

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JULY 2023

Present: Councillor Owen Jones(Chairperson)
Councillors Derbyshire, Gibson, Green, Lancaster, Lloyd Jones,
Jackie Parry, Proctor and Wood

13 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Shifa Shazad.

14 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

15 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson, subject to the following amendments:

Replacement LDP item

10th bullet point – the addition of the words ‘for new developments’ after ‘Community Engagement Officer’.

11th bullet point amend ‘north / east west’ to read ‘north west / east’

16 : REPLACEMENT OF RECYCLING FLEET FOR RESIDENTIAL COLLECTIONS

The Committee received a report providing an opportunity for Members to note and discuss the Cabinet report titled ‘Replacement of the Recycling Fleet for Residential Collections’ in advance of the Cabinet report being presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 July 2023. The report recommends that the Cabinet approve the phased purchasing of 41 new recycling collection vehicles over a three-year period with a value estimated at £9.7 million.

Members were advised that the current fleet of recycling and Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) was procured in 2013/14 via a contract hire agreement. At the end of the agreement in 2018/19, the vehicles were purchased and maintained by Central Transport Services (CTS).

A proposal to upgrade the fleet was completed in 2021/22 in respect of Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV’s) for ‘residual and garden waste. However, a decision in relation to food RCVs was deferred until there was clarification on how kerbside segregated recycling would be collected. Following the recycling pilot it was decided that the following vehicles are required to support the delivery of the Recycling for Cardiff Strategy:

- Split back RCV's to collect both containers (tins and plastics) and mixed paper/card
- Top loader vehicle, with noise insulated interior, for collection of glass
- Top loader vehicle, with sealed plastic interior, for collection of food

The preferred solution is for Central Transport Services (CTS) to purchase the replacement vehicles which will then be leased. CTS will provide ongoing support from within that service area's budget. Members were asked to note that, whilst the service would like to introduce electric RCV's, the capacity for recharging at Lamby Way is limited. Consequently, some fleet vehicles will be purchased and others would be leased to allow the service area some flexibility to replace diesel vehicles with electric when this is possible.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director - Street Scene to the meeting. After a brief statement from the Cabinet Member the Chairperson opened the debate on this item. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked whether the capacity for additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Lamby Way was cost prohibitive or restricted by the space available. The Assistant Director stated that the capacity is currently limited by the wider power grid network. It was not possible to increase the electricity supply to the Lamby Way sub-station without significant investment from Western Power to upgrade their power cabling. The service area is investigating the potential to provide recharging from renewable energy sources (solar and wind) from a Council managed facility adjacent to Lamby Way. This would result in a 'circular economy'. The provision of energy storage on site would also provide resilience in the event of power outages.
- Members asked whether smaller vehicles would be procured that are able to access residences where access is limited. The Assistant Director confirmed that a range of different sized vehicles would be purchased. The larger RCVs are narrow bodied to allow ease of access and smaller 7.5 tonne and 12.5 tonne RCVs will be deployed also. However, many access issues are related to problems caused by parked vehicles and this is being addressed in partnership with another service area with a view to improving access.
- Members noted that a number of vehicles would be disposed of. Members asked whether those vehicles would be sold in order to fund the purchased of the new vehicles. The Assistant Director stated that the vehicles in question are at 'end of life' and CTS will try to sell them on or scrap the vehicle for its scrap value. Members were advised that 25% of all vehicles leased in order to allow some flexibility to respond to changes in service demands.

- Members asked whether the future phased roll-out of the Recycling Strategy will require additional vehicles to be purchased as it progresses. The Assistant Director stated that the purchase will cover the segregated recycling aspect of the Recycling Strategy and no additional vehicles will be required. The procurement will take place in two phases – 40,000 properties adopt the changes in October 2023 and a further 80,000 in July to August 2024.
- Members asked whether delays in the procurement process could delay the roll-out of the segregated waste strategy. Members were advised that the target dates will be achieved. Vehicles will be leased initially in order to achieve the targets. The purchased vehicles will be used to cover the second phase of the roll-out primarily.
- Members requested further clarification of the service area's lease-back arrangements with CTS. The Assistant Director stated that the fleet management business plan dictates that it is more cost effective for CTS to purchase fleet vehicles and for service areas to lease them back using their revenue-based budgets. Responding to a question from the Committee, the Assistant Director confirmed that lease arrangements are flexible but notice periods are built-in to lease contracts – with shorter lease ending notice periods being more costly.
- Officers were asked whether the overall cost of refuelling vehicles would be reduced by converting to electric vehicles and whether this would result in the new vehicles be delivered at cost-neutral. Members were advised that the collection of separated glass will result in increased income. Currently co-mingled collections mean that glass needs to be processed at a cost of £15-20 per tonne. Segregated glass is sold at between £35-45 per tonne – a net gain of £60 per tonne approximately.
- Officers were asked to comment on the use of the split-back vehicles in terms of the proportion of the vehicles that is used to collect the different types of waste presented. Members were advised that the use of split-back vehicles does present some challenges as they fill up at different rates. Therefore 30% of the vehicles will collect plastic containers and tins and 70% of the vehicles will collect paper and card. Both streams will be compacted to maximise efficiency. During the pilot both collection methods were trailed. Waste collections crews indicated that they favoured the split-back method as collections are completed quicker in an urban setting.
- Members asked what were the main benefits to arise from the procurement of the new vehicles. Members were advised that segregated recycling would result in a reduced carbon footprint for residents. Waste represents around 3% of emissions in terms of carbon footprint. However, the mining and manufacturing of the raw materials used to make aluminium, glass and plastic represents 45% of the global carbon footprint, so reusing those materials will have a major

impact. Segregated waste collection will also prevent contamination of the waste recycling and remove the reliance on 27 million green plastic recycling sacks provided to residents annually. Removing contamination, mainly from food, results in a reduction of litter in the street scene as vermin and birds are no longer attracted to the reusable sacks. The Assistant Director indicated that the cleansing teams are being restructured and cleansing of the street scene will take place after collections in most settings.

- Members asked whether the vehicles being procured are the same vehicles used in other Welsh local authorities who are operating similar segregated recycling schemes. The Assistant Director stated that some other Welsh local authority areas are rural in nature and use a 'single pass' vehicle which collects all the segregated recycling in one visit. This works well where properties are dispersed, but there is less benefit in urban areas as the vehicles stay in streets for a longer period causing difficulties for passing traffic, etc. The model being adopted is similar to that being used in Swansea.
- Members asked whether any analysis has been undertaken on the emissions from the diesel vehicles being procured. Members were advised that the vehicles will cause emissions but the engines are the latest Euro 6 category engines and their emission standards are higher than older vehicles, which will be an improvement.
- Members asked whether the vehicles would be used until their 'end of life'. The Assistant Director stated that the transition to a fully electric fleet would take a number of years. The vehicles are being procured for the full life of the vehicles of between 5 and 7 years. Over that period there will be changes in the manufacture of electric vehicles, for example, manufacturers switching to silica insulation in batteries will allow faster charging of the battery. Electric RCBs are prototype vehicles and the authority is leading the way, in partnership with Welsh Government, in assessing how these vehicles perform and how efficient they are.
- Officers were asked whether reaching the net zero target by 2030 was achievable in Cardiff. The Assistant Director stated that the Council's carbon emissions are significant in certain areas but are limited. Some industries are outside of the control of the local authority. Net zero is achievable for the Council but recycling waste materials will help the city reduce its carbon footprint as a whole. The ambition for Wales is to create a circular economy, so that if Wales needs 100,000 tonnes of glass then that 100,000 tonnes is remanufactured in Wales. The Cabinet Member stated that the first meeting of LAEP (Local Area Energy Plans) convened recently and they set a baseline for Cardiff's energy use and how it will be decarbonised. LAEP received a presentation on energy use in the City and it was suggested that the Committee may like to receive that presentation at a future meeting.

- Members noted that there was no segregated recycling plan specifically for HMOs in the city. Officers were asked whether they were confident the vehicles being procured were suitable for HMOs in the absence of such a plan. The Assistant Director stated that some of the existing fleet will be retained to collect co-mingled recycling from HMOs. Once segregated recycling has been rolled out in standard housing the focus will switch to segregated recycling in HMOs. Currently, HMOs are given a number of bins, caddies and bags and residents present their waste individually. The service area is keen to ensure that the model adopted does not have an adverse impact on the street scene.
- Members asked whether the potential for a glass bottle deposit return scheme in Wales would affect the business case for the new vehicles. The Assistant Director stated that a bottle deposit return scheme would mean that the adopted model would need to be modified. However, a bottle return scheme is also intended to reduce littering. The Assistant Director did not consider this to be a significant issue, as if the amount of glass collected reduced by 50% following the implementation of such a scheme, then the number of vehicles would be reduced accordingly.
- The Assistant Director confirmed that the vehicles purchased from the Council's supplier which went into liquidation did provide value for money.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee to convey any comments, observations and recommendations made during the way forward.

17 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS WORK PROGRAMMING

Members were asked to note the draft indicative work programme for the Committee. Members requested update reports on biodiversity and the central bus station be included on the work programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

18 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

19 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 14 September 2023.

The meeting terminated at 6.15 pm