

Press Release

More Information: Phil Hurst on 02920 649 750 or 07708 423 005

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For immediate use

Assembly must fully investigate new shock waste costs report.

Responding to the Assembly's recycling collection costs report published today, Cylch, the Wales Community Recycling Network, is calling for a full inquiry into local authority waste and recycling budgets.

The report reveals that recycling might cost your council anything between £36 and £1,000 per tonne to collect. The report shows that the collection system used is the main factor in cost – NOT your location. In total more than £20 million could be saved every year in Wales if the best schemes were used.

"This report is a bombshell. Serious questions need to be asked and Assembly investment decisions put on hold whilst the report is responded to by government" said Mal Williams, CEO of Cylch the Community Recycling Network in Wales. "It deserves a full investigation. We need to standardise how these recycling and waste budgets are monitored. The current situation is chaotic.

"The good news, however, is that the report also shows we have solutions to hand, and the right systems could be rolled out extremely quickly" he added. "The government's own document: 'Wise about Waste – the Wales Waste Strategy', advocates methods that work very well and would save millions if run out throughout Wales.

"Welsh Local Authorities are asking the Assembly for more than £700 million to invest in capital equipment alone and a trebling of revenue budgets (to £300 million per year) is being mooted," he continued. "With the likelihood of huge EU fines being imposed on Welsh taxpayers if we fail to meet landfill reduction targets there is a real risk that councils will be panicked into buying huge waste treatment plants which don't perform nearly as well as some of our best schemes. This will cost the Welsh taxpayer a fortune, and will remove money from the Welsh economy that could be used for schools and hospitals."

Cylch represents the interests of the community recycling sector, a group of organisations that includes companies that are providing kerbside recycling collections in Newport, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and parts of Blaenau Gwent and Powys. These social enterprises are providing quality services at a fraction of the cost of other providers - Newport leads at about £40 per tonne ("because we designed the system from the ground up"); Monmouthshire at

about £80 per tonne and Torfaen at around £150 (and falling) compared to the Local Authority average of £250 per tonne.

These five social enterprise collections are also performing twice as effectively as any non-community sector rival. Whilst the RPS report does not cover this issue, community sector operations are collecting twice the tonnage of recyclables from equivalent numbers of households to those of their nearest rivals.

Phil Hurst of CYLCH said: “the assembly needs to grab this issue by the horns and impose a set of economic, environmental and social criteria that Local Authorities must include when they design their waste contracts. We are not telling Local Authorities how they should recycle – we are simply asking that they specify that their contractors meet basic criteria such as economic prudence, environmental sense and social responsibility to the communities they will be serving.”

As the report concludes; recycling collections for the whole of Wales could, within five years, cost as little as £3.5 million per year collecting 70% plus of our household waste, or as much as £22 million (at today’s prices) per year collecting only 40%.

(See Cylch website www.cylch.org.uk for copy of the report “Survey of Funding of Municipal Waste Management Kerbside Collection in Wales”.)

Ends:

Notes for Editors:

- 1: Cylch (Wales Community Recycling Network) is an umbrella support organisation that represents the interests of Wales based community sector organisations engaged in the business of recycling.
- 2: Cylch members employ six hundred and fifty-two full-time staff across Wales in twenty local authority areas. Members are engaged in activities from kerbside recycling to community compost schemes.
- 3: “Survey of Funding of Municipal Waste Management Kerbside Collection in Wales” published by RPS for Welsh Assembly Government 13 September 2007.
- 4: Cylch is spear-heading social economy development in Wales and contributes fifty percent of the Welsh Assembly Government’s target of twenty-six projects in the Assembly’s pilot Social Enterprise Development Strategy.

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