Nottinghamshire County Council

Report to Environment and Sustainability Committee

21 July 2016

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND PROPERTY

RECYCLING CENTRE REGISTRATION SCHEME

Purpose of the Report

To advise Committee of the outcome of the review of the Recycling Centre Registration Scheme in response to the motion as amended and agreed at the County Council on 12 May 2016.

Information and Advice

County Council Motion

1. Members will recall 2014/15 and 2015/16 budget proposals which included various changes at the Council's network of Recycling Centres. The approved proposals included the implementation of a new recycling centre access scheme for all County residents to protect against cross border use, which was introduced in March 2016.

2. Subsequently the County Council at its meeting on 22 May 2016 passed a Motion to review the registration scheme.

Cross Party Members Group Meeting

3. As part of the County Council Motion to seek a review of the waste permit scheme, it was agreed to discuss the policy with the Environment spokespersons of the major groups and a Cross-Party Members Group was established in this respect. The group met with lead officers from the Place Department on 7 June 2016.

4. The group viewed the background and context to the scheme, the operational procedures put in place for implementation, management and enforcement, the identified common areas of concern raised by those affected by the scheme and the registration process, and considered potential amendments to the current arrangements to address these concerns.

5. This included analysis of the complaints received to date, address validation process, and a review of the checking process being undertaken on site.

6. The Cross-Party Members Group had the opportunity to review the scheme and it was agreed that the Chair of Environment and Sustainability Committee would write formally to all our neighbouring councils to seek an equitable financial arrangement for the sharing of costs associated with cross border use at the Nottinghamshire Recycling Centres.

7. Letters were sent out on 20 June 2016, and at the time of writing responses have been received from Nottingham City Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council confirming they did not favour a cost sharing arrangement, although they supported collaborative working.

8. Additionally, informal discussions have now been held with officers of all our County neighbours. The Chair of Environment and Sustainability Committee has also met with the relevant Elected Member from Lincolnshire to discuss reciprocal arrangements for the use of the Newark Recycling Centre, and the Gainsborough site in Lincolnshire.

9. Although these discussions have been useful, lack of formal agreement and responses from most of those contacted makes it unlikely that suitable financial arrangements will be agreed in the near future by the authorities, and thus negate the need for the scheme.

10. A letter has also been sent to the Secretary of State informing him of the situation and requesting direction to local authorities to cooperate on this issue.

Summary of Outcomes and Actions

11. The Cross-Party Members Group on 7 June 2016 reviewed the following:

- The need for the scheme, major areas of concern raised by residents, and need for certain information to effectively identify customers as residents and council tax payers in Nottinghamshire.

- Monitoring and enforcement processes proposed for the scheme, and potential changes and developments which could be implemented in the future if appropriate.

- Engagement with neighbouring councils over the issues identified, and proposed further actions.

- Lobbying of the Secretary of State and local MP's regarding joint-working.

12. The Cross-Party Members Group noted that schemes to restrict recycling centre access to residents within the local authority have been implemented in several other areas including Bath, Bradford and Rutland. These have proved very successful and in Rutland made significant savings of up to 23% in waste inputs, with associated financial savings through reducing waste treatment and disposal costs.

13. Although the business case for the scheme is based on achieving a net saving of £200,000 through the diversion of waste to sites outside of Nottinghamshire, this is a prudent estimate of the potential savings based on a number of complex variables and assumptions particularly around operating costs.

14. Members acknowledged that the waste disposal costs currently being met by Nottinghamshire County Council for disposal of this waste from outside of the County, estimated to be at least £1m pa, was unsustainable.

15. The view of the Cross-Party Members Group was that in the absence of suitable cross border cost sharing arrangements the scheme should continue, with appropriate random and targeted enforcement commencing in September 2016.

16. A report on the impacts of the scheme will be brought back to Environment and Sustainability Committee once meaningful data on changes to waste tonnages and any savings resulting from the scheme is available.

Other Options Considered

17. None. The County Council Motion to Council agreed that a Cross-Party Members Group would meet to review the scheme and consider potential amendments to the current arrangements to address concerns raised following the launch of the scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations

18. To update Committee on the issues raised and action taken arising from the motion as amended and agreed at the County Council on 12 May 2016.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described

below. Where appropriate, consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

20. The business case for the scheme, approved at County Council on 27 February 2014, predicted a net saving of £200,000 through the diversion of waste to sites outside of Nottinghamshire. This is a prudent estimate of the potential savings based on a number of complex variables and assumptions particularly around operating costs.

21. Analysis of national waste data (updated with 2014/15 figures) showed that the annual waste per household deposited at Nottinghamshire Recycling Centres (13 sites at the time, but now reduced to 12) was 235kg per household (HH), compared to 52kg/HH at the (one) site in Nottingham City.

22. It has been calculated that it may be possible to reduce the County Council figure to 185kg/HH with strict enforcement of the scheme, giving a maximum saving of 50kg/HH, by effectively controlling these cross border waste imports. This is estimated to cost the Nottinghamshire council tax payer at least £1m per annum in unnecessary waste disposal costs.

23. For comparison these figures are 174/154 kg/HH for Derbyshire (9 sites) and Derby City (1 site) and 209/139 kg/HH for Leicestershire (14 sites) and Leicester City (2 sites).

24. Although kerbside collection arrangements vary across all of these areas, these figures indicate that a net import of waste into the Nottinghamshire Recycling Centres continues to be an issue for the County Council.

25. Should the scheme be withdrawn it would be necessary to identify a further £200,000 of income from our neighbouring authorities, or savings of the same amount, in order for the service budget to be balanced.

26. In reality the savings accruing from the Recycling Centre Registration scheme could be substantially more, which will release additional savings for the Council.

Legal Implications

27. This report is for noting only.

Implications for Service Users

28. All residents of Nottinghamshire wishing to use the Recycling Centres now need to register their vehicles either online or via the Customer Service Centre. There is no change to the types of vehicles that residents can access the site in, nor is

there any change to the policy around number of visits they can make. The registration process is free, quick and easy and should improve the service at the Recycling Centre sites by restricting access to Nottinghamshire council tax payers only.

Recommendation

29. That Committee:

I. Note that a Cross-Party Members Group met on 7 June 2016 to review the Recycling Centre Registration Scheme and address the specific concerns set out in the County Council Motion of 12 May 2016.

II. Note that as recommended by the Cross Party Group the Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee has now written to all our neighbouring authorities to seek an equitable financial arrangement for the sharing of costs associated with cross border use of the Nottinghamshire Recycling Centres.

III. Note that the view of the Cross Party Members group was that in the absence of suitable cross border costs sharing arrangements being agreed that the scheme will continue as currently implemented, with appropriate random and targeted enforcement commencing in September 2016.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments

The report is for noting only and therefore Constitutional Comments are not required.

Financial Comments (SES 08/07/16)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Divisions

All