

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **22nd October 2024**
 Report Subject: **Waste and Recycling Annual Performance 2023-24**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Helen Cunningham, Cabinet Member - Place & Environment / Deputy Leader**
 Report Submitted by: **Matthew Stent - Service Manager Neighbourhood Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
01/10/24	03/10/24				22/10/24	04.12.24		

1. Purpose of the Report

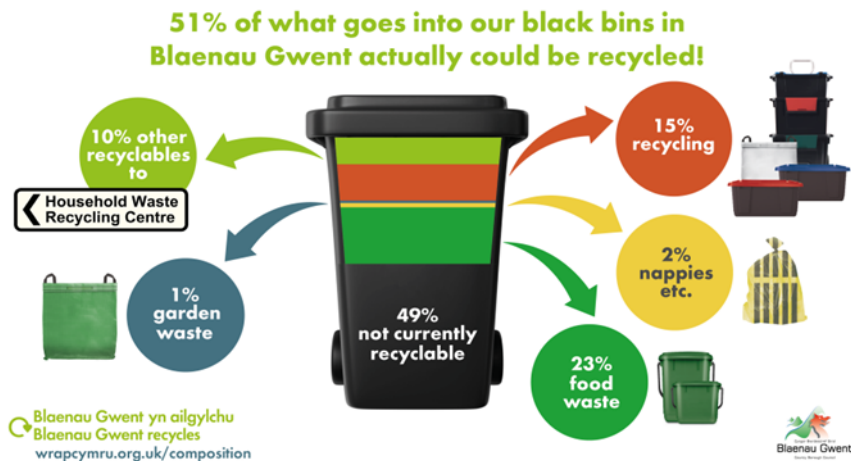
To provide the Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee with an update of Waste and Recycling Annual performance outcomes for 2023-24.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The report summarises the waste and recycling performance data for 2023-24, **Appendix 1**. Since 2019-20 we have exceeded the Welsh Government statutory recycling target of 64%. In 2023-24, we have maintained that success and once again exceeded the target of 64%, attaining 66.18%. This has been achieved through the hard work and dedication of the Waste Team - Officers, wardens and frontline staff, including those at the Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centres - with support from the Communications Team, Business Support, Corporate Performance Team, Senior Management, Elected Members and most importantly, the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

2.2 Blaenau Gwent has made considerable progress in recent years in increasing the amount we recycle, exceeding Welsh Government targets and reducing the amount of material that we dispose of. Between 2017-18 and 2023-24 our recycling rate has risen from 56.0% to 66.18% and our total waste arisings has reduced by 804.79 tonnes. However, since 2019-20 our recycling rate has remained steady and current projections show that we are unlikely to reach the 70% target for 2024-25.

2.3 In 2022 an analysis of non-recyclable waste in Blaenau Gwent was carried out to understand what materials were being thrown away. A summary of the results is shown in the diagram below. The results show that despite a comprehensive recycling service, 51% of materials that are placed into the non-recycling bin could have been recycled using existing services, with 23% being food waste alone.



2.4 This equates to around 4811 tonnes of recycling being unnecessarily disposed of which costs around £554,000 per year in disposal fees and stops materials from being recycled.

2.5 Furthermore, some of these recyclable materials including paper, card, plastic, clothing, glass, steel, and aluminium have a value and can be sold to generate an income. The value of the recycling materials being disposed of in the non-recyclable bin is approximately £246,000 per year.

2.6 Based on current performance and assuming the total municipal waste remains constant (31,901.13 tonnes) Blaenau Gwent will need to recycle 22,330.79 tonnes to achieve the 70% target in 2024-25. This would require a shift of 1,218.56 tonnes from residual waste to recycling tonnage from within the current total waste arisings.

2.7 We are currently working with Welsh Government, through Local Partnerships and Wrap, to develop a new Waste Strategy which will set out the challenges we face and the strategic actions we will need to take to increase our recycling rate to 70% and beyond and reduce our overall waste.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1** to accept the information in the report [**Preferred option**].

3.2 **Option 2** to consider the information contained within the report and provide challenge and/or further action for consideration to make improvements.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Corporate Plan Priorities

The improvement of waste and recycling performance supports the Council Priority to ‘Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable Connected communities’ in particular ‘to increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets’.

Statutory Responsibilities

Local Authorities in Wales have been set statutory recycling targets through the Wales Waste Measure 2010, and failure to meet the targets will result in a financial penalty from Welsh Government.

Gwent Well-being Plan

Waste and recycling services support the Well-being objective 'where the natural environment is protected and enhanced' by using our resources in a fair and sustainable way.

5. Implications Against Each option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

The Local Authority may face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if it fails to achieve the statutory recycling targets. These are currently £200 per tonne below the recycling tonnage required to achieve the target of 70% in 2024-25 and for each following year. If the current recycling rate of 66.18% remains the same in 2024-25 there are potential fines of £243,712 to be incurred.

The Local Authority currently pays for the treatment and disposal of black bag waste. The greatest disposal cost in the budget is for the black bag waste and the income we receive from the sale of recyclate helps to support the service but does not offset the cost. As residents recycle more of their waste, the money spent on waste treatment and disposal will reduce and the income gained from the sale of recyclate may increase, however, this is very much dependant on market forces. It should be noted that we only get income from the kerbside collected recyclate – for all other waste streams we have to pay for the collection, disposal and processing costs.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

There is a risk that the Local Authority will continue to face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if it fails to achieve the statutory recycling targets.

Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of Council services carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in service performance and the quality of provision; and
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Regular monitoring of waste and recycling performance is a key element in ensuring that the Council knows its services well and is able to support and intervene appropriately.

5.3 Legal

Local Authorities in Wales have been set statutory recycling targets through the Wales Waste Measure 2010, and failure to meet the targets will result in a financial penalty from Welsh Government.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no Human Resources issues associated with this report.

5.5 **Health and Safety**

There are no Health and Safety implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Please note: The following indicators are not the final version and may change following final validation by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

6.1.1 **Recycling Targets**

	2022/23	2023/24
Quarter 1	67.76%	70.11%
Quarter 2	68.29%	66.99%
Quarter 3	64.66%	61.91%
Quarter 4	66.32%	65.42%
Annual	66.78%	66.18%

In comparison to 2022-23 the annual recycling rate has decreased slightly by 0.60 percentage points.

6.1.2 **Residual Waste**

Overall residual waste has increased when compared to the previous year.

Kerbside

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	10244.398	9434.211	9549.86

In comparison there has been an increase of 115.65 tonnes (1.23%) of residual waste collected at the kerbside in 2023/24.

HWRC

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	806.839	1150.948	1459.01

In comparison there has been an increase of 308.06 tonnes (26.77%) of residual waste from New Vale and Roseheyworth HWRC in 2023/24.

6.1.3 **Composting Recycling**

There has been an increase in food and a decrease in garden waste collected in 2023/24.

Food

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
3674.12	3573.21	3599.45

In comparison there has been an increase of 26.24 tonnes (0.73%) of food waste collected in 2023/24.

Garden Waste

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1672.390	1684.118	1485.578

In comparison there has been a decrease of 198.54 tonnes (11.79%) of garden waste collected in 2023/24.

6.1.4

Dry Recycling

There has been a decrease in kerbside dry recycling, collected in 2023/24.

Kerbside

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
5902.920	5388.640	5003.089

In comparison there has been a decrease of 385.55 tonnes (7.15%) of dry recycling collected at the kerbside in 2023/24.

Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP)

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
600.75	602.70	608.94

In comparison there has been an increase of 6.24 tonnes (1.04%) of absorbent hygiene products (AHP) collected at the kerbside in 2023/24.

6.1.5

HWRC (Recycling)

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
4262.122	4410.108	5481.465

In comparison there has been an increase of 1071.36 tonnes (24.29%) of dry recycling from the HWRC in 2023/24.

HWRC (Reuse)

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
101.95	177.786	210.215

In comparison there has been an increase of 32.43 tonnes (18.24%) of reuse from the HWRC in 2023/24. This is in part due to the opening of the reuse shop (The Den) at Roseheyworth HWRC.

6.1.6 **Welsh Local Authority Comparison**

2022/23 Overall - Blaenau Gwent were 9th out of 22 with a recycling rate of 66.78%.

2023/24 Overall – Blaenau Gwent are 14th out of 22 with a recycling rate of 66.18%.

6.1.7 **2022/23 Dry Recycling Only** – Blaenau Gwent were 3rd out of 22 with a dry recycling rate of 49.34%.

2023/24 Dry Recycling Only – Blaenau Gwent are 6th out of 22 with a dry recycling rate of 47.92%.

6.1.8 **2022/23 Composting Only** – Blaenau Gwent were 18th out of 22 with a composting rate of 16.84%.

2023/24 Composting Only – Blaenau Gwent are 17th out of 22 with a composting rate of 17.57%.

6.1.9 The comparison data shows that shows that Blaenau Gwent’s recycling rate has remained steady however, where other local authorities have introduced policies to enhance their services and restrictions to residual waste collections, their performance has improved. It should be noted that Blaenau Gwent has been a front runner in introducing many of the same policies, for example three weekly residual collections, black bag sorting at HWRC’s, Enforcement Policies for side wate and non-recycling.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Increased involvement from our communities as residents recycle in line with service requirements to achieve national targets.

6.3 **Involvement** (*consultation, engagement, participation*)

Through the public engagement sessions, the public have been consulted and their views have been sought regarding the impact of the side waste enforcement policy.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term** (*forward planning*)

In line with the Councils agreed Waste Management and Recycling Strategy 2018-2025, we will continue to seek to identify actions needed to achieve the statutory recycling rates but crucially that service users and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the aims of the service, the actual services to be provided by the Council, the education and engagement activities it can undertake to promote these, the Council’s future plans to meet its aspirations and statutory requirements and how it will work together with residents, partners and neighbours to meet wider goals and agendas.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Improved waste management at a local and national level can help reduce our Ecological footprint, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impact, therefore preventing problems from getting worse.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Waste Services continue to work closely with the Welsh Government through Local Partnerships and Wrap to further develop and improve the service to achieve future targets.

6.7 **Integration**

Our Waste Collections service is made up of an Integrated Frontline Service, this has allowed us to maintain all of our collection services during high periods of sickness absence and annual leave.

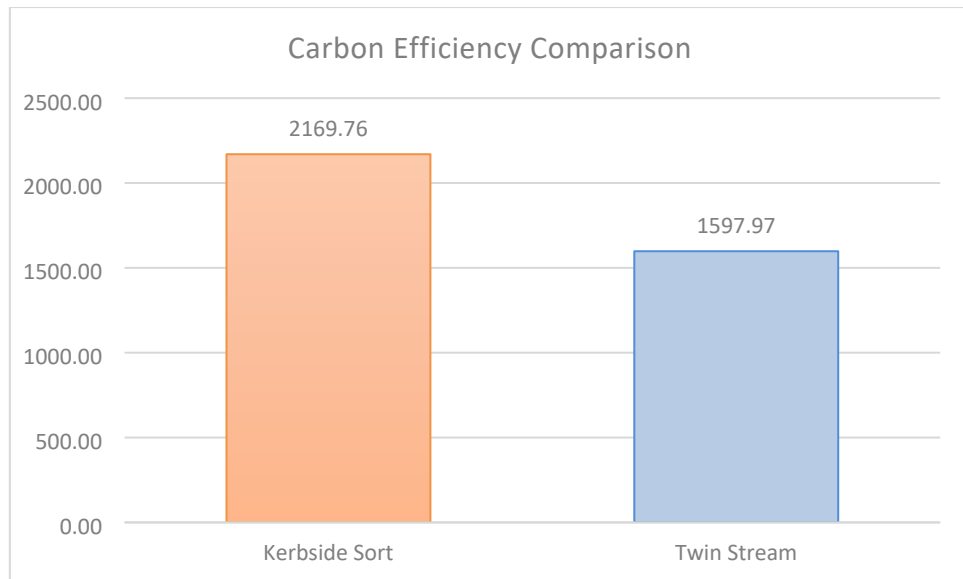
6.8 **Decarbonisation and reducing Carbon Emissions**

A Wrap issued report entitled “The Climate Change impacts of Recycling Services in Wales” documented the increased carbon benefit of a kerbside sort collection service when compared to a Twin Stream (Co-mingled) collection service.

The report produced the following assumptions;

- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Kerbside Sort = 2569 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit
- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Twin Stream = 1892 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	23/24
Collected recycling tonnage	2035.789	2023.99	1969.49	2416.65	8445.919
CO2e Carbon Benefit – Kerbside Sort	522.99	519.96	505.96	620.84	2169.76
CO2e Carbon Benefit – Twin Stream	385.17	382.94	372.63	457.23	1597.97
Difference	137.82	137.02	133.33	163.61	571.79



Switching to a kerbside Sort collection service has resulted in a CO2e benefit of 571.79 tonnes when compared to a Twin Stream collection service.

6.9 Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Not required for this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The performance of the waste and recycling service will be monitored by the service on a monthly basis, including, but not limited to:

- Changes in residual waste tonnage collected
- Changes in tonnage of recyclables and food waste collected
- Recycling performance
- Financial position
- Number of residents presenting side waste
- Number of residents issued with Section 46 notice
- Number of residents issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Waste and Recycling Performance Pack 2023/24 Data, Appendix 1.*