

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	9th December 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Brian Jones: Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Tony Ward: Head of Highways and Environmental Services
Report author	Tara Dumas, Waste and Recycling Service Manager
Title	New Waste & Recycling Operating Model General Update and Communications Progress.

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. On 18th December 2018, Cabinet approved a new operating model for the collection of household residual waste and recycling, i.e. a source segregated kerbside weekly recycling service, along with a four weekly residual waste collection for households on the “standard” service (**Appendix I refers**). This report provides a general update on progress and the latest communications initiatives planned to raise awareness of the service change over the next six months. It also details the proposed suite of Household Waste and Recycling Policies intended for adoption in the New Year to support the service both now and in the future model.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. As the implementation date for the new Operating Model moves closer, it is important that Members are fully informed with regard to progress with the project. The Waste Project Board have committed to reporting regularly to this Committee.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Members discuss the progress made by the Project Team delivering the new Waste and Recycling Service to residents by summer 2023.
- 3.2. That Members consider and endorse the suite of household waste and recycling policies (**Appendix II**) and note that the Head of Highways and Environmental Services intends to ensure the policies are adopted through the delegated decision process by March 2022.
- 3.3. That the Head of Highways and Environmental Services brings a future report to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on the pilot project outcomes in West Rhyl (use of microchips in waste containers), Bron y Crest (Communal bin service change) and Elected Member Recycling Experience initiatives.

4. Report details

4.1. General project update

The mobilisation for this Service Change is complex, consisting of a number of “work streams”. **Appendix III** maps out the status of the key milestones reported to the last Committee. The majority are still on track and we are still projected to roll out the new service in early summer 2023. The Phase 1 groundworks contract for the new single centralised depot in Denbigh is well underway. Photos illustrating the scale and current status of the earthworks next to the Colomendy Industrial Estate are detailed in **Appendix IV**, along with plans for the Phase 2 construction element for the Council’s section of land.

Critical to the timeline has been the “route planning” for the new service. This has now been completed. Every household has been allocated a future collection round for their weekly recycling collection and residual waste collection with both collections being made on the same day of the week. We now know the number, and sizes, of the new recycling vehicles we need to purchase for the new service. Due to the pressures the manufacturing industry is facing from Covid-19 and Brexit, we have brought forward the procurement for these vehicles to make sure they are delivered on time. An option to supply up to one third of the main recycling fleet as fully electric Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) has been included in the specification which will significantly lower the carbon footprint of the service. We intend to award the contract in January.

4.2. Optimising Environmental benefits through the adoption of UK and localised waste policies

Members are reminded that the Cabinet decision on 18th December 2018 was predominantly based on environmental and wider economic benefits. **Appendix V** refers to an updated version of the Benefits Realisation Plan.

The urgency of the climate change crisis has led to a series of Government policy changes. The timing and design of the new service means we are well-placed to ensure we operate a greener service fit for the future which is more capable of meeting statutory environmental targets.

4.2.1 Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (EPRS)

The EPRS will be launched in late 2023. This legislation will ensure producers, manufacturers and key suppliers are financially obligated to the recovery cost of their packaging. The proposed legislation will incentivise them to make recyclable products and products with more recycled content. A key driver for this scheme is to ensure the quality of the recyclables we collect. Local councils will be paid to collect packaging waste we target on our kerbside service. The details of exactly what is funded and how payments will be provided has still to be confirmed, but it is anticipated that this will include most operational costs generally incurred, such as vehicles, staffing and transfer station infrastructure. Denbighshire Council will be re-numerated at a set rate typical of costs arising from our family group (i.e. of similar demographics, size and geographical distribution and collection system

type). Payments could be reduced or withheld if quality standards are not met. The EPRS second consultation closed in June 2021 and responses are currently being reviewed before the details of the new scheme are announced.

4.2.2 Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

This scheme will see the return of the partial consumer refund when packaging is returned to a collection point (often a sales outlet). The details of the scheme to operate in Wales and England have yet to be confirmed but as a minimum could follow the Scottish model (due to be launched in 2022), offering a 20p return for most drinks containers (glass, metal and plastic). Anti-Littering lobbyists have advocated the introduction of the scheme in the UK as it has been proven to significantly reduce litter in countries that have adopted a DRS. It is also proven to increase recycling rates in countries that do not have consistent or comprehensive kerbside collection rates. Behaviourists predict that pro-recycling behaviours will increase across populations where the DRS is operated and that these behaviours will not just be confined to those waste materials in scope of the scheme, especially as people learn that their waste has a value.

Welsh Authorities are amongst the most successful in the World for the capture rate of drinks containers and there is concern that the DRS is a duplication of effort. Local Authorities operating kerbside sort systems rely on the income from the sale of the recovered containers to help fund the infrastructure we need to prepare it for resale. Recognising this risk, the Welsh Government and WRAP Cymru are supporting trials in order to find a workable solution for households to be able to claim their deposits back through the Council kerbside schemes. This would reduce the need for as much DRS collection infrastructure which could be very costly, with consumers picking up the cost through increased purchase costs. Despite achieving our best ever cleanliness scores this year, on-the-go drinks related litter was found on 22% of Denbighshire streets surveyed by Keep Wales Tidy (Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) Report 2021/22). Our street cleansing service collects significant amounts of recyclable containers from the roadside and open spaces every year too. It is therefore certain that an incentive programme such as the DRS would have a beneficial impact on our local environmental quality and clean-up costs. Finding an efficient solution that compliments, rather than competes with the Welsh kerbside recycling blueprint is therefore very important. The much anticipated case study is due to be released soon.

4.2.3 Denbighshire's Household Waste and Recycling Collection Policy

In order to ensure that people use our waste services to their full potential so that we can optimise service efficiency and recycling performance, it is recommended we set out our service user requirements. Existing policies and procedures have been updated and brought together in one single document [Appendix II(a)]. Members are asked to review and endorse the Household Waste and Recycling Collection Policy. Appendix II(b) highlights amendments to the policy once the

new waste operating model is operational. The final policy will be adopted through the Delegated Decision process by 1st April 2022.

4.4 Communications Update: Preparing our residents for change

Appendix VI outlines the communication plan to date. To summarise, key activities between now and June 2022 are:

- West Rhyl Project - Microchipping containers (wheeled bins and gull proof sacks) – A trial to evaluate the benefits in regard to reducing escaped waste, abandoned bins/bins left out/stolen, contamination of recycling, recycle rates. This project has been delayed due to recruitment issues but a project officer is now in post and preparation for the changes are underway.
- On-going monitoring and engagement from the communal bin collection point trial at Bron y Crest, Denbigh. A new collection system was installed in November. Early indications are that the quality of the recycling has significantly increased from those actively engaging, but more education is needed to encourage more items to be recycled. A second site for the trial expansion will be identified in the New Year in the West Rhyl area.
- Elected member “standard service” experience – Ward Members currently using the blue/black bin kerbside service will be given the opportunity to experience the new service for 8 weeks in February and March next year. For this time, members will use a trolley box and reusable sack instead of their blue bin and will be issued with a larger black bin (if needed). Weekly recycling collections will be undertaken (including food waste) and the residual waste will be collected every four weeks. Those who need it will be given additional capacity for hygiene waste. Volunteers will be asked to complete a simple observational diary and feedback comments to officers at the end of the trial. Members will be contacted in December to promote the opportunity and a “case study” report will be available by the end of April 2022.
- January will see the launch of the *B INformed* quarterly newsletter. It will be available in hard copy format at One Stop Shops and libraries. Households will be encouraged to sign up to receive future editions. The newsletter aims to ensure households are aware of the forthcoming changes to their bin service, and understand why the changes are being made. Initially, every household’s black bin will be tagged to promote the e-version of the Newsletter. All residents signing up to regular updates by the end of March 2022 will have the chance to be entered into a free prize draw. The Service aims to get at least 1 in 5 households signed up by Summer 2023.
- The service will launch a Denbighshire Specific online “Recycling A to Z”. Members will be given the opportunity to view this helpful educational tool ahead of its public launch in January. The A to Z is relevant to our current recycling system and will be updated to reflect the additional things we can recycle once the new waste model rolls out.

- A comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions about the new service has been produced. Initially these will be used internally to help the Communications Team and front of house staff responded to queries about the service. The FAQs will be launched in the second B INformed newsletter in April 2022. A small sample of FAQs can be viewed in Appendix VII.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. Detailed in the Cabinet Report 18th December 2018. The project also contributes significantly to the Council's ambition to become Carbon neutral by 2030.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. The Council is still operating within the affordability window set by Cabinetto reduce the annual cost of the service by at least £500K (**Appendix VIII** refers).

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment (WBIA)?

- 7.1. The original WBIA 407 carried out in 2018 and was updated in April 2021. The latest version of the WBIA can be found here:
<http://wellbeingad.denbighshire.gov.uk/Assessments/Assessment/en/407>

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. A Recycle More Residents' Survey was carried out in 2018. In addition to those groups consulted up to and included in the Communities Scrutiny report 24th October 2019, the service has also reported to: Cabinet Briefing (depot update) October 2020 and April 2021; Performance Scrutiny (Trade Waste element) March 2021; and SIG (Microchipping and In-Cab technology) March 2021; Communities Scrutiny Committee May 2021; Cabinet (19 October 2021).

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications of this report with Members being asked to note the progress being made on the project. With cost pressures from increased supply/material costs affecting Depot, Fleet & Container costs, the £2m risk contingency within the overall project cost is projected to be fully utilised to deliver the service change (Appendix V). As noted on 6.1 the projected annual revenue savings for the service continues to be on target, to meet the prudential borrowing cost of the project.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1 A comprehensive risk register is maintained on the Council's Verto system and monitored by the Project Board.

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government and Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution.