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HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES – PROPOSED CHANGES

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with details of the proposed changes being considered for Household Waste Recycling Centres in Cardiff.

**Scope of Scrutiny**

2. This item will enable Committee to pass comments to the Cabinet Member for the Environment about the proposed changes being considered for Household Waste Recycling Centres prior to them being considered at Cabinet.

**Previous Scrutiny & Background**

3. The Environmental Scrutiny Committee received an item on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 titled '2015/15 Budget Strategy – Early Consideration of Proposals – Household Waste Recycling Centres – Service Redesign'. A copy of this document has been attached to the report as **Appendix 1**.
4. In response to this item the Chair of the Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member for the Environment after the meeting. In his letter he raised a number of comments and observations including:
  - *'Members were informed that, based on current site usage statistics, demand for HWRC could be met and efficiency savings achieved through the development of two 'Super sites' at Wedal Road and Bessemer Close. The current HWRC at Waungron Road and Lamby Way would be closed in April 2014 and September 2014 respectively.'*

- *'Members are concerned that the proposals leave the eastern side of the city, currently served by the Lamby Way HWRC, without a local facility. This may result in anger from residents local to the existing sites, as there will be significant increases in their journey time to access a HWRC and it will in effect cost them more to recycle their household waste. Members of the Committee were also concerned that this will increase fly-tipping and the carbon footprint of the city as residents travel further to access one of the two new HWRC Super Sites'.*
- *'Members noted the intention to open a brand new Commercial Waste Recycling Centre at Bessemer Close to support medium size businesses and local traders. The Committee recognised that this type of service is not currently available in Cardiff but it would welcome some further analysis of how such a new facility would reduce the current misuse of the HWRCs by local businesses and how changes to the van operators' policy will potentially impact on fly-tipping rates'.*
- *'Members of the Committee wish to express their serious concerns about the communication that has taken place around these proposals. It is not acceptable for Elected Members representing the areas of Cardiff that contain HWRCs to be emailed on the same day that this item was scrutinised, and to make matters worse, not all the correct Members were captured by this communication. At the latest, Members should have been contacted when papers for this item were circulated, three clear working days before this meeting. Additionally, Members felt that this information would have been in the interest of all Elected Members, as all will have constituents who are affected by the proposed changes'.*
- *'Members feel it is imperative that these service redesign proposals are communicated to all those who will be affected, and that a Communication Plan is in place prior to the implementation of changes that outlines planned communication with all stakeholders. Members would expect such a plan to already be in place, given the launch of Phase 2 of the consultation on the Waste Strategy and the email contact received by Members regarding HWRC.*
- *'Members were concerned that surveys have shown that a high number of HWRC users travel from outside Cardiff. The Phase 1 consultations indicated that 74% of the respondents felt that HWRCs should be used by Cardiff residents only; the Committee would like clarification on how the additional staff would ensure that only Cardiff householders could use the facilities'.*

- *‘Members recognise the intention to provide increased customer service at the two HWRC Super Sites, however they were not convinced by the assertion that all site users will be meaningfully assisted and advised by staff on where their waste should go. Members request that they are provided with clearer information on the new working protocols that will be introduced for staff at HWRC, highlighting how it is anticipated this will provide an improved customer service, and detailing how this will improve the levels of pre-sort recycling and achieve the target of 80% recycling. Members would also welcome further information on the possibility of the establishment of ‘re-use’ enterprises at the two super-sites’.*
- *‘The Committee appreciates the arguments that these changes would reduce costs, and the laudable aims of achieving increased reuse, recycling and service provision for residents and businesses in Cardiff. However, Members were not convinced that the savings projections of £300k per annum and projected capital receipts for the two disposed sites were accurate’.*

5. The 2014/15 budget setting process approved a proposal which was described as Household Waste Recycling Centre Service Redesign. This was designed to save £135,000 and described as:

- **ENV10 - HWRC Service Redesign** - *This proposal is for a site redesign - moving to 2 large sites. In doing so the operating method will change to allow for three staff on site at all times and opening hours will be changed to match customer demand, this remodel will focus heavily on customer interaction on site to educate, control and enforce higher recycling, reduced landfill tax and post sorting costs.*

6. At the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 the Committee received an item titled ‘Outline Waste Management Strategy 2015 – 18’. A small part of this item made reference to Household Waste Recycling Centres. The relevant comments from the report are quoted below:

- The Household Recycling Centres achieved 65% recycling in 2013/14. A series of proposed improvements are being implemented in 2014/15 with a need to reach the 80% recycling target for the sites.
- The Welsh Government’s “collections blueprint” suggests that HWRC must achieve an 80% recycling rate if we are to achieve the statutory recycling targets of 64% by 2020.

The HWRCs achieved 65% recycling in 13/14, so there is potentially a large proportion of material (up to 5000 tonnes, with a further 1000 tonnes from new markets) that could be captured. Recycling over 80% is achievable and some high performing sites achieve over 85% recycling.

- It was felt that in order to achieve high recycling at the HWRC sites the following steps should be initiated:
  - Considering best practice design and layout, including split-level sites and efficient traffic management systems, when planning the development of the new site at Wedal Road;
  - As a result of the HWRC 2 site” re-design, it is anticipated that there will be a higher staffing levels. The council will dedicate resources to ensure that site operatives are proactive in diverting waste from landfill, directing materials into the correct skips, as well as providing helpful and useful knowledge to the site users;
  - Adapting to recycling markets, and providing recycling facilities for a range of bulky items and materials not currently recycled e.g. mattresses and carpets;
  - It has been identified that 5% of all site users are trader (businesses) that should not be using the sites and also 17% of all users do not live in Cardiff. The council must reconsider the current vehicle access policy, to ensure that only domestic site users from Cardiff are accessing the site;
  - Exploring the merits, or otherwise, of regional working to provide our HWRC facilities to residents of other local authorities. Alternatively, consider the introduction of a “permit scheme” to ensure only Cardiff residents benefit from the HWRC;
  - Invest in comprehensive training and up skilling programme for the site operatives so they can assist the customers to reuse and recycle as much as possible, plus identify and turn away those not entitled to use the sites;
  - Considering a “no bag” policy at the HWRC, to encourage users to segregate material prior to entering the site, as well as reducing contamination of mixed recycling skips;
  - Progress a re-use shop located on the new Wedal Road site ran entirely by a third party organisation, with conditions to ensure that any items deemed unsuitable for re-use are recycled;

- Improving signage around site, and on containers, to improve capture rates and reduce contamination levels;
  - Educate residents on the facilities available to them and how best to present and prepare their waste and recycling before coming to site.
- In 2014 the council supported three Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) located at Lamby Way, Bessemer Close and Wedal Road. Recycling facilities for various materials are available at all our HWRC sites which include cardboard, electrical goods, wood, garden waste, metal and much more. Sites are currently open seven days a week. Following a review of services, including public consultation, a decision was made to move to a two site model. It is anticipated that this will be implemented early 2015.
  - There are currently 17 “Bring Sites”; local drop off points located around the City, to enable residents to recycle household items such as mixed recycling, batteries and textiles.
  - The council operates commercial recycling & waste collections, currently servicing approximately 3300 customers. Customers are able to recycle the same range of dry recyclable material as householders in Cardiff. Various collection arrangements are available, changeable to the customer’s individual needs. Waste audits are arranged to assist in determining the most appropriate arrangements. In addition, a commercial waste recycling centre has recently been opened at the Bessemer Road site, to enable commercial customers to drop recycling and waste off at site.

7. The February 2015 budget setting process again made reference to Household Waste Recycling Centres. The proposal looked to save £42,000 and was described as:

- ***ENV11 - Remaining two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) with reduced operating days and hours - the proposal is that both sites will operate five days per week with reduced opening times and that they would be closed on different days enabling access to a HWRC facility seven days a week. Both facilities will open on Saturdays and Sundays to manage the busiest periods of usage at weekends. Bank holiday opening will be maintained for the same reasons. Savings are generated from different working patterns and plant and equipment resources. The proposal enables the retention of sufficient resources and the ability to achieve high recycling and***

*tonnage throughputs with customer care and education to further improve recycling rates.*

8. To support the changes line 37 in the capital programme was included in the budget papers and described as:

- *Household Waste Recycling Centres - Enable two large sites to be completed and upgraded as needed. £1.562m.*

9. In response to this item the Chair of the Committee wrote a letter to the Cabinet Member for the Environment and in it he stated that:

- *The Committee are unable to support the proposed £42,000 saving for reducing the opening times for the two Household Waste Recycling Centres. The main reasons for this are:*
  - *They believe that the disruption caused by varying the hours of the two 'part time' sites would cause uncertainty; this would result in an increase in activities like fly tipping which would create additional cost for the Council. In particular there was some concern that waste could be dumped outside the entrance of the Household Waste Recycling Centres creating a removal cost and making access to the site difficult.*
  - *At a time when we need to achieve a 58% recycling target we should avoid confusing the public as to where and when materials can be recycled. Every little helps and ultimately small measures will help the Council achieve the tough recycling target and avoid potential Welsh Government fines.*
  - *As no comprehensive traffic surveys have been completed for the sites. Members question how the Council has managed to put forward a proposal which would drive increased traffic into one site during the opening and closing overlap period between the sites. They urge you to complete a detailed traffic survey on both sites before finalising any decision.*
  - *The Committee note that a final decision for a long term operating model for Household Waste Recycling Centres will be taken before the end of this calendar year. Members of the Committee look forward to this announcement and would like to undertake pre decision scrutiny on the subject.*

10. Finally the topic was last raised at Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015 during an item titled 'Recycling Waste Strategy & Residual Waste Restricting Programme 2015'. The item made reference to Household Waste Recycling Centres in the following way:

- In 2014/15 the decision was taken to move from four to two household waste recycling centres; this was based on usage and the infrastructure space available to service future recycling needs. This process began with the closure of Waungron Road. These proposals need to be fully implemented in 2015/16 in order to deliver the savings and also drive up the sites recycling performance from just below 70% to over 80%.
- The next phase of the agreed position is to deliver the second super site and close the current Wedal Road site. The current Wedal Road site remains too small for demand and future recycling requirements. The full feasibility study has now been undertaken on the current assets; traffic flows; public consultation comments and financial profile. The most cost effective proposal identified is to develop the new super site at Lamby Way, rather than the previously identified Parks depot at Wedal Road.
- The new Lamby Way facility will compliment the existing Bessemer Close site and will ensure the City has a fairly distributed household waste recycling centre provision, which is accessible from the east and west of the city. The existing environmental permits at Lamby Way can be expanded to incorporate the new facility so accelerating the delivery time and cost of establishing the new facility. Equally, the planning constraints and traffic concerns in the surrounding residential areas of Wedal Road can be avoided.
- The Wedal Road location will not be left without some replacement facilities. To continue the Council's commitment to reuse and recycling a reuse shop and bring site facility will be provided at the current Wedal Road Parks depot. This will support the northern communities of the city to dispose of their bulkier and reusable items. Residual waste and some bulkier items will have to be taken to one of the two Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- To manage the reuse shop a community partner will be sought to lease and run the shop. This social enterprise will accept donations of household items, repair and sell items back to the community. As well as supporting the reuse agenda they will provide local jobs and training.

- The three current Household Waste Recycling Centres (Bessemer Close, Lamby Way and Wedal Road) will operate until autumn 2015 and the completion of the new site at Lamby Way. Once the new Lamby Way site is completed the current Wedal Road and old Lamby way sites will be closed leaving two large sites at Bessemer Close and Lamby Way. The reuse and recycling facility at the Parks Depot at Wedal Road will be operational in 2015.

11. During 2014 an independent study was also undertaken to establish cross boundary movements of the Household Waste Recycling Centre users. From the report it is clear that Cardiff suffers from the cross boundary influx of material from our neighbouring authorities, whilst our neighbouring authorities do not receive similar quantities from Cardiff residents. To the extent that 11% of the material we receive through our Household Waste Recycling Centres is from outside our borders; it is estimated that 17% of the tonnages received at Bessemer Close arise from the Vale. The compound impact of tonnages on our recycling performance and the operational processing burden equates to an estimated £430,000 each year.
12. Following discussions with other local authorities the preferred solution for each authority was for them to control their own waste flows directly, rather than a partnership or recharging approach. The preferred solution is to provide the service for Cardiff residents only through household confirmation checks and where a Cardiff address cannot be evidenced the customer will be directed to chargeable weighbridge. Residents from outside Cardiff can continue to use the facilities but the charge will reflect the cost to use our facilities; equally they can choose to use their own council's facilities free of charge.
13. The proposed changes to Cardiff's Household Waste Recycling Centres are due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2015. It is anticipated that the Cabinet report will propose a number of proposals for the future of Cardiff's Household Waste Recycling Centres, these should include:
  - The reconfirmation of the 2014/15 Budget Report that the planned number of Household Waste Recycling Centres will reduce from four to three to two.
  - Discuss the consultation and decision making process around deciding on a second Household Waste Recycling Centre for Cardiff, i.e. reviewing the options around the potential Wedal Road and Lamby Way sites.



- The potential introduction of seasonal opening hours. Current sites operate twelve hours per day, 363 days per year. The Council are reviewing the option of operating sites for twelve hours a day in the summer and eight hours a day in the winter when demand is lower. Implementing these opening hours would mirror the approach taken by most of the other Welsh local authorities.
- How the Council plans to expand commercial options for Household Waste Recycling Centres in Cardiff.
- Consider how Cardiff residents and those from outside the area are able to access the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

### **Way forward**

14. Councillor Bob Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for the Environment and officers from the newly formed City Operations Directorate have been invited to attend to give a presentation and to answer Members' questions.

### **Legal Implications**

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and

review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to:

- Consider the information in the report and appendix provided at the meeting;
- Decide whether they would like to make any comments to the Cabinet;
- Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015