

5 July 2023**Agenda Item: 7**

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE (HWRC) STRATEGIC REVIEW

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a progress report to the Place Select Committee on the review of recycling centres.
2. To allow the Place Select Committee to consider the review and any further actions they require.

Background and context

3. In January 2022, the Transport and Environment Committee gave approval to undertake a Strategic Review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) network in Nottinghamshire to ensure that individual facilities and the wider network are fit for the future, in light of the impact of proposed changes to kerbside collections needed to meet the statutory obligations of the Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) and the impending Environment Act (EA), as well as assessing the impact of housing growth across Nottinghamshire.
4. The following were agreed as the scope for the review:
 - To assess the condition and potential of the current network of 12 HWRCs using appropriate assessment criteria i.e., scope for development, accessibility, suitability of location/surrounding land use, household coverage, travel times/distances, environmental impact, meeting RWS requirements and affordability.
 - To recommend a core long-term network of HWRCs for the county, including consideration of the above criteria, the need to replace those sites that have a limited life span, and any opportunities for providing sites in new locations to serve key areas of the county.
 - Identify strategic locations of any new HWRCs.
 - Consider the issues of cross border usage and trade waste.
 - Assess the potential to expand the reuse offer.
5. Officers commissioned independent advice and support from consultants AECOM.

Methodology Used

6. To achieve the review scope, success criteria were identified, and future policy implications considered. An operational assessment was undertaken of the current HWRC provision (including outlining potential for improvement at each site), as well as identifying recommendations to improve the overall network based on maximising network efficiency and balancing the challenges of location, sufficiency, and site access.
7. The recommendations identified still require additional analysis to fully understand the implications of any changes. This is because there are many permutations and combinations, and it would be helpful to have input from Members to narrow down the potential work required.
8. Part of the further work required includes resolving commercial issues with the Council's Waste PFI partner and securing approval from DEFRA (the sponsoring department on behalf of His Majesty's Treasury (HMT)) and who need to agree any HWRC service changes.

National Waste Policy review

9. Existing policy and legislation determine how the County Council manages its HWRC network. The legislation (mainly the Environmental Protection Act 1990) outlines, what waste needs to be accepted, whether waste collection can be charged for, and how certain materials must be collected.
10. The Government is seeking to fundamentally overhaul the waste system through the Resources and Waste Strategy and the impending Environment Act, and a new set of policies:
 - **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - to encourage greener production, which could result in increased data collection requirements and changed revenue streams to authorities and contractors.
 - **Consistency of kerbside collection** - could see a reduction in materials received at the HWRC by making the collection of various waste streams and material types compulsory at the kerbside
 - **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)** - to increase capture rates, which again may reduce certain materials deposited at HWRCs.
11. The full impacts from these policy changes are not yet known as Government has yet to announce the outcome of the consultations. This delay in setting the national policy framework, has meant it has not been possible to finalise the HWRC Strategic Review in the original timescales.
12. Two proposals that were explored in the review were the option of charging for DIY waste at HWRCs and using booking systems for demand management.
13. Government has recently published the outcome of its consultation on both subjects and whilst not currently committing to a position on booking systems has confirmed that charging for household DIY waste at HWRC's will be forbidden under legislation during 2023.

Operational assessment

14. As part of the strategic review, all sites were visited in July 2022 and highlighted the key challenges each site faced, as well as suggesting improvements to improve operational efficiency, recycling performance, or improve user satisfaction.
15. The operational assessment focussed on locality and access, traffic flow, container management, materials collected, potential for reuse activity, and unauthorised usage of the site by non-residents and tradespeople.

Wider HWRC Network Assessment

16. The existing HWRC network was assessed on service provision to residents using geographic information system (GIS) tools. Service provision has been evaluated using travel times to the HWRCs in five-minute bandings for a percentage of the population. This provides an assessment of current coverage and identifies any gaps.
17. Population growth forecasts were also considered, with current estimations predicting a 5.8% increase in the population by 2032. It was determined that the impact of population growth on HWRC requirements is limited and places no special considerations on the location of a HWRC.
18. Currently 98% of the Nottinghamshire population lives within 20 minutes of their nearest HWRC based on using a car at peak travel times, with the 2% not within a 20-minute drive split between the southeast and northeast of the county in isolated properties and hamlets.
19. The National Assessment of Civic Amenity Sites (NACAS) recommends a maximum driving time of 20 minutes in urban areas and 30 minutes in rural areas for the vast majority of residents. So, Nottinghamshire has particularly good coverage.
20. Despite variation across the County overall tonnage collected per person per year in Nottinghamshire is in line with the England average.

Alternative Network options

21. The current network comprises 12 sites of varying quality located largely around previous landfill disposal sites, other sites with a history of waste use, or on areas of land owned or controlled by the County Council.
22. As a result, the network has not necessarily been planned in a structured way around public needs or with specific reference to the wider highway network capacity.
23. A number of different issues have to be carefully considered and balanced in identifying the most suitable long term recycling centre network including both geographic factors (e.g., population coverage) and operational factors (e.g., the efficiency and operability of individual sites), but within the context of national waste policy and strategy, and local planning and development frameworks.
24. Additionally, there are more local priorities that also need to be considered.

- a) A gap in service capacity in the southeast of the county.
- b) Cross border and devolution impacts.
- c) Operational, locality and performance related issues at some sites.
- d) Recent network investments.

25. There is a need to look at options to deliver a long-term sustainable network of sites within the NACAS principles outlined above.

Additional Considerations

26. The review so far has also identified that to improve the efficiency and performance of the HWRC offer in Nottinghamshire the Council could consider:
- a. Expanding the range of materials collected
 - b. Introduction of a meet and greet system or ANPR
 - c. Introduction of reuse systems on sites
 - d. Introduction of technological applications

Next Steps

27. Because of the number of permutations that could be considered, and the complexities of getting location, sufficiency, and access to sites right, with the resultant impact on residents, relevant background information and data supporting the review conclusions more work is required, and it would be helpful to get input and feedback from Members.
28. The Place Select Committee will need to consider the review work undertaken so far and to be done and if there is anything further that they require.

Financial Implications

29. There are no direct financial implications from this report, but the Council spends circa £35m per annum on waste recycling, treatment, and disposal, and is always seeking to deliver improved public services whilst reducing operational costs.
30. Any investment in new or enhanced sites will need capital investment which will need to be identified within the relevant capital programme and may require revenue savings to be identified to offset any additional borrowing. Detailed financial modelling will need to be completed to support any investment business cases.
31. As the HWRC sites form part of the wider PFI Waste Contract approval to any revisions to the network will need to be obtained from His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in order to ensure the central government Waste Infrastructure Credit (WIC) payments are not affected by the changes.
32. Any reduction (or increase) in WIC payments will need to be factored into service budgets and the business case for change.

Implications for Service Users

33. Options which deliver a better quality service at a lower cost are more sustainable in the longer term.
34. Any new sites developed would be designed to modern Disability Discrimination Act access standards and will therefore make the sites more inclusive.
35. Before any proposals are taken forward, they will be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment and public consultation.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

36. The current PFI contractual arrangements for HWRC provision provide a sustainable and affordable service with high levels of overall landfill diversion performance, exceptional HWRC recycling performance, and numerous local sites.
37. These factors minimise the environmental impact of the service and provide a robust contractual and commercial basis for delivery of the HWRC service to enhance recycling performance in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Place Select Committee:

- 1) Notes the progress on the Household Waste Recycling Centres Strategic Review.
- 2) Considers whether there is any further information the Committee require or any other steps they wish to take in respect of the review.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 26.06.2023)

The report falls within the remit of the Place Select Committee under their terms of reference.

Finance Comments (PAA 21/06/2023)

The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 29 to 32.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.