



JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 28TH JUNE 2023 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnston – Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, D. Cushing, C. J. Cuss, D. T. Davies MBE, N. Dix, G. Ead, C. Elsbury, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, A. Gair, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, L. Jeremiah, S. Kent, A. Leonard, C. P. Mann, A. McConnell, B. Miles, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, M. Powell, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J.E. Roberts, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L.G. Whittle, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland

Co-opted Members:

Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative).

Cabinet Members:

Councillors S. Morgan (Leader of Council), C. Andrews (Education and Communities), S. Cook (Housing), E. Forehead (Social Care), N. George (Corporate Services, Property and Highways), C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), J. Pritchard (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), Mrs E. Stenner (Finance and Performance)

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), S. Ford (Communications Manager), Cath Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer). R. Barrett (Minute Taker)

Non-Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillors A. Angel, J. Jones, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds.

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website

– [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Fussell, D.W.R. Preece, D. Price, J. Reed, S. Skivens, J. Taylor and C. Wright, together with Co-opted Member Mrs P. Ireland (NEU).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

3. A ROUTEMAP TO INFORM OUR RESOURCE AND WASTE STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces introduced the report, which sought the views of Scrutiny Committee on the Council's draft Routemap that sets out the principles of an emerging Resource and Waste Strategy in advance of it being presented to Cabinet. The report sought the views of Members on the proposed immediate interventions to improve recycling performance in Caerphilly and set out a timeframe and associated milestones for Member engagement and scrutiny in developing the Council's Resource and Waste Strategy.

Members were advised that the Resource and Waste Routemap appended to the report sets out a plan to ensure that Caerphilly meets and exceeds Welsh Government statutory recycling performance targets and includes the required resources and timescales to achieve success. The Authority had historically performed well against waste recycling targets, but in the last three years, recycling performance had declined and is now below statutory targets, with the Authority at the risk of incurring significant financial penalties if they fail to improve these levels.

The Routemap builds upon the work that was discussed at the previous Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27th March 2023 and sets out the principles of an emerging Waste Strategy, which will be presented to Members later in 2023. It outlined several priority interventions for the period 2023-2025, with further details set out in Section 5.12 of the report, together with the financial implications at Section 8 of the report. The interventions are designed to increase recycling performance in the short term and prompt the beginning of the journey for long-term behaviour change.

The Routemap also sets out a longer-term structured programme of change, with five pillar projects and five enabling themes. Members were advised that the challenge to deliver such wide range in change should not be underestimated, and the Routemap sets out realistic timescales to deliver the steps and achieve the change required. Extensive and continuous communication is an essential ingredient throughout the programme of change. The campaigns will be delivered across various media channels to reach all sectors of the community and will feature a range of key

measures tailored to the audience, including local schools. Members noted that Council cannot do this alone, and it will take a collective effort of residents, communities and the workforce working together. Members also noted that meetings had already been held with the trade unions and the workforce and were assured that this vital communication would continue throughout the process. It is also important that residents help shape the future strategy and proposals, with these to be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet during Autumn 2023, where approval will be sought to launch an extensive public consultation process beginning in early 2024, following which the new Waste Strategy would be brought forward for approval as a Council policy.

The Chief Executive gave an update on the significant developments that had occurred since the Joint Scrutiny Committee last met to consider the Draft Waste Strategy.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the key messages received from Members at the last Joint Scrutiny and confirmed that a series of distinctive pieces of work will be brought forward for Members' consideration and decision over the next couple of years in order to convert the waste collection service from the current model to the new blueprint model by 2027. These five "pillar projects" consisted of Household Recycling Centres, Kerbside Dry Recycling, Kerbside Organic Recycling, Kerbside Residual and Trade Waste Services, and will be underpinned by five "enabling themes" which have taken into account Members' feedback around the need for communication and engagement and for these to be tailored to the individual needs of their respective communities.

The Chief Executive then delivered a presentation which outlined each of the five pillar projects in detail and how these would be implemented to help the Authority meet and exceed the WG statutory recycling performance targets.

Members noted the considerable financial implications associated with the full Strategy, and that this needed to be balanced against the fact that the Council potentially faces significant financial penalties for not achieving recycling targets. The financial model would work on an Invest to Save basis by putting some up-front investment in place that over the medium-to-longer term will reduce costs associated with waste disposal and recycling. This investment equates to approximately £2.35m which will be funded using uncommitted capital earmarked reserves. The report also proposed that a Task and Finish Group be formed to assist in the development and delivery of the draft Routemap and associated Strategy thereafter.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee discussed the report and raised the following queries and comments in respect of the proposals.

Top Hatting/Enforcement

Members asked if the proposed enforcement measures to combat "top hatting" and "sideways" practices (where additional waste is placed on the top or to the side of household bins) would lead to an increase in fly-tipping, and assurances were sought that enforcement will only apply to residual waste bins and not recycling bins. Concerns were raised about possible enforcement action where residents are disabled/ elderly or have dementia and cannot sort their waste and do not have the support to do this. Officers advised that enforcement will not necessarily lead to more fly-tipping but needs to be aligned to engagement, education and awareness raising, and that enforcement will only be used, if necessary, in a small minority of cases. Assurances were provided that the top-hatting policy only applies to residual waste and there is no intention to enforce additional recycling in clear bags.

Communication and Engagement

Members sought further detail on the engagement process and queried if every household would receive a doorstep visit, and how people with additional needs would be supported. A Member asked if the Council is intending to work with business forums and expressed a need to engage with social housing areas. Members were supportive of the proposals to communicate and engage with residents to change people's mindsets regarding recycling. It was suggested that there should be particular focus on recycling contamination and the implications and costs involved. Members also highlighted examples of where bins are not being emptied and asked how communication could be improved so this information could be shared with them to answer residents' complaints.

Officers advised that it is not intended for every household to receive a doorstep visit, but the proposal is to utilise digital technology to gather data and undertake targeted visits to households. Face-to-face engagement as well as digital methods of communication will seek to break down barriers to participation. The Committee were referred to the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) within the report which details how the Council will address the equalities aspects of communications and engagement, with it noted that further reports will include updated IIAs. Members were also advised that the digital technology available should also assist in providing updates on missed collections.

Trehir HRC Booking System Trial

A number of concerns were highlighted around this proposal, including whether a booking system would lead to increased fly-tipping and if the proposal would impact upon people who work during the daytime, and if it was intended to extend the HRC opening hours into the evening as a result. One Member suggested that residents may decide to use alternative HRCs to avoid booking at the Trehir site and asked if it was possible to measure HRC usage around this scenario. Concerns were expressed that reduced tonnage at Trehir because of the trial could lead to closure of the site. Members requested more detail and a breakdown of the £350k costs associated with the trial.

There was scepticism of how a trial could be measured, with Members expressing reservations over whether the trial would accurately reflect how the booking system could be rolled out across other sites. Clarification was sought on whether the Authority is intending to operate in line with other authorities and introduce a cap on the number of HRC visits per year. Members expressed concerns around digital exclusion and felt that some residents would find it difficult to access the online booking system, and they were referred to the IIA which states that residents that are not digitally enabled or unable to make a booking online will still be able to call the contact centre to make a booking.

Officers confirmed that the Council will be able to measure tonnage and vehicle movement to determine whether the booking system at Trehir is having a knock-on effect on other sites and will also be able to monitor queuing times at other sites and take a view on whether the booking system could be extended at other sites. Members were advised that the purpose of the trial is to gather evidence and inform future proposals and is not intended to introduce a cap on visits to HRCs. It is proposed to run the trial for an initial period of six months to examine the impact and extend the trial period if needed.

Additional staff

Queries were received around the financial costs and proposals for the additional staff to support the implementation of the new Strategy. Officers advised that all staffing on-costs are included, with the posts being fixed-term for a period of two years, and form part of the wider proposals and are not contingent on whether the booking system proceeds.

Recycling

Recycling contamination issues were recognised and a Member asked if a deposit return scheme for glass and cans would be built into the proposals. Members were assured that any legislation around this scheme will be considered, and forms part of the Council's wider focus of "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle". A Member asked how the 70% recycling target would be achieved, given that current CCBC performance is at 60% and each of the pillars are anticipated to produce a 1% increase, leaving a shortfall of 5%. The Scrutiny Committee were advised that dry recycling performance has been maintained but the Authority is producing more residual waste (368kg per household) which is 91kg higher than other local authorities. Members were reminded that the Minister will look upon the Authority favourably if they can demonstrate improvements in recycling performance. It was also explained that the projected increases are based on modelling work which are dependent on household behaviour and participation levels in terms of the new Strategy.

Residual Waste

Members discussed waste items that cannot currently be recycled such as plastic wrappers and Tetra Pak items. Officers explained that additional markets recycling, including Tetra Pak, continues to be explored. Members also asked if the proposal to move to a 3 or 4 weekly residual waste collection, as discussed at the previous Joint Scrutiny meeting, was still being considered. Members were assured that this proposal is not off the table, but the Council now has more time to develop the new Resource and Waste Strategy and strive to achieve WG recycling targets through alternative avenues.

Green Waste

Clarification was sought on the Kerbside Organic Recycling proposals and it was confirmed that the service will be examined to determine whether the current model is fit for purpose and maximises the Council's recycling intentions over the longer term. It was noted that some local authorities charge for this service and a report on this aspect of waste management will be brought to Members for consideration at a later date.

Climate Emergency

Members agreed that the climate emergency needs to be acknowledged, and that the emphasis needs to be upon consuming less and the waste review needs to include analysis of all waste components. It was felt that more needs to be done to reduce single use plastics and engage with food suppliers and supermarkets regarding this issue. One Member felt that the 2030 net zero carbon target is not an achievable milestone. Officers agreed that there is a need to address this urgently and it was noted that the Council have access to a detailed waste analysis which will be available for the Task and Finish Group to consider. The waste hierarchy included in the report details the need to reduce waste and highlighted that food waste is more expensive to

process in general waste compared to composting treatments. The Authority is also examining the messaging around single use plastics and has received advice from WRAP in this regard.

Caddy Liners

Members queried the proposal to introduce free caddy liners for 12 months at a cost of £300k in view of the significant budget savings required over the next two years, and several Members stated they were unable to support this proposal. Comments were received on how plastic bags and paper can be used as an alternative to liners or food can be deposited loosely, and how improved communications could help increase participation. Members were advised that CCBC is the only Welsh local authority that does not provide free caddy liners, and that WG have suggested this incentive to counteract the barriers in recycling food waste, with it hoped that this scheme will boost participation and reduce residual waste.

Task and Finish Group

Members felt it was important to look at the recommendations made by the previous iteration of the Task and Finish Group. It was also commented that CCBC needs to aim to supersede performance by other authorities and examine initiatives such as nappy collection and pet waste recycling in order to improve recycling levels. Members were assured that the recommendations from the previous Task and Finish Group will be made available to the new group.

During the course of the debate, Members praised the work of the refuse and recycling collections team across the Authority and expressed their thanks to these staff.

Following consideration of the report, an amendment was moved and seconded to remove from Pillar 1 of the Routemap the Trial at Trehir and HRC Booking System and that this be additional recommendation (3.4). By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 33 for, 8 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

An amendment was moved and seconded to remove from Pillar 3 of the Routemap the provision of free caddy liners for 1 year and that this be additional recommendation (3.5). By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 31 for, 10 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

A further amendment was then moved and seconded to amend the wording of recommendation 3.3 to read 'To agree the proposed Member Task and Finish Group to assist in the development and delivery of the draft Routemap and associated Strategy thereafter'. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 42 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

It was moved and moved and seconded that, subject to the additional recommendations above (3.4 and 3.5) and the amendment to Recommendation 3.3, the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 39 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) through critical questioning, the Joint Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the principles of the draft Routemap;

- (ii) the Joint Scrutiny Committee considered and offered comments regarding the proposed early interventions, anticipated to increase current recycling performance, along with the proposal to establish a specific reserve of £2.347m funded from uncommitted capital earmarked reserves;
- (iii) the proposed Member Task and Finish Group to assist in the development and delivery of the draft Routemap and associated Strategy thereafter be agreed and RECOMMENDED to Cabinet for approval;
- (iv) it be RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the trial at Trehir and HRC Booking System be removed from Pillar 1 of the Routemap;
- (v) it be RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the provision of free caddy liners for 1 year be removed from Pillar 3 of the Routemap.

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.