

Welsh Government
Summary of responses

Changes to local authority municipal waste statistical outputs

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Proposed Changes to the frequency of local authority municipal waste statistical outputs. User Consultation - Results

Summary

A user consultation was conducted between June and September 2017 to seek user views on proposals to:

- (a) Cease publishing the detailed quarterly Statistical release and replace with a short Statistical Headline outlining key points at a Wales level. Publish accompanying key data at a Wales and Local Authority level on StatsWales, to include the following (quarterly and 12 month rolling average):
 - Municipal waste arisings
 - % Reused/recycled/composted
 - % Reused/recycled
 - % Composted
- (b) Cease publishing Quarter 4 provisional data in August, and publish Quarter 4 data as part of the final annual release in October. The annual release would provide a detailed analysis of the local authority municipal waste data, and would be accompanied by StatsWales data tables.

The evidence for the proposed changes was that it would reduce the burden on staff within Welsh Government without adversely impacting on the usefulness of the information available for monitoring the progress of the scheme. It would free up resources within Welsh Government to enable more timely provision and more detailed analysis of the annual data on local authority municipal waste.

Findings

There were 8 responses to this official consultation which ran from 27 June 2017 to 19 September 2017. This report includes a summary of responses as well as direct quotes where relevant.

Many thanks to all those who took the time to respond to this official user consultation.

The user consultation showed that all 8 respondents agreed with the proposed changes to the local authority municipal waste statistical outputs.

Decision:

We will:

- (a) Replace the detailed quarterly statistical release with a short headline outlining key points, together with StatsWales tables. This change will take effect from November 2017 onwards (for the publication of data for Quarter 1, 2017-18)
- (b) Not publish quarter 4 provisional data, and publish quarter 4 data as part of the final annual release. We will aim to bring forward the publication of the annual release from October to September.

Following implementation, the Welsh Government will monitor and review the impact of these changes to ensure that users' needs continue to be met and that the quality of information published is not adversely affected.

Introduction

A summary of the background to the consultation is provided in this report. The full background to the consultation is available in the [consultation document](#).

Currently, data relating to local authority municipal waste are published in a release as well as on Stats Wales on a quarterly basis, covering the activity at an individual local authority level for the previous quarter. The quarterly release published consists of the number of waste rates during the reporting period and also the cumulative recycling rate for the whole of Wales, along with the recycling rate per person and per dwelling.

The latest annual release covering 2016-17 and the latest quarterly release covering January to March 2017 are available [here](#).
The full data set is available on [Stats Wales](#).

A Welsh Government consultation was held, in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice, to allow all users of the data to comment on these proposed changes to Local Authority Municipal Waste statistical outputs.

The consultation was open for a period of 12 weeks from 27 June to 19 September 2017.

The rationale for the proposed changes was included in the consultation documents which were available at the following link:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/changes-local-authority-municipal-waste-statistical-outputs>

Methods

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposals.

The questions asked in the consultation are attached in Annex A.

The consultation document and the response form were accessible via the Welsh Government consultations website. Potential users of local authority municipal waste Wales data and known users of environment statistics were informed of the consultation and invited to respond. These included waste managers and waste officers of local authorities, local government, environmental associations and third sector organisations.

Results

8 responses to the consultation were received, using both the online and Excel response forms. 3 of the respondents were from Welsh local authorities, 3 were from other organisations, while the remaining 2 were individual responses. Of the 8 respondents, 4 stated that they were happy to be identified in this report and they are listed in Annex B. All respondents supported the consultation proposal.

The following pages give more detail on the responses provided to each question.

Question 1

Do you agree with the proposals to cease publishing the detailed quarterly Statistical release and replace with a short Statistical Headline outlining key points at a Wales level (whilst adding 12 month rolling data to StatsWales tables)? Please briefly explain your answer.

7 responses were received in relation to this question. Of these, all agreed with the proposal. Respondents agreed that ceasing the quarterly detailed release would avoid confusion and unnecessary duplication. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- 'The existing quarterly bulletins can be confusing and the new proposal should alleviate this issue.'
- ' Avoids unnecessary duplication'
- 'Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) agree that quarterly figures can be misinterpreted when presented without the context of annual data. For example variations in garden waste can vary considerably by the weather and seasons. These differences could be misinterpreted by the public without additional information.'

CIWM Cymru also suggested including additional indicators in the quarterly headline, such as:

- % change in total municipal waste arisings;
- Household waste generated per capita, etc.

Question 2

Do you agree with the proposals to cease publishing Quarter 4 provisional data in August, and publish Quarter 4 data as part of the final annual release in September? Please briefly explain your answer.

6 responses were received in relation to this question. Of these, all agreed with the proposal, mainly due to the potential for confusion with the current publication timetable. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- 'Provisional Q4 publication can provide a false picture as the figures can be subject to change so the final publication will alleviate this.'
- 'A reduction in workload and possible improvement accuracy. Some data has been revised to make significant adjustments 9 months after initial reporting.'
- 'LARAC agree it is prudent to delay publishing the Q4 data to allow quality assurance for data'
- CIWM Cymru would agree with the consultation proposal that the existing reporting procedures of publishing Q4 in August and the final annual two months later in October can be a little confusing where the final data is provided relatively shortly and would support the proposal that only the final adjusted annual data should be published in the Autumn of each reporting year.

Question 3

What are your views on the current format and content of the annual release? Are there other alternative analyses that you require?

6 responses were received in relation to this question. Of these, five were content with the current annual release. Comments included: all agreed with the proposal. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- 'LARAC find the current format and content is good and includes sufficient analysis.'

One respondent (CIWM Cymru) felt that the current annual release can be confusing and complex:

'CIWM Cymru is of the view that the current format and the annual release is that it appears to be over complex and possible confusing. Clearly aimed at the professional officers. It doesn't in our opinion for a document published on the NAW and WG webpages allow those less technically minded to fully understand the data and their specific Council performance. CIWM Cymru would suggest that the future format should be as user, including the general public, friendly as possible to ensure that the right measures are received and understood by all users.'

Discussion

All of those who responded to this proposal were in favour of the consultation proposals. Additional indicators were suggested for the quarterly StatsWales tables and one respondent suggested improving the annual release.

Conclusion

We will carry out the proposed changes to the statistical information published on Local Authority Municipal Waste.

- We will no longer publish quarterly releases of the data relating to local authority municipal waste. We will instead publish a full data set at an individual local authority level of the information relating to local authority municipal waste on the Stats Wales website on a quarterly basis (for the first 3 quarters of the year) along with summary headline information on the Welsh Government website. The StatsWales data will include the following (quarterly and 12 month rolling average):
 - Total municipal waste by management method
 - % Reused/recycled/composted
 - % Reused/recycled
 - % Composted

We will not publish information on household waste per person and per household on a quarterly basis, but will include this in the annual release of data.

This change will take effect from November 2017 onwards (for the publication of data for Quarter 1, 2017-18)

From 2018 onwards, we will not publish quarter 4 provisional data, but will publish quarter 4 data as part of the final annual release. We will bring forward the publication of the annual release to September. In discussion with users and stakeholders, we will review and improve our annual release prior to publication in September 2018.

We have also published Recycling Destinations data on our [StatsWales website](#).

This dataset shows the flows of major recyclable material types from each local authority to each destination facility. We will review the publication of this stand-alone data and in future this data may be made available through a different mechanism.

ANNEX A

Questions asked

Name

Organisation

Job Title

Email address

Do you wish to be identified as the author of your response? (mandatory question)

Q1. Do you agree with the proposals to cease publishing the detailed quarterly Statistical release and replace with a short Statistical Headline outlining key points at a Wales level (whilst adding 12 month rolling data to StatsWales tables)? Please briefly explain your answer.

Q2. Do you agree with the proposals to cease publishing Quarter 4 provisional data in August, and publish Quarter 4 data as part of the final annual release in September? Please briefly explain your answer.

Q3. What are your views on the current format and content of the annual release? Are there other alternative analyses that you require?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

ANNEX B

List of responders *(who stated that they were happy to be identified)*

Name	Organisation/Role
Mark S Williams	Caerphilly County Borough Council / Head of Community and Leisure Services
Celine Anouilh	CIWM Regional Development Officer for Wales
Clifford Parish	MICE MIWM
Dianne Hewgill	Policy Support Officer, LARAC
Christopher Williams	Member of the public