



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

All Member Briefing Note

Forthcoming Consultation On Increasing Recycling Performance

From the Head of Streetcare, Michael Roberts

Purpose of note:

To inform Members of the details of a forthcoming consultation on increasing recycling performance, including three weekly refuse collections as previously approved to be undertaken under the Council's adopted Waste Strategy Action Plan.

Executive Summary:

The implementation of the Council's Waste Strategy Action Plan as approved in April 2023 is ongoing. The plan included an action to undertake consultation on three weekly collections of non-recyclable residual waste with the existing 3 bag/140ltr wheeled bin limit, alongside continuing with weekly collections of recyclable waste including food waste; paper and card; plastic and metal cans; household batteries and glass. The consultation to explore the way forward with green waste and nappy collection frequencies. Detailed service analysis has now been completed and this report is to inform Members of the consultation timeline and details.

Background:

General

Members considered and approved the Council's Waste Strategy Action Plan in April 2023. Work on the 18 measures included in the plan have since been ongoing, including service analysis in preparation for Measure 11 as detailed below:

Measure 11: Conduct formal consultation with households, the workforce and their Trade Union representatives, and other stakeholders such as our Trade Waste customers, on three weekly collections of non-recyclable residual waste with the existing 3 bag/140ltr wheeled bin limit, alongside continuing with weekly collections of recyclable waste including food waste; paper and card; plastic and metal cans; household batteries and glass. The consultation to explore the way forward with green waste and nappy collection frequencies.

The adopted Waste Strategy Action Plan made provision for the re-investment of any savings from any move to three weekly collections into enhanced recycling collections. The reason for considering three weekly refuse collections is not specifically financial, but is founded in achieving statutory waste targets, which are set to increase further, as WG continues to seek progress to zero waste in 2050.

Service analysis has been required in advance of the consultation, in particular to inform workforce consultation and consider the impacts of service configurations with respect to Green Waste and Absorbent Hygiene Product collections.

Timeline of Consultation

It is programmed that Public, Member, Trade Customer and Workforce consultations will start during week commencing 6th May and run for six weeks.

Details of resource deployment

In order for three weekly collections to work effectively, collection day changes would be needed for some residents to better cluster areas. Without changes more crews would be needed due to avoidable lost time on double driving certain areas.

Three weekly refuse rounds have been calculated using narrow track single compartment drop axel vehicles which helps to maximise the number of properties that can be collected in a day (on average around 850 per day accounting for bin lift operation). Re-clustering under this option avoids wasting resources associated with crossovers of crews and every crew can 'fit' everywhere (because they would all be narrow track). Taking account of daily variables such as travel time, property collection numbers vary to some degree by round and day of collection.

[Note: using an existing mix of narrow track and split back freighters was also looked at but it was not as efficient and required an additional vehicle and crew compared to the above, due to the crossover of rounds and the slower manoeuvrability of the split back vehicles].

Around 19,000 properties, 28% of the County Borough, would need to have their day of collection changed for the sake of efficiency with any move to three weekly refuse collections.

Some kerbside recycling collection rounds would need to be changed also to fall in line with efficient three weekly refuse collections if recycling collections are to remain on the same day. As this review is a significant exercise it would be completed if, after consultation, it is determined that three weekly collections should move forward.

[It is noted that a new fleet of improved capacity recycling vehicles is currently in the process of procurement. Even if three weekly refuse proposals do not move forward, a review of weekly recycling rounds

would still be needed with the introduction of the new fleet and re-location to the transfer station.

Addendum 1 gives the calculated breakdown of refuse collections for week one, week two and week three on a three weekly cycle.

Addendum 2 gives the calculated areas by collection day for a three weekly refuse collection cycle.

Exact resources levels and vehicle configuration cannot be finalised until after the consultation, but further to the service configuration put forward a comparison of resources for two weekly and three weekly refuse collections are given below.

Existing two-weekly refuse related resources as follows:

- 6 No. 'Split back' two compartment freighters
- 2 No. 'Drop axel' single compartment narrow track freighters
- 1 No. 'Drop axel' single compartment narrow track freighter for Garden Waste
- 1 No. Seasonal split freighter to assist with garden waste
- 2 No. Safari vehicle for farm collections

For three weekly refuse collections the following related resources are calculated:

- 5 No. 'Drop axel' rounds over a 3 week cycle (reduction of 3 crews)
- 3 No. Split freighter rounds for Garden Waste + AHP (maintained at fortnightly)
- 1 No. 'Drop axel' for garden waste (fortnightly)
- 1 No. Tipper for AHP collections on drop axel rounds (fortnightly)
- 1 No. Safari for farm refuse collections (three weekly)

Green Waste and AHP collections to be free to register fortnightly services. Household coverage numbers per day would be significantly higher than for refuse collection but not all properties on

these rounds would have anything presented, and there would also be no waiting time for bin lifts to operate.

The above service arrangement would involve the same numbers of vehicles and employees as existing with no job losses. The decision on what staff would collect refuse and what staff would collect the Green Waste + AHP would initially be by expression of interest. Every employee would remain a waste loader or driver (HGV or non-HGV) as existing on a 37 hour week contract.

There are seven refuse freighters currently due for renewal which would allow for the balance of 'split back' and 'drop axle' freighters to be aligned with proposals.

Aside from the above, weekly hygiene waste collections for people with Stomas and the like would remain unchanged.

It is noted that the Welsh Government recommend that green waste collections are chargeable. If charges were introduced that could potentially facilitate weekly as opposed to fortnightly Green Waste and AHP collections. The economics of weekly Green Waste and AHP collection with a green waste charge have been estimated as follows:

If an annual subscription charge was made for garden waste collections then based on 'mid-range' charges made by other Local Authorities that charge and assuming only half the County Borough take up the option, then indicatively income could be as follows:

Assuming £26 subscription for an 'up to 6 bags' option (with no charges for the bags) taken up by 23,000 properties = income of £598,000

Assuming £40 subscription for a higher capacity 'up to 10 bags' option taken up by 10,000 = £400,000.

And assuming the Council might spend an estimated £35,000 on bags, then net income would be around: £598,000 + 400,000 - £35,000 = £963,000

Against this, it is estimated that in order to carry out a weekly Green Waste and AHP collection (including combining the weekly hygiene collection), 4 no. 'split back' freighters and one 'drop axle' freighter would be required. Four of these are already accounted for in the service profile for put forward for consultation as detailed above, which would mean only one additional vehicle (another split back freighter and crew), estimated at around £200K including borrowing repayments for the vehicle.

If the service expanded beyond 50% of the County Borough take up then additional resources would be required.

There would be associated financial and participation risks that would need to be weighed up if charging for green waste collections was considered. A move to three weekly collections would avoid space in wheeled bins in which to put in green waste.

The draft public consultation paper and questionnaire is given in Addendum 3.

Financial Impacts:

None in terms of collection costs for the service configuration presented for consultation.

Increases in recycling as may arise from a move to three weekly refuse collection and the universal introduction of AHP collections would be expected to reduce overall disposal costs.

If statutory recycling performance targets are not met the Council faces potential £200/tonne fines for every tonne by which the target is missed.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications. The note is for information only and concerns public consultation on potential service changes which would inform decision making.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications. This note concerns public consultation on potential service changes and responses would inform decision making.

Legal Impacts:

No implications. This note concerns public consultation on potential service changes which would inform decision making.

Risk Management Impacts:

The Council runs the risk of fines from Welsh Government if statutory recycling performance targets are not met, and financial risks generally if it does not keep overall waste management costs to a minimum in the context of recycling collections needing to expand and improve. It also runs the risk of reputational damage if statutory targets are not achieved.

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

There would be the potential for some additional fly tipping with any move to three weekly refuse collections by householders not prepared to engage in recycling. Around half the councils in Wales have already introduced three weekly collection and their experience with respect to fly tipping will be looked at alongside the consultation.

Consultation:

Consultation is the subject of this briefing note. This note, together with the final consultation paper and questionnaire, will be made available online with an invitation for the public to express their views and also via Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres along with other locations.

Appendices:

- Addendum 1: Estimated refuse collections areas for week one, week two and week three on a three weekly cycle.
- Addendum 2: Areas by collection day for a three weekly refuse cycle.
- Addendum 3: Detail of consultation on improving recycling performance.

List of Background Papers:

Waste Strategy Action Plan Report: E, R & SS Board, 14th April 2023