

RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

THE INTRODUCTION OF A PRE-ENTRY BOOKING SYSTEM AT ALL OF WILTSHIRE'S HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES.

Decision made

To approve the introduction of a pre-entry booking system for all of Wiltshire's household recycling centres operated on behalf of Wiltshire Council by FCC in accordance with the Lot 2 contract and Hills Waste Solutions in accordance with the Lot 1 contract.

Made by: Parvis Khansari, Director Highways and Environment

Background

1. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of Part 3 Section D of Wiltshire Council's Constitution, the Directors of Wiltshire Council are empowered to take all necessary decisions in cases of emergency. This decision is being taken by Parvis Khansari, Director Highways and Environment using these powers in circumstances where the Director concerned believes that there is a risk of damage to property, a threat to the health or wellbeing of an individual and/or that the interests of the Council may be compromised if this decision is not otherwise taken.

Reason for decision

2. This decision would in other circumstances be taken by Cabinet. However, in circumstances where Cabinet is unable to meet to expedite its functions in a timely manner during the COVID-19 pandemic, this decision is being taken in accordance with the power referred to in paragraph 1 above in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet member for Highways, Transport and Waste, Chief Executive Officers and other Directors. This decision will be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet.

Following a period of service suspension between 24 March and 17 May, where all ten of Wiltshire household recycling centres (HRCs) were closed to the public in order to support the government guidance issued on 23 March 2020 that people should "stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives", nine of the ten sites reopened to the public on 18 May 2020.

The decision to reopen the HRCs was informed by revised government guidance on how local authorities should prioritise the provision of waste services issued on 5 May 2020, together with new guidance from the Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum, and also from the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO).

The council has reviewed this non-statutory guidance with its contractors, and has applied many of the recommendations after carrying out risk assessments in respect of each of the sites to ensure that they could be reopened while protecting human health and maintaining safe systems of work.

These risk assessments concluded that in order to achieve the necessary social distancing on the sites and ensure the safety of site staff and site users the number of unloading bays needed to reduce significantly. This step has helped ensure people are typically at least 2 metres apart wherever possible. However, this has reduced capacity at the sites by an average of 63% and has inevitably led to queuing traffic on the highway. Most sites have seen waiting times of up to 2 hours on occasion. The high numbers of vehicles queued on the public highway awaiting entry to the HRCs have required a combination of formal traffic management and volunteer staff to marshal. In order to help reduce initial demand on the HRC network, the council placed restrictions on the types of material that could be disposed of at the HRCs and also promoted a postcode entry system to encourage householders in certain post code areas to only visit the HRCs on specified days. Whilst these measures have been largely successful, the traffic management and marshalling has come at a financial cost that needs to be reduced as soon as possible. The post code system has also proved to be imbalanced, leading to sites being very busy on some days, but quieter on others as dictated by the post code areas in which residents had been asked to restrict their visits.

To remedy the current requirement to manage traffic queues on the highway, and remove the imbalanced demand caused by the temporary post code system, a new online booking system will be put in place to control access to the household recycling centres, and to continue to ensure that the necessary social distancing measures can be maintained. This approach will also allow the Stanton St Quintin HRC, which has remained closed since 24 March due to safety concerns over queuing traffic on the busy B4122 road, to reopen on 4 June 2020. The temporary opening hours at key sites such as Amesbury, Purton and Salisbury will also revert to normal summer opening hours, as there will no longer be a requirement to avoid conflicts between vehicles queuing to access these HRCs and strategic waste facilities, council depots and other commercial operators.

From 04 June 2020, all residents wishing to use the council's recycling sites will need to first book a visit to their preferred HRC via an online form on the council's website before making their visit. From this date, any resident attempting to deposit waste at the site without having first made a booking for that day will be refused entry. The system will allow residents to book a timed slot (currently 15 minutes) at any of the 10 sites in Wiltshire during their normal summer open hours.

The introduction of a booking system, as recommended in recent guidance on reopening HRCs and implemented by a number of other local authorities, is expected to better control the usage of the sites, by limiting this to the anticipated daily capacity of each site. This in turn is anticipated to help prevent excess queuing on the public highway outside of the sites and reduce or remove completely the need for ongoing traffic management measures.

The implementation of this system will also allow the HRC network to revert to accepting all materials at the sites, and to avoid the cost currently incurred in providing additional hours of operation at some sites.

3. I confirm that in making this decision I have considered the following in line with Wiltshire Council's Constitution: **(Please insert 'Yes' / 'No' / 'Not Applicable' and any other comments necessary to evidence the issue identified has been addressed)**

Key decision requirements	Yes. Under normal circumstances such a decision would not have to be made. It is being made as an urgent decision to enable nine household recycling centres to be opened at the earliest opportunity.
Views of relevant cabinet member(s), committee chairman, area board(s)	Yes, Approval has been given by the Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Highways, Transport and Waste.
Consultation with cabinet member(s), the Leader and Scrutiny (for Executive decisions taken under Emergency Powers)	Approval has been given by the chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
Consultation with local members (as appropriate)	Not applicable.
Consideration of the area boards and delegated decision checklist for officers on the issue of when and how to involve local councillors and area boards in decisions about local services	Not applicable.
Implication of any council policy, initiative, strategy or procedure	Yes. There will be an impact on the delivery of the council's Household Waste Management Strategy, but the priority is to protect public health.
Consultation in accordance with requirements and expectations of consultation with the public	No. Decision is being made as urgent to manage the reopening of the household recycling centres. There is reduced capacity at the sites and demand is increasing in order for residents to safely dispose of excess household waste, or other waste items that may give rise to health concerns if continued to be stored at home
Range of options available	Maintain current situation whereby 9 sites are operating hours different to their normal hours,

	<p>with the additional requirement of traffic management measures at additional cost to the council. Stanton St Quintin site would remain closed. The ongoing costs and provision of resources for this task are considered unsustainable.</p> <p>Remove the current “post code checker” system – this would lead to increased demand on all sites when open, and an ongoing requirement for traffic management measures to be put in place.</p>
Staffing, financial and legal implications	<p>Staffing and financial implications are being discussed with contractors. Temporary additional “gate staff” to be deployed at two Lot 1 HRCs.</p> <p>Some reduced traffic management capacity required for initial 3 days of operation of the new scheme.</p> <p>Contract Change Notes will be required to formalise this temporary change to the specifications of the Lot 1 and Lot 2 contracts.</p> <p>The council has a duty to arrange for places to be provided at which residents may dispose of their household waste in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (clause 51).</p> <p>The primary implication should be the reduced costs of formal traffic management across the HRC network.</p>
Evidence of due regard having been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty.	The decision impacts on all residents.
Risk assessment	The introduction of a pre-entry booking system supports existing measures to mitigate the risk of residents being unable to observe the social distancing requirements whilst attending the HRCs, and reduce the risk of traffic queueing on the highway.
Involvement of statutory officers and/or directors	Yes. The Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer are aware of the decision.
Regional or national guidance from other bodies	The Waste Industry safety and Health (WISH) Forum and National Association of Waste Disposal Officers (NAWDO) has issued guidance on reopening of sites. Government

	guidance has also been issued on the prioritisation of the provision of waste services, and the provision of household recycling centres during the Covid-19 pandemic. Officers have consulted other councils in the region who have reopened or are planning to reopen sites with booking systems in place.
The council's constitution	Yes. See paragraph 1 above.
Contract is suitable for execution under the e-signature process	Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

4. Not applicable.

Other options considered

5. i) To continue with opening nine of the ten recycling centres in Wiltshire, with additional traffic management measures in place to mitigate any escalated highways issues. Stanton St Quintin site would need to remain closed without a system to limit and control the numbers of visitors using the site, or until highways and construction works adjacent to the site are concluded.



Made by:

Parvis Khansari, Director Highways & Environment

Date:

04 June 2020