

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE CROSS BORDER CHARGING AND PERMIT SYSTEM  
**DATE:** 13 JUNE 2019  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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## THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

### SUMMARY:

In January 2020, Hampshire County Council (HCC) will introduce a charge of £5 per visit to its Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) for people who live outside of the Hampshire Districts and who wish to use the facilities. In order to administer this, Hampshire County Council are introducing a permit scheme which will require all residents to register online from January 2020. Southampton residents will be eligible to register online and therefore avoid the charge; if they do not, they will have to pay £5 per visit. There is now a need to consider whether Southampton City Council should adopt a similar scheme for the HWRC at City Depot in Millbrook, or retain the current free-of-charge arrangements.

Hampshire has also introduced an administration fee of £15 for the existing provision of a waste permit for commercial vehicles and trailers from 1 June 2019 at HWRCs. This charge applies to everyone who requires a waste permit, including Hampshire (and Southampton) residents. A link to this scheme is provided on the council's website and Cabinet are being asked to note that Hampshire are now applying an annual admin fee for the permit.

### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. Southampton's HWRC is located at City Depot on First Avenue. This site is managed by Veolia Environmental Services under the HCC HWRC contract. Residents are able to take a wide variety of items to the HWRC including recyclables, garden waste, furniture and clothes, for no charge. Residents are also able to take soil, rubble, plasterboard and asbestos to the HWRC and dispose of these for a small charge.
2. Other Hampshire HWRCs are available at:
  - Grange Road, Netley, SO31 5FF
  - Normandy Way, Marchwood, SO40 4UD
  - Shamblehurst Lane South, Hedge End, SO30 2AD
  - Stoney Croft Rise, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 3YU.
3. HCC takes overall responsibility for managing the procurement and terms of the countywide HWRC contract but Southampton, as a Unitary Authority, has authority to make minor changes to the operations at the City Depot HWRC. It is recognised that some Southampton residents may use other sites close to our border and they will need to comply with the requirements to register with HCC to continue to use these free of charge.

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4. HCC has proposed a number of changes to HWRC operations in the last 3 years. These have included reviewing opening hours and charges, as well as introducing a cross border charging scheme. The cross border charging scheme would levy a charge of £5 per visit on non-Hampshire residents when using Hampshire HWRCs as a contribution towards the disposal costs associated with the material they bring in.
5. In October 2018, a decision report presented to Hampshire County Council resulted in approval to introduce cross border charges from January 2020 onwards, as well as to implement an electronic residents' permit scheme to manage the cross border usage of HCC HWRCs.
6. HCC considered two broad options for the cross border system: a manual one and a digital one, and evaluated each in terms of its cost, management and effectiveness. The manual option involved either:
  - making it a requirement that all site users brought with them a suitable piece of identification to prove they are a Hampshire resident (e.g. a council tax bill or driver's licence), or
  - Issuing a physical permit or sticker to all Hampshire addresses so that these could be presented when entering the HWRC.

These options were discounted due to the costs associated with staff checking documents of each user, and of producing and distributing permits.

7. The digital option will require all Hampshire residents to register for an electronic permit (e-permit) that would be used by vehicles entering the sites via an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system. ANPRs are already installed on site. Therefore the proposal would be to ask residents to register with HCC, entering their name, address, contact details and up to three vehicle registrations. An e-permit record would then be created and used to populate a database shared with the ANPR system. When a vehicle not registered on the database enters a HCC site, it will be flagged to staff who could then approach the customer and manage the customer journey.
8. Having considered all the factors associated with the manual and digital solutions, HCC has determined that the flexibility, reduced impact on Hampshire residents, minimal administration, and low delivery cost means that the digital solution is their preferred approach.
9. HCC have further noted that, whilst sign up will be primarily a 'self-service' activity, they will make provision for those residents that are not able to access the internet to support them in signing up for a permit. They are intending to develop a detailed communications plan to encourage residents to sign up for a permit.
10. HCC will be going ahead with work to implement the cross border charging scheme throughout 2019, so it has become necessary for Southampton City Council to determine its position.

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11. There are three main options available to Southampton City Council in terms of charging schemes at City Depot:
  - i. Adopting a consistent approach with HCC, introducing a £5 charge per visit for non-Hampshire residents, and a residents permit scheme to manage cross border usage
  - ii. Remaining 'as is', so that the HWRC at City Depot remains free of charge for everyone, in contrast to other HWRCs across Hampshire
  - iii. Introducing a different scheme, either in terms of the charges it levies, or the way the permit scheme is administered.
12. The first option to adopt a consistent approach with HCC, meaning non Hampshire residents would be charged £5 per visit to City Depot:
  - Would maintain a consistent operation for residents and recognises that Southampton residents use different HWRCs depending on the area of the city they live in.
  - A consistent approach enables delivery of simple, effective and consistent communication to the public and traders regarding use of these sites.
  - The existence of different systems would have the potential to cause confusion, dissatisfaction and complaints, particularly when using HCC sites.
  - This option would ensure that residents from outside the county who use Southampton's HWRC pay a contribution towards the operational and disposal costs of the site.
  - This option would also mitigate the risk that traffic to the City Depot site increases significantly (as could happen if it remains free of charge).

This would increase site management and disposal costs, and could lead to poorer customer experiences and increased traffic congestion/disruption.
13. If the first option was adopted, the service has reviewed the options around the type of permit scheme which could be introduced, in the same way HCC did. A manual checking scheme would significantly slow down the throughput at the site and lead to increased queuing. The option of a physical permit or sticker is also not recommended due to the significant cost for producing and distributing these to approximately 130,000 households in Southampton, as well as the ongoing cost of replacing damaged and lost permits. There would also be enforcement costs associated with the potential for misuse. A digital solution of the same type as that which will be introduced in HCC would therefore be preferred. Veolia already have an ANPR camera at City Depot and it would be possible to link with HCC, so this will be a low cost solution.
14. However it is not apparent that the HWRC at City Depot currently suffers in the same way from cross border (out of County usage) when compared with other HWRC's across Hampshire. This calls into question the proportionality of asking all Southampton residents to register to use the HWRC in Southampton, particularly when the likely impact is not currently known.

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15. The second preferred option is to remain 'as is', so that the HWRC at City Depot remains free of charge for everyone, including non-Hampshire residents and keep the impact under review:
- This option would mitigate the risk that charging reduces or removes the incentive for residents to recycle, encourages residents to drive further to dispose of their waste, and/or increases fly tipping
  - Encouraging recycling and responsible disposal of waste is in line with strategic ambitions around green city; this option would also likely prove most popular with those residents that live close to City Depot and currently use this site
  - However, this option may increase traffic to the City Depot site. At peak times, the site is already very busy; on a Saturday, we can see over 800 vehicles visit the site. If this site was the only one in Hampshire that remained free of charge for non-residents, throughput may increase.
  - It may also have a direct cost to SCC, as disposal costs are paid per tonne.
  - There is a risk that residents living close to one of the other HCC sites might express dissatisfaction, or be confused by the changes.
  - SCC would need to direct residents to HCC information regarding permits, and provision of support to residents who need it to complete the forms.
16. The impact of the decision not to follow HCC by introducing a charge for cross border (out of county) use in terms of a potential increase in throughput, congestion and disposal costs will be kept under review following implementation by HCC proposed in January 2020.

## RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial

17. There is a risk that as the only HWRC in Hampshire not to monitor or charge for cross border (out of county) usage there may be an increase in throughput and therefore disposal costs. It is estimated that a 10% increase of waste would cost an additional circa £50K pa.
18. There will be no additional costs associated with communicating the changes to residents. We will link with HCC in terms of their broader communications plan, and will utilise free channels such as social media wherever possible.

### Property / Other

19. None

### Legal

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20. S.51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on waste disposal authorities (including SCC) to provide a site / facility at which residents of the Waste Disposal Authorities area can bring and dispose of their normal household waste and recyclables free of charge. Charges may be introduced for certain classes of waste as prescribed by legislation, such as commercial, hazardous, garden or bulky waste etc but the principle remains that normal household waste must be collected, received and disposed of free of charge. Access and entry controls to a site can be introduced, along with a reasonable administration fee, in order to prevent unauthorised disposal by commercial type vehicles.

## **Risk Management**

21. As detailed previously there is a risk that as the only HWRC in Hampshire that will not monitor or levee a charge for cross border (out of county) usage there may be an increase in throughput which could lead to congestion, a poorer customer experience and increased disposal costs. On the other hand the imposition of a charge or registration by Southampton residents to use the HWRC at City Depot could be seen as disproportionate and an unnecessary administrative burden leading to potential reputational damage. It may also discourage recycling and the proper disposal of waste. Once HCC have implemented their scheme SCC will be in a better position to quantify the impact.

## **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

None

**Further Information Available From:**

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