

Inquiry into Waste Management

by the Public Accounts Committee

Memorandum from WRAP Cymru

Executive Summary

1. WRAP Cymru welcomes the opportunity to provide written evidence to the Public Affairs Committee's Inquiry into waste management, launched on 13 May.
2. WRAP Cymru is a part of WRAP. WRAP works with governments, businesses and communities to deliver practical solutions to improve resource efficiency and is backed by government funding from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
3. WRAP Cymru delivers the Collaborative Change Programme (CCP) on behalf of the Welsh Government. Our other Welsh Government-funded work includes communications support for local authorities introducing changes to their recycling services, sustainable procurement support for Wales' public sector, and the Courtauld Commitment 2025 and UK Plastics Pact.
4. This paper provides written evidence in relation to the Auditor General for Wales's reports into municipal recycling, with a specific focus on the increase in recycling rate in Wales in recent years and greater levels of consistency of service across different local authorities.
5. The rest of this memorandum covers the following issues:
 - Use of landfill;
 - Recycling rates;
 - Service consistency;
 - Recycling capture rates;
 - Comparative costs of recycling services; and
 - Comparative carbon impacts of different recycling services.
6. We hope that this evidence will be of use to the Committee, and will be happy to expand upon it further in our oral evidence on 14 October.

Use of Landfill

7. Reliance on landfill by Local Authorities has decreased markedly throughout Wales in recent years. In 2017-2018 11% of municipal solid waste was sent to landfill compared to 41% in 2012-2013. Projections suggest this will decrease further in 2018-19, with a further decrease expected in 2019-2020 as a result of the Parc Adfur energy from waste facility coming on line in summer 2019.

8. We anticipate that, notwithstanding any unforeseen events or circumstances, Wales will reach the 2024-2025 target of no more than 5% of municipal solid waste sent to landfill.

Recycling rates

9. The municipal recycling rate increased from 7% in 2000-2001 to 63% in 2017-18. The rates declined slightly between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 due to improved end destination reporting and better reporting of wood reject rates.

10. We anticipate that Wales as a whole will meet the 2019-2020 target of 64% recycling, and that that this rate will increase with local authorities introducing new recycling services.

Service consistency

11. Since the Wales Audit Office report both the Vale of Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire have confirmed their planned change to a blueprint collection model and these are both being implemented in autumn 2019. Denbighshire County Council is planning plans to change to a blueprint service in the next two years. This will bring the number of local authorities that follow the Welsh Government blueprint to 14.

12. It is also worth noting that there are many aspects of the blueprint that are followed by most, if not all, Welsh local authorities, for example weekly food waste collections and the basic list of materials collected, comprising paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic pots, plastic tubs, plastic trays, metal cans and small scrap (e.g. kitchen utensils), foil, and glass jars and bottles.

Recycling capture rates

13. WRAP Cymru's [National Municipal Waste Compositional Analysis in Wales](#), published in 2016, examined waste arisings in every local authority in Wales. It found that just under half of the material collected in kerbside residual waste collections could be readily recycled using services available to residents. Half of this (25% of the total) is food waste.

14. This demonstrates that there is further potential to use communications and behaviour change campaigns to increase recycling rates – and particularly food waste capture rates – using existing recycling services.

Comparative costs of recycling services

15. Our report on [Harmonised Recycling Collections Costs](#), published in 2016, compared source separated kerbside collections to co-mingled and two stream collections and found that the former offered the most cost-effective approach to achieving high recycling rates.

Comparative carbon impacts of different recycling services

16. Our [Carbon Impacts Report](#), published in 2016, examined the carbon impacts of different recycling services used by local authorities in Wales, comparing the performance of kerbside sort, co-mingled and two stream systems. It also considered the climate change benefits of recycling activities in 2014-2015 and compared this to the benefits that would be seen if the Welsh Government's Collections Blueprint were to be adopted by every local authority.

17. We look forward to discussing these points with the Committee in person on 14 October.

Submitted by:

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