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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	31 st March 2021
Report Author	Paul Davies/Stephen Thomas
Service Area	Waste Services
Committee Date	12 th April 2021

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Waste Services – Improving recycling rates and vehicle breakdowns

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report is an update to the scrutiny committee on the improvements being made to one of the key Neighbourhood services priorities of providing services that meet the needs and aspirations of residents and helping to achieve Welsh Government recycling targets, by improving recycling rates and participation in recycling services, through education and enforcement actions. The report also covers the barriers to service delivery when vehicle breakdown occur.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 The content of this report to be discussed and noted

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 In 2015 the Authority implemented a service change to its refuse and recycling collections based on the Welsh Government's collections blueprint and funded through the Collaborative Change Programme (CCP). Refuse bins were downsized from 240ltr to 140ltr per property with some concessions made.

3.2 Dry recycling collections changed from mixed recycling collected in 55ltr boxes or sacks to source separated materials collected in blue re-useable sacks and 55ltr boxes. These materials are collected on a bespoke vehicle where previously collections were made in RCVs and co-mingled.

- 3.3 The garden/food waste service was reduced to seasonal for garden waste from an all year around service and the food waste was collected alongside the dry recycling.
- 3.4 In 2016 WEEE (small electricals) and textiles were added to the materials collected on the recycling vehicles.
- 3.5 Further changes to the services were made in 2016 and 2017 that included the provision of recycling frames for flat complexes and trolley boxes for selected areas of the County Borough funded through CCP.
- 3.6 Welsh Government`s recovery rates for the Recycling, composting and preparation for re-use are set out in the Waste (Wales) measures 2010. In 2019/20 the target increased from 58% to 64%. In 2024/25 the target increases to 70% and aims to achieve zero waste by 2050. Since 2016/17 we have achieved the annual target every year.
- 3.7 Waste Services has 2 Performance Indicators of:
- The amount of waste recycled, composted or prepared for re-use.
 - The amount of residual waste (kg) generated per person per year.
- 3.8 The report covers details on education and enforcement solutions to improve the quality of materials and increase participation in recycling services as well as:-
- Frequency of residual waste collections
 - 'Keeping up with the Joneses' campaign update
 - Vehicle breakdowns and barriers.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

Education and enforcement

- 4.1 In 2019/20 educational information was provided to residents through electronic mediums such as our website and social media posts. Since the loss of the waste Awareness and Behavioural Change Officers a few years previous to this there was very limited educational visits to schools and Community groups.
- 4.2 Residents who didn`t comply with our side waste policy and the placement of recyclable items in the wrong containers policy (Keeping up with the Joneses) received a visit and supporting advisory letter from the Waste & Recycling Wardens. If there was a continuation of failure to comply with these policies then enforcement action was taken under s46 of the EPA 1990.
- 4.3 Both of the above campaigns were implemented to increase materials captured for recycling and to reduce residual waste being sent to Energy from Waste, as well as improving the quality of recyclables collected.

Residual Waste Collections

4.4 Residual waste collections remained on a fortnightly basis in 2019/20.

Keeping up with the Joneses

4.5 The campaign commenced in September 2019 and operated until March 2020 when it was suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions. The table below illustrates the number of educational and enforcement engagements during this period.

	Sept 19 – March 20
Number of properties visited	12,199
Number of first letters	894
Number of s46s	138
Number of FPNs	5
Number of prosecutions	5

Recovery rate

4.6 In 2019/20 we achieved the Welsh Government's recovery target of 64% by attaining 65%.

Fleet

4.7 Prior to purchasing the recycling fleet the authority was collecting recycling throughout the County Borough co-mingled and sending the material to be sorted, this was collected using 3 open back RCVs (refuse collection vehicles). After consolation period with Welsh Government the authority accepted the WG blueprint for kerbside recycling within wales

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

5.1 Education and enforcement

5.2 The education and enforcement programmes have continued as above through electronic medium as well as through the Keeping up with the Jones campaign and excess waste policy enforcement.

5.3 The KUWTJs programme is currently on phase 9 at the end of which 27,000 households would have been monitored. Each phase takes place over a six week period and engages with approximately 3,000 properties per phase.

5.4 To improve the quality of our card and stop any health and safety issues which occurs when broken glass is placed into the containers we have purchased and delivered additional boxes to residents, this was achievable through the with Circular Economy Funding (CEF), from Welsh Government.

5.5 From 5th April 2021 glass and card will be collected separately. This will improve the quality of the card and decrease any health and safety (hand cuts) to crews making it a safer and marketable product.

Residual Waste Collections

5.6 We have continued to operate a fortnightly residual waste collection.

Keeping up with the Joneses

5.7 The Keeping up with the Jones and excess waste enforcement were paused between March 2020 and September 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions.

5.8 The table below illustrates the amount of engagement though the KUWTJs campaign since it restarted in September 2020 to March 2021.

	Sept 20 – March 21
Number of properties visited	11,537
Number of first letters	723
Number of s46s	93
Number of FPNs	3
Number of prosecutions	4

5.9 An additional waste & recycling warden, funded for 12 months from Welsh Government's additional revenue grant has been appointed.

5.10 Between September 2020 and March 2021 a temporary officer was appointed with external Private sector funding to monitor and advise residents who were found to have WEEE items in their wheeled bins, the officer advised residents on how to dispose of their WEEE items in the correct manner. Battery bags were purchased from the funding to provide residents with a means of collecting and disposing of household batteries correctly.

5.11 We are currently working with RSLs to support and improve recycling containment in flats and residential complexes.

Recovery rate

5.12 For the first 3 quarters of 2020/21 our recovery rate is 66.7%.

Fleet

5.13 Waste Management operate a daily collection service for the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil, Kerbside Recycling operate 8 vehicles with 3 spare for approx. 26,000 collections per week as this is a weekly collection, the spare vehicles are cover for breakdowns, 6 weekly safety inspections, services and MOTs for each of the aforementioned the vehicle is unavailable to the service for one week per vehicle.

5.14 Recycling vehicles were registered 2015, vehicle are renewed every 5 years but as a result of the pandemic this has been delayed.

- 5.15 Refuse collection operate 3 vehicles with 1 spare for approx. 13,000 collections per week as this is a fortnightly collection, the spare cover for breakdowns, 6 weekly safety/service inspection and MOTs for the 3 collection rounds again for the aforementioned maintenance we lose each vehicle for a week. All refuse vehicles are renewed every 3 years as these vehicles go to landfill.
- 5.16 Trade waste operate 1 vehicle for all commercial waste within the County Borough this also shares the refuse spare vehicle.
- 5.17 Garden waste operate 2 vehicles with 1 spare for approx. 13,000 collections per week. These vehicles are 13years old and are only used seasonally.
- 5.18 The main barriers are the recycling vehicles were purchased in 2014/2015 and were funded vehicles, paid for by WG. These vehicles should have been renewed 2019/2020. WRAP worked closely with the authority to trial and purchase these vehicles. Although the vehicles were trialled, MTCBC were one of the first Authorities to operate these type of vehicles and problems were identified from the start.
- 5.19 Costings below, the evidence identifies a large increase in costs as the vehicle ages.

Recycling Vehicles comparisons 2019/20 (September to February):

Vehicle hire	Nil
Repairs and Maintenance	£58,316.46
Total	£58,316.46

2020-21 (September to February):

Vehicle hire	£8,670.00
Repairs and Maintenance	£86,826.44
Total	£95,496.44

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 6.1 To continue to achieve the Welsh Government's recovery target of 64% but improve incrementally towards the increased target of 70% by 2024/25. To help us achieve this we have set in-house targets.
- 6.2 To provide residents of Merthyr with a sustainable waste management service that not only achieves recovery targets but is also environmentally beneficial and provides us with good quality marketable products.
- 6.3 There is still a considerable quantity of recyclables and food waste being collected in the residual waste bins. In order to improve our performance we need to focus on reducing the residual waste collected by extracting the recyclable material into the proper waste collection services. The ongoing education and enforcement campaigns above will help us achieve this.
- 6.4 The pandemic delayed us purchasing the vehicles due to the majority of companies closing, as you can see from the fleet update above the renewal programme is now

back on track. Being one of the first authorities in Wales to purchase a kerbside recycling fleet in 2015 caused unforeseen problems.

- 6.5 The new recycling vehicles have now been properly trialled with many makes and models to choose from we have split the fleet of recycling vehicles between Terberg and Romaquip this will hopefully decrease and breakdowns.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 Continue to educate and enforce through the KuwtJs campaign and excess waste policy.
- 7.2 Open the Re-use shop, in line with Government guidelines on Covid 19 to provide our residents with good quality affordable items.
- 7.3 A trial kerbside collection of plastic film, in partnership with Blaenau Gwent CBC and overseen by WRAP Cymru is planned for late Spring/early Summer 2021 (date to be confirmed).
- 7.4 Recycle on the Go bins have been purchased through the CEF grant. These will be placed at strategic locations throughout the County Borough to capture recyclables generated by residents on the go.
- 7.5 Identify and provide sustainable waste management educational support to schools and Community groups utilising existing resources.
- 7.6 Investigate the potential of in-cab technology to produce are more efficient kerbside service.
- 7.7 Achieve the fleet renewal program to avoid continuous breakdowns and vehicle hire.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 8.1 Identify the corporate priorities and respective plans and strategy to which the contents of the report relate. Explain how the issues in the report contribute to the corporate priorities.

JUDITH JONES
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COUNCILLOR DAVID HUGHES
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING &
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		NO