
RECYCLING & WASTE RESTRICTING PROGRAMME – ONE YEAR UPDATE

Reason for the Report

1. To provide Members with a one year update on the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme which was introduced in the summer of 2015.

Background

2. A report titled Recycling & Waste Restriction Programme was received at the 2 April 2015 Cabinet meeting. The reasons in the response relevant to bringing this paper forward were:
 - To build on the draft Outline Waste Strategy 2015 to 2018 that was approved for consultation in October 2014;
 - To seek approval of the Draft Recycling Waste Management Strategy 2015 - the required household recycling and waste collection changes for 2015;
 - To set out further steps necessary to deliver longer term statutory targets such as amendments to kerbside recycling;
 - To emphasise that the immediate service changes in the Draft Recycling Waste Management Strategy 2015 – Implementation Phase 1: Residual Waste Restriction Programme were required to support achievement of the statutory recycling target of 58% by the end of March 2016 and also to deliver the savings that were approved in the February Budget setting for 2015/16;
 - To highlight the importance of the recycling programme as well as the governance arrangements proposed to ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) regulations 2012

and the subsequent statutory guidance on the separate collection of waste paper, metal, plastic and glass;

- To seek agreement for the partnership with Welsh Government and other local authorities to support the feasibility assessment and potential progression for regional recycling infrastructure.

3. The main aims of the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme relevant to this report were:

- Meeting the recycling targets and saving requirements for 2015/16 through restricting general waste;
- Outlining the future position on the recycling collections methodology;
- Seeking cost reductions and delivering the most cost effective recycling approach for Cardiff;
- Securing high quality recycling;
- Securing long term regional working and partnerships for recycling;
- Reducing Cardiff's carbon footprint.

4. The 2015 report explained that there was a need to drive operational efficiencies and reduce service costs to achieve the budget approved by Council in February 2015. Equally critical was the need to increase recycling to avoid fiscal fines, as statutory recycling targets were in place with a £200 per tonne penalty for failing to meet target. As a result of Cardiff's recycling performance in 2013/14 the Council could have been fined in excess of £800,000. At the time the outline strategy highlighted that if the Council did not increase its recycling performance year on year then fines could quickly escalate to £2 million by 2015/16 as the recycling target rose from 52% to 58%. The report also estimated that fines could potentially reach £21 million by 2020; therefore, arguing that maintaining the same approach was not an option.

Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme – Phase 1

5. Implementation of Phase 1 of the Residual Waste Restricting Programme was introduced during the summer of 2015. It aimed to provide an additional 5,000 tonnes of recycling and £622,000 of budget savings. The main drivers for achieving this were:

- A move to smaller capacity for residual waste across the city through smaller wheeled bins (140 litre) or the equivalent volume of bespoke bags;
 - An expansion of the number of properties using wheeled bins to better contain waste;
 - To further control the issuing of green bags and food liners to reduce wastage and to only provide these to Cardiff residents to use for recycling.
6. Since the publication of the 2011 Waste Strategy the need for further restricting residual waste has been highlighted. Analysis of the residual waste illustrated that a high proportion of recycling and food waste remained in the waste stream. The 2015 report argued that if the Council were to achieve 58% recycling in 2015/16 there needed to be a change in citizens' habits towards waste minimisation and recycling; to achieve this it was felt that a consistent city wide restricting programme was required. The Welsh Government's preferred collection blue print sets out the introduction of 140 litre bins as best practice. They believed that as recycling targets increase to 58%, more local authorities would move towards smaller wheeled bins or reducing the frequency to three weekly collections, with some considering four weekly collections.
7. At the time research and public consultation suggested that the preferred method of restricting residual waste in Cardiff was to move towards a smaller bin (and the equivalent bag provision in the remaining bag areas).
8. On the whole the kerbside collection services did not change for residents. This meant that (in most cases) the level of service from 27 July 2015 remained the same as a result of the implementation of Phase 1 of the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme. The general collection approach taken as a result of Phase 1 of the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme is set out below:
- Weekly dry recycling to continue via the freely provided green bags;
 - Weekly food waste to continue via the kerbside caddies;
 - Garden waste collections to remain fortnightly in the summer and monthly over the winter period;
 - General waste collections to remain fortnightly;

- Customer supporting services to remain such as the Hygiene Service and Assisted Lifts;
- Green bags and food caddy liners to remain free to Cardiff residents.

Main Areas For Change in Phase 1

9. The main areas for change under Phase 1 of the Recycling & Waste Restriction Programme were:

- To ensure services remained efficient, the collection days and week of collection were reviewed. To accommodate the service changes and city growth, collection day changes were required in four wards. The number of vehicles and operatives was balanced to maximise efficiencies.
- The collection days were to be kept under review while maintaining the option of implementing further changes driven by operational experience. The aim of any changes was to create efficiencies and minimise operational costs.
- A wheeled bin expansion programme for suitable households across the city receiving wheeled bins for residual waste was implemented. A new smaller (140 litre) black wheelie bin was provided to just over 12,000 households. In addition just over 4,000 of these properties were provided with 240 litre green garden wheelie bins.
- All households with a standard 240 litre black wheelie bin had their bin replaced with a 140 litre bin. The exchange programme began in July 2015 and was continued over the summer period. The old wheelie bins were removed and recycled. It was felt the new wheeled provision would assist in driving up the recycling rate and would also secure the city's wheelie bin assets as they are currently coming towards the end of their natural life expectancy.
- The properties remaining on bag collections were been provided with a limited number of bespoke bags equivalent to three black bags per fortnight. This was to bring the bag area households into line with the rest of Cardiff, i.e. they were only able to dispose an amount of municipal waste equivalent to the wheelie bin households.

- The bespoke bags would only be delivered twice a year.
 - Flats with communal bin collections remained with their current provision. Work was due to be undertaken on a block by block basis to make specific recycling improvements and review residual waste capacity.
 - Waste presented in black bags or shopping bags, etc.. would not be collected. Those householders presenting non-compliant issued bags were subject to an £80 fine. Additional education and enforcement resource would support the changes to ensure that residents take responsibility for their waste and recycle as much as possible.
 - To improve and make the service more sustainable, households were not provided with a green garden wheelie bin were provided with reusable garden sacks to present their garden waste. Provision of the bags was initially free and if subsequent sacks were required they could be purchased for a small fee. These sacks were to be available via a 'ring and request' service or at nominated Council buildings. The supply of bio-bags for green garden waste would be removed once the reusable garden sacks had been distributed.
 - To ensure consistency across the city a charge was applied to households requiring an extra green garden wheelie bin. In addition, a charge was introduced for the replacement of lost or stolen black or green wheelie bins.
 - Green bags and food liners would continue to be provided freely only to Cardiff residents. These could be accessed through nominated Council buildings, the 'ring and request' service or by online ordering.
 - Existing services such as the hygiene service; assisted lifts to support infirm and unsupported householders; bulky services; Household Waste Recycling Centres; the larger family policy and additional waste collection paid services would remain.
10. As with any change to service provision a period of disruption was to be expected whilst operatives and residents became familiar with the changes. At the time it was

anticipated that disruption as a result of changes to residual waste collection would be resolved within three months of the changes (on an area by area basis).

Additional resources were provided to the Council's Connect 2 Cardiff and Waste Management services to support residents through the change. More Waste Officers would be in place to provide education on recycling, support the changes and to provide strong enforcement for those that place their waste incorrectly or in a manner that is non compliant for collection. This principle of providing this additional resource was supported by 73% of the consultation respondents.

Stakeholder Engagement

11. In parallel to the Council's 2015/16 budget stakeholder events and consultation, a separate consultation took place regarding recycling and waste services. The consultation included a number of key stakeholders such as community groups, waste teams and crews, Councillors, contractors and a random postal survey of 3000 residents. The consultation received 1443 responses. The headline results from the consultation were:

- Residents supported the need to recycle to reduce costs and avoid fines;
- Residents supported reducing the impacts on our environment through waste minimisation and recycling;
- Maintaining the same service across the city was important to residents;
- A smaller bin or bespoke bags was the most popular choice of restricting the general waste;
- The Council should do more to encourage recycling and take enforcement action against residents who don't recycle;
- Less than one fifth of respondents used local brings site;
- There was general support for more wheeled bins, reusable sacks and continuation of the green bag scheme;
- Having simple schemes that didn't cause clutter on the streets was important to residents;

Finances

12. 'Phase 1' of the 'Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme' was allocated revenue funding of £500,000 for 2015/16 and capital funding of £2.4 million. The bulk of the

capital funding was for the provision of new wheelie bins, but the procurement exercise managed to deliver the new bins at a cost of £1.3 million - £1.1 million less than the original amount projected.

13. It was estimated that the proposals would create a recurring saving of £622,000 (including revised bag controls) per annum in 2015/16. Beyond this it was estimated that additional recurring savings of £318,000 would be generated over the life of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Delivery Timeline & Planned Communications

14. At the time the anticipated delivery timeline for implementing Phase 1 of the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme and communications plan was described as:

- Mid June 2015 would be the starting point for a city wide communications exercise;
- 27 July – Full implementation of Phase 1 across the new bin areas and bespoke bag areas. This would cover an additional 26,000 households;
- From 18 August literature was sent out explaining how old and new wheelie bins could be exchanged;
- The reusable sack service started on 7 September - residents would be required to call the Council to opt into the scheme;
- The wheelie bin exchange scheme would run from 7 – 30 November – i.e. to exchange 240 litre black wheelie bins for 140 litre black wheelie bins;
- The scheme would impact on approximately 94,000 households in Cardiff.

15. The resident engagement and communication exercise involved a diverse range of activities to promote the waste collection changes. By the end of Phase 1 these included:

- Letter and leaflets to all affected households;
- Tidy Text to be replaced with a new Waste App;
- Face to face engagement with residents;

- Promoting the changes internally within the Council, for example, Our News, Your Inbox etc;
 - Articles in the Capital Times;
 - On the internet, including the Cardiff Council website;
 - Promoting the changes to schools;
 - Promoting the changes across various Cardiff networks, for example, local universities;
 - Communicating the changes via social media;
 - Blogs and Twitter interviews;
 - Via community leaders and stakeholder groups;
 - Press releases;
 - Posters & pop-up banners;
 - Roadshows;
 - Radio advertising;
 - Bus stop posters & bus advertising;
 - Promoting through student liaison channels and on Cardiff Digs.
 - Publishing the changes in alternative language formats;
 - Communicating the changes to landlords, tenant associations & letting agents.
16. Since the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 13 October 2015 the Council has delivered the Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme across Cardiff. Performance against recycling target has improved from 53.38% in 2014/15 to 58.18% in 2015/16.

Way Forward

17. Councillor Bob Derbyshire (Cabinet Member for the Environment) has been invited to attend for this item. He will be supported by officers from the Commercial & Collaboration Service.

Legal Implications

18. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal

implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

19. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of the attached reports;
- ii. Consider whether they wish to pass on any comments to the Cabinet following scrutiny of the item titled 'Recycling & Waste Restricting Programme – One Year Update'.

DAVINA FIORE

Director for Governance & Legal Services

28 September 2016