

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4TH OCTOBER 2021

FUTURE WASTE STRATEGY

Purpose:

To provide the future strategy, actions and considerations for the Waste Service, in order to achieve 70% recycling by 2024/25 and provide a base for improvements to achieve zero waste by 2050.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

For the reasons set out and contained within this report, the service seeks approval for the following recommendations:

- To approve the direction of travel for service delivery set out for an interim solution followed by a longer term service change. Including the interim proposals of:
 - a. the move to weekly recycling collections.
 - b. the change to three weekly residual collections.
 - c. the separate collection of glass at the kerbside (3-weekly in the interim).
- To commence the procurement of the additional vehicles required for the interim solution.
- To develop the programme of longer term service change for delivery in 2024 of:
 - a. The move to Welsh Government "Blueprint" compliant recycling collections
 - b. Weekly Glass recycling as part of the kerbside sort collection methodology.
 - c. Additional material collections – textiles, Small Domestic Appliances and batteries.

Reasons:

Whilst the current service model has enabled the Authority to exceed the statutory 64% target, further change is required to meet the 70% target from 2024/25 and the expected 80% target by 2030.

This report sets out the considerations, measures and strategy proposed for future improvement of the waste kerbside collection service to achieve the measures set out in the Welsh Government strategies *Towards Zero Waste* and *Beyond Recycling*.

To be referred to the Cabinet for decision: 11/10/2021

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:
Cllr. Hazel Evans – Cabinet Member for Environment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4TH OCTOBER 2021

FUTURE WASTE STRATEGY

Introduction and background

1. Carmarthenshire County Council currently provides waste services to approximately 91,000 households through the delivery of a fortnightly residual general waste collection and co-mingled kerbside recycling service as well as a weekly food collection.
2. In 2018-19 the Council's recycling performance was at 59%, presenting a significant risk of failing the statutory recycling target of 64% due the following year 2019/20. To ensure performance improvement the Authority undertook a series of policy changes, targeted at our Household Waste Recycling Centre's (HWRC) and kerbside residual waste. As a result of these changes performance increased to 64.66% in 2019/20, exceeding the target by a small margin.

Drivers for change

3. Whilst the current service model has enabled the Authority to exceed the statutory 64% target, further change is required to meet the 70% target from 2024/25 and the expected 80% target by 2030.
4. The Council is now in a position where it is developing its future waste strategy and collection methodology to meet future targets and ensure that we are working towards reducing the carbon impact of the service in line with our future carbon reduction ambitions, whilst ensuring we meet our obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The detailed report sets out the full considerations and measures proposed for future improvement of the waste service.
5. Welsh Government strategy contains specific legislation to deliver more sustainable approach to waste and resource management, with particular emphasis on developing the Circular Economy. This is being reinforced through their new strategy *Beyond Recycling* which dictates a separate collection of high-quality materials with low levels of contamination.

6. Our waste collection fleet is due for renewal in October 2021 at the earliest, assuming a 5-year renewal programme. Whilst we could extend this by a maximum of three years, it will become economically and operationally difficult beyond this point.
7. The service needs to focus on the requirement for significant public behavioural change which is promoted and fostered by the council collection methodology and service delivery.
8. Operating the alternative collection methodology and with the increasing performance of kerbside recycling, the service is witnessing an ever-widening gap of workload imbalance between the two-core material streams on alternative weeks - residual, and dry recycling.
9. In practical terms for recycling collections, it is leading to streets, properties and in some cases whole areas left uncollected on their scheduled collection day due to route over capacity. This leads to complaints, service requests and member lobbying. The service in its current form is no longer fit for purpose to deliver its principal function and future requirements.
10. With increasing volumes at the kerbside contained within mixed single use bags it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify and address contamination. This is limiting the education and enforcement process for recycling and compounding the issue further.
11. Currently the service design has reached capacity with unmanageable and unsustainable workloads with no capacity for future growth and limited ability to manage operational challenges, such as severe weather, staff shortages and vehicle breakdowns.
12. Material quality is a growing and significant focus within recycling markets with further restrictions on sale. Our current service fluctuates between 13-20% contaminated materials. Those Authorities who produce clean, dry, and uncontaminated material streams will find their materials easier to place in sustainable demand-led UK markets directly with re-processors to command the highest rebates and provide certainty of off-take.
13. Enforcement at the scale of contamination we are now seeing is not effective with the enforcement resource we have available. A service which can deliver education through direct rejection of materials at the kerbside would lead to a perpetual improvement in quality of material and self-priming education process.
14. With 46% of the contents of our black bag waste being recyclable and almost 5% of this being glass, the need to address this for cost and resource efficiency is necessary. It should be noted that Carmarthenshire is the only Authority in Wales which does not deliver a weekly dry recycling service and collect glass at the kerbside.
15. Glass community bring sites have to date meant an extremely efficient service, however, we are experiencing increasing issues of fly-tipping and general abuse of these sites. These issues combined with public pressure for a kerbside glass collection means that the need to address this is now required.

16. The design and implementation of a waste kerbside collection service demands a long-detailed lead in time. The service affects all 91,000 households every week so the scale of disruption can be significant. The collection routing, service design, vehicle procurement and delivery are all resource intensive matters, meaning a long-term view is required.
17. The move to a weekly Welsh Government “Blueprint” compliant model will necessitate the development of new depot and transfer infrastructure at present this has been modelled on a centralised depot located at Nantycaws. The move to such a collection method and development of infrastructure at this location could provide the key to unlocking wider ambitions to develop the site as an eco-park facility. With plans having the potential for regional and commercial benefits with the further opportunity to provide charging facilities for electrically powered commercial vehicles serving the regional transportation sector. Such a regional scheme would offer increased opportunities for Local Authorities and businesses to collaborate around services, helping drive innovation in resource efficiency.
18. In February 2019 members unanimously resolved to declare a climate emergency and committed to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. In planning for our future service delivery, it is essential that we analyse and consider the whole lifecycle carbon impact of our proposed future service approach.
19. In service design the net carbon benefit takes into consideration the vehicle type and number but the most dominant feature of carbon assessment is the management of recycling materials and their onward transportation and end destination for re-use.
20. The Councils objectives combined with current Welsh Government waste fleet aspirations mean that the Council has the opportunity to develop and maximise its Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) fleet capacity. As transport emissions make up a large part of the Council’s overall emissions, a strategy of maximising the use of ULEV can deliver significant benefits to our overall carbon emissions.
21. The carbon impacts modelling indicates that a move to blueprint collections will result in the annual saving of 2,864 tonnes per annum of CO₂ compared to the current service.
22. Crucially, in relation to decarbonisation, economic studies have shown that whilst there is an increased cost in the short term associated with the investment needed, there is a saving in the longer term as the continuation of the status quo costs more in the medium to long term.
23. Welsh Government have recently published new guidance for the reporting of public sector carbon emissions. This is to support Welsh Government’s ambition for a Net Zero Carbon public sector by 2030.
24. A move to blueprint collections will result in demonstrable carbon savings in both our waste sent to landfill, and by the reduction emissions by our recycling fleet. This will enable us to show proactive progress in reducing emissions in these areas, in anticipation of Welsh Government setting a carbon budget for the public sector.

25. Full carbon cost implications are currently being assessed but it can be predicted that the cost to the Authority to offset the equivalent carbon saving compared to the current service if a change to blueprint collections was not adopted could potentially be sizeable over the 7 years of the service design profile, should this method of offset be adopted.
26. The total Carbon Savings of the Blueprint option of 9,021tCO₂e is the equivalent of:
- **25** - 500kW wind turbines or,
 - **107,000** – individual solar PV panels or,
 - **2,000** – cars taken off the road.
27. To assess the net carbon economic benefit to Carmarthenshire we have used the National Social Value Measurement Framework for Wales. This metric is used to assess the impact of the carbon reduction on the local economy. Results show that there would be a £186k per annum net economic benefit to Wales from the Blueprint option compared to the next highest carbon performing option.
28. The Council has specifically included in the Corporate Plan the objective “Looking after the Environment now and for the future”, specifically to address the aims highlighted above of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The delivery of a sustainable collections model, which addresses wider carbon reduction and economic benefits is a key area of delivery against this corporate objective.
29. For us to shape our future services and respond to how our residents would best utilise our service, it has been essential to undertake a Public Engagement exercise. The engagement was designed to gather public opinion on the waste and recycling services that are currently provided and to understand the barriers to recycling that certain people may still face, but critically it was aimed to assess public attitudes towards proposed changes to the service. The engagement exercise ran for a period of 6 weeks from 24th June to 7th July 2021 with over 4,000 respondents.
30. The engagement exercise provided overall a very positive response to our proposals with a majority of respondents supporting the major changes we propose. There will be further development work and refinement of the service delivery model required to address some concerns. However, the issues raised are mainly addressed through our current proposals and were provided to the public prior to engagement via a FAQ on the service changes set out.
31. In terms of our engagement exercise 82% of people noted their motivation for recycling being “to do my bit for the environment” and 57% identifying “to address climate change” as a motivating factor. It should be recognised that the strategy proposal we have outlined will contribute maximum benefit to the environment, providing a service focussed on tackling climate change and delivering the greatest carbon saving of all options available to us. This suggests that the changes proposed will be welcomed by the public to support the long term benefit of the environment.
32. Welsh Government new future strategy “Beyond Recycling” looks to build upon the successes of the former “Towards Zero Waste” strategy and deliver a circular economy in Wales, where waste is avoided and the things we use are kept in use as long as possible. The aim of this is to support the transition to an innovative, low carbon economy.

33. To deliver against the aims of this new strategy Carmarthenshire have been successful in obtaining funding to develop our circular economy ambitions within the County. We are in the process of delivering these WG supported projects delivering the re-use, repair, and re-manufacture of waste streams.
34. To further our aspirations surrounding the circular economy the Council are currently finalising a Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan, developing a framework to enable the Council to deliver positive environmental, social and economic co-benefits for the communities of Carmarthenshire.
35. The service has been working with colleagues in Welsh Government to develop the opportunity for support funding, developing and submitting a business case for consideration. As a result of this exercise and business case, the WG have recognised the considerable opportunities associated with the potential plans outlined for improving the collection of high-quality materials alongside support for their processing and use. Not just in waste and resource efficiency, but also in renewable energy, transport, and regional economic development.
36. In July we received in-principle support funding approval from the WG and the Minister for Climate Change for £14.3m to support household waste collections service change subject to specific caveats.

Conclusions

37. The need for weekly collection of dry materials combined with kerbside glass collections and increased restrictions on residual waste is required to ensure we deliver against statutory targets.
38. To deliver service improvement and address the operational issues and performance improvements required in the immediate term, it is proposed that we undertake a phased approach to service change.
39. In the immediate term it is proposed we deliver an option utilising our current arrangements and resources, moving to a weekly dry recycling service and three weekly collections of glass and residual waste.
40. The long-term service change will need to see the Authority through potentially two target years of 2024/25 – 70% and 2030 - 80%* (*proposed target*) and our carbon reduction ambitions by 2030, looking to the longer term is essential in-service design.
41. From modelling and qualitative assessment, the Blueprint model offers the cheapest method of collection long term and is the only option that WG would consider supporting financially. It is proposed that we implement the Blueprint approach longer-term once detailed modelling and indication of WG support is achieved.
42. This proposed strategy will give WG confidence in our direction of travel to our long-term implementation of the blueprint compliant collection scheme. Delivering against their carbon and resource efficiency agenda thereby increasing our potential for financial support.

43. The move to kerb sort might be a challenging message to the public in the lead up to the changes; however, it is a common misconception that they will not use, or even learn to like, the system. Experience across Wales has shown that opposition to kerb sort has been consistent in the run up to service change. What has also been consistent is the almost complete disappearance of objection post-service change when householders realise that separating recycling is not difficult and that residual restriction is completely achievable when the dry and food collection facilities are effectively used.

Finance

44. Given the current low-cost service (single fleet on alternative weekly collections), all modelled future options result in increased annualised costs from the baseline £9,852mpa and there is currently £6m within the fleet replacement programme budgeted for 2021-22.

45. To deliver the interim service model the net service cost increase from the baseline will be £1.63m per year. With the proposed timeline this would equate to a figure of £2.4m for an 18-month service programme.

46. During this interim period, the Authority would define the capital funding and spending plan with Welsh Government following their approval of our business case in July 2021. We are currently working on the detailed costings of the proposed Blueprint option with the intended delivery in March 2024 at the earliest.

47. Without WG funding the long-term blueprint strategy will cost an additional £1.44m per year from the baseline (£11,292k vs £9,852k).

48. The WG are willing to support the transition to blueprint complaint collections. This support is predicated on the maximisation of ULEV vehicles within the fleet and wider economic and partnership objectives being achieved.

49. The full future costed service plan with Wrap Cymru and WG is still in development and the detail costings will need to incorporate the fuel savings from ULEV vehicles and identify full infrastructure and resource costs for the operation life cycle.

50. On our initial costings it is expected the future full-service cost will be £9.97mpa compared with current operating costs of £9.85m an additional £125k per year on current service design, on the principle that all other additional costs will be funded by WG as outlined in their proposals above.

Recommendations

51. For the reasons set out and contained within this report, the service seeks approval for the following recommendations:

- To approve the direction of travel for service delivery set out of an interim solution followed by a longer term service change. Including the interim proposals of:
 - a. the move to weekly recycling collections.
 - b. the change to three weekly residual collections.
 - c. the separate collection of glass at the kerbside (3-weekly in the interim).
- To commence the procurement of the additional vehicles required for the interim solution.
- To develop the programme of longer term service change for delivery in 2024 of:
 - a. The move to Blueprint compliant recycling collections
 - b. Weekly Glass recycling as part of the kerbside sort collection methodology.
 - c. Additional material collections – textiles, SDA and batteries.

Next Steps

52. A lead project manager has been appointed and developing the project team and governance for the delivery of this strategy will now be necessary.

53. By January 2022, the Council will be rolling out an expanded Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) service to all households. This subscription-based free service is available to all who have a need and request it. The service will capture the material for treatment and recycling providing further capture of recycling and enable the authority to consider further restrictions or reduced collection frequencies of black bag waste.

54. Due to our corporate ambitions to engage with communities in shaping our services for the future and to fully comply with Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, following the initial engagement we will need to ensure the ongoing engagement of the public to ensure service acceptance and address concerns. There are many issues that residents, officers, and members are likely to raise through this process and a programme of engagement is essential for any major change programme to be successful.

55. Procurement of vehicles for the interim solution needs to be undertaken, with routing and service design for the three weekly black and glass collections commencing in September 2021. This work delivers the necessary improvements in recycling performance and will dictate our capacity for the utilisation of ULEV vehicles in the short term.

56. Finalise the long-term resource requirements and service design proposals based upon public engagement exercise. Develop the final service costings (aided by Wrap Cymru) based upon WG funding support.

57. Wrap Cymru have agreed to support the development and mobilisation of the interim and long-term strategy, including the support for all operational delivery considerations and WG engagement.

58. Strategy programme timetable:

Kerbside Strategy Timeline



DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES:-

- 1. Detailed Report**
- 2. Waste Collection Engagement Thematic Analysis**

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: A WILLIAMS

Head of Waste & Environmental Services

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

1. Finance

To deliver the interim the net service cost increase from the baseline will be £1.63m per year. With the proposed timeline this would equate to a figure of £2.4m for an 18-month service programme.

Detailed modelling and design of the interim option which will dictate our resource requirements going forward will be undertaken and are due to be finalised once route modelling is undertaken.

Following the approval of our business case submission to WG and the in-principle funding support, initial costing projections based on the funding level support will result in a marginal increase in annualised costs due to the increased capital costs of ULEV vehicles.

The full future costed service plan with Wrap Cymru and WG is still in development and the detail costings will need to incorporate the fuel savings from ULEV vehicles and identify full infrastructure and resource costs for the operation life cycle. On our initial costings it is expected the future full-service cost will be £9.97mpa compared with current operating costs of £9.85m an additional £125k per year on current service design, on the principle that all other additional costs will be funded by WG as outlined in their proposals above.

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.

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.

6. Staffing Implications

Additional staffing resources will be necessary in the interim and longer-term options set out. Detailed modelling will be undertaken to fully understand the requirements going forward.

There is currently a shortage of resource in terms of drivers and loaders within the industry and wider for drivers across the haulage industry. This will be an ongoing risk for the foreseeable future and resource/succession planning will be key.

A temporary team will be created to support the delivery and implementation of this strategy, this will be funded by the Waste Strategy Implementation Reserves. This could include increased resource capacity within corporate teams such as media and marketing and procurement/risk.

7. Physical Assets:

Additional physical resources will be necessary in the interim and longer-term options set out. Detailed modelling will be undertaken to fully understand the requirements going forward.

In addition, the development of infrastructure at Nantycaws and transfer stations will be progressed dependent upon WG and regional support.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: A WILLIAMS

Head of Waste & Environmental Services

1. Scrutiny Committee

Yes – Report is scheduled for consideration – 4.10.21

2. Local Member(s)

Yes - we will continue to undertake a full engagement process to inform our decision-making process.

3. Community / Town Council

Yes - we will continue to undertake a full engagement process to inform our decision-making process.

4. Relevant Partners - N/A

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Yes - we will continue to undertake a full consultation and engagement programme with staff side representatives to deliver the strategy.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD 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