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**Review of Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to propose changes to household recycling centre opening hours, in order to make the budget savings agreed by full Council on 24 February 2015.
2. It is proposed that from 13 July 2015:
  - (i) household recycling centre opening hours would reduce to 10am to 4pm on each day they are open;
  - (ii) household recycling centres would open on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, which are the days when usage is at its highest, along with two additional weekdays.
3. The proposed changes will see at least one household recycling centre open on all seven days in each of the four geographic areas (north, east, south and west Wiltshire).
4. **Appendix 1** shows the details of the proposed opening hours for each household recycling centre.

**Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

5. The proposed changes to household recycling centre opening hours would enable the council to achieve full year savings of around £300,000 per annum. These savings would assist the council in fulfilling the commitment to our three priority areas: to protect those who are most vulnerable, to boost the local economy – creating new jobs and safeguarding existing jobs – and to support and empower communities to do more for themselves; making them stronger and more resilient.

**Main Considerations for the Council**

6. Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan 2015-16 contained a proposal to review opening hours at household recycling centres. The report explained that the proposal would see opening hours reduced at some or all household recycling centres following an assessment based on current usage and the location of alternative sites. Closure on days where usage is high would be avoided where possible. Opening times would be fixed and widely advertised.

7. The council has been working with Hills Waste Solutions to develop a proposal for a reduction in opening hours which would enable the council to achieve its savings target. The proposal set out in **Appendix 1** is for fixed opening hours with all household recycling centres open on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the busiest days of the week, and two other weekdays. The proposed opening hours of 10:00 to 16:00 on each day the household recycling centres are open are the hours with highest usage. Current usage is set out in **Appendix 2**. The distance by road between household recycling centres is set out in **Appendix 3**.
8. The proposal constitutes a key decision as defined in Part 1 of the Wiltshire Council Constitution as the reduction in opening hours would result in a restriction of service of more than five per cent when compared to the current opening hours.
9. Once a decision has been made on the proposed new opening hours a comprehensive communications strategy would be implemented.
10. Representations received during the consultation period are set out in **Appendix 4**. A summary of the issues raised and officer comments are included.

### **Background**

11. The council faces financial pressures as central government has cut the allocation of funding to Wiltshire Council by more than £15 million this year. This, combined with the rise in demand for key services, the growth in the number of households, and inflation, means the council has to save £30 million.
12. At its budget meeting on 24 February, full Council approved a review of opening hours of our eleven household recycling centres in order to make savings of £300,000 per annum.
13. Currently, the household recycling centres are open seven days per week, closing on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. Summer opening hours are 09:00 to 17:00 from 1 April until 31 October, and winter opening hours are 09:00 to 16:00 from 1 November to 31 March. Salisbury household recycling centre is currently open from 09:00 to 20:00 during summer, and from 09:00 to 18:00 during winter.
14. Information about the number of users visiting the sites each hour shows that household recycling centres are used less at the start of the day (between 9am – 10am ) and are used more at weekends, than mid-week. The proposed opening times mean that sites would be open on the days and times that they are used most.
15. **Appendix 2** shows the average number of visitors to the sites per day and per hour in 2014.

### **Safeguarding Considerations**

16. There are no direct safeguarding implications arising from the proposed changes.

### **Public Health Implications**

17. There are no direct public health implications arising from the proposed changes.

### **Corporate Procurement Implications**

18. There would be a variation to the contract for the provision of Waste Recycling and Disposal services arising from the proposed changes. The savings would represent a reduction in payment to Hills Waste Solutions under the current contract. There is a condition of the contract setting out the right of the council to propose changes to the service. The council has consulted Hills Waste Solutions on the proposal and they have agreed in principle to this change.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

19. The council does not expect a significant increase in the amount of fly tipping in Wiltshire due to the changes in household recycling centre opening hours. We anticipate that residents will make effective use of the kerbside collection services and continue to use the household recycling centres during the revised opening hours.
20. Both fly tipping cases and recycling rates will be regularly monitored to assess any impact of the changes.
21. There will be a reduction in lighting and heating at each site office as a result of the change in operating hours. There may be a reduction in the requirement for external lighting, although this would still be needed so that Hills Waste Solutions' drivers can safely exchange the containers before the sites open and after they close.
22. There may be an increase in the number of cars queueing to access the household recycling centres during the busiest times which may have an impact on air quality.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

23. The changes to opening hours at the household recycling centres would affect all residents wishing to use the service equally; therefore, there would be no adverse equalities impact arising from the introduction of the proposed changes.

### **Risk Assessment**

24. The council will monitor the busiest sites when the changes are implemented to assess any impact on traffic queuing.
25. As a consequence of introducing charging for garden waste the council anticipates there will be an increase in visitors to household recycling centres. An increase in visitors, as well as the proposed changes in household recycling centre opening hours, may also mean additional queuing at the sites for residents.
26. The council has a policy not to collect additional household waste which is presented at the kerbside. Residents with additional waste which will not fit in their wheeled bins are advised to take this waste to household recycling centres for disposal.
27. There is a risk that the introduction of charges for garden waste and the reduction in opening hours at the household recycling centres could result in an increase in waste that may have been recycled being placed in wheeled bins for kerbside collection of non-recycled waste. There is also a risk of excess waste being fly tipped, impacting on the environment and generating costs for enforcement and removal. Tonnes of waste and recycling collected will be monitored as will the number of reported fly tips. We anticipate that residents would continue to use the household recycling centres during the shorter opening hours. The vast majority of fly tipped waste in Wiltshire is commercial waste rather than household waste.

### **Financial Implications**

28. The council will achieve £290,000 of contract savings in a full year from the introduction of the proposed changes. If the changes are introduced from 13 July the savings achieved in 2015-16 would be £216,000.

### **Legal Implications**

29. The council has a statutory duty under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) to arrange for places to be provided at which residents in its area may deposit their household waste and arrange for the disposal of that waste.
30. Section 51(2) sets out that household recycling centres should be:
- (i) situated within the local authority area or reasonably accessible to residents;
  - (ii) open at all reasonable times (including at least one period on the Saturday or following day of each week except a week in which the Saturday is 25 December or 1 January);
  - (iii) free of charge to residents in the area.

In light of current financial constraints the proposed opening hours should enable the council to comply with this statutory duty, taking into account the pattern of usage and that all household recycling centres would be open on Saturday and Sunday.

### **Options Considered**

31. To review opening hours at household recycling centres to achieve the savings target of £300,000 agreed by full Council on 24 February 2015.

### **Reason for Proposal**

32. The proposed changes would allow the council to make savings of £290,000 per annum without the need to permanently close any household recycling centres in Wiltshire. The proposed opening hours also ensure that residents have access to at least one household recycling centre within their area (north, south, east or west Wiltshire) seven days a week and to all household recycling centres on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, at times when the sites are busiest.

### **Proposal**

33. That from 13 July 2015:
- (i) household recycling centre opening hours would be from 10am to 4pm on each day they are open;
  - (ii) household recycling centres would open on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, which are the days when usage is at its highest, along with two additional weekdays.

34. **Appendix 1** shows the proposed opening days for each household recycling centre.

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:**

None