

Turning Rubbish into a Resource

**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Waste and Resource Strategy – 2025 to 2030**



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (the Council) is committed to delivering high quality, sustainable waste management services. Over the previous 10 years the Council has focused waste policy on the diversion of waste from landfill, implementing measures aimed at delivering high rates of recycling. During the financial year ending Apr-24 the council recycled 67.23% of all municipal solid waste collected throughout the borough.
- 1.0.2 This strategy document sets out the Council's approach to delivering a cost effective, high performing waste collection service over the next 6 years. Providing residents with a convenient and 'easy to participate in' recycling service, whilst achieving recycling rates in excess of 70% shall be the overarching principal of the strategy.
- 1.0.3 Waste management collection services and the recycling and disposal of solid waste results in carbon emissions. The Council has set out how it will reduce carbon emissions in its climate change strategy 'Think Climate'. In making decisions regarding the method of waste collection or the processes and services used to recycle or dispose of waste, the Council will look to reduce carbon emissions wherever practicable.
- 1.0.4 The waste and resource strategy has been developed in a manner that is consistent with the Council's corporate values and wider strategic plans.

1.1 Scope

- 1.1.1 This strategy document sets out the Council's strategic waste management objectives and details measures that will be used to achieve the required level of performance, with respect to measurable targets. The strategy will be used by the Council as a framework for the delivery of services and will follow the prioritisation of the waste hierarchy. Over the next 5 years the Council will aim to:
- Assist households in the reduction of waste through education and other practicable waste reductions measures (e.g. reuse).
 - Reuse, recycle and compost as much waste as technically and economically feasible.
 - Improve the efficiency and sustainability of each aspect of the service, from collection at the kerbside to the delivery of high-quality materials to the circular economy.
 - Continue to provide a simple, easily accessible waste and recycling service.
 - Comply with all relevant legislation.

1.2 Policy Context

- 1.2.1 The Council continues to collect municipal waste in accordance with the obligation placed upon it under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended. The Act provides the Council with the authority to specify the way in which waste is presented for collection and to issue written warnings and penalties for failure to comply with collection requirements.
- 1.2.2 Waste management policy was devolved to Welsh Government within the provision of the Government of Wales Act 2006. Since this time Welsh Government have issued several waste policy documents along with legislation setting out statutory obligations for increased recycling of municipal solid waste and diversion of waste from landfill.
- 1.2.3 The Future Generations Act 2015 sets out a framework within which Welsh public authorities should seek to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the needs of future generations. It is an overarching policy directive, which has implications for a wide range of Council strategies and services and is particularly relevant to our approach to waste management. The transition to a more circular economy will ensure that resources are not wasted and are available to society in the future.

Landfill Allowance and Recycling

- 1.2.4 The Waste (Wales) Measure 2010 sets out progressive annual targets for Welsh local authorities in relation to recycling, preparation for re-use and composting. The final target set out in the current form of the legislation is 70% recycling (inclusive of re-use, recycling and composting) of municipal solid waste during the financial year 2024/25. Failure to meet this target may result in financial penalties levied by Welsh Government Ministers. Other relevant legislation in this respect are as follows:

- Landfill Allowance Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2004 – makes provision for restricting waste disposed of to landfill.
- Recycling, Preparation for Re-use and Composting Targets (Definitions) (Wales) Order 2011 – provides rules on what can and cannot qualify for recycling, re-use or composting.
- Recycling, Preparation for Re-use and Composting Targets (Monitoring and Penalties) (Wales) Order 2011 – defines the financial penalty as being £200 per tonne by which a local authority falls short of the annual targeted amount.

Beyond Recycling

- 1.2.5 In 2021 Welsh Government published its updated waste strategy 'Beyond Recycling'. This sets out a commitment in Wales to accelerate the transition to a circular, low carbon economy. Of the eight commitments outlined within the strategy the following three are considered to be fundamental to the Council's waste and resource management strategy going forward:
- We will strive to achieve the highest rates of recycling in the world.

- We will reduce the environmental impact of the waste collection from our homes and businesses.
- We will take full responsibility for our waste. We will reduce the amount of waste that we produce and effectively manage what we create by having the infrastructure we need.

Trade Waste

1.2.6 The Council is required to provide waste collections from commercial businesses, where there is a demand. This requirement is set out within the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Act defines 'commercial premises' and makes provision for the Council to levy charges for commercial waste collection and disposal service. The Council continues to operate a 'Trade Waste' collection service, providing local businesses with opportunities to recycle their waste as far as practicable.

1.2.7 Welsh Government's Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023, came into effect in April-24. This legislation constitutes a considerable change in the collection of commercial waste across Wales. For the first time, it is a legal obligation to collect commercial waste in a manner which facilitates recycling. The following requirements for the collection of this waste type are noted as being relevant to the Council's Trade Waste Service.

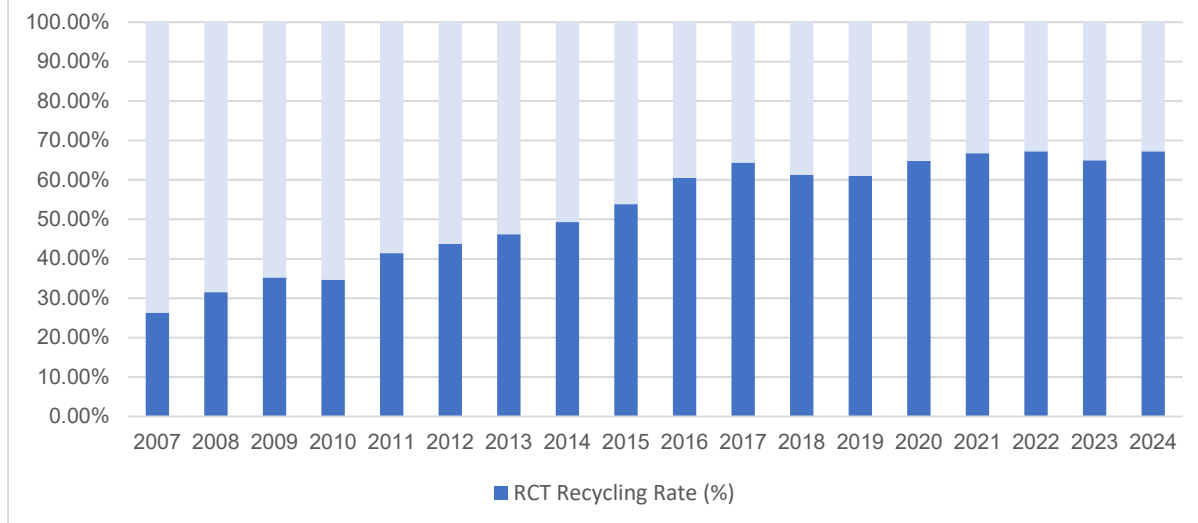
- Food Waste must be presented and collected separately from other recyclable materials and residual waste.
- The four main types of recyclable materials (paper, glass, plastic and metal) must be presented separately from residual waste and as a minimum must be collected in three separate waste streams: i) paper and card, ii) Plastics and Metals, iii) glass.
- Separately collected wastes must be kept separated during collection and processing.
- Waste Electronics and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) and unsold textiles must also be presented and collected separately.

1.2.8 The Council has provided its commercial customers with food waste receptacles and various coloured bags for the separation of recycling. The legislation is being enforced in a transitional manner under the regulation of Natural Resources Wales. The Council may be required to make changes to its Trade Waste collection services as further guidance on compliance becomes available.

1.3 Review of Current Performance (Where we are)

1.3.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has consistently achieved high recycling rates, complying with each of the sequential targets specified within the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010. This has been achieved through resident's participation in kerbside recycling collections. Figure 1, provided below, provides an overview of the Council's progression from less than 30% recycling for the 2006/07 financial year to the current recycling rate of 67.23% recycling, as reported for 2023/24.

Figure 1: Headline Annual Recycling Rate reported for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council during the period 2006/07 to 2023/24.



1.3.2 It is shown that the Council and its residents progressed reasonably consistently to 65% recycling through the period 2007 to 2017, whilst progression toward 70% has been more difficult. Key actions taken by the Council to facilitate this progression can be summarised as follows:

Year	Milestone
2006	RCT Council introduces borough wide, mixed dry recycling collection. Residents are provided with a clear plastic sack, targeting the four main materials (glass, metal, paper and plastic).
2009	The Council introduces source separated food waste collection across all its households. Residents are provided with a 'kitchen caddy', for separation of food waste within the home and a larger plastic bin for outside storage and presentation at the kerbside.
2013	RCT Council alters the frequency of the collection of residual household waste from weekly to fortnightly and implemented a limit on the volume of residual waste permitted for each household (limited to 2 standard refuse sacks per fortnight). In addition the Council start the process of replacing 240 litre (wheeled) bins with smaller 170 litre versions.
2014	The Council introduces side waste restrictions. Households with 240-litre bins were precluded from presenting extra bagged residual waste (side waste). Households with a 120-litre bin were allowed to present 1 additional side waste bag. In relation to the acceptance of residual waste within the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (CRC Sites), a policy was implemented preventing the disposal of bagged mixed waste.
2015	To improve the quality of recycling and to comply with the requirements of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, the Council introduced

	<p>separate collection of green waste, presented at the kerbside in clear plastic sacks.</p> <p>The Council introduces increased resources for monitoring recycling quality and implements a policy of enforcement for persistent non-compliance.</p>
2016	<p>The frequency of waste collection services provided internally to other Council departments / buildings was extended from weekly to fortnightly.</p> <p>The Council introduces Christmas Tree recycling through a booking system.</p>
2019	<p>Introduction of separate food waste collection for trade customers.</p> <p>The Council partners with Amgen Cymru in the development of a 'state of the art' materials recycling facility at the Bryn Pica (Aberdare) waste management site.</p>
2021	<p>Reusable Hessian Sacks are provided to all households for the collection and presentation of garden (green) waste. This reduced the Council's consumption of single use plastic sacks.</p>
2022	<p>'Up Your Recycling Game', waste and recycling awareness campaign launched.</p>
2023	<p>The Council further extends the frequency of the collection of residual household waste from fortnightly to three-weekly, whilst maintaining the previously implemented, residual waste volume controls.</p>
2024	<p>The Council implements its 'Bins to Bags' policy, requiring all residents to present residual waste at the kerbside in standard refuse sacks, as opposed to wheeled bins, which were used by around 60% of households.</p> <p>Implementation of the Workplace Recycling Regs [Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023] and the introduction of 3-weekly collections for trade waste customers.</p>

- 1.3.3 Volumes of both dry mixed recycling (DMR) and separated food waste collected at the kerbside have steadily increased over the past 5 years. The total volume of residual waste collected from households reduced from 33,292 Tonnes, during the 2019/20 reporting period to 28,195 Tonnes in 2023/24. This has been achieved through wide participation in the kerbside recycling scheme, with a high percentage of households consistently presenting DMR, Food Waste and other separately collected fractions weekly.
- 1.3.4 The Council operates six community recycling centres, also known as Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Residents can use these facilities to recycle a wide range of household items such as garden waste, metal, wood, rigid plastics and cardboard. Whilst there is provision for the disposal of non-recyclable, residual waste, residents are encouraged to recycle as much of their waste as possible.
- 1.3.5 Recent surveys undertaken by the Council indicate that the majority of residents consistently participate in the Council's weekly kerbside recycling service. They take

advantage of the benefits of the widely accessible and easy to use service, presenting separately collected wastes in the required form. There does however remain a small percentage of households that only participate in certain elements of the service and / or do so infrequently.

1.3.6 During a series of street surveys undertaken during 2023, it was determined that between 30 and 35% of households did not consistently present food waste for recycling. Whilst overall participation increased considerably following the implementation of 3-weekly residual waste collections in July-23, participation in food waste recycling remained below 80% of households surveyed. Furthermore a small waste characterisation survey undertaken on residual waste sampled from a range of households was shown to contain recyclable food waste at levels as high as 25% (Wrap 2023).

1.3.7 To enable the Council to attain and then exceed the 70% recycling target, household participation rates need to increase along with the overall volume of material that each household recycles. Public awareness campaigns shall continue to be used to encourage residents to regularly recycle their waste and will aim to maximise participation in:

- dry recycling (glass, metal, paper and plastic),
- food waste (discarded food and peelings and other biodegradable kitchen waste)
- garden waste (grass cuttings and tree clippings etc.).

In addition, residents are encouraged to utilise the Council's Community Recycling Centres to their full potential. With the provision of recycling disposal points for over 20 different material types, it is important that resident separate their waste as far as practicably possible.

1.4 Future Waste Management Trends

1.4.1 In 2024, research and consulting organisation Eunomia published a league table of global recyclers (Global Recycling League Table – Phase One Report, Eunomia 2024). Wales was placed second, marginally behind Austria with a headline recycling rate of 59%. Welsh Government has signalled its intension to transition to a 'zero waste' economy by 2050 and whilst the current municipal recycling target of 70% is yet to be achieved by many of the 22 local authorities, it is expected that future metrics will look to push beyond 70%. Welsh Government are currently considering the degree to which further legislative targets are required to achieve the 'zero waste' objective. The Council will consider any guidance or legislation in due course and may review this strategy where action is required to ensure compliance.

1.4.2 Progress in recycling within Wales has in the greater part been driven by interventions targeting materials at the point of disposal. There is a clear trend that policy makers intend to shift some of this focus towards product manufacturers and suppliers. In particular, extended producer responsibility (EPR) and Deposit and Return Schemes

(DRS) are two policy areas that the Council expects government will seek to make progress on, over the term of this strategy. Measures associated with these concepts will directly affect the Council's collection strategy and could have a significant impact on sources of funding available to support the costs of recycling collections.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

- 1.4.3 Much of the waste collected by the Council, from households constitutes discarded packaging materials. Glass bottles, steel cans and cardboard are heavily relied upon by manufacturers, particularly within the food and drink industry, to ensure that their product reaches the consumer in the best possible condition.
- 1.4.4 The pervasive use of these materials is unsustainable, particularly where they fail to be captured for high quality recycling. Packaging materials place a financial burden on waste collection authorities, and it is generally considered that producers have not given sufficient consideration to their end of life. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can be considered to be a range of interventions aimed at shifting elements of the environmental, technical and financial burden of waste, particularly packaging, back onto producers. The desired outcome is for manufacturers to develop more sustainable products and packaging, using less raw materials with reduced energy consumption.
- 1.4.5 At the time of writing (Feb-25) producers considered to be within the scope of the regulations are required to report their packaging data to the regulator for the financial year 2024. They will be required to continue this reporting yearly and from October 2025 (provisional date at the time of writing) will be required to make payments relating to the type and volumes of materials used for packaging. Current estimates suggest that this could raise in the region of £3 Billion in funding and the intention is to provide some of this money to local authorities to compensate for the financial burden resulting from waste packaging.
- 1.4.6 UK Government is currently working on the financial calculations, methodologies and timescales to be used for EPR funding allocations to local councils. There is some indication that payment could be made at the end of the 25/26 financial year.
- 1.4.7 Council staff will ensure that levels of income available to the Council from this source are maximised and where there are opportunities to improve performance metrics related to payments, these will be subject to a business case assessment.

Deposit Return Schemes (DRS)

- 1.4.8 Historically, residents may recall in the 1970/80's returning glass, milk or beverage bottles and receiving a small financial deposit in return. These can be considered to be a simple form of a 'Deposit Return Scheme' and in most cases ended up in the bottle being cleaned and reused. Most examples of this within the UK ended with the rise in popularity of the supermarket and the wide replacement of glass with plastic and metal cans. Many waste policy makers consider this reuse of packaging to be an environmentally sustainable way of reducing packaging production.

- 1.4.9 There is a general desire to implement some form of DRS for certain elements of packaging supplied within the UK market. There are examples of schemes operating successfully in some European countries. UK Government is currently consulting on the potential scope and methodologies of a UK wide DRS, with potential variations among the four devolved governments. When implemented and depending on the scope, DRS may alter the overall composition of municipal recycling collections. This may have implications for elements of the Council's waste and resource strategy.
- 1.4.10 Whilst there may be opportunities for the Council to facilitate DRS, there is also the potential threat that certain, high value packaging materials will be directed away from the Council's recycling collection service. Materials like aluminium and polyethylene terephthalate (PET, typically used in plastic drinks bottles) are some of the few materials that attract a positive income when supplied to the circular economy. The diversion of large volumes of valuable material types, from the Council's recycling collections, will likely result in less income for the Council, impacting on annual operational budgets.
- 1.4.11 The Council will task its officers with staying up to date with information relating to DRS and will undertake modelling of any impact on the service when information is made available by government.

2. WASTE COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

- 2.0.1 The Council provides free at the point of use waste collection services to all households within the county borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf. This is in the form of an efficient, easy to use kerbside waste and recycling collection service. The format of the collection service is such that it encourages residents to reduce their residual waste whilst maximising the opportunities to recycle everyday household items they discard.
- 2.0.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf predominantly consists of what can be described as peri-urban valley communities. The upper valley areas of the Rhondda Fach and Rhondda Fawr and to a slightly lesser extent the Cynon Valley are characterised by rows of terrace houses concentrated on the narrow valley floor and lower slopes of the valley sides. Having been constructed at the beginning of the 20th Century, many of the streets are narrow, with limited kerbside parking and single carriageway access. This presents unique challenges for waste collection services with limited space on the kerbside for a wide range of waste receptacles and access limitations on refuse collection vehicles in certain areas.
- 2.0.3 Towards the south of the borough, whilst there remains a high proportion of terraced housing, there is a higher degree of semi-detached or detached houses with larger plots. Housing growth is generally more prevalent in the south of the borough with areas such as Church Village, Miskin / Pontyclun and Talbot Green featuring amongst the highest housing growth areas over the last 20 years.
- 2.0.4 The Council is committed to the provision of a kerbside waste and recycling service of a form that is best suited to the morphology of its communities and the demographics therein.

2.1 Recycling Collections

- 2.1.1 Of the circa 116,000 Tonnes of household waste collected by the Council during the 23/24 reporting period, around 50,000 Tonnes (43%) was recyclable materials presented at the kerbside. It is important that communities continue to present their recycling in the forms prescribed by the Council. This will facilitate efficient recycling collections and provide materials of good quality for supply into the circular economy.

Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR)

- 2.1.2 Most of the consumable items discarded routinely by households, fall within four material types: paper, plastic, metal and glass. These 'Dry Recyclable' materials are collected weekly by the Council. For ease of participation and efficiency of collection, residents are provided with clear plastic sacks and requested to present their household recyclable materials together. This 'dry mixed recycling' (DMR) is transferred to the Council's 'state of the art', Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), where it is separated into a number of different material streams for supply to manufacturers operating within the circular economy, for example: paper mills and glass remanufacturers.

2.1.3 Residents can obtain free 'recycling bags', a plastic translucent sack, from one of many local supply points located throughout the borough. During the term of this strategy, the Council will review the distribution methodology and may consider other means for the supply of recycling bags to households. These will aim to increase the efficiency by which recycling bags are distributed to residents, whilst controlling any wastage.

Food Waste

2.1.4 The Council encourages its residents to separate food from other wastes through the provision of free food waste recycling bags and hygienic kitchen caddies (plastic food waste containers). In addition, a larger food waste bin is also provided for presentation of the separated food waste at the kerbside. Food waste collections are provided weekly.

2.1.5 Food is an important resource, and the Council will continue to encourage residents not to waste food. This will be done in partnership with relevant public organisations such as the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) and will typically take the form of awareness raising campaigns (e.g. Love Food, Hate Waste).

2.1.6 Where the discarding of food waste cannot be avoided, and where it can be effectively segregated from other waste types, it remains a valuable commodity. Food waste collected by the Council within the borough is treated at the Tomorrow's Valley Food Waste Anaerobic Digestion Plant (Bryn Pica, Aberdare). The facility recycles food waste into electrical energy and liquid fertiliser creating local jobs and delivering wider economic benefits.

Garden (Green) Waste

2.1.7 Garden waste originating from households is collected free of charge by the Council with a borough wide weekly collection service during the period April to October (inclusive), with an opt-in (registered) service for the remainder of the year. The Council provides residents with two reusable hessian (green) sacks for the presentation of garden waste at the kerbside. Additional bags can be purchased as required.

2.1.8 Green waste is processed and recycled by the Council's partners into a high-quality soil improver. This is typically done through the process of windrow composting although other viable technologies are available and may be used depending on specific benefits.

Other separately Collected Fractions

2.1.9 In addition to the three main recycling streams discussed above, the Council also provides collection and deposit services for more specialist recyclable wastes. The council has a special collection for waste Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP), such as nappies and similar household sanitary items. This is an opt-in service with registered households being provided with purple plastic sacks and a secure plastic caddy for

presentation of this waste at the kerbside. Collections for registered households are weekly.

2.1.10 The Council provides a number of convenient places throughout the community for the recycling of small, household waste electrical equipment (WEEE). Collection points at a number of Council facilities, including sport centres, are well equipped and provide information on what items can and cannot be accepted for recycling.

Changes to the Council's Recycling Collection Service

2.1.11 The Council may during the term of this strategy change the format of its kerbside recycling scheme, in order to respond to a range of outcomes including recycling performance, legislative change and or general efficiency pressures. This may result in the introduction or removal of certain separately collected waste streams, where there is clear environmental, operational or financial justification in doing so.

2.2 Residual Waste Collection

2.2.1 The Council provides extensive services for the recycling of waste. As such the remaining percentage of household waste that cannot be recycled is low. This 'residual waste' element can be placed in standard refuse sacks (typically black bags) for collection at the kerbside.

2.2.2 Household residual waste has a significantly higher environmental impact compared to discarded materials that are reused and recycled. Furthermore, residual waste typically cost the Council more in collection, transfer and disposal costs. The Council's policy is to promote recycling over residual waste in every facet of its waste strategy and collection operation.

2.2.3 Research demonstrates that the availability of residual waste collections directly influences household recycling performance; residents are less likely to recycle where there is frequent, unrestricted access to residual waste disposal. Like many other Councils across Wales, RCT restricts the volume of residual waste that can be presented for disposal. At the time of writing, this is three number standard size black refuse sacks, collected every three weeks.

2.2.4 Where it is demonstrated that further improvements in recycling performance can be attained, the Council may consider further alteration to the volume, frequency and method of presentation for residual waste.

2.2.5 At the time of writing this strategy, the UK Government has an open consultation on an expressed proposal to extend the scope of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK-ETS) to include Energy from Waste (EfW) and waste incineration processes. If implemented in a manner that is currently predicted, such a move would require operators of such waste recovery facilities to purchase 'carbon credits' to cover the environmental cost of carbon emissions that result from the respective incineration process. This will in turn increase operational cost and there is every indication that this will be passed on to customers in the form of gate fees. Indicative estimates

suggest that the purchasing of such credits, could result in additional gate fee costs for EfW of between £35-£70 per Tonne. This could come into force as early as 2028.

2.2.6 The Council depends on EfW for the disposal of residual waste collected across the borough. Despite the predicted growth in recycling, the Council could still expect to be collecting from households, around 30,000 Tonnes of residual waste, year on year over the term of this strategy. Introduction of the UK-ETS in the expected form will result in additional waste disposal charges to the council in the range £1.1 Million to £2.1 Million.

2.2.7 Council services are under severe financial pressure with significant budget shortfalls projected over the period of this strategy. It is therefore important that the service mitigates these potentially significant cost increases. The main action that can be taken in this respect will be to further increase recycling to significantly reduce the volume of residual waste generated by households and collected by the Council across the borough.

2.3 Household Waste Recycling Centres (CRC Sites)

2.3.1 Household items that are not collected at the kerbside can be taken to one of the Council's six community recycling centres (CRCs). These are operated by the Council's waste management partner, Amgen Cymru and are situated at convenient locations throughout the borough.

2.3.2 Similar to the kerbside collection service, there is a focus on recycling at the CRC Sites. Residents are encouraged to separate their household waste by material type with over 20 individual materials streams available on most sites.

2.3.3 Residual waste disposal points are provided as a means of last resort. Residents are precluded from disposing of bagged mixed waste. Where residents have failed to follow this directive, they will continue to be instructed to remove the waste from the site and encouraged to return when the waste is sorted for recycling.

2.4 Changes in Collection Methodology

2.4.1 The Council is committed to maintaining an efficient, accessible, compliant, high performing and low carbon waste and recycling service. To achieve this the Council will, on occasions need to change the form of its collection methodology. Such changes may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Adjustments to collection frequency, the day and or time of collection for elements of the service.
- Changes in the manner in which residents are required to present waste at the kerbside.
- Addition or removal of certain waste types for separate collection.
- Variation in the types of vehicles used to collect the waste in the community.

3. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY

3.0.1 A 'circular economy' can be considered as one that retains materials and resources for as long as possible by avoiding waste and using natural resources as efficiently as practicable. Such an approach can preserve the environment and its limited resources for future generations. Whilst both national and regional economies have commenced the transition to circularity, in many ways they can still be considered to be linear in that they continue to produce large volumes of waste and have increased consumption of natural resources, such as energy or raw materials.

3.0.2 Many of the products purchased by households within Rhondda Cynon Taf, will have been manufactured via international supply chains and may originate from countries that have lower environmental standards. The difficulties in the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the Covid-19 pandemic is an example of how the communities of Wales rely on the import of everyday products.

3.0.3 The discarding of products and materials and the replacing of them with imported goods results in a loss of value within the local economy. A simple example could be as follows:

<i>The purchasing of a quality used and refurbished television from a high-quality local reuse provider such as Too Good To Waste in Ynyshir, compared to the purchasing of the latest model that has been imported from an overseas manufacturer.</i>	
Circular Economy Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase at a significantly lower price than new alternative. • Money from the sale goes to local people, who may then spend that money locally. • Skills developed by local communities in refurbishing and reselling products. • Reduced transport and embedded carbon in reused products. • Reduce waste and impact on local environment. • Not dependent on global supply chain disruption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not have the functionality of the latest models, some of which may not be fully used.

3.0.4 The Council identifies the potential benefits of further transition to a more circular economy and will take this into consideration in its decision making towards waste and recycling.

3.1 Partnership with Amgen Cymru

- 3.1.1 Amgen Cymru (Amgen) is the trading name for Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Ltd., a private limited company owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. In excess of 80% of the income generated by waste management services provided by Amgen, is sourced directly from the Council. This is mostly in the form of gate fees for waste handling, sorting and recycling. The board of directors controlling Amgen is made up of two senior Council Officers and a third non-executive director. The Company reports annual accounts to Companies House / HMRC in accordance with relevant legislation and is audited externally by a third party, certified accounting provider.
- 3.1.2 In 2019 the Council partnered with Amgen in the funding and development of a 'state of the art' Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). The facility benefits from the latest technology in material identification and mechanical sorting and is used to separate the circa 35,000 Tonnes of DMR collected annually by the Council within the borough.
- 3.1.3 Amgen operates the Council's six Community Recycling Centres providing waste management expertise in the development, operation and ongoing environmental compliance of the facilities. The Company's experienced officers work with the Council's procurement team to source services for the ongoing processing / recycling of a wide range of materials.
- 3.1.4 It is acknowledged that Amgen has developed into a high performing waste management specialist and makes significant contributions to the Council's delivery of high recycling rates for its residents. In this respect the Council will continue its partnership with Amgen and where opportunities for further development or improvement in the service can be identified, will support Amgen in this respect.

3.2 Delivering Efficient, High Quality Recycling

- 3.2.1 As society transitions to a more circular economy, recyclable materials such as paper, plastic, metal and glass will develop increasing values. The degree to which the Council and its partner Amgen are able to generate income for these materials is dependent on the final quality of the materials, market conditions and the robustness of any procurement process associated with their onward sale.
- 3.2.2 The Council and its waste management partners will always seek to produce the highest quality recycling given technical, social and economic constraints. Whether making decisions on its own waste practices or procuring external waste management services the Council will place an emphasis on the quality of recycling from the point of collection to the end destination.
- 3.2.3 In order to deliver best value and high-quality recycling outcomes the Council will continue to utilise frameworks for the selection of waste and recycling transport and processing. Companies purchasing our materials will be required to demonstrate high environmental and corporate compliance and provide recycling outcomes, often referred to as 'end destinations' that are high quality, clearly traceable and are as local to the point of origine as practicable.

3.2.4 The Council will continue to collaborate with other local authorities within the region to procure recycling outlets and services, with the aim of delivering economies of scale and best value.

3.3 Repair and Reuse

3.3.1 Welsh Government's waste strategy 'Beyond Recycling', documents the aspiration to move towards a "universal culture of re-use, repair and remanufacture", identifying reuse and repair as a higher sustainability priority within the context of the Waste Hierarchy. Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021-2026 commits to the development of "80 repair and reuse hubs in town centres".

3.3.2 With the assistance of the Welsh Government, RCT Council has developed 3 re-use shops throughout the borough: Llantrisant, Treherbert and Aberdare. During the 2023/24 reporting period, the Council and its reuse service partner (Wastesavers Charitable Trust) reused over 220,000 household items with a combined weight of 350 Tonnes.

3.3.3 The Council will aim to increase this to 500 Tonnes for the 2025/2026 financial year. This will be achieved by improving existing facilities to encourage increased, better-quality donations and where sustainable, developing new facilities in areas that demonstrate a level of demand and where grant funding is available.

3.4 Innovation and Funding

3.4.1 Historically, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has shown regional leadership in respect of sustainable waste management, leading the procurement and development of a range of regionally significant waste management facilities, including a Food Waste Anaerobic Digestion Plant; developed under a public private partnership with a specialist organic waste recycler. The Council has also been recognised nationally for its innovative approach to complex waste management issues and has secured significant sums of grant funding from various sources over the previous 10 years.

3.4.2 The Council will continue this approach through the term of this waste and resource strategy and will work with Welsh Government to identify areas of its operation that can be improved or further developed with targeted support. Council officers will be encouraged to retain and improve upon their waste management knowledge, skills and experience through investment in training. Staff will be encouraged to look for grant funding opportunities that can deliver, quality and efficiency improvements within their service area.

4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 4.0.1 Whilst the Council can set out within this strategy the benefits of sustainable waste management and the transition to more circular practices, the extent to which the aims and objectives outlined can be achieved are heavily dependent on action taken by residents and local communities. The Council can facilitate good waste management practices through waste awareness, education and by recognising where local efforts have contributed to the overall objectives.
- 4.0.2 Our waste and recycling services are delivered by a large workforce of operational staff and waste officers, that work together effectively to provide a first-class service. The Council will continue to invest in its staff and will, where appropriate recognise high performance in accordance with the Council's wider corporate policies.

4.1 Waste Awareness and Education

- 4.1.1 Historically the Council has used its media platforms to raise awareness of reuse and recycling and provide feedback to residents in relation to progress towards recycling targets. We will continue with this approach, ensuring our communications are accurate, non-technical and provide residents with the information they need to continue their recycling journey.
- 4.1.2 With support from Welsh Government, RCT Council has invested in waste education with full time waste awareness and education officers. Awareness officers support within the community, providing feedback to households on local performance and providing information and equipment (i.e. information leaflets and waste receptacles) across the borough.
- 4.1.3 The Bryn Pica Education Centre provides an opportunity for primary school children to get 'hands on' with recycling and sustainability. The centre is equipped with interactive exhibits and skilled education staff deliver activities with clear learning objectives that promote recycling. The Council will continue to make this facility available to schools and other interested community groups and will invest in further improvements to the learning experience, where funding is available.

5. TARGETING PERFORMANCE

5.0.1 In order to achieve the aims set out in the waste strategy the Council will adopt the performance metrics outlined below. These will assist us in prioritising certain elements of the service and allow us to modify our approach where specific measures may indicate that required levels of performance have not been met.

5.1 Data Collection, Management and Reporting

5.1.1 The Council will continue to collate and report on the volumes of waste collected and the amounts that reach reuse, recycling and composting end destinations, as well as waste volumes recovered through Energy from Waste (EfW) or landfilled. This will be done in accordance with the requirements set out by Welsh Government.

5.1.2 The Council shall continue to meet quarterly reporting deadlines and will make headline recycling performance available to residents, typically through existing Wales wide waste information web sites and in direct local communications. Trained waste management officers will inform senior leaders in waste management trends both nationally, regionally and within the borough, to facilitate effective decision making.

5.2 Recycling Rate

5.2.1 The Council is committed to maintaining high levels of recycling. Our performance in this respect will be in part reliant on the participation of residents in the kerbside recycling scheme and quality recycling services provided by our private waste management partners. The form of our kerbside collection service and the provision of community recycling centres across the borough are also important considerations in respect of recycling performance.

5.2.2 Council Officers will monitor the performance of each aspect of the service and effectively communicate with elected members and communities in relation to performance against the following key indicators. Where there is a pattern of reduced performance or where a particular metric has not been achieved, Council Officers will propose interventions aimed at rectifying such outcomes.

5.2.3 At the time of writing the Council is on course to achieve 70% recycling in 2025. Provisional data for the period Apr to Jun 2024 indicates an overall recycling rate of 69.7%. Further gradual increases through the remainder of the 2024/25 reporting period should result in the Council achieving the 70% target, however this will require continued efforts by households to recycle.

5.3 Waste Minimisation and Reuse

5.3.1 In accordance with the principals of the waste hierarchy and Welsh Government's 'Beyond Recycling' strategy, the Council will seek to assist its communities in reducing waste generation and prioritising reuse and repair. The overall volume of waste produced within the borough will be heavily influenced by economic conditions

prevalent at a particular time. Given that the Council has little influence on household waste generation, it is not possible to set targets for waste reduction.

5.3.2 The repair and reuse of everyday household items does help reduce waste generation. The Council provides reuse and repair facilities on some recycling centres and in the community. The Council will continue to grow this network, working operationally with partners and supporting circular economy funding applications, where appropriate.

5.4 Efficiency

5.4.1 Annually, the Council spends in excess of £10 Million in the collection, recycling and disposal of waste, handling in the circa 115,000 Tonnes of waste per year from around 110,000 properties. The Council will ensure that waste collection and disposal services are highly efficient and deliver value for money for local residents.

5.4.2 To achieve this, Council Officers will review operational plans, service contracts and other aspects of expenditure at regular intervals and in response to any proposed service changes.

5.5 Key Objectives

5.5.1 In order to meet the aims set out in this strategy, the Council has adopted 3 key objectives. These are set out as follows:

Objective 1	Attain and sustain recycling levels of at least 70%.
Target	During the term of this strategy, achieve 70% recycling in accordance with the requirement of the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010. Maintain this level and increase further where technically and economically feasible.

Objective 2	Reduce the volume of municipal residual waste collected by the council.
Target	With reference to the desired increase in recycling volumes collected by the Council, action shall be taken to assist households to reduce the use of the residual waste (black bag) collections. The overall volume of residual waste collected from households by the Council shall be lower in the final year of this strategy compared to the value reported for the period Apr-23 to Mar-24.

Objective 3	Increase participation in weekly food waste recycling.
Target	Whilst the Council would seek to discourage the wasting of food wherever possible, it is acknowledged that food waste constitutes a significant proportion of household. During the term of this strategy the Council will take action to ensure that a high percentage of households frequently participate in separate food waste collections.

References

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