

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-005-2009/10

**Date of meeting:** 8 June 2009



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Environment.

**Subject:** Local Recycling Centres.

**Responsible Officer:** Qasim Durrani (01992 564055)

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That in view of their usage and popularity the 21 District Recycling Centres be retained at a cost of £3,000 per annum for annual maintenance;**
- (2) That in view of their declining usage and the extensions to kerbside recycling services the 30 Local Recycling Centres be decommissioned with a revenue saving of £10,000 per annum; and**
- (3) To consider whether to return the net £7,000 CSB saving to the general fund or to retain it pending an investigation into the feasibility of providing a kerbside collection scheme for textiles**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Council manages a total of 51 recycling centres in the District. There are two types of recycling centres, District Recycling Centres (DRC) and Local Recycling Centres (LRC). DRC are larger sites, with the larger recycling banks, such as commonly seen in shopping areas and town centres. They offer a wide range of recycling facilities. LRCs are smaller sites, using large wheeled containers and are commonly located in communal areas and provide for a more limited range of recyclable materials, predominantly glass, cans and paper.

The DRCs remain popular with users and are worthy of continued support. However, some of the DRCs are now old and are in need of around £3,000 of investment.

With the continued investment in the kerbside collection schemes, LRC usage has declined over recent years. Given the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of these schemes there is a strong argument for their withdrawal. This would not materially affect overall recycling performance, but would result in a saving of £10,000 to the continuing services budget.

The net saving of £7,000 could either be returned to the general fund as a saving, or it could be retained with a view to the possible provision of a kerbside textile collection service.

The decision to discontinue Local Recycling Centres is a key decision, a total of 30 LRCs are located at various locations within the District.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The Council now offers door step collection for all of the materials collected at 27 of the 30 Local Recycling Centres (glass, cans, paper and plastic), the remaining 3 offer textile collection which is currently not offered at the door step. It appears that residents prefer to use their door step collection service rather than take recyclables to a local recycling centre, and the falling tonnage collected at these centres confirms this.

There will be a financial saving to the Council by discontinuing the local recycling centres which can contribute towards the cost of introduction of a new kerbside textile collection service, which will be an enhancement to the current kerbside collection services.

## **Other Options for Action:**

If the Local Recycling Centres are to be maintained then an additional one off sum of £15,000 is required to carry out repair and upgrade works and a further £3,000 a year for ongoing maintenance.

## **Report:**

### Recycling Centres:

1. The Council has historically provided recycling centres in the District to enable residents to deposit their recyclables in communal containers for collection. This service was introduced back in the 1990s when the Council only provided a limited kerbside recycling collection service. .
2. There are two types of recycling centres, District Recycling Centres (DRC) and Local Recycling Centres (LRC). DRCs are larger sites, with the larger recycling banks, such as commonly seen in shopping areas and town centres. They offer a wide range of recycling facilities. LRCs are smaller sites, using large wheeled containers and are commonly located in communal areas and provide for a more limited range of recyclable materials, predominantly glass, cans and paper.
3. There are 21 DRCs and they are popular with residents. They offer a comprehensive collection service including textiles and the tonnage of waste collected raises recycling credit and income for the Council. It is therefore suggested that these should be retained, and in order to provide a safe and effective service, £3,000 per annum is allocated for ongoing yearly maintenance (*Recommendation (1)*).
4. Local Recycling Centres (LRCs) are more numerous and use recycling banks that can easily be re-sited and are usually custom-made 1100 litre or 660 litre wheeled bins. The types of materials collected at LRCs are paper, cans and glass with three centres collecting textiles. The annual cost of collection is approximately £10,000. The three textile banks generate a nominal income from the textiles collected.
5. The Council took over the LRCs from South Herts Waste Management (SHWM) when the company went into Administration in 2006. These had fallen into disrepair and although some maintenance has since been carried out they are in need of comprehensive maintenance and upgrading to bring them to an acceptable standard.
6. As the Council now provides an extensive kerbside collection service the usage of the LRCs is declining. There is an opportunity for the Council to either save the £10,000 it spends on servicing the LRCs by discontinuing all of the 30 LRCs and using the saving of £10,000 to fund the maintenance of the DRCs and to provide, if viable, a kerbside textile collection

service (*Recommendations (2) & (3)*).

#### Textile Collection:

7. When South Herts Waste Management (SHWM) was the Council's service provider it collected textiles from the doorstep in the clear recycling sacks or in plastic carrier bags. Due to operational reasons and SHWM's inability to provide a viable service the Council engaged a specialist textile collection contractor for the service at a cost of £5,000 per year offset by the income generated by textile collection with the contractor obtaining additional external funding for covering the cost of service provision.

8. The external funding ceased in late 2007 and efforts were made to renegotiate the cost of provision of this service. An agreement could not be reached and the service ceased on 31 March 2008.

9. Preliminary discussions have been held with the current service provider SITA to consider the feasibility of introducing a kerbside textile collection service. It may be possible to introduce a sack based system with 4 collections per annum, but it is not certain at this time whether this level of service could be provided within the net £7,000 savings arising from the recommended changes to the district and local recycling facilities. Cabinet is requested to consider whether officers should continue to pursue this possibility or whether the £7,000 should be returned as a saving to the General Fund (*Recommendation (3)*).

#### **Resource Implications:**

There is an identified saving of £10,000 per annum arising as a result of discontinuation of the Local Recycling Centres. Of this £3,000 per annum is required to adequately maintain the DRCs to ensure safe and effective operation. The net saving of £7,000 can either be returned to the General Fund as a saving or if feasible, could be utilised to provide a new kerbside textile collection service. .

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Relevant statutory authorities include the Public Health Acts, Environment Act 1990 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and associated regulations and guidance

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The delivery of an effective waste management service is a key component of the Council's "Safer, Cleaner, Greener" strategy. There is a requirement upon the Council to increase the recycling and diversion of waste and to reduce the volume of waste destined for landfill.

Improvement and proactive maintenance of the Council's remaining recycling centres will improve the appearance of the streetscape.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Council's current service provider SITA Suez has been consulted however further detailed discussions have to be undertaken before viability of a new textile service can be established.

#### **Background Papers:**

None.

**Impact Assessments:**

Without the additional £3,000 investment in the DRCs there is a significant risk that they will not remain safe for use by residents.

The loss of the 3 LRC textile facilities may result in a nominal reduction in recycling performance.

If it does not prove feasible to replace the LRC textile facilities with a kerbside service, there may be some residents who use them now, particularly those with disabilities or who are unable to travel to the DRC sites, who will not have access to a textile recycling service. However, through the existing kerbside schemes they will retain access to all other recycling facilities.