

**By:** Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste  
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**To:** Cabinet 19 March 2012

**Subject:** Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres and Future Service Delivery  
**For Decision**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** This report sets out the findings of the Review of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in Kent and recommends changes to the way the sites are to be operated and provided.

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## **1. Introduction and Review Process**

- 1.1 On 8th April 2011 the Environment Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (POSC), agreed the terms of reference of a review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) service. The POSC agreed that an Informal Member Group (IMG) should guide the review. The Informal Member Group comprised:  
Councillors John Cubitt (chair),  
Mike Harrison,  
Steve Manion,  
Malcolm Robertson, and  
Elizabeth Tweed
- 1.2 The Informal Members Group reported the review findings back to POSC on 27 September 2011. The Committee supported the findings and referred the matter for public consultation.

The report from the Informal Members Group considered in detail the options for change relating to the operating policy of the sites and the household waste recycling centre network. The financial implications of the changes were confirmed as being consistent with the medium term financial plan and the current capital programme.

It was resolved that the recommendations of the Informal Members Group were supported.

- 1.3 Following the end of the public consultation on 9 February 2012, the Informal Members' Group met on 21 February 2012 to consider the outcomes, which have led to the recommendations in this report.
- 1.4 This decision report is structured as follows.

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## 2. Current arrangements

- 2.1 As the waste disposal authority for Kent, Kent County Council has a statutory obligation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990

*“for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and for the disposal of waste so deposited”.*

There is no duty to receive trade waste and the household waste recycling centres are not licensed to do so.

- 2.2 The Act does not specify how many sites, the ratio of sites to households, or travel times. Most of the population of Kent is within a 20 minute drive of a HWRC.
- 2.3 Kent has 19 HWRCs, of which 6 are co-located with waste transfer stations. The sites are located largely as a reflection of historic factors, particularly in respect of those locations which are associated with closed landfill sites. Their distribution does, however, broadly reflect the centres of population in the county.
- 2.4 Map 1 below shows the network of transfer stations and household waste recycling centres across Kent with drive times.



### **3. Public Consultation and Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 3.1 Following the POSC meeting on 27 September 2011, a 10 week public consultation commenced on 1 December 2011 and ran until 9 February 2012 on options for change. A total of 3,499 responses were received; 3,456 from the general public and 43 from stakeholders. There were 2056 on-line responses and 1,400 hard copy responses.
- 3.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was conducted prior to the development and delivery of the public consultation. This shaped the engagement and participation mechanisms, and identified Protected Characteristics which have the potential to be positively or negatively impacted by the proposed policies. This also ensured that particular attention was paid to engagement with minority groups in Kent.
- 3.3 The methodology for the consultation aimed to engage householders across all sectors of Kent's communities, providing residents with the opportunity to participate in the consultation. Of the 3,095 hard copies of the questionnaire distributed, 1,400 were returned; a 45% response rate. There were responses from 28 of the 305 Town and Parish Councils and 8 responses from the waste collection authorities.
- 3.4 A further EIA was undertaken following the consultation, confirming impacts already identified in the initial screening and interim EIA. Assessments will continue to monitor customer usage and feedback following the implementation of any policy changes, with appropriate action to be taken as required.

### **4. Household waste recycling centres: Operating policy**

- 4.1 The key policy areas are considered below. These are:-
- Limiting the materials coming into the sites; and
  - Limiting trade waste and non-Kent vehicles

Each is provided with a commentary on the original IMG/POSC position and a summary of the consultation response, as applicable.

- 4.2 The IMG was mindful that any operating policy changes would require sufficient communication to ensure that the public were aware of the changes. This has been reinforced through the EIA and is considered later in the report. In considering operational changes the IMG was also mindful that interventions which tended to reduce queues at HWRCs would help alleviate pressure on the sites, and respond to the public's on-going concerns about queues.
- 4.3 The efficiencies being taken forward recognise the difference in approach needed in respect of the fixed costs, predominantly in operating the sites, and the variable costs of disposal of the waste tonnage arisings. The variable costs are by far the larger element.

#### 4.3.1 Limiting the materials coming into the sites

##### POSC report:

Having in mind that the greatest cost in managing waste through the HWRCs is the treatment/disposal of the waste brought into the sites rather than the operating costs of the sites, the exclusion of non-household waste was seen as a priority by IMG. The IMG therefore focused in detail on tyres, asbestos and gas bottles.

It was proposed to:

- a) exclude all tyres on the basis that householders were unlikely to change tyres at home;
- b) exclude asbestos as the amounts being received were inconsistent with householder's arisings and were very likely to be the spoil from demolition;
- c) exclude gas bottles which are generally subject to re-use. (Small single-use gas containers would still be accepted.)

The IMG noted that construction waste in quantities clearly in excess of that which could be related to domestic DIY, were being deposited at the HWRCs on a daily basis. Even though hardcore and other materials could be recycled the IMG considered the processing cost of £400k per year to be excessive. It proposed to exclude construction waste.

The IMG was aware that at the same time alternative disposal routes would be required (albeit at a charge) and that this should be encouraged through both private and KCC owned waste transfer stations.

##### Consultation responses summary:

**Do you consider that items such as tyres, gas bottles, and asbestos, which are mainly commercial waste, should be excluded from HWRCs, provided that other routes are available?**

60% agreed, 32% disagreed and 8% answered don't know.

The four most recorded comments were:

- Materials may be fly-tipped
- Believe that these materials are generated by householders and they have a need for the HWRCs to accept them
- Customers want a one-stop-shop for all materials and convenience of service
- Lack of information about other disposal routes

**Would you support the exclusion of construction waste, which the HWRCs have no duty to accept and costs the Council money?**

65% agreed, 26% disagreed and 9% answered don't know

The four most recorded comments were:

- Increase in fly-tipping
- Penalises "the DIY person"
- Should charge for all construction waste regardless of source
- Lack of information about alternative disposal points

## Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

The majority of respondents support change and agree that the material is mainly commercial waste. The comments support the need to implement the changes in a systematic way.

### (i) Tyres, asbestos and gas bottles

It is now proposed that these items/waste are accepted at waste transfer stations only, and the unit quantity limited as follows.

Tyres: Limit car tyres to a maximum of two per visit.  
Asbestos: Limited to one sack or equivalent per visit.  
Gas bottles: Limited to one gas bottle per visit.

Additionally a charging regime is now proposed for this waste, with a standard charge of £5 per unit (i.e. up to 2 tyres or one bag of asbestos or one gas bottle). This charge is set to be increased annually as necessary to cover any increase in disposal costs and administration. The consultation indicated that there was a need for the Council to consider ways to continue to provide this service, and a charge to cover disposal and administration costs would enable this need to be met.

### (ii) Construction waste

It is proposed that the amount of household waste to be brought into a site by any single vehicle, or combined vehicle and trailer, is to be a maximum of one car boot load of household construction waste. This is equivalent to 3 bags, of up to 30kg weight per bag, being a weight that the average person can lift. (For example - the bags are to be similar in size to a large sack of compost). The waste is to comprise spoil, hardcore, soil, rubble, or equivalent. For larger items such as baths, the material would not need to be bagged but should not exceed approx. 90kg in total or one average car boot load per visit. There is to be no limit on repeat visits as this is unenforceable across the network.

It is clear that this approach would bring the service in line with standard practice for most other waste disposal authorities, reducing arisings from the current disproportionately high levels as shown below.

### **Construction Waste Overview**

<b>Kg/household 2010/11</b>	<b>Kent</b>	<b>Medway</b>	<b>Surrey</b>	<b>East Sussex</b>
Total HWRC waste arisings	310	262	300	246.5
HWRC Residual waste	92.7	166.32	123.38	112.08
Soil hardcore	70.65	10.89	36.48	24.01
Soil/Hardcore % of total arisings	22.7%	4.2%	12.2%	9.7%

Source: DEFRA Waste Data Flow

The IMG was mindful that capacity must be provided for commercial waste to ensure proper disposal and to prevent fly-tipping. Clearly, there is a demand for cost-effective disposal of commercial waste, particularly from businesses which produce relatively small quantities of waste and/or produce

waste on an irregular basis. The waste transfer network of 6 sites is designated for charged-for waste. The transfer stations are provided with weighbridges linked to invoicing software, and are capable of producing waste transfer notes to comply with the waste Duty of Care Regulations. It is proposed that the waste transfer stations are provided and adapted as necessary to handle the tonnage of trade waste which may be displaced from the household waste recycling centres, so that this waste can be properly handled at a realistic charge.

(iii) Customer information programme

A comprehensive customer information programme regarding disposal options for these materials is proposed in advance of implementation and on a continuing basis.

(iv) Implementation of operational policy changes

It is proposed that the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Environment implements the roll-out of the policy changes regarding limiting materials in a systematic way, through a phased approach to ensure sufficient capacity to manage a smooth transition and to keep progress under continuous review to maximise customer service.

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#### 4.3.2 Trade and non-Kent Vehicles

POSC Report

The IMG was shocked to note the extent of trade waste being delivered on its sites' tour. The IMG felt that a blanket ban on all trade or potentially trade vehicles and trailers was necessary, with an exception scheme available only in very rare circumstances. The IMG also noted that some householders from Kent use the Cuxton, Medway site and that conversely, some Medway residents visit Pepperhill and other KCC facilities.

In respect of the county's western border, a permit scheme was proposed for the sites in proximity to the border, namely Dartford Heath, Swanley, Dunbrik and New Romney, in order to restrict usage to Kent householders.

Consultation responses summary:

**Would you support the exclusion of trade waste e.g. by ceasing to open the height barrier and excluding trade vehicles, which the HWRCs have no duty to accept and costs the Council money?**

67% agree, 25% disagree and 8% answered don't know

The five most recorded comments were:-

- Increase in fly-tipping
- Implement a charging scheme for traders
- What about householders who only have a van or hire a van.
- Allow all waste from anyone to save fly-tipping and generate income
- Encourage all waste to be disposed of responsibly

**Do you believe that it is reasonable for householders who do not live in Kent, and therefore do not contribute to funding of the sites, to be excluded from using Kent's HWRCs?**

59% agree, 34% disagree and 7% answered don't know

The three most recorded comments were:

- Reciprocal arrangements are required, balance needed, petty proposal
- Risk of fly-tipping
- Convenience to use nearest HWRC regardless of border

**Do you use HWRCs in other areas?**

92% answered yes and 8% answered no.

Of those that use sites in other areas, 57% use Medway sites

Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

The majority of respondents support change, subject to an exception scheme in limited circumstances. Exclusion of commercial vehicles will reduce queues and congestion on sites, which has been repeatedly raised as an issue in consultation responses.

(i) Commercial vehicles

It is proposed that all commercial vehicles, including vans and pick-up trucks of any size, and agricultural vehicles including horse-boxes, are to be excluded. For the purposes of defining a commercial vehicle the definition applied by HM Revenue and Customs will be applied.

An exception scheme for customers with disabilities will be provided. In addition a permit scheme for the minimal number of householders who do not own any other vehicle other than an excluded vehicle, and those with large private vehicles (which cannot fit under the height barriers) will be established at nominated sites. All other conditions, such as the limit on construction waste, will apply. The permit scheme will provide access to the sites on up to 12 occasions per calendar year. Any exceptional application for further permits within a single year will be investigated to ensure the exclusion of trade waste.

The IMG was mindful that capacity for commercial waste must be provided to ensure proper disposal and to prevent fly-tipping. Clearly, there is a demand for cost-effective disposal of commercial waste, particularly from businesses which produce relatively small quantities of waste and/or produce waste on an irregular basis. The waste transfer network of 6 sites is designated for charged-for waste. The transfer stations are provided with weighbridges linked to invoicing software, and are capable of producing waste transfer notes to comply with the waste duty of care regulations. It is proposed that the waste transfer stations are provided and adapted as necessary to handle the tonnage of commercial waste which may be displaced from the household waste recycling centres, so that this waste can be properly handled at a realistic charge. If there is insufficient capacity further interventions may be required to ensure additional outlets.

## (ii) Trailers

Although there is a risk that a minority of traders may utilise trailers to access the HWRCs, it has been recognised that there is a genuine need by householders to use trailers in certain circumstances. Consequently, trailers are to be limited in size to approximately 1.0m<sup>3</sup> capacity, to assist householders, and for ease of manoeuvring on site. For clarity, the total combined quantity of construction waste is to be limited to 1.0m<sup>3</sup> and not to be doubled for a combined vehicle and trailer.

## (iii) Western Boundary

The existing permit scheme at Dartford Heath HWRC is to be retained. A permit scheme for Kent residents at other sites near the county's western boundary is not recommended, but a trial permit scheme is to be considered for the Swanley site in order to test value for money. It was considered that the cross-border movement of household waste was likely to be broadly similar in each direction, but this should be tested.

## (iv) Provision for Trade Waste

As a pre-requisite for the exclusion of construction and trade waste from household waste recycling centres, it is necessary to support the development of additional commercial capacity where there is evidence of under-provision of waste disposal for businesses. Collaboration with the Minerals and Waste Development Framework project will be valuable in taking this forward. Additionally a feasibility study is proposed on the opportunities at Kent County Council's waste sites to promote cost-effective waste disposal capacity for businesses in order to ensure there are alternatives to fly-tipping.

## (v) Implementation of operational policy changes

It is proposed that the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Environment implements the roll-out of the policy changes regarding trade waste in a systematic way, through a phased approach to ensure sufficient capacity to manage a smooth transition and to keep progress under continuous review to maximise customer service.

## **5. Household Waste Recycling Centres: Current network provision**

### POSC Report

- 5.1 It was considered that the design-build-finance-operate model, widely used in the waste industry, has become less attractive during the recession as the cost of private sector borrowing increased.
- 5.2 The IMG noted that in earlier years, capital funding for waste infrastructure had been provided primarily by Government grant, namely Waste Infrastructure Capital Grant (WICG). This funding was spent necessarily on projects with high deliverability, leading to some projects being deferred such as those with challenging waste planning permission issues.

5.3 It was clear that there had been significant investment in the past and that this should be sustained. The recent investment at Pepperhill and Manston Road, Margate sites was noted, together with the additional household waste recycling centre opened at New Romney in 2011, as evidence of continuing investment by the Council.

5.4 The Table below shows the current capital provision for waste management infrastructure.

WASTE CAPITAL PROGRAMME	TOTAL					Total Scheme Costs
	Previous Years Spend	2010-11 Spend	2011-12 Budget	2012-13 Budget	Forecast Future Years	
£'000s						
Herne Bay Site Improvement	95	0	250	1250	0	1,595
New Romney - New site development	520	1,475	32	0	0	2,027
Sub-total	615	1,475	282	1250	0	3,622
<b>Transfer Stations Improvements</b>						
TS/HWRC Swale	0	0	0	1,880	1750	3,630
TS/HWRC Ashford	0	0	750	4,250	0	5,000
TS/HWRC Tunbridge Wells	50	242	881	0	0	1,173
HWRC Mid Kent (TMBC)	0	0	0	0	2300	2,300
HWRC West Kent	0	0	0	0	2600	2,600
sub-total	50	242	1,631	6,130	6,650	14,703
<b>Total Waste Capital Programme</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>1,717</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>7,380</b>	<b>6,650</b>	<b>18,325</b>

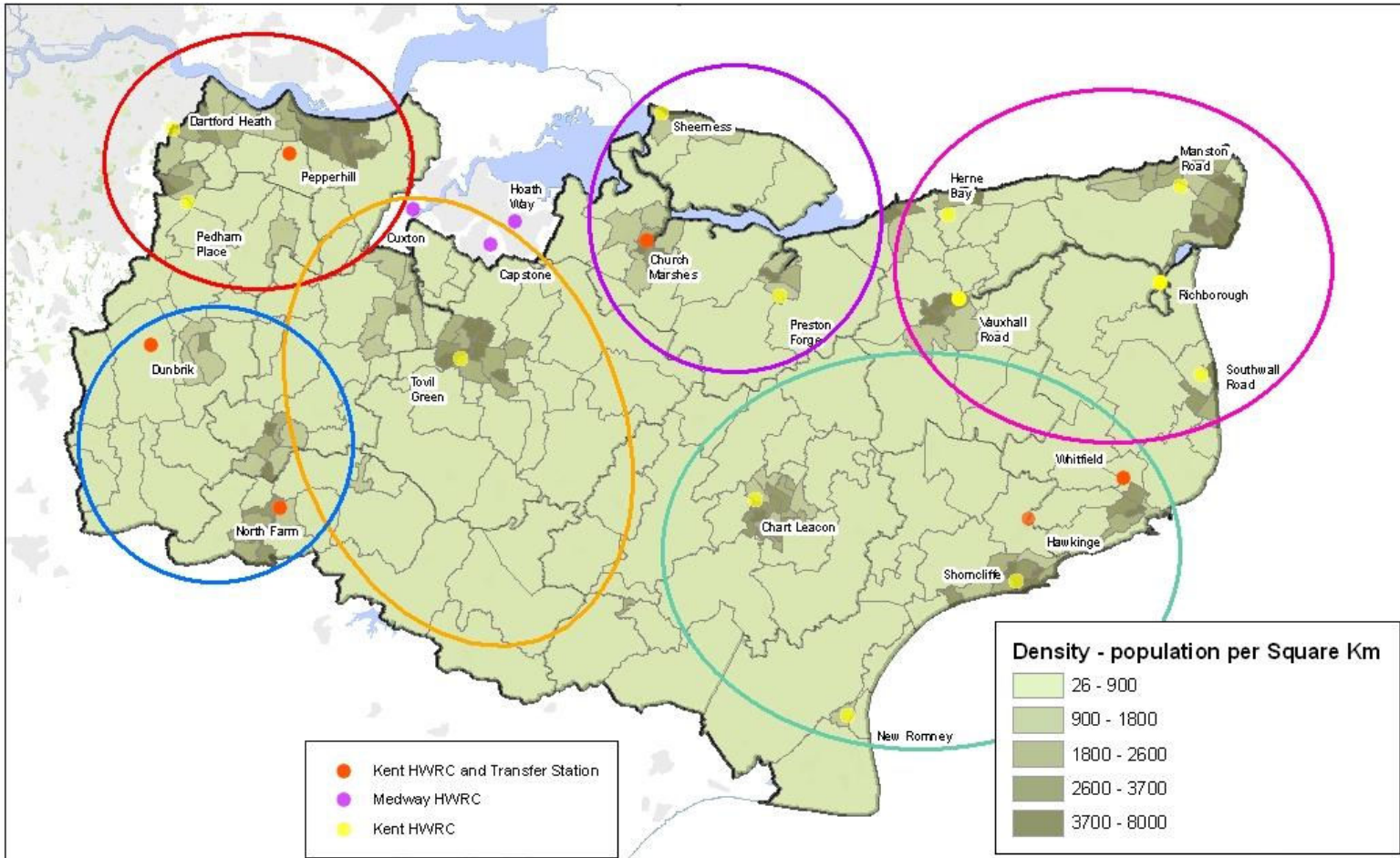
- 5.5 In order to plan effectively it is important to consider the network as a whole rather than prioritise opportunistic advances. It is also necessary to take account of growth and regeneration, the significant improvements in the highway network in Kent over the past 30 years, and the extent to which existing facilities meet current demands and standards. In particular, irrespective of the standard of the actual sites, the IMG noted serious access issues at several facilities such as Church Marshes, Sittingbourne.
- 5.6 With this in mind, the existing network of 19 sites has been divided into 6 zones or clusters. The IMG considered that this approach should provide the blueprint for future network delivery.

These clusters are:

1. SE Kent: Dover, New Romney, Shornecliffe, Hawkinge & Ashford
2. NE Kent: Canterbury, Herne Bay, Margate, Deal and Richborough
3. Swale: Sheerness, Sittingbourne and Faversham
4. NW Kent: Pepperhill, Dartford Heath and Swanley,
5. Mid Kent Tovil (Cuxton),
6. W Kent: Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

There are proposals for clusters 1-5, but no proposal for (6) W Kent as these two waste transfer station and household waste recycling centre sites will be reviewed ahead of their existing management contract terms.

Population Density and HWRC zones



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20 Miles



## **6. Household Waste Recycling Centres: Future network provision**

This section identifies potential scope for optimisation of the network within the clusters. The consultation first included general questions regarding usage and options for change with the following responses.

- 85% of the respondents rate the current service as good or excellent.
- 40% of respondents visit the HWRCs a few times a year, 10% visit weekly, 22% visit 2-3 times a month and 24% visit monthly.
- 91% of respondents have a journey time of less than 20 minutes to their nearest HWRC.
- 71% of respondents believe that a reasonable drive time to a HWRC is between 10 and 20 minutes.

Specific questions and responses are set out below.

### **Thinking of the Council's aim to continuously improve sites, do you believe that the HWRCs are generally fit for purpose?**

90% agree, 5% disagree and 5% answered don't know

The three most common comments were:

- HWRC too small and poorly designed
- Negative experience of queues
- Need to increase materials streams

### **Would you support an overall reduction of one or two sites across Kent, provided the service continued to be operated to a good standard across the remainder of the HWRCs?**

55% agreed, 30% disagree and 15% answered don't know

### **To help shape the future of the network of HWRCs, please tell us which are the three most important things for you?**

The top most important factors were the range of materials, short journey times and reduced queues.

### **If you do not use a Kent HWRC, are there any improvements that would encourage you to? (Note – some respondents answered this question although they do use the HWRCs already)**

The top 3 reasons were stated as:

- Local facilities – want a site close to home
- Extend range of materials accepted
- Improve accessibility, no steps to containers.

Turning to the clusters identified in section 5.6 above, each one is considered separately below.

## **SE Kent**

### **Dover, New Romney, Shornecliffe, Hawkinge and Ashford**

#### **POSC Report**

The plans for a new transfer station at Ashford provide an opportunity to improve access and upgrade the HWRC substantially. The accepted business case includes the associated closure of the legacy transfer station and HWRC at Hawkinge, which is located at the site of an obsolete incinerator. The Hawkinge site is set to close when the Ashford facility comes on stream in 2013. It is considered that the remaining sites in the zone meet current needs and standards. However in the long-term, consideration may need to be given to the need for expansion or relocation of the Shornecliffe (Folkestone) HWRC which has limited capacity to meet any increase in demand.

#### **Consultation response summary:**

**Taking into account proposals to improve the facility at Ashford, do you believe it is reasonable to close the out of date and expensive to operate site at Hawkinge, provided services exist within a 20 minute drive time of your home?**

36% agreed, 18% disagreed, 46% answered don't know

The three most common comments were:

- Other HWRCs are too far to travel
- Improve Hawkinge HWRC
- Increased fly-tipping

204 people from the Hawkinge area responded that the HWRC should not be closed.

The most commonly stated reasons were:

- Increased journey times
- Fly-tipping increase
- Hawkinge is a growing town and needs its own HWRC

Some respondents commented that the question was loaded and/or misleading.

#### **Petition**

A petition of 587 signatures was presented by Hawkinge Town Council to the Cabinet Member on 22 February 2012 strongly opposing any proposal to close the household waste recycling centre at Hawkinge.

**Do you support the upgrading of the existing HWRC at Ashford, which forms part of the proposal for a new waste transfer station?**

50% agree, 4% disagree and 46% answered don't know  
Of those respondents who use the Ashford HWRC 88% support upgrading.

### Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

It is proposed to close Hawkinge HWRC and waste transfer station in late 2013 as part of the proposal to provide a new waste transfer station at Ashford. This takes account of the site having the lowest waste arisings of any site in the county, the nature of the legacy site which opens on weekdays and on a Saturday morning only for historic reasons, the ongoing cost of maintaining the obsolete incinerator building and the availability of both Shornecliffe, Folkestone and Whitfield, Dover HWRCs within a 20 minutes drive time.

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### **NE Kent**

### **Canterbury, Herne Bay, Margate, Deal & Richborough**

#### POSC Report

This zone has sites in close proximity, each serving discrete populations (with the exception of Richborough HWRC, where the hinterland for the site overlaps with that of Margate HWRC). The Richborough site has limited space and would need significant investment for expansion and upgrading to modern standards. Therefore, Richborough HWRC has been identified for closure in summer 2013, when the current management contract expires. The nearest alternative site is at Margate, which was subject to major re-development and expansion in 2006. It has available capacity to meet any resultant increased demand, and mapping analysis shows the impact on householders' drive times would be minimal.

Of the other three sites, Canterbury HWRC is a modern fit for purpose site serving a large urban community; Herne Bay HWRC is scheduled for major re-development to current standards in 2012; and Deal HWRC (although relatively small) provides a full range of services and serves a distinct local community.

#### Consultation response summary:

**Taking into account that there is a facility at Deal and Margate, do you believe it is reasonable to close the out of date and expensive to operate facility at Richborough, provided services exist within a 20 minute drive time of your home?**

41% agree, 17% disagree and 42% answered don't know.

The three most common comments were:

- Other HWRCs are too far to travel
- The roads do not make other HWRCs easily accessible.
- The HWRC is always busy and should not be closed

177 people from the Richborough area responded that the HWRC should not be closed.

The most commonly stated reasons were:

- Journey times will increase
- Increase in fly-tipping
- The site should be updated / improved

## **E-petition**

An e-petition commenced on 14 February 2012, petitioning the Council “to decide to keep the household waste recycling centre at Richborough” on the stated basis that it is a well-run site, used by local residents, any closure will increase pressure on other sites and increase fly-tipping.

### Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

It is proposed to close Richborough HWRC in 2013 (when the current management contract expires) due to its low waste tonnage throughput, the poor quality of the site which would otherwise require significant capital investment, and the low number of households which would be affected by drive times to the next nearest site.

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## **Swale**

### **Sheerness, Church Marshes and Faversham**

#### POSC Report

The three sites in this area were developed in the 1980s and have had little further capital investment. They are arguably no longer fit for purpose, being too small to be capable of significant improvement. The existing capital programme already makes provision to replace the Church Marshes transfer station and HWRC. It is important to consider the context of the recent highway investment to Sheerness, the new Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road currently under construction, and proposals for regeneration in the area by Swale Borough Council. With these points in mind, once the Church Marshes relocation site is confirmed it will be possible to consider any scope for consolidation in this zone.

#### Consultation response summary:

**Do you agree that the HWRC at Church Marshes, Sittingbourne, is inadequate and should be replaced with a new facility at a more accessible location, to provide a more efficient service to Swale residents?**

24% agree, 4% disagree and 72% answered don't know.

Of the respondents who use Church Marshes 40% believe it should be replaced. The most common comments from those who disagree with replacement were:

- Happy with Church Marshes as it is

- This will result in the closure of Faversham or Sheerness sites
- Not enough information on new location

#### Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

It is proposed that a site search be carried out to find a replacement site for Church Marshes TS/HWRC. Subject to the location of the replacement site, it is proposed site provision in the area be reviewed and consult on any further changes which are indicated.

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### **West Kent** **Pepperhill, Dartford Heath and Swanley,**

#### POSC report

Pepperhill transfer station and HWRC opened in 2008 has been subject to major investment. It is subject to a long term management contract. It is one of the busiest sites in the Kent HWRC network. Of the other two sites, Dartford Heath is on land which is leased and therefore produces an additional revenue pressure. However, based on tonnage throughput and operating cost, these two smaller sites, Dartford Heath and Swanley, are considered to be cost-effective. As a result the time to consider the future of these two sites is at the lease expiry in 2017.

#### Consultation response summary:

**The HWRCs at Dartford Heath and Swanley currently operate at full capacity with no scope for expansion. Do you agree they should be replaced with modern facilities?**

50% agree, 6% disagree and 44% answered don't know  
Of the respondents who use Dartford Heath and Swanley HWRCs, 47% believe they should be replaced with modern facilities.

The three main reasons why people disagreed were:

- The sites are fine as they are
- Risk of reducing from two sites to one
- Insufficient information

#### Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

It is proposed a site search be carried out in this area, with a view to replacement facilities being provided in 2017, and subject to a further decision. A provision of £2.6m has already been made in the waste capital programme.

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### **Mid-Kent** **Tovil (Cuxton)**

#### POSC Report

Tovil HWRC is recognised as an over-subscribed site. It serves the whole of the Maidstone urban area, the West Malling / Larkfield / Ditton corridor, and a large proportion of the rural area to the south reaching to the county boundary at Hawkhurst. There is a clear need for an additional site to reduce the pressure at Tovil and equally seek to provide a service for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council area residents.

Additionally, KCC pays Medway for KCC householders' use of the Medway Cuxton site. This funding of £300k per year would be better used to support a new facility in Kent. The capital programme previously made provision for this project but the funding was removed due to the problems finding a suitable site. It is proposed that the site search be renewed and new capital funding sought for development in 2015/16, subject to the pressure on the capital programme.

#### Consultation response summary:

**Do you support the provision of an additional HWRC in the Tonbridge and Malling area, which is currently not covered by the existing network?**

52% agree, 3% disagree, 45% answered don't know

Stakeholder comments included:

- Support for an HWRC in the area
- Improve existing access before building new ones
- Overcrowding at sites e.g. Tovil

#### Revised recommendations taking account of consultation and EIA:

Despite previous unsuccessful site searches it is proposed to continue to seek to provide a new site to serve Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone residents which will assist in reducing queues to the Tovil HWRC. Provision of £2.3m has been included in the capital programme.

## **7. Operational risk management**

### **7.1 Fly-tipping**

7.1.1 Fly-tipping has been identified as a risk consequent to both operational changes and site closures. However, the vast majority of Kent residents are law abiding and keen to recycle and dispose of their waste appropriately. When individual household waste recycling centres have been closed for refurbishment in the past there has been no evidence of increased fly-tipping. For instance the Pepperhill site, one of the busiest in the county, was closed for 6 months in 2008 without any adverse impact in this respect. Additionally, in other local authority areas where radical changes have been made which far exceed those proposed in this report, any temporary increase in fly-tipping has been short-lived.

7.1.2 However, it is recognised that there is a minority of people who commit criminal offences. The Council, working with the waste collection authorities, has a very good track record of successful prosecutions utilising covert

surveillance to secure significant fines including custodial sentencing. The maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and fines of up to £50,000 is well established. The team also pursues cases of fraud where waste entering the HWRCs is misrepresented as household waste. It works regionally with London boroughs, the Environment Agency and the waste collection authorities to share intelligence.

7.1.3 It is proposed to launch a new campaign to increase vigilance and emphasise a zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping across the county which coincides with the proposed operational changes. The campaign will aim to maximise the deterrent impact of criminal prosecutions across Kent.

7.1.4 In respect of managing the risk of fly-tipping, it is important to ensure that the commercial and industrial (C&I) waste sector is provided with information on their current disposal options as part of the customer engagement plan highlighted below. Additionally, the Minerals and Waste Development Framework is making provision for all commercial and industrial waste arisings in the County. A network of suitable sites is currently being identified as part of the site assessment process. The preferred options for new sites will be consulted on in a consultation commencing at the end of May 2012. In addition KCC will be safeguarding the existing major facilities for commercial and industrial waste in the Core Strategy in order to maintain capacity for the planned period to 2030.

## 7.2 Customer Engagement Plan

7.2.1 The need for a comprehensive customer engagement plan ahead of the implementation of any agreed operational changes was noted by the IMG/POSC as essential. Attention is particularly drawn to a recurring point in the Equalities Impact Assessment which is the need for appropriate communications, for instance in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, and pregnancy & maternity.

7.2.2 There will need to be a planned implementation programme so that information can be provided during the lead-in period. A phased approach will be taken to manage the transition, with good communications to raise public awareness of changes in the way sites are operated.

## 8. Financial considerations

8.1 The proposed operational and infrastructure changes will deliver efficiencies and are consistent with the medium term financial plan. Additional funding has already been provided within the capital programme for waste management infrastructure.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree that the following operational policy changes are made at the household waste recycling centres.

- a) Tyres, asbestos and gas bottles are to be accepted by KCC's network of waste transfer stations only, and the quantity limited as follows.

Tyres: Limit car tyres to a maximum of two, per visit.  
Asbestos: Limited to one sack or equivalent, per visit.  
Gas bottles: Limited to one "refillable" gas bottle, per visit.

A standard charge of £5 per unit (i.e. up to 2 tyres or one bag of asbestos or one gas bottle) is proposed, to be increased in line with future increases in disposal costs and administration.

- b) The amount of construction waste to be brought into a HWRC by any single vehicle, or combined vehicle and trailer, is to be set at a maximum of one car boot load of construction waste. This would be equivalent to 3 bags, of up to 30kg weight per bag, this being a bag weight that the average person can lift. The waste is to comprise spoil, hardcore, soil, rubble, or equivalent. For larger items such as baths, the material would not need to be bagged, but should not exceed approx. 90kg in total or one average car boot load per visit.
- c) All commercial vehicles including pick-up trucks, vans, agricultural vehicles including horse boxes are to be excluded from HWRCs.

An exception scheme for householders with disabilities using over-height vehicles is to be introduced.

A permit scheme for the small number of householders who do not own any other vehicle, other than an excluded vehicle, and those with large private vehicles is provided. All other conditions, such as the limit on construction waste, will continue to apply. Permits will provide access to the sites on up to 12 occasions per calendar year. Any additional applications for permits in one year from the same household will be subject to investigation to ensure the exclusion of trade waste.

- d) Access to HWRCs for trailers is limited to those of up to 1.0m<sup>3</sup> capacity. The total combined quantity of construction waste is to be limited as set out above. (The quantity is not to be doubled for a combined vehicle and trailer.)
- e) Support the development of additional commercial capacity where there is evidence of under-provision of waste disposal for businesses. Carry out a feasibility study on the opportunities at Kent County Council waste sites to promote cost-effective waste disposal capacity for businesses in order to ensure there are alternatives to fly-tipping.
- f) Provide close monitoring of fly-tipping across Kent to identify any hot-spots arising from the implementation of operational policy or network changes. Ensure prompt action and support to investigate offences and arrange for the removal of waste by working with the waste collection authorities. Launch a new media campaign based on zero-tolerance of fly-tipping and promoting responsible waste disposal.
- g) A comprehensive communications plan and information programme to be provided to support implementation of the operational changes.

- h) The existing permit scheme at Dartford Heath HWRC for Kent only residents is retained. A similar trial permit scheme is considered in 2013/14, at Swanley HWRC.

It is further recommended that the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Environment to implement the decision in respect of policy changes through a phased approach to ensure sufficient capacity to manage a smooth transition and to keep progress under continuous review to maximise customer service.

9.2 It is further recommended that the following changes are introduced in respect of the HWRC sites network:-

- i) Carry out a site search in respect of the North West Kent and Mid Kent areas.
- j) Close Richborough waste site in autumn 2013 at the end of the current contract term and Hawkinge waste site in autumn 2013 when the new Ashford Transfer station and improved household waste recycling centre is fully operational.
- k) Review the HWRC provision in the Swale area subject to a further member decision when the replacement site for Church Marshes TS/HWRC is established.

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## 10. Background documents:

Public Consultation Report – Household Waste Recycling Centres (February 2012)  
Equalities Impact Assessments (May 2011 – February 2012)

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