



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20**

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

### **REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF RECYCLABLE MATERIAL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

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Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the management of recyclable material in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the content of the report; and
- 2.2 Task the Service Director - Democratic Services and Communications to undertake the appropriate report of how the Council facilitates the use of recyclable waste in the future.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will be aware of recent press coverage about plastic waste from the UK being found dumped outside the town of Jenjarom, Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. The illegal dumping of waste featured in a three part KEO Productions documentary for the BBC "*War on Plastic with Hugh and Anita*" with the first programme scheduled for transmission on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019.
- 3.2 Within the rubbish at Jenjarom, it was reported by the programme that one Rhondda Cynon Taf Council recycling bag was found. We have not had access to the

conclusions formed by the documentary, but we have carried out our own investigations into why a Rhondda Cynon Taf recycling bag, with no waste inside, was found in Malaysia.

#### **4. INFORMATION PROVIDED IN RESPONSE**

- 4.1 It is important to highlight that until being contacted by the production company responsible for this series that, to our knowledge, which was based upon the contractual arrangements we have in place, all our recyclable waste was being processed in the correct way.
- 4.2 The Council has conducted a full investigation with the accredited company concerned to find out why a Rhondda Cynon Taf recycling bag was found in Malaysia.
- 4.3 The company concerned maintain that the correct procedures have been followed in respect of managing the recyclable waste of this Council. The Council no longer utilises this company and can confirm that since 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018, the Council has not exported any waste materials outside of the EU.
- 4.4 This Authority was asked to take part in a BBC Documentary on plastics and were told the show wanted to highlight the good practice work being undertaken by the council
- 4.5 The Council was able to effectively investigate the formal process a bag would have gone through to end up at the reported location, as the council only use registered contractors. As there was a contractual arrangement in place we have relied upon the integrity of the registered contractors.
- 4.6 For the record the company involved in the export have informed us they were confident it was not through their processes that a bag would have arrived at this location as they utilize registered outlets. The council ceased its contractual arrangements with this company in May 2018.

#### **5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 The Council continues to ensure that as much of its recycling is processed in the UK in a sustainable manner and will continue to look for markets closer to where the material is collected from.
- 5.2 The Council can also confirm that 97% of our waste was processed in the UK. The remaining 3% was for specific reasons, such as paper mill capacity in the UK, treated and processed outside the UK under EU and the Environment Agency licenses.
- 5.3 In response to this discovery, the Council has also sought assurances and evidence from all its UK waste processing contractors, all of whom are licensed and regulated by the Environment Agency, to reaffirm that all Rhondda Cynon

Taf Council's waste has been properly processed in the UK. All the companies have provided evidence that this is the case.

5.4 The Council supports the action being taken by the Environment Agency to investigate and prosecute organisations that have not complied with their licences to recover and recycle plastics exported to countries such as Malaysia but are fraudulently sending the waste to landfill or illegally dumping it.

5.5 As Members will be aware, the Council's recycling bags are freely available across the County Borough.

5.6 RCT Council continues to develop an Eco Park at Bryn Pica where companies will process materials collected in the County Borough utilising green energy produced on site and highlighting true circular economy.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no Equality or Diversity implications aligned to this report.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 There are no Consultation implications aligned to this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1 There are no Legal Implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

10.1 The recycling processes we adopted align themselves to the Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities.

10.2 This is linked with the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, helping to create a resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

10.3 The Council's response to Net Zero – the Committee on Climate change was recently reported to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

10.4 The report seeks to understand its impact on the environment and respond to the issues set out in the Committee on Climate Change Report – Net Zero. The future actions that arise as a result of the recommendations in the report will set out new requirements and aspirations of the new Council Corporate Plan and will take full regard to the 7 National Wellbeing goals.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 RCT Council is proud of its recycling services and prides itself on being at the forefront of continuous improvement in this area.
- 11.2 Since the subject matter of recent media coverage, the Council has conducted a full investigation with the companies which it has entered into contractual arrangements to process recyclable material.
- 11.3 The council continues to progress its Eco Park plans and the development of the new Material Recycling Facility, which is currently under construction.