

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Environment and Highways Cabinet Board

14<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### Report of the Head of Streetcare

M. Roberts

#### Matter for Information

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### Recycling Trial

#### Purpose of Report

- 1 To update Members on the containers to be used for the Council's Recycle+ kerb sort recycling service.

#### Executive Summary

- 2 The Council has undertaken a recycling container trial and the 180 litre reusable white bag with diagonal divider is to be replaced with two 90 litre reusable bags which addresses criticism received from the public and significantly speeds up collections thereby increasing efficiency of the collection service.

#### Background

- 3 The Council's Waste Strategy, considered by Cabinet in April 2015, is generally aligned to Welsh Government's (WG) Collections Blueprint. The Blueprint is WG's preferred service configuration for the collection of waste from householders. The Blueprint advocates the collection and sorting of recyclables at the kerbside.
- 4 Recycle+ allows sorting at the kerbside of dry recyclables presented for collection by the householder and is considered to produce high quality recyclables and minimise contamination.

- 5 The Council has rolled-out its kerb sort recycling collection service to approximately one third of the County Borough under the banner “Recycle+”, and is preparing the next phases of roll-out. The phase II roll-out is due to take place in April 2016 whilst the third and final phase is programmed to be completed before the end of 2016/17.
- 6 As part of the initial roll-out householders were provided with the following collection containers for recycling.

| <b>Container</b>            | <b>Material</b>             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 40l box                     | Glass                       |
| 40l box w/lid               | Paper & textiles            |
| 180l reusable bag w/divider | Plastics & cans / cardboard |
| Battery bag                 | Batteries                   |

- 7 The Council has received feedback from Members, residents and operational staff regarding the collection containers, in particular raising concerns about the large re-useable bags with dividers. Specifically the large bags were difficult to handle both for residents and operational staff and the divider did not keep the materials separate in the two sections of the bag as it is not sewn at the base, leading to contamination of recyclables and additional work for the staff at the kerbside.
- 8 As a result of this feedback a recycling container trial was undertaken whereby householders on selected Recycle+ collections rounds were given different collection containers; one area was supplied with two reusable bags whilst the other was supplied with the trolley box system as being used in areas such as Conwy. Food and garden waste was collected from existing containers in both areas:
- 9 One round in the Margam area trialled the following containers:

| <b>System using Two Reusable Bags</b> |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Container</b>                      | <b>Material</b>  |
| 40l box                               | Glass            |
| 40l box w/lid                         | Paper & textiles |
| 90l reusable bag                      | Plastics & cans  |
| 90l reusable bag                      | Cardboard        |
| Battery bag                           | Batteries        |

Another round in the Pontrhydyfen/Tonmawr area trialled:

| <b>System using Trolley Boxes</b> |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Container</b>                  | <b>Material</b>   |
| 45l box w/lid                     | Paper & textiles  |
| 55l box                           | Glass & cardboard |
| 55l box                           | Plastics & cans   |
| Battery bag                       | Batteries         |

The areas were selected for operational reasons and were considered to be representative of properties across the County Borough.

- 10 Feedback was collected from residents and operational staff. The feedback was analysed in conjunction with quantities of recyclables collected and a summary of the findings is set out below.
- 11 With regard to the two Reusable Bags system (compared to the single 180 litre bag):
- 78% of households responding to the survey stated that they preferred the two Reusable Bags system;
  - 85% stated that the smaller bags were easier to lift and move;
  - 87% stated that the smaller bags were easier to store; and
  - 84% thought the system helped them recycle more.

12 With regard to the Trolley Box system (compared to the single 180 litre bag):

- 61% of households responding to the survey stated that they preferred the trolley box system;
- 62% stated that the trolley boxes were easier to lift and move;
- 72% stated that the trolley boxes were easier to store; and
- 58% thought the system helped them recycle more.

Furthermore,

- 55% thought the Trolley Box system had less capacity for recyclables.

Residents also commented on difficulties at properties with stepped access.

13 The Trolley Box system is being promoted by Welsh Government officers and their consultants such as WRAP. Feedback however from members of the public, the collection crews and supervisors in our trials, indicated that the trolley box system allowed for the separate collection of fewer materials compared to the other system trialled. The trolley box system also potentially increases the operational time to segregate the materials at the kerbside which could impact on the number of households serviced by any one collection crew. Furthermore, the system is expensive to implement. [A unit cost of some £34 means the cost of implementation would be approaching £2.2Million for all households in the County Borough.] Conversely, whilst the amount of material collected was significantly down in the trial, there was anecdotal evidence to suggest the recycling material produced was of higher quality.

14 Tonnage data was analysed comparing the tonnage of recyclables collected for the 4 week period immediately before the trial with the 4 week period of the trial itself. It is recognised that the tonnage of

recyclables varies up and down throughout the year, however the pilot round with the Trolley Box system saw a fall of 1.68 tonnes during the trial period compared to a fall of 0.50 tonnes on the pilot round with for the 2 Reusable Bags system.

- 15 As a result of the findings of the trial, the smaller 90 litre reusable sacks have been purchased to go with the Phase II roll out of Recycle+, along with sufficient sacks to retrofit households within Phase I. The reusable sacks cost £1.70 over bag and the cost of 90 litre sacks for phase II plus sacks to retrofit Phase I is £136,000

### **Financial Impact**

- 16 Welsh Government have provided funding for the 7 kerb-sort vehicles being deployed as part of the Phase II Recycle+ roll out, with the reusable bags being purchased via the Strategic Waste Reserve.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 17 A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.

### **Workforce Impact**

- 18 There are manual handling implications associated with the 180 litre bag which have been noted by the HSE in a recent inspection visit and which are resolved when replaced by the two smaller 90 litre bags. The changes in the system also allows more properties to be served by a vehicle and crew during the working days increasing service efficiency which helps to secure sustainability of the service going forward and will reduce overtime working.

### **Legal Impact**

- 19 The two smaller sack system assists the Council in complying with Health and Safety legislation.

## **Risk Management**

- 20 Risk of failure to comply with health and safety legislation is substantially reduced. Furthermore, the change has been informed by piloting changes which reduces potential reputational and other risks associated with change.

## **Sustainable Development**

- 21 As well as helping to increase the amount of recyclables recovered and minimise landfill, the introduction of kerb sort recycling is helping increase the quality of materials collected making them more attractive to third party re-processors. This should help ensure that the Council's contractors can continue to find outlets for all its recyclables.
- 22 The on-going collection and management of both recyclable and compostable material throughout the County Borough, in line with the latest WG guidelines helps promote a circular green economy and contributes to delivering the wider aims of the national waste strategy for Wales 'Towards Zero Waste'. In turn it will help deliver 'one planet' living with respect to Welsh consumption of energy and resources, and have a positive impact with respect to climate change.

## **Consultation**

- 23 The change being implemented has been subject to external consultation with residents that participated in the trial. Collection crews and operational supervisors were also consulted during the process.

## **Appendices - None**

## **List of Background Papers**

- 24 Equalities Impact Screening Assessment

- 25 Environment and Highways Cabinet Board, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015, Waste Strategy Update
- 26 Municipal Sector Plan Part 1, Towards Zero Waste, Collections Blueprint

### **Officer Contact**

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