

**REPORT TO:** Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Environmental Services

**SUBJECT:** Household Waste Recycling Centres

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information in respect of Halton's Household Waste Recycling Centres and to ask Members to endorse proposed changes to current Policy and operating practices at the Centres.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) Members receive and comment upon the report;**
- 2) Members endorse the proposals set out in paragraph 4.30 of the report, and;**
- 3) A report be presented to the Executive Board recommending the approval and implementation of the proposals set out in paragraph 4.30 of the report.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a statutory duty to provide places where residents in its area may deposit their household waste. In meeting this duty, the Council provides two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs); one at Johnson's Lane in Widnes and one Picow Farm Road in Runcorn, where residents can deposit a wide range of items for recycling or disposal.

3.2 Over time, the range of materials that can be deposited at the HWRCs has increased and both Centres continue to perform well in terms of recycling performance. The Centres are well used and the annual tonnage of materials deposited has increased in recent years; with circa 3,000 tonnes more material currently being deposited compared to 2014/15. This has led to an increase in costs as indicated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – HWRC Annual Operating Costs**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual Total</b>
2014-2015	£1,182,286
2015-2016	£1,356,030
2016-2017	£1,390,320
2017-2018*	£1,428,867

*\*Estimated*

- 3.3 The increased costs associated with operating Halton’s two HWRCs, together with the continuing financial pressures being felt by the Authority as a result of cuts to its funding by Central Government, resulted in a review of the Council’s HWRCs operations being undertaken. The purpose of the review was to identify options to reduce the overall costs associated with the operation of the Centres whilst maintaining a high level of customer service.
- 3.4 As part of the review, and in addition to looking at Halton’s own current practices, research was undertaken into the operation of HWRCs across a number of other local authority areas; both regionally and nationally, and four key options for change have been identified for Members’ consideration. These are;
- To reduce the current opening hours at the Centres
  - To amend aspects of the current Vehicle Permit Scheme
  - To introduce a new ‘Halton Resident Only’ Policy
  - To introduce a new Policy of charging for the deposit of ‘non-household’ waste items at the HWRCs
- 3.5 Further detail of the proposals set out in paragraph 3.4, along with the rationale behind each and relevant supporting information is set out in the following section.

#### **4.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

##### HWRC Opening and Closing Times

- 4.1 The opening hours for Halton’s two HWRCs are as follows;
- April to September - 8.00am to 8.00pm
  - October to March - 8.00am to 6.00pm

A comparison shows that Halton’s two sites are open for longer hours than HWRCs in Warrington, Cheshire West & Chester and across Merseyside.

4.2 Officers recently conducted a 'user' survey at Halton's HWRCs. The purpose was two-fold; Firstly, to determine the number of visitors to the Centres on an hourly basis, and secondly, to try and establish information in respect of the areas from which visitors had travelled. The survey was carried out for two weeks at each Centre; 7 days per week and covered all hours that the Centres were open.

4.3 Table 2 below provides information in respect of the number of visitors to the site and where they reside. Members will note that 4% of visitors were non-residents and 1% were not prepared to give their postcode.

**Table 2 - Summary of HWRC Visitors**

Summary	Johnsons Lane	%	Picow Farm Road	%	Overall	%
<b>Total Vehicles</b>	<b>5,976</b>		<b>5,794</b>		<b>11,770</b>	
<b>In Borough</b>	<b>5,476</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>5,633</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>11,109</b>	<b>95%</b>
<i>Runcorn</i>	143		5,557		5,700	
<i>Widnes</i>	5,333		76		5,409	
<b>No Postcode</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Not In Borough</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>4%</b>

4.4 Table 3 below shows the Centre visitor numbers on an hourly basis. It can be seen from the Table that the least number of visits were made between 8.00am & 9.00am and between 5.00pm & 6.00pm.

**Table 3 - HWRC Visitor Numbers (November 2017)**

Time	Johnsons Lane	%	Picow Farm Road	%	Total	%	Weekend	Weekday
08-09	253	4%	247	4%	500	4%	28%	72%
09-10	481	8%	407	7%	888	8%	30%	70%
10-11	685	11%	572	10%	1257	11%	31%	69%
11-12	830	14%	687	12%	1517	13%	35%	65%
12-1	765	13%	681	12%	1446	12%	38%	62%
1-2	754	13%	846	15%	1600	14%	34%	66%
2-3	872	15%	795	14%	1667	14%	28%	72%
3-4	734	12%	801	14%	1535	13%	34%	66%
4-5	446	7%	524	9%	970	8%	30%	70%
5-6	156	3%	234	4%	390	3%	24%	76%

4.5 Table 4 below shows the number of vehicles entering the Centres during a two week period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This information was formulated using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data and can be used as an indication of the number visitors during the 'summer' months. This information demonstrates that, as with the 'winter' opening hours, the largest proportion of visits to the Centres is made between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

**Table 4 - HWRC Visitor Numbers (September 2017)**

Time	Johnsons Lane	%	Picow Farm Road	%	Total	%	Weekend	Weekday
08-09	115	3%	253	5%	368	4%	39%	61%
09-10	253	6%	363	8%	616	7%	31%	69%
10-11	411	10%	462	10%	873	10%	35%	65%
11-12	507	12%	581	12%	1088	12%	36%	64%
12-1	510	12%	503	11%	1013	11%	33%	67%
1-2	532	13%	451	10%	983	11%	33%	67%
2-3	538	13%	418	9%	956	11%	36%	64%
3-4	452	11%	392	8%	844	10%	36%	64%
4-5	376	9%	424	9%	800	9%	40%	60%
5-6	229	6%	363	8%	592	7%	36%	64%
6-7	127	3%	317	7%	444	5%	34%	66%
7-8	99	2%	181	4%	280	3%	24%	76%

4.6 Cost savings can be realised by reducing opening hours. This saving would not be from a reduction in the amount of waste deposited, but from a reduction in the costs payable to the contractor for staffing the Centres. Information presented in Tables 3 and 4 shows that there would not be significant numbers of people unduly affected by a reduction in opening hours; with the only impact upon residents being that they would need to access the sites at a slightly later or earlier time than they may be accustomed to.

4.7 Taking into account the information set out in Tables 2 & 3, it is proposed that the opening hours at both the Johnson's Lane and Picow Farm Road Centres be revised and set as;

- **9.00am to 5.00pm – All Year Round**

It is estimated that these revised opening hours could achieve savings in the region of £20k per annum. Having standard opening and closing hours operating all year round will also reduce any potential confusion associated with seasonal variations.

- 4.8 Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the 'summer months' residents from Warrington use Johnson's Lane HWRC between 6.00pm and 8.00pm due to the Gateworth Centre (in Warrington) closing at 6.00pm. This would increase the overall percentage of non-residents using the centres (as referred to in paragraph 4.15 below) and further increase the costs for the Council in disposing of non-Halton waste. Moving to the new opening hours proposed in paragraph 4.7 will help mitigate the financial risks associated with Halton's sites being open later than neighbouring authorities' Centres.

#### HWRC Vehicle Permit Scheme

- 4.9 In September 2010, the Council's Executive Board approved the implementation of a Vehicle Permit Scheme for the two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in Halton. The scheme was introduced to deter and prevent the depositing of 'trade waste' at the Centres. Under the scheme, residents who wish to access the sites using commercial-type vehicles or with large trailers must obtain a permit to do so. Permits are free and issued to residents who provide proof of vehicle ownership and residency within the borough to staff at one of the Council's Halton Direct Link shops.

- 4.10 There are two types of Permit available as detailed below;

4.10.1 **Annual permits** are available to residents of the borough who **own** a 'commercial-type' vehicle or large trailer and who wish to deposit rubbish, recyclables or smaller segregated household waste items. These permits are valid for one calendar year and allow unlimited visits. Only vehicle 'owners' may be issued with an Annual Permit, which is retained by the vehicle owner and which will expire 12 months after issue.

4.10.2 **Temporary permits** are available to;

- Residents of the borough who **own** a 'commercial-type' vehicle or large trailer and who wish to deposit materials other than those described in paragraph 4.10.1, such as bulky waste (furniture etc.), rubble and hardcore, scrap metal (white goods etc.), televisions and large electrical items, wood (fences etc), and;
- Residents of the borough who **are hiring or borrowing** a 'commercial-type' vehicle or large trailer and who wish to deposit **any** materials at the HWRCs.

4.11 The number of Permits issued between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 is as follows;

- Annual Permits – 929
- Temporary Permits (Owned Vehicle) – 925
- Temporary Permits (Borrowed Vehicle) – 2226
- Temporary Permits (Hired Vehicle) – 765

4.12 A householder who wishes to use their own commercial-type vehicle for the deposit of bulky waste, rubble, wood etc is currently eligible to receive Temporary Permits to allow 12 visits to the Centres in a rolling 12 month period. The number of visits that can be made to the Centres in a borrowed or hired vehicle is currently also restricted to 12 in any 12 month period.

4.13 Moving forward, it is proposed that the number of Temporary Permits issued to a householder wishing to use either their own commercial type vehicle, or a hired or borrowed one, be reduced from 12 to 6. Members are advised that In the majority cases, the number of Temporary Permits issued for the use of a borrowed or hired vehicle was 6 or below and it is considered that 6 visits per year will still be sufficient to meet a householder's requirements. Issuing a maximum of 6 Temporary Permits would require a change to the Council's current HWRC Vehicle Access Policy.

4.14 Whilst the standard allocation of Temporary Permits would be 6 per year, it would be proposed to allow up to a maximum of 3 further Permits to be issued in cases where a resident could evidence genuine need due to special circumstances. Each such request would be treated on a case-by-case basis and the decision to allow additional Permits would be at the discretion of a Waste Management Officer.

#### Resident Only Access Scheme

4.15 Information gathered through the recent user survey, and presented in Table 2 above, shows that up to 5% of visitors to the Council's HWRCs during November were non-residents of Halton (assuming that those who refused to provide their postcode were reluctant to do so as they lived outside of the borough). Table 5 below provides further details of the areas from which these visitors travelled.

**Table 5 – ‘Out of Borough’ Visitors to Halton’s HWRCs**

	<b>Johnsons Lane</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Picow Farm Road</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Bolton, Manchester	5	1%	6	7%	11	2%
Chester	1	0%	6	7%	7	1%
Crewe	1	0%	5	6%	6	1%
Frodsham	8	2%	47	53%	55	11%
Liverpool	34	8%	6	7%	40	8%
St Helens	30	7%	3	3%	33	6%
Warrington	349	82%	15	17%	364	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>4%</b>

- 4.16 Members will note that the highest number of non-resident visitors to Johnson’s Lane came from Warrington. The primary reason for this is likely the proximity of the Warrington boundary to the Johnson’s Lane Centre; meaning that for some Warrington residents Halton’s Centre is closer than the nearest Warrington HWRC at Gateworth. The highest number of non-residents visiting Picow Farm Road lived in Frodsham. It was noted during the user survey that the higher proportion of Frodsham residents visiting Picow Farm Road did so on a Tuesday and a Thursday when the HWRC in Frodsham was closed.
- 4.17 The annual cost of recycling or disposing of waste deposited at the Council’s HWRCs is circa £760k. Working on the assumption that 5% of waste was deposited by non-residents would mean that the Council incurred costs of £38k for dealing with waste that should have been paid for by other Disposal Authorities and who make no financial contribution to the Council’s costs.
- 4.18 There is no legal duty on the Council to provide HWRC facilities for residents outside of its area and it follows that the Council can prohibit non-Halton residents from accessing its Centres. To help eliminate ‘cross-boundary’ use of the Council’s HWRCs, it is proposed to introduce a ‘Halton Residents Only’ access scheme. Under such a scheme, residents would be issued with a sticker that would bear their vehicle registration and which they could attach to their car window. There will be some administrative costs involved in implementing such a scheme (for which no charge could be made) however, it is anticipated that any costs will be outweighed by the savings achieved from avoiding the cost of disposing of ‘non-Halton’ waste.
- 4.19 An alternative option to providing residents with a car sticker would be to require them to provide proof of residency when they turn up at the Centre; such as showing photographic ID (such as a driving licence) or producing a valid vehicle registration document showing the vehicle registered in Halton. However, it was felt that asking Site Attendants to carry out the task of checking every visitor would be time consuming, would hinder them in carrying out their duties and cause traffic congestion. It was deemed that being able to simply observe an easily visible sticker in a car window would be much more practicable.

## Charging for Non-Household Waste

- 4.20 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 states that waste from “construction, improvement, repair, alteration or demolition works, including preparatory works” is classified as Industrial Waste. Such waste would include, but not be limited to, concrete, bricks, tiles, ceramics, soil, stones, asbestos and gypsum based materials. Under Paragraph 4 of the 2012 Regulations, a charge may be made for the disposal of these waste types.
- 4.21 The Council’s duty (under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) is solely to arrange for places to be provided at which Halton’s residents may deposit Household Waste. There is no legal duty upon the Council to accept “non-household” waste (such as those waste types referred to in paragraph 4.20) at its HWRCs. However, in acknowledging that many householders carry out small DIY projects at their home, the Council has allowed these discretionary waste types to be deposited.
- 4.22 Industrial Waste is expensive for the council to dispose of. The most significant proportion of Industrial Waste tonnage deposited at Halton’s HWRCs is Hardcore (Bricks, Soil, Rubble etc); with an average of 2,200 tonnes being deposited each year. The disposal cost alone for dealing with Hardcore is circa £45k per annum.
- 4.23 Given the high costs involved and its continuing financial pressures, the Council does have the option to cease allowing Industrial Waste and non-household waste to be deposited at its HWRCs. However, in recognition of the fact that residents do produce such waste it is proposed that the Council continue accepting these discretionary types of waste, but that a reasonable charge is levied to cover the cost of handling and disposal as is permitted under legislation. Any charges introduced would be relatively low and only apply to items not generally disposed of on a frequent basis.
- 4.24 Whilst it is being proposed to introduce a Policy of charging for all materials classified as non-household waste, the intention would be to only initially apply such charge for Hardcore; given that this is the most substantial element of Industrial Waste currently deposited at the HWRCs and brings the highest cost to the Council. Looking at how schemes work in other areas, charges are generally applied on a ‘per rubble sack’ basis. Members are advised that taking into account current costs and using comparable data from other local authorities, proposed charges would likely be in the region of £2.50 to £3.00 per standard sized rubble sack. The actual charges for disposing of Hardcore and the method of payment will be worked up subject to Executive Board approval of a charging Policy.
- 4.25 Other local authorities who have implemented charging schemes have seen the tonnage of Hardcore deposited reduce by up to 75%.



- 4.26 Whilst charging for non-household waste at HWRC's is permissible under currently legislation, the Government has expressed a view that residents should be able to dispose of household DIY waste free of charge. In the 'Litter Strategy for England', the Government stated its intention to review current guidance to make clear what can and cannot be charged for at HWRCs (including in respect of waste that arises from DIY work at households). This guidance was expected by the end of 2017 but has not yet been issued.
- 4.27 The key risks associated with the introduction of a charge for Industrial Waste are set out in Section 8 of the report.

#### Timescales for Implementation

- 4.28 Subject to PPB Members endorsement, it would be the intention for a report to be presented to the Executive Board in April recommending the adoption of the proposals set out within paragraph 4.30. If approved, the proposals would be introduced on a phased basis throughout the new financial year. Phasing the introduction of the proposals would ensure that;
- Sufficient time is available to work up each proposal in detail.
  - Sufficient time is available to develop the ICT systems and administrative processes required to operate the new schemes
  - A comprehensive communications package can be developed to ensure that members of the public are fully aware of the changes to opening hours and the new schemes that would be in place
  - Sufficient officer capacity is available to successfully manage the introduction of each new scheme
  - Any guidance issued by the Government in respect of charging for non-household waste at HWRCs can be fully considered.
- 4.29 Members will be aware that the Council's HWRCs are managed by VEOLIA Environmental Services through a long-term contract. Some of the proposals set out in this report may require formal changes being made to the current contractual arrangements and may trigger compensation payments being made to the Contractor. Any such payments will be factored into the assessing the financial advantages of the proposals. Phasing the introduction of the proposals (subject to approval) will also provide sufficient time for changes to contractual arrangements or terms and conditions of staff working at the HWRCs to be negotiated and agreed. There will also be implications for formalising the existing Inter Authority Agreement which is associated with this contract – but this will be a purely administrative exercise.

## Recommendations

4.30 Members of the Waste Topic Group; Councillors Sinnott, Nolan, Joe Roberts and Zygadlo, are thanked for their contributions to this report. Members of the Board are asked to comment upon the report and endorse that;

4.30.1 The opening hours for Halton's HWRCs be revised as set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report,

4.30.2 The current HWRC Vehicle Permit Scheme be amended as set out in paragraphs 4.13 and 4.14 of this report

4.30.3 A new 'Halton Resident Only' Policy is adopted for accessing the Council's HWRCs

4.30.4 A new Policy of charging for the deposit of 'non-household waste' items at Halton's HWRCs be adopted.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial and resource implications of the proposals contained within the report are not known at this stage. However, it is envisaged that each element will result in cost reductions.

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The proposals contained within this report would constitute changes to existing Policy or require the adoption of new Policies.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

No direct impact.

### **7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

No direct impact.

### **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

No direct impact.

### **7.4 A Safer Halton**

No direct impact.

### **7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

No direct impact.

## **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 The Key risks associated with the proposals contained within this report are as follows;

8.1.1 Introducing charges for certain waste streams at HWRCs may result in 'chargeable waste' being disposed of in the residual waste stream; although information from other local authorities suggests that even if it did, this is likely to be a small amount.

8.1.2 There is a perception that introducing charges would result in an increase in fly-tipping but there is no conclusive evidence available of a direct correlation between charges at HWRCs and fly-tipping. However, anecdotal evidence from other authorities that have implemented charging schemes, has shown no discernible long-term impact on fly-tipping that can be directly attributed to the scheme.

8.1.3 The Government could take future steps to prohibit charges from being applied for the deposit of non-household at HWRCs; meaning that any decision to approve the introduction of such charges would need to be reconsidered.

8.1.4 Failing to put in place measures to prevent non-Halton residents from depositing waste at Halton's HWRCs will result in additional costs being incurred by the Council. Introducing a 'Resident Only' access scheme and not having Halton's HWRCs open whilst neighbouring authorities' Centres are closed will help mitigate the risk of incurring these additional costs.

8.1.5 Failing to ensure that the Vehicle Permit Scheme remains fit for purpose to prevent abuse of the HWRCs by traders and those charging for collecting waste from householders will lead to increased costs being incurred by the Council.

## **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 There are no equality and diversity issues as a result of this report.

## **10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Executive Board Report 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2010 - Household Waste Recycling Centres - Vehicle Permit Scheme and Access Policy	Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes	Angela Scott