

By: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste

To: County Council – 29 March 2012

Subject: Richborough Household Waste Recycling Centre

Classification: Unrestricted

Petition

On 16th March 2012 a paper-based petition was submitted to Kent County Council containing 1302 signatures.

The wording of the paper-based petition is:

We the undersigned petition the Council to decide to keep the household waste recycling facility at Richborough near Sandwich.

Current position

The site closure is proposed in the Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres report, the recommendations of which were endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 March 2012. Cabinet referred the matter back to me as the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste for final decision, after taking account of the debate in respect of this petition.

The Cabinet report recommended a range of operational and strategic measures, supported by £18m of capital investment, to make the HWRC network better for the future. It was formulated through the work of a cross-party Informal Members' Group which received support for all its findings from the POSC. The review has been subject to a comprehensive 10 week consultation which produced a high response rate from 3,500 residents.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Review

During the year-long review it was noted that there are 5 sites in NE Kent, namely at Canterbury, Herne Bay, Margate, Deal and Richborough compared to other parts of the county where there is under-provision. In fact, the hinterland for the Richborough HWRC overlaps with that of the Deal and Margate sites, such that approximately only 150 households would be disadvantaged to the extent that their journey time to an alternative site could exceed a 20 minutes drive time. As an indication of its level of use, the Richborough HWRC has one of the lowest tonnage throughputs in the county (7,112 t/year) compared for instance to the popular Margate site (22,441 t/year).

The Richborough site is a legacy site located adjacent to a closed landfill site. There is sufficient capacity to accommodate the recycling and residual waste, currently collected at Richborough, at the two nearest alternative sites at Southwall Road, Deal

and Manston Road, Margate, the latter having been enlarged in recent years. Furthermore Kent County Council already owns land adjacent to the Deal site, currently used for container storage, which would enable expansion if required at minimal cost. Projected savings from the closure are £255k per year.

I have noted residents' concerns, particularly regarding the perceived risk of increased fly-tipping and seek to reassure them that when other sites have closed, such as Pepperhill which was closed for 6 months for re-development, an increase in fly-tipping does not occur.

In conclusion, there is a greater need for additional HWRC provision in other parts of the county such as in the Tonbridge & Malling area and to relieve severe pressure on the Maidstone HWRC as well as to continue as appropriate the Council's modernisation and enlargement programme. For this reason, £18m of capital funding has been provided for investment in developing the network. This will contribute to achieving the aim of making the service fit for the future. Savings from the revenue operating costs will help offset those of new facilities in the long-term.

After listening carefully to the petitioners and the Council debate, I undertake to consider the matter in the light of all the information available and based on the advice that I receive from Members of the County Council (under Appendix 4, Part E, section 5E.4(f) of the Constitution) before making the final decision in my capacity as the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste.