

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 8 February 2024

Report of the Director of Highways and Transport

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Protecting our environment;

Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Brief Summary

The council's Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy was modified in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time a separate Inert Waste Policy which placed limits on the amount of inert wastes that residents could deliver to Household Waste Recycling Centres, with the option to pay for additional amounts, was suspended.

In March 2021 a temporary Access Policy was approved which sought to maintain some of the benefits of the changes that were introduced as a result of the pandemic, most notably a move from a paper based 'permit' scheme to the use of appointments.

This report proposes a revised formal Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy which incorporates much of the temporary policy already being delivered. However, to address concerns in relation to a sustained increase in inert waste being delivered to Household Waste Recycling Centres since the suspension of the inert waste policy, the proposed Access Policy also includes for placing a limit on the amount of inert waste that can be delivered in vans and trailers to 3 x 25kg bags or items (or equivalent) per appointment. This quantity is in excess of original policy limits but without an option to pay for more.



Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the revised Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy as set out in Appendix 'A'.

Detail

The council's Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy was introduced in 2003 and has three main purposes:

1. To reduce congestion
2. To improve safety for facility users
3. To reduce the potential for the illegal deposit of commercial waste

The original policy, details of which are provided at Appendix 'B', required residents visiting a Household Waste Recycling Centre using a van or twin axle trailer to obtain a permit prior to visiting. There were two types of permit available, one for general items which limited facility usage to once per month and one for certain recyclable wastes which allowed unlimited visits.

Separate to the Access Policy, in 2015, the council introduced a limit on the amount of inert waste (such as soil, rubble and general DIY wastes including plaster and plasterboard) that residents visiting a Household Waste Recycling Centre could deposit – the 'Inert Waste Policy'. The limit of up to 10 x 25kg bags or items per annum was also delivered by means of a permit and residents were given the option to pay for inert waste delivered without a permit, or any in excess of the permitted maximum.

During the pandemic in 2020 both of these policies were suspended as a result of the need for social distancing and to reduce potential transmission of the virus through paper permits changing hands and being inspected. The policies were replaced initially by an appointment system for all visitors. As restrictions eased this was maintained in place of permits for the Access Policy allowing those using vans and trailers one visit per calendar month by appointment only. It should be noted that at this point the restriction on trailers was extended to all trailers, not just twin axle trailers. No limits on inert waste were maintained, save for the fact that those depositing inert waste using a van or trailer were limited by the restriction of one visit per calendar month. The Leader of the Council approved these arrangements in March 2021, subject to future review by Cabinet.

Interim Period

In the interim period the appointment system has been very successful, the key benefit it brings being that appointments can be scheduled throughout the day and can be reduced during known busy periods such as bank holidays, helping to reduce congestion.

A new digital platform has been developed to replace the existing appointment application process put in place during the pandemic. The new platform will work using QR codes giving residents quicker and easier access to appointments and



providing better processes for checking and authorising appointments on site. It is intended that the new platform will be launched in Spring 2024.

Quantities of inert waste being delivered to Household Waste Recycling Centres have, however, risen significantly during the interim period. Across all Household Waste Recycling Centres inert waste has increased by 95% (circa 9,700 tonnes per annum) on the levels received during implementation of the Inert Waste Policy. A large proportion of inert waste is delivered in vans and trailers and, whilst the restriction of once per month applies to visits in these vehicles, it is considered that a lack of restriction on the amount of inert waste that can be delivered during any visit is largely responsible for the increase.

Proposed Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy

As required by the decision taken in March 2021, a proposed revised Household Waste Recycling Centre Access Policy is set out at Appendix 'A'.

Save for the move from permits to appointments the key changes to the 2003 Access Policy are:

- The inclusion of all trailers rather than just twin axle
- The prevention of pedestrian access to Household Waste Recycling Centres
- The incorporation of limits on inert waste
- Revised descriptions of vehicles subject to the policy

Under the original policy some site users would modify single axle trailers to increase carrying capacity, often more than doubling the intended carrying capacity of the trailer and giving question to the trailer's safety and road worthiness. In most cases it is likely this was done to illegally deposit commercial waste at tax-payers expense. The inclusion of all trailers reduces the potential for this.

The original access policy recognised the lack of pedestrian access at most Household Waste Recycling Centres and required pedestrians to obtain a permit, which was provided in the form of a letter with instructions for the facility user to follow when accessing on foot. Modern safety standards no longer recognise this as a suitable control.

Household Waste Recycling Centres are designed primarily for the delivery of wastes not collected at the doorstep. In most cases these are large, bulky or heavy items and accordingly Household Waste Recycling Centres are designed exclusively for the delivery of wastes in vehicles. The cost of modifying existing facilities to provide pedestrian access would be prohibitive and not provide good value for money given the extremely small number of site visitors that would use it. In the interests of safety therefore the proposed policy prevents access to Household Waste Recycling Centres by pedestrians. For the avoidance of doubt, access by bicycle is not prevented.

It should be noted that the policy in relation to trailers and pedestrians has been operated since March 2021 and accordingly will result in no discernible change for residents.



It is recognised that many householders produce inert waste during DIY activities but the facilities provided are for small quantities of DIY waste, not wholesale renovations, construction or demolition, as is prescribed in national regulations.

Whilst increased population and dwelling stock will account for some proportion of the increase in tonnage the amount of inert waste now being received suggests that in some cases excessive quantities are being delivered for which alternative means of disposal should be sourced. The previous Inert Waste Policy limited the amount of inert waste that could be delivered by any household irrespective of vehicle but was reliant on the option for residents to pay for more for added flexibility. Recent changes in regulations are such that returning to the former policy is not an option.

As previously stated, a large proportion of inert waste delivered to Household Waste Recycling Centres is done so using vans and trailers. Accordingly, therefore, in order to prevent the excessive use of Household Waste Recycling Centre inert waste facilities, the proposed access policy replaces the former Inert Waste Policy by placing delivery limits on those vehicles in scope of the policy to 3 x 25kg bags or items (or equivalent weight) during any appointment visit, thus allowing a maximum of 900kg (0.9 tonnes) per calendar year. It should be noted that such limits are significantly in excess of the previous Inert Waste Policy limit of 250kg per annum but will be an absolute maximum without any flexibility to pay for more.

Finally, the policy wording has been amended to provide a more robust description of which vehicles are in scope of the policy such that it is clearer for both residents and for staff implementing it. This is now aligned to Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency V5C document descriptions to make resolution of queries easier.

Appendices

Appendices 'A' and 'B' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Proposed Access Policy
Appendix 'B'	2003 Access Policy

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

The additional cost to the council of the increase in inert waste since the pandemic is in the region of £375,000 per annum. A further income of £40,000 per annum was received as result of customers choosing to pay for more than the prescribed limit.

The policy is not intended as a means to make financial savings or efficiencies, but it is anticipated that the proposed policy will result in some reduction in cost of inert



waste disposal though at this stage the level of which cannot be realistically estimated.

Risk management

Legal

Recent changes to the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 now permit householders to dispose of limited amounts of waste from DIY projects free of charge (up to 100 litres on four occasions every 4 weeks) provided that certain criteria are met. As the restrictions under the proposed access policy relate to inert waste deposited using trailers and commercial vehicles only, without limiting the amount of such waste that householders can deposit using a private vehicle, it is considered that the policy is a reasonable and proportionate means of managing site access and safety while affording residents rights over and above the minimum provided for under the waste legislation.

Financial

Not to reintroduce limits on the delivery of inert wastes could lead to increased costs as a result of inert waste deliveries increasing unchecked.

Due to regulations surrounding commercial waste, deposit of the same at the council's Household Waste Recycling Centres is illegal. Whilst it is recognised that preventing the deposit of commercial waste in its entirety is impossible, having policies in place to reduce the potential for this to happen reduces the risk of prosecution and the potential burden on the taxpayer as a result of businesses who seek to avoid disposing of their waste legally and legitimately.

List of Background Papers

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

