# REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

# 13 JUNE 2019

# HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES: RESPONSE TO KENT COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY CHANGE


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**Summary**

To update the Committee on Medway's response to the introduction of charges for DIY waste at the Kent County Council (KCC) Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).


## 1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 This report impacts on the Council's core values: putting our customers at the heart of everything we do; giving value for money and providing a clean and green environment.

1.2 The HWRC network supports the Council's Waste Strategy that, in turn, provides the basis for targets in performance and service plans. The primary objectives are to:

- Ensure compliance with statutory duties
- Meet statutory performance targets
- Ensure continuity of a front line service
- Provide services within agreed budgets
- Meet requirements to achieve efficiency gains
- Provide environmentally sustainable services.

## 2. Background

2.1 Medway Council and KCC have had a cross-border agreement in place for a number of years, meaning KCC residents can use Medway HWRCs. A charge is made to KCC to offset the cost for providing this service.

2.2 In February 2019, KCC cabinet took the decision to restrict quantities of some materials and charge residents to dispose of DIY waste (rubble and hardcore, plasterboard and soil) from 3 June 2019 at all of their HWRCs.

2.3 Medway Council will not be imposing any charges or restrictions on any waste materials disposed of through Medway's HWRC network.

2.4 Due to the historic cross-boundary agreement, changes or restrictions of usage at KCC sites have had a significant financial and operational impact on Medway's HWRC network with Cuxton being the most affected. This was clearly evidenced through the impact of Pepperhill closure due to fire for 16 weeks during Spring/Summer 2018 where Medway's sites saw:

- A 15% increase in operational and disposal costs for this period
- A 13% increase in waste tonnages through sites
- Overall KCC resident usage surveyed at 35% averaged across all three sites (up from 18% during a standard survey)
- Significant pressure at Cuxton HWRC where KCC usage was surveyed at 53% (up from 36% during standard survey)
- 17 occasions of site closure at Cuxton due to insufficient bin capacity and safety concerns on the A228 from customers driving into oncoming traffic to bypass queues:

2.5 Following KCC's decision to charge; a new cross-boundary payment has been agreed for 2019/20. KCC residents will now be allowed to continue to use Medway's sites free of charge, with all costs for KCC waste being paid to Medway Council by KCC; Medway will not be subsiding Kent usage of Medway's HWRC sites.

2.6 The new fee negotiated with KCC is in place for the current financial year 2019/20. Negotiations will begin in November for any extension of the cross border agreement for 2020/21.

2.7 The 2019/20 fee has been charged to KCC in advance and includes:

- Disposal costs at 28% average KCC usage threshold
- Operational costs at 28% average KCC usage threshold (previously operational costs have not been part of the cross border charge)

2.8 KCC resident usage will be closely monitored through the new on site ID check. Should usage or tonnages increase above the 28% throughput threshold in place or the impact on the sites become unsustainable then this will be re-negotiated with KCC.

2.9 KCC have agreed to an increase in cross border charge should the throughput thresholds be exceeded.

## 3. Options

3.1 The following options were considered:

3.2 **Option 1 – Do nothing**
Continue to allow all residents from Medway and KCC into sites and tolerate the burden of additional throughput from KCC residents avoiding charges.

3.3 **Option 2 – Implement a Medway Council tax payers residents only scheme**
Restrict Medway HWRCs to Medway residents only in line with KCC go live of 3 June 2019, requiring residents to provide proof of residency at every visit to gain entry (such as a recent council tax bill or photo card drivers licence).

3.4 **Option 3 – Charge KCC residents to use Medway sites**
Allow KCC residents to use Medway HWRCs for a charge, which is applied to the resident at point of access.

3.5 **Option 4 – Renegotiate the KCC cross-boundary agreement**
Continue with the KCC cross boundary agreement and ensure Medway is fully compensated for use of facilities by Kent residents.

## 4. Advice and analysis

4.1 **Option 1 – Do nothing**
From analysis of the Pepperhill closure impact there is evidence of significant financial and operational risks for Medway. Doing nothing was not an option.

4.2 **Option 2 – Implement a Medway council tax payers residents only scheme**
This option would entail:

- Work to be carried out on the entrances of all three HWRC's to include traffic management, meet and greet shelters and automatic barriers.
- Staff to check residents are from Medway and allow access to the sites.
- Refusing access to any non-Medway residents and put in place a turning circle to enable these users to be removed from site with minimum impact on traffic flow.

4.3 **Option 3 – Charge Kent residents to use Medway sites**
For this option to be viable, alongside all the changes in option 2, a remote payment system would also be needed. Due to the limited space at the HWRCs, the tight timeframe and the additional queuing that would be caused by taking a payment, it was not possible at this time to offer a payment option to Kent residents. This option could be explored in the future but the sites would need extensive redevelopment to accommodate the high KCC resident throughputs we have seen in the past.

4.4 **Option 4 – Renegotiate the KCC cross-boundary agreement**
This option would still require the works detailed in option 2, but KCC would recompense Medway for the use of the facilities by its residents. All site users would still be stopped at the entrance and records taken of postcode and house number. This will enable Medway to monitor usage by non-Medway

residents and ensure full recompense is given for site usage. This was the most pragmatic way forward.

## 5. Risk management

| Risk | Description | Action to avoid or mitigate risk | Risk rating |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial | Non-Medway residents use Medway's free, unrestricted services to avoid the KCC charges. | Implement a direct charge to Non-Medway residents.<br><br>Prevent Non-Medway residents using Medway sites. | B2<br><br>C2 |
| Operational | The sites have to close more frequently to handle increased tonnages from non-Medway residents avoiding KCC charges. | Extend operational working hours to manage waste volumes.<br><br>Implement a direct charge to Non-Medway residents.<br><br>Prevent non-Medway residents using Medway sites. | C3<br><br>B2<br><br>C2 |
| Reputational | Long delays and traffic queuing from directly charging KCC residents.<br><br>Medway residents dissatisfied at longer waits due to ID check. | Prevent non-Medway residents using Medway sites.<br><br>Additional staff to manage ID checks.<br><br>Thorough communications campaign.<br><br>Implement an 'E-Permit scheme' giving automatic access to residents through ANPR system. | C2<br><br>D2<br><br>D2<br><br>E3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Flytipping | Disgruntled residents from either Medway or KCC flytip around site entrances after being refused access. | Thorough communications campaign.<br><br>Working closely with Enforcement team to manage flytipping incidents.<br><br>Ensure flytipping is responded to and removed quickly. | D2<br><br>C2<br><br>C2 |
| Staff harassment | Disgruntled residents become abusive to meet and greet staff. | Security guards with body-worn CCTV cameras to be deployed for initial 3 month period to manage incidents of aggression.<br><br>Future meet and greet staff to be trained to deal with aggressive behaviour.<br><br>Incidents of aggression to be monitored and appropriate action taken. | |

## 6. Consultation

6.1. The changes required on site are operational, not service delivery related, so there is no change to the service and hence no requirement to consult residents. The requirement to provide ID for each visit is an indirect impact on the sites in relation to an imposed KCC policy change and is there to protect assets and service offered to Medway council tax payers.

6.2 A comprehensive communications campaign has been implemented to ensure residents are aware of changes to accessing the site. This includes site signage, leaflets, social media, web pages, radio adverts, posters in local access points and more.

6.3 KCC have been kept informed about our response to their changes throughout the process.

## 7. Financial implications

7.1 To ensure Medway can manage the potential impact of KCC policy change a number of site infrastructure works have been necessary.

7.2 In his Budget Speech to Full Council on 21 February, the Leader allocated funding for these works with £133,000 of capital funding and £122,000 of revenue for Civic Amenity Site Improvements added to the 2019/20 budget. In addition £88,000 of funding has been secured through Section 106 Agreements.

7.3 Capital site infrastructure ground works have been identified including:

- Traffic management at main entrances to allow vehicles to exit
- Removal of grass banks and verges at Capstone and Gillingham to provide additional storage space due to traffic management
- Meet and greet cabins.

7.4 Additional staffing and a communications campaign include:

- Temporary meet and greet security staff for an initial 3 month period while service changes bed in
- Permanent meet and greet staff
- Communications campaign.

7.5 Based on 28% usage of the sites by KCC residents, the recharge value has been calculated at £675,000. This figure will be reviewed as per section 2.8 above.

## 8. Legal implications

8.1 There is no legal duty on Medway Council to provide HWRCs to KCC residents.

8.2 Section 51 (1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the waste disposal authority to provide a place for the deposit of household waste, free of charge, for residents of its area.

8.3 Section 51 (3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 states that the waste disposal authority may also take waste (household, commercial or industrial) from persons outside of the area for a charge as determined by the authority.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is requested to note that no charges will be made to Medway residents for using Medway HWRCs. Our sites will continue to be accessible to all Kent resident from 3 June 2019 as detailed in option 4 of this report, until such a time as KCC have built their new facility; likely to be within a period of 12-18 months.

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## Appendices

None

## Background papers

None