

# PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2023

## WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

### Purpose:

To provide a summary of the interim waste service change roll out that was implemented on 23 January 2023.

To present an overview of the future strategy, actions and considerations required to achieve blueprint kerbside rollout.

### THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO: -

1. To note the progress made during the interim phase of the Waste Strategy January 2023.
2. To consider the report and provide observations for the proposed course of action outlined in this report for the next phase of the waste strategy.

### Reason:-

This report provides and update on the waste strategy and the interim service change implementation and the outcome of those changes. Setting out an overview of the overarching plan and actions that will be required to deliver blueprint kerbside sort collection methodology.

### CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

**Cllr. Edward Thomas- Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE**

**Introduction**

The Carmarthenshire Waste Strategy 2021 – 2025 was approved by Cabinet in October 2021. This strategy outlines a comprehensive programme of works to deliver service transformational change to achieve 70% recycling by 2025, providing a base for further improvements to achieve zero waste by 2050 and working towards reducing the carbon impact of the service in line with our future carbon reduction ambitions. This strategy provided a two phased approach to achieving blueprint kerbside collection methodology by 2025, with the interim phase successfully rolled out in January 2023.

In February 2019 members unanimously resolved to declare a climate emergency and committed to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. The interim phase has commenced our journey in achieving this ambition, with the introduction of our first three ULEV 27t refuse collection vehicles into our front-line fleet, and with further financial commitment from Welsh Government, the Council has the opportunity to further develop and maximise its ULEV fleet capacity during the second phase of the strategy.

**Interim Waste Service Change Update**

Carmarthenshire County Council currently provides waste services to approximately 91,000 households and since the introduction of the interim waste service change on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 the delivery is now through a:

- Weekly dry recycling [blue bags] collection
- Three weekly collections of up to three [black] bags of Non-recyclable material
- Introduction of a glass collection service to 95% of properties in Carmarthenshire for glass bottles and jars to be collected from kerbside every three weeks,
- with food waste collection continuing to be collected weekly.

To facilitate this transition, the service acquired an additional 23 vehicles in total. This procurement exercise encompassed not only standard diesel refuse collection vehicles but also featured ten customised glass collection vehicles and three electric refuse collection vehicles, aligning with our broader sustainability objectives. These newly acquired vehicles are all stationed at our new established interim depot located at Heol Stanllyd in Cross Hands, and their usage is for residual and glass collections only. Meanwhile, the vehicles stationed at our three original depots have been dedicated to handling the weekly collections of dry recycling materials and food waste.

This configuration will remain in effect until the complete implementation of the blueprint methodology, at which point, the dry recycling collection vehicles will be replaced by new ones, while the recently purchased residual collection fleet will remain operational.

Whilst the residual waste and glass recycling are collected by separate vehicles and crew, it was important to try and maintain a consistent waste collection day/week for the householder. Due to the operational placement of vehicles in the three principal depots, and geographical spread of the county, by undertaking some changes to the blue bag recycling round, we managed to achieve around 44% of households on the same day for collection for their Blue, Black and Glass collection.

Due to the number of vehicles required to roll out the interim service, there was a need for additional staff. We were successful in recruiting 17 HGV drivers at a time of shortage for HGV drivers, this was achieved through a collaborative approach between our operational team, our internal training team and Coleg Sir Gar. We also employed an additional 28 loaders through a contemporary engaging advert outlining the benefits of working with local government.

86,730 [95%] of properties in Carmarthenshire are now in receipt of glass collection from their home and we are currently undertaking further route assessments which will establish if this percentage can increase. Following the interim service change the glass recycling bring site review is ongoing to rationalise our network of sites. The aim is to continue to provide this service at strategic locations around the County during the interim period, to ensure residents who are unable to receive kerbside glass collection will maintain access to glass recycling in their local community.

A robust engagement and communication plan was implemented to support and assist residents in Carmarthenshire with the changes in relation to their waste collections. Various communication actions were carried out pre and post roll out of the new service, which included social media campaigns, updates to the corporate website, posters installed at key bus stops County wide, including the ten towns and FAQ's on the website. We also delivered training and members seminars to support members in the rationale and process of change so they could assist their constituents directly. In addition to this, a text message/email notification reminder service was rolled out to residents to sign up for to assist in reminding residents of what day their commodities will be collected on.

As of any service change, an Integrated Impact Assessment had been completed and measures were put in place to ensure that these changes did not have a negative impact on Carmarthenshire residents. On the back of this assessment, we have now employed six Waste and Recycling Wardens to undertake the education and enforcement role to assist with compliance to the changes, the wardens are engaging with residents in person and providing advice, targeting areas that we currently experience high contamination and low participation to recycling. The Wardens also have delegation to investigate noncompliance on a more legal basis and enforce when needed if advice and guidance is not followed.

## Performance Figures of the Interim measure

Following the roll out in January 2023, Quarter 1 figures of 2023/2024 have been released resulting in the percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted performance of **72.96%**. This is compared to a 2022/23 Q1 performance of **64.5%** showing an **8.46%** increase in performance attributed to our change in service.

The domestic waste provisions of introducing hygiene waste collections to include children's nappies, weekly collection of dry mixed recycling and food waste, introduction of a three weekly glass bottles and jars collection and three weekly black bag collections has seen a significant rise in quarter 1 recycling rate and a marked improvement compared with last year's quarter 1 performance:

Quarter 1 Comparison Table

Waste Stream	2022/2023 Qtr 1	2023/2024 Qtr 1	+ / -
AHP/Nappy Waste	109.36	308.58	199
Blue Bags	3,704.39	3,954.18	250
Food Waste	2,252.98	2,428.26	175
Kerbside Black Bags	4,495.74	3,058.88	-1,437
Mixed Glass	858.20	1,304.38	446

The project team, which encompassed strategic and operational staff from the waste service combined with key corporate services worked hard on the recent service change to achieve this result. This provides a great foundation to what can be achieved for the development and implementation of the second phase of the strategy. If the quarterly performance remains constant throughout this financial year, the authority will have achieved the 70% recycling rate for 2025 by 2024. On current performance the interim service change has been a success and provides us with optimism as we move to kerbside sort, which theoretically should provide a higher grade of recyclable material with less material contamination.

The waste service change and subsequent recycling performance improvement would not have been possible without the support of other teams and departments across the authority. This demonstrates the essential role played by many across the Authority, with effective governance facilitating successful collaborative working and positive outcomes.

## Post roll-out feedback

Following the successful roll out of the interim measure, we conducted a feedback initiative to identify best practices and key lessons learned to inform the forthcoming second phase of the waste service change in 2025. To ensure an impartial assessment of the interim phase rollout, the internal TIC team led on this review. A comprehensive survey was conducted to gather input from 44 stakeholders, from the Director, Cabinet Member, Waste Services staff (including depot operational personnel), key project colleagues from other departments, and external stakeholders from Cwm Environmental.

The feedback was consistent across most stakeholder groups with project management, communication and governance featuring positively. It was widely acknowledged the project had delivered a complex and challenging project to many service users with relatively few issues.

The evaluation pinpointed a limited number of issues that can be improved upon and offered valuable feedback mainly concerning resource allocation, improved engagement with front-line staff, enhanced complaint handling structure, and better use of mobile technology utilisation to minimise service disruption to our residents. These aspects are being prioritised for addressing challenged for the second phase of the Waste Service Change.

### **Overview of Phase Two- Waste Service Change**

To achieve the aims within the Waste Strategy and our commitment to the Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy, the second phase of the project, aims at implementing kerbside sort collection methodology across the entire county, which will require additional recruitment, vehicle acquisition, waste commodity procurement, and an increase in grid capacity to ensure sufficient energy to charge 50% of our fleet that is planned to be electric.

As transport emissions make up a large part of the Councils overall emissions, this approach can deliver significant benefits to our overall carbon emissions. In addition, the potential development of a centralised depot at Nantycaws presents a real opportunity to advance new renewable energy production and charging infrastructure for the proposed Waste fleet and can also unlock wider collaborative and integrated commercial charging potential.

At present to achieve the aim of an operational, financial and carbon efficient model a review of our current infrastructure is being undertaken. Currently our operational depots (Cillefwr, Glanamman and Trostre) are unable to facilitate and operate the blueprint methodology for the whole County. This is due to the current lack of parking, storage, office and welfare facilities that would be required for the increased number of fleet vehicles and operatives. This combined with a need to invest heavily in waste transfer infrastructure at each location and in vehicle charging infrastructure challenged through limited grid capacity at these locations. Given the challenges at our current locations a centralised depot is being examined, as this would provide a single location investment and enable the ability to maximise ULEV fleet capacity and also support operational efficiency.

At present we are scoping a proposed model for a centralised depot located at Nantycaws which would be co-located with our waste treatment and transfer infrastructure and have the ability accommodate the whole collection fleet, vehicle maintenance unit, offices, storage, welfare facilities, staff parking, together with a vehicle washing bay. This centralised depot could unlock the potential for further development of our corporate Eco Park ambitions, which will incorporate renewable energy production to power our electric fleet.

Work is currently underway to scope the proposed site at Nantycaws to establish the best use of the site and to prepare for a Pre-Application Consultation for Planning Permission if the proposal is approved.

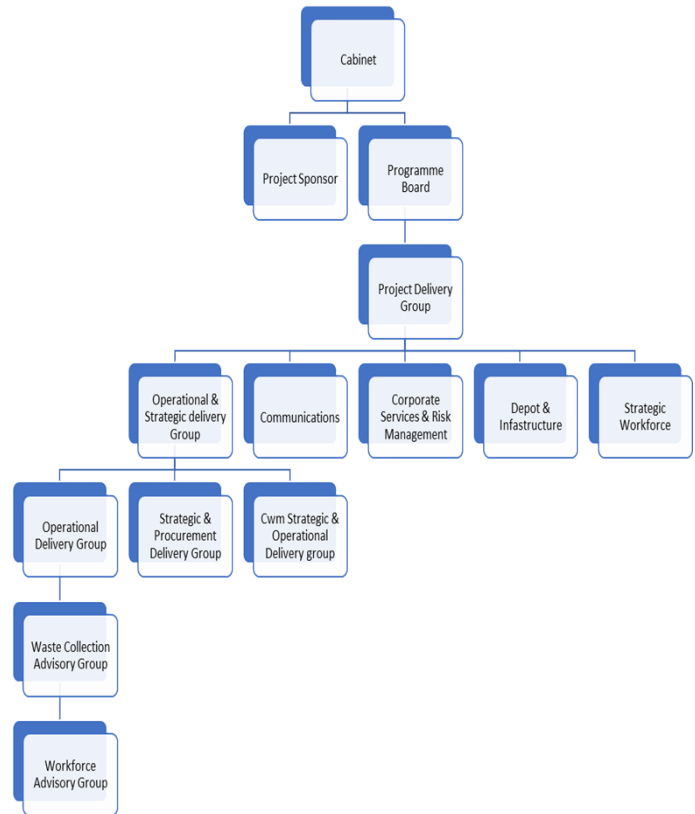
Centralising the depot for waste collections, will also assist in streamlining operational efficiency by consolidating resources, allowing for better coordination of collection schedules and routes, by facilitating the adoption of zonal collection routing for all waste types, and enhance productivity. A centralised depot will not only reduce fuel consumption and associated costs but will provide adequate grid capacity to enable the purchasing of the required number of electric vehicles, both minimising carbon emissions and contributing to a more environmentally sustainable operation.

To assist with the authority's, change to the Blueprint-compliant collection service and the wider creation of Eco Park infrastructure, the authority has successfully received funding from Welsh Government of up to £15,546,000, with the authority to contribute 38% of the overall cost of service change.

### **Governance**

Following a successful governance structure for the interim roll out, it has now been essential that the governance is reviewed and amended accordingly based on the objective and needs of the second phase. The revision has also incorporated views gathered from the feedback sessions.

As you can see, the new Governance Structure enables the project team to deliver on the requirements of this new phase and creates a forum to resolve issues, enabling the decision-making process regarding infrastructure investment and operational issues to be clear, concise, effective, transparent and accountable by each workstream assigned certain roles and responsibilities, with key officers assigned to each workstream.



### **Vehicles for blueprint kerb side sort collection**

We are currently undertaking route assessments to accurately determine the number and size of kerbside sort vehicles necessary for the rollout of the kerbside sort collection methodology by 2025. Following the interim roll-out we have been undertaking an evaluation and performance review of our electric vehicles to understand their restrictions and best utilisation to dictate our future service development.

To meet our Carbon Zero commitment, it is imperative that we maximise the use of ULEV vehicles where practically possible in our waste service delivery. We have recently received demo vehicles to test throughout the County, to establish mileage performance on the ULEV vehicle and to understand the impact of Carmarthenshire topography on its performance. As a service, we are planning to initiate the procurement process by December 2023. Through market engagement we have been informed that due to supply issues in the market an anticipated delivery would be between March and September 2025.

## **Timeline**

Following market research and engagement with vehicle manufacturers we have been advised that vehicle the supply timescales (especially for ULEV vehicles) is greater than the 9-10months initially programmed, initial estimates is that there is presently a 18month lead in time.

In addition, the infrastructure development required for blue-print collections either at a single location or across our current network will require planning and civil engineering works.

Both of these factors mean that the second phase of the Waste Strategy in Carmarthenshire isn't feasible for delivery within 2024. The project has developed a new timeline with planned roll-out in Autumn 2025

## **Communication**

Moving forward into the second phase of the Waste Service Change a comprehensive communication and engagement plan will be developed, similar to phase one, with staggered communication to ensure residents are fully informed of the future changes. This will also include further engagement activities with Carmarthenshire residents. As a team, we felt that the engagement and communication plan that was established for phase one was vital in its success.

## **Commodity considerations for collection**

As we learn from other welsh Local Authorities who have already made the transition to kerbside sort collection, we are currently engaging and discussing about the types of materials collected at kerbside and the collection commodities that we can divert from our residual waste stream. This will require a decision on what materials are collected at kerbside and the practicalities and frequency these materials are collected. Once further engagement is undertaken and evidence and statistics are collated in conjunction with costs of commodities, we will provide further comprehensive details on this.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the initial phase of the waste service change has had positive results regarding the County's recycling targets and has established a solid foundation for the second phase. By providing an overview of the course of action for the upcoming second phase, aligning with the objectives outlined in our waste strategy, the Council is well placed to deliver the next phase ensuring we maintain a high-performing, carbon efficient and customer focussed service with a revised timeline for service delivery.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?</b>	<b>NO</b>
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# 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
<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

## 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

- The recommendations are in line with published policy and strategic direction of the authority, in particular the Corporate Strategy and Well-being Objectives of integration, collaboration and involvement.
- The recommendations in the report are in line with the Carmarthenshire Waste Strategy and procurement requirements through utilising our internal Professional Service Framework.

## 3. Finance

To fund the additional cost as an authority we have been successful of grant funding from Welsh Government of up to £15,546,000 (Fifteen Million, Five Hundred and Forty Six Thousand pounds), with the Funding relating to the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 and must be claimed in full by 14 April 2025.

The above figure is the most grant funding Welsh Government will commit to the second phase of the Waste Service Change with the Local Authority contributing towards the project of at least 38% of the Total Project Costs Incurred and Spent.

The grant funding is awarded to support CCC to develop a centralised, upgraded depot at Nantycaws, Carmarthenshire and the procurement of new ultra-low emission (ULE) recycling collection vehicles as part of its Collections Blueprint service change, in order to improve recycling performance and deliver decarbonisation benefits in line with 'Beyond Recycling'.

The grant support can also be used for infrastructure in support of constructing a new centralised depot, recycle collection containers, the purchase of new ULE recycling collection vehicles (where feasible) and a grid upgrade and charging infrastructure.



#### 4. ICT

There is a comprehensive IT development programme for Waste and Environmental Services with resource currently identified. IT Development for information systems relating to our kerbside collection fleet will be required to deliver our long-term aspirations of service improvement and is currently in progress.

#### 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 (100% recycling) 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.

In addition, the award funding from Welsh Government of £15,546,000 to assist with the authorities change to the Blueprint-compliant collection service and the wider creation of an Eco Park at Nantycaws is available to claim between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. The funding must be claimed in full by 14 April 2025, otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available.

#### 6. Physical Assets

Additional physical resources have been necessary to deliver the interim options set out. With the purchase and lease of additional vehicles to deliver the service configuration. The service has also entered into a lease agreement on a unit at cross hands to effect collections of the additional services. Detailed modelling is being undertaken to fully understand the requirements going forward, which will include further detail on the centralised depot and the number of additional vehicles required.

#### 7. Staffing Implications

Additional staffing resources will be required for the second phase of the service change.

Robust workforce planning will be carried out with dedicated officers responsible for the recruitment and training element. Trade Unions will be actively involved as we develop the second phase of the waste strategy, with member and staff briefings arranged at regular intervals.

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED</b>	Yes
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**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**