

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**

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Background papers:

Van and Trailer Permit Scheme Policy

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