

Divisions Affected – ALL

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

22 FEBRUARY 2024

KEY DECISION - CESSATION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE SUMMER THURSDAY LATE NIGHT OPENING

Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the cessation of late-night summer opening at Household Waste Recycling Centres on Thursdays from 1 April 2024**

Executive Summary

- 2. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) are open 362 days/year (shut Christmas day, Boxing Day, and New Years Day) from 8am to 5pm each day. There has been a long-standing arrangement that during the summer months (April – September) sites will remain open to 8pm on a Thursday. In the context of wider service and usage these extended hours are not well used; repeated communications through a variety of channels have promoted the service, but it remains underutilised. As part of the corporate approach to deliver authority wide savings it is proposed that late night opening is stopped in 2024 and a saving of £27k is used to meet pressures elsewhere in the service.**

Background

- 3. Late night summer opening on a Thursday from 5-8pm at all HWRCs has been a long-standing arrangement, but despite this it is very underused. Traffic telemetry shows that HWRCs receive over 1 million visits each year. Around 2% of these visits are during late night opening, this can be averaged at around 20 visits/hour/site during 5-8pm. However, on a number of weeks some sites have reported single numbers of visits across all hours and most sites most weeks reporting under 20 per hour.**
- 4. Sites have capacity to accept an average of 77 visits/hour, meaning they are only operating at around a quarter capacity even when slightly busier on late night opening but at many times and across some sites very much lower still.**

These visits are often condensed into the first 1.5hrs, meaning 6:30-8 is often very quiet.

5. Late night opening is promoted on the 'Waste Wizard' (online look up tool that details how residents can manage their waste) on OCCs website and at site. Through the resident satisfaction survey, we know that up to 90% of those asked use the website to check site opening hours, so we can conclude lack of usage is not due to residents being unaware of the service. In recent years concerted efforts have been made to increase late night usage; a social media campaign has been run for the past two years, with paid posts to promote late night opening on Facebook, X/Twitter and Google ads. These efforts have not resulted in any significant increase in visitors to sites between 5pm and 8pm.
6. As part of the ongoing efforts by the directorate to deliver authority wide savings, it is proposed that late night summer opening (due to start on 1 April 2024) is stopped. This will result in contractual savings of £27k/year which can be used to meet pressures elsewhere in the service (such as costs resulting from the changing legislation around DIY charging).

Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. Opening hours are detailed in Oxfordshire County Councils' 'Waste Acceptance Policy'. This has been updated to reflect the proposed change and is attached in Annex 1. If this proposal is approved, the updated document will be uploaded to the website.
8. As well as changes related to the proposed cessation of summer late night opening, the Waste Acceptance Policy attached has also been updated to reflect legislation changes related to charging for DIY wastes that began on 31 December 2023, and where approved by Cabinet Member Decision in December 2023.

Financial Implications

9. Through consultation with both HWRC Management contracts, £27k/year will be saved by this proposal which can be used to meet pressures elsewhere in the service (such as costs resulting from the changing legislation around DIY charging). This change is based purely on staff savings from opening 3hrs less/week for 6 months of the year. It is anticipated that waste volumes (and therefore costs) will remain the same as residents who were visiting during late night opening will still visit sites to deposit waste at other times.

Reviewed by Prem Salhan - Interim Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

10. If approved, a contract variation will be needed with both FCC and W+S as OCCs HWRC management contractors. Both Contractors have been consulted as part of developing this proposal and have been supportive of the change and

it is not anticipated that this will result in any issues. The value of the variation is well below the 10% of contract value threshold allowable under Contract Procurement Rules.

Review by: Bede Murtagh – Contracts Solicitor

Staff Implications

11. Management of the HWRCs is contracted out to two contractors. They have both consulted their staff who are very supportive of this proposal.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

12. An EIA has been completed for this proposal (Attached at Annex 2). The cessation of late-night opening may have a minor impact on residents who preferred to use late night Thursdays due to their working pattern, however most residents only visit site 4 times a year, and sites are open 7 days a week, including weekends and bank holidays so it is anticipated that most residents will be able to still find a visit time that is suitable for them.
13. Those who do use sites during late night opening tend to prefer it as sites are very quiet with no queuing, making it a quick and easy visit. However, the overall low use of this service means that the impact of increased visitors between 08:00-17:00 should be minimal.

Sustainability Implications

14. A CIA has been completed for this proposal (Attached at Annex 3). The main impact identified is the increase in visitors during 08:00-17:00 potentially increasing pressure on the transport network – increased queuing can result in poorer air quality etc, and the impact of increased queuing potentially meaning residents do not want to 'waste' time sorting their waste for recycling and instead placing it all in the residual bin, however, the overall low use of this service means that the impact of increased visitors between 08:00-17:00 should be minimal.

Risk Management

15. There are no discernible risks associated with this change in operational hours.

Consultations

16. The two Household Waste Recycling Centre contractors who operate the 7 sites on behalf of the Council have been consulted on this change and are supportive of the change.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annexes:

Annex 1: Household Waste Recycling Centre Waste Acceptance Policy

Annex 2: Equalities Impact Assessment

Annex 3: Climate Impact Assessment

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