



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

15th FEBRUARY 2018

IMPROVING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE – PRE SCRUTINY OUTCOMES

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS M WEBBER AND A CRIMMINGS.

Author(s): Emma Wilkins, Executive & Regulatory Business Unit

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to update Members on the 'Improving Recycling Performance' report following Pre-scrutiny by the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the 25th January, 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1** Note the comments and observations of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee attached as Appendix A of this report.
- 2.2** Subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members, endorse the recommendations outlined within the 'Improving Recycling Performance' report (attached as Appendix B) and for ease of reference as listed below:
- a) Approve the changes to the Council's residual side waste policy from 4th June, 2018 as follows: -
- The residents that have their waste collected in black bags, primarily the Rhondda – the current four black bags allowance per fortnight is reduced to two bags;
 - The residents that have a bin waste collection, primarily in the Cynon and Taf - no side waste per household per fortnight irrespective of the bin size will be permitted;

- Over the Christmas period there would be a relaxation of the restriction, as explained in paragraph 4.10 of the report.
- b) Approve that between 1st November and the 1st March the Council's green waste collection service is a fortnightly collection which reverts back to a weekly service over the remainder of the year, each year.
- c) To approve that the Council by way of a notice, inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag. This change will have no adverse affect on residents currently recycling in line with our system. It is not aimed at residents who put the odd recycling item in their residual waste in error, this change is aimed at residents who continually fail to recycle and/or put large amounts of recycling in their black bag/bins.
- d) Run an awareness campaign at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes in order to try and encourage residents currently not recycling to change their habits and recycle prior to the changes come in and it is recommended to continue to support the awareness campaign once the changes have started.
- e) Approve that if the Notice is then breached, and after a series of warnings by way of a visit (three visits/ warnings) through our awareness/enforcement team, then a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Committee prior to their consideration of the report as attached as Appendix B

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following consideration of the Cabinet work programme at a recent meeting between the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure and the Chair & Vice Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed pre-scrutiny of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' report, listed within the Cabinet Work Programme.
- 4.2 Following the meeting the Leader of the Council formally wrote to the Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee asking that his Committee undertake pre scrutiny in respect of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' at the next meeting of the Committee.

- 4.3 The Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the item on the 25th January, 2018 and the draft minute (subject to agreement at the next meeting of the Committee) is attached as Appendix A).

5 PRE-SCRUTINY OF 'IMPROVING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE'

- 5.1 At the meeting of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee Members were content with the proposals put forward in order to improve recycling performance across the County Borough.
- 5.2 Members recommended an amended implementation date of the 4th June, 2018 to be taken forward.
- 5.3 Members commented and supported the proposed recommendations within the report that had been identified by the Director Highways and Streetcare services.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The report contained within appendix B has been presented to Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for pre scrutiny before consideration by Cabinet.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Any financial implications are outlined within Appendix B of the report.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Non applicable – the report is identifying the scrutiny arrangements in place.

10 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 Making Best Use of Our Budget – Pre scrutiny can improve cost effectiveness.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.

11..2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in this area will strength accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee - Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

15th FEBRUARY 2018

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS M WEBBER
AND A CRIMMINGS**

IMPROVING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE – PRE SCRUTINY OUTCOMES

Background Papers

- Cabinet – 25.01.18 [Report](#)
- Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
– 25.01.18 [Report](#)

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DRAFT MINUTE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH JANUARY 2018.

(SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE)

32. Pre Scrutiny – Increasing Recycling Performance

The Director of Highways and Streetcare Services presented his report, in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder, Councillor Ann Crimmings, in respect of Improving Recycling Performance. Members of the Committee were asked to undertake pre scrutiny in this area to inform a recommended way forward and feedback to Cabinet.

In presenting his report, The Director of Highways and Streetcare Services invited Committee to review and challenge the proposals before them to improve the Council's recycling rates and improve service delivery. He referred Members to the recommendations set out in the report to approve the changes to the Council's residual side waste policy from June 2018.

The Director reminded Scrutiny that the Council has been proactive in addressing the issue of improved recycling and a number of initiatives have been undertaken to help improve the municipal recycling rate and meet the statutory target. Failure to meet these targets will result in significant fines for the Local Authority.

Members were informed that as a result of a number of awareness campaigns which have encouraged residents to waste less and recycle more, the Council's recycling rate improved to over 64% in 2016/17; however, the Director advised Committee that in order to meet the next target set at 70% by 2024/2025 further changes would still need to be made. These proposals were outlined as follows:-

- Residents that have their waste collected in black bags, primarily the Rhondda – the current four black bags allowance per fortnight is reduced to two bags;
- Residents that have a bin waste collection, primarily in the Cynon and Taf - no side waste per household per fortnight irrespective of the bin size will be permitted;
- Over the Christmas period there would be a relaxation of the restriction whereby there will be a 4 bag limit for residents that have their waste collected in black bags and residents with a 120l bin could have one bag of side waste whilst there would be no change for any resident with a 240l bin;
- That between 1st November and the 1st March of each year the Council's green waste collection service be a fortnightly collection which reverts back to a weekly service over the remainder of the year;
- That the Council by way of a notice, inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag and if the Notice is breached, and after a warning has been given, then a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued; and

- That an awareness campaign is run for at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes and then to continue to support the awareness campaign once the changes have started.

The Director advised Scrutiny that predominantly the proposals were targeted at those residents who are not engaged with the current recycling initiatives or those who recycle very little, so that they can participate and make a positive contribution to improving the overall municipal recycling rate within RCT. He reminded scrutiny that many other Welsh Councils have already or are considering reducing their residual waste collection frequency to three or even four weekly collections so as to influence the recycling percentages but he gave assurances that there was no intention to introduce this in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In conclusion, the Director explained that key to the implementation of the proposals, should they be agreed, would be a clear and simple message to all residents by way of an awareness campaign which would give them sufficient notification and offer support to those residents who need additional assistance following the changes.

Some Scrutiny members asked whether there could be a stepped approach to the reduction of black bags in the Rhondda, from four to three in the first instance with a reduction to two following a period of stability. The Director advised that the reduction from four to two bags per fortnight from the outset would have a greater, more effective impact on the overall recycling rates and a lesser impact on those residents who are already engaged in recycling.

Members agreed that running an effective and clear awareness campaign is crucial so that residents are fully aware of the changes in place and can access support where needed. They also agreed that the proposed four stage approach whereby officers issued three warnings to residents prior to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice was a sensible approach which offered the recycling teams the opportunity to influence residents through direct contact and engagement before the enforcement teams are involved.

The Chair reminded Scrutiny that all domestic animal waste can be recycled with the Council's green waste which is collected on a weekly basis all year round but he suggested that this service should be better publicised to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Chair also suggested that a booking system during busy periods for larger than normal amounts of green waste recycling (such as Christmas and summer) would better concentrate the work of the green recycling teams. The Director advised that this option would be considered and reviewed in the summer of 2018.

With regard to the report in respect of improving recycling performance within Rhondda Cynon Taf, it was **RESOLVED** that the following feedback from the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee be reported to the Cabinet:-

- That Scrutiny supports the changes to the Council's residual side waste policy from the 4TH June 2018 (as set out at 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of the report); and

- That it is better publicised that domestic animal waste can be recycled with the Council's green waste on a weekly basis.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

15TH FEBRUARY, 2018

IMPROVING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND STREETCARE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS

Author: Nigel Wheeler, Director Highways & Streetcare Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to make changes within the Refuse and Recycling Collection service in order to improve the recycling rate and improve service delivery

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Approve the changes to the Council's residual side waste policy from 4th June, 2018 as follows: -

- The residents that have their waste collected in black bags, primarily the Rhondda – the current four black bags allowance per fortnight is reduced to two bags;
- The residents that have a bin waste collection, primarily in the Cynon and Taf - no side waste per household per fortnight irrespective of the bin size will be permitted;
- Over the Christmas period there would be a relaxation of the restriction, as explained in paragraph 4.10 of the report.

2.2 Approve that between 1st November and the 1st March the Council's green waste collection service is a fortnightly collection which reverts back to a weekly service over the remainder of the year, each year.

2.3 To approve that the Council by way of a notice, inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag. This change will have no adverse affect on residents currently recycling in line with our system. It is not aimed at residents who put the odd recycling item in their

residual waste in error, this change is aimed at residents who continually fail to recycle and/or put large amounts of recycling in their black bag/bins.

- 2.4 Run an awareness campaign at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes in order to try and encourage residents currently not recycling to change their habits and recycle prior to the changes come in and it is recommended to continue to support the awareness campaign once the changes have started.
- 2.5 If the Notice is then breached, and after a series of warnings by way of a visit (three visits/ warnings) through our awareness/enforcement team, then a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council, like all other Councils in Wales, has statutory targets to meet on recycling. Failure to meet these targets will result in significant fines for every percentage not achieved and these fines could be in the region of hundreds of thousands of pounds dependant on how far the target is not achieved.
- 3.2 The Council has made various changes over the past few years in order improve the recycling rate and these changes have been fundamental in the Council's recycling rate improving year on year to the extent that we achieved over 64% in 2016/17.
- 3.3 In order to achieve the next significant target set at 70% by 2024/2025, the Council needs to implement some further changes as the Council has seen the recycling percentage plateau in 2017/18 despite continued awareness campaigns on both food and dry recycling and no change to our collection system.
- 3.4 In 2016/17 the Council disposed of 35,636 tonnes of residual waste which meant that 36% of waste produced in the County Borough went to either landfill or Energy from Waste.
- 3.5 A WRAP compositional analysis in 2015, highlighted that over 70% of that residual waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture just 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council at present, provides a weekly twin streamed/co-mingled recycling service, food waste service, green waste collection service, an opt in AHP (Nappy) collection service and a fortnightly residual waste collection

service via either a bag system (former Rhondda) or a bin system (former Cynon & Taf).

- 4.2 This service is available to all residents and through various consultation exercises over recent years, it is clear our residents like the system and hold it in high regard due to its simplicity.
- 4.3 Despite this, there are still residents who do not take part in the scheme at all or on a very limited basis and due to this we still are disposing of over 35,000t in 2016/17 through either landfill or Energy from Waste.
- 4.4 A WRAP composition analysis in 2015 highlighted that over 70% of that waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target.
- 4.5 A number of Welsh Councils have already or are looking to reduce the residual waste collection frequency to three or four weekly collections, as there is clear evidence that by reducing residual collection frequency the recycling percentage increases. There is also clear evidence that by reducing the number of bags a resident can put out or by introducing a 'no side waste' policy recycling performance also increases.
- 4.6 The Cabinet of the Council have always been clear that they will not reduce the frequency of residual collection less than fortnightly for two main reasons
- it penalises residents who are recycling fully; and
 - it is a clear reduction in service provision.
- 4.7 Due to the above, it is proposed that we change the current residual collection levels within the County Borough to:-
- Rhondda - the current **4 bag** allowance per fortnight be **reduced to 2 bags**;
 - Cynon & Taf - a '**no side waste**' policy is brought in regardless of bin size, with the provision that the bin lid has to be closed.
- 4.8 In Cynon and Taf, there are mainly two bin sizes, that is 240 litre or 120 litre bin. In lieu of removing all 240l bins and replacing with new 120l bins, it is proposed that the Council continues with its policy of when a bin is requested, to only provide a 120l bin. This policy has been in place for 30 months and we anticipate that well over 65% of bins in use are now the 120l bins and in time the amount of 240l will gradually reduce further. The Council will continue to provide support to households who for various reasons may struggle with these proposals eg households with ash waste and large families.

- 4.9 The reason for this approach is rather than a change in collection frequency which affects all residents, the change recommended ensures that there will be no adverse affect on our many residents who currently fully engage in the service, as this change is aimed at engaging with residents who either take no part in the recycling scheme or take part on a limited basis.
- 4.10 Over the Christmas period, there would be a relaxation of the restriction, whereby in the Rhondda there would be a **4 bag limit** whilst in Cynon and Taf, any resident with a 120l bin could have **one bag of side waste** whilst there will be no change to the policy for any resident with a 240l bin for the Christmas period.
- 4.11 In past years, the Council has had no powers to tackle residents not prepared to engage in the recycling scheme but in conjunction with Welsh Government and all Welsh Councils, we are now in a position under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and Clean Neighbourhoods Act (CNA) to tackle this issue.
- 4.12 The EPA Sec.46 allows a Waste Authority to specify what may/may not be placed in any specified container, by way of a notice. It is recommended that by way of a notice we inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag.
- 4.13 If the Notice is breached, and following a warning, then a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £100 can be issued under Sec.47ZA of the EPA as inserted in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act.
- 4.14 The Council has since its inception always stated that enforcement is a last resort, and it would be the same in this case, with the team initially raising awareness with residents on this matter and only issuing a FPN if and when all other avenues have been exhausted
- 4.15 The Council currently collects green waste on a **weekly** basis all the year round, even in the winter months when the growing season has ended. In order to improve the efficiency of the service, it is recommended that between 1st November and the 1st March the service reverts to a **fortnightly** service and revert back to a **weekly** service thereafter, whilst there will be no real term financial saving, it will reduce wasted travelling time.
- 4.16 In order to raise awareness with our residents, if Cabinet approve the recommendations, it will be important to run an awareness campaign at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes and to continue the awareness campaign once the changes have started.
- 4.17 The awareness raising would be similar to previous successful campaigns in recycling where we look to engage with residents on the reasons behind the change and what the outcomes will be, with the use of various marketing

tools such as social media, council website, town centre awareness events, cinema, information leaflets, etc.

- 4.18 It is proposed that the changes set out above will be implemented from 4th June, 2018.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No consultation is required

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment scoping exercise has been undertaken that indicates that there would be no such implications. There are no equality or diversity implications aligned to the recommendations in the report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There will be no significant budget implications and any funding needed can come from within existing budgets
- 7.2 If the changes implemented produce a significant swing from residual waste to recycling there will be a cost saving although this is difficult to quantify at present.
- 7.3 Funding to support the awareness campaign is available from within existing budgets.
- 7.4 If the Council does not improve its recycling rates by 6% from the current recycling rate of 64% to 70% by 2025, Welsh Government will levy significant penalties on the Council. These penalties are significant, and if no further progress is made in terms of improving the recycling rates, the cost to the Council could be in excess of hundreds of thousands of pounds dependant how much we fail by.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005
Environmental Protection Act 1990

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

9.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular *"Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work"*.

- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment will be clean and attractive...*
- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces will continue to be valued by residents...*

9.2 These proposals are also consistent with the Well-being Goals under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- *A healthier Wales – a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities – attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.*

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council has to meet its statutory recycling targets to avoid financial penalties. The fines are significant, and without some change to the current service provision, it could struggle to achieve the recycling targets. Therefore doing nothing is not really an option and as in previous changes the recommendations outlined in this report look to allow the Council to achieve those targets whilst not adversely affecting the residents already fully engaged with the service.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee