

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES**IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING IN RUSHCLIFFE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for the development of a new recycling centre in Rushcliffe to meet demand and deliver on environmental commitments. The report will set in train the preparation of a planning application for the preferred site off Hollygate Lane in Cotgrave.

InformationBackground

2. Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to minimising its impact on the environment. A recently approved Environmental Policy has brought forward the development of an ambitious and far reaching Environment Strategy to support the Council's agreed aspiration to "limit the negative impacts of its operations on the environment including waste generation and management".
3. Delivering an additional recycling centre in Rushcliffe to meet anticipated future housing growth and address under-capacity within the existing recycling centre network is essential if the Council is to fulfil its ambitions and address the needs of local residents.
4. The current West Bridgford recycling centre, located on Rugby Road, is the only site currently operating in Rushcliffe. The centre occupies a small, constrained site, and has a history of traffic issues due to the location and lack of space for queuing onsite or offsite. The facility is now at full operating capacity due to exponential growth of West Bridgford over recent years.
5. The site regularly receives over 8,000 tonnes of waste per annum, the fourth largest amount in the County, and behind only Calverton, Newark and Worksop which all operate out of modern purpose-built facilities located close to the strategic highway network.
6. The operating constraints highlighted above have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic, and particularly following reopening of the site in early June. Pent up demand for the site lead to lengthy queues at most times, impacting on road safety on Rugby Road.
7. A trial booking system has recently been implemented at the site to address these ongoing road safety concerns since it is impossible to manage the demand through alternative arrangements without additional capacity being secured elsewhere in Rushcliffe to divert users away from the site.

8. Given these issues, it is time to bring forward an additional site to meet the demand from residents and deliver on environmental obligations.
9. The County Council undertook an extensive site search to identify a suitable location for a new recycling centre. In addition, the Council also commissioned specialist planning consultants, RPS, to undertake a commercial land and property search to identify potential sites or premises that would be suitable for this use.
10. Over 80 sites were reviewed and assessed against relevant criteria such as availability, accessibility, and compliance with local development plans. An initial shortlist of 9 sites were identified, and subsequently reduced to the three which offered the best potential for development. Unfortunately, despite market testing, it has proven impossible to secure any third party land for the development of a new site.
11. Therefore, after a further review of County Council-owned land, a site located off Hollygate Lane in Cotgrave, and formerly part of the Cotgrave Colliery site but currently used as grazing land, has been identified as potentially suitable for a recycling centre. This has been selected as the preferred site.
12. The potential site is well located off the highway network and would be accessible for neighbouring communities. The site is currently screened from Hollygate Lane by an existing and substantial hedge, and in order to minimise the visual impact of the new centre, additional landscaping will be incorporated into the design. There are a range of other potential mitigations that can be considered to reduce the impact of the recycling centre, providing visual and noise screening and enhancing the local ecology and biodiversity. Surveys and design options are currently being prepared and will be carefully considered as the planning application is prepared.
13. Appendix A shows the potential location of the proposed site, subject to further planning and design work.

Planning

14. Pre-application advice has been requested from Nottinghamshire County Council's Planning Team with regard to the preferred site. The County Council, as the Waste Planning Authority, will be the determining planning authority.
15. The site is large enough to accommodate the requirements of a new recycling centre which will be able to handle a wider range of materials (such as a paint reuse facility) and is within convenient distance for the population that would use the service, particularly the main communities of Bingham, Radcliffe on Trent, Keyworth, Ruddington, Gamston, and other villages within Rushcliffe including Cotgrave itself.
16. The site is expected to handle around 5,000-6,000 tonnes of waste per year, which will reduce the pressure on the existing West Bridgford site. This will also impact positively on the ongoing safety issues at that location whilst also meeting the needs of the growing population. Importantly, the new site will help achieve the strategic environmental aspirations of the County Council and deliver on commitments to local residents.

17. As noted above the design of the facility will need to incorporate appropriate environmental mitigations and will also need to meet the requirements of the highway authority in terms of safe access and egress from the site, and appropriate vehicle routing and signage. This work will be carefully reviewed to ensure safe routes and impact on the village of Cotgrave.
18. The delivery of the new facility will require all planning requirements to be met and will include appropriate public consultation through the planning process.

Financial implications

19. There is £2.5m allocated in the capital programme to develop and construct a new site.
20. There will also be availability fees due to the site operators (Veolia – the Council's PFI waste management partner) to operate the facility and a rate per tonne of waste received at the site to pay. It is estimated the opening of a new site would generate an additional 5,000-6,000 tonnes of waste per year. This would result in overall additional annual revenue costs of up to £500,000.

Next steps

21. Veolia has been commissioned to carry out the design and development of the new recycling centre to ensure it both achieves the highest design and operational standards, and minimises any impacts on the local environment. A topographical survey has now been prepared and an initial ecological survey is underway to inform the planning application.
22. It is anticipated that subject to the requirements of the Waste Planning Authority a full planning application could be submitted in the autumn with a subsequent application process to the Environment Agency for an Environmental Permit.
23. Subject to receipt of planning permission and the Environmental Permit application construction would be likely to take in the order of 6 months, so a site could be open for late summer 2021.

Other Options Considered

24. Do not provide an additional recycling centre in Rushcliffe. A range of other sites were also considered and discounted as part of a site review.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

25. The current recycling centre in West Bridgford is struggling to cope with demand due to housing growth, its location and layout and is creating local road safety concerns.
26. A new high-quality recycling centre will provide much needed capacity and will support the wider environmental aspirations of the County Council by making it easier for residents to recycle waste which cannot be managed through the kerbside collection services.
27. Despite extensive site searches undertaken internally, in engagement with Rushcliffe Borough Council, and through an external planning consultant no other suitable sites have been identified.

Statutory and Policy Implications

28. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

29. The financial implications are outlined in paragraphs 19 and 20 of this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) Approves the development of an additional recycling centre in Rushcliffe.
- 2) Approves officers submitting a planning application for the preferred site off Hollygate Lane in Cotgrave.

Derek Higton
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Constitutional Comment (EP 30/07/2020)

30. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comment (RWK 12/08/2020)

31. The current approved Communities and Place capital programme includes a budget of £2.5 million to fund capital works associated with this report. The additional estimated annual revenue costs of up to £500,000 per annum to meet availability fees will be addressed as part of the development of the 2021/22 budget.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All