

North Yorkshire Council

Environment Executive Members

30 October 2023

Options to revise Household Waste Recycling Centre Policies

Report of the Assistant Director - Environmental Services and Sustainability

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Executive Member for Managing Our Environment of options to amend the Household Waste Recovery Centre policies.
- 1.2 To seek approval to undertake a public engagement exercise regarding the Household Waste Recycling Centre options so that the findings are considered when the decision whether to amend the policies is taken.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) consists of 20 facilities across the county, complimented with mobile sites in hard-to-reach areas. In 2022/23 the network handled c.57,000 tonnes of waste and received 1.3 million visits.
- 2.2 This report presents information on the use of North Yorkshire's HWRCs by non-residents, the frequency of visits made by vans and trailers or 'Commercial Like Vehicles', and the receipt of chargeable trade waste; and recommends undertaking an engagement exercise to enable residents and businesses to express their views on the options under consideration.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Directorates of the Council are seeking to identify savings to help the new Unitary Authority achieve a balanced budget and to deliver efficient and effective services as part of a transformation initiative. At the same time Government has announced that charging for DIY materials at HWRCs will be abolished. Government intends to make the changes in late 2023, which means that North Yorkshire Council along with many others, will need to withdraw charging. In North Yorkshire, the loss of revenue and the expected increase in DIY materials delivered will cost circa £800,000 per annum. In response to these challenges a review of the HWRC service has been undertaken and has identified the following areas of interest:
 - Access arrangements for non-residents
 - Frequency of visits made by Commercial-Like-Vehicles (CLVs)
 - Acceptance of trade waste

4.0 REVIEW OF HWRC SERVICE

4.1 Access arrangements for non-residents

Surveys in 2015 and 2022 establish that on average 1 in 6 users or 17% are not made by North Yorkshire residents. There were 1,348,900 visits to the HWRCs in 2022/23, of which an estimated 229,300 were undertaken by out of county users. Legislation¹ requires waste

¹ Section 51, Environmental Protection Act 1990

disposal authorities to “arrange for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste” and that “each place is available for the deposit of waste free of charge by persons resident in the area”. Most neighbouring local authorities provide their HWRC networks for their own residents and seek to restrict access to North Yorkshire and other ‘out of area’ residents as set out in table 1 below:

Table 1: Restrictions in neighbouring authorities

Area	No of sites	Restriction
North Yorkshire	20	No (resident permit at 1 site)
Bradford	8	Resident permit
City of York	2	No
Cumberland/ Westmorland & Furness	14	Permit for waste type (checks address)
Durham	13	Resident Permit
East Riding	10	Resident permit & proof of address
Leeds	8	Provided for residents (booking system withdrawn)
Middlesbrough & Stockton-on-Tees	1	Booking System
Redcar	1	Booking System

- 4.1.1 Due to a high influx of non-residents from the Middlesbrough & Stockton-Tees areas, a resident only permit scheme was put in place in 2016 at Stokesley HWRC, and successfully reduced the tonnage throughput by 22%. Out of county residents can pay to dispose of their waste at Stokesley HWRC although this option is rarely taken.
- 4.1.2 Once the responses are received, there are several approaches the Council could consider including:
- Retention of existing arrangements, whereby access is regulated at only Stokesley HWRC.
 - Subject to compliance with data protection legislation, ask residents to bring proof of address when visiting the HWRCs. Staff greet cars near the entrance. If proof of address is not available, site operatives could potentially access an online postcode ‘council checker’ to ascertain if resident lives within North Yorkshire Council administrative area. This process takes seconds using existing site devices.
 - Extend the permit scheme in place at Stokesley, either paper permits or e-permits.
 - Put in place an advanced booking system, whereby residents select a date and time convenient to them at a site of their choosing. If Government withdraws the ability to charge for DIY materials, advanced booking systems are one of the few ways to regulate the frequency of visitors with DIY waste.
- 4.1.3 An options appraisal will be undertaken, to understand the benefits of each approach and the ease and convenience to residents. If a resident only access approach is progressed, all neighbouring authorities will be contacted prior to implementation to explain the introduction of a residents only policy in North Yorkshire. If there is an opportunity to consider alternative collaborative arrangements such as reciprocal arrangements whereby each local authority pays for its residents to deposit waste at a neighbouring authority’s facility, then these options will be explored at this stage.
- 4.1.4 It will be appropriate to consider fly-tipping. Whilst not directly associated with a restriction on non-residents, demand management measures at HWRCs are explored in a 2021 WRAP report “The relationship between fly-tipping rates and HWRC charging”. The WRAP report explores the relationship between fly-tipping rates and HWRC charging concluded that “Comparison of fly-tipping rates does not show that those local authorities that have introduced charges for some HWRC waste have higher fly-tipping rates than those without charges”. There is no reasonable interpretation of available evidence in North Yorkshire

between any historic changes in service provision at HWRCs and an increase in fly tipping e.g., reduction in opening hours and charges for DIY materials.

4.2 **Frequency of visits made by Commercial-Like-Vehicles (CLVs)**

North Yorkshire Council currently operates a registration scheme that requires residents with vans or pickup vehicles to pre-register with the Council before they visit a HWRC. Once registered there is no restriction on the number of times a CLV can visit. It is very difficult for site operatives to determine whether a CLV is carrying household or commercial waste. The absence of a threshold means that the council will be accepting commercial waste free of charge for which it has no obligation to do so.

4.2.1 By cross referencing vehicle details from the registration scheme with the ANPR system, we believe that 7% of CLVs visit the HWRCs more than 12 times per annum. Benchmarking with 37 local authorities shows that 87% regulate access by CLVs either through permits or advanced booking systems, with the most common limit being 12 annual visits. On this basis 12 visits per year is sufficient for most residents depositing household waste, but effective in deterring tradespersons depositing business waste. A bench marking discussion with a local authority illustrated that 99.6% of their residents do not use the full allocation of 12 permits per year, so the threshold is sufficient. We anticipate that a limit of 12 visits per year will see a reduction of 36,000 visits in vehicles designed to accommodate large payloads and volumes.

4.2.2 North Yorkshire Council currently allows trailers of unlimited size access to HWRCs, the only restriction is that agricultural vehicles are not permitted. Large trailers are challenging to manoeuvre, especially at small sites where space is at a premium and where members of the public in close proximity. The carrying capacity of large trailers is similar to CLVs – we are seeking views on limiting trailer size and where trailers are accepted, being subject to the 12 visits per year restriction. The impact of retaining the existing approach is that residents in regular size cars are impeded by those with CLVs and trailers, longer queues because of the time taken to unload these larger vehicles, and a source of conflict for site operatives when attempting to establish whether the waste is household or commercial.

4.2.3 Once the views are received, there are several approaches the Council could consider including:

- Retention of the existing registration system, which is ineffective in deterring excessive amounts of waste from being delivered.
- Introduce a permit system, either paper or e-permits, to enable owners of CLVs and trailers to apply for their permits in advance via self-serve or customer services, or the site operatives can do this on the customer's behalf.
- Introduce an advanced booking system, whereby residents choose a timeslot that is convenient to them, which assists site operatives to regulate the number of large vehicles and trailers on site at any one time. This approach will improve the customer experience for residents in regular vehicles and will help to address queues.

4.2.4 An options appraisal will be undertaken, to understand the benefits of each approach and the ease and convenience to residents.

4.3 **Acceptance of trade waste**

North Yorkshire Council currently accepts trade waste at all 20 HWRCs. Trade waste is accepted subject to a charge, but there is no weighing equipment on any of the HWRCs. Charges are levied by the site operatives estimating the volume delivered, such as the number of bags or whether the vehicle is $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or full. In reality it is very difficult for the site operatives to estimate the weight delivered and the appropriate charge, which has led to trades persons being undercharged and the Council not recovering costs. The inability to accurately quantify the weight of trade waste delivered to HWRCs is the single biggest source of confrontation faced by site operatives. Benchmarking with other authorities

shows that trade waste is not accepted unless there is a weighbridge to accurately quantify the weight and charge to customers. In tandem with the engagement exercise, the service will review the technology available and cost of procuring weighing equipment that meets the needs of UK weights and measures legislation to be able to charge by weight.

4.3.1 Once the responses are received, there are several approaches the Council could consider including:

- Retention of the existing system whereby trade waste is accepted at all HWRCs without weighing equipment.
- Assess whether purchasing weighing equipment for some/ all HWRCs is economically viable.
- Divert trade waste to existing waste disposal facilities already equipped with weighbridges.
- Do not accept trade waste. There is no obligation for the Council to accept trade waste at HWRCs and the majority of LAs benchmarked do not accept it. The unitary authority provides a trade waste collection service and meets its obligation to arrange for the collection of commercial waste. In addition to Council provided services, tradespersons can also use private waste disposal facilities.

5.0 ENGAGEMENT UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

5.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise on how the proposals would impact site users. The draft questions are listed in Appendix A. The engagement duration is likely to be 12 weeks and will help to understand the impact of the proposals, and whether to seek recommendations from the Executive and Full Council to change HWRCs policies and practices.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 The proposals contribute towards the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and deliver an efficient and effective HWRC service.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise on how the proposals would impact site users. It is desirable to understand stakeholder's views before a decision on HWRC policies is made. Alternative proposals to reduce the service were considered and not taken forward, for example providing fewer HWRC facilities and/ or reducing the number of days the sites are open.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise. The financial implications of implementing proposals will be considered should a decision be sought to implement changes to policies and practices.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 North Yorkshire Council has a duty to comply with its obligations under the Environmental Protection Act, Section 51 requires waste disposal authorities to arrange "for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and for the disposal of waste so deposited" and that "each place is available for the deposit of waste free of charge by persons resident in the area". In relation to commercial waste, section 45 requires waste collection authorities "if requested by the occupier of premises in its area to collect any commercial waste from the premises, to arrange for the collection of the waste".

9.2 The Government has announced that they will amend the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 to prevent local authorities charging for the disposal of DIY waste from small-scale projects by householders at HWRCs. The Government expects to bring these changes into force late 2023.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise. The equalities implications of implementing proposals will be considered should a decision be sought to implement changes to policies and practices.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise. The climate change implications of implementing proposals will be considered should a decision be sought to implement changes to policies and practices.

12.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The report seeks a decision to undertake an engagement exercise. The policy implications of implementing proposals will be considered should a decision be sought to implement changes to policies and practices. Outside the scope of the engagement exercise, the Council may look to amend the existing friends & family guidelines to ensure fair usage and review pedestrian access on a site-by-site basis to ensure the safety and wellbeing of site users.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Directorates of the Council are seeking to identify savings to help the new Unitary Authority achieve a balanced budget and to deliver efficient and effective services as part of a transformation initiative. The options under consideration avoid the need to reduce the service but do impact certain site users. We are seeking a decision to undertake an engagement exercise to consider those impacts before reviewing existing HWRC policies and practices.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1
- i) To inform the Executive Member for Managing our Environment of options to amend the Household Waste Recovery Centre policies.
 - ii) To seek approval to undertake a public engagement exercise regarding the Household Waste Recycling Centre options so that the findings are considered when the decision whether to amend the policies is taken.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Proposed Engagement Exercise

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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Assistant Director Environmental Services and Sustainability

Report Author – Peter Jeffreys, Head of Waste (Contracts)

Presenter of Report – Peter Jeffreys, Head of Waste (Contracts)

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A : Proposed Engagement Exercise

Share your views to help develop the household waste recycling centres across North Yorkshire

We have a legal duty to provide household waste recycling centres for residents to dispose of any additional household waste, free of charge.

We currently provide 20 household waste recycling centres (plus mobile sites) across North Yorkshire and this service, including the disposal of the waste delivered, costs more than £5 million per year.

We face many significant challenges now and the years ahead. Including the impact of inflation, increased demand for our services, climate change, and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our communities. Government also plans on scrapping charges for household DIY waste at household waste recycling centres, which will also have an impact on our budget and the services we provide.

To help make savings we are looking at various options while ensuring we maintain our frontline services.

We are therefore asking residents to share their views about changes to the following services;

- Restricting the use of the household waste recycling centres to North Yorkshire residents only
- Limiting the access for commercial-like vehicles
- Changes to commercial waste

Firstly, we would like to know a bit about you and how you use the household waste recycling centres.

1. Do you live in North Yorkshire?

- Yes
- No

2. What do you use a household waste recycling centre for?

- Disposal of household waste
- Disposal of commercial waste
- I do not use a household waste recycling centre

3. How often do you visit a household waste recycling centre?

- Once a week
- Once or twice a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year or less

4. How satisfied are you with the service you receive?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied Fairly Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

a. If you are dissatisfied, please could you elaborate.

5. Which household waste recycling centres do you normally use? (Please select all that apply)

- Burniston
- Catterick Bridge
- Harrogate (Stonefall)
- Leeming Bar
- Leyburn
- Malton and Norton
- Northallerton
- Ripon
- Seamer Carr
- Selby
- Settle
- Skipton
- Sowerby
- Stokesley
- Tadcaster
- Tholthorpe
- Thornton-le-Dale
- West Harrogate (Penny Pot Lane)
- Whitby
- Wombledon

15% of household waste recycling centre users live outside of North Yorkshire. If only North Yorkshire residents were allowed to use the household waste recycling centres, this could generate savings of approximately £140,000 per year.

6. We propose restricting the use of the household waste recycling centres to North Yorkshire residents only.

- I agree with this proposal
- I disagree with this proposal

a. Please explain why (optional)

7. Should we restrict access to North Yorkshire residents only, we propose that non-residents should pay a fee to use one of our household waste recycling centres.

- I agree with this proposal
- I disagree with this proposal

Commercial-like vehicles

93% of commercial vehicles visit less than 12 visits per year. If we limit these vehicles to 12 visits per year we could bring in savings of around £370,000 and could also reduce congestion at sites to improve the experience for everyone. It is believed that some waste being deposited from these vehicles could be commercial waste, which should be paid for.

8. We are proposing to limit the number of times per year that commercial-like vehicles can use the household waste recycling centres?

- I agree with this proposal
- I disagree with this proposal

9. We believe up to 12 visits a year per household in a commercial-like vehicle is a reasonable amount to dispose of household waste and recycling items? ([A list of items that can be accepted are available on our website](#))

- I agree with this proposal
- I disagree with this proposal

a. Please explain why (optional)

10. Do you use a trailer to bring your waste to a household waste recycling centre?

- Yes
- No

11. Cars can currently bring trailers of any size into the HWRCs. Trailers can be difficult for household waste recycling centres to deal with, especially at busy periods. Would you agree with any of the following options? (Please tick all that apply)

- Limiting the number of visits to up to 12 per year
- Restricting the times trailers can visit by using a pre-booking system
- Restricting some size of trailers

Commercial waste accepted at household waste recycling centres and whether this should be changed

Commercial waste, which is a paid for service, is currently accepted at all household waste recycling centres (except Harrogate Stonefall). Providing this service costs the council nearly £140,000 a year.

We have no legal obligation to accept commercial waste at household waste recycling centres but we understand that this is a useful service to very small businesses that operate from home in rural areas.

12. Do you think we should continue to accept commercial waste at household waste recycling centres?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you think this should be accurately weighed and paid for?

- Yes
- No

14. To accurately weigh and price commercial waste, weighing equipment could be offered at dedicated household waste recycling centres or at dedicated commercial waste disposal sites across North Yorkshire. Which option would you support?

- Dedicated weigh bridges at household waste recycling centres
- Commercial waste disposal sites across North Yorkshire, therefore reducing waiting times at household waste recycling centres

15. If you could not dispose of commercial waste at a household waste recycling centre, how else would you dispose of your waste?

- Commercial waste collection service from your premises
- Hire a skip
- Waste disposal site
- Other