

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 May 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Waste

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Outcome of the Public Consultation on Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Executive Summary

In December 2018 Cabinet agreed to consult on proposals to change opening hours and days at Household Waste Recycling Centres across Lancashire.

The outcome of the consultation and responses to issues raised are contained in this report. Following consideration of the consultation responses, it is recommended that the changes proposed are implemented with the exception that Skelmersdale recycling centre remains open seven days a week.

In addition, all recycling centres should open on Bank Holidays even if a facility's normal closure day is Monday.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (i) That the opening hours of all recycling centres be changed to 9am – 5pm all year round.
- (ii) That six of the council's 15 household waste recycling centres are changed to open five days per week; and
- (iii) That the Waste service takes all necessary steps to implement the changes with a targeted implementation date of 1 October 2019.

Background and Advice

In December 2018 Cabinet agreed to consult on proposals to change opening hours and days at Household Waste Recycling Centres. The specific proposals being:

1. To change the opening hours of all recycling centres from 9am to 5pm all year round.
2. To reduce the number of days seven of the council's 15 recycling centres are open; from seven days per week to five days per week. The seven recycling centres being:

- Barnoldswick
- Burscough
- Carnforth
- Clitheroe
- Haslingden
- Longridge
- Skelmersdale

A public consultation took place between 28 January 2019 and 25 March 2019. 1,219 responses were received. Full details of the consultation responses are provided in the report at Appendix 'A', with the key findings of the consultation set out in Section 1.

Proposal to change opening hours to 9am – 5pm

39% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 51% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 10% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Those that disagreed with the proposal did so mainly because it will be less convenient to visit the centres due to work commitments, because they will struggle or won't be able to visit the centres during these hours, that they won't be able to go as often as they need and that the reduced hours would potentially increase fly tipping.

Some respondents suggested that consideration be given to opening late one night a week or opening longer hours in summer and shorter in winter.

Proposal to open seven recycling centres five days per week

31% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 50% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Those that disagreed did so mainly because it would be inconvenient, may reduce recycling rates and that the changes would potentially increase fly tipping.

A specific concern was raised in relation to the reduction of days at Skelmersdale recycling centre. 70% of respondents who use the Skelmersdale facility cited traffic as a concern. In addition it was noted that of the seven centres proposed

Skelmersdale is significantly busier in terms of the tonnage it receives than the other six.

Consideration of consultation responses

Fly tipping

It is understandable that fly tipping is a concern for the many respondents. Fly tipping is a problem nationally as well as throughout Lancashire. However, there is no evidence that links fly tipping to recycling centres or that fly-tipping increases when recycling centres are closed.

The recycling centres are currently open 11 hours a day, 7 days a week over summer and fly tipping still occurs across the county. This is because most fly tipping is carried out by unscrupulous businesses who do not want to pay for their waste to be disposed of properly. Our recycling centres only accept household waste. We do not accept business waste and it is in fact illegal to deposit business waste at our facilities. As such the main fly tipping culprits will not be affected by Household Waste Recycling Centre changes.

The majority of residents care for their local environment and would not fly tip as a result of a change in operational hours. Fly tipping carries an unlimited fine and up to 5 years in prison; and, whilst the changes may be inconvenient, it is not considered that the vast majority of householders would risk such penalties by fly tipping when they will still be able to take their rubbish to a recycling centre free of charge.

There is evidence from past recycling centre closures within Lancashire that such events did not result in any discernible increase in fly tipping. It is expected that in the immediate period following changes some waste may be left at the facility gates, mainly by customers who hadn't realised the facility was not open. Initially, staff will be able to collect this waste at the start of each day and as customers become accustomed to the changes this will diminish.

It is not considered therefore that respondents' concerns regarding fly tipping are likely to materialise; and consequently they should not impact on the proposed changes.

Accessibility

A number of issues were raised around accessibility of the centres following the proposed changes.

In the first instance it must be remembered that all Lancashire residents receive a comprehensive doorstep waste collection for the majority of wastes produced day to day in the home. This should be the main method for managing household wastes.

The recycling centres are provided primarily for those items not collected at the doorstep. Waste streams like wood, metal, plastics, bulky items, large packaging or generally when larger than usual quantities of wastes are produced. In most cases these waste types are generated infrequently or on specific occasions. The majority

of householders do not visit a recycling centre on a frequent basis. Indeed if they do, it should be questioned why they are generating so much waste. Many authorities restrict the number of visits residents can make to a recycling centre.

In considering suggestions to have a late night opening or open longer hours in summer, the primary consideration must be the facility staff. Staff are currently asked to work 11 hour shifts over summer and the majority feedback that the late hours in summer significantly affects both their health and family life. To have a consistent working pattern is beneficial to both these issues. In addition, existing traffic data does not support the need for late opening or extended summer hours.

83% of respondents want to be able to visit their recycling centre on Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 9am – 5pm; and this opportunity will be provided. As such it is considered that the days and times that recycling centres are proposed to be open is sufficient to provide convenient access to the facilities for the majority of residents.

One issue that was raised during consultation is the accessibility of facilities on Bank Holidays. It had been considered that the days facilities are open should be staggered to provide wider availability; and this may mean that some facilities would normally be closed on Mondays. Where this is the case, it is therefore recommended that such facilities are opened on Bank Holidays to allow maximum accessibility and closed on an alternative day during Bank Holiday weeks.

Recycling rates

It is not considered that recycling rates will be impacted by five day opening. Generally, customers actively separate their waste during visits to the recycling centre, and there is no reason why this should change as a result of changes to the days a facility is open.

Those facilities opening five days will naturally be a bit busier on those days but overall visitor numbers are likely to remain the same. Our busier facilities across the county manage to achieve good recycling rates despite having much higher visitor numbers than those quieter centres that will move to a five day operation.

Skelmersdale recycling centre

Skelmersdale recycling centre was included in the proposal to reduce to five days a week opening on the basis that West Lancashire has two recycling centres whereas most districts only have one. It is not considered that the distance between the two facilities is prohibitive in this respect and many residents in Lancashire have to travel similar distances to their recycling centre.

However, Skelmersdale is significantly busier than those other facilities proposed for five day opening. It receives over 2100 tonnes per year more than the busiest of the other six sites and more than double the tonnage received at Longridge and Barnoldswick. As a result, the impact on visitor numbers in consequence of a change to five day opening would be much more significant than at the other six centres.

Access to the centre is from a very short road immediately off a roundabout on the public highway. During skip exchanges the gates must be closed to ensure the safety of visitors; and this immediately impacts on the highway. Given the increased amount of waste that would be deposited over fewer days at the facility and the potential impact during skip exchanges, respondents' concerns regarding traffic are accepted.

On this basis, and given the greater amount of waste received at the facility in comparison to the other facilities proposed, it is recommended that the Skelmersdale recycling centre remains open seven days per week.

Summary

The responses to the consultation were mixed with support for, or indifference to, the proposed changes being roughly equal to those opposing them. The main concern relates to a potential increase fly tipping; and whilst it is accepted that fly tipping is a widespread problem, it is not anticipated that it will increase as a result of the proposed changes. Fly tipping levels across Lancashire will continue to be closely monitored.

As such, it is recommended that the council proceeds to make the changes to opening hours and days in line with the proposals, with the exception of Skelmersdale recycling centre which should continue to offer a seven day service. In addition, all facilities should be available on Bank Holidays even if the usual day a facility is closed is a Monday.

An equality impact assessment for the proposals is provided at Appendix 'B'.

Consultations

Public, staff and partner organisations have been consulted.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The original proposals were forecast to deliver a financial saving of £0.734m per annum. If the recommendation is accepted that Skelmersdale remains a seven day facility it will result in a savings shortfall of c£0.030m per annum, which it is thought can be managed within the wider waste services budget. This will be closely monitored throughout 2019/20.

Risk management

Personnel

Delivery of the proposed changes will require a restructure of the waste service. Many recycling centre staff transferred to the council under TUPE regulations and

are still on terms and conditions of employment of their former employer. All posts in the revised structure will be on county council terms and conditions. Implementation of the revised structure will be in line with the council's Restructure and Reorganisation Policy and subject to staff and union consultation.

There is the potential for redundancies within the service as a result of the proposal being implemented.

Legal

The county council is under a statutory obligation to provide household waste recycling facilities for the residents of Lancashire in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and it is not considered that the implementation of the proposed changes would result in the county council failing to meet these requirements.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		