

**MEMBER BRIEFING REPORT - DRAFT RECYCLING STRATEGY 2021-25 AND
WASTE MANAGEMENT AND COLLECTIONS UPDATE**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an update on Cardiff's draft Recycling Strategy 2021-25 which is due to be considered at a future meeting of Cabinet.
2. This report also provides Members with the opportunity to receive an update on Waste Collections and Waste Management in response to the Committee's requests from their July meeting.

Scope of Scrutiny

3. As the attached briefing report states, Cabinet will consider a report at a future meeting on the draft Recycling Strategy 2021-25; 'Make a change to save our planet – Reduce, Re-use, Recycle'. This will seek Cabinet's approval for the consultation on the draft strategy and associated resident survey on improving recycling performance.
4. In addition to this, it also seeks approval for the following:
 - To support a pilot of 3 stream segregated collection for glass, mixed containers (plastic and metal) and paper / cardboard; alongside the use of reusable bags.
 - To retain the Recycling Centre booking system and 'no black bag' policy.
 - To cease the provision of red and white striped bags for residents living in properties unable to store 140litre residual bins on the property and allowing residents to present three refuse bags from January 2022.

5. During this scrutiny, Members have the opportunity to explore:
 - i) The Council's draft plans to achieve the Welsh Government's recycling target of 64% between 2019/20 and 2023/24;
 - ii) The proposed approach for consultation and engagement, both in relation to the draft Strategy and the proposed changes to be introduced;
 - iii) The responses and updates provided on Waste Management and Waste Collections resulting from the July Chair's letter to Cabinet;
 - iv) Whether there are any risks to the Council;
 - v) The timeline and next steps for delivering the Recycling Strategy and the proposed changes highlighted in the briefing report.

Background

6. The Recycling, Preparation for Re-use and Composting Targets (Monitoring and Penalties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 imposes a requirement for the Council to measure the tonnage of waste and recycling of both households and commercial business serviced by Cardiff Council.
7. The legislative requirements for recycling as set by Welsh Government was for the Council to achieve 64% by 2019/20 followed by 70% by 2024/25.
8. At the end of 2019/20, the percentage of municipal waste collected and prepared for re-use and/or recycled was 58.10%. According to the Council's Annual Wellbeing report 2020/21 the annual recycling performance for 2020/21 was 55.80% (still to be validated by Natural Resources Wales). This, it was reported was due to changes in waste and recycling collections during Quarter 1 of the year, when the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in all waste and recycling collected from residents being sent to the Energy from Waste plant. This had an impact on overall performance for the year resulting in the 64% statutory recycling performance target not being achieved.
9. The Regulations allow the Minister responsible for recycling performance to impose a fiscal penalty on Local Authorities who fail to meet recycling performance targets. Welsh Government has not enforced financial penalties for

failing to meet statutory targets, however, as the briefing report states, there is a requirement for immediate intervention to ensure targets are met moving forwards.

10. As a result, the Corporate Plan 2021-24 agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 25th February 2021, continued the Key Performance Indicator of 64% for 2021-22 with the Annual Wellbeing Report 2020/21 stating that a new Recycling Strategy is required immediately to demonstrate commitment to achieving this target as well the need to achieve the statutory target of 70% by 2024/25.
11. The Briefing Report entitled Recycling Strategy 2021-25 is attached at **Appendix A** along with the Strategy document at **Appendix A1** and the draft consultation document at **Appendix A2**.

Issues identified in the Briefing Report

12. The briefing report highlights at **point 8** that Cardiff has a high number of people living in flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) at circa 30% of total properties. These types of properties have a disproportionately high level of non-participation in recycling and where recycling does take place, there are high levels of contamination within the co-mingled recycling. Further statistics identified in **points 9-11** indicate the percentages of contamination and co-mingled recycling.
13. **Point 12** of the report indicates that performance for the Council's in-house trade waste is significantly lower than that for the residential sector. The report states that trade waste represents circa 9% of the total of waste collected by Cardiff Council and the poor performance of this sector drags down the Council's overall recycling performance.
14. As the report suggests, it is hoped that through new ways of working and new statutory targets for trade waste, soon to be introduced by Welsh Government, recycling performance will improve.

15. The briefing report sets out the aims and objectives of the draft Recycling Strategy 2021-25 at **point 15** and expands further upon these with core actions in the draft strategy document itself, in **Table 1**.
16. Following agreement by Cabinet, the draft strategy will be published for public consultation along with a resident survey.
17. Further to this, the briefing report details a series of proposed changes to be introduced in addition to the strategy. These include the proposed pilot for a 3 stream segregated collection of glass, mixed containers (plastic and metal) and paper/cardboard, alongside the use of reusable bags.
18. According to the report, from **points 18-22** this approach is being proposed to prevent the loss or reject of recycling material as a result of contamination and has been weighed up against a kerbside sort model which was believed not appropriate due to the length of time the vehicle would remain in residential streets.
19. The pilot will be for the 4,000 properties (households with frontages only) where the bottle and jar pilot took place and will utilise the following:
- 1 x 90L red reusable sack for containers (plastic bottles, tubs, cans, tins and aerosols)
 - 1 x 90L blue reusable sack for paper and card (fibres)
 - 1 x blue caddy for glass (already issued)
20. The pilot's aims are set out at **point 26** as well as its links to the One Planet Cardiff Strategy, at **point 27**, to reduce single use plastics. As highlighted, the use of reusable bags will address the 24 million single use green bags per annum for dry mixed recycling (DMR) and will reduce the cost significantly from the £800,000 that is currently spent on purchasing and distributing green recycling bags each year.

21. In addition to this the report proposes retaining the Recycling Centre booking system that was introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic and the 'no black bag' policy, which resulted in a large reduction in residual waste and in turn an improvement in the recycling recovery rate as detailed at **points 35 and 36**. These controls have also resulted in an increase in projected income from commercial activity (small businesses and traders who were previously using the recycling centres for their residual waste) of 56%.
22. As stated in **points 39-40**, the service has increased the number of vehicles allowed at the Recycling Centre from 50 to 80 per hour, meaning that the operating capacity is under 50% at both Recycling Centres.
23. Further changes identified in the briefing report at **point 42** include the ceasing of red and white striped bags which were provided to those who were unable to store 140litre residual bins, allowing them to present three bags for collection.
24. According to the report, **points 46-49**, the procurement and delivery of the bags has created problems for residents when they run out, the ordering of new ones when someone moves into a property has caused issues and the associated cost for their provision to the Council is £50,000.
25. Instead, the proposal is to phase out this provision, aligning with all other Councils across Wales where the restricted number of black bags has been implemented.

Previous Scrutiny

26. This Committee have received and scrutinised numerous reports and updates on the previous Waste strategies and education campaigns etc. Examples of some of the points raised by Members at these meetings are detailed below:

- Importance of detailed consultation with local ward Members who hold significant amounts local information about the wards that they represent;
- That any changes introduced incorporate plans for enhanced education, engagement and communication, for those who may not be IT literate, unable to read English/Welsh and, as in the case of the glass pilot scheme –

consideration be given to the provision of calendars and printed instructions delivered to residents as well as information detailed on the Council's website;

- Consideration given to introducing a municipal waste sticker, similar to the 'Pink Sticker' scheme used for recycling bags.

28. In addition to this, the Committee received a detailed report at its meeting in July 2021 on the new Waste Collections Service. The Committee's comments and requests following this meeting, are attached at **Appendix B**, along with the updated responses that have been provided from the Directorate.

29. These along with further attachments at **Appendices B1, B2 and B3** incorporate updates and responses on the following:

- Missed collections overall
- Hygiene waste collections
- Assisted Lifts
- Improvement actions taken and proposed to address issues with waste collections.
- Proposed changes to garden waste collections
- Proposed changes to cleansing, education and enforcement services
- Proposed recycling model – noting that 30% recycling currently goes to the Energy from Waste plant due to customer contamination.

Way Forward

30. Cllr Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and Neil Hanratty, Director of Economic Development have been invited to make a statement and answer Member's questions. They will be supported by further representatives from the Economic Development Directorate who have been invited to attend to answer Member's questions.

Legal Implications

31. 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

32. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report, its appendices and the information presented at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter;
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

1 December 2021