

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	17 June 2021
Title:	Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision in North Hampshire
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on feasibility studies conducted into two possible locations for a new Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the Kingsclere area, and to outline potential alternative arrangements regarding cross-border use of West Berkshire Council's HWRC in Newtown Road, Newbury, by north Hampshire residents.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the findings of the feasibility studies into two potential sites for a new HWRC in north Hampshire and accepts the conclusion that the sites are not suitable for development, for economic and environmental reasons, and therefore will not be taken forward.
3. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the option under consideration by West Berkshire Council to allow access to Newtown Road HWRC to non-Berkshire residents and apply a charge for such access.
4. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment acknowledges the decision previously taken by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources on 29 July 2020, providing temporary access for specified Hampshire residents to the HWRC at Newtown Road, and confirms that on the basis of the recommendations above, the current arrangement will cease as planned on 31 July 2021.

Executive Summary

5. This paper seeks to update the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on developments following the decision taken by

the Executive Member for Policy and Resources in July 2020 to jointly come to a short-term 12-month transitional arrangement with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to enable residents from the north of the county to cross the border to continue to access the Newtown Road HWRC where they reside more than 10 miles from a Hampshire HWRC.

6. The interim agreement between the Leaders of Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council agreed to share the transitional cost on an interim basis for 12 months while further investigations and discussions were progressed. This included feasibility studies into two potential locations for constructing a new HWRC in the Kingsclere area as an alternative to Hampshire residents using an out-of-county facility. The conclusion of both studies was that the cost and environmental impact was too great to consider taking either site forward.
7. West Berkshire Council has since notified Hampshire County Council that it is considering imposing an entry charge to non-Berkshire residents in the future, similar to that used at Hampshire sites for non-Hampshire users. This would enable north Hampshire residents to continue using the Newtown Road HWRC as their closest facility should they choose to at their own cost without the County Council being required to underwrite this usage.

Contextual information

8. A transitional arrangement was previously in place between Hampshire County Council and West Berkshire Council from 2016 to enable Hampshire residents to use the HWRC in Newtown Road, Newbury following the closure of a jointly run facility at Paices Hill on the Hampshire-Berkshire border. Due to a known service gap in this area of the county, it is sometimes more convenient for residents in the north-west of Hampshire to use this site rather than travelling to the nearest Hampshire-run sites in Basingstoke or Andover.
9. The cost of this transitional agreement to Hampshire County Council was around £175,000 per annum. Hampshire County Council already provides a larger network of HWRCs than any other similar authority in the country, and this arrangement was an additional cost burden. In line with ongoing budget efficiency programmes and given that this payment affected less than 1% of the Hampshire population, it was recommended on 2 July 2020 to terminate that arrangement.
10. Following this, the Leaders of Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council jointly agreed to co-fund the agreement for a further 12 months on an interim basis to facilitate time to evaluate alternative options, including feasibility studies into two pieces of land which had been proposed as possible locations for construction of a new HWRC in the Kingsclere area to serve the affected residents.

Feasibility study outcomes

11. For some Hampshire residents in the very north and north-west of the county, the nearest Hampshire-run HWRCs are over 10 miles away. As an alternative to using the Newtown Road HWRC and to consider the service gap in this

part of the county, two potential sites in the Kingsclere area were put forward as possible locations for constructing a new HWRC. Hampshire County Council's Engineering Consultancy was commissioned to undertake feasibility studies on both sites to evaluate their suitability to build a new HWRC.

12. The first site under consideration was land near the former Cottismore Nursery beside the A339. The site would be big enough to construct a large-sized facility with up to eight double bin bays and two upper storage areas. A stacking capacity of 30+ vehicles would be possible, making it comparable with some of the bigger sites in Hampshire.
13. However, while the A339 would provide good access to the area, the current access road to the site is single track with passing places and would require substantial improvements to service an HWRC, including a new junction. This would involve purchasing land from multiple landowners and moving telephone poles. Desktop research indicates that a previous planning application to use the site for storage units was rejected on visual and access grounds with local landowners objecting to the scheme. Additionally, flooding and groundwater issues were identified with no foul sewer connection to the site.
14. The second site under consideration was the former Wolverton Quarry. Again, the site has excellent access to the A339 and is well connected, although a new junction would be required to safely enter the site. The land has the potential to build a similarly sized large facility, however current site topography would preclude this without the import of around 80,000m³ of material to provide more consistent levels at very significant cost. Without this intervention, only a smaller sized HWRC would be possible.
15. The local area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the adjacent woodland is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) identified as ancient woodland, which could lead to complications with regards to obtaining planning permission. The stability of the quarry walls is a risk and supporting the slopes would reduce the construction area further. In addition, the site has no utility or sewer connections.
16. It was therefore concluded that the constraints and risks associated with both sites, and the likely significant costs, outweighed the benefits of developing either site.

Alternative options

17. West Berkshire Council is considering an alternative approach whereby non-Berkshire residents would be charged a fee each time they visit the Newtown Road HWRC site. This recognises the additional cost burden that West Berkshire Council bears for customers originating from outside of West Berkshire depositing waste at its facility, while enabling north Hampshire residents to continue using the site if it is more convenient for them.
18. If taken forward this new system could begin on 1 August 2021 from the end of the existing interim agreement but would be subject to the Government's roadmap to easing COVID restrictions. Hampshire residents with existing blue

permits would be asked to retain them to confirm residence and pay the required entry fee. A digital solution using ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) may be introduced at a later date.

19. Going forward, HWRC provision in the north of Hampshire will continue to be considered by officers as part of a wider countywide service provision review. Hampshire County Council already provides more HWRCs than any other county, so building new or redeveloping existing sites needs to be carefully evaluated in line with expected housing and population projections. It is recognised that extensive development is planned in the south-west of Basingstoke which will likely put pressure on the existing Basingstoke HWRC and may require the provision of additional infrastructure in the future which could be more convenient for north Hampshire residents to access.

Finance

20. Between 2016 and 2020, the cost of this transitional agreement was met by the Economy, Transport and Environment Department's main waste budget. It funded usage of the Newtown Road HWRC for around 5,000 Hampshire households at a cost of £175,000 per annum (approx. £700,000 over four years).
21. The interim agreement for 2020-21 was for Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to jointly share the cost for 12 months at £87,500 each. The County Council proportion was funded by the Leader of the Council's budget.

Consultation and Equalities

22. This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with statutory protected characteristics, with a possible low negative impact in relation to poverty for some north Hampshire residents. A potential new charge to use the Newtown Road site may be more onerous for those north Hampshire residents on low incomes who wish to access affected sites. However, free access to sites remains available at HWRCs within Hampshire's borders. Other Waste Disposal Authorities, including Hampshire County Council, have taken the decision to establish a charging 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-residents is not subsidised by residents of the authority operating the HWRC.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

23. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C

temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

24. The adaptation project screening tool considers vulnerability of proposals to the effects of climate change and whether any adaptations are required. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability was not completed in this instance as the initial vulnerability assessment indicated that the project is at minimal risk from climate vulnerabilities as the overall statutory service would continue to be required.
25. The mitigation decision-making tool considers the impact of carbon emissions and whether any mitigations are required. There is a carbon benefit to reducing vehicle journeys, and new, more local, HWRC in the Kingsclere area could have resulted in shorter journeys and less emissions, however the feasibility studies for the two proposed locations proved unfavourable. It may also have encouraged unsustainable 'waste only' visits to the village. By making its site available to Hampshire residents however, West Berkshire Council has facilitated an alternative to a longer journey into Basingstoke and Andover, albeit at a charge to the resident. It is acknowledged that many north Hampshire residents work or spend leisure time in Newbury, potentially meaning that journeys could be combined, thereby reducing the overall carbon impact.
26. This project addresses two of Hampshire County Council's statutory priorities by supporting residents and communities to lead healthy and independent lives and assisting the County Council's ambitions to protect Hampshire's unique environment in the future.

Conclusions

27. The conclusion of the feasibility studies is that developing a new HWRC site in north Hampshire is not feasible at this time, therefore the transitional payments will not be extended.

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:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
HWRC Cross Border Update	2 July 2020
Agenda for Executive Member for Policy and Resources Decision Day on Wednesday, 29th July, 2020, 9.00 am About the Council Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)	29 July 2020

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:

- 2.1. This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with statutory protected characteristics, with a possible low negative impact in relation to poverty for some north Hampshire residents. A potential new charge to use the Newtown Road site may be more onerous for those north Hampshire residents on low incomes who wish to access the affected site. However, free access to sites remains available at HWRCs within Hampshire's borders.