

Ref: Scrutiny/Env/26/09/2022

Date: 28 September 2022

Matt Wakelam

Cabinet Member for Climate Change



Dear Councillor Wild

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 26 September 2022

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee a sincere thank you for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the **Recycling Strategy for Cardiff 2021-2025**, despite the late publication of papers for our perusal I felt that the Committee offered some useful insights for consideration. Please also relay our thanks to the officers who attended the Committee meeting to support this item. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations. You will find our recommendations and requests, listed at the end of the letter.

Segregated Recycling Pilot

The Committee heard from Mrs Linda Gibbs regarding her, and Danescourt residents, concerns and observations about the pilot. These were also echoed by councillors from other areas that participated pilot and provided written comments. The issues raise fall into the following general areas:

- Poor communication;
- Containers – Quality and storage;
- Inappropriate vehicles.

It was noted that you offered to meet with residents to allay any concerns and officers confirmed that all households that participated in the pilot would be written to providing feedback from the exercise following the Cabinet meeting on 28th September.

Members asked why the particular areas had been chosen to take part in the pilot and asked if any further breakdown of the feedback had been done to establish if there was any correlation between 'house type' and satisfaction.

Officers stated that the areas had been chosen to provide a demographic mix from different household types across the city.

It was **recommended** that the impact of the segregated recycling pilot in terms of reduced contamination and increased recycling rates are included in future communications so that residents can see the benefits of what they are being asked to do. E.g. Contamination of recyclable materials reduced from 30% to 6%

Communication

Members commented that it was vital that we get communication messages right so that we can keep citizens onside and to take them with us throughout the proposed changes outlined in the Strategy.

It was also suggested that a 'public information' film could support the implementation of the strategy going forward.

It is **recommended** that the communications around the implementation of the strategy use language associated with the 'circular economy', and not just recycling, to start to embed this in the public consciousness.

It is also **recommended** that local councillors are included in any communications about the roll out of separated recycling in their area, so that they can support and encourage residents to participate fully and feedback any concerns during the phased roll out.

Containers

The committee noted that concerns raised in the pilot about the 'quality' of the recycling bags as they are difficult to keep clean, are not watertight and tend to blow away. Officers confirmed that alternatives are being investigated, e.g., vinyl coated bags and heavier weighted, however the use of plastic caddies for all types of materials is not possible due to health and safety issues (repetitive strain injuries) for waste operative in emptying this type of container.

It is **recommended** that provisions are made to support and enable partially sighted/blind residents to recycle, e.g. braille tags to differentiate the containers.

The issues surrounding storage of additional containers in some property types was acknowledged and Committee members were informed that further work will be undertaken to understand better the requirements of properties without frontages, flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The Committee expects tangible solutions to issues associated with these type of properties to be presented to them before they are included in the roll out.

Therefore it is **recommended** that the Committee are kept informed of decisions in relation to preferred containers as the roll out progresses and different solutions are trialled, and in particular solutions for properties without frontages, flats and HMOs.

Vehicles

The Committee note the frustration of residents during the pilot of seeing their separated recycling being emptied into a non-segregated vehicle. Officers provided assurance that the recycling materials were handled separately, and that further division was required i.e. paper and cardboard, aluminium from steel, However, officers did acknowledge and apologise that communication regarding the use of vehicles during the pilot could have been better.

Officers confirmed that everything was in place to start the procurement process for new vehicles to support the implementation of the roll out following consideration and approval by Cabinet of the Recycling Strategy on 28th September.

Education and Enforcement

Members noted that behaviour change on this scale across the city needed support and officers confirmed that there would be a dedicated help team, and that education will always be the first course of action, however, where problems persist enforcement and the issuing of fines remains an option.

General

The Committee asked about the role of schools in the strategy, and officers commented that schools are run by Governing bodies and therefore we can only influence any decisions they make. However, opportunities to involve them are being explored.

Members were interested to hear about proposals for a large scale reuse warehouse, repair shops and borrowing library, and looked forward to receiving details in due course.

The Committee also noted that there was a significant responsibility for manufacturers, supermarkets and government to change legislation and production of goods to help reduce the volume of single use plastic in use.

Members also noted with concern the finance required to support an ambitious strategy. Officers clarifies that one off grants are available from Welsh Government and that as the changes are rolled out, (10,000 household at a time) this would allow resources to be redistributed where needed.

Members also congratulated officers on the work that has been undertaken to data and were all in favour and supportive of the proposed changes in principal.

Recommendations to be monitored following this scrutiny:

To summarise, the Committee makes 4 formal recommendations which are set out below. As part of the response to this letter, I would be grateful if you could state whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet's response. If the recommendation is accepted or partially accepted. I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as agreed by Cabinet.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
It was recommended that the impact of the segregated recycling pilot in terms of reduced contamination and increased recycling rates are included in future communications				
It is recommended that the communications around the implementation of the strategy use language associated with the 'circular economy' to embed this in the public consciousness.				
It is recommended that local councillors are included in any communications about the roll out of separated recycling in their area.				
It is recommended that provisions are made to support and enable partially sighted/blind residents to recycle, e.g. braille tags to differentiate the containers.				
It is recommended that the Committee are kept informed of decisions in relation to preferred containers as the roll out progresses and different solutions are trialled, and in particular solutions for properties without frontages, flats and HMOs.				

For ease of reference, the request detailed in this letter is:

- Members **requested further details from the pilot survey results to determine whether ‘satisfaction’ was linked to ‘house type’**

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and recommendations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Owen Jones

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

*Cc: Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee
Neil Hanratty, Director Economic Development
Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director, Street Scene - Waste*

*Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives
Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground
Cllr Rhys Taylor, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Office
Chris Pyke, Audit Manager
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications and External Relations
Tamar Wilson – Economic Development Performance Lead
Jenny Goss, Cabinet Support Officer
Mrs Linda Gibbs, Danescourt Resident*