

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 21 st November 2023
Report Subject	Resources and Waste Strategy Consultation
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council supports the declarations made by Welsh Government for the Public Sector to become net zero by 2030 and in Dec 2019 the Cabinet Members approved a motion to develop a clear Climate Change strategy, which will set key aims and actions for creating a carbon neutral organisation. Reducing consumption and increasing reuse and recycling to save precious resource is a key part of reaching net zero.

The draft Resources and Waste Strategy sets out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets. Without action the Authority is at risk of circa £1.13m fines for failing to achieve these targets in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, as well as a further risk of similar fines in 2023/2024. The new Strategy demonstrates to the Minister our commitment to make change.

This report seeks approval to undertake a consultation exercise on the draft Resources and Waste Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet acknowledges the progress made on achieving a robust and effective Resources and Waste Strategy to meet net zero targets and mitigate against the risk of fines and achieve statutory recycling targets.
2	That Cabinet approves the commencement of a consultation exercise on the authority's draft Resources and Waste Strategy

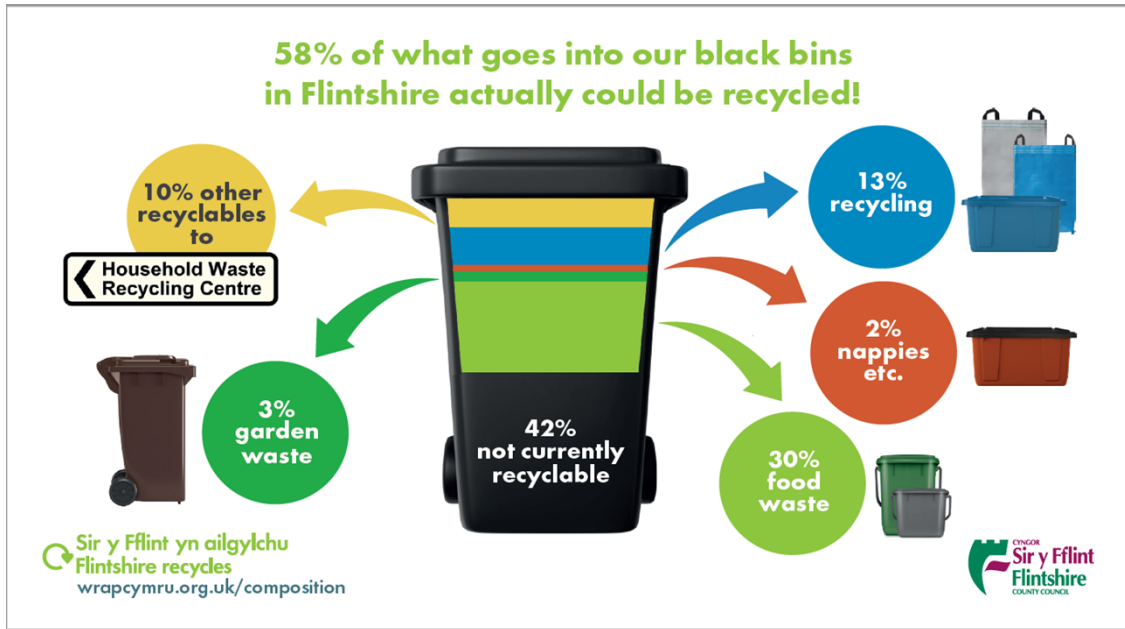
REPORT DETAILS

1.00	WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION																		
1.01	<p>The Council supports the declarations made by Welsh Government for the Public Sector to become net zero by 2030 and in Dec 2019 the Cabinet Members approved a motion to develop a clear Climate Change strategy, which will set key aims and actions for creating a carbon neutral organisation.</p> <p>Unsustainable consumption of precious resources and waste disposal has a significant impact on our environment and cannot be decoupled from its impact on our climate. Taking steps to reduce consumption and move away from traditional linear resource models of make, buy, dispose, to a circular model is a must.</p>																		
1.02	<p>It is clear that we cannot make the required step changes alone and a collective effort from residents, the workforce and the wider community will be essential to reduce consumption and improve our recycling performance.</p> <p>Furthermore, as a public body we must ensure we work with our communities to protect the long-term impact of our decisions in line with the Well-Being and Future Generations Act (2015) and the Environment Act (2021).</p>																		
1.03	<p>As reported previously we are guided by the Welsh National Waste Strategy, Towards Zero Waste (2010) and the Beyond Recycling, which is a Strategy to make the Circular Economy in Wales a reality (2021).</p> <p>The Welsh Government has set an overall zero waste target by 2050 and challenging recycling targets for councils in the interim. The current recycling rate in Flintshire of 61.51% (2022/23) is well below the level required to achieve current and future targets.</p> <p>The tables show our performance over the last three years, where we have continually missed the target, and shows that the future target of 70% needs to be achieved in 2024/25.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Actual Performance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>64%</td> <td>63.98%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>64%</td> <td>60.08%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>64%</td> <td>61.51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>64%</td> <td>61.61 % (Q2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>70%</td> <td>???</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Target	Actual Performance	2020/21	64%	63.98%	2021/22	64%	60.08%	2022/23	64%	61.51%	2023/24	64%	61.61 % (Q2)	2024/25	70%	???
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1.04	<p>The Waste (Wales) Measure (2010) made the targets for reuse, recycling and composting statutory from 2012-13 and beyond. This status allows Welsh Government to levy financial penalties against Councils that fail to achieve them. The statutory targets are weight based and have increased gradually over time.</p> <p>We have continually reported that the Council faces significant fines for not achieving the statutory recycling targets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 that we are likely to meet the same challenge for 2023/24. These fines for missing the targets over the two years equate to circa £1.13M.</p> <p>The targets increase further from 1 April 2024 and the Council faces increasing fines per annum on current recycling levels.</p>																		

1.05

On review of our current Waste Strategy in early 2023 officers made it explicitly clear that without significant service changes we were unlikely to achieve the statutory targets in future years due to the high volumes of recyclable items being placed in the residual waste bin that could have been collected via the weekly recycling collection service or at the household recycling centres (HRCs).

The pictorial diagram below shows the latest compositional analysis from 2022 of this waste and the percentage of waste that could have been diverted to recycling:



Using data from 2022/23, to achieve the 70% recycling target, we need to divert 7,600 tonnes of material from the residual waste stream to the existing kerbside recycling services. The compositional analysis shows that 13,410 tonnes of material in the residual waste bin could have been recycled using the existing services and, of this, 6,940 tonnes was food waste. The following table summarises the materials found in the black bin.

Materials	% of Kerbside Residual	Mass of Materials (t)
Food Waste	30%	6,940
Dry Recycling	13%	3,010
Other Recycling	10%	2,310
Garden Waste	3%	690
Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP)	2%	460

The remaining 42%, 9,710 tonnes, is non-recyclable waste that should have been presented in the residual waste bin.

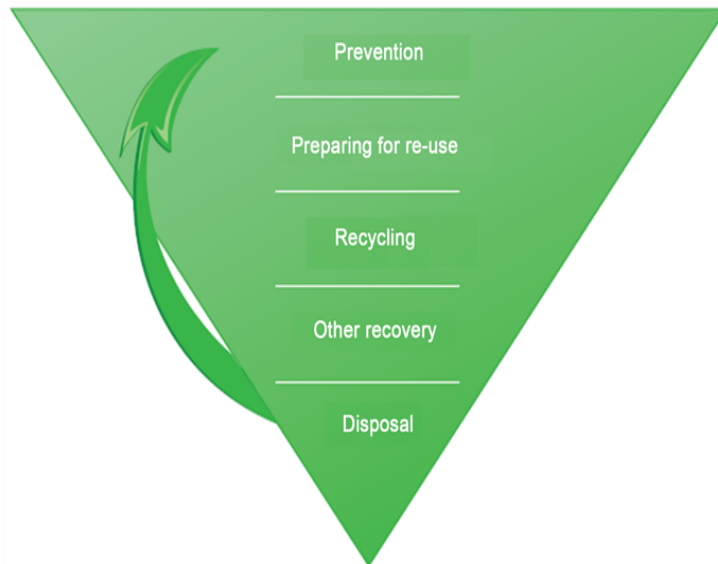
Due to the current risk of infraction fines and inability to achieve statutory targets this has been highlighted as a strategic risk rated RED for the authority.

1.06

Following the waste strategy review in early 2023, and the recommendations put forward to introduce an operating model that could result in achieving the 70% target in 2024/25, Cabinet made the decision not to make any changes to the Waste Strategy, but to undertake a further period of monitoring to see if recycling rates could be achieved through education and enforcement alone.

	<p>An action plan, including this approach and other opportunities, such as finding a recycling solution for some hard to recycle waste streams such as absorbent hygiene products (AHP), was presented to the Minister for Climate Change for consideration in deciding whether to levy a fine. This action plan was not accepted by the Minister as being sufficient to give assurance of the council’s approach in meeting the current and future targets.</p> <p>Further work was requested by the Minister for the authority to provide a more well thought through, realistic and evidenced based action plan and Resources and Waste strategy.</p> <p>The Minister has yet to make a decision on the infraction fines for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 and is also monitoring Flintshire’s performance in 2023/2024 closely. In arriving at a decision, the Minister has stipulated that the evidence that the authority provides relating to its plan for, and commitment to, improving its performance to achieve the statutory minimum targets is of fundamental importance and the plan needs to be credible, in terms of the actions proposed and the commitment from the Authority in place to deliver them.</p>
1.07	<p>Since that time, dialogue with the Minister for Climate Change and senior Welsh Government officials has led to the development of a new Resources and Waste Strategy to address the performance of the Authority and mitigate against the risk of fines.</p> <p>Whilst reviewing the Authority’s performance and whilst seeking to develop the action plan, the following challenge have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing budgets and accessible funding • Instilling long term behavioural change of our residents • Political support • Reducing residual waste arisings • Encouraging use of the food waste recycling service • Increasing all recycling streams • Providing opportunities for increased reuse of items • Providing effective recycling services to flats and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) • Bridging barriers to utilising the service (accessibility, storage, containers) • Finding sustainable recycling outlets for some waste items (carpets, AHP, flexible plastics) • Procurement of sustainable disposal outlets • Our waste infrastructure capacity • Staff resilience, retention, and recruitment • Changing legislation (workplace recycling/deposit return scheme/extended producer responsibility)
1.08	<p>The Strategy starts by presenting the global, national, and local context that the waste strategy sits within. It has then been developed in line with the waste hierarchy, supporting the principles of waste prevention and minimisation, supporting re-use, recycling and finally residual recovery and landfill for items not suitable for re-use or recycling.</p>

The waste hierarchy principles are:



The focus of the new Resources and Waste Strategy is to support our residents and communities to avoid waste and promote the reuse of valuable materials and, where that is not possible, then to enable residents to present items for recycling and make access to the recycling service the easiest option with disposal through the residual streams to recovery, the last resort.

Supporting our residents and communities to recycle and embed long term behaviour change is core to our Resources and Waste Strategy.

This aligns in with our Council Plan 2023/28 priority Circular Economy, sitting in the Green Society and Environment theme, where we have committed to:

- Achieving Welsh Government recycling targets
- Developing a recycling waste transfer station for the deposit and processing of recyclable materials
- Promoting the option to reuse and repair unwanted items at household recycling centres by partnering with local charities or social enterprises.
- Working in partnership, actively support and engage with community led groups by developing recycling initiatives.

1.09

The engagement and support of elected members is crucial in shaping the policies and procedures that will be necessary to support the delivery of the new Resources and Waste Strategy. Several member workshops have taken place over the years, explaining how the waste and recycling services operate, highlighting the statutory targets and what we need to do to achieve these, and the impact of failing to meet them. These sessions have proven fundamental in developing council's strategy in the past.

It is clear that we cannot make the required changes alone and a collective effort is required. It is important that residents and our communities have the opportunity to shape proposals and therefore we recommend that a full consultation takes place on the draft Resources and Waste Strategy.

It is proposed that the consultation will take place over a period of six weeks from 1st December 2023 until 12th January 2024. The consultation will take the form of a short online survey. Where access to the online survey is not possible, paper surveys will be provided and available.

	<p>To deliver the consultation to as many key stakeholders as possible a programme is being developed, highlighting methods of communication and engagement. These will include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online survey • Drop-in events at connects centres/libraries. • Press release and social media campaign • Promotion at the household recycling centres (HRCs) • Promotion via GovDelivery email service (c.30,000 subscribers) • Briefings for MPs/MSs/Town and Community Councils. • Briefings/Workshops for Members
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The work is being supported by Local Partnerships and Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Cymru. There is no additional resource implication for undertaking the public consultation, however support will be required through the corporate communications team.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>A full integrated impact assessment will be undertaken on the draft Resources and Waste Strategy to be included in future reports.</p>
3.02	<p>We are highly unlikely to achieve the statutory recycling targets without making significant changes to improve recycling performance and reduce the amount of waste in the residual waste bin.</p>
3.03	<p>The risk of not achieving the statutory recycling targets could result in a significant financial penalty for the Council (£200 for every tonne not recycled) if Welsh Government were to choose to levy the infraction fines. This equates to £1.13m for failing to achieve the targets in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, and potentially in excess of £1M per annum from 2024/25, for which there is no available budget and would equate to a 1% rise in council tax.</p>
3.04	<p>Continuing to accept the volume of residual waste at the current rates has resulted in increased expenditure on disposal costs. Diverting this waste to recycling would reduce the gate fee on some recycling streams (e.g. food) and would create an income for others (e.g. paper/glass/metal/plastic). It would also reduce residual waste disposal costs, which currently costs the authority over £3.4M annually.</p>
3.05	<p>The lack of appetite to improve recycling performance and implement changes could result in the loss of the Sustainable Waste Management Grant from Welsh Government to invest in Flintshire. The value of this grant to Flintshire is currently £0.742m.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED
4.01	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy.
4.02	Flintshire residents.
4.03	Elected members.
4.04	Town and Community Councils.
4.05	Members of the Senedd.
4.06	Members of Parliament.
4.07	Flintshire County Council officers and employees.
4.08	Contractors.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Towards Zero Waste Municipal Waste Sector Plan - Collections blueprint Beyond Recycling Strategy Climate Change Strategy Council Plan

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 E-mail: ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.