



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management

Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel 9 November 2020

Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

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 Enhancement & 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 2019/20, the Council exceeded the increased statutory recycling target of 64% by achieving 64.94%; this was an increase of 2.1% on the previous year. The increase was mainly due to the implementation

of the Keep it Out campaign reducing recyclable material being sent to landfill.

- 1.4 This performance meant that the Council provisionally sits 13th 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 due to start a stand-alone procurement process to obtain a long-term solution for the disposal/treatment of our residual waste having exhausted all options on a regional solution with WG in the last 12 months.
- 1.7 In addition to the recycling target, 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 two quarters of this year the authority is hopeful of meeting the 64% target this year despite the Coronavirus lockdown, which forced the closure of all our Recycling Centres, separate nappy collections, and our bulky waste collection service for 2 months. The Re-use Shop also had to

close and currently remains closed. This situation, affecting all Councils in Wales, is fully understood by Welsh Government, who have advised that they will take the pandemic into account.

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

- Refreshing the promotion and enforcement of the Keep it Out campaign.
- Restarting the recycling of separately collected nappies, and expanding the service to a full separate nappy collection service.
- Continuing to promote recycling.
- Waste minimisation
- Increasing the recycling rates of waste collected from commercial premises.
- Re-opening the Re-use Shop
- Procuring an energy from waste provider from January 2022 onwards

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 and supplemented by the introduction of the Keep it Out Campaign, resulted in a significant reduction in residual waste tonnages.

2.2 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.

2.3 An on-going national advertising and communications plan is in place, and together with a range of initiatives to encourage more participation in the extensive kerbside collection services that are provided, seeks to change attitude towards recycling for those who do not yet participate.

2.4 Commercial waste was been significantly affected by the lockdown at the end of the year, and is still at a level well below the pre-covid position.

2.5 Changing markets 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. There is also a need to keep moisture content down, which can prove problematic when loose cardboard is put out with green bags during wet weather.

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 continue recovery from the lockdown, and get back to the increased statutory recycling target of to 64%, initiatives which will be explored include:
- Introduce a full separate nappy collection service and work with Welsh Government in developing a cost effective processing plant
 - Continue work on the procurement of a long-term energy from waste solution.
 - Refresh the Keep it Out campaign to further drive recyclable materials out of the black bags.
 - 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 The service has a circa £12.4m annual budget comprising of £19.8m costs and £7.4m income. £5.4m income is generated through commercial contracts or the sale of certain recyclables; £1.2m of the income currently comes via grants from Welsh Government. The £19.8m costs principally comprise of staff, vehicles and waste/recyclable treatment/disposal costs.

Background papers: Waste Management Commissioning Review

Appendices: None