

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET EXECUTIVE**

**11<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies  
Portfolio Holder for Waste and Property**

**SUBJECT: Household Waste Recycling Centres – Review of  
changes implemented in April 2017 – reduction in  
opening days and commercial vehicle restrictions**

---

**REPORT FOR: Decision**

---

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Council currently provides five Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) for residents to deposit bulky waste and recycling. The statutory requirement is to provide at least one facility.
- 1.2 A proposal put forward in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), agreed in principle by Council in February 2016, was to close two of the five sites to realise a saving of £700k from April 2017.
- 1.3 A consultation exercise was carried out during November 2016, where residents clearly stated a preference for not closing sites, but instead for reducing opening days and restricting usage.
- 1.4 Due to the strength of public feeling, £200k was provided through the Financial Resource Model (FRM) process to ease the pressure on the service with a further £300k provided from the Budget Management Reserve for 2017/18 only.
- 1.5 The remaining £200k savings target for 2017/18 was then met through a number of measures including a reduction in opening days to three per week at all sites and a strictly enforced restriction on all commercial type vehicles and trailers using the site.
- 1.6 Whilst it was always the intention to review these changes after three months, the newly elected Cabinet have asked that this is undertaken urgently due to the extensive public pressure received during the run up to the Local Government Election.
- 1.7 This report considers the impact of two months of operating the new opening days and vehicle restrictions and assesses the financial impact of any changes made.

## **2. Review Findings**

2.1 As the review is based on two months of operation only it is considered to be of limited statistical accuracy as residents adjust and adapt to the revised arrangements. The results are summarised below.

### **2.2 Complaints**

2.2.1 As perhaps expected, there has been a number of complaints received by the department summarised as follows:

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>AM / MP</b>
Opening Days	21	4	1
Vehicle Restrictions	69	16	2
Hours and Restrictions	9	6	-

2.2.2 A petition to increase opening hours at Newtown and Welshpool, organised by the Liberal Democrats was also received containing 657 signatures.

### **2.3 Tonnage throughput at sites**

2.3.1 Tonnage has decreased at all sites, which may be explained by traders using legitimate routes for their waste and recycling; residents storing up their bulky items; or potentially inappropriately disposing of their waste.

2.3.2 The largest drop in tonnage has been for materials that are also collected at the kerbside. Since the introduction of the changes there have been a number of residents claiming that they did not receive or did not wish to use the kerbside recycling service. Many have now received containers and are having their recyclables collected from their properties.

2.3.3 The amount of DIY type waste has fallen significantly which would suggest that alternative methods of disposal are being used such as using local skip providers.

2.3.4 Garden waste has decreased at the sites but there has been an increase in material through the Community Recycling Sites. This may suggest that commercial type gardeners who were keen users of the HWRC's have found alternative routes for their material.

### **2.4 Site usage**

2.4.1 When the changes were first introduced, queues and congestion were experienced at some sites but this has reduced over time as residents become used to the days that the sites are open.

2.4.2 Site surveys did indicate an increase in vehicle numbers per hour at the site as would be expected with reduced days of opening.

## **2.5 Flytipping**

- 2.5.1 The number of reported flytipping incidents has increased for April and May 2017 compared to the same period in 2016, although some of this increase may be down to residents being encouraged to report such incidents and also that it has been made easier for residents to do so over the last year.
- 2.5.2 Most flytipping on public land is collected by the street cleaning crews of the Highways Grounds and Street Scene service with tonnage collected increasing by 6% in April and May 2017 on the same period in 2016. However, the larger flytips are collected by the refuse collection crews, whose overall tonnage has fallen by 9% using the same time periods.
- 2.5.3 It should be noted that detailed correlation of flytipping activity is extremely difficult to undertake. According to various sources there has been a rise nationally in fly tipping but whether this relates to increased reporting or additional material is difficult to determine.
- 2.5.4 Some sites, particularly Newtown and Lower Cwmtwrch, experienced flytipping at the gates on the days that the sites were closed. As this is an illegal activity any evidence obtained, including CCTV footage, is being acted upon and enforcement action taken where appropriate.

## **2.6 Recycling Rate**

- 2.6.1 The recycling rate at the HWRCs increased during April and May 2017 compared to the same period last year.
- 2.6.2 The overall recycling rate for all municipal waste also increased despite a decrease in total throughput of all materials at the sites.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The Cabinet has made a commitment to consider the outcomes of the review and consider options taking into account the financial implications of these options.
- 3.2 The changes have proved very unpopular with residents and attracted considerable media attention which has placed Members under pressure to reverse the decision made by the previous Cabinet in February.
- 3.3 A complete reversal of the recent changes to the service provided would require the Cabinet to find £185k per annum (noting that £15k per annum will be delivered through the introduction of waste compaction equipment at the HWRCs).
- 3.4 It must also be stressed that there is a further £300k to be found for 2018/19 as the use of funding from the Budget Management Reserve is

for one year only. Accordingly any service changes made during 2017/18 will add further to the budget pressures for 2018/19 and beyond.

- 3.5 It would appear that the main opposition to the changes has been to the commercial vehicle restrictions as opposed to the reduction in opening days. However, to revert to allowing all commercial vehicles into sites would undo the positive outcomes achieved such as reducing illegal use and encouraging householders to use their kerbside service. A permit scheme such as used by many other authorities would therefore be necessary to ensure that residents who use their commercial vehicles for household waste and recycling are allowed to use the site.
- 3.6 Having considered the above it is proposed that a permit system is introduced for householders wishing to use commercial type vehicles and trailers and Cabinet consider increasing the opening days for sites whilst addressing the budgetary impact of doing so both in the short and long term.
- 3.7 Any changes agreed by Cabinet will require time to implement as a permit system will need to be put in place that is robust enough to prevent fraudulent access to the facilities. Furthermore, the site operators will need time to recruit and train the staff to cover the additional days of opening.

#### **4. Options Considered / Available**

- 4.1 Option 1 - Keep the current restrictions on opening days and vehicles in place – this option would involve no requirement to find additional savings from the Council's 2017/18 budget. It would however continue to have the negative impact on residents.
- 4.2 Option 2 – Restore opening days of all sites to seven days per week and remove commercial vehicle restrictions. This would cost an additional £185k per annum as it would reverse all the savings that have been made with the exception of those associated with the introduction of compaction at the sites.
- 4.3 Option 3 - Increase opening days of all sites to five days per week including weekends and maintain the current commercial vehicle restrictions. This would cost an additional £70k per annum.
- 4.3 Option 4 – Increase opening days of all sites to five days per week including weekends and introduce a controlled permit scheme for residents using commercial type vehicles for their own household waste and recycling. This would cost £100k per annum taking into account staff resources required, on costs, sundries, etc. It should be noted that in order to achieve these savings there would need to maintain a reduction in tonnage of 10% at the sites (using 2016/17 tonnages as the baseline), which is considered achievable by the service. This will enable

the previously negotiated saving of £50k to be retained, with any shortfall in the reduction being compensated on a pro rata basis.

- 4.4 Option 5 – Restore the opening days of all sites to seven days per week and introduce a controlled permit scheme for residents using commercial type vehicles for their own household waste and recycling. This would cost £165k taking into account projected staff costs.
- 4.5 Noting that all options above will need to address the budget shortfall of £300K for 18/19 as identified in 3.4.

## **5. Preferred Choice and Reasons**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Option 4 be progressed as this will provide for an enhanced five day a week service (including weekends) ensuring that residents will have improved access to the five sites.
- 5.2 A permit scheme should also be introduced for residents using commercial type vehicles to ensure that residents have access to the sites for their own genuine household waste. This will ensure that the sites are not misused by traders.
- 5.3 That an in year budget adjustment is provided to deal with the projected 2017/18 shortfall from Council reserves and that the 2018/19 FRM is revised to take into account the revisions to the MTFS which will be required.
- 5.4 Noting that the revised MTFS target is £500k for HWRC savings which was then split between 17/18 (£200k) and 18/19 (£300k). In order to still deliver the MTFS, if option 4 is supported a permanent adjustment of £400k will be required from 2018/19.

## **6. Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Impact Assessment was carried out for the original changes introduced in April 2017 and included with the report to the Cabinet of 7<sup>th</sup> February.

## **7. Corporate Improvement Plan**

- 7.1 One of the key priorities of the Corporate Improvement Plan is remodelling council services to respond to reduced funding.
- 7.2 Service objectives for Highways, Transport and Recycling are: to achieve the Welsh Government's recycling targets to reduce the impact on the environment and avoid fines; and to review the way we deliver services to provide £1.7m of savings through an alternative delivery model.

- 7.3 There is a commitment in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy to review the provision of HWRCs to realise efficiencies of £500k by 2018/19.

**8. Local Member(s)**

- 8.1 All Members will be affected by the proposal as it will be a countywide revision to the service.

**9. Other Front Line Services**

- 9.1 There has been an increase in material going through the Community Recycling Sites which has impacted on the Waste and Recycling Operations Team.

**10. Communications**

- 10.1 Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes
- 10.2 The report is of considerable public interest and any decision will need to be extensively communicated through the press, website and social media to inform residents as widely as possible.

**11. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)**

- 11.1 Legal – The recommendations can be supported from a legal point of view provided that the budgetary issues are dealt with and provided that any necessary virements are put in place.
- 11.2 Finance - The Finance Business Partner notes the contents of the report. If the proposal is accepted this will lead to a shortfall on the saving targets of £400k over the 2 years. The Service has proposed that with a reduction in site tonnage by 10%, the introduction of a Permit system and the installation of Compaction equipment at the HWRC'S, £100k of savings can be achieved. This is not without risk and will be a pressure on the service if the proposed changes are not successful. Of the £200k savings required in 2017/18, £100k will not be achieved (with the recommended option 4), it is proposed that this is funded from the budget management reserve for the current financial year. This could rise if the measures put in place do not realise the remaining £100k.
- 11.3 For 2018/19 the £100k carried forward and the additional £300k identified in that year will need to be included as a pressure on the revenue budget, the funding of which will be considered within the Financial Resources Model as part of the overall 18/19 budget setting process.

**12. Scrutiny**

- 12.1 Has this report been scrutinised? Yes – 30 June 2017 – version 5
- 12.2 The Scrutiny Working Group support the preferred option – Option 4 – with increased opening hours and introduction of a permit scheme for commercial type vehicles. However they note the budgetary implications of introducing option 4 together with the requirement for further savings in the service for 2018/19.
- 12.3 The Group requested that Option 4 be reworded to clarify the issues surrounding the 10% reduction in tonnages stated in the report. This section has been amended accordingly
- 12.4 Improved communications will be essential going forward.

### **13. Statutory Officers**

- 13.1 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.
- 13.2 The Section 151 Officer has commented: “The decision changes the budget agreed by Council and creates a shortfall that must be covered. The use of the budget management reserve provides certainty around funding in 2017/18 but the financial impact will need to be monitored in this financial year. The reserve is a one-off source of funding and going forward the decision means that alternative savings will be needed in future years’ budgets to reflect the shortfall.”

### **14. Members’ Interests**

- 14.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>1) The opening days of all the sites are increased to 5 days per week to include weekend opening (both Saturday and Sunday) by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.</b>	<b>To allow residents convenient access to the sites to maximise the recycling of their waste.</b>
<b>2) To introduce a permit scheme for residents to visit the sites to deposit their household waste only though the use of commercial type vehicles and trailers by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017. Approval of the detailed implementation is hereby delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Waste and</b>	<b>To maintain the £50k saving associated with this service change and ensuring that the sites are managed effectively to prevent illegal use.</b>

<b>Property.</b>	
<b>3) The savings shortfall in 17/18 (£100K) will be met through the use of the Budget Management Reserve.</b>	<b>To ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.</b>
<b>4) The savings shortfall in 18/19 of £400K be addressed through the Financial Reserves model as part of the overall budget setting process.</b>	<b>To ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.</b>

<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>			
<b>Within Policy:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Within Budget:</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	<b>All Members</b>
----------------------------------	--------------------

<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	<b>Nigel Brinn</b>
<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2017</b>

Contact Officer:	Nigel Brinn
Tel:	01597 82 6659
Email:	nigel.brinn@powys.gov.uk

**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**  
HWRC Changes Data Review