

Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre Closure

Summary

1. This report deals with a motion presented to Council on 29th March regarding the budget decision already made regarding the closure of Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Background

2. A motion was presented to Council on 29th March by Councillor Reid regarding the Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre. This stated in full:

“Council notes the significant improvement in the proportion of waste that has been recycled under the previous Liberal Democrat administration, from 12% in 2003 to 45% in 2011.

Council supports the principle that waste collection and recycling should be convenient and fair to residents across the city.

In light of the fact that the Budget 2012/13 has deleted the provision of a Recycling and Reuse Centre in the west of the city, Council requests that the Cabinet halts the closure plan for Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Council also supports the principle of the provision of a free receptacle for the collection of waste to all residents across the city requests that the provision of free black bin bags should continue to all areas of the city where wheeled bins are not in use.”

This motion has been referred to Cabinet; this report deals specifically with issues in relation to the closure of the Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre. A petition calling for the

tip to remain open was also received at Council. As this is believed to have more than 750 signatories the petition will trigger a debate at a future Council meeting.

3. The Annex to this report sets out further information regarding the decision made for the closure of Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling centre as part of the budget proposals agreed at Budget Council in February this year.

Consultation

4. Consultation on budget proposals has been previously reported to Cabinet and Council.

Options

5. The options for Cabinet at the present time in view of the Council motion are:

Option 1 – consider the evidence from the motion and petition and confirm the decision made through the budget process for the closure of Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre; or

Option 2 – consider the evidence from the motion and petition and recommend a change in the budget decision and seek alternative funding cuts to offset it.

Analysis

6. It is recommended that Option 1 is approved as the motion presents no additional evidence to amend the decision made by Budget Council. The basis for that decision which is set out in the Annex to this report still remains valid. As set out in the implications section and the Annex, Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre is not fit for purpose, does not comply with current standards, and is not fully accessible to all users. Costs in the region of £250k have been identified to address immediate basic maintenance and health and safety issues if closure does not go ahead. To make any facility fully accessible would require either redevelopment of the existing site at an estimated cost of £2million or relocation at an estimated cost of £3.6million. Previous budget papers referred to £2.5million allocation for the provision of a new recycling centre in the West of York.

Council Plan

7. The decisions made in relation to the budget agreed at Budget Council in February are aimed at supporting the strategic objectives in the Council Plan.

Implications

8. Financial:

Budget council accepted the saving from the closure of Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre on 23rd February 2012. The saving (CANS32) incorporated with changes to contractual arrangements at Towthorpe provided a saving of £100k in 2012/13 and a further £30k in 2013/14. This saving includes for the closure of the Beckfield Lane site and associated management costs of the site and premises costs such as repairs and licensing costs.

The immediate savings from closing the site equate to a £40k management fee and direct premises costs. The closure though will reduce the need for additional costs that have been incurred in the past such as security and avoid the need for necessary repairs at the site. There will also be potential savings from combined transport costs as the waste is diverted to Hazel Court. The remainder of the savings will be delivered from contract negotiations at the Towthorpe site.

Option 1 allows for the approved savings to be delivered as part of the budget proposal.

Should Members accept option 2 then the approved budget savings would not be deliverable and further savings would need to be identified from other service areas.

The saving from the removal of provision of black sacks (CANS 116) was £29k in the budget. To reinstate this budget would lead to savings needed to be identified from other service areas.

Human Resources:

No direct implications

Equalities:

In terms of equalities Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre site is not fully accessible for all users and therefore is not fit for purpose in terms of equalities. Closure of the site will reduce choice of site for residents and they will have to use the two other, fully accessible sites. The very nature of the use of a household

waste site means that most users will arrive in a vehicle, so a potential adverse impact would be the additional travel to another site and possibly some additional waiting time. For those users without vehicles there are alternative accessible facilities, use of kerbside recycling, bulky collection service, other bring sites and free community furniture collections.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into effect almost two years ago DED is important because it gives expression to the shift from 'equal treatment' and 'reasonable adjustment' to emphasising equality of outcome and equality of experience. It is not only necessary for individual public bodies to pay due regard to the needs of disabled people, essential though that is, but for public authorities as a whole to take a holistic approach to disability, ensuring that public services enable the effective inclusion of disabled people on equal terms. It is for this reason, all HWRC's are expected to move to split level in a reasonable timeframe if they are to remain open and to comply with the duty under the Equalities Act. Equality impact assessments have identified that Beckfield Lane is not fit for purpose in its present condition. Under the Equalities Act the Authority could be challenged as to whether it is fulfilling its duty under the Act to ensure 'reasonable treatment' and whether it is making 'reasonable adjustments' within a reasonable timeframe. This is ultimately a decision for a court but the Authority could be open to such action if Beckfield Lane continues as it is.

Property:

If the closure of the site is implemented on the grounds as set out in the Annex then it may be suitable for alternative development which could meet other strategic objectives for the Council and/or generate a capital receipt.

Risk Management

9. Closure of Beckfield Lane was agreed at full Council. Failure to close the site and make associated savings will create the risk of not achieving savings required for a balanced budget.

Recommendations

10. That Cabinet are recommended to note the motion and petition to Council and as this provides no further information with regard to

the decision made at Budget council to agree Option 1 as set out in this report.

Reason: To enable the implementation of the Budget Council decision

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Report
Approved



Date 03 April 2012

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Patrick Looker

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annex – background information regarding the closure of Beckfield Lane Household Waste Recycling centre

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1. Local waste disposal authorities are required to provide one site where the public can dispose of waste free of charge. York has two sites that are fit for purpose as modern household waste sites. Government guidance states that all household waste sites should be fully accessible, operate as split level centres and users should not have to climb steep steps. Beckfield Lane household waste site does not fulfil the standards required and is not fully accessible.
2. The Beckfield Lane site has limited development opportunities and there are restrictions in its opening hours due to the close proximity of housing. Nationally, it is recognised because of traffic congestion and levels of Anti-Social Behaviour that HWRC's do not make good neighbours, this is true of the Beckfield Lane site.
3. Of the three sites Beckfield Lane collects the smallest amount of waste. Within the last 18 months the city has expanded its kerbside recycling services to the majority of properties in the city, including all the properties in the vicinity of Beckfield Lane, this has seen a further reduction in the use of the sites. The Authority's bulky household waste collection service is available to all residents. There are numerous bring sites for a variety of waste disposal and recycling in the area and throughout York.
4. Beckfield Lane was chosen for closure as part of the requirement to have a balanced budget for 2012/13. This decision was based on the operational difficulties already described and the investment that would be needed to make it fit for purpose, estimated to be £2 million. This would not overcome all the issues that the site poses situated in a residential area.
5. Relocation of the site to a new facility at another location has been investigated previously, 2008/9. Relocation is of course dependent on the availability of a suitable site for a household waste site. Even if it was feasible to find a suitable site it was estimated that the time to establish a new facility would take between 4 and 7 years and in 2008/9 the estimated ballpark scheme costs amount to £3.6 million.
6. The decision to close Beckfield was taken as part of the budget process in order to have a balanced budget for 2012/13. Beckfield

Lane in its current state is not fit for purpose. In reaching that decision, the options available in relation to Beckfield Lane were to:

- 1 – Do nothing and operate a site that is not fit for purpose, does not meet current standards for a household waste site, is not fully accessible to all users.
 - 2 – Redevelop the site as a modern household waste site at a cost in the region of £2 million.
 - 3 – Look to relocate the site in another area within an estimated timescale of 4 – 7 years and costs at over £3.6 million at 2008/9.
7. Option 1: Continued operation of the site would mean that the savings identified for closure would need to be found from other service areas. If the site did not close some basic maintenance/improvements would have to be made, estimated costs in the region of £250K. The basic maintenance and improvement work is primarily for site lighting, repairing the site surface and access road and demolishing an unsafe adjacent building. In addition, the use of temporary steps to carry waste to the top of the skip has Health and Safety implications both for the public and the staff, and all risks should be removed wherever possible.

Option 2: Redevelopment of the site would require to be funded. The restrictions on opening at the site, placed by the Environment Agency, given the location of the site within a residential housing area could not be easily overcome. Redevelopment of the site could potentially mean that there would be a demand for the public opening hours to be extended more in line with those operating at Hazel Court and Towthorpe. The extension of public opening hours would be subject to consideration by the Environment Agency and because of the location of the site in a residential area there is no guarantee that this would be approved.

Option 3: Relocation would be dependent on a full feasibility assessment, availability of funds, suitable land etc. This is not a short term option and would need to be examined in the light of decreasing tonnage at the site.

The only option for funding capital investment would be prudential borrowing. A capital investment of £2m would require a revenue budget of approximately £180k and an investment of £3.6m would require a revenue budget of £324k. Equivalent savings in other service areas would be required to fund these improvements.