

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2023

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

Shifa Shahzad and Charlotte Bowden

69 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Green.

70 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

71 : RECYCLING STRATEGY FOR CARDIFF

The Committee received a report providing Members with an update on the roll-out of the Recycling Strategy for Cardiff 2021-25, progress towards achieving the Welsh Government's Recycling targets, and an opportunity to hear from Councillors whose wards are currently segregating their recycling.

Members were advised that the Welsh Government is committed to supporting local authorities improve their recycling performance and becoming a zero-waste nation. As a result Cardiff's recycling performance has improved but it is still behind other Welsh local authorities. Cardiff was required to achieved a 64% recycling rate by 2021/22, and 70% by 2024/25.

Officers provided a presentation summarising the current service provision for residents and information regarding the segregated recycling pilot undertaken in a number of wards. The presentation also highlighted the proposed timeline for introducing segregated recycling across the city and the changes being introduced in trade waste, which will also be required to introduce segregated recycling.

The Committee also received representations from a number of Councillors representing the wards involved in the segregated recycling pilot.

The Chairperson opened the debate on this item. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- A Member stated that residents were generally supportive of the principal of recycling. However, there were some practical problems that need to be addressed. For instance both recycling bags have the same symbols on them and it is unclear what products go in each bag. The bags are also not being fully emptied, they are not being returned properly and they are being blown around by the wind.

- Members raised concerns re the elderly and disabled peoples' ability to segregate their waste. It was suggested that perhaps a bespoke service may be offered to vulnerable groups such as these.
- Members asked for a breakdown of the rate of recycling per ward across the City. Officers advised that it was not possible to provide an accurate estimation of the rate of recycling in each ward because waste collections rounds cross ward boundaries. Officers stated that it was possible to provide a breakdown of waste collected from types of residence. Members welcomed that data.
- Members noted that Newport was achieving the best rate in recycling for all cities in the UK. Members asked what Newport was doing differently. Officers stated that Wastesavers are contracted to operate a segregated recycling service for some time on behalf of Newport City Council. Members were asked to note that the majority of authorities performing better than Cardiff operate segregated recycling schemes. However, those authorities may not process the same amount of trade waste that Cardiff is collecting. At present trade waste adversely affects Cardiff's recycling rate but this position will be reversed when new legislation, requiring that all trade waste is recycled, is introduced in the near future.
- Members asked for details of the current rate of sickness absence within the Waste Management Service. Officers stated that the target for the service area is 20 days sick leave per person. This is a reduction from the target of 24 days in the previous year. There has been a lot of effort made to manage sickness absence and improve well-being and health. Occupation Health support is provided at the Lamby Way Depot – 7 days per week – where they can meet staff directly.
- Members asked whether the total amount of waste presented for recycling during the pilot had increased or whether the improved recycling rate was as a result of a reduction in cross-contamination. Officers stated that the co-mingled bags have approximately 30% contamination. It is estimated that contamination from segregated recycling will be around 1.6%
- Members noted that approximately 50,000 properties that were mainly flats and HMOs were not included within the new arrangements. Members asked how the properties are identified and what any future pilot for those types of properties would seek to establish. Officers stated that some pilot schemes are operating are smaller blocks of flats at present, including the provision of communal recycling facilities. It was accepted that there were issues to resolve around the storage of segregated bins in some types of residence. HMOs will need a different scheme and further consideration is being given to those. Responding to a question from the Committee officers advised that HMOs in the areas

participating in the pilot received the same number and type of containers as other properties.

- Officers provided clarification on the various 'strands' or work programmes being undertaken that are needed to achieved the Welsh Government's 70% recycling target.
- Officers stated that the majority of recycling - 50,000 tonnes is processed in Wales, 30,000 tonnes is processed in England the remaining waste is taken to Germany and India. Members were advised that the Welsh Government – 'My Recycling Wales' website contains a breakdown of where each local authority's waste is processed. Natural Resources Wales also require that waste flow data identifies where materials are sent and what happens to them.
- Members referred to feedback received and requested further comments from officers on the segregated recycling containers provided to residents. Concerns were raised that once emptied containers are being blown around in windy conditions or they were not being returned to residents satisfactorily once emptied by operatives. There can also be a long period between them being emptied and residents returning home to collect them. Officers stated that the feedback received was accepted and changes will be forthcoming as a result. The paper and card bag will be changed and flaps will added to prevent rainwater going into it. The bags are weighted to a similar weight as every other local authority across Wales. A training issue was also identified as there is an appropriate method in presenting the containers back to residents which is not being adopted. In future a different split-back refuse vehicle will be used as this will make it easier for bags to be emptied.
- Members requested information regarding recycling performance in those areas participating in the scheme versus those areas not currently segregating their recycling. Officers agreed to provide feedback and identify the total reduction in contaminated recycling. However, it would not be possible to provide figures on a ward by ward basis.
- Members asked whether tetra-paks will be included in the recycling scheme in future. Officers stated that a pilot scheme is being undertaken currently to post-sort tetra-paks. If that pilot proves to be successful then residents will be asked to present tetra-paks in their plastic/metal container.
- Members asked for details of the timeframe for the rollout of segregated recycling flats and HMOs. Officers advised that pilot schemes will run for approximately a year and schemes would then rollout in 2024/25. The service are would need to ensure that there were sufficient resources in place to support public engagement during the roll out of any changes, particularly in terms of the student population.

- Responding to a question from the Committee, Officers advised that textiles and fabrics should be presented at HWRCs and at community hubs. Officers are also investigating whether it will be possible to provide an accessible clothes bank service in schools.
- Officers advised that there were no plans to expand the workforce. However, data and digital systems would be used to increase efficiency. Officers acknowledged that the service also needs to improve how it presents information to residents. There were also around 500 volunteers working in community litter picking groups in the city.
- Members asked whether a weekly collection of bottles and jars was sufficient. Officers stated that the service wishes to encourage residents to recycling as much as possible and residents can be provided with as many recycling containers as they need. The move to two-weekly collections of glass has come about as a result of data received during the pilot phase. A two weekly collection of glass would be more efficient as less than 50% of residents present their glass container weekly, as opposed to 80% when two weekly.
- Officers confirmed that staff have accepted the change to segregated recycling. It was suggested that the Committee might like receive feedback from staff in around 6-months time.

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.

72 : CARDIFF CROSSRAIL

The Committee received a briefing report on the Cardiff Crossrail project following the announcement of a successful 'Levelling Up' funding bid.

Members were advised that confirmation of the successful £50 million Cardiff Crossrail (CXR) Phase 1 bid was published by the UK Government in January 2023. The Welsh Government match funded the budget and a total of £100 million is available to deliver Phase 1 of the development. The role of Transport for Wales in developing the bid and the outline business case was acknowledged.

The project aims to deliver a regular tram service from Cardiff Central to a new platform at Cardiff Bay train station; two new platforms at Cardiff Central Train Station; public realm improvements around the existing and new train platforms; and a new road layout which allows safe transition for the public to use between road, rail, cycling and walking.

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Moggridge, Operational Manager, Head of Transport and Jason Dixon, Operational Manager – Transport Development and Network Management to the meeting. The officers were invited to deliver a presentation.

The Chairperson opened the debate on this item. Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raised questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members asked what capacity Phase 1 of the project would have. Officers stated that there would be enough capacity to run upwards of 12 trains per hour between Cardiff Central and Cardiff Bay. The evaluation in 2019 estimated approximately 1.9 million passengers per year. The forecast, depending on development in the Bay, could be up to 2.5 million per year.
- Members asked for details of the timeline for the next phase of the project towards the east of the city. Officers stated the Phase 1 would be completed by 2027/28. Further funding bids would be forthcoming to continue with the project further east.
- Members asked what effect industrial action or another event causing a rail network failure would have on the city. Officers stated that the rail operators have a legal responsibility to provide an alternative service for any blockages or works taking place on the network. However, industrial action, would bring elements of the transport system to a standstill and this would bring challenges.
- Officers confirmed that major events in the Bay will have a travel plan. Crossrail will be invaluable in supporting that and it will be a vast improvement on current provisions. Events will also be supported with park and ride, priority bus services and walking/cycling.
- Members asked whether officers were confident that the funding for the remaining sections of the Metro project would be forthcoming and whether there would be sufficient linkages between the CXR and those sections. Officers stated that the CXR would allow for Cardiff Central to be linked to Cardiff Bay using existing mainline and regional services. Existing services from Cardiff Queen Street would also remain.
- Members requested details of the current modal split between walking/cycling/bus/train/car. Officers stated that those figures are currently being reviewed and agreed to report back to the Committee.
- Members asked how travel projections have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Officers stated that some travel patterns have returned to pre-pandemic pattern – but over a 12-hour period those patterns have changed. The

morning peak is later and lasts longer. However, the hourly flow rate appears to be slightly lower at times. There has been an increase in cycling and walking. Cycling is remaining high and the service area is keen to maintain that. Rail and bus patronage has returned on some routes and has not returned on others. It is now at approximately 80% of where they were pre-pandemic. Concessionary fares have not returned to pre-pandemic nationally.

- A Member noted that since the end of the pandemic more people are working from home. People are also shopping online more and the cost of living crisis is having an effect on their spending. Officers were asked to comment on the overall viability of the project. Members were advised that footfall in the city centre is higher in the city centre than in most core cities. The development of the indoor arena in the Bay will increase footfall further. A mass transit system that is sustainable and reliable is therefore essential.
- Officers stated that preparatory works around the highway network for the project are advanced and Members can be reassurance that the start of those works are some way forward. These works are timely and will be fully integrated with work on the heat network and the indoor arena development. The works will require a Transport Regulation (Wales) Order to be approved by the Welsh Government and planning approval before they commence.
- Members asked whether officers were confident the Council has sufficient capacity to deliver the range of transport projects planned. The Head of Transport acknowledged that resources are under pressure. However, officers are confident that the projects will be delivered.
- Officers stated that a key requirement of the project would be joint ticketing. Joint ticketing is being led by Transport for Wales (TfW) and the Council is working closely with them. Officers confirmed that TfW will operate CXR.

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.

73 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were asked to agree the Environmental Scrutiny Committee section of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23.

RESOLVED – That the Environmental Scrutiny Committee pages of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 be approved.

Expressions of interest were sought for Members interested in participating in the Replacement Development Plan Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED That expressions of interest in participating in the Replacement Development Plan Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be provided to the Principal Scrutiny Officer by 24 March 2023.

74 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items.

75 : WAY FORWARD

76 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 20 April 2023.

The meeting terminated at 6.45 pm