

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

28 July 2022

Report of the Head of Streetcare

Mike Roberts

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Future Waste Depot Requirements and Collection Fleet Relocation

Purpose of the Report

To report the outcome of the previously approved feasibility study and staff consultations into relocating the waste fleet to the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station, to present proposals to create an electric vehicle capable depot for the council's Waste Services at the Transfer Station, and to seek Member approval for associated financial borrowing and the undertaking of a procurement exercise.

Executive Summary

Following Cabinet approval in June 2020 and subsequent operational changes at the Transfer Station, an assessment has been completed into the feasibility of locating the waste collection fleet at the Council's Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station.

The first desktop stage of the assessment determined it is both feasible and beneficial to co-locate the waste collection operation at the Transfer Station, as set out in the summary report included at Appendix A.

On the back of the positive desktop exercise, more detailed outline design work and staff consultations were undertaken. The outcome of the consultation, together with the resulting proposals, have informed this report.

Background

The operation at Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station, formerly known as the “MREC”, was insourced on 1 October 2019. A subsequent report was presented to Members in June 2020 on the outcome of a Management of Change consultation process to alter the operation at the site to that of a transfer station, and bring all staff onto Council terms and conditions of employment. Further to Member approval, staff subsequently transferred to Council terms and conditions in October 2020, and work is currently ongoing to remodel the interior of the facility to that of a transfer station with enhanced recycling capability in line with service needs.

In March 2022 the Council let a Contract via the South West Wales Contractors Framework to remodel the facility. The work is currently programmed to be completed in March 2023.

The waste collection operation has been based at the Service Response Centre (SRC) at Baglan Energy Park since 2008. All of the recyclables and non-recyclables collected at the kerbside by the fleet currently based at the SRC are delivered to the now insourced Transfer Station at Crymlyn Burrows.

The Council’s waste collection service currently relies for the most part on a fleet of diesel powered HGV vehicles. Members will be aware of the national drive towards reducing carbon emissions and achieving ‘Net Zero’. Furthermore, there is an expectation by Welsh Government that Local Government in Wales will decarbonise its vehicle fleet by 2030. Given that the current waste HGV vehicles have a typical lifespan of 7 to 9 years, then the Council will need to be increasingly taking decisions in favour of ultra-low emission vehicles and will need the infrastructure to support them.

It is noted that the bulk of the Council’s recycling collection fleet, some 20 HGV kerbside Resource Recovery Vehicles, are coming towards the end of their working life and procurement is due to start for replacement next year. Furthermore, there will be WG expectation that prime consideration is given to them not being powered by fossil fuels, and to this end WG are offering payments for the difference in cost to purchase electric RRVs over diesel powered units. To inform and hopefully ‘de-risk’ such a change, a single eRRV has just been ordered using

Sustainable Waste Grant funding and WG vehicle transition funding which is due to arrive in March next year.

Initial Stage Desktop Feasibility Study

At the end of 2021, the Council commissioned a feasibility study to look at the following key aspects of co-locating the collection operation at the Transfer Station:

- Physical Assessment – does it fit?
- Operational Impact
- Staff Impact
- Does it meet our goal to decarbonise the collection fleet?

A summary of the report is included in Appendix A, and the main findings are set out below:

- The study found that as a result of the current remodelling of the site to that of a transfer station, the Waste Collection Service can be accommodated at the Crymlyn Burrows site, with sufficient space for fleet parking, staff parking, staff offices and welfare together with associated facilities.
- Co-locating the collection operation at the Transfer Station will reduce operational travel, improve efficiency, and result in associated cost and carbon savings. Furthermore the study found potential benefits associated with improved internal service collaboration and resilience.
- The study also looked at potential further benefits for 'shunt drivers', to off-load collection vehicles whilst drivers take their statutory driving break, and found the potential for future efficiency savings particularly in relation to recycling collection vehicles.
- The study found that relocating waste collection from the SRC to the Transfer Station would result in slightly longer home to work travel for some, whilst others would be shorter, but no journey would increase by more than 4 miles (the distance from the SRC to the Transfer Station). On balance there would be a small overall increase in staff travel to work, however there is a much bigger net carbon saving resulting from the reduced fleet travel.

- The study also noted:
 - The site can accommodate the same or better workforce welfare and office facilities currently provided at the SRC;
 - potential to provide facilities for workplace charging for staff electric vehicles and electric bikes, potentially key in future for staff living in terrace housing or flats with no access to charging points;
 - better public transport links (albeit not currently available for shifts starting at 06:00 as with The Quays).
- Members have received reports from the Head of Engineering and Transport on the need for the Council to transition to a 'zero emissions' fleet and provide associated electric charging infrastructure. It has been highlighted that the number of Battery Electric Vehicles within the Council's fleet is set to increase significantly in the coming years; and the need to identify parking with sufficient charging infrastructure. One of the main constraints on fleet charging infrastructure is the connection to the power grid. The feasibility study noted that the Crymlyn Burrows site benefits from an existing substantial national power grid connection, and will further benefit from the 500kilowatts of solar panels being installed on the roof of the main building as part of the current remodelling.

Second Stage Study - Staff Consultation

In May this year, the service management team engaged with staff and their Trade Union representatives on a proposed move. All staff affected were given a short presentation and invited to provide feedback. One-to-one meetings were offered, although none were requested. Feedback received was collated to inform the final proposals. The large majority of staff were content with the proposals and made no comment. A few comments were however received and the outline design proposals were amended and re-costed.

Next Steps

The next step is for members to consider the proposal to relocate the waste fleet and associated costs, and take a decision whether a move as recommended by officers should proceed. In doing so, a corporate commitment is needed to meet the cost of the move.

If members support the proposed move, then further to early-stage enquiries already had with the Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs) team, detailed submissions would be prepared and submitted for approval. Furthermore a contract would then be procured and let, subject to the statutory approvals noted, to complete construction followed by ICT and furniture fit outs etc. The draft programme indicates that subject to gaining the necessary approvals the move would be implemented in May 2023 (or would follow as soon as practicable thereafter).

The scheme would facilitate the electrification of the entire waste fleet of vehicles in future, in terms of ducting, cabling, and switchgear etc., with EV chargers to be installed as EV vehicles are purchased (other than two 50KW HGV rapid chargers to be installed as part of the parking alteration works).

Financial Impact

Capital Expenditure

A budget cost of £3.4M including some contingency has been calculated by Consultants SLR for the construction of car parking and new office space with welfare facilities, together with a new safe footpath, transition fuel filling and vehicle wash arrangements.

The Council has a waste reserve of £0.9M available which has been earmarked towards funding the capital expenditure, and therefore prudential borrowing of £2.5M would be required for the project to proceed, the funding of which is considered in the revenue section below.

There will be other costs in future, for additional vehicle chargers and potentially battery storage to make the most cost effective use of the solar energy generated on site. However charger costs would be the same whether the fleet remained at The Quays or is relocated, and will

need to be dealt with at the time of future vehicle purchases. Furthermore it is hoped the cost of chargers will continue to fall and technology improve, so there is no advantage in kitting out the depot with chargers before they are needed. It is noted there are currently some 80 HGV vehicles in the council's fleet, some 50% of which are in Waste, with the others in services such as Highways, Neighbourhood and Transport. Given power demands for HGVs in particular, it is noted the current power infrastructure at The Quays cannot deal with the 50% of HGVs that would remain if the waste collection fleet relocated, and will need substantial additional electric capacity just to deal with 50% of the fleet. In the absence of say a hydrogen solution, a good portion of the Council' fleet needs to move from The Quays to deliver a Battery Electric Solution as a whole.

Whilst the staff car parking at the Transfer Station would be constructed to accommodate workplace chargers they would not be installed initially. Bicycle parking with eBike chargers will be put in at the start. In terms of workplace charging it is likely this will be fundable going forward using grant funding.

During the staff consultation a small number of employees raised concerns about the walk from the staff car parking area to the offices, welfare and fleet parking, some 300metres down the site. As a result the proposal includes provision of a new safe footpath. A canopy over the walkway was also requested to protect staff in poor weather, but has not been included in proposals as the cost would be an additional £260K. An uncovered walk from staff parking to work places is considered to be expected.

Revenue Expenditure

The Feasibility Study showed reduced operational travel with associated reduced fuel costs albeit since the feasibility work was completed fuel prices has increased rapidly with an associated cost pressure for diesel purchase of £130k in Waste Services alone. Notwithstanding the cost of electric vehicles and that the cost of electricity has also risen, ultimately it is going to become uneconomic to run fossil fuelled waste vehicles. The move will enable the transition to an electric collection fleet and purchased energy consumption will be reduced by virtue of the solar roof being installed on the transfer station roof and the reduced operational travel.

Based on a depot infrastructure life span of 25 years, the cost of prudential borrowing to fund the budget gap of £2.5M would be £156,250 per annum, which would need to be met from the revenue budget. It is believed such saving can and will be easily achieved within the waste budget as follows:

- The remodelling works currently underway at the transfer station include the installation of a materials sorting line to separate the steel and aluminium cans from the plastics. The rates available for these separate streams will generate greater income than that from the mixed plastics and cans that we currently receive and have to give to others to sort. The new processing capability will also help ensure the sustainability of the increased recyclate income, above budget, that is already being seen. It is believed increase income from recyclate alone will exceed the cost of the prudential borrowing.
- There will be substantial and increasing energy cost savings from the installation of the grant funded 500KW solar roof on the transfer station which has not yet been incorporated into the budget. Based on current usage and expenditure, and likely power generation from the roof, this should be around £70,000 at current costs.
- The fleet relocation will facilitate having one accountable manager for waste services (that is for waste collection and waste transfer services combined) in place of the current two, albeit some of the savings will be needed to fund knock-on JE implications for the next tier to ensure the service manager has sufficient support.
- The former recycling building at the rear of the site, as well as being used for storage and for vehicle charging, can provide space for day to day maintenance such as tyre and lamp changes further to daily driver checks which would remove non-productive time travelling back and fore to Tregelles Court.
- The remodelled site will include storage for recycling kit and wheeled bins currently kept in Tawe Terrace remote from the fleet which will also reduce non-productive travel time.
- With the collection fleet based at the transfer Station all vehicles will be emptied at the end of each shift, and therefore all vehicles will be empty and ready for use the following morning, this will remove non-productive time at the start of shifts, where crews

have to empty their vehicles before beginning the days rounds due to late running.

- There is already believed to be sufficient capacity to reduce the number of refuse freighters/crews by one. This has not been pursued because of the imminent introduction of pilot 'nappy' collections albeit the segregating of the waste is not expected to have much operational impact. The reduced operational travel expected as a result of the relocation, and other time savings above, plus the potential ability to combine statutory driving breaks with meal breaks at the transfer station will cement this possibility which could easily be achieved without any risk of redundancy. Saving a front line service crew and vehicle would save approaching £150K.

Whilst vehicle fuel savings will be achieved, the value of which will grow over time, these are not considered here as it will be necessary to pay more into the vehicle renewal fund going forward as the periodic cost of replacing low emissions vehicles will be higher than diesel vehicles.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This has been supplemented by a travel/'carbon assessment' as part of the initial desk-top feasibility work as shown in Appendix A.

The first stage assessment, as supplemented by the feasibility work detailed in Appendix A, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. In summary, no adverse impacts are identified as there will be immediate carbon emissions saving which will increase in future.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications.

Workforce Impacts

See detail contained with the report. The depot and offices for the waste collection personnel would be relocated from the Service Response Centre (SRC) to the Transfer Station at Crymlyn Burrows. A change of

workplace within the County Borough, and indeed within adjacent areas, is covered under the mobility clause of the existing contractual terms and conditions of employment for staff.

Whilst the Council has a Disturbance Allowance Scheme, the relocation distance between the SRC and the Transfer Station is below the minimum distance for any payment under the scheme.

During staff consultations it was raised that a small number of drivers might be unable to walk the distance from the staff car parking to the office, welfare and fleet parking location, about 300m. The proposals have been amended to accommodate a few 'accessible' staff parking spaces near the fleet parking area that will be managed by the supervisors.

The proposal includes staff welfare facilities including a mess area, showers, locker provision and drying room, similar to those available at the current base in the SRC at The Quays.

As well as securing the potential to deliver services using battery electric vehicles, the substantial electrical connection to the transfer station site will allow for potential workplace EV charging facilities in future. The sale of new petrol and diesel cars is expected to be banned from 2030, and the ability to offer workplace charging may become important for some staff. Council terms and conditions regarding such facilities generally are currently being looked at corporately.

Both the Collection Service and the Transfer Station Service are now currently being overseen by the same Accountable Manager on an interim basis pending a formal establishment change should relocation be agreed. Co-locating the services allows for better oversight of the council's waste services overall, and will provide greater resilience within the management team and supervisors. There will also be a better career path for operational staff to follow on site: Waste Loader, Transfer Station Skilled Operative/Non HGV Driver; HGV Driver, Chargehand/Waste Enforcement Officer, Supervisor etc.

Legal Impacts

All future procurement exercises will be conducted in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Risk Management Impacts

The creation of a fully operational waste depot at the Transfer Station by relocating the fleet, will help minimise the impact on operations of Bridgend Council ultimately leaving the current inter-authority working arrangements when the current agreement expires.

There is an expectation to move to Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles by 2030, including electric vehicles. The electricity connection to the grid at the current depot at the SRC is not sufficient to charge the entire fleet. The electricity connection to the Transfer Station is sufficient for the whole waste fleet. Ceasing the use of fossil fuels in vehicles will remove supply and cost related risks going forward.

Consultation

Staff consultation has been undertaken and informed the proposal, as set out in the report.

Recommendation

Having due regard to the first stage Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that:

- Members confirm the intention to relocate the waste collection fleet to Crymlyn Burrows;
- Officers process the necessary Planning and SuDs Approval Body applications as are necessary to deal with matters that are beyond the permitted development rights for the transfer station site;
- Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Streetcare in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to appoint consultant advisors to prepare any design and tender documents, and procure the necessary construction works;
- Members note the capital requirement for the project and approve the necessary capital expenditure by way of the waste reserve of £0.9M and prudential borrowing of £2.5M, the latter to be paid for from the waste management/waste collection budgets.
- Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Streetcare in consultation with the Head of People and Organisational Development to give appropriate notice to staff and implement the

proposal to relocate the waste collection service to the Transfer Station as soon as facilities are in place in the next financial year, 2023/24.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To ensure future service needs can be met and efficiencies maximised.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix A: Feasibility Study on the relocation of Waste Collection Services at the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station

Appendix B Indicative Timetable

Appendix C Plans

Appendix D: First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet - Materials Recovery and Energy Centre, Crymlyn Burrows, 25 June 2020 and associated minutes of the meeting

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Feasibility Study

Relocation of Waste Collection Services at Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station

December 2021

1.0 Introduction

Further to the Cabinet recommendation on 25 June 2020, a feasibility study is ongoing into the co-location of Waste Collection Services with Transfer Station Services at Crymlyn Burrows.

This report summarises the key findings of the first stage of the investigation in terms of:

- Physical Assessment
- Operational Impact
- Staff Impact
- Planning for decarbonisation and medium-term

2.0 Physical Assessment

A physical assessment of the site found that Waste Collection Services can be accommodated. With sufficient space identified for fleet parking, staff parking, staff office and welfare together with associated facilities.

~~The following plans are included at Appendix 1 (not included as now superseded. Refer to Cabinet report Appendix C)~~

- ~~1 Site Location~~
- ~~2 Site Layout - Remodelling~~
- ~~3 Site Layout - Proposed~~
- ~~4 Staff Parking~~
- ~~5 Fleet Parking~~
- ~~6 Offices and Welfare~~

3.0 Operational Impact

Existing

The waste collection service is currently based at the Service Response Centre (SRC), Baglan Energy Park.

The vehicles are parked at the SRC overnight, and crews leave from and return to the SRC every day. Supervisors are also based at the SRC.

The collection service is provided across the borough. Recyclables are collected weekly, whereas non-recyclables are collected fortnightly.

Both recyclable and non-recyclable materials are delivered to the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station. Typically, collection crews drop-off material twice-a-day.

Bulky collections and hygiene collections are also borough-wide, but provided on request. Bulky and hygiene waste are currently dropped-off at the waste transfer station at Briton Ferry.

Kit deliveries also operate out of the SRC and deliver borough-wide on request, whilst stock is held at Tawe Terrace.

The associated waste management service is co-located with the collection service at the SRC. This is principally an office-based function working closely with the collection service. A handful of staff spend some or most of their time on site responding to calls across the borough. Any waste collected as part of these function is dropped-off at the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station, and any kit required is collected from store at Tawe Terrace.

All waste fleet vehicle maintenance is carried out at Tregelles Court.

Proposed

The waste collection service including the associated waste management service to be re-located at the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station. Including office and welfare needs.

Secure fleet vehicle parking, with a substantial grid connection to accommodate a future move to Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV).

On-site kit stock.

On-site minor vehicle repair, replacement of lights etc.

Impact

The main benefit of the proposed re-location will be a reduction in travelling for the collection fleet, and the resulting carbon and cost savings.

Description	Time hours pa	Distance miles pa	Carbon kgCO2e pa	Cost (fuel) £pa
Additional travel at the start of the day	-359	-15,923	-26,479	-14,445
One less journey at the end of the day	921	40,763	73,398	40,042
Saving	562	24,840	46,919	25,597

Additional benefits

- Existing, substantial grid connection can accommodate a future move to Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles
- Reduction in non-productive time travelling to collect kit from Tawe Terrace
- Reduction in non-productive time travelling for minor repairs at Tregelles Court
- Additional cover for managers and supervisors
- Additional synergy across all waste services
- Driving/lunch breaks could be taken in welfare facilities at time of tipping off

Potential further benefits

- ‘Shunt’ drivers could be used to empty recycling vehicles whilst crews are taking their required driving/lunch break to increase service efficiency/capacity.

4.0 Staff Impact

Existing

The waste collection service is currently based at the Service Response Centre (SRC), Baglan Energy Park.

All staff associated with the service start and finish at the SRC.

There are welfare and mess facilities and lockers for staff.

The SRC has staff car parking, bicycle parking and is on one bus route.

Proposed

The waste collection service including the associated waste management service to be re-located at the Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station.

All staff associated with the service to start and finish at the Transfer Station.

Welfare, mess facilities and lockers for staff.

Staff parking with substantial grid connection to enable potential future charging-at-work options for staff (particularly important for staff with no option to charge their electric cars at home, e.g. if resident in terraced housing etc.).

Bicycle parking and a number of public transport options as close to one of the main routes between Swansea and Neath / Port Talbot.

Impact

The distance between the SRC and the Transfer Station is 4 miles. Home to work journeys will be impacted on an individual basis, some staff will benefit from a shorter home-to-work journey, whilst others will have slightly longer journeys.

A study looking at the overall impact across all staff, shows that on balance the relocation will result in some additional staff travel to and from work.

No journey will increase more than 4 miles, and the average increase will be 1.8 miles.

The additional travelling will increase carbon emissions by approximately 31,000 kgCO₂e per annum*. However, this increase is more than offset by the savings resulting from reduced fleet travelling, and furthermore, the Transfer Station is better served by public transport, and could accommodate extensive electric charging, all of which could reduce the carbon footprint of home to work travel.

*This figure assumes those living within one mile of the depot (SRC or the Transfer Station) will walk or cycle, and that 20% of staff car share.

5.0 Planning for decarbonisation and the medium-term

Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles

Diesel and petrol vehicles are being phased-out, and Members have received reports on the transition to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and the associated infrastructure.

The electricity grid connection at the Service Response Centre (SRC), Baglan Energy Park has, as it stands, a limited potential for the shift to ULEV, both in terms of the fleet and staff vehicles.

As part of the feasibility study the council has commissioned a report into the potential to accommodate ULEVs at the Transfer Station.

In terms of an electric fleet, the report found that both the existing substantial grid connection assisted by the new solar roof (to be installed as part of the remodelling) could provide sufficient electrical capacity to charge an electric collections fleet. With sufficient space on site for potential battery storage if needed to help reduce overall energy consumption.

With regard to future hydrogen options, whilst there is sufficient space on site to accommodate the fleet, the report states that the safety buffer zones required for gas production and storage, make the location of this technology unrealistic at the Transfer Station.

The Transfer Station also has better public transport links, located on one of the main routes in and out of Swansea to Neath and Port Talbot.

Estates Management

Moving the waste collection service out of the SRC and using existing capacity at the Transfer Station will free-up accommodation at the SRC. The Council can consider re-locating other services to the SRC, potentially out of older parts of the estate, such as Building Services.

6.0 — Appendices

Appendix 1 Plans

Not included as superseded. Refer to Cabinet Report Appendix C

Future Waste Depot Requirements and Collection Fleet Relocation

Indicative Timetable

Ref	Description	Start	Finish
1	Consultation	<i>completed</i>	
2	Planning and SAB	11/07/2022	11/11/2022
3	Design and Procurement	11/07/2022	18/11/2022
4	Construction Phase*	21/11/2022	10/03/2023
5	Support Services and Fit-out	13/03/2023	05/05/2023
6	Implementation		08/05/2023

*The above timetable will overlap with the current remodelling works, which are due to be completed March 2023.

Plans (attached separately)

1. Site Location
2. Site Layout
3. Staff Parking
4. Fleet Parking
5. Collection Service Office and Welfare
6. Office Block