

Strategy for Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Facilities in Devon

Report of the Executive Director of Environment, Economy and Culture

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) the contribution that the Recycling Centre network makes towards achieving Devon's high recycling rates be noted;**
- (b) the vision and principle of continuous improvement of Devon's recycling performance and the service offered to the public by enhancing existing Recycling Centres be endorsed;**
- (c) the established policy of providing a Recycling Centre within a 10 mile radius of all Devon Householders be caveated with the phrase 'where economically practicable';**
- (d) the principle of charging to allow the continued provision of facilities to accept restricted quantities of soil/rubble; plasterboard; bonded asbestos and tyres from householders from 1st April 2011 be noted;**
- (e) clarification of the users permitted to access the network of Recycling Centres and on the types of vehicles permitted to access the sites be agreed as set out in this report;**
- (f) approval be granted for submission of a planning application for a replacement Recycling Centre to serve Sidmouth and the surrounding area.**

1. Summary

This report reviews the provision, performance and future direction of the Recycling Centre service and highlights/recommends areas of the service where savings and efficiencies could be realised.

The report also provides an update on progress with the 'Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Improvement Strategy (ED/05/166/HQ – Executive, 2 August 2005) and recommends the approval of a revised strategy which will ensure that selected existing sites are upgraded/replaced over the next few years. This will ensure that statutory service provision requirements are fulfilled, recycling rates are maximised and the Recycling Centres are of a modern standard, efficient and suited to today's demands and standards of service expected by the public, whilst ensuring that the service is as efficient and cost effective as possible.

The Strategy will further contribute to the corporate goal of 'Reducing Waste, Improving Recycling and Reducing Landfill' and "Delivering better value for money" as set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2009-2013 and will help meet the pledge to achieve a 57% recycling rate by 2013.

2. Background/Introduction

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 requires that DCC (as the Waste Disposal Authority) provide Recycling Centres (Civic Amenity Sites) in its area for use by local residents to

deposit/dispose of 'household' waste. The sites are required to be 'reasonably accessible' to persons resident in the area and must be provided on a free-of-charge basis for 'household' waste. These sites are set up to handle bulky household waste which is not normally collected by the household waste collection service provided by the District Council. The existing network of 20 permanent Recycling Centres has been built up over the last 30 years and provides a good coverage across the County with most centres of population having access to a facility nearby.

3. The Vision

The Vision is to provide a network of modern attractive sites which are convenient to use and designed to maximise the recycling of the material brought in.

The ethos of "bring" and "buy" should be encouraged such that the Recycling Centres are seen as a good local cost effective service to the Community.

Reuse, recycling and composting of waste goods and materials should be encouraged as these techniques are cheaper to run than residual waste disposal facilities.

4. Current Recycling Centre Performance

The performance of the Recycling Centres can be considered in terms of Recycling rates achieved, front-line public service provision and value for money in delivering the service.

With regards to Recycling performance, the Recycling Centre service is generally performing very well. In 2009/10, 120,600 tonnes of waste were handled and a 75% recycling rate (of total waste handled) was achieved across the network. (This compares with 125,000 tonnes and a 37% recycling rate achieved in 2002/3). For 09/10, the Recycling Centres made up 37.4% of the overall tonnage of materials recycled across DCC and all the Districts. As such, the recycling rate achieved at DCC Recycling Centres plays a key role in driving up the recycling performance in Devon. The centres are crucial in diverting waste from landfill and avoiding potential Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) fines.

In terms of front-line public service provision, it is estimated that 2.4 million public visits were made to the Recycling Centres in 09/10. A Devon Voice study (March 2009) reported an 87% satisfaction rating with the service.

The overall cost of operating Recycling Centres and recycling the collected waste is cheaper than landfilling the waste and this cost saving will increase over the coming years as landfill costs continue to rise (as a result in significant annual increases in landfill tax - e.g. in 2012/13, the cost difference/saving of recycling via the entire Recycling Centre network as opposed to landfilling the waste would be over £3m).

However, it is recognised that:

- some permanent recycling centres are too small or poorly configured to cope with modern demands leading to poorer recycling yields and higher levels of customer dissatisfaction and are in need of upgrading;
- Some parts of the County are not well covered by the existing Recycling Centre network and ideally one additional site needs to be provided in the longer term;
- Cost efficiencies within the service are to be realised by closing sites that are expensive to operate and where there is a suitable alternative site within a reasonable distance;
- Savings can be realised by charging for certain types of 'non-household' waste and clarifying the rules on site access;

- Recycling performance also needs to be continually improved as the Recycling Centres will need to be achieving an 80% Recycling Rate in order to meet the Strategy pledge of 57% recycling/composting by 2013.

5. Existing Policy

The County Council's established policy is to provide a permanent Recycling Centre within a radius of 10 miles of every household in Devon. It is proposed to amend this policy to read "to provide a permanent Recycling Centre within a radius of 10 miles of every household in Devon where economically practicable". This change is necessary to reflect the cessation of the rural skip service on cost grounds.

The locations of the existing Recycling Centres are given on the map at Appendix I. It will be seen that most of the main towns in Devon have a Recycling Centre in close proximity.

All sites are operated for DCC by contractors who are appointed following competitive tendering processes subject to the Contracts Procedure Rules as set out in DCC's code of business conduct.

6. Improvements Achieved

A report entitled "Improving Devon's Environment: Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Improvement Strategy" was considered by the Executive on 2 August 2005 (ED/05/166/HQ).

This report recommended 10 sites to be improved/provided (over a period of up to 10 years from 2005). The table in Appendix II lists the sites/works in order of priority and provides an update on progress with them. Thus far, two new sites have been provided and six sites improved.

7. Proposals

In order to continue to provide a quality, modern front-line service that generates high recycling levels whilst delivering efficiency savings, the following developments are proposed:-

(a) Recycling Centre Improvements

In future, where there is potential to serve several population centres with one larger Recycling Centre, this will be actively considered in order to achieve 'economy of scale' savings.

The 2005 Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Strategy has been reviewed, and the revised priority list shown below. Proposed service improvements have been listed in order of priority, to ensure a standard of service to meet modern demands/expectations.

Site Details:-

Short/Medium term:

I. Woods Farm (Sidmouth/Ottery St Mary/Seaton) – Relocate/provide new Site

This site has only ever achieved 'temporary' planning permission status and the current temporary planning permission expires in 2012. There is a risk that it may not be renewed by the Waste Planning Authority. This would leave the towns of Sidmouth, Ottery St Mary and Seaton (and surrounding villages) without a permanent Recycling Centre facility.

In addition, the current site is too small and cramped and queuing on the public highway is common. A much larger, modern site of a design capable of eliminating queuing on the highway and maximising recycling is therefore required. A site search has taken place and three potential alternative sites have been investigated (as shown on the plan attached in Appendix III). Due to the lack of suitable industrial land in the area and the extensive coverage of the AONB designation, all 3 proposed sites are in green field locations, outside settlement limits and within the AONB, which will make any planning application 'challenging'.

A public exhibition/consultation exercise was held in September 2010 to establish which of the 3 potential sites would be supported by local residents. There were 529 responses from the public with 84.5% favouring site A (The Bowd, near the existing site); 11.5 % favouring site B (Corehill Lane, opposite Waitrose) and 4% favouring site C (Two Bridges Road, adjacent to the Sewage Works). Sidmouth Town Council and East Devon District Council were also consulted and their preference was also for site A. It is therefore proposed to move forward with site A and submit a planning application for a new Recycling Centre at that location (scheme plan shown in Appendix IV). Approval is therefore sought for the submission of a planning application.

Approximate scheme costs are estimated at £2.0m, including land costs.

It is estimated that a new site would yield an additional 300 tonnes recyclables per annum, saving £30,600 per year in potential LATS fines. As the cost of recycling waste via a Recycling Centre is cheaper than landfill, this additional recycled tonnage equates to a further saving of approximately £11,000 per annum from 2012/13.

It is proposed that a planning application be submitted in spring/summer 2011 with the new site being opened to the public by late 2012. Funding for this scheme is included in the capital programme.

II. Ivybridge - Relocate/provide New Site

The existing site is very small and cramped and is inadequate to serve the local growing population and growth planned for this catchment. Given the size of the existing site, significant queues can develop on the public highway. The small scale of the site also significantly limits its recycling performance, resulting in lower yields than would be expected. It is likely that a brand new site would have to be developed (as it is unlikely the existing site could be expanded sufficiently to provide an optimal solution – however, this option is currently being looked at). Potentially suitable land has been identified for a new site and initial discussions have taken place with the landowner. Approximate costs are estimated to be £2.5m, including land costs.

It is estimated that a new site would yield an additional 530 tonnes recyclables per annum, saving £54,000 per year in potential LATS fines. As the cost of recycling waste via a Recycling Centre is cheaper than landfill, this additional recycled tonnage equates to a further saving of approximately £14,000 per annum from 2012/13.

It is proposed that the scheme be developed over the period 2013/14-2014/15 with the new site becoming open to the public in 2014/15. Capital funding for this scheme has been allowed for in the capital programme (which includes a potential £500k s106 contribution from the developers of the nearby Sherford scheme).

Long Term:

III. Cullompton, Tiverton and Willand – New combined Site

Cullompton and Willand are probably the most significant areas in Devon not to benefit from a permanent Recycling Centre in close proximity to the main centres of population. A Rural Skip facility has been provided at Cullompton on one day per month, but was inadequate to serve the demands, expectations and needs of the growing population and was inefficient. A new permanent Recycling Centre would be desirable to serve the populations of Cullompton, Willand and surrounding areas, in the longer term (of perhaps between 5 and 10 years). The proposal has the potential to also serve Tiverton (to replace the existing facility at Ashley, which is sub standard and cannot easily be expanded) and one larger facility could be provided to jointly serve these areas. Approximate scheme costs are estimated to be £2.0m. In the interim, the local community is asked to use the permanent sites at Ashley, Tiverton and the new recycling centre in Pinhoe, Exeter.

It is estimated that a new site could yield an additional 1,000 tonnes recyclables per annum, saving £102,000 per year in potential LATS fines. As the cost of recycling waste via a Recycling Centre is cheaper than landfill, this additional tonnage equates to a further saving of approximately £20,000 per annum based on projected landfill rates in 2012/13.

No Capital funding is currently allocated for this scheme, but it is hoped that funds might be made available in the longer term to provide this facility.

IV Crowndale (Tavistock) – Phase 2 Improvement Works

The first phase of this scheme was completed in 2006 and involved swapping the waste transfer station area with the Recycling Centre area, thereby providing a much larger Recycling Centre area. At the time, a new waste transfer building and weighbridge were provided but the Recycling Centre area was left largely unimproved. It is proposed to develop the Recycling Centre into a new, purpose built facility which would provide for improved levels of Health and Safety, reduced queuing and an easier to use site. Approximate scheme cost is estimated to be £1.5m.

It is estimated that an improved site would yield an additional 500 tonnes recyclables per annum, saving £51,000 per year in potential LATS fines. As the cost of recycling waste via a Recycling Centre is cheaper than landfill, this additional tonnage equates to a further saving of approximately £14,000 per annum based on projected landfill rates in 2012/13.

No Capital funding is currently allocated for this scheme, but it is hoped that funds might be made available in the longer term (of between 5 and 10 years) to improve this facility.

V. Totnes – Relocate/provide new Site

The existing site is small and frequently suffers from congestion and queuing on the highway. In the longer term, a new, larger site will need to be found to serve the Totnes area. Approximate costs are estimated to be £2.0m, including land costs.

It is estimated that an improved site would yield an additional 120 tonnes recyclables per annum, saving £12,240 per year in potential LATS fines. As the cost of recycling waste via a Recycling Centre is cheaper than landfill, this additional tonnage equates to a further saving of approximately £2,000 per annum based on projected landfill rates in 2012/13.

No Capital funding is currently allocated for this scheme, but it is hoped that funds might be made available in the longer term (of between 5 and 10 years) to improve this facility.

(b) Charging for certain types of non-household waste

Previously, DCC allowed householders to deposit restricted quantities of soil/rubble; plasterboard and asbestos on a free of charge basis in order to provide a service to householders undertaking small scale DIY type tasks. Householders undertaking larger DIY type tasks that generate larger quantities of waste are encouraged to hire a skip. In addition, DCC also allowed a small quantity of vehicle tyres to be disposed free of charge to provide a service to those householders undertaking car maintenance activities.

DCC only has a legal obligation to provide Recycling Centre facilities for Household waste (which legally has to be accepted on a free of charge basis). However, items from the repair or improvement of houses (e.g. DIY type waste) are not classed as Household waste and DCC has no liability to accept the waste or accept it free of charge. (Household waste comprises of the unwanted contents of the house, not part of the house itself). Vehicle tyres are also not defined as 'household' waste.

The cost of this Non-statutory service has been high (in excess of £1m/annum) and cannot be sustained in the current funding climate.

It is recognised that facilities are still needed for householders to dispose of small amounts of DIY type waste (especially for just a few bags of waste when it is not worth hiring a skip) and tyres and so a charging scheme has been approved that will cover the cost of providing these particular elements of the service.

Many other Councils already charge for such waste through various schemes.

The public would be charged on a 'pay per throw' basis at Recycling Centres (e.g. per bag of rubble or per sheet of plasterboard). The public will pay the contractor at the site direct and will be given a receipt if one is requested. The charging scheme will be widely publicised. The scheme will be administered entirely by the contractor.

The alternative would have been to stop accepting such materials at the sites altogether which could have lead to increased flytipping. By retaining the service and negotiating the lowest possible cost, the risk of flytipping has been reduced.

All the costs (including scheme administration costs) associated with handling, transporting and disposing/recycling soil/rubble (including tiles, slates, sanitary ware etc); plasterboard; asbestos and tyres will be charged direct to the public at Recycling Centres with effect from the 1st April 2011.

The impact of the charging scheme will be kept under review during the first 12 month period following implementation.

(c) Clarification of the users permitted to access the network of Recycling Centres and clarification on the types of vehicles permitted to access the sites.

Vehicle Restrictions:

Only householders are entitled to use the Recycling Centre facilities. Currently, there is no formal policy on the types of vehicle that can/cannot access the sites and it is generally left to the individual site manager to decide if a vehicle is unsuitable to use a site. This leads to confusion and the potential for conflict with certain vehicle users on site, particularly at some of the smaller sites where space is limited.

In order to enhance site safety and further tackle abuse of the facilities by traders/commercial users using larger vehicles, it is therefore proposed to formally clarify the

type of vehicles that would not be permitted access to the Recycling Centres. Such vehicles are:

- Any vehicle over 3.5 tonnes gross weight.
- Any tipping vehicle.
- Box Vans/Luton Vans (with the exception of vehicles hired to a householder from a legitimate vehicle hire company for a hire period of less than 3 days and appropriate documentation can be produced).
- Any trailers over 3m (10 feet) in length (measured from tow hitch) or with more than 1 axle*.
- Tractors/agricultural machinery.

*trailer size limit at South Molton site is 1.8m due to very small/restricted nature of the site.

User Restrictions:

Only householders are entitled to use the Recycling Centre facilities. It is proposed that Recycling Centre guidelines should be updated to ensure that only waste from Households (delivered by the householder) is permitted into sites and to specifically clarify that waste from the following groups/premises/activities are not accepted (and are re-directed to appropriate, private/commercial facilities):

- Landlords disposing of waste from rental properties.
- Parish/District/County Councils or Council premises.
- Educational or medical Establishments.
- Charity shops; charitable organisations and premises (except where otherwise agreed in writing with DCC).
- Any club, society or other association of persons (including allotment organisations).
- Religious establishments.
- Prisons or Probation service.
- Agricultural holdings, including small holdings and paddocks (excluding waste from the farmhouse itself).
- Waste from shops, businesses, traders including business waste associated with people working from home.
- Removal firms.
- "Man and Van" or house clearance operators.
- Waste from rented Holiday Homes/Holiday Lets/campsites/caravan parks.
- Flytipped waste (unless delivered by the District Council with prior agreement from DCC).

The list is not exhaustive, but provides clarity to the main groups where confusion arises.

8. Financial Considerations

(a) Recycling Centre Improvements

The costs of such a programme of recycling centre improvements are significant, and clearly these schemes would only be delivered over an extended timescale, of perhaps up to 10 years. However, the potential benefits in terms of cost savings, are also significant.

Potential cost savings from possible LATS fines are estimated at in excess of £250,000 per year on the completion of the programme. Such savings would be achieved incrementally over the time period of delivering the programme. In addition, the cost of handling waste via

the Recycling Centres is now cheaper than landfill. Landfill costs will continue to rise due to the £8/tonne annual Landfill Tax escalator, and so it will remain cheaper to recycle waste than send it to landfill, with the savings growing year by year (e.g. in 2012/13, the cost difference/saving of recycling via the entire Recycling Centre network as opposed to landfilling the waste would be over £3m).

The estimated capital cost of delivering the strategy is £10m. Within the current capital programme there is already an approved allowance of £4.5m.

However, at this stage, financial approval is not being sought beyond the current allowance, just the approval for the concept and priorities outlined in this Recycling Centre Strategy.

The estimated costs included in this report are indicative and will be refined following further detailed design work.

(b) Charging for certain types of non-household waste

Savings in the order of £920,000/annum are likely to be delivered by this proposal, whilst still providing this useful service to local householders. There are financial risks in 2011/12 as the proposal developed with the existing contractor has to respect and allow for the provisions in the current contract, so the reimbursement formulae includes a provision for loss of fixed costs and profit if the volumes of chargeable waste fall significantly as a result of the introduction of charging. The savings figure mentioned above take into account this payment adjustment.

9. Sustainability/Carbon Impact Considerations

The site improvement strategy will make a significant contribution to increasing recycling rates and minimising inputs to landfill. Improvements to reduce queuing at existing/relocated Recycling Centre facilities will also cut congestion and vehicle emissions. An improved service will also make it easier for the public to recycle and will be another step forward in changing peoples behaviour towards waste and recycling. Green technologies will also feature in new/refurbished sites where possible.

10. Equality Considerations

An equalities impact and needs screening process has been undertaken which has shown that the Recycling Centre service has low relevance in terms of potential impact. The site improvement strategy seeks to improve the service for all. Reasonable assistance by the site operators is provided for all site users on request and most signage is of a pictorial nature to overcome language barriers. The service is complemented by a bulky household waste collection service provided by the District Councils for those unable to travel to/access a Recycling Centre for whatever reason.

11. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations. Counsel's opinion has been sought on the charging proposals to ensure DCC is acting within the law.

12. Risk Management Considerations

The main risks to the site improvement strategy involve securing land and securing planning permission for the various schemes.

The risk of not achieving the full saving for chargeable waste is set out in section 8(b) above.

13. Options/Alternatives

This Strategy seeks to deliver improvements and efficiencies to the services provided across Devon. If status quo was maintained, then the front line service would not be improved, recycling rates would not increase and the sites would not be of a modern standard that will meet the demands and standards of service expected by the public. The site closure and waste charging programme have been necessary to deliver the budget savings required, and are considered to be the 'least worse' scenario.

14. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

Devon County Council Recycling Centres play a key role in achieving recycling rates, minimising landfill and minimizing potential LATS fines, and can be further improved with additional investment. These frontline facilities are valued by the public but certain sites need upgrading/replacing and a new facility needs to be provided in the longer term at Cullompton to ensure that the standards of service provided are in line with the public's expectations.

This Strategy will play an important part in delivering the corporate goal of 'Reducing Waste, Improving Recycling and Reducing Landfill' and "Delivering better value for money" as set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2009-2013 and will help moving towards a 60% recycling and composting rate by 2020.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services,
Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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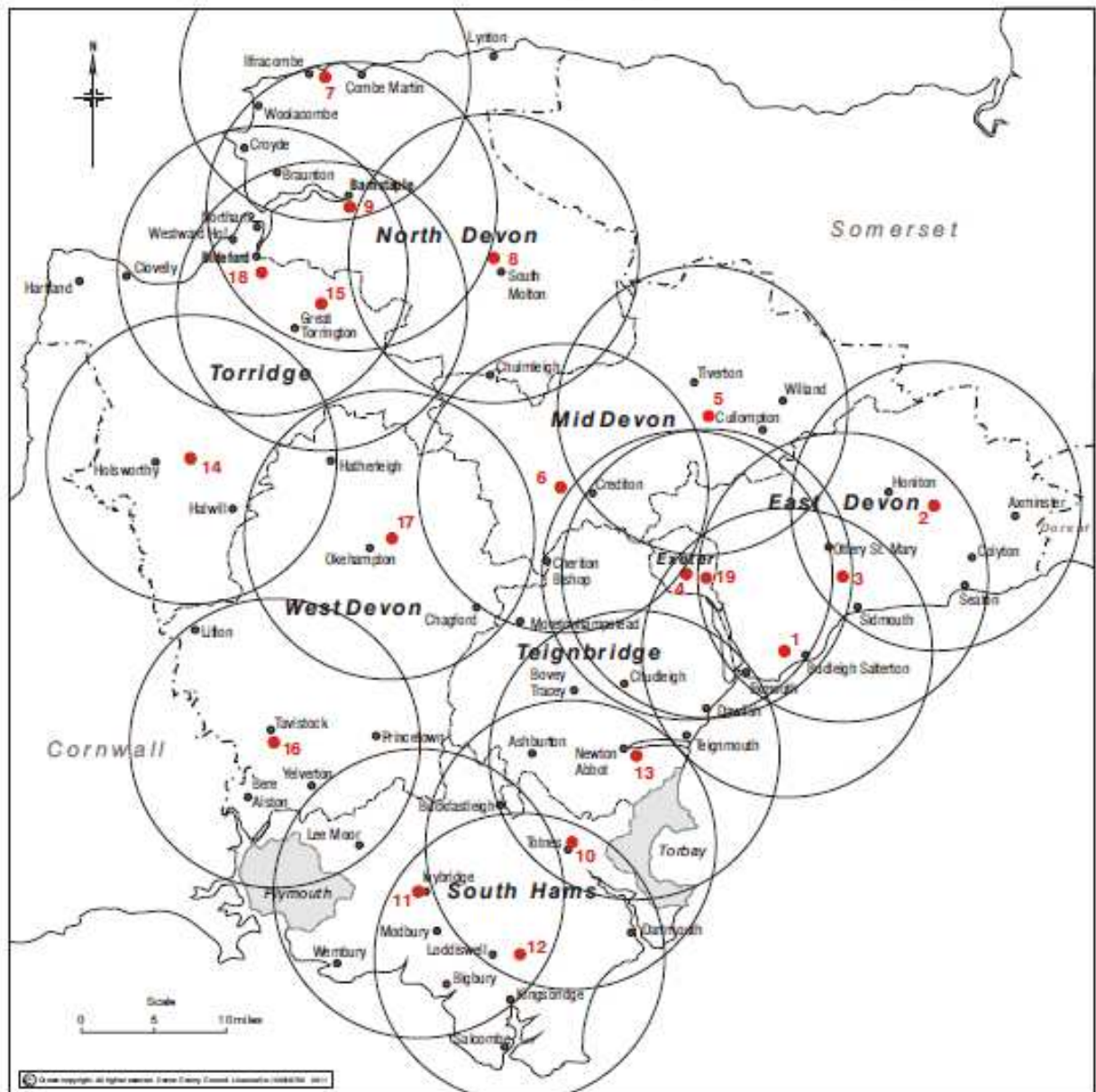
Tel No: (01392) 383387

Background Paper	Date	File Ref
EINA form (Recycling Centres)	2 nd February 2010	

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Locations of Recycling Centres following site closures from April 2011

Locations of Permanent Recycling Centres in 2011/12



Recycling Centres (10 mile radius)

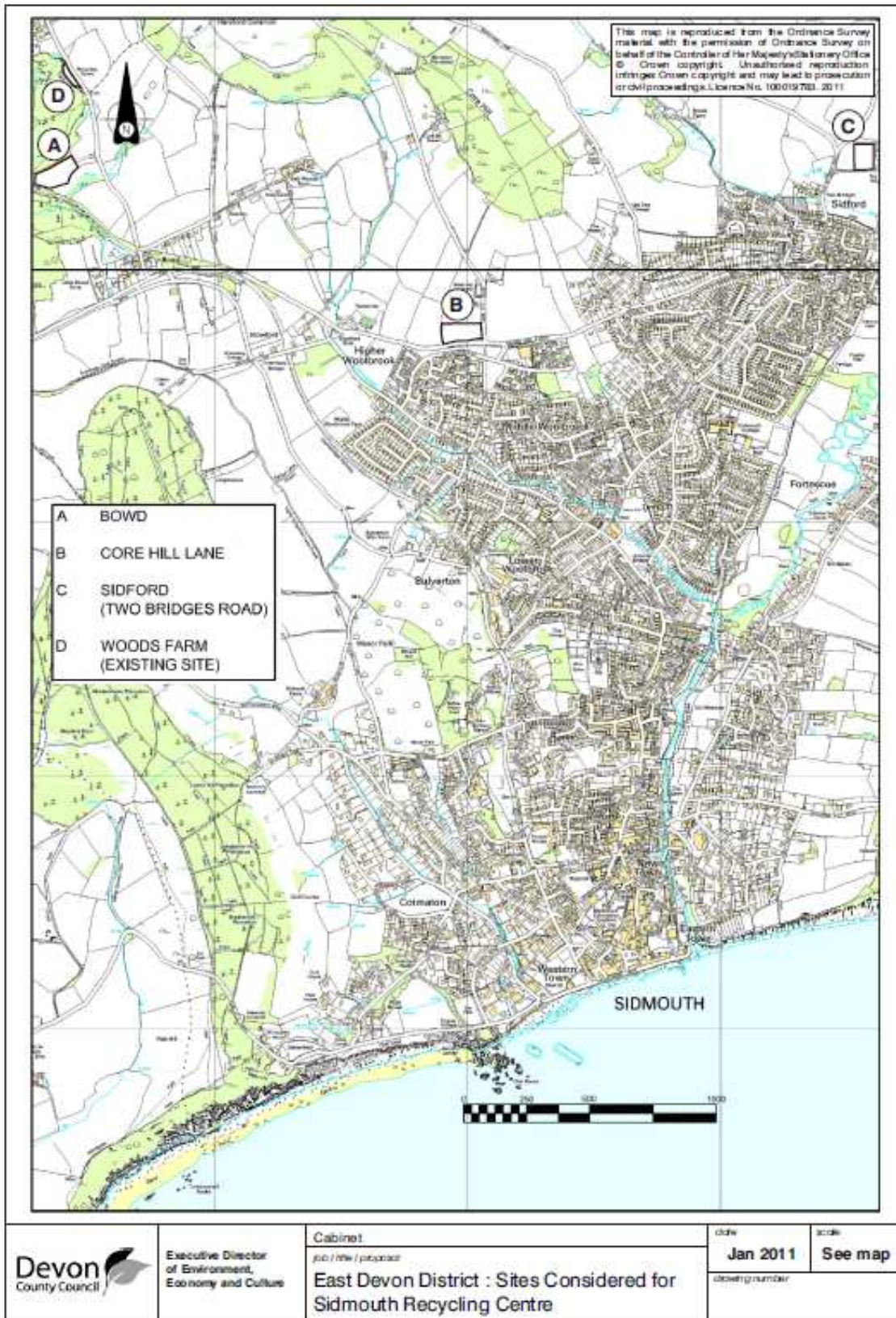
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|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 Knowle Hill | 8 Macklins Quarry | 15 Deep Moor, Great Torrington |
| 2 Sutton Barton | 9 Seven Brethren, Barnstaple | 16 Crowndale |
| 3 Woods Farm, Sidmouth | 10 Babbage Road, Totnes | 17 Exeter Road, Okehampton |
| 4 Exton Road, Exeter | 11 Ivybridge Depot, Erme Wood | 18 Bideford |
| 5 Ashley | 12 Torr Quarry | 19 Pinbrook Road, Pinhoe, Exeter
(Construction commenced) |
| 6 Punchbowl | 13 Brunel Road, Newton Abbot | |
| 7 Killadeave | 14 Anvil Corner, Holsworthy | |

**Appendix II
To EEC/11/38/HQ**

Progress report on site improvements recommended in the Executive report entitled "Improving Devon's Environment: Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Improvement Strategy" 2 August 2005 (ED/05/166/HQ).

Scheme	Progress
1) Provision of site East of Exeter	Planning Permission now obtained (November 2008). Construction works commenced March 2010. Opening to the public spring/summer 2011.
2) Provision of site for Bideford	Site provided – opened May 2007. Site was recognised as one of the best in the UK in the 2008 Letsrecycle.com National Awards
3) Relocate/provide new site for Ivybridge	A potential new site has been identified and initial discussions are on-going with the landowner
4) Crowndale (Tavistock) Site Expansion/Improvements	The first phase of this scheme has been completed (Recycling area moved to the much larger transfer station site, and new transfer station and weighbridge provided) Phase 2 discussed later in this report.
5) Seven Brethren (Barnstaple) Site Expansion/Improvements	Site expansion/improvements completed Winter 2007
6) Punchbowl (Credon) Site Expansion/Improvements	Site expansion/improvements completed Spring 2008
7) Exton Road (Exeter) Expansion into Salt Barn area and General Site Improvements	Delayed due to extended requirement to use salt barn. Agreement has now been reached with Exeter City Council (landlord) regarding this scheme and the scheme is due to commence in late 2010/11.
8) Sutton Barton (Honiton) – Minor Site Improvements	Permanent Planning Permission achieved for the site. Improvement works completed Spring 2008. Further small expansion planned for 2011 (planning permission for this granted March 2010)
9) Woods Farm (Sidmouth) – Minor Improvement Works	Temporary Planning Permission extended and small site expansion completed Spring 2008. Proposals to provide a new site for this facility are discussed in the main body of the report
10) Dawlish – Provision of New Site	No progress made as this site was due to be looked at towards the end of the 10 year Strategy period.

Locations of potentially suitable sites for a new Recycling Centre to serve Sidmouth and surrounding areas



Layout plan of the proposed new site to serve Sidmouth (located to the south of the existing facility)

