

Household Waste Recycling Centres Improvement Strategy

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

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.

Recommendations: that

- a) the Household Waste Recycling Centre Improvement Strategy which sets out the vision and principle of 'providing a network of modern, safe, attractive Household Waste Recycling Centres which are convenient to use and designed to maximise the recycling and recovery of the material brought in' be endorsed;
- b) approval be granted for the submission of a planning application for a replacement Household Waste Recycling Centre to serve Tavistock and the surrounding area;
- c) the development and implementation of a Household Waste Recycling Centre van permit scheme be approved in principle with approval of the details of the scheme delegated to the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste.

1. Summary

This report outlines a Strategy which will ensure that Devon County Council's network of Household Waste Recycling Centres can continue to be significantly improved, with several older sites replaced over the next 10 – 15 years should funding become available. This will ensure that the standards of this public service continue to develop in line with health and safety requirements and the public's demands and expectations thereby offering a network of modern, attractive, safe sites. The report also seeks approval to submit a planning application to develop a new facility at Tavistock and seek funding for £4.9m from the Corporate Capital programme.

This report also discusses the development and implementation of a van permit system for Household Waste Recycling Centre access to help reduce the potential of trade waste abuse at the sites.

2. Background and introduction

Devon County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority and as such is responsible for the disposal of controlled Local Authority Collected Waste collected in the area by the Waste Collection Authorities (District Councils) and for providing a network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (Civic Amenity Sites) for residents to deposit their bulky household waste.

The County Council manages 19 Household Waste Recycling Centres. These have been developed over a number of years and some facilities now require replacement or significant repairs or improvements.

This Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy builds on (but does not replace) the 'Strategy for Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Facilities in Devon' approved by Cabinet in March 2011 (EEC/11/38/HQ) and will contribute to the corporate goal of 'Managing Waste Efficiently' as outlined in the DCC 'Better Together' Report 2014-2020. Delivery of the Strategy approved in 2011 has seen new sites developed for both the Sidmouth and Ivybridge communities. However, lack of capital funding has meant that there have been no further developments.

3. Proposal

(a) Household Waste Recycling Centres Improvement Strategy

The vision outlined in the Strategy for Recycling Centre (Civic Amenity Site) Facilities in Devon' (EEC/11/38/HQ Cabinet 9 March 2011) was to 'provide a network of modern attractive sites which are convenient to use and designed to maximise the recycling of the material brought in.'

This vision still stands. However, safety must rightly feature prominently in such a vision and as such the vision is now 'to provide a network of modern, safe, attractive sites which are convenient to use and designed to maximise the recycling and recovery of the material brought in'.

Previous Improvement Strategies have seen several new Household Waste Recycling Centres being developed, including the National award-winning Ivybridge and Pinhoe (Exeter) facilities and others at Sidmouth and Bideford.

However, there are still several older Household Waste Recycling Centre sites across Devon that are no longer fit for purpose and not suited to modern demands, leading to health and safety concerns and increasingly higher levels of customer dissatisfaction. The main factors being:

- Sites having to temporarily close (either in whole or part) to allow the accumulated waste to be safely loaded and transported off site, leading to long and inconvenient delays for the Public.
- Vehicles regularly queuing (particularly in a dangerous manner on the Public Highway) to access sites either during peak times or when a container is being replaced.
- Restricted layouts particularly at some smaller sites, which makes recycling inconvenient (and/or limits the amount of materials that can be recycled).
- Access issues – particularly health and safety concerns with sites in which steps have to be climbed to deposit waste into containers by an ageing and/or vulnerable public.
- Pedestrian conflict with vehicles leading to health and safety concerns.
- Increased public demand, due to population and housing growth, leading to significant site congestion especially at peak times.

Some of these issues are illustrated in Appendix 1

The proposals outlined below set out which sites need to be replaced and are listed in order of priority. A complete list of Recycling Centres and their current status is provided in Appendix 2. It is envisaged that such a programme of site replacements would take around 10-15 years to deliver. All new sites would need to be 'split-level' in which the public deposit waste from a higher level into containers placed in a dedicated lower level service yard. This enables waste to be removed from sites without having to close the facility temporarily; significantly improves safety; eliminates the need for the public to climb steps and makes recycling far easier/more convenient/more accessible for the public.

Sites requiring improvement:

I Tavistock -provision of new site

The existing facility at Crowndale was developed adjacent to the old landfill site which closed over 30 years ago. It is also adjacent to an old transfer station where waste from West Devon Borough Council is bulked up and delivered to the South West Devon Waste Partnership Combined Heat and Power Energy from Waste plant operated by MVV at Devonport. The site is physically constrained and must be closed to enable containers to be replaced. This leads to significant queuing problems on the public highway raising health and safety concerns and complaints. Some minor works have been undertaken at the site and improvements made to operational practices, but the site does need to be replaced with a modern, fit-for-purpose facility.

Locating a suitable site in this area to develop a new facility has been challenging. However, proposals are now being developed to provide a new facility on the adjacent inert landfill site, which is mostly within DCCs ownership and is the most promising site in the area.

Approval is sought for the submission of a planning application for this replacement Household Waste Recycling Centre.

II Newton Abbot - provision of new site

The existing Brunel Road Household Waste Recycling Centre facility is the busiest in Devon, managing around 12,000 tonnes of waste per annum and approximately 250,000 visits per year. As waste has to be loaded from bay areas into HGVs, and HGVs have to access public areas, parts of the site have to close temporarily leading to significant queuing problems and frustrated site users. The existing site is not big enough to serve the communities that currently use it and existing problems will become exacerbated as the local area continues to be developed. A new, state-of-the-art facility is therefore proposed.

III Cullompton, Tiverton and Willand area - provision of a combined new site

The current small Household Waste Recycling Centre at Ashley, Tiverton is no longer fit for purpose to meet the current demands. Development of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension is progressing which will deliver an additional 2000 homes and employment land to the east of the town with the highway infrastructure partially completed. In addition, further housing is planned for both Cullompton and Willand including potentially a new Garden Village. Contributions from developers will be sought where appropriate to do so.

The current site at Ashley (Tiverton) arose as ancillary to the landfill site which closed over 30 years ago. It is on a small footprint and requires the public to climb steps to place their waste into skips. The site must be closed to replace containers and there is a high degree of pedestrian and vehicle conflict. It is poorly configured, suffers from queuing issues and is inadequate to cope with significant housing growth that is occurring/proposed in the area. A new, large joint facility covering the growth areas of Tiverton, Cullompton and Willand is proposed.

IV Honiton - provision of new site

The existing facility at Sutton Barton is small, constrained and suffers significant queuing problems albeit off the public highway. There are health and safety concerns with vulnerable people accessing skips via steps as well as conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. The site is historically located next to the adjacent (closed) landfill site and is very remote from the main population centre that it serves. A new facility in the Honiton area is therefore proposed.

V Kingsbridge, Totnes, Dartmouth - provision of combined new site

The existing facility at Totnes is the smallest (in physical area) in Devon and suffers queuing issues. The existing Kingsbridge site at Torr Quarry is also not ideal and vehicles have to queue whilst waste is being compacted and skips changed. Dartmouth has had no Household Waste Recycling Centre facility since the 'Rural Skip' provision was removed as part of budget reductions in 2011.

As such, a large new facility jointly serving all 3 communities is proposed.

VI Barnstaple - provision of new site

The current historic site at Seven Brethren (Barnstaple) is outdated and poorly configured. Significant housing growth that is occurring/proposed in the area is also impacting on capacity which will get worse over time. Whilst the site manages to just cope at present, it is envisaged that a new site will be required towards the end of the 10-15-year period that this Strategy covers.

(b) Van Permit Scheme for Access to Household Waste Recycling Centres

Currently, users of vans can access Household Waste Recycling Centres to dispose/recycle their waste (subject to certain vehicle and vehicle size restrictions). However, despite current checks, there is concern that abuse of this system by commercial firms and businesses to dispose of their waste at public expense remains an issue.

As such, it is proposed that a 'Van Permit' system is introduced. Permits will only be issued to vans registered to individual residents and not to vehicles registered to companies/businesses. This will help to ensure that only residents deposit their household waste at the sites. Approval in principle to this scheme is sought with details to be agreed by the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste.

4. Options/Alternatives

This Strategy seeks to deliver significant improvements to the Household Waste Recycling Centre network across Devon. If the status quo was maintained, the Household Waste Recycling Centre service would not be improved, and the public would have to keep using several old facilities that are no longer fit for purpose and suffer significant issues including health and safety. This may eventually result in some facilities having to be closed.

5. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The delivery of replacement HWRCs will require public exhibitions and consultations with local Members, the public, Parish/Town/District Councils and other relevant stakeholders as part of the planning application processes that will be required. These may need to be undertaken virtually if necessary.

6. Financial Considerations

The capital costs of such a programme of Household Waste Recycling Centres improvements/replacements are significant, and clearly these schemes could only be delivered over an extended timescale of perhaps up to 10-15 years and only when funding is available including seeking external sources of funding.

It is estimated that there would be no increase in the level of revenue funding required to operate the new sites and indeed there could potentially be savings from replacing the existing Totnes and Kingsbridge sites with a single new site, along with reduced maintenance costs at the new sites.

Approval of this Strategy will enable contributions to be sought towards developing new sites from housing developers where appropriate to do so.

7. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

This Strategy sets out a vision to modernise and improve the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres to make them safer and more attractive to the public to use. It will contribute to the corporate goal of 'Managing Waste Efficiently' as outlined in the DCC 'Better Together' Report 2014-2020.

Re-use is promoted at all of the Household Waste Recycling Centre sites with resale shops handling approximately 1,000 tonnes in 2019/20. Modern sites with purpose-built resale shops generate higher levels of reuse. All of these actions will contribute to achieving Devon's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

9. Equality Considerations

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment/Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/household-waste-recycling-centres/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item/meeting.

Equality considerations would only apply to the proposals surrounding the provision of new and maintenance of Household Waste Recycling Centres (public facilities).

The proposal to provide several new Household Waste Recycling Centres will allow modern designs to be used to allow easy access for all site users and eliminate the need to use steps to access containers at these new sites. Disabled parking and welfare facilities will also be provided at new sites. Overall, the provision of modern facilities will benefit all site users and in particular the vulnerable who sometimes struggle to use steps at the older sites.

10. Risk Management Considerations

This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken/included to safeguard the Council's position. No risks have been identified.

11. Public Health Impact

There are no specific Public Health implications. All sites are operating in accordance with Government guidelines about being COVID 19 secure and social distancing measures will be in place for as long as they are required.

12. Summary, Conclusions, Reasons for Recommendations

This Strategy sets out a vision for the modernisation of the HWRC sites to meet the demands of the 21st century. New facilities will make recycling a lot easier, safer and more convenient for the public thereby potentially managing more waste at the higher end of the waste hierarchy through re-use and recycling.

Temporary closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centre network during the recent lockdown demonstrated how much these sites are valued by the public in order to help them manage their bulky household waste. They form a critical element of offering a comprehensive frontline waste service to Devon's residents.

Delivering the vision will help to ensure that the service continues to meet the health and safety, operational and legislative requirements as well as the public expectations placed upon it. Opening new sites where required will help ensure that the Household Waste Recycling Centre service is well placed to meet the growing needs placed upon it, as well as increasing re-use and recycling thereby contributing towards Devon achieving net zero carbon emissions.

Approval of the Strategy will enable funding to be sought including potential developer contributions where appropriate to do so.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for Enquiries: Wendy Barratt

Tel No: 01392 383000 Room: Matford Offices, County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

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Appendix 1 to HIW/20/38

Photographs highlighting health and safety, access and queuing issues with older Household Waste Recycling Centres in Devon



Appendix 2 to HIW/20/38

List of Devon Household Waste Recycling Centres showing which sites will require redevelopment or replacing within the next 10-15years.

Household Waste Recycling Centre Site	Comments/Status	Redevelopment/new site required (in next 10-15years)
Anvil Corner, Holsworthy	Significant Improvement Works undertaken in 2010. Site remains adequate	No
Ashley, Tiverton	No longer fit for purpose. New site proposed to cover Tiverton, Cullompton and Willand areas	New site required
Bideford	New, modern site provided in 2007. Site acceptable	No
Brunel Road, Newton Abbot	No longer fit for purpose	New site required
Crowndale, Tavistock	No longer fit for purpose – significant queuing issues on Public Highway	New site required
Deep Moor, Torrington	Contractor provided site (not a DCC Asset)	No
Exton Road, Exeter	Site Adequate	No
Ivybridge	New site provided in 2017	No
Killacleave, Ilfracombe	Significant Improvement Works undertaken in 2018 Site remains adequate	No
Knowle Hill, Exmouth	Site Adequate	No
Maclins Quarry; South Molton	Site Adequate	No
Okehampton	Site Adequate	No
Pinbrook Road, Exeter	New site provided in 2011	No
Punchbowl, Crediton	Significant improvement works undertaken in 2008. Site Adequate	No
Seven Brethren, Barnstaple	No longer fit for purpose	Yes
Sutton Barton, Honiton	No longer fit for purpose	Yes
Torr Quarry, Kingsbridge; and Totnes	Sites could be replaced with new, joint facility (also serving Dartmouth)	Yes
Sidmouth	New site provided in 2013	No