

Thriving Communities Task & Finish Group – Waste Collection Service
Monday, 30th January, 2023

2.00 p.m.

Committee Members present:	Others present:
Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans (Chair) Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan Councillor Marc Davies Councillor Meirion Davies Councillor Rhodri Davies Councillor Wyn Evans Councillor Rhodri Evans Councillor John Roberts Councillor Chris James	Councillor Euros Davies Councillor Ifan Davies Councillor Amanda Edwards Councillor Eryl Evans Councillor Keith Evans Councillor Geraint Hughes Councillor Hugh Hughes Councillor Ceris Jones Councillor Caryl Roberts

The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group met on Monday 30 January to scope the information they would request from officers for a Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on the waste collection Service. A date for the Scrutiny meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 21st March at 1.30pm.

Members shared their experiences of problems with the waste collection over the Christmas period with a number of residents not having their waste collected for up to 6 weeks. They raised concerns in relation to the issues that this caused including, storage problems, rodent problems, the image of Ceredigion as this is the 'shop window' for the County. Increasing resilience within the teams was discussed, due the effects that inclement weather can have on the service.

The group requested a full report explaining why the disruptions to waste collection are happening, and that it appears to be worse this year.

The main points raised by the Committee are outlined below:

1. General

- Why is the collection of refuse not a priority?
- Inconsistency in when purple bags are collected in some areas (eg. Lampeter)?
- We need to focus on the disruptions that happen due to bank holidays/inclement weather.
- Condition of roads, road sweepings, leaves and soil. Roads aren't cleaned as well as they used to be. Do sweepings have to go to Cross Hands because of contaminated waste? It can all cause a knock on effect.
- The reasons given that HGV drivers were gritting in winter and not available for waste lorries does not hold in August. Waste collections were missed for 3 weeks in that period. Why?
- Should we forget about collections on Bank holiday Mondays? Easier and clearer
- In the countryside, it is often the ONLY service they get or need from the Council, and they do not get it, what are they paying for? When it is not

collected, there is a long lane to go down and back, not 3 paces on a pavement/

- As a small county, we can and should be more flexible
- Where should people keep the bags for 3/4/5 weeks in town?
- The public are positive about the staff they encounter
- Why is the waste going to N Ireland and not Carmarthenshire?

2. Staffing

- Would like information on the following:
 - Number of staff; resilience of service.
 - Pay & Conditions – has overtime changed over time.
 - The way holidays are structured – has that changed? Seems taking holidays at same time, pattern of.
 - HR recognised absences? Sicknesses? Request a graph to show.
- Are there enough staff?
- Do we have a full complement of staff to operate the fleet?
- Why are staff allowed to choose whether to work or not on bank holidays?
- Why are staff contracts different from each other?
- Do we need to review staff contracts?
- The employees are not comfortable or happy with contracts and therefore take holidays and sick leave as a way out
- Is refuse collection a full time job?
- If there is spare time after collections do the staff migrate into other jobs in that time?
- Can we have more staff able to assist when there are shortages (more people to have HGV licence / be able to pull staff from other Service areas / Access to bank staff)
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3. Budget

- Is there enough budget?
- How many more lorries and staff would be needed to fulfil the function of refuse collection? How much would it cost?
- What is the cost per household per week and what would be the cost of a gold plated service?
- They shut Beulah with a projected saving of £40,000 but were then delivering rubbish to Lampeter with the vehicles making 7-8 mpg. Was there any saving? How much? Is Beulah reopened now?

4. Outsourcing

- Should we look at alternative ways working? Outsourcing? Would this be a cheaper option?
- Example given of using private contractor for commercial collection, not missed once in 7 years

- Have you explored the option of employing contractors when there are disruptions?
- In difficult times can we not use farmers, they have the equipment to assist?

5. Fleet/maintenance

- How many refuse lorries are needed to safely collect black bags weekly?
- How many lorries are needed to safely collect recycling bags weekly?
- What percentage of vehicles are unserviceable every week?
- Have we adequate mechanics to keep the lorries serviceable?
- When the fleet needs renewing, would it be an option to look at smaller vehicles which don't require drivers to have a HGV licence/cheaper to run?
- Having been to Glanyrafon and seen 8 vehicles not in use, should we be doubling the shifts with the same number of vehicles?

6. Communication

- Would it be possible to improve communication when there are disruptions, many people are unclear if they should leave waste for next day or represent the following week, there isn't consistency. The Communication that is sent to Councillors has a note saying that it is not to be shared.
- Not everyone is on social media
- Can the daily/twice daily messages be more specific i.e. black bags, recycling, food, glass and what hasn't been collected?
- Evidence needs to be collected from the workforce and the public
- A press release is important

7. Amenity sites

- Why do Amenity Sites not accept waste bags when there are problems with collection, some residents are happy to take their bags there?
- In Penparc they insist on opening the black bags, why? No one wants to do it
- Could skips be placed in Glanyrafon to enable people to take their waste there if they choose, when it is not collected?

8. Clic

- How many enquiries in relation to Waste Collection issues have Clic received in the last 6 months?

Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans,
Chair of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee