for 2019/20. This increase is due to the full year impact of the Keep it Out campaign.

1.9 The priority improvement areas to enable the Council to meet the statutory target will include:

- Continuing to promote and enforce the Keep it Out campaign.
- Segregating nappies and adult hygiene products out of the residual waste stream.
- Continuing to promote recycling.
- 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 introduction of the Keep it Out Campaign replicated the HWRC prohibition of recyclables from residual waste containers, but at the kerbside, and resulted in a significant reduction in residual waste tonnages.

2.3 The Council continues to look at options to get more recycling out of non-recyclable waste. We are working with Welsh Government to secure a national Absorbent Hygiene Products recycling facility and, if successful, roll out AHP separate collections.

2.4 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.

2.5 Commercial waste customers have increased their level of recycling, particularly food waste, and work to increase this further is on-going. The Welsh Government is currently consulting on the introduction of compulsory separate collection of recyclables for commercial waste, which could have a significant impact on the marketplace.

2.6 The Reuse Shop continues to generate more throughput and provides essential household items for low income families.

2.7 A clean up of our household plastics collections has increased the value of the material, and made its disposal far more robust,

particularly important for disposal within the UK. This helps to protect our recycling performance.

- 2.8 Changing markets have also forced us to de-bag and quality check our paper and card collections, which comes at a high cost, but is also essential to make its disposal far more robust, and to protect our recycling performance.

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 include:

- Continue work on leading the procurement of a regional energy from waste solution.
- Continue to improve the quality of materials from recycling bags to protect both recycling performance and the budget position.
- Continue to review the commercial waste service offer/pricing structure so it is appropriate for all customers.
- Continue to implement the Keep it Out campaign at communal collection point (e.g. flats) where there appears to be a higher percentage of recyclable items in the black bag.

- 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 £12.3m annual budget comprising of £19.0m costs and £6.7m income. £5.4m 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 £19.0m costs principally comprise of staff, vehicles and waste/recyclable treatment/disposal costs.
- 5.2 Welsh Government did not reduce the level of grant 19/20, although the service was subjected to an effective reduction in budget of circa £185K due to an increase in landfill tax, and only a partial covering of the annual salary uplift. 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 £19.0m in costs are liable to rise each year due to inflation etc.

Background papers: Waste Management Commissioning Review

Appendices: None