



Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Services

Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel 6 December 2022

Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

Purpose	To monitor and challenge performance and action plan for meeting statutory targets.
Content	This report explains the statutory recycling target, performance to date and actions to meet statutory target.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the report
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Member for Community Services
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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 new Waste Strategy in 2022 which sets out a range of principles and actions to achieve the statutory targets set out in Welsh Governments plans by 2024/25. In addition the Waste Strategy outlined upcoming issues and potential future options which may need to be considered.
- 1.3 In 2021/22 the Council exceeded the increased statutory recycling target of 64% by achieving 65.07%; this was an increase of 0.58% on the previous year. This increase overcame the adverse impact of the

Coronavirus lockdowns, and was supported by the successful delivery of the new Waste Strategy.

- 1.4 This performance meant that the Council sits 16th 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. Swansea's Energy from Waste contract commenced in February 2022, so whilst there is 2 months' worth of residue ash in the 2021/22 recycling figures, the full impact will be seen for the first time in the 2022/23 recycling figures. 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 annual residual household waste produced per person in the Swansea Council area was 154kg, compared with a Wales average of 178Kg, putting the Council joint 5th in Wales.
- 1.6 Should the Authority miss the Welsh Government Statutory Recycling Target 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.

2 Progress on the Waste Strategy 2022-25

- 2.1 Our The following actions from the Service Improvement Action plan have been successful implemented:
- Thermal Treatment Contract
 - Push on Keep it Out Campaign
 - Recovery of Recyclables
 - Green Waste from Meadows
 - Paper Line Reject Reductions
- 2.2 Our current un-validated recycling and composting rate for the first two quarters of this year has increased to over 70% due to the implementation of the above measures, moving Swansea up to the top quartile in Wales. It is still early in the new Waste Strategy and things can change. There may be some downgrading of our performance through the validation process, and mechanical, operational, and/or contractual breakdowns could hamper our performance at any time, although we are still in a very good position.
- 2.3 We can always improve, and potential areas to enable the Council to increase its recycling and reuse will include:

- Reviewing our commercial waste operations in line with any new legislative requirements.
 - Increasing reuse of products.
 - Continuing to promote recycling through the Keep Recyclables Out campaign.
 - Waste minimisation
 - Exploring options for the collection and/or receipt of new waste streams for recycling
 - A further reduction in material sorting rejects
- 2.4 The Service will continue to monitor recycling performance and levels of residual waste and review new recycling technologies and markets to ensure it maximises recycling performance within available budgets.

3 Welsh Government Policy Future Direction

- 3.1 Following the publication of Welsh Government's Towards Zero Waste in 2019, and Beyond Recycling in 2021, WG has clear aspirations for increased recycling and a move towards a circular economy.
- 3.2 WG state "*To maintain our trajectory towards zero waste by 2050, we will commit to setting out interim targets on a trajectory towards zero waste.*" WG are highly likely to set increased recycling targets post 2025.
- 3.3 WG are also considering the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), where purchasers of products included in the scheme, such as beverage cans or bottles, will have to pay a deposit up front and then claim it back when they return the empty container. This could have a negative impact on Council's recycling rates and incomes from recyclable materials depending upon which products are included and how the scheme is administered.
- 3.4 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is another scheme WG are considering. This operates under the principle of the producer of packaging which eventually becomes waste, pays for the cost of dealing with that waste.
- 3.5 All of the above uncertainties mean that it is difficult to set a long term waste collection strategy until some of the issues become clearer.

4.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.3. Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language. An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required. This report relates only to the process of preparing the three strategies. The IIA screening form is attached as **Appendix A**.

4.4 This report provides an update only, and there are no significant risks associated with this project, the project has been scored as 'low risk' and the outcomes are all deemed positive, therefore a full IIA is not deemed necessary

5 Legal Implications

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

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The service has a circa £14.1M annual budget comprising of £21.8M costs and £7.7M income generated primarily through commercial

contracts or the sale of certain recyclables. £1.1M of the income currently comes via grants from Welsh Government. The £21.8M costs principally comprise of staff, vehicles and waste/recyclable treatment/disposal costs.

Background papers: None

Appendices: IIA Screening 21-22 Recycling Scrutiny