

HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES - POSITION STATEMENT

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1. Purpose of Position Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this Position Statement is to inform the Panel of the current situation with improving all those Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) that are identified in the Environment Department Service Property Strategy 2003-2007.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are currently 19 HWRCs in Hertfordshire, all of which differ in their suitability and sufficiency to perform the functions for which they are intended.
- 2.2 Until relatively recently the primary purpose of each site was to receive waste as efficiently and quickly as possible and dispose of it to landfill. The introduction of recycling targets and the move towards more sustainable forms of waste management in recent years, has, however, radically changed the way in which the service must be provided and the demands on the HWRCs have changed.
- 2.3 Since the introduction of the Landfill Tax in October 1996, there has been a significant increase in the amounts of waste being delivered to the HWRCs and the need to pass customers through the facilities quickly, has increased accordingly. The pressure to achieve high levels of recycling and recovery at the HWRCs has also increased with the result that a much wider range of collection facilities must now be provided.
- 2.4 In 2002 a programme of modernisation of all HWRCs was implemented and incorporated into revised operating contracts. The improvements have included more consistent and user-friendly opening hours, more efficient traffic management, better signage and customer training for site staff.
- 2.5 One immediate benefit of these improvements has been a significant increase in recycling performance at the sites. In 2002/03 more than 34% of the 131,000 tonnes that were received at the sites, was recycled. The current projection for 2003/04 is in excess of 40% which compares very favourably with the County Council's Best Value target for the year, of 35%.
- 2.6 These pressures for change have placed additional demands on all of the HWRCs and many have been found wanting for one reason or another. Opportunities for either improving or relocating those sites in need of improvement are therefore constantly being sought and the following Analysis section deals with each of the HWRCs in turn.

3. Analysis

- 3.1 Hoddesdon HWRC – no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.2 Turnford HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.3 Tring HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.4 Berkhamsted HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.5 Hemel Hempstead HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.6 Letchworth HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.7 Royston HWRC – this HWRC is too small to provide the range of recycling facilities that are currently demanded and needs to be enlarged. There is a plot of vacant plot of land immediately to the rear of the site that would be ideal for the purpose, and the Waste Management Unit (WMU) has been speaking to the owners, North Herts D.C. about a possible purchase. These discussions have now reached the point where NHDC have offered to sell the land to the County Council as part of a package, which would include two further adjoining plots of land. The WMU is currently exploring ways to purchase the land and dispose of the parts that it does not need.
- 3.8 Bishop's Stortford HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.9 Buntingford HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.10 Ware HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present although approaches have been made to the owners of the adjoining landfill site, asking about the possibilities of improving the HWRC as part of a land exchange deal. This deal would probably involve exchanging the County Council's disused landfill site, which is located at the rear of the HWRC, for a more suitable piece of land at the roadside.
- 3.11 Elstree HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.12 Potters Bar HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.13 Harpenden HWRC – temporary works have been carried out to increase the size of the site so as to provide a larger unloading area and a wider range of recycling facilities. The construction works to develop a brand new facility are expected to commence early in 2004.
- 3.14 St. Albans HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.
- 3.15 Stevenage HWRC - no major plans for improvement at present.

- 3.16 Rickmansworth HWRC – plans to enlarge the facility by expanding it into the vacant land alongside it, have been delayed by problems arising from the activities of the County Council’s tenant on neighbouring land. These activities could put site users at risk should they be asked to dispose of their waste near the boundary that is common to both sites. The Waste Management Unit is currently trying to resolve these problems and works will begin once this is done.
- 3.17 Hunton Bridge HWRC – this facility will close once the new Waterdale HWRC is constructed and opened to the public. Works on the new site are programmed to start soon and it is expected that Hunton Bridge will close and be sold before the end of the financial year.
- 3.18 Watford HWRC – this facility is currently located within Watford BC’s works depot which they are currently planning to redevelop for residential use. In order to allow their plans to progress to fruition, WBC have been discussing with the County Council, proposals to build a replacement facility within the Cardiff Road industrial area. There is no firm timescale for these proposals at present but negotiations are underway.
- 3.19 Cole Green HWRC – the Waste Management Unit continues to search for a suitable alternative site to relocate this facility to but to date one has not been forthcoming. For many reasons, the Cole Green facility is neither suitable nor sufficient and its relocation is seen by the WMU as being a matter of high priority.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Whilst a solution for the Cole Green situation is still to be found, reasonable progress is being made on most of the County Council’s least suitable or sufficient HWRCs. The next few years should see significant improvements made to the level of service provision with a number of new or improved facilities in the pipeline.

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