PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3RD OCTOBER 2023

BULKY WASTE REVIEW

Purpose:

To present the scope of review of the bulky waste service for preliminary consideration and comment, with the aim of maximising; the reuse, repair and recycling potential of bulky waste items, promoting sustainability, reducing the service's carbon footprint and to advance the Council's Circular Economy project 'Eto' and other similar community-based initiatives.

THE SCRUTINY IS ASKED TO:-

Consider the report and provide preliminary observations on the potential options for the future Bulky Waste Collections Service, as a form of early engagement.

Reasons

New and sustainable approaches to waste management are necessary to meet Welsh Government reuse and recycling targets. Increasing the reuse and recycling of our bulky waste is essential to meet the next statutory target of 70% in 2024/ 2025 and to be a part of becoming a zero-waste nation by 2050.

This report outlines the review process and service improvement options for the current bulky waste service.

To deliver an efficient and effective service provision, improving the reuse and recycling performance Carmarthenshire and providing residents domestic items for re-use, ensuring items are in use for longer, reducing carbon footprint and supporting accessibility to low-cost reused and repaired goods.
The report offers the opportunity for the Committee to examine the proposed review criteria and options available to the authority moving forward.

MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-
Cllr. Edward Thomas - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

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Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire County Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3RD OCTOBER 2023

BULKY WASTE REVIEW

Background

The Authority provides statutory waste and recycling collection and management services to approximately 92,000 households. Our bulky household waste collection service managed circa 650 tonnes in 2021/22 with the collection of almost 15,000 items.

At present the service is achieving a diversion from landfill rate of approximately 60%, however this is through recycling alone, with no direct reuse of items collected from residents' properties.

All collections are made using in house resources and there are no formal material reuse partners in place. Although, residents are signposted via the council website to local repair options or select community organisations/ charities that will collect re-usable items free of charge.

Having achieved a recycling rate of 65.25% in 2022/23 and in the context of the upcoming 70% target for 2024/25 (and potentially higher statutory targets in the future), we have already via our Waste Strategy 2021-2025 document, committed to implementing changes to the kerbside recycling service. Hitting higher future targets will require Welsh local authorities to look at the performance of the ancillary waste and recycling services, including bulky waste, which is part of a wider focus on supporting and implementing a Circular Economy.

In 2020/ 2021 the Authority successfully secured funding through the Welsh Government's capital funding programme, to implement projects relevant to the future management of bulky waste:

- Reuse Village, Nantycaws Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) – utilising repurposed containers to deliver a repair and retail outlet for bikes, paint, repair, small electricals, garden tools and furniture, reclaimed wood, alongside an Educational Centre.

- Repair Workshop and Re-Use Shop, Llanelli – located within the Llanelli town centre, with the objective of re-using and reselling items normally destined for disposal of at HWRCs.

- Paint Re-Use Facility, Nantycaws HWRC – development of a paint blending and re-packaging facility to focus on bulking up, blending and treating the contents of part filled paint tins in order to sell at the above retail outlets.

Existing Service Provision

The current bulky waste collection service operates from three depots at Cillefwr, Carmarthen, Glanamman and Trostre , Llanelli. A crew (driver + loader) operate from each depot using 3.5 tonne or 7.5 tonne cage tipper vehicles with a tail lift.

Collections are scheduled over a standard working week (7.5 hours per day, 37 hours per week) with collections taking place Monday - Friday (except on bank holidays). There is a non-refundable charge of £25 for up to three items selected from a prescribed list.
The service can be accessed online, through the HWB or over the phone. Residents can opt to receive a text reminder of when their collection is due, along with an email reminder.

The bulky waste collection resources also deliver additional services and activities:

- Collection of material deposited from small WEEE bring banks (15 banks and c.15t in 2021/22).
- A chargeable bulky waste disposal service for non-household waste, primarily used by Council buildings and schools with few private sector clients (yielding c.72t in 2021/22).
- Weekly or on request deliveries to principal Hwbs and a small selection of private outlets of recycling items e.g. blue bags, food waste bins.

All materials collected by the bulky waste service are then managed at our Household Waste Recycling Centres operated by CWM Environmental. Items are sorted for treatment or disposal and at present the condition of material means they are not suitable for re-use. Material routes for the collected bulky waste streams comprise of:

- Residual (general) waste: Predominantly Energy from Waste with some landfill.
- Recycling and small WEEE: Managed through the same routes as HWRC materials.

Table 1.1 Bulky waste profile by items and (estimated) weight.

Item category	Number of items	% items	Estimated weight of items (t)	% weight
Furniture	10,434	70%	394	69%
Carpet & flooring	379	3%	10	2%
DIY	314	2%	7	1%
Leisure	273	2%	4	1%
WEEE	3,332	22%	146	26%
Other	242	2%	8	1%
Total	**14,974**	**100%**	**568**	**100%**

*The weights of the items were estimated using adjusted average item weight data from the Reuse Network.

Below shows a breakdown of the composition of the (predominant) bulky waste categories residents use the service for.

Figure 1.1 Composition of bulky furniture waste (%wt.)
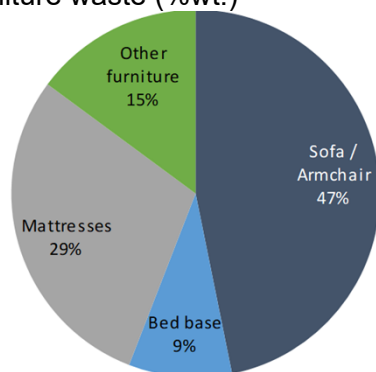
Operationally;

- Trostre depot services the Llanelli post code area in the South of the County,
- Glanamman depot covers the East to Northeast and
- Cillefwr depot services, Carmarthen town and to the West and North boundaries of the county.

The current collection timetable model divides the three depot areas into five collection days, with selected post code areas being serviced Monday- Friday. Slots are booked up quicker in urban locations, resulting in the six-week slot period being filled routinely in these areas. Table 1.2 below shows the slot numbers and take up of the bulky waste services per depot area.

Table 1.2 Operational delivery

Depot	Areas served	Approx. number of slots p.a.	Number of slots used 2021/22	Approx. utilisation (slots)	Items collected 2021/22	Bulky household waste tonnage	Bulky waste recycling rate
Cillefwr SA32 3LZ	Llanelli and South	2,200	1,831	83%	4,659	172	69%
Glanamman SA18 1LQ	East and North East	2,300	1,745	76%	4,441	165	44%
Trostre SA14 9RA	Carmarthen West and North West	2,600	2,308	89%	5,874	231	53%
Totals		**7,100**	**5884**	**83%**	**14,974**	**568**	**55%**

The bulky waste service is near capacity with the remaining 17% of the slots used for; recycling item deliveries, commercial bulk waste and WEEE bank collections from bring site locations.

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The Bulky Waste service recycling performance is below –

		2021/2022	% Recycled	Contribution to overall recycling rate
Kerbside Collections	Bulky Waste Recycled	339t	51.16%	0.42%
	Bulky Waste Landfill	323t	48.84%	
	Total	662t		

The 2021/22 service cost profile was

Collection Cost	Material treatment	Income	Net Service Cost
£269k	£32k	£168k	£133k

The average cost of collection per service user was estimated to be c.£46 (or £18 per item). At present the service cost per recycling 1% contribution to our overall recycling performance is over £316k per year.

Considerations

Local Market

The management, and in particular reuse, of bulky items rarely happens via one management route. Many items never enter the local authority system. As they are sold locally or online (via platforms such as eBay, Facebook Marketplace and local Buy & Sell networks, car boot sales etc.) or donated to local charities. Many local authorities have entered formal partnerships or contracts with reuse organisations to divert items for local benefit. Understanding the local network of stakeholders with potential to maximise reuse is an important part of setting an overall strategy for managing bulky items / waste. We have made positive progress in this area because of our Circular Economy ambitions. However, this has not yet resulted in potential future operating relationships being formalised, other than that in place via CWM Environmental.

We have undertaken a scoping exercise of circular businesses within Carmarthenshire and have identified local organisations that manage bulky household waste for reuse. The Authority provides links to these organisations through its website for "good quality furniture".

Donation stations are provided at Carmarthenshire's HWRCs for the public to separate (potentially) reusable items prior to depositing items for recycling or disposal. This has the benefit of reducing the Authority's collection operating costs and generating a supply of items for repair and sale in the new reuse shops / village.

In terms of repair options in the county, several businesses and organisations are identified through a Council study in 2021/2022 and via the Repair Directory, Wales. This exercise has evidenced a reasonable level of capacity in the wider market for repairs of IT equipment and white goods, but less so for furniture.

<u>Resource Rationalisation.</u>

Depot rationalisation as part of the kerbside sort collections blueprint for 2025 could potentially centralise the recycling and waste collections fleet. Presenting an opportunity to redesign the bulky waste collection service to look at; redefining collections and incorporating zonal working.

Reviewing the type of vehicle deployed for bulky waste collection can influence collection productivities with larger vehicles able to collect and carry more items before needing to tip.

In-cab technology: integrated in-cab and back-office technology would help to improve collection productivities by providing real-time information that will make crews more efficient and effective. For example, integrated in-cab and back-office technology would allow for crews to update orders on the ground, for example, where additional items are set out for collection.

Entering properties: At present all of our collections take place from the kerbside, this impacts the quality of collected material as it can be exposed to inclement weather. However, this will have an impact crew collection productivity. Contrary this action will significantly improve the ability to reuse items and also provide a better standard of service to the customer.

<u>Charges and concessions;</u>

Charging levels across the Welsh authorities varies, though standard charging generally sits in the range £20 - £25 for 3 – 5 items (consistent with Carmarthenshire's current charging policy) with additional items charged per unit.

Cost modelling can be used to confirm the current and potential future operating cost profiles for the service. From this derive target reuse and recycling levels, from which an assessment of future pricing strategies can be set. This might include concessionary (or reduced) charges for those in varying social circumstances. A joint approach with other departments where subsidised bulky waste collections may be undertaken to minimise fly tipping of bulky waste items in hot spot areas affecting the local environmental quality of an area.

<u>Delivery partners / structure;</u>

The direction of travel for increasing the circularity of goods through reuse both at HWRCs and as direct reuse service provision is through partnerships. Multiple examples of such practice already exist in Wales, England and Scotland, many of which involve public, private and third sector partners.

Best practice examples

The following summaries capture the outputs of the good practice research by WRAP Cymru on behalf of the Authority, by theme along with commentary on the challenges the Council face (based on the service as it operates now) to implement the identified good practice.

Maximising reuse and recycling

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

North Ayrshire Council subcontracts Cunninghame Furniture to collect items for re-use. As part of a wider Housing Association Cunninghame is able to maximise re-use by adopting innovative approaches such as mattress cleaning. Service statictics:
- 751t bulky waste collected by the Council
- 161t collected by reuse partner (155t re-used)
- Overall reuse rate of 17%

The 'online donation form' used by Cunninghame Furniture Recycling might be used as a guide to additional questions and information that might be captured (by CCC) at the point of ordering to identify items suitable for re-use (versus recycling / disposal): https://www.cfrcltd.org.uk/donation-form/

In Cheshire West and Chester all bulky items are collected by CLIC undersub-contract with the Teckal company (Cheshire West Recycling). An overall diversion rate of 55% is achieved where 50% of items are recycled, 5% are re-used

Monmouthsire County Council re-tendered their bulky waste management contract in 2022. This embeds formal re-use and recycling targets in the contract:
- Year 1: 64%
- Year 2: 64%
- Year 3: 70%

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

There is no single locally identifiable re-use partner with the skills and capacity needed to provide a service across the whole county

Future uncertainty regarding the impact of restrictions on furniture (sofas) containing POPs being sent for re-use, recycling or landfill. These could push down re-use and recycling rates for all LA bulky waste services

Lack of an effective triage system where the re-use potential of an item is identified through the booking system, with revised storage, collection (including home entry) and transport process (enclosed vehicles) adopted accordingly

Designing a service that is future-proofed against the unknown future requirements that come with the proposed application of Extended Producer Responsibility to bulky items such as mattresses, furniture and carpets

Procurement and contract structure;

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Current contracts:
- Conwy and Crest (long standing SLAs (approximately 13 years), for the provision of a bulky waste, textile, small WEEE and a mobile HWRC reuse service
- Pembrokeshire and Frame (long standing SLA) the provision of a bulky waste collection contract with secondary sorting of collected items into material streams
- Monmouthshire and Homemakers Community Recycling (in contract since 2012) ; for the provision of a collection and reuse of household items service
- Oldham and Bulky Bobs (live/awarded); provision of a bulky waste collection and community support service helping vulnerable residents to establish a home in the community
- Shropshire/Veolia/Reviive; A subcontract for the provision of bulky waste service by Veolia (27 year PFI) to Reviive
- North Ayrshire and Cunninghame Furniture Reuse; a contract to deliver a furniture reuse and repair service (excludes non reusable bulky waste)
- Cheshire West and Cheshire/Cheshire West Recycling/Changing Lives in Cheshire; a sub-contract for the provision of an 'all-in' bulky item collection service

Pending / out to tender:
- Monmouthshire – out to tender for a 5+2 years contract, including the following award criteria: Collection of Bulky Waste (30), *to be achieved within 1 week of resident payment;* Reuse of suitable Items (20); Processing of non-reusable Items (20); Well-being of Future Generations and Circular Economy (30); Price (60)
- Conwy – preparing a 5 year bulky waste collection contract
- Pembrokeshire - preparing a 9 year bulky waste collections contract (quality criteria to include social aims)

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

If choosing to outsource the collections, CCC will need to be able to guarantee the delivery organisation can provide an equal level of service to all parts of the county, The challenge of servicing properties in outlying rural areas may require consideration of supporting activities, such as mobile HWRC type arrangements

Future-proofing the service (including any associated contracts) against upcoming policy changes, e.g. the need to allow for small WEEE and textiles from non-domestic properties to be added to the household bulky waste service

Delivery Partners/ Structures;

✓ GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

All examples of identified good practice involved some element of collaborative working with re-use partners. Examples of such arrangements include:

- Direct contract / Service Level Agreement between Third Sector reuse organisations and local authorities:
  - Conwy
  - Pembrokeshire
  - Monmouthshire
  - Oldham
  - Liverpool

- Sub-contracts to third sector reuse organisations by private waste management companies or Teckals
  - Shropshire (Veolia, via PFI)
  - Cheshire West and Cheshire (Cheshire West Recycling (recently formed Teckal))

Most successful examples of LA partnerships with re-use organisations are based on years of collaborative working and joint investment in the service. In the case of North Ayrshire (Cunninghame) and Oldham (Bulky Bobs) the re-use partners are affiliated with local Housing Associations, providing demand for furniture via other contracts, financial stability and access to supporting infrastructure (IT and maintenance teams)

Section 2 of the report identifies those items most commonly collected via the household bulky waste service. In seeking a potential re-use partner CCC should be loooking for expertise relevant to the largest waste streams. By way of example, many re-use organisations have invested in mattress cleaning and refurbishment equipment in recent years, recognising the high numbers of these collected as bulky waste.

✗ CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

Financial sustainability of potential re-use partners in Carmarthenshire, which tend to be dependent on grant funding for the ongoing delivery of certain activities

No sole organisation with the full range of capabilities and ability to service all parts of the County

Lack of a registered 'AATF' in the Carmarthenshire area

No obvious Housing Association with a re-use arm that could provide a service that is akin to Cunninghame Housing (North Ayrshire) or Bulky Bobs (Oldham)

Interface risks associated with a partial outsourcing of the collections. Any savings may be negated by additional management time and the need to allow for spare capacity

Vehicles and technology;

✓ GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

A fleet of low-loading 3.5 tonne box vehicles (with supporting transit vans) are considered best practice for the collection of bulky / re-usable items
- Low loading vehicles eliminate the need for a tail lift; increasing the payload by approximately ¼ tonne
- Smaller vans (such as transits) are typically deployed for for use in restricted access areas

Examples of mobile HWRC and 'Library of Things' services are starting to emerge. · Examples of the former operate in
- Conwy (https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Recycling-and-Waste/Recycling-banks-and-household-recycling-centres/Mobile-Recycling-Centre.aspx)
- North Yorkshire (https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/mobile-household-waste-recycling-centres); and are proposed in
- Birmingham (https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/birmingham-to-roll-out-mobile-hwrcs/).

An example of the latter, where residents in rural communities are able to access a mobile item loans service, operates in Devon (https://www.shareshed.org.uk/).

Limited examples of good practice adoption of IT / in-cab systems were identified. A lone example is found at Cheshire West and Chester/Cheshire West Recycling where access to the Bartec in-cab system is provided to CLiC (Changing Lives in Cheshire), who undertake the bulky items via sub-contract

✗ CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

Planning for vehicle changes that incorporate corporate commitments to carbon reduction, e.g. electrification of vehicle fleets

Allocating jobs such that vehicle volume, time and mileage travelled are all optimised

Designing the service so that the cost implications of 'one-off' bulky waste lifts from rural locations are mitigated. This may justify consideration of variable charges based on location, though such proposals are rarely favoured politically

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Entering Properties;

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Reuse organisations (that collect household items for reuse) **do enter** properties for collections and typically adopt the following protocols for managing risk:
- Hold appropriate levels of public liability insurance cover
- Property route/access risk assessments
- All collection staff are DBS checked
- Damage waivers required to be signed by residents (which could be managed digitally)

Ideally, the order booking process should capture sufficient information about where the items are located in the property, the route to entry / exit and any steps or other obstacles along the route of egress. It is important to have clear protocols applying to items or appliances that may be fitted or plumbed in.

Entering properties for the collection of bulky waste is uncommon
- No 'live' examples could be found of local authorities that enter properties for the collection of bulky waste items. However, evidence was found that at some point in time Wandsworth Council in London collected from inside of properties (with an associated cost of £89)
- Only one of the partner organisations interviewed enter properties for bulky waste collections; doing so by request only and requiring a signed damage waiver from the householder

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

Allowing for the additional time incurred by entering properties and removing items. Having an in-cab system that enables job start / completion times would help generate average job time data that could be used for future planning purposes

Handling protocols to maintain the integrity of items removed from within properties

Staff training and monitoring

Next steps

To work out the best bulky waste service solution that meets the requirements of residents in households without the means or ability to take bulky items to the recycling centre the following options in table 1.3 will be explored in full.

Table 1.3 Bulky waste service options.

Scenario	Scenario description	Detail
0	The baseline	Representation of how service was delivered in 2021/22.
1	Depot rationalisation	Representation of how service may be delivered in 2024/2025 from a central location in the County. Includes 'standard' practice level of reuse associated with improved facilities and practices from depot rationalisation but largely based on existing item assessment and sorting processes.
2	Depot rationalisation with a review of resource allocation	Maximum productivity levels allow for up to 3 appointments per hour of productive time on average.
3	Depot rationalisation with partial outsourcing	Engagement with local partners to collect specific bulky waste item types (e.g. furniture, WEEE, mattresses) for reuse or recycling.
4	All bulky waste collections outsourced	Engagement with a single partner to undertake collections of all bulky waste items.

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Modelling undertaken by WRAP Cymru will be considered to formulate a way forward along with a qualitive analysis to recommend a way forward to bulky waste collections for Carmarthenshire. Considerations to service costs, rationalisation of vehicles, routes and charging mechanisms in addition to the overarching objective of increasing reuse potential of bulky items ahead of recycling and disposal options is paramount.

Examples of the best practice and similar models on a local level will be explored and potential for partnership working with CWM Environmental to resource feed stocks into the 'Eto' circular economy project, in turn enhancing sustainability, increasing availability for low cost items to be available for residents to access via our repair and reuse project and sold at the 'Eto' shops, working towards the well-being objectives within the Corporate strategy and Cabinet Vision Statement 2022-2027.

Collaboration with other organisations will also be explored to ensuring a common goal of providing an accessible, affordable, and efficient service for residents, that leads to a higher reuse yield in collection items increasing the lifespan of such items, helping residents via their community work which the Authority may not currently access via the waste management service.

A new way forward for collections will also deliver wider benefits such as improving environmental impact of fly tipping incidences by an improved and more efficient service.

Conclusion

The current bulky waste service needs review and remodelling to deliver a service that maximises the overall reuse of materials and supports our objectives of working towards our recycling and re-use statutory targets set by Welsh Government, the delivery of the WG strategy Beyond Recycling and the wider de-carbonisation of our Council services.
This report provides the high-level considerations and options to be considered and a report on a proposed way forward will follow to ensure we can deliver a bulky waste service that will meet social, environmental and economic goals and maximise material being retained in the local economy for longer.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?	No

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Daniel W John   Head of Environmental Infrastructure

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	**NONE**	**YES**	**NONE**	**NONE**	**YES**	**NONE**

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities
The proposals to reevaluate the bulky waste service and the overall outcome will mean a change in the 'Bulky Waste Service' section of the Waste Management Policy document 2022.

3.Finance
Financial implications will arise from the remodelling of the service, where rationalisation of the service may create financial savings. Albeit considerations to charging mechanism for bulky item collection charged to residents, especially if concessions are incorporated, will pose additional costs as collection and disposal costs could increase.
The changes however should be met by the current budget allocation for the service provision and prove no additional cost to the service. A more accurate reflection of costs will be included in the cabinet paper pending the overall solution decision.

5. Risk Management Issues

The current Welsh Government statutory target is 64% recycling, increasing to 70% recycling by 2025, and possibly 80% by 2030, with the aim for Wales to be a zero waste nation by 2050. If the Authority fails to meet the statutory targets, it could face large financial penalties. This risk of recycling performance failure is identified as part of the corporate risk along with mitigating measures.

7. Staffing Implications
There is potential for staffing resource variation in duties from the current resource provision depending on the appropriate scenario selected as the final future service option.
Trade Unions will be actively involved as we develop the bulky waste service remodelling, and any changes will be discussed and conveyed in a timely manner.

All Human Resource policies will be followed if necessary, pending the outcome.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED	YES

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE

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