HWRCs – have your say

Consultation Questionnaire

2 June to 22 August 2014

www.hants.gov.uk/recycling
**HWRC consultation**

*Help plan the future of the HWRC service*

We are reviewing our household waste recycling centre (HWRC) service and want your feedback on how we can continue to deliver a service that meets the needs of Hampshire residents and represents good value for money for the council taxpayer.

Hampshire’s HWRCs are a key component of the county’s waste management infrastructure and providing a modern, efficient and fit for purpose HWRC service is a priority for the County Council. This has become more important as the County Council needs to make significant savings by 2015, equivalent to a 12% cut in its total budget. We have identified some different and innovative ways of running the HWRC service to make sure we can continue to deliver our priorities while meeting our budget saving targets and maintaining the quality of our core services.

It is important that we know what people want and expect from the HWRC service, so we are now carrying out a consultation to help inform how we use the reduced budget appropriately while remaining mindful of the public’s priorities.

A number of proposals have been identified that could help reduce costs and generate an income to help recover the cost of providing the HWRC service:

- Closing one or more sites that do not represent good value for money, where there are nearby alternatives within easy access, alongside the existing programme of site redevelopment and accounting for planned housing growth.
- Introducing tighter trade waste controls such as height barriers or dedicated onsite enforcement officers, to reduce the amount of trade waste wrongfully disposed of at sites.
- Accepting waste and recyclable material from small businesses for a fee.
- Looking to recover the cost of disposing of DIY waste such as soil, rubble, plasterboard and asbestos through charging. These wastes are not classified as household waste and are expensive to dispose of.
- Reviewing our site opening times to negotiate lower management costs, while maintaining the service at our busier times.
- Working with charities or communities to increase reuse of furniture and other items, to further reduce the amount of waste we dispose of.

There is more information on each of these proposals in this document. No decisions have been made yet, but it is possible that some or all of the options presented here could be introduced as part of the new HWRC management contract that starts in 2015.
This is your opportunity to help inform the future of the HWRC service and to give your views on how any changes to the service can be made with minimum impact on site users. We also welcome any additional ideas you may have for recovering costs or otherwise improving the HWRC service. You can provide your feedback on all the options in this questionnaire.

The consultation will be open from 2 June to 22 August 2014. To respond, please complete the consultation questionnaire online at: www.hants.gov.uk/recycling, or complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the freepost address provided.

**Hampshire’s HWRC service**

Hampshire County Council is required by legislation to provide “places at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste” (Environmental Protection Act 1990). Hampshire provides a network of 24 HWRCs across the county, accepting bulky household and garden waste. Our HWRCs divert a significant proportion of waste from landfill, with an average recycling and recovery rate of over 80%.

So that we can maintain the HWRC service in light of the budget pressures faced by the County Council, we recently undertook a review of the service to assess its value for money in terms of its economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This involved looking at who uses the sites, when they are used and what waste types are brought in. The review identified a number of options for reducing or recovering the costs of providing the HWRC service in Hampshire.

Some of these options have already been successfully introduced, such as trials to recycle more materials and onsite advertising, however there are a number of proposals that we want your views on before we consider introducing them. No decisions have been made on these options yet and any changes will be informed by the outcome of this consultation. For this reason, we aren’t able to provide full details of how they might operate onsite, but we have provided some suggestions for how they might work based on best practice examples we have seen operated by other councils.
Please let us know your views on each of the proposals presented below.

**Site closures**

Hampshire County Council has a network of 24 HWRCs across the county. The majority of Hampshire residents are within 25 minutes drive time of one of our HWRCs, and almost 85% of the population are within 5 miles of one of our HWRCs. The network has developed over many years and access to the sites is not equal across the county, with some parts of Hampshire within the 5 mile catchment area of more than one site.

Sites that are least used and that receive comparatively less waste cost a similar amount for the Council to run as the busier sites that receive a greater amount of waste. This means these sites represent relatively poor value for money.

Closing one or more of these HWRCs where there are alternative sites within a reasonable distance and that are more cost effective would provide better value for money. In some cases this option could generate revenue to the Council through the sale of land.

Hampshire County Council manages a programme of development and investment in the HWRC network that will continue and there may be the opportunity for new sites to be built in line with housing growth, such as the new Waterlooville HWRC that was recently built at the Wellington Park Major Development Area.

**Enhanced trade waste measures**

Hampshire’s HWRCs are not currently licensed to accept waste from businesses, yet our research estimates that between 400-900 tonnes of trade waste are wrongfully delivered into each site per year, either through a lack of awareness or in some cases, deliberately to avoid paying for private disposal. This costs Hampshire County Council and therefore the taxpayer a significant amount of money to deal with.

While we want to support businesses to recycle, we also want to make sure the sites are used fairly and that council taxpayers do not subsidise the waste disposal costs of local businesses.
Our research shows that the majority of trade waste enters the HWRC in larger vehicles such as vans and pick-ups. As well as the permit scheme for vans that we have already introduced, there is the option to install height barriers and/or employ dedicated enforcement officers at the site entrances to further monitor access.

We do understand that some residents, including those who already hold permits, drive larger vehicles and will still need to dispose of their own household waste. If this option is introduced we will ensure that there are flexible measures in place that allow legitimate users to dispose of their household waste in larger vehicles.

We anticipate that in the case of height barriers it is likely that larger vehicles would be allowed access at set times when the barrier is opened, for example on weekends only. Enforcement officers could monitor access on days when the height barriers are opened, for example, or operate on smaller sites that are not suitable for barriers.

Accepting waste from small local businesses

As already outlined, Hampshire’s HWRCs are not currently licensed to accept waste from businesses. There are approximately 46,000 small businesses (those with fewer than 10 employees) in Hampshire, many of which produce waste types similar to those accepted at HWRCs such as cardboard, green waste, soil and rubble.

It is possible to change the site licences to allow local businesses to dispose of their waste for a charge. This could generate an income to be used to recover some of the costs of providing the HWRC service for Hampshire residents.

The service would provide small businesses and mobile traders with access to a recycling service. This may work by allowing businesses to use the same bins as householders and charging them accordingly for the quantity of waste they deposit. The service could also be limited to particular sites depending on demand.

It is expected that this option could operate alongside Proposal 2 – Enhanced trade waste measures – by allowing small businesses to legally dispose of their waste and ensuring that all trade waste deposited at sites is paid for.
Charging for DIY waste

DIY waste, including soil and rubble, plasterboard and asbestos, is classified as construction and demolition waste and not household waste (which the HWRCs are provided for). DIY waste is also expensive to dispose of.

We appreciate that from time to time Hampshire residents will generate waste from DIY projects in their home and have a need to dispose of it locally and conveniently. HWRCs will currently accept a limited amount: the equivalent of a medium-sized car boot full of waste (approximately the contents of six 30 litre bags) no more than once per month, per household. This restriction can be difficult to monitor and treating this waste type costs the County Council approximately £1 million a year.

One option is to continue to accept DIY waste at our HWRCs but to introduce a small charge for it. This would allow us to recover some of the cost of treating this material type whilst still providing householders with a viable disposal option for it.

Changes to opening hours

Across Hampshire there are currently 24 HWRCs, open seven days a week, for between eight and eleven hours, dependent upon the season.

Standard opening hours for most sites are:

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<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>April-September</td>
<td>8am-7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>October-February</td>
<td>8am-4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>8am-5pm</td>
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This graph shows the average number of visitors per hour across all our HWRCs:
Our visitor data shows that for the majority of sites:

- There are often fewer than 22 visitors per hour from 8am-10am.
- In the summer months, the number of visitors from 5pm-7pm is an average of 18 visitors per hour, compared to the peak of 48 visitors per hour during the day.
- The quietest day of the week for visitors is Tuesday, with an average number of site visitors of around 285 per day, compared to an average of 390 visitors on Sundays.

Reducing overall opening hours in line with site usage could allow us to make financial savings in the new HWRC management contract without affecting the majority of our customers.

**Working with community and charitable organisations**

Reuse at Hampshire HWRCs is currently operated through onsite sales areas, and it is estimated that around 3% of material brought to HWRCs is reused in this way. It is possible that charitable or community based organisations could reuse more items through activities such as sale and repair. This would reduce the overall amount of waste we send for disposal and reduce costs.

Existing models of charities or community organisations working with HWRCs include developing improved onsite ‘retail’ shops at larger sites, or the organisations taking items from sites either to be sold in their own shops, to be repaired or to be used in their charitable projects. In some cases this could mean that onsite resale areas are reduced.

As well as disposal savings, this option could add social value to the HWRC service by supporting the work of the organisations in Hampshire, including potential for local job and training opportunities.
What happens next?

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to the consultation. To respond, please complete the consultation questionnaire online at: www.hants.gov.uk/recycling, or complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the freepost address provided. Please ensure your response reaches us by Friday 22 August 2014.

The results of this consultation will be made public no later than 14 November 2014. The feedback received through the consultation will then inform our recommendations for the HWRC service from 2015 onwards.

For more information, visit: www.hants.gov.uk/recycling, email: hwrc.consultation@hants.gov.uk or call Hantsdirect on: 0845 603 5634.

This document is available in large print, Braille, or in other languages if required. Please call: 0845 603 5634 for details.