

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	2 July 2020
Title:	Household Waste Recycling Centres Cross Border Update
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

Contact name: Sam Horne

Tel: 01962 832268

Email: sam.horne@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current position with regards to the Hampshire Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) cross border residents vehicle registration system, the proposed agreements with neighbouring authorities and the transitional arrangements with West Berkshire Council.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the progress with the Household Waste Recycling Centre residents' vehicle registration system.
3. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment acknowledges the short delay to the proposed implementation of the HWRC residents' vehicle registration scheme as a result of the temporary closure of the HWRC network due to the Government's social distancing guidelines and approves a revised implementation date of 1 August 2020.
4. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the steps that have been taken since 23 March 2020 to both close down the HWRC Service in line with the Governments imposed lockdown and subsequent re-opening in such a way as to deliver the service safely both for site staff and site users.
5. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approves the termination of the agreement with West Berkshire Council regarding Hampshire residents access to the Newtown Road site in West Berkshire, with effect from 31 July 2020 and notes that the final quarterly payment recognises that the site has been closed for six weeks.
6. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment acknowledges the agreement that has been entered into with Dorset Council and approves that the principles set out in this report be applied to other authorities that wish to cover the cost of their residents usage of Hampshire

HWRCs rather than see their residents bear these costs directly by way of the proposed access charge.

7. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment delegates authority for the completion of any necessary legal agreements for these financial arrangements with other neighbouring Authorities as may be required and to undertake annual reviews and vary the arrangements as necessary to ensure that the payments made reflect full cost recovery of non-Hampshire resident usage to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the head of Legal Services and the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment.

Executive Summary

8. This paper seeks to:
 - set out the current status of the HWRC residents' vehicle registration system so as to explain the reasons for the decision;
 - outline the agreement with Dorset Council and the financial impact; and
 - explain the current status of the transitional arrangements with West Berkshire Council.

HWRC Cross Border Project Background

9. Approval to develop a HWRC cross border system was given in late 2016¹. Following this, the County Council sought to reach a consensus on a system that would operate with all its neighbouring authorities.
10. Regrettably, this has proved impossible, with a number of Authorities – including Wiltshire Council, West Sussex County Council, and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council – having introduced or intending to introduce a ban on Hampshire residents from using HWRCs within their administrative areas.
11. The County Council has continued negotiations with both West Berkshire Council and Dorset Council to introduce transitional arrangements to enable systems to be established to manage cross border usage in a way that recognises the costs borne by the council dealing with the waste.
12. The principle behind this is one that recognises that in some instances it is more convenient for a resident to use an HWRC in a neighbouring authority area than one in their own authority area. However, there is a cost associated with this action that is being transferred to the authority receiving the waste. In the case of the Christchurch HWRC operated by Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, it is considered neither reasonable nor equitable for Hampshire County Council to pay a monetary contribution to enable Hampshire residents to continue using that site beyond 1 April 2020 when two Hampshire HWRCs exist within a reasonable driving distance.
13. The County Council's proposed cross border system establishes a mechanism for non-Hampshire residents to pay at the point of use, whilst also allowing

¹ [Cross Border HWRC Access – 12.10.2016](#)

neighbouring authorities, who would prefer to make a payment on behalf of their residents, to enter into agreements that would see the full cost associated to their residents use of Hampshire HWRCs covered in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 27.

14. A paper providing an update on the HWRC Cross Border project was brought to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport in October 2018², which set out the details for implementing the HWRC residents' vehicle registration system.

HWRC Cross Border Residents e-Permit System

15. Pre-registration for the residents e-permit system was opened in late December 2019 in order to allow time for Hampshire residents to sign up ahead of the implementation of the system which was planned for 1 April 2020.
16. During the first 24 hours of the system being open almost 40,000 households registered and since then there has been a steady increase with over 345,000 households now successfully registered on the system.
17. The scheme has continued to be promoted through both online and traditional routes, including posters and leaflets on all sites and advertising across social media streams. The County Council is also using Parish Council networks and ensuring that information is available at all of the District and Borough Council offices to ensure that all partners are able to share the correct information.
18. It was intended that implementation of the system would begin from 1 April 2020, however the closure of the HWRC network from 24 March 2020 as a result of the Government's social distancing regulations forced an unavoidable delay. The network reopened to the public on 11 May 2020 with significant changes made to the way the service is delivered in order to ensure it is delivered in such a way as to ensure the safety of both site staff and users.
19. In order to re-open the HWRC service safely a number of measures have been implemented across the network;
 - a. Limited numbers of vehicles able to access the site at any one time. This is supported by a booking system implemented on 15 June 2020 to manage high demand.
 - b. Strict adherence to the 2m social distancing rules at all times.
 - c. Reuse shops have been closed and no chargeable waste types are accepted.
 - d. Sites initially opened with reduced opening hours to ensure that staff can effectively manage waste flows and ensure sufficient time for cleaning of sites, however normal summer opening hours were re-established on 15 June 2020.
 - e. Due to the need to maintain social distancing and the restricted space on site, staff are not able to help residents with their waste and trailers are not permitted.

² [HWRC Cross Border Charging and Permit System Update - 29.10.2018](#)

20. In line with the cessation of the West Berkshire Council agreement as detailed in paragraphs 21-23 below, it is proposed that implementation of the residents' vehicle registration scheme commences on 1 August 2020. Ahead of this date, there will be further formal communication and promotion, and additional staff and technology will be provided at key sites on the county borders to support residents to sign up then and there on a tablet, in a manner which respects any social distancing measures in place at that time, with site staff providing further information and support and directing users to contact Hantsdirect if required.
21. It is planned that this support will be on site for at least the first three months after implementation, and the levels of sign up will be reviewed over the period to target those areas where there is a larger percentage of users who have not yet registered, based on the data provided by the system.

Transitional Agreement with West Berkshire Council

22. There is currently a transitional arrangement in place since 2017 with West Berkshire Council such that Hampshire County Council pays £175,000 per year for just over 5,000 households in the north west of Hampshire which are more than 10 miles from a Hampshire HWRC and closer to the West Berkshire site at Newtown Road.
23. The County Council has had initial discussions with West Berkshire to support it in introducing a similar system to the one that Hampshire County Council runs whereby Hampshire residents who wish to use the Newtown Road site will continue to be able to access the site but will be required to pay a fee each time they visit. As per the above principles, this ensures that access to Newtown Road is not blocked to residents of north west Hampshire, but proposes that a charge is levied which contributes to the costs of disposing of the material that those residents bring in.
24. The current transitional arrangement with West Berkshire was due to terminate on 30 June 2020. As a result of the closure of HWRCs nationally due to the COVID-19 outbreak, agreement was sought and secured to adjust the final payment to West Berkshire to reflect the period of closure, such that the quarter one payment would cover the period up until 31 July 2020. Subsequently the current agreement now terminates on this revised date.

Finance

25. As was highlighted in the paper brought to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 14 January 2020³, Dorset Council requested an agreement be entered into to allow its residents to continue to use the Somerley HWRC. This is because Dorset Council would prefer to fund this access on behalf of its residents rather than have Dorset residents charged at the point of use on account of a significant service gap in the east of the county.

³ [HWRC Cross Border Charging Update - 14.01.2020](#)

26. An agreement has been developed and agreed with Dorset Council which can also be used as the basis for an agreement with other interested Local Authorities that ensures that the actual costs of use of the relevant HWRC are recognised and is flexible enough to be able to respond to both changes in the usage and respond to changes in costs in providing the service.
27. The principles of the agreement are:
- the full costs of the relevant site(s) are covered including management fees, disposal costs, rents, rates and other overheads, proportionally calculated against the percentage split of non-Hampshire residents as per the HWRC site users survey undertaken in 2017;
 - that the cost of maintenance of the relevant site(s) is included in the costs, proportionally calculated as above;
 - that any income generated from the sale of materials is netted off against those costs so that only a net cost is paid;
 - that, whilst Hampshire County Council will keep other Authorities informed of any potential changes to the operation of the sites, this is on a for information basis only and no approval for changes will be sought;
 - that a quarterly payment will be made to Hampshire County Council based on the previous year's costs and this will then be subject to a reconciliation process in each subsequent financial year once the final cost is known;
 - that the percentage split will be based on the HWRC users survey undertaken in 2017 and that this percentage will be updated based on the data from the system on an annual basis; and
 - that the arrangements and payment will be reviewed annually to ensure appropriate cost recovery.
28. A formal legal agreement, including non-disclosure agreement for commercially confidential data, based on (but not strictly limited to) the above principles has been agreed with Dorset Council, and will be entered into with any neighbouring authorities who are interested in doing so.

Consultation and Equalities

29. This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with statutory protected characteristics, and a possible low negative impact in relation to poverty for some non-Hampshire residents. A new £5 charge may be more onerous for those Non-Hampshire residents on low incomes who wish to access affected sites. However, free access to sites remains available within their own authority's borders. Other Waste Disposal Authorities have taken the difficult decision to ban residents of other counties from using their sites, due to the cost implications of dealing with the waste, however Hampshire County Council wishes to establish a system whereby residents of neighbouring counties may continue to access its sites where practical, but in so doing ensuring that the cost of dealing with waste from non-Hampshire residents is not subsidised by Hampshire taxpayers.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	no

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
HWRC Cross Border Charging Update	14.01.2020
HWRC Cross Border Charging and Permit System Update	29.10.2018
Progress Report on HWRC Cross Border Charging	14.11.2017
Cross Border HWRC Access	12.10.2016
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
None	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with statutory protected characteristics, and a possible low negative impact in relation to poverty for some non-Hampshire residents. A new £5 charge may be more onerous for those Non-Hampshire residents on low incomes who wish to access affected sites. However, free access to sites remains available within their own authority's borders. Other Waste Disposal Authorities have taken the difficult decision to ban residents of other counties from using their sites, due to the cost implications of dealing with the waste, however Hampshire County Council wishes to establish a system whereby residents of neighbouring counties may continue to access its sites where practical, but in so doing ensuring that the cost of dealing with waste from non-Hampshire residents is not subsidised by Hampshire taxpayers.