

North Yorkshire County Council
Business and Environmental Services
Executive Members

14 June 2021

Household Waste Recycling Centre Service Provision

Report of Assistant Director – Travel, Environmental and Countryside Services

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services (BES) and BES Executive Member for Open to Business of the services provided at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) during the coronavirus pandemic, and to agree new ways of working once national coronavirus restrictions are removed.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Government's published roadmap to ease restrictions across England and to provide a route back to a more normal way of life suggest that limits on social contact could be removed no earlier than 21 June 2021. Whilst such easing of restrictions are subject to passing of certain tests, this is an indicative timescale for when some of the current temporary measures at HWRCs could be withdrawn.
- 2.2 When Government does ease national restrictions, the Council proposes to continue to provide a HWRCs with a 'meet and greet' approach to customer service and a limit on trailer size subject to review over a 12-month period.

3.0 Key Background Information

- 3.1 The County Council has a duty as a waste disposal authority (WDA) under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) to provide places where residents can take their household waste for disposal. The County Council fulfils this duty through the provision of 20 household waste recycling centres (HWRCs).
- 3.2 At the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020 the response of most local authorities was to close non-essential services including HWRCs. As government and industry guidance changed, North Yorkshire HWRCs reopened on a phased basis between the 6th and the 19th May 2020, with Stonefall HWRC reopening 18th June 2020.
- 3.3 Social distancing measures to protect staff and visitors enabled the sites to reopen safely, including:
- Site specific limits on the number of vehicles permitted on site
 - Large trailers (>1.8m in length) are not permitted
 - Small trailers (<1.8m in length) are permitted at 10 sites
 - Only one person is permitted out of their vehicle at a time, unless disposing of heavy or bulky items
 - Assistance cannot be given by site operatives
 - Many sites were reconfigured to reduce the number of parking bays and to minimise pedestrian movements

- 3.4 In addition to the network wide measures **Error! Reference source not found.**, further arrangements enabled the busiest site, Stonefall HWRC, to reopen safely including:
- traffic management to manage the queuing on the access road and out onto the A661,
 - exclusion of commercial customers (redirected to West Harrogate), and
 - no chargeable waste or asbestos is accepted to maximise throughput on site.

Forward Planning

- 3.5 Government's published roadmap to ease restrictions across England and to provide a route back to a more normal way of life suggest that limits on social contact could be removed no earlier than 21st June 2021. Whilst such easing of restrictions are subject to passing of certain tests (vaccination programme, effectiveness on reducing hospitalisations/ mortality and infection rates, new variants etc.), this is an indicative timescale for when some of the current temporary measures at HWRCs could be withdrawn. It is less clear however, whether the societal consequences of the pandemic will be with us in the long term. Many organisations, for example, are looking at their previous office based working practices and see benefits of agile working. A higher degree of home working is likely to be responsible for more people visiting the HWRCs during the pandemic and is set to continue, so whilst social distancing may no longer be required changes to the HWRCs service may still need consideration.
- 3.6 Despite social distancing measures being in place, the HWRC network has received 60,000 more visits in 2020/21 compared to the same period the previous year. The waste service and Yorwaste have been looking at options, both short and long term, to ensure the HWRCs are able to meet increased demand. The immediate priority however, is to continue to provide the following service standards when national restrictions are lifted in order that continuity of service for residents is maintained.

- **Retention of meet and greet.** Meet and greet was introduced during the pandemic to control the number of vehicles on site. Customer advice at the site entrance includes the site layout and the facilities available to reuse, recycle and compost their waste in order to increase performance and to promote the efficient delivery of waste materials. It is not envisaged that meet and greet will be implemented at quiet sites, where visitor numbers do not justify this approach.

To implement meet and greet approach and avoid affecting staffing numbers, Yorwaste will *'provide assistance where needed unless staff are engaged with other duties such as health and safety matters'*. The precise wording is critical to achieve the desired level of customer service. The Yorwaste Agreement defines a minimum standard of active assistance as:

'actively assisting Customers with the deposit of their Waste by requesting whether a customer requires assistance, physical collection from the Customer or their vehicle, physical separation and assistance in the deposit of waste into such containers as required' and

'actively separating/retrieving recyclable waste and encouraging Customers to recycle their waste'.

The proposed approach is not active assistance, rather assistance where needed or required. Site operatives will still provide assistance where it is required/asked for, but will not assist each customer. Operatives will wear hi-viz with 'We're here to help, just ask' type messaging to encourage residents to request assistance where needed. It is acknowledged that it is a fine line in finding the right balance between being overly prescriptive and using common sense and sound judgement. To ensure an appropriate and measured approach to customer assistance, it is proposed to implement the meet and greet system on a 12 month trial and to review customer feedback at regular intervals prior to consideration of a formal, long term change to contract clauses within the Yorwaste Agreement.

- **Trailers.** There were no limits on the size of trailers prior to the introduction of temporary covid-19 measures (except Wombledon HWRC that could not accept trailers due to its size). In practice, large agricultural trailers could deliver huge volumes of household waste potentially filling a skip and preventing access to other residents. Since the introduction of a temporary 1.8 metre limit there have been 6 complaints concerning this rule. Yorwaste suggest that maintaining a limit improves the safety of site users by ensuring that large trailers are not reversing and manoeuvring in confined spaces.

Yorwaste have undertaken site by site assessments and consider that trailers limited by size could be accepted at 15 HWRCs excluding Malton, Tadcaster, Leyburn and Settle in addition to Wombledon. The creation of parking bays at some sites for residents with trailers will permit meet and greet staff to control the number of trailers on site at any one time.

The waste service reviewed other local authorities' approaches to trailers at HWRCs. There is no common or standardised approach, however many do limit trailer size. A common trailer size to purchase is 6 feet or 1.86 metre in length. The Council proposes a 2 metre limit to avoid unnecessary disruption to residents. Residents with a trailer exceeding 2 metres in length (internal dimension) will be informed of their options including to return with the waste in a permitted vehicle or smaller trailer, find alternative means of disposal such as charity collections/ shops, or to utilise the charged for bulky waste collection services provided by the district and borough councils.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None at this stage. The Council will amend contract clauses if the proposed changes are permanent.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 Protected groups receive assistance. The Council will continue to provide residents with an on line service to make a prior arrangement with Yorwaste to ensure those who require assistance receive it. At present, this service is not widely utilised. An EIA screening has been carried out and whilst there may be some impact on some protected characteristics, the mitigations proposed are felt sufficient to alleviate any foreseeable issues that may arise. It will be however be monitored over the next 12 months and if any further changes are required, Members will be advised. See Appendix A.

7.0 Climate Impact

7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse climate change impacts arising from the recommendation. A Climate Change Impact Assessment is included as Appendix B of this report.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The HWRC service has coped with increased visitor numbers at a time when social distancing measures have limited onsite capacity. Despite this challenge, new ways of working have helped meet demand. Continuing with a meet and greet approach and a limit on trailer size on a 12 month trial basis from when social distancing measures are lifted, will enable a full and detailed review into their effectiveness and allow the waste service to explore further short and long term measures.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Director BES and BES Executive Member for Open to Business note the contents of this report, and agree when national coronavirus restrictions are removed, to continue to provide the HWRCs with a 'meet and greet' approach to customer service and a limit on trailer size subject to review.

Michael Leah
Assistant Director – Travel, Environmental and Countryside Services

Author of Report: Peter Jeffreys, Head of Waste.

Background papers: None

Initial equality impact assessment screening form	
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.	
Directorate	BES
Service area	Waste Management, TECS
Proposal being screened	New ways of working at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) once Covid restrictions are removed.
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Kerry Green
What are you proposing to do?	<p>Government has published roadmap to ease Coronavirus restrictions across England and to provide a route back to a more normal way of life and this suggests that limits on social contact could be removed no earlier than 21st June 2021. Whilst such easing of restrictions are subject to passing of certain tests, this is an indicative timescale for when some of the current temporary measures at HWRCs could be withdrawn.</p> <p>When Government does ease national restrictions, the Council proposes to continue to provide a HWRC service with a 'meet and greet' approach to customer service and a limit on trailer size subject to review over a 12-month period.</p>
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	The HWRC service has coped with increased visitor numbers at a time when social distancing measures have limited onsite capacity. Despite this challenge, new ways of working have helped meet demand. Continuing with a meet and greet approach and a limit on trailer size on a 12 month trial basis from when social distancing measures are lifted, will enable a full and detailed review into their effectiveness and allow the waste service to explore further short and long term measures.
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No. Meet and greet staff will be repurposed from their pre-covid job requirement of providing active assistance to all visitors. This will now be assistance where required, and so can be absorbed within the existing staff operative numbers.
<p>Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics</p> <p>As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? • Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? • Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 	

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age	Possibly		
Disability	X		
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity	X		
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
NYCC additional characteristics			
People in rural areas	X		
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	X	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	<p>The 2m size restrictions on trailers is an easing of the limits currently in place. So whilst rural citizens may be more likely to own a trailer the increase in size from 1.8m to 2m will enable easier access. It is proposed that the trailer size limit is trialled for 12 months so any complaints and comments will be recorded and kept under review to inform the longer term decision.</p> <p>A change from active assistance to assistance when required may impact on customers with disability, pregnancy, or age related issues, but as assistance will still be provided on request, they are not adversely impacted on a permanent basis, and mitigations are in place.</p>		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Michael Leah		
Date	7 June 2021		



Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission

Environmental Impact Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	New ways of working at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) once Covid restrictions are removed.
Brief description of proposal	Government has published roadmap to ease restrictions across England and to provide a route back to a more normal way of life and this suggests that limits on social contact could be removed no earlier than 21st June 2021. Whilst such easing of restrictions are subject to passing of certain tests, this is an indicative timescale for when some of the current temporary measures at HWRCs could be withdrawn. When Government does ease national restrictions, the Council proposes to continue to provide a HWRC service with a 'meet and greet' approach to customer service and a limit on trailer size subject to review over a 12-month period.
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services
Service area	Waste Management
Lead officer	Kerry Green
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	n/a
Date impact assessment started	June 2021

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

At the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020 all of the 20 HWRCs were closed. As the Government and industry guidance changed on what constituted an essential service, North Yorkshire's HWRCs reopened on a phased basis in May and June with a range of social distancing measures in place to protect staff and the public. These measures included site specific limits on vehicle numbers permitted on site, restrictions on the size of trailers allowed and which sites they could access, site reconfiguration and removal of assistance by site operatives. Alongside this a meet and greet system took effect at the gate to control access and vehicle flow and to provide information on revised practices at the site to visitors.

Despite social distancing measures being in place, the HWRC network has received 60,000 more visits in 2020/21 compared to the same period the previous year. The waste service and its contractor have been looking at options, both short and long term, to ensure the HWRCs are able to meet increased demand. The immediate priority however is to establish service standards when national restrictions are lifted in order that continuity of service for residents is maintained.

As a result, the meet and greet system is proposed to be maintained with a change to assistance where required or needed, rather than a pre-covid approach of active assistance. The other change is in respect of trailer sizes. There were no limits on the size of trailers prior to the introduction of temporary covid-19 measures (except Wombledon HWRC that could not accept trailers due to its size). When the HWRC were reopened it was with the introduction of a temporary 1.8 metre limit on internal measurements of trailers. The waste service has done a review of other local authorities' approaches to trailers at HWRCs and whilst there is no common or standardised approach, many do limit trailer size. A common trailer size to purchase is 1.86m length and so we propose to introduce a limit on 2m internal length, with trailers allowed at 15 sites (and excluded from Wombledon, Malton, Tadcaster, Settle and Leyburn due to the small footprint of those sites).

There may be other longer term changes to HWRC service provision in the future and these will be subject to further Member reports and climate assessments at the relevant time. This assessment considers the impacts of only these two changes.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

This proposal will be cost neutral as the meet and greet staff are included within the existing HWRC management fee.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel			X	There may be an increase in people having to travel further to access a HWRC that does accept trailers when they might live closer to a site that cannot allow trailer access.	We will monitor the level of complaints arising because of the trailer restrictions over the period of the 12 month trial and include this in the evaluation of a long term approach.	Allowing trailers at the larger sites will increase throughput of customers at the site, leading to reduced traffic congestion and associated emissions from queuing.
	Emissions from construction		X		Not applicable (no construction is envisaged through this proposal)	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		It is not envisaged that the running of buildings will change through this proposal.	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Other						
Minimise waste : Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic		X					
Reduce water consumption		X					

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>			X	<p>There may be an increase in traffic movements to HWRCs further away from the citizen's home address.</p>	<p>Keep complaints under review</p>	
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X				
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		X				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>						

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

The waste service regularly engages with best practice organisations such as NAWDO, LARAC, CIWM, APSE, ADEPT and WIDP to ensure that best practice environmental standards are considered and adopted where practicable. WISH has also been instrumental in devising safe operating practices for HWRCs during the Covid pandemic and we will continue to follow their guidance when it is updated.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The proposal may have a slight adverse impact on traffic movements and distances that citizens have to travel to use a HWRC with a trailer. We will keep this under review (using complaint levels) and will also work with the contractors to investigate options for reconfiguring sites to allow greater turning space for trailers in the longer term.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Kerry Green
Job title	Contracts and Compliance Manager (waste)
Service area	Waste Management, TECS
Directorate	BES
Signature	Kerry Green
Completion date	7/6/2021

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Michael Leah, Assistant Director – Travel, Environment and Countryside Services

Date: 7 June 2021