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**Date: 2nd July 2024**

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Joint Scrutiny Committee** will be held in Penallta House and via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 8th July, 2024 at 5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Harrhy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

1 To receive apologies for absence.

Pages

A greener place Man gwyrddach



## 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

## 3 Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 26th February 2024.

1 - 6

To receive and consider the following report: -

## 4 Draft Waste Strategy - Feedback from 12-week Public Consultation.

7 - 24

### **Circulation:**

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

And Appropriate Officers

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# Agenda Item 3



## JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnston – Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, A. Angel, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, N. Dix, G. Ead, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, C. Gordon, D. Harse, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, S. Kent, A. Leonard, A. McConnell, B. Miles, B. Owen, M. Powell, D. Preece, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J. Simmonds, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, K. Woodland and C. Wright.

Cabinet Members:

Cabinet Members in attendance: S. Morgan (Leader of Council), C. Andrews (Education and Communities), S. Cook (Housing), E. Forehead (Social Care), N. George (Corporate Services, Property and Highways), P. Leonard (Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), and E. Stenner (Finance and Performance).

Together with:

Officers: D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), M. S. Williams (Corporate Director Economy and Environment), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), G. Jenkins (Interim Director of Social Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), B. Winstanley (Head of Land and Property), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), J. Pearce (Business Improvement Officer), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), A. Jones (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Co-opted Member M Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education).

### **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 D. Cushing, D. T Davies, E. Davies, C. Elsbury, G. Enright, C. Forehead, J. Fussell, T. Heron, M. James, J. Jones, C. Mann, T. Parry, L. Phipps, D. Price, J. Reed, J. Roberts, R. Saralis, J. Scriven, S. Skivens, J. Taylor and L. Whittle

## **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. JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024.**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies being noted for Mr M Western (Co-opted Member). By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 35 for, 0 against, and 1 abstention), this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (minute nos. 1 – 5) be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies being noted for Mr M Western (Co-opted Member).

## **4. JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2024.**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies being noted for Mr M Western (Co-opted Member). By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 33 for, 0 against, and 1 abstention), this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 (minute nos. 1 – 6) be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies being noted for Mr M Western (Co-opted Member).

## **5. ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES)2022/23.**

Councillor E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance) introduced the Annual Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23. The report also included an update on the Well-being Objectives for 2022/23.

The self-assessment report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It is an important part of the Council's performance framework. This is the second self-assessment report which replaced the former Annual Performance Report. The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with a balanced picture of that performance. The Council must also report

progress against the six Well-being Objectives set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2023. The report included an update on the fifth and final year of the outgoing Corporate Plan.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee were asked to review the Self-Assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and discussed, challenged, and scrutinised the information contained within the report.

The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services explained the Self-Assessment was an assessment of our organisational effectiveness in two parts. Part-one looked at corporate governance functions over the last financial year and sets out key actions that are being put forward as a mechanism for continuing to improve those corporate functions. Aspects covered within part one were corporate planning, financial management, workforce arrangements, procurement and digital, asset management, risk management and performance management.

Part two looked at progress over the last 12 months against the Council's Well-being Objectives. Members were advised that this was the last year of the recently concluded Corporate Plan. The Corporate Director explained that this is a constantly evolving process, and it is intended to add more evaluative judgments for future reports. Every section would be summarised with a judgment that says good or in need of improvement, and how soon. The process would also look to develop an enhanced consultation process that allowed engagement on a broader platform than the current arrangements. Members were advised that external officers from other organisations would come and check that the Council assessed itself in accordance with legislation set out by the Welsh Government once during the legislative term.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and teams for their presentations and invited Members questions.

A Member commented on the interaction between the Health Service and Social Services and referred to page 26 of the report regarding impact of the delays and backlogs within the health service that is impacting on our communities. The Member stated that this was a workflow situation and whilst progress has been made in recruiting, they questioned why the Council had not prioritised vulnerable patients who need home care and queried whether increasing pay would encourage more carers.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that some pressures within the NHS are caused by flow issues and discharging patients from hospital is a two way path, delays with GP surgeries and within A and E leads to a situation within the community where individuals are presenting themselves with far greater needs. Members also heard how it was not just a matter of paying the carers more, that it was a more complex picture than that and people are seen daily who would not need the level of intervention from local government or from social services if the NHS were in a better position. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council has prioritised these services and shown its commitment by the level of growth that has gone into the Social Services budget over the last three years.

The Assistant Director for Adult Services confirmed that 90% of the Council's work is in the community and 10% is in the hospital. Members were advised that the system needs to be looked at and ongoing conversations with the NHS continue around people being looked after at home rather than in hospital. Committee were further advised that the picture is improving, but the Council did not have carers in reserve and staff are working tirelessly every day and doing the best they can.

A Member suggested that the decision on whether or not to take a person into hospital would be made by the paramedics who attended following a call. Members were advised that there are a few initiatives starting imminently which would be an alternative pathway

for paramedics and other medical staff. These would look at admissions from care homes, the support that could be provided, and clinic appointments if appropriate. A review of the older persons services was also being looked at such as intravenous antibiotics being given at home instead of in hospitals. Committee were advised that there would be updates in the future on some of these projects.

A Member requested an explanation on why the actions on page 34 in relation to financial planning were not met. It was confirmed that the Council has a Reserve Strategy that was approved by Cabinet in 2016 and that this will be updated once an ongoing review of the Council's financial regulations has been completed. In terms of timescale, the updated financial regulations would be taken to the Governance and Audit Committee in April 2024 and then Council AGM in May 2024.

The Member queried the sickness absence data on page 38 and asked whether a team would be required to investigate the levels of absence due to sickness and identify the reasons for these rates. It was confirmed that sickness absences were a national issue and that a lot of the data relates to employees off work due to long term sickness. Investment in the Managing Attendance Team had been introduced to investigate and monitor sickness levels.

Clarification was sought on the list of risks on page 49 and a Member asked how they were rated as they are quite different in terms of their impact. Members were advised that in terms of significance and severity, the risks had been looked at from a broad perspective and not all those risks were equal, and officers explained that at the time of the report being written those were the ten risks identified.

The Chair requested clarity on what the Council's strategy was to get children back into schools. Members were advised that there was a strategy in place which was working well and involved pupils, teachers, headteachers, the learning support systems, governors, and the wider community. Committee heard how attendance levels had increased this year and compared to last year secondary schools' attendance was up by 1.7% and primary school attendance was up by 1.5%. Also, pupils in receipt of free school meals in secondary schools was up by 2.9% and the figure for primary schools was up by 2.6%. Officers outlined a new campaign called "Attend to Achieve" which had been introduced with banners given to schools to display on their gates to promote the campaign. Workshops had also been planned in conjunction with primary and secondary heads of schools to discuss further strategies around attendance.

The Strategic Lead for School Improvement placed his thanks on record to everyone who had invested in this campaign.

Clarification was sought on the uptake on free school meals. It was confirmed that the take up of free school meals averages about 65%. Members were advised that Caerphilly County Borough Council was one of the two authorities in Wales that were part of a project called Nesta which is funded by the Welsh Government and collaborates with schools to encourage take up of free school meals, and it was hoped that percentages would increase in the future.

A Member observed that during their work as a Council Attendance Champion they had seen how Officers work hard to improve both attendance and uptake of free school meals and he highlighted that some issues with free school meals was due to the portion size. Members were advised by officers that portion sizes are regulated by legislation from the Welsh Government, and that a review of the guidance and legislation as part of the "Appetite for Life" scheme included portion size differentials between infants and junior school children.

A Member referred to page 71 in relation to vulnerable pupils and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) learners and sought confirmation on how monitoring of the progress ensured that improvements would be undertaken to keep the high levels achieved. It was confirmed that the Council would continue to monitor the situation and strive to make improvements year on year. Members were advised that there was data called "Tier One Data" which does not always get reported and which centred on pupils that are identified as hard to reach. Committee heard how the Council had an excellent record in finding these pupils and from a safeguarding perspective it ensured that they were receiving the best support. It was outlined how, during the Covid 19 pandemic, challenges arose, but strategies had been adapted to engage with these pupils. Members were also advised that there is a project called "Inspire" which had twelve officers working across each of the secondary schools throughout the County Borough to target pupils at risk starting at Key Stage 3. The role of the Engagement Progression Coordinator was also highlighted, and Members heard how he works in partnership with other agencies like the Youth Service, Homelessness Prevention Team, and Education Welfare Service to ensure that support is provided to pupils at risk. The Member thanked the Officer and was glad to see that there is a multigroup approach going forward to try to improve things.

One Member requested clarity on the 1% increase in pupil attendance and specifically how many children that equated too and sought confirmation on what were the most common reasons given for persistent non-attendance. Members were advised that the specific figures were not available but would be provided following the meeting. In relation to reasons given for pupil absences, it was confirmed that post Covid reasons given included emotional based school avoidance amongst other things. Members were advised that there was a multi-agency approach involving the Education Welfare Service, the Healthy Schools Team, and the Educational Psychology Service. These agencies worked together to ensure schools are supported in their approach to learners with emotional based school avoidance, anxiety, or other issues around wellbeing and mental health.

Members thanked all Officers involved.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the Self-Assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and discussed, challenged, and scrutinised the information contained within.

RESOLVED that the Joint Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Self-Assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and discussed, challenged, and scrutinised the information contained within.

The meeting closed at 17.50 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

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CHAIR

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## JOINT SCRUTINY – 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024

**SUBJECT: DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY – FEEDBACK FROM 12-WEEK PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**



### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To provide members with an update on key findings from the 12-week public consultation on the council's draft waste strategy.
- 1.2. Through the consultation findings, offer some initial operational recommendations to help mitigate the public impact of some of the proposals, with additional feedback from the cross-party member working group on these initial recommendations.
- 1.3. To agree appropriate next steps in shaping the final draft of the waste strategy using feedback from the public consultation and member working group for Cabinet and Council consideration.
- 1.4. To provide members with an update on the financial implications associated with the delivery of the Waste Strategy and discussions with Welsh Government on the Outline Business Case (OBC)

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1. Endorsed by Cabinet in July 2023, the draft waste strategy set out the strategic direction and longer-term plan to ensure the council meets and exceeds its statutory performance targets, while being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions.
- 2.2. The draft strategy is based on five strategic objectives:
  - Reduce overall waste arisings
  - Increase repair and reuse
  - Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled
  - Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy, and
  - Help our residents to manage waste more sustainably

- 2.3. The document also explores key areas of data to set out the council's current performance as well as setting out the rationale for a number of proposed interventions and service changes.
- 2.4. It is clear however that the council cannot make the changes alone, and that a collective effort is required. On 17 January 2024 Cabinet endorsed an in-depth 12-week consultation period to allow residents and other stakeholder groups the opportunity to help shape the proposals within the final version of the waste strategy.
- 2.5. At that meeting, it was agreed a further report will be presented to Cabinet in summer 2024 once the consultation has been completed and the responses analysed. This report sets out the key findings from the 12-week public consultation on the council's draft waste strategy along with comments received from the Cross-Party Members Working Group.
- 2.6. Through the consultation findings, this report also offers some initial operational recommendations to help mitigate the public impact of some of the proposals, and it seeks approval on appropriate next steps in shaping the final draft of the waste strategy, for Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council consideration during summer 2024.
- 2.7. The financial implications that were outlined in the previous report to Cabinet (Draft Waste Strategy Jan 17, 2024) have been revised. The total capital cost now stands at £53.946m, however, this includes capital costs for replacement of existing vehicles so when this is removed the total capital funding requirement stands at £45.586m. There is also currently a revenue gap of £1.247m up to 2029/30 (thereafter it would be an annual gap of £0.577m to address each future year). This is the revenue position before any borrowing costs. Welsh Government have made it clear that they would not be able to provide any revenue support for the project but have offered assurances regarding capital support. Whilst the level of support is yet to be confirmed the assumption has been made that it would be a 60/40 split with Welsh Government providing 60%. Discussions with Welsh Government are ongoing.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. The Scrutiny committee is asked to consider the key findings from the 12-week public consultation on the council's draft waste strategy and subsequent comments from the cross-party member working group. This includes some initial operational recommendations – described in detail at 5.9 of this report - to help mitigate the public impact of some of the proposals.
- 3.2. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to provide its views on the proposed next steps in shaping the final draft of the waste strategy using feedback from the public consultation, prior to Cabinet and Council consideration.
- 3.3. The Scrutiny committee is asked to consider the latest financial implications associated with the delivery of the Waste Strategy and note the update on the development of the OBC and discussions with Welsh Government within the financial implications section (section 8 of this report).

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1. The draft waste strategy builds upon the previously endorsed Routemap and sets out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets.
- 4.2. Following a period of public consultation, to ensure the views of residents and other stakeholder groups are considered in detail and help shape the final version of the strategy for Cabinet and Council consideration.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1. Endorsed by Cabinet in July 2023, the draft waste strategy set out the strategic direction and longer-term plan to ensure the council meets and exceeds its statutory performance targets, while being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions.
- 5.2. The draft strategy is based on five strategic objectives:
  - Reduce overall waste arisings
  - Increase repair and reuse
  - Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled
  - Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy, and
  - Help our residents to manage waste more sustainably
- 5.3. The document also explores key areas of data to set out the council's current performance as well as setting out the rationale for a number of proposed interventions and service changes.
- 5.4. It is clear however that the council cannot make the changes alone, and that a collective effort is required. On 17 January 2024 Cabinet endorsed an in-depth 12-week consultation period to allow residents and other stakeholder groups the opportunity to help shape the proposals within the final version of the waste strategy.

#### **5.5 Engagement to inform the draft strategy's development**

The engagement and support of elected members has been crucial in shaping the draft waste strategy to date. In July 2023, Cabinet agreed to establish a cross-party members working group, to include trade union representatives, which has been instrumental in the development of the draft strategy.

In developing the draft strategy for public consultation, the group of 12 members reviewed several aspects of the strategy, giving a clear steer for each proposal. In addition, officers have worked closely with representatives from WRAP and Local Partnership to undertake thorough modelling of a range of options to inform the draft strategy in readiness for public consultation.

A Joint Scrutiny Committee was also held on 15 January 2024 for members to offer their views prior to Cabinet consideration of the draft strategy on 17 January 2024.

#### **5.6 The consultation process**

The 12-week consultation ran from Monday 5 February 2024 until Tuesday 30 April 2024.

Residents were invited to give their views in a variety of ways, including:

- A survey, which was available on the council's website, with hard copies also available from all county borough libraries. Hard copies could be returned via libraries or through the post.
- A dedicated edition of Newslines, delivered to each household within Caerphilly County Borough also featured a hard copy version of the proposals and associated consultation materials.
- A total of 16 informal face-to-face drop-in sessions were arranged at libraries and other community venues across the county borough. A further four online drop-in sessions were held, and extensive promotion of these sessions was supported by colleagues from the communications team. As far as possible, these sessions were held on different days of the week and different times of the day, including evenings and weekends, to enable as many people as possible to attend.
- In addition to the advertised sessions, 'pop up' opportunities for residents to offer their views were held at supermarket foyers and other locations across the county borough, with attendance also at the council's programme of town centre spring events.
- A dedicated meeting of the Viewpoint Panel; which is a group of residents who are regularly invited to get involved in the council's consultation activities. Anyone who is a resident can join.
- Online engagement opportunities through the council's digital engagement platform, Engagement HQ.
- Extensive targeted engagement with stakeholders, waste and recycling council staff and seldom heard groups. Identification of these was supported through the development of the integrated impact assessment for the draft proposals.
- Further engagement as identified in discussion with local elected members

A full breakdown of each engagement session held, the date and location, the approximate number of attendees and an overview of feedback can be found at:

[Link to Breakdown of Engagement Sessions](#)

In presenting the feedback from the 12-week consultation, the quantitative data from the survey is outlined over the following paragraphs. Also, key for consideration is an overview of the main themes arising from the qualitative, conversation-based elements of the public consultation.

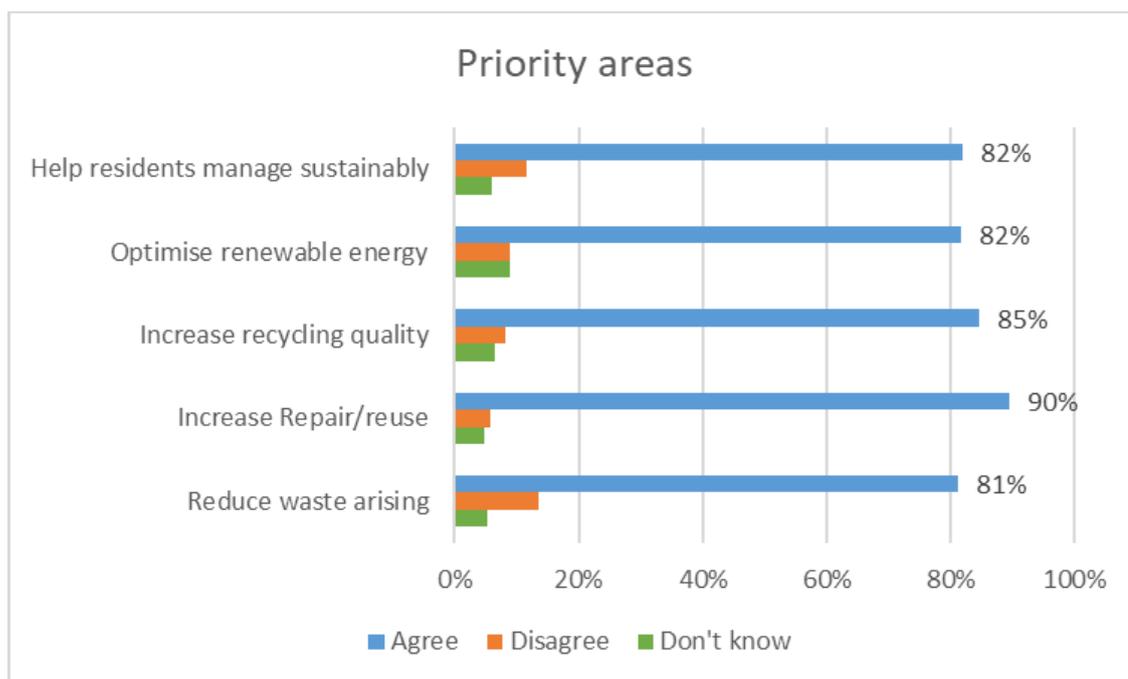
## 5.7 Data collated through the survey

The total number of responses received through the survey was **2,816**. The statistical data (percentages) presented within this key data survey report relates to survey responses and not the qualitative feedback from conversations. Participation in the consultation was self-selecting and the data should be considered within this context.

### Views on the strategic objectives:

This question within the survey sought to gauge views on whether residents agreed or disagreed with the overarching strategic aims of the draft waste strategy. The question asked whether people agreed, disagreed, or didn't know.

Table 1 – Priority Areas



While ranging between 81% agreeing with reducing waste arising as an objective, and 90% agreeing that increased repair/reuse is a key objective, the consultation responses confirm there is clear support overall for the strategic direction of the draft waste strategy.

#### Views on proposal to separate dry recycling

- 95% of respondents state they currently recycle (dry recycling).
- 79% of respondents also currently use the food waste recycling service.
- 24% respondents felt that the proposal to introduce separated dry waste recycling will help us meet statutory recycling targets. 61% disagreed and 15% didn't know.
- 42% of respondents felt the proposal to introduce separated dry recycling would either have a positive or neutral impact on them/their households (14% and 28% respectively). 57% felt it would have a negative impact upon them.

#### Views on proposals to reduce the frequency of garden waste collection from weekly to fortnightly and only collect from March to end of October:

- 67% of respondents state they currently use the weekly garden waste collection service.
- Just under half of respondents (47% for seasonal waste and 49% for fortnightly waste) agreed that the proposals will help achieve statutory recycling targets.
- 64% felt that these proposals would have a positive or neutral impact on their household, with 34% stating the proposals would have a negative impact on them/their household.

#### Views on proposal to reduce the frequency of refuse (residual waste) bin collections:

- 83% of respondents selected 3 weekly collections as their preferred option with the remaining 17% selecting 4 weekly collections.

- 21% felt that the changes to the frequency of general waste collection would help us meet statutory recycling targets, with 20% stating they didn't know. The remaining 59% felt the changes would not help meet the statutory recycling targets.
- 40% of respondents felt that changes to the frequency of general waste collection would have a positive or neutral impact on them/their households (8% and 32% respectively), while 60% felt the proposal would have a negative impact on them/their household.

Views on proposed expansion of absorbent hygiene product collection service:

- 46% of respondents felt that this proposal would help meet statutory recycling targets, with a further 44% saying they didn't know.
- This is reflective of a lower level of usage of the service, with 74% indicating that it would have a neutral impact on them.
- A further 150 respondents did not answer this question.

Views on proposal to review the current provision of Household Recycling Centre (HRC) sites:

- 88% of respondents had used HRC sites in the last 12 months.
- Of those who indicated that they had used a HRC site in the last 12 months, just under half (47%) had visited less than 6 times. 34% had visited 6-10 times and 19% had visited more than 10 times.
- Among respondents, Trehir was the most visited site and Rhymney the least visited site.
- 8% of respondents felt that this proposal would have a positive impact on statutory recycling targets whilst 72% disagreed.
- 36% felt that this proposal would have a positive or neutral impact on them with 64% feeling that this would have a negative impact on them (albeit depending on which site/s may close).

A full breakdown of the survey results is available at:

[Link to Breakdown of Survey Results](#)

## 5.8 **Qualitative/conversational insight gained through the consultation process**

While the survey responses offer a clear, statistical indication of respondents' views on the proposals, the value of qualitative, conversational insight gained through the other engagement methods (e.g. face to face engagement, drop-in sessions, targeted stakeholder engagement etc) should not be underestimated.

It is through these conversations and qualitative insight gathering, largely with residents, where potential impact and possible mitigation of impact for the proposals has come to the fore.

As stated above, throughout the consultation period, a total of 16 informal face-to-face drop-in sessions were arranged at libraries and other community venues across the county borough. A further four online drop-in sessions were held, and extensive promotion of these sessions was supported by colleagues from the communications team. As far as possible, these sessions were held on different days of the week and different times of the day, including evenings and weekends, to enable as many people as possible to attend.

In addition to the advertised sessions, 'pop up' opportunities for residents to offer their views were held at supermarket foyers and other locations across the county borough, with attendance also at the council's programme of town centre spring events.

Extensive targeted engagement with stakeholders, waste and recycling council staff and seldom heard groups was also undertaken, including with local community organisations supporting those residents with protected characteristics.

Parent and child classes, carer support groups, knit and natter groups, youth clubs, Caerphilly People First, coffee mornings and community partnership meetings are just some of the further targeted engagement sessions attended by officers during the consultation period.

A full overview of qualitative feedback received through the consultation is available at Appendix One, with further detail at [Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy Consultation | The Caerphilly Conversation](#). A summary of key themes is presented over the following paragraphs.

#### Qualitative feedback on the strategic objectives:

There was overall strong support for the strategic objectives, with many agreeing that things need to change to help meet the ambitious targets. It was often felt that more clarity is needed on how the strategic objectives would be achieved.

It was frequently suggested that waste and recycling disposal needs to be as easy as possible to encourage participation, with a focus on those who do not currently recycle (including introducing fines for non-compliance) rather than penalising those who already participate fully.

Some felt the proposals are more about saving money than improving recycling rates, while others felt the responsibility for achieving these targets lies with others – this was more strongly the view in relation to renewable energy in particular.

Many respondents felt that more information/education is needed for residents to understand what can be recycled and why recycling is so important, with many commenting that the council should expand what is collected at the kerbside, in particular, soft plastics.

Some suggestions were made that how the council deals with waste outside the home should become an additional strategic objective. Litter, fly-tipping and street cleanliness was frequently raised, with pleas to consider the impact of any changes on the appearance of streets and neighbourhoods.

Overall, there was general strong support for the strategic objectives outlined within the consultation document.

#### Qualitative feedback on proposal to separate dry recycling

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the feedback on this proposal was mixed. Many respondents were firm in their views that they would do what was required of them, regardless of what system for recycling was put in place. Many didn't feel strongly about the proposal either way, with some saying they've seen the separating of recycling taking place for some time in other boroughs, and they felt it was only a matter of time before Caerphilly residents have to do the same.

Some also felt that the separation of recycling will help residents better understand what can be recycled, and that separation is already being done in the workplace now due to changes in legislation, so residents should better understand how to do this already.

Where concerns were raised about the proposal, many felt that a more complicated system will require more effort, and therefore lead to lower participation. A common statement was 'if some people don't recycle now while it all goes in one bin, why do we think they'll start recycling when it requires more effort?'. Others saw separation as the role of the council, not residents.

Lack of space/storage for additional receptacles was a primary concern throughout discussions, particularly among those living in terraced properties and flats. Concerns were also raised about the new receptacles themselves, with the need for them to be 'animal proof' and 'weatherproof'. The weight of the receptacles was raised as a concern, particularly among older people and those with disabilities, due to not being able to lift the new receptacles. It was asked that for this reason, and for those with steps outside their property, that a wheeled receptacle is provided.

A popular suggestion was to somehow use the existing brown bin for separated waste (positive of it having wheels and meeting the weatherproof/animal proof criteria).

#### Qualitative feedback on proposals to reduce the frequency of garden waste collection from weekly to fortnightly and only collect from March to end of October:

Many residents felt a reduced frequency would be adequate, often stating that their use of the garden waste collection service is far lower in the winter months. Where people stated they didn't use the garden waste collection service, it was often due to home composting. There were positive suggestions that these proposals may encourage this on a larger scale, perhaps in collaboration with local allotment groups.

Where concerns were identified, many related to the need to lift the 4-bag restriction if collection frequencies reduced, and that less frequent collections could result in unpleasant odours and heavier bags, making them more difficult for some residents to lift.

While many respondents felt seasonal collection would be adequate, many noted that due to climate change, their gardening season now extends more into the autumn months. Autumnal leaf fall and not being able to cut back trees and hedges during nesting season was highlighted as reasons for suggesting an extension of the collection service into November.

Others felt that a year around collection would still be needed – or suggested e.g. an additional one-off collection of Christmas trees or a request service in winter months, while some raised concerns of an impact on street cleanliness with overfilled bags being left out for longer periods of time.

#### Qualitative feedback on proposal to reduce the frequency of refuse (residual waste) bin collections:

Unsurprisingly, the feedback on this proposal was again mixed. Many respondents, particularly those in smaller households did not perceive a negative impact. Some also felt that 4 weekly collection would be preferable over 3 weekly as it could become confusing in remembering the collection cycle. Some who supported a reduction in

frequency also felt it may encourage others who currently don't recycle adequately, particularly with food waste, to start.

Conversely, many others, particularly those with larger families stated they already have a general waste bin at full capacity after a fortnight, despite the fact they recycle all they are able to already.

Concerns were also raised relating to smelly, unhygienic bins, particularly those with animals or children in nappies, and the weight of bins after 3 or 4 weeks, with more reliance being placed on assisted collection services as a result. Some also felt this proposal would adversely affect people who are unable to access Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) to take any surplus residual waste to these sites between collections.

The impact on street cleanliness was again raised as a potential risk, as well as contamination in recycling bins, if overflowing residual waste was placed in with recycling. The need for the council to ensure there are no missed collections should the frequency change was also highlighted regularly, as this could make the situation unmanageable.

#### Qualitative feedback on proposed expansion of absorbent hygiene product (AHP) collection service:

As with the results within the survey, the views and opinions on this proposal were fewer in number than the others, largely due to a relatively low awareness or use of the current AHP collection service.

Many felt this service is a very positive one and could be particularly useful should the frequency of residual waste collections reduce to free-up capacity in bins, as nappies and other absorbent hygiene products can be bulky. The hygiene aspect of having regular, separate collections for this type of waste was frequently highlighted as a positive.

Some noted that any positive impact on them would depend on the eligibility for the service – and that this needs to be widened and clearly defined. Expansion to those with one child in nappies would be very welcomed.

Where concerns were raised, a number of respondents commented there needs to be sensitivity around how this service is delivered. Bags 'promoting' you use this service could cause embarrassment and raise awareness of a household's vulnerability to others.

Through discussions particularly with carers groups, it was suggested that paid carers need to be provided with information to help them understand what goes in which bin as it is not always the recipient of the service who disposes of waste.

#### Qualitative feedback on proposal to review the current provision of Household Recycling Centre (HRC) sites:

Through discussions, many residents felt it would depend on which site/s closed, with it also being acknowledged that some sites are positioned in relative close proximity at the moment. Many felt extended opening hours would be a positive move, and less confusing if all were open full time.

The need to travel further/concerns about increased fuel use on the environment, concerns about an increase in fly-tipping and increased queue times/number of visitors at each site (particularly if residual waste collection frequencies reduced) were highlighted as particular areas of concern with the proposal.

In mitigating against the impact of this proposal, residents offered a range of suggestions including keeping all the sites open and make them easy to access. Others said they'd rather a further reduction in opening days/times at their local HRC rather than see it close entirely, and the council are also encouraged to increase what can be recycled at HRCs.

For those unable to drive, or for those residents with vehicles not accepted at the HRCs, it was felt by some that the council should also consider mobile HRC facilities on a cyclical basis to allow as many people as possible to use the facilities.

## 5.9 Operational level recommendations

While not exhaustive, the feedback within the preceding paragraphs highlights the key themes arising through the 12-week public consultation.

Using this insight, some operational level recommendations/potential mitigations against the proposals include:

- Introducing a sixth strategic objective – how waste outside the home is dealt with - which would include street cleanliness.
- If the separation of recycling proposal is pursued, consideration is given to storage implications, the need for the receptacles to be animal and weather proof and suitable for people who may not be able to lift heavy items.
- If the frequency of garden waste collections reduced, consideration is given to extending the proposal further into the year – for example, until the end of November rather than the end of October currently proposed. Also lift the 4-bag restriction that can be placed out for collection.
- Larger families need to be considered in particular, with the proposed changes to the frequency of residual waste collections. Some households, who recycle as much as they are able to, are already at capacity with their residual waste bins after a fortnight.
- If AHP collections are expanded, a comprehensive communications campaign is required alongside clear eligibility criteria to encourage participation in the scheme. The scheme should also be promoted sensitively and carried out discreetly.
- If changes to household recycling centres are considered, for some, reducing the opening hours/days would be preferable over complete closure.

## 5.10 Overarching themes

In considering the feedback within this and the full consultation report, officers and members are also asked to note the following overarching themes:

- Access to waste and recycling services should be as easy as possible for residents.
- Education is key to encouraging and improving recycling rates.
- One approach will not suit all resident groups - consideration needs to be given to those who are older/disabled/do not have the capacity to understand. These residents need to be supported to ensure that they are able to participate more

effectively or are not penalised for non-participation as a result of their specific difficulties. Similarly with larger families, those in smaller properties etc.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 While the assumptions made in the prior report to Cabinet (Draft Waste Strategy – 17 January 2024) remain relevant, there is a further assumption of a funding split of 60/40 with Welsh Government providing 60%. This is to be determined as discussions are still ongoing. An assumption is also made that Welsh Government will fund 80% of the difference between the cost of Diesel vehicles and Electric vehicles as this level of support has been provided previously to authorities making the transition to electric vehicles.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1. Unsustainable consumption of precious resources and waste disposal has a significant impact on the environment and cannot be decoupled from its impact on our climate. It is important steps are taken to move away from the inefficient linear economy (where resources are taken, made into products, used, and finally thrown away) and transition to a more circular economy. In a circular economy, precious resources are kept in use for longer, maximising material quality and offering social and economic opportunities.
- 7.2. The draft waste strategy builds upon the previously approved Routemap and sets out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets. The council is at risk of circa £2m per annum fines for not achieving statutory recycling targets; the Minister previously took the decision not to fine the council subject to a root and branch review and supplementary actions being implemented to meet future targets.
- 7.3. The draft waste strategy sets out how Caerphilly will minimise the negative impacts of waste on the environment by reducing waste, ensuring items are used again, recycled for further manufacturing, or sent for recovery. It builds upon the short-term interventions agreed and part of the Routemap and provides evidence to the Minister of Caerphilly's commitment to make change.
- 7.4. The link to the full Integrated Impact Assessment for the draft waste strategy can be found here: [Link to IIA](#) . The document will be further refined in light of feedback through the public consultation and subsequent further input from the cross-party member working group.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The financial implications associated with the delivery of the waste strategy were outlined in the previous report to Cabinet (Draft Waste Strategy – 17 January 2024) Following the preparation and submission of an Initial Strategic Project Assessment, Officers have been preparing an Outline Business Case (OBC) and are due to meet WG officials on July 1st.
- 8.2 In the previous report to Cabinet (Draft Waste Strategy – 17 January 2024 initial revenue and capital costs estimates were provided. These have been further revised and the summary Capital and Revenue position is shown below in Table 2, a detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix 2:

Table 2 – Revised Revenue and Capital Costs

	2023/24 Year 0 £m	2024/25 Year 1 £m	2025/26 Year 2 £m	2026/27 Year 3 £m	2027/28 Year 4 £m	2028/29 Year 5 £m	2029/30 Year 6 £m	Total £m
Total Revenue Cost	9.317	10.045	9.167	9.104	9.968	9.836	9.687	67.124
Total Revenue Funding	-9.317	-10.341	-9.663	-9.227	-9.110	-9.110	-9.110	-65.877
<b>Revenue Gap</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-0.296</b>	<b>-0.496</b>	<b>-0.123</b>	<b>0.858</b>	<b>0.726</b>	<b>0.577</b>	<b>1.247</b>
Total Capital Cost	0.000	6.918	19.808	23.918	3.301	0.000	0.000	53.946
Total Capital Funding	0.000	0.000	0.000	-8.360	0.000	0.000	0.000	-8.360
<b>Capital Gap</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>6.918</b>	<b>19.808</b>	<b>15.558</b>	<b>3.301</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>45.586</b>

- 8.3 These costs are current best estimates but remain indicative at this stage and subject to change. Final costs will depend on a range of factors including the final decision made on kerbside collection service changes, manufacturers and contractors selected, final site designs, and inflationary pressures. All prices have been quoted at 2023/24 prices with the exception of site acquisition and development which is based on a QS report and is at 2026 prices and includes indexation of 5.9%.
- 8.4 The most significant change from what was previously presented to Cabinet is in relation to the infrastructure required to deliver the blueprint compliant collection service. An appropriate mid valleys site has been identified and negotiations are ongoing should members decide to progress with the proposals identified within the report.
- 8.5 The costs relating to the development of the recycling facility have increased. It was anticipated that the current site and building could be refurbished to allow for the required recycling facility but there are significant limitations largely around the height of the building and number of supporting columns within the building. There are also concerns about the current entry/exit points to the facility which would not allow for a one-way system as well as the location of the fuel pumps and garage. In its current format, the site would not allow for any future proofing. Therefore, consideration has been given to the construction of a new 'fit for purpose' site on the footprint of the existing site.
- 8.6 Welsh Government have made it clear that they would not be able to provide any revenue funding to support the project. The modelling is showing a revenue gap of £1.247m up to 2029/30 and £0.577m per year thereafter, that need to be addressed. Therefore, as it stands the desire to achieve a cost neutral position cannot be achieved. This is the revenue position before any borrowing costs. There are risks in assumptions included in the revenue modelling, assumptions have been made around the future recyclable material and prices to forecast the income that could be achieved from recyclable sales, this is a very volatile market and is difficult to predict. In addition, savings on material processing from diverting waste streams and not having a secondary sort at Household Recycling centres have also been included and are dependent on resident's behaviours and ultimately how successful the strategy is.
- 8.7 Welsh Government have provided assurance that there will be capital funding available to support us on the journey. The total capital cost to implement the strategy is forecast at £53.946m. However, this includes the cost of vehicle replacement, only

the incremental costs of implementing the strategy can be included in the bid so the capital cost for replacing existing vehicles under current operations of £6.120m has been deducted from the capital request to Welsh Government. In addition, Welsh Government have previously provided funding to local authorities to the value of 80% of the cost difference between diesel and electric vehicles so an assumption has also been made that this level of commitment will be provided, £2.240m has been assumed as grant contribution for this element.

- 8.8 Therefore, the Capital request to Welsh Government to implement the strategy stands at £45.586m. Based on a 60% capital contribution from Welsh Government of £27.352m the remaining 40% of £18.234m and the existing operation vehicle replacement cost of £6.120m would need to be funded by the Council. The Council does not have sufficient uncommitted reserves to fund this so would either need to reprioritise existing commitments or undertake borrowing. The revenue cost of borrowing based on an annuity loan at 5.3% and after accounting for existing vehicle replacement revenue budgets would be £1.963 per year. For comparison the fines for not achieving recycling targets are forecast at £2.713m up to 2023/24 and forecast to be £1.337m thereafter, based on current performance against the 70% target.
- 8.9 Engagement with Welsh Government is ongoing and therefore critical to secure maximum capital contribution. Officers are meeting with Welsh Government on July 1st and will be able to provide a verbal update to members on the outcome of these discussions.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. While the potential personnel implications in the prior report to Cabinet (Draft Waste Strategy – 17 January 2024) remain relevant, there are no further personnel implications outlined in the preparation of this report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1. Public consultation has been central in the development of this report, in line with the Gunning principles. The doctrine of legitimate expectation (common law) also applies:
- when there has been a clear promise of consultation
  - where official guidance or policies imply a promise to act in a particular way
  - where there is a proposed withdrawal of a benefit with significant impacts to be considered
  - where the nature of the relationship would create unfairness if there to be inadequate consultation

A full overview of the feedback from the 12-week consultation can be found at Appendix One and at the following links:

[Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy Consultation](#)

[Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy Consultation | The Caerphilly Conversation](#)

[Trafodaeth.caerphilly.gov.uk/strategaeth-gwastraff-ailgylchu-ddrafft](https://trafodaeth.caerphilly.gov.uk/strategaeth-gwastraff-ailgylchu-ddrafft)

- 10.2. The engagement and support of elected members has been crucial in shaping the draft waste strategy to date. In July 2023, Cabinet agreed to establish a cross-party

members working group, to include trade union representatives, which has been instrumental in the development of the draft strategy.

In developing the draft strategy for public consultation, the group of 12 members reviewed several aspects of the strategy, giving a clear steer for each proposal. In addition, officers have worked closely with representatives from WRAP and Local Partnership to undertake thorough modelling of a range of options to inform the draft strategy in readiness for public consultation.

10.3. A further meeting of the cross-party members working group was held on 11 June 2024 to give consideration to feedback from the consultation and to consider any recommendations that the group wish to make in presenting an updated final draft waste strategy for consideration in July 2024. The feedback from this working group session is summarised below.

10.4. Comments from cross-party working group – 11 June 2024:

### **Recycling system and Targets**

Dry recycling - A member felt that the more complicated a recycling system is, the less likely people are to participate as it is more time consuming. Education and fine will be needed to ensure that it works as we have no choice due to Welsh Government.

The group were informed that the top performers in Wales are at 70% recycling and are on Blueprint. It is important to have clear messaging and understanding and to act immediately to provide feedback to residents.

Food waste figure at 79% in the consultation doesn't match the actual participation of 50%, so it is misleading. In clarifying, the 79% participation figure was from respondents to the survey, not the community as a whole.

A member highlighted that Wales is currently second in the world for recycling and we need to continue.

A member sought clarification of the extra cost to introduce sorted recycling compared to the additional recycling that will be collected. It was suggested that with the increase in food waste collection and penalties for contamination that we may get closer to target without having to introduce sorted dry recycling collections. It was explained that we are now at 60% and modelling shows we can get to 70% but at a significant cost. However, we will save Gate Fees (which we pay for sorting at present) and we could also make money by selling better quality sorted materials.

Recycling targets are made up of all recycling, because we have the highest volume of residual waste the percentage of recycling needed is higher. Therefore, reducing residual waste will have a significant impact on targets for recycling. It was also noted that Welsh Government will take into consideration if we are moving towards Blueprint when considering our recycling percentage performance. The previous strategy included the current method of co-mingling of recycling, this was not acceptable to WG and put us at risk of fines due to not achieving the required recycling performance.

The proposals in England were highlighted to be legislating for co-mingling of dry recycling. It was explained that England currently recycles only about 40% of waste and does not have a national requirement on recycling and individual authorities decide themselves what method they will use. It was suggested that Wales needs to compare its recycling record with English Authorities that currently sort recycling and not for

England as a whole. It was pointed out to members that Caerphilly along with other Welsh authority's need to adhere to the WG legislation and that targets have now been raised from 64% to 70% for 2024/25.

A member stated that it is important to recycle materials such as aluminium and believes in a circular economy.

### **Assisted Collections**

A member stated that it would be difficult for older and disabled people to use a number of containers. Data is needed on how many will need support and how much it will cost.

### **Collection Method**

A member stated that change can become normalised and suggested a trolley system with boxes. Members were advised that the costing for collection of dry recycling is for bags and boxes, trolley systems are not included but the cost is £36 per unit, it was suggested this could be offered for some people who need assistance. The collection cost is also an issue as it takes longer to collect with trolleys.

A member stated that change is always resisted but knows people in other local authorities that have changed and they are now used to the system, the member raised concerns about the bags used as they can blow away and make the streets very untidy. It was suggested that we look at other areas to see what works best. It was highlighted to members that weighted bags could be provided which significantly reduces the risk of bags blowing around. Also, the return of the bags/boxes could be undertaken in a manner to reduce this likelihood.

It was stated that there are already complaints about the brown bins which are left on pavements, blocking them for disabled persons.

A member agreed that we need containers that are animal and weatherproof, they also need to be accessible for older disabled persons.

It was suggested that the existing brown bins could be re-purposed for Cardboard of garden waste. It was explained that the side collection vehicles do not have lifts so it would not be suitable for cardboard but an option to use them for garden waste could be looked at as they are currently collected separately with food waste and this could be reviewed for future service delivery.

Members asked to see example of the proposed bags and boxes and it was agreed that photographs will be circulated to the group and made available for joint scrutiny meeting. It was also suggested that feedback from other areas on the system they use both what has and what hasn't worked.

### **AHP collections**

A member queried how the hygiene waste would be disposed of, will it be an incinerator and how will that help achieve targets. It was explained that this waste could be sent to an incinerator but there are also specialist companies that will recycle this waste, but it is very expensive.

Members felt that a separate system for collection that is sensitive would be preferable.

## **Residual Waste**

A member highlighted that she already uses a very small container for residual waste and it work well. Members then confirmed that the 3 weekly option was their preference although one member did support 4 weekly collections.

## **Household Recycling Centres**

This was discussed and members advised that they considered previously and supported rationalisation of the current network.

The consensus of the group on the following points was sought:

- Dry recycling – different container options to be available to allow for needs of disabled/older residents.
- 4 bag limit for garden waste – agree that it may not be enough and agree with fortnightly/seasonal collections and end at November.
- Residual waste 3 weekly collections.
- AHP – separate collection but sensitive and discreet.
- HRC's – we have already agreed to consider reducing the number.
- Further meeting to discuss sixth strategic objective – waste outside the home as this can be covered outside of the main strategy.

The group supported the points listed with 7 for and 1 abstention.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1. The following statutory powers relevant to the Draft Waste Strategy are identified:

- Environment Protection Act (2010)
- Revised Waste Framework Directive (2018)
- Environment Act (2021)
- Waste (Wales) Measure (2010)

11.2. Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. One of the specific duties covers matters of consultation and engagement.

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Background Papers:

Draft Waste Strategy, Cabinet 17 January 2024 and

Draft Engagement Strategy and Consultation Questionnaire, Cabinet 17 January 2024

[Link to Draft Waste Strategy and Engagement and Consultation Questionnaire - Cabinet 17 January 24](#)

Appendix One                      Proposed Waste Strategy Routemap

[Click Here To Access Appendix 1 - Proposed Waste Strategy Routemap](#)

Appendix Two                      Revised Revenue and Capital Costs

[Click Here To Access Appendix 2 - Revised Revenue and Capital Costs Document](#)

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