

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure

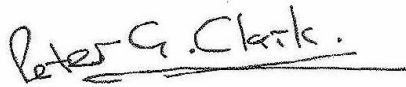
***Tuesday, 4 September 2012 at 2.00 pm
County Hall, New Road, Oxford***

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 12 September 2012 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public



Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

August 2012

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Note: Date of next meeting: 17 October 2012

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. **Declarations of Interest**

2. **Questions from County Councillors**

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am on the working day before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. **Petitions and Public Address**

4. **Van and Trailer Permit Scheme Second Annual Review** (Pages 1 - 10)

Forward Plan Ref: 2012/040

Contact: Andrew Pau, Head of Waste Management Tel: (01865) 815867

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning) (**CMDGI4**).

Division(s): N/A

CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE - 4 SEPTEMBER 2012

VAN AND TRAILER PERMIT SCHEME SECOND ANNUAL REVIEW

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning)

Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) currently provides seven household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) in Oxfordshire. These are provided for Oxfordshire residents to recycle and dispose of their household waste.
2. The van and trailer permit scheme was specifically introduced to control trade waste abuse and make sure that only household waste is deposited at the HWRC's. Householders who are owners of commercial-type vehicles or of trailers 1.8m – 3m long can apply for a free permit for a specified number of visits, allowing them access. Traders with trade waste are not issued permits and therefore prevented from using the HWRCs. The scheme was approved by the Cabinet Member for Growth and on 15 July 2010 and formally introduced on 1 November 2010.
3. The first review of the scheme was approved by the Cabinet Member on 31 August 2011 and the changes approved in that review have been implemented.
4. This report provides the second review of the scheme and outlines progress to date. Annex 1 sets out a series of amendments in light of issues that have arisen in the course of the year.

Progress to date

5. Oxfordshire residents have responded magnificently to our waste reduction and recycling initiatives and the county has one of the best recycling rates in the country, with a county wide recycling rate of over 60% for 2011/12. Once final figures are ratified, we expect Oxfordshire to rank nationally as the best County Council for recycling and composting. We are also very good at not producing waste and for 2010/11 had the lowest waste arisings per person of any County Council.
6. Since the introduction of the van and trailer permit scheme, all of the HWRCs have seen reductions in the amount of waste deposited. Across the sites there has been a 13% decrease in waste deposited, this equates to approximately 8,000 tonnes, a decrease from 61,000 to 53,000 tonnes in total. The total

numbers of visits across all sites has also reduced significantly, by over 8%, from 1.2 million to 1.1 million visits per annum.

7. There is no evidence to suggest fly tipping has increased as a direct result of the scheme and the Waste Management Group (WMG) continues to monitor the situation and work closely with other authorities and officers within the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP). Fly tipping overall, comparing 2010/11 to 2011/12, has reduced by 5% from 2806 to 2665 cases per annum.
8. The total number of permits approved since scheme inception is over 16,000 (2.55% of the population of Oxfordshire). There was an initial flurry for permits when the scheme started but this has since settled down, with 5,000 of the total number of permits being issued between June 2011 and May 2012. This coupled with the reduction in tonnages through the sites shows that the scheme is well established, effective and that the limit of 12 visits has proved to be appropriate and workable.

Customer Satisfaction

9. There have been 24 recorded complaints regarding the scheme between June 2011 and May 2012, of which 7 were formal complaints. They related to such issues as being unaware of the scheme, disagreeing with the scheme or aspects of the policy, discrimination against owners of commercial-type vehicles and arriving on site without a permit. The number of complaints compared to the number of permits issued is considered to be very small. Where appropriate, points raised in these complaints have been considered as part of this review.
10. Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out annually at the HWRCs. The most recent surveys carried out in June 2012 at all seven HWRCs show a very high percentage of overall satisfaction across a number of categories.
11. Customers with a permit were specifically asked if they had any comments about the scheme. Only two customers complained that it did not allow them enough visits and that they did not consider their vehicle to be a 'commercial-type'. Most customers reported that they found the scheme easy to use and that it had not restricted their ability to use the HWRCs.
12. It is recognised that the good work undertaken by the site staff has contributed significantly to the success of the scheme. It is unfortunate that there have been instances of abuse of site staff by members of the public specifically relating to the permit scheme. HWRC visitors who are registered on the Council's permit scheme and are suspected of the abuse of site staff can be traced and subsequently contacted and this has proven successful on a number of occasions.
13. A procedure has been developed to deal with incidents of abuse of site staff in partnership with Thames Valley Police and CANAcT (Crime And Nuisance Action Team). CANAcT are based in Oxford and were formed in 2001 in the

light of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, with a specific remit to address issues of anti-social behaviour within the community.

14. A trial commenced on Thursday 19 July 2012 at Redbridge HWRC with the intention to roll out to all sites if successful and with buy in from other police officers across the county. Other regional CANAcT officers are affiliated to each district in the county so the intention is to establish links to all the teams to make sure each HWRC is covered.
15. During the review period, new CCTV equipment has been installed at all 7 sites and CCTV footage can be used as evidence to support the above procedure where available if and as required.
16. Going forward, WMG will carry out two annual customer surveys in order to gather feedback to meet the Council's new customer satisfaction key performance indicator (KPI 4 – '% of customer satisfaction of Waste Recycling Centre'). This will also include questions on the permit scheme so that WMG can monitor how easy customers find the scheme to use and to obtain further feedback.

Financial Savings

17. As a result of decreasing visits and tonnage and as a consequence of the permit scheme, savings of around £350,000 have been achieved; with over £250,000 being attributable to the scheme, with the remainder related to changes in the provision of collection services by Oxfordshire's District Councils.
18. There have been over 2,000 telephone calls from Oxfordshire residents to the van and trailer permit scheme dedicated telephone line since that service went live on 1 December 2011. The calls mainly related to how permits were acquired or the reason for the scheme introduction. These were initially covered by a temporary assigned administrator, but are now undertaken within the Waste Support Team at 0.3 Full Time Equivalent.

Conclusion

19. The permit scheme is now an established and successful system that has deterred trade abuse and delivered a reduction in tonnages through the sites. Significant savings have been delivered as a result. The scheme has not caused an increase in fly tipping and the number of complaints has been low. The Council continue to listen to the site users and always seek to improve by implementing suggestions where possible.

RECOMMENDATION

20. **The Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure is RECOMMENDED to**
- (a) approve the detailed amendments to the Van and Trailer Permit Scheme as set out in Annex 1 to this report;**
 - (b) authorise the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy and Infrastructure Planning) to make changes to the permit scheme as deemed necessary in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure;**
 - (c) conduct a third review of the Scheme when appropriate and not longer than 3 years from the date of this report**

MARTIN TUGWELL

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Strategy and Infrastructure Planning)

Background papers:

Van and Trailer Permit Scheme Policy

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August 2012

Annex One – Policy amendments

I. ALL references to commercial vehicles within relevant documentation should read: 'Commercial-type vehicles'.

A complaint was received regarding of the use of the phrase “and/or” in the Van and Trailer Scheme Policy in relation to what constitutes a commercial or commercial-type vehicle. The wording was reviewed and with the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure, Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale the policy was subsequently revised in February 2012 from:

'Commercial vehicles are defined as those that are designed to carry goods, not people. They have no rear windows and/or no rear seats, and/or an open back, or a back, which is separate to the main cab area'

to:

'Commercial-type vehicles are any vans or towed trailers that are designed to carry goods, not people. This includes vehicles with any of the following: no rear windows (this means rear windows which are side-facing); no rear seats; an open back; a back which is separate to the main cab area'

In order that consistency is maintained throughout with regard to the definition of these vehicles and to avoid any perceived inference that a vehicle may be being used for commercial purposes when it is not, all references to commercial vehicles within relevant documentation should read: 'commercial-type vehicles'.

II. Householders who arrive at site in a commercial-type vehicle or towing a trailer without a permit but are only carrying a single item for disposal.

A common sense approach will be taken. Site operatives will telephone the Council's Service Development Officer or Waste Contracts Officer in this instance to seek approval. The householder's details will be taken over the phone and any future permit application will have this visit removed from their permit.

The Council will keep a record of vehicles which have been allowed to deposit waste under these circumstances in case a site user is attempting to abuse the system.

The wording above allows for entry to householders with only one item in a commercial-type vehicle or trailer to deposit without a permit in instances where they have not heard of the scheme or have forgotten their permit. This was considered as part of the first review and rejected at that time. However it has continued to be a problem for a number of residents visiting the sites and

therefore the 'common sense approach' originally proposed has been trialled whereby site operatives use their judgement or will telephone the Council's WMG to seek approval for the visitor to use the facility. The householder's details are recorded for any future permit application and a visit subsequently removed from that permit.

WMG keep a record of vehicles which have been allowed to deposit waste under these circumstances in case a site user is attempting to abuse the system. The trial has worked well and has enhanced customer service and reduced the potential for and number of complaints.

III. Trailers of any size are not permitted to be towed onto site using a commercial-type vehicle

This wording appears within the 'frequently asked questions' section of the Council's Waste and Recycling webpages. It is also contained within the Council's Waste Acceptance Policy. It should be specifically recorded within the Van and Trailer Permit Scheme Policy. The reason for the restriction is to allow safe access of the site.

IV. Only mini-buses under 3.5 tonnes laden and no longer than 5.8 metres (19 ft) in length, will be allowed access to the site and will not require a permit.

A people carrier is not classified as a mini bus.

Mini buses are not allowed to tow trailers onto the HWRC sites.

The current policy does not allow mini-buses over 3.5 tonnes laden on to the HWRC's at all due to issues with safe access of the site and that should be maintained.

However, mini-buses less than 3.5 tonnes laden with 11 seats or less are allowed on to the site but require a permit.

A key element of the methodology for considering whether or not a vehicle is of a commercial-type and needs a permit is whether they are designed or have been modified to carry people and not goods and it is therefore considered mini-buses under 3.5 tonnes laden, but no longer than 5.8 metres (19 ft) in length, will not require a permit. The reason for the restriction on length and on towing trailers is to allow safe access of the site.

The wording in italics above should be recorded within the policy and all references throughout the policy relevant to mini-buses amended accordingly.

CMDGI4

Due to the structure of the Van and Trailer Scheme database, it is not possible to identify all current mini-bus permit holders. Existing mini-bus permit holders will therefore be informed of the change to the policy by site staff when they visit the site.

V. The permit scheme is made 'paperless' through the issuing of permits electronically, emails are sent to householders and if they wish to print their own permit they can at home.

The scheme is to be enhanced to establish a predominantly paperless scheme as set out within Annex 2 of this report.

August 2012

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Annex 2 – Van and Trailer Permit Scheme - Paperless System Update

A system to apply for, renew and issue permits was developed by the Council's ICT Services Team which are printed out and posted to customers.

The permitting scheme was formally reviewed by the Council's Waste Management Team in 2011 and the recommendations from the review were approved under Delegated Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure on 31st August 2011.

One recommendation was to introduce a paperless system for administering the scheme by issuing permits electronically via emails sent to the customer. Anyone who applied online would no longer be sent a physical paper permit but could print it out themselves if they so choose.

A paper permit can still be provided for customers without internet access or email although the permit format will change so visits aren't marked off. Site operatives will be able to notify the customer of the number of visits remaining on their permit from the electronic record.

The intention is that the system should be developed in house by ICT Deployment Team, and specified and tested by the Waste Management Team.

The record of visits would be maintained by the site staff recording visits as they currently are with the Blackberry devices. The computer record would become the 'official' record.

On each anniversary of the issue date of the application, the system will automatically reset the visit limit for a user to twelve. This alleviates the need for a separate renewal process. On the second consecutive automatic renewal, where no visits have been used, the permit will automatically expire.

The expected business and customer benefits are:

- to reduce the time and cost of issuing and posting paper permits – there is a reduced admin resource needed to manage this process
- to respond to customer preference - only 8% of customers now apply for the permits using paper applications
- to reduce discrepancies and disputes arising from having two records of visits made – one on customer's paper permit and another on the electronic system
- to improve customer service by providing customers the opportunity to check their balance of remaining visits online or by email
- to improve customer service by enabling the database to update customers by email with their usage and current balance (optional)
- to improve customer service by removing the potential for permits to become lost (because the database holds up to date details of the permit number and balance of visits remaining)

CMDGI4

Consideration will be given as to the possibility of incorporating technologies such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and Quick Response (QR) codes.

Further consideration will be required with regard to the possibility of extending system use to cater for Schedule ii permits as a variant or 'bolt-on'. Although there are some similarities with the main Van and Trailer Permit system, there are also significant differences which make it difficult to apply certain rules. For example a single organisation may use multiple vehicles, be located in a commercial address, or be operating a commercial business within a non-commercial building (e.g. a café within a church).

The aim is to implement a paperless system within six months of the date of the report.

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