

**Report of the:  
Policy and Resources Scrutiny  
Committee**

**A Task and Finish Group to Review  
the Waste Strategy**

**February 2023**



**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee undertook a Task and Finish Group to consider and review the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's ("the Council") Waste Strategy. The overall purpose of this strategy being to ensure the Council achieves the next statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/25 and provides an effective service to the public.

The Task and Finish Group met for a one day workshop session to focus specifically within the Waste Strategy on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The Task and Finish Group held a workshop session to gather all information required to develop recommendations and a summary of the discussions are included within the report.

## **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The Environment, Regeneration and Street scene Services Scrutiny Committee are the appropriate scrutiny committee for the consideration of the Council's Waste Strategy

The Committee were keen to arrange a Task and Finish Group to consider the measures that the Cabinet Board were proposing within its review period as a way of helping them discharge their pre-scrutiny role and to enable constructive feedback to be provided to the Cabinet Board as they continue to determine matters under this strategy.

As well as the Task and Finish group, all members of the Council participated in two All Member Seminars in preparation for the discussions on the Waste Strategy Review.

The overall purpose of this strategy being to ensure the Council achieves the next statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/25 and provides an effective service to the public. It will also contribute to the Council's Vision within the corporate plan of ensuring our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

|  |  |
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| <b>Task and Finish Objective</b>                               | To develop recommendations to the Waste Strategy Review  |
| <b>Membership</b>  | <p><b><u>Elected Members</u></b></p> <p>Cllr. S. Pursey (Chair)<br/>Cllr. T. Bowen (Vice chair)</p> <p>Cllr. S. Penry<br/>Cllr. C. James<br/>Cllr. S. Grimshaw<br/>Cllr. L. Williams<br/>Cllr. S. Freeguard<br/>Cllr. W. Carpenter<br/>Cllr. K. Morris<br/>Cllr. A. Dacey<br/>Cllr. R. Davies<br/>Cllr. N. Goldup-John</p> <p><b><u>Advisors/Support Officers</u></b></p> <p>Charlotte Davies<br/>Tom Rees<br/>Michael Roberts<br/>Chris Roberts<br/>Alan Harvey<br/>Gary Slyman<br/>Nicola Thomas</p> |
| <b>The main aims of the Project</b>                            | To enable to Task and Finish Group to explore and suggest recommendations to the Cabinet Members on the Waste Strategy Review prior to decision.   |
| <b>Scope of the study</b>                                      | To ensure the Council achieves the next statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/25 and provides an effective service to the public.  |
| <b>How it will contribute to achieving Corporate/Community</b> | This Task and Finish group will help towards achieving the next statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/25. It will also contribute to the Council's vision within the Corporate plan at   |

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|--|--|
| <b>Objectives / Priorities.</b>  | ensuring our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations.   |
| <b>Initial list of key officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve</b> | Officers – as stated above   |
| <b>Key issues to be addressed</b>  | <p>That the Task and Finish group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the planned measures aimed at ensuring that the Council successfully meets the next statutory recycling target.</li> <li>• To consider additional/ amended measures to help successfully meet the statutory recycling target and/or improve the service provided to residents.</li> <li>• To demonstrate the Scrutiny Committee has undertaken it's pre-scrutiny duty in relation to Cabinet Board proposals</li> </ul> |
| <b>Timescale for completion of the task</b>  | A one day Task and Finish group be held with Any findings to be taken to the Environment, Regeneration and Street Scene Services Scrutiny Committee due to be held on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2023 to commend the Task and Finish Groups views to the Cabinet Board prior to decision in April.  |
| <b>Meeting Dates</b>   | 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2023   |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the following proposals be considered and agreed by Cabinet Board:**

**Measure 2 - Employ a Recycling Officer (Grade 5) to pursue increased community engagement including schools engagement, produce online & physical educational materials, and to help deal with increasing service demand.**

The Task and Finish Group would however wish to suggest that emphasis be provided on the importance of education to the public on the potential new measures and ensuring that leaflets, advertisement and virtual 'how to videos' are provided to the public to ensure engagement and the raising of awareness is achieved.

**Measure 3 – To introduce free biodegradable 'dog poo' bags for public use. Bags to be made available for collection in community locations such as Post Offices alongside existing provision of food waste bags**

The Task and Finish Group would however wish to suggest that the progress of this measure be reviewed in a year's time to ensure the use of the 'dog poo' bags are achieving its environmental targets within the financial agreements. Also, it be ensured that all wards have access to 'dog poo' bags. In the instances where there are no public amenities, dispensers to be provided.

**Measure 5: Changes to Absorbent Hygiene Product Collections**

The Task and Finish Group would however wish to suggest that the storage bin be utilised as a 'presentation' bin, with the purple collection sacks be stored within the bin and presented at the location for bin collections as usual for crew to collect the bag from the bin.

**Measure 8: Cleaner streets following collections.**

The Task and Finish Group would however wish to suggest that officers monitor the improvement of the coordination of the street cleansing following the collections and ensure that this is consistent throughout the County Borough.

**Measure 11: Prepare a detailed proposal for 3 weekly refuse collections with 3 bag/existing wheeled bin limit, and conduct formal consultation with the workforce and households. Subject to consultation, finalisation of proposal, and continued sub 70% recycling performance, implement 3**

**weekly collections in 2024/25 (70% target year). The bulk of the Council's refuse vehicles are due for renewal in 2024/25 and vehicle requirements can be linked in with any change of service provision proposals.**

The Task and Finish Group would however wish to suggest that the consultation is not immediately undertaken in 2023/24 and is deferred as long as possible, to enable the other measures to support improved recycling rates and improve the service to be implemented first. This is to avoid unnecessarily consulting on the proposal where it may not be required in the short term, resulting in a distraction from the important communication and education tasks needed to improve recycling in the Borough.

### **Additional Measures/Recommendations:**

The Task and Finish Group would wish to propose the following considerations:

- That the missed collection policy be reviewed and monitored by the Scrutiny Committee
- Measures be taken to ensure that education and correct communication is provided to the public on the expectations of when their missed bin will be collected under the current policy.
- That a rolling programme of public engagement be embarked on by the Waste Service e.g. in the form of regular surveys to the public on their experience of the service.

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

The following Members of the Environment, regeneration and Street scene Services Scrutiny Committee took part in the Task and Finish Group:

- Cllr S. Pursey (Chairman)
- Cllr T. Bowen (Vice Chairman)
- Cllr W. Carpenter
- Cllr R. Davies
- Cllr C. James
- Cllr S. Lynch
- Cllr S. M. Penry
- Cllr. L. Williams
- Cllr. S. Freeguard

**Representations were also communicated to the chair in advance of the meeting from Cllr. N Goldup-John**

Members were provided with support from the following officers:

Michael Roberts  
Gary Slyman  
Chris Roberts  
Alan Harvey  
Charlotte John  
Tom Rees

Members were provided with the Draft Waste Strategy to consider the measures that the Cabinet Board were proposing within the review period to ensure that the Scrutiny Committee undertook and discharged their scrutiny role .

Members of the Task and Finish Group were also invited to attend two All Member Seminars to be fully informed of the proposals.

### **Scrutiny Comments**

The focus of members was specifically on the recommendations that are noted above. The following additional comments were raised which are important to note.

When discussing the additional proposals, members were concerned that if the 3 weekly collection were to be introduced it **could cause further issues if there are missed collections**. There was also discussion around the communication of when missed collections would be re-collected to the public. Therefore, members wished to re-look at the policy and ensure correct communication was being provided to the community on missed collections.

Members discussed that it is important there is public engagement through a variety of mechanisms in any consultation and afterwards, however, felt it was important that the public had a way of providing feedback to ensure communication was available between the public and the Council. Therefore members felt that a rolling programme of engagement would be beneficial.

Following the discussions at the Task and Finish Group members requested that the recommendations be commended to the Cabinet Board for information and consideration prior to the agreement of the consultation.

Members of the scrutiny committee therefore wish to invite the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Neighbourhood Services to attend a future meeting of the Environment, Regeneration and Street scene scrutiny



committee to explain their perspective behind their views on the proposals being suggested.