

# Recycling Performance Management

Isle of Anglesey County Council

April 2026



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# Audit snapshot

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## What we looked at

- 1 The audit looked at how the Council manages the performance of its recycling service. The audit focussed on the Council's arrangements for:
  - understanding recycling performance;
  - strategic and operational planning and communication; and
  - value for money.

## Why this is important

- 2 In 2010, the Welsh Government set incremental recycling targets, reaching 70% by March 2025. The Welsh Government's *Beyond Recycling* strategy aims for 75% recycling by 2030 and 100% by 2050, promoting a circular economy. Whilst not statutory targets at this stage, it sets a clear direction to councils to continue improvement in recycling rates.
- 3 Under the same legislation, Welsh Government has the power to fine councils £200 for every tonne of waste that falls short of the 70% recycling target. Missing the target can lead to penalties that equate to approximately £250,000 for every 1% a council falls short. However, Welsh Government has historically stated that imposing fines would be a 'last resort' intervention.
- 4 One of the six strategic objectives in Anglesey's Council Plan 2023-2028 is Climate Change – 'responding to the crisis, tackling change and working towards being a net zero organisation by 2030'. The Plan states the Council will 'establish a household recycling rate at 70%'.

- 5 In 2019-20, Isle of Anglesey County Council reused, recycled, or composted 68% of its residential waste compared to the Welsh average of 65%. By 2024-25, the percentage reported by the Council had fallen to 65% in comparison to the Welsh average of 68%, and the Welsh Government recycling target of 70%.
- 6 In 2024-25, the Wales average expenditure on waste per resident was £114. In the same period, Isle of Anglesey County Council spent £124 per resident<sup>1</sup>.
- 7 We felt it was important to assess if the Council has arrangements in place to understand the performance of its recycling management, to meet the national recycling targets, and to ensure value for money of the service.

## What we have found

- 8 The Council currently has clear and robust arrangements in place to manage its recycling performance effectively. These arrangements include
  - up-to-date strategic and operational plans to respond to recycling targets;
  - periodic and detailed reports aiding the Council's understanding of its recycling service performance and benchmarking;
  - involving island residents in its efforts to drive zero waste; and
  - routine oversight of contract outcomes and spend.

However, the Council's ability to achieve value for money depends on how effective its interventions are in improving its recycling performance and reducing the risk of penalties.

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<sup>1</sup> [Find statistics and data about Wales | StatsWales](#)

## What we recommend

- 9 We have not made any recommendations for the Council. This is because the Council provided sufficient and appropriate evidence corresponding to the audit questions and criteria. This indicated that we could be reasonably assured from the evidence we reviewed that the Council currently has effective arrangements to manage its recycling performance.

# Our findings

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The Council currently has clear and robust arrangements in place that help manage its recycling performance effectively.

## **The Council has a well-developed understanding of how its recycling service performs.**

- 10 The Council has effective governance arrangements where it routinely measures and monitors its recycling performance and presents this information in formal reports. For example, the Council reports on its recycling performance in its corporate scorecards to members and the public and in its statutory returns to Welsh Government. The Portfolio Holder is kept informed of the Council's recycling performance. The Council also meets with its waste contractor, Biffa, every week, which provides ongoing operational checks.
- 11 To aid its understanding of how its recycling service performs, the Council has formally looked into the reasons for its
  - high level of residual waste;
  - lower-than-expected dry recycling yields; and
  - low levels of food waste recycling.
- 12 The Council asked specialist waste industry consultants WRAP Cymru to conduct this work. WRAP Cymru identified interventions that could help improve its recycling performance. These include
  - increasing kerbside recycling;
  - reducing bin sizes for residual waste; and
  - improved community engagement.

- 13 As a result, the Council has since used these insights to inform specific action plans to improve recycling performance.
- 14 The Council looks at comparative information from councils across the UK that also use Biffa as their main waste contractor. The Council compares its recycling performance with other Welsh councils by using data published by
  - WasteDataFlow;
  - Welsh Local Government Association; and
  - waste industry reports.
- 15 This provides the Council with useful insight to support informed decision-making and identify emerging issues. As a result, the Council can target resources for interventions to help improve its recycling performance and help secure value for money.

## **The Council has up-to-date strategic and operational plans to help it meet the current recycling target.**

- 16 The Council has set out a clear strategic direction to help it meet national recycling targets and developed a comprehensive set of operational plans to improve its recycling performance. For example, the 2023-28 Council Plan commits to increasing recycling rates and achieving the current 70% government target. The Council's Resources and Recycling Strategic Plan for 2024-29 sets out four priorities. The Strategic Plan is supported by three detailed action plans that cover communication, improvement and finance.
- 17 Based on the WRAP Cymru findings and other research, the Council's recycling management arrangements include the following up-to-date action plans:
  - Kerbside Intervention Action Plan;
  - Workplace Recycling Action Plan;
  - business continuity plans; and
  - electric vehicle fleet readiness.

- 18 The Council proactively communicates and engages with its residents as key participants in its plans to improve recycling performance. For example, the Council plans its social media engagement with its residents, and it monitors themes in the responses. Recently, the Council held a well-publicised consultation on proposed changes to its waste service. This involved a questionnaire and nine drop-in events and received approximately three thousand responses.
- 19 As a result, the Council's arrangements provide a strong basis for it to plan, fund and deliver improvements to its recycling performance. This should help the Council meet the recycling targets and comply with regulations. However, the Council has also identified that if it decides to implement service changes it will need to amend its operational plans and produce new delivery timescales.

### **The Council has established robust arrangements to secure value for money in its recycling interventions.**

- 20 The Council has established robust arrangements for securing value for money through its routine waste contract and expenditure oversight, supported by financial modelling.
- 21 For example, the Council discusses value for money at monthly performance meetings with its waste contractor Biffa. The Council has arrangements to scrutinise its monthly invoices from Biffa. This process provides the Council with regular opportunities to check invoices against agreed outcomes, variable costs, and contract pricing schedules. The Council has produced short to mid-term financial modelling to compare options for meeting recycling performance targets, including assessing costs, benefits, and risks such as fines.
- 22 The Council has submitted an Initial Strategic Project Assessment to seek Welsh Government support to fund improvements to its waste service. We heard verbal evidence of how the Council has considered income opportunities such as charging fees for its recycling services and sale of materials. The Council already charges for some recycling services, such as garden waste and reviews these fees annually.

- 23 The Council has considered which improvements it could make to its waste and recycling service in terms of cost and outcomes. It has also considered the financial and reputational risk to the Council of not meeting the government recycling targets. As a result, the Council's arrangements allow it to challenge costs, make informed investment choices, and demonstrate economy and efficiency for its recycling service.
- 24 Continued assurance that the Council's recycling management arrangements secure value for money in the longer term and mitigate the risk of financial penalties will depend on
- the changes it decides makes to its waste service; and
  - the timing of the changes and their success.

# Appendices

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# 1 About our work

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## Scope of the audit

The audit reviewed the Council's management of recycling service performance. It focussed on:

- Understanding recycling performance;
- Strategic and operational planning; and
- Value for money.

## Audit questions and criteria

### Questions

Does the Council understand the performance of its recycling service?

Does the Council have a clear strategy and operational plan to respond to national recycling targets?

Does the Council have arrangements in place to secure value for money in its recycling interventions?

### Criteria

The audit criteria were sourced by considering what 'good' looks like in terms of

- compliance with legislation;
- the reasons for current and past performance rates;
- how the Council compares its performance with others;
- how it communicates its recycling targets and performance to stakeholders; and
- how it secures value for money as defined by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy).

## Methods

Our methods for this audit included gathering written and verbal evidence supplied by the Council and validated by the audit team. We met with key officers and reviewed documents corresponding to the audit criteria.

## About us

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