

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	10 March 2022
Title:	Household Waste Recycling Centres – Pedestrian access trial evaluation
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline and seek approval for the retention of pedestrian access at specified times at Alresford and Hedge End Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

Recommendation

2. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment notes the evaluation of the pedestrian access trial at three Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), namely Hedge End, New Alresford and Waterlooville, and approves the retention of the terms of the scheme at specified times at New Alresford and Hedge End HWRCs only.
3. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment to approve the introduction of pedestrian access schemes at further HWRCs in Hampshire where demand exists and appropriate measures can be taken, to make amendments to the access times, and to cease a scheme at any point where customer or staff safety is at risk or reduced demand makes it no longer viable.

Executive Summary

4. This paper seeks to:
 - provide an update on the outcomes of the six-month pedestrian access trial introduced in July 2021; and
 - recommend next steps for establishing a countywide approach for pedestrian access at Hampshire HWRCs in the future.

Contextual information

5. Hampshire County Council, as the designated Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) for the administrative area of Hampshire, has a statutory duty through the Environmental Protection Act (1990) to provide places where persons “resident in the area” may deposit their bulky household and garden waste for recycling and processing. This has historically been delivered in Hampshire through 24 HWRCs located across the county.
6. There is an expectation that the vast majority of householders will access HWRCs in a vehicle in order to safely deliver their bulky household and garden waste, and as such sites have generally evolved according to this premise. Only one site in the county, Waterlooville, features a side gate into which pedestrians may enter safely; at all other sites access for pedestrians must be through the vehicle entrance/exit. It is recognised however that a small number of residents may be unable to access a site in a vehicle, or live close enough to make using a vehicle questionable for environmental and economic reasons.
7. Pedestrian access to HWRCs has historically been discouraged at all Hampshire sites for health and safety reasons, however it was formally restricted from May 2020 in light of social distancing requirements to reduce interaction onsite. Following customer feedback, and once national restrictions had eased, a six-month trial to evaluate readmitting pedestrians on a controlled basis at three HWRCs (Hedge End, New Alresford and Waterlooville) was approved in June 2021.
8. As previously noted in reports to the Executive Member of Economy, Transport and Environment on 2 December 2020 and 17 June 2021, there is an inherent and arguably unacceptable risk to the practice of accessing HWRCs on foot, including a hazard of distraction in such a situation when carrying bulky and/or heavy items. The Health and Safety WISH Forum advises that: “The most hazardous activity on CA (Civic Amenity) sites is the movement of vehicles near pedestrians¹”, while published guidance by the Waste & Resource Action Programme (WRAP) strongly recommends that measures are taken to ensure that users are not tempted to park outside designated areas and walk to disposal areas, and that site layout and parking should be designed to minimise pedestrian interaction with traffic. Accidents involving pedestrians (i.e. site users moving about the site on foot) have occurred at Hampshire HWRCs, including incidents where a pedestrian was struck by a reversing vehicle or tripping over whilst attempting to carry bulky waste into the site.
9. In addition, pedestrians ‘walking in’ waste have historically faced accusations of queue jumping in busy periods, while site staff have also observed some customers using it as a means to attempt to avoid either the permit scheme or paying trade waste charges, albeit this particular issue has largely disappeared with the introduction of the booking system.
10. Of the 24 HWRCs in Hampshire, only three are located directly within residential areas (Hedge End, Waterlooville and Hayling Island), with a further six within reasonable walking distance (up to 10 minutes) of housing but located within

¹ Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum FORMAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT: WISH WASTE 26 - Managing health and safety in civic amenity sites – Issue 1 2015

adjacent industrial estates. Although many of these sites have standard pavements on the highway leading up to (but not through) the site entrance, in some cases, particularly in some of the industrial estates, it requires pedestrians to cross multiple business vehicular accesses to neighbouring premises with dropped kerbs as well as negotiating vans and cars frequently parked on the pavement.

11. Desktop research indicates that at least 17 other county councils, including all of Hampshire's immediate neighbours, do not allow access into sites by pedestrians and cyclists. Oxfordshire County Council publicly states on its website² that it considers health and safety to outweigh environmental and economic benefits of permitting pedestrian access.
12. It should be noted that HWRCs are primarily provided for the deposit of bulky household and garden waste items unsuitable for kerbside waste collections such as furniture and wood, many of which are uncondusive to being carried by pedestrians or cyclists. Carrying heavy and/or bulky items on foot or by bicycle can, as previously outlined above, be a risky practice. By contrast, the domestic kerbside recycling service and smaller recycling points provided by district and borough councils offer a convenient and effective alternative for small recyclable items.
13. As with the HWRC at Waterlooville, consideration to facilitating safe pedestrian access to HWRCs will be given during any major projects to develop new or refurbished sites in the coming years.

Trial outcomes

14. Instigation of a six-month trial to evaluate the impact of allowing controlled pedestrian access was approved by the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 17 June 2021. The trial commenced on 20 July 2021 and three HWRCs were chosen to participate – Hedge End, New Alresford and Waterlooville.
15. The trial involved using the existing HWRC booking system to block out an hour from 9am on three mornings per week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday), to enable pedestrians to enter the site safely without vehicles present. It was made clear that this trial was specifically aimed at local residents only and was not available to those customers who parked outside and attempted to circumnavigate the booking system. Pedestrian access was not permitted at any other point other than the advertised pedestrian access periods.
16. Take up of the trial was mixed. While New Alresford saw a small but steady patronage over the three days, Waterlooville only received seven customers presenting as pedestrians in the first five months. Of the waste delivered at these times, 54% of pedestrians deposited garden waste and 28% brought unrecyclable 'black bag' waste, both of which are commonly accepted through district kerbside collections. Just under 13% of visits were made by pedestrians

² [Visiting recycling centres | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

who did not wish to deposit waste but instead wanted to access the reuse sales area.

	No. of pedestrian visits July-Sept 2021	No. of pedestrian visits Oct-Dec 2021
New Alresford	143	110
Hedge End	26	22
Waterlooville	5	2

17. Some safety concerns were noted by site staff during the course of the trial. On several occasions at the beginning of the trial, particularly at New Alresford, customers were observed driving up and parking outside before attempting to walk in. On being challenged by site staff that this was outside of the spirit of the trial to facilitate access for those householders living nearby within walking distance, the perpetrators often became abusive. Following discussion with the local Member, Councillor Jackie Porter, and the issuing of a local reminder of the trial terms, this situation did improve.
18. The trial was initially reviewed by Officers after the first three months. Following recommendations based on feedback and data, and in line with delegated authority, the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment approved a scaling back of the trial from December 2021 resulting in the trial henceforth operating on two days per week at Alresford, one morning per week at Hedge End, and withdrawal of the trial entirely at Waterlooville.

Customer feedback

19. The decision to limit access to vehicle users only since the pandemic has not proved to be a significant issue, with a total of just 28 enquiries regarding pedestrian access received in the period from May 2020 to January 2021. This compares to a total of just under 6,000 waste related enquiries in the same period. A significant proportion of these pedestrian access enquiries derived from the Alresford area.
20. Since the commencement of the trial in July 2021 specifically, just six enquiries or complaints have been received in relation to the restriction on pedestrian access, of which two each related to the Alton and Hayling Island HWRCs respectively. Anecdotally, site staff across the network of HWRCs advise that they have not received more than just an occasional verbal enquiry about pedestrian access onsite in that time.

Consultation and Equalities

21. The Public Sector Equality Duty, established by the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), places a duty upon the County Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in

employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are protected characteristics for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is important to note that impact on poverty is not listed as a protected characteristic under the Act.

22. A deputation received at the County Council meeting held on 24 September 2020 alleged that residents with disabilities, older residents and residents on low incomes could be indirectly discriminated against through a continuation of the policy to restrict pedestrian entry, as regular access to a vehicle may not be possible. The County Council does not accept any suggestion that this practice is discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, as it was introduced as a proportionate measure on health and safety grounds to protect all site users, and is consistent with neighbouring authorities' practice. In order to progressively develop and improve public services, the County Council continues to investigate and, where appropriate, implement reasonable, safe and proportionate measures to enhance service provision. The retention of the HWRC booking system provides a safe and effective means to control pedestrian access at the chosen sites.
23. It should also be noted that alternative options exist for 'low weight' waste materials such as the kerbside recycling collection and local recycling banks. Waste collection authorities and some charitable organisations also provide an alternative collection service for bulky items such as furniture, albeit a charge may sometimes be applied for this service.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

24. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

Climate Change Adaptation

25. The adaptation project screening tool considers vulnerability of proposals to the effects of climate change and whether any adaptations are required. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability was not completed in this instance as the initial vulnerability assessment indicated that the project is at minimal risk from climate vulnerabilities.

Carbon Mitigation

26. The mitigation decision-making tool considers the impact of carbon emissions and whether any mitigations are required. Reuse and recycling activity produces fewer carbon emissions than waste disposal, so maximising recycling and reuse has clear carbon benefits. The overall aim of the HWRC service is to minimise

landfill where possible and therefore reuse, recycling and recovery actions will be prioritised in line with the waste hierarchy.

27. Retaining the pedestrian access periods at New Alresford and Hedge End HWRCs presents a carbon neutral means of accessing sites by local residents instead of using a vehicle.

Conclusions and next steps

28. The trial highlighted that while there is a small proportion of customer interest and demand for enabling occasional pedestrian access to HWRCs, it is not at the scale initially envisaged when the trial commenced. Differing levels of demand were demonstrated at the three trial sites which, in the case of Waterlooville, could not justify continuation with such a low volume. Closing the HWRC for one hour on three mornings per week for just seven customers in five months represented a very high loss of bookings which could have been used by other customers in vehicles.
29. It is therefore recommended to retain the pedestrian access period indefinitely as per the terms of the scaled back trial scheme from December 2021, to facilitate an hour on two mornings per week (Thursday, Saturday) at New Alresford and a single period per week (Thursday) at Hedge End only. The terms of the scheme as set out on the County Council website³ will be adopted as the approach going forward. They make it very clear that this period is for local residents without vehicles carrying manageable loads only, and not an opportunity for any customer to attempt to get around the booking system by parking outside and walking in.
30. Experience has shown that scheduling the pedestrian period for an hour at the start of the day from 9-10am offers the most efficient way of operating the service. While there has been some feedback that it is restrictive, others have commented that it allows certainty each week. Scheduling it at another time of day could be more problematic in terms of booking slots overlapping.
31. In light of the low level of customer enquiries and demand observed elsewhere in Hampshire during the past two years, it is not recommended that the pedestrian access period is introduced at any of the other 22 HWRCs at this point. As outlined above, only six customer enquiries have been received on this subject since July 2021, of which two each respectively concerned the Alton and Hayling Island HWRCs. In Alton's case, the site's location within a busy industrial estate, more than 1km away from the nearest significant proliferation of residential properties, coupled with the low reported customer demand, does not indicate that it is a viable option to introduce a pedestrian period at this time. Hayling Island is surrounded by predominantly holiday properties which creates a seasonal demand. The peculiarities of the layout here and a history of known accidents again make this unviable without significant demand.
32. The County Council will remain open to facilitating the introduction of similar trial periods at other HWRCs at any point in the future if demonstrable demand is

³ [Household waste recycling centre pedestrian access trial | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

evidenced. The retention of the booking system at all HWRCs means that trials can be commenced relatively quickly on a controlled basis. Potential sites would only be considered where residential demand exists and a safe means of approaching the site such as a highway pavement is in place. It is therefore recommended that delegated authority is given to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment to approve the implementation of further pedestrian access schemes at other Hampshire HWRCs, either on a trial or longer basis, following advice from Officers.

33. The County Council retains the right to continue to monitor this service closely, and make necessary changes at short notice, particularly in the event of health and safety concerns emerging. As such, delegated authority for the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to immediately cease a pedestrian access scheme, either permanent or a trial, should safety concerns necessitate is also recommended.
34. Going forward, consideration to facilitating safe pedestrian access to HWRCs will be given during any major projects to develop new or refurbished sites in the coming years.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Pedestrian access to Household Waste Recycling Centres trial: Pedestrian Access to HWRC Trial-2020-12-02-EMETE Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</u>	02/12/2020
<u>Household Waste Recycling Centres Operations: HWRC Operations-2021-06-17-EMETE Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</u>	17/06/2021
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Environmental Protection Act (1990) – s51</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

2.1. The Public Sector Equality Duty, established by the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act"), places a duty upon the County Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are protected characteristics for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is important to note that impact on poverty is not listed as a protected characteristic under the Act.

2.2. A deputation received at the County Council meeting held on 24 September 2020 alleged that residents with disabilities, older residents and residents on low incomes could be indirectly discriminated against through a continuation of the policy to restrict pedestrian entry, as regular access to a vehicle may not be possible. The County Council does not accept any suggestion that this practice is discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, as it was introduced as a proportionate measure on health and safety grounds to protect all site users, and is consistent with neighbouring authorities' practice. In order to

progressively develop and improve public services, the County Council continues to investigate and, where appropriate, implement reasonable, safe and proportionate measures to enhance service provision. The retention of the HWRC booking system provides a safe and effective means to control pedestrian access at the chosen sites.

- 2.3. It should also be noted that alternative options exist for 'low weight' waste materials such as the kerbside recycling collection and local recycling banks. Waste collection authorities and some charitable organisations also provide an alternative collection service for bulky items such as furniture, albeit a charge may sometimes be applied for this service.
- 2.4. The decision to retain the pedestrian access at Hedge End and New Alresford HWRCs is considered to be neutral for groups with protected characteristics.