



Environment & Transport Select Committee  
12 January 2012

**Update on Community Recycling Centre performance**

**Purpose of the report:** Policy Development and Review

This report provides a 6-monthly update to the Environment and Transport Select Committee on the performance of and developments at Surrey's Community Recycling Centres (CRCs).

**Introduction:**

1. Surrey County Council provides 15 CRCs where the public may deposit their waste and recycling. The sites are operated by SITA Surrey on behalf of Surrey County Council. In 2010/11 members of the public brought around 134,000 tonnes of waste to the CRCs, which equates to 28% of the total municipal waste collected in Surrey. It is estimated that members of the public make over 2.5 million visits to the centres each year.
2. The Waste and Sustainability Group are currently working to improve the performance of Surrey County Council's CRCs. This report serves as an update on schemes in progress at the sites.

**Extended opening hours during summer months at Camberley and Earlswood**

3. The aim of the pilot scheme at the two sites was to ease congestion over the summer period particularly at weekends, which would in turn enable increased recycling, reduce the level of fly tipping and improve customer satisfaction.
4. Currently during summer opening hours the sites open at 8am on weekdays and at 9am at the weekend. They close at 5.15pm on weekdays and 4.45pm at weekends. During the pilot scheme the sites opened at 8am until 7.30pm, everyday.
5. The pilot commenced on 1st April 2011 and ended on 30th September 2011. A local publicity campaign was developed to ensure that the improvement in service was communicated to residents, with a view to maximising use of the trial sites during the extended opening hours.
6. Automated Traffic Counters (ATCs) were installed at both sites to count the traffic entering the sites for the duration of the trial. Visit information for the sites over the six-month trial is set out below.

Opening Hours (extended hours in yellow)	Camberley average daily visits	Earlswood average daily visits	% of Total visitors
08:00 - 09:00	44	35	4%
09:00 - 10:00	101	87	9%
10:00 - 11:00	136	118	12%
11:00 - 12:00	143	124	13%
12:00 - 13:00	134	116	12%
13:00 - 14:00	127	105	11%
14:00 - 15:00	137	117	12%
15:00 - 16:00	131	112	12%
16:00 - 17:00	88	70	8%
17:00 - 18:00	38	32	3%
18:00 - 19:00	32	27	3%
19:00 - 20:00	11	8	1%
<b>Total daily visits</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>100%</b>

7. During the 6-month trial period, the extended opening hours persisted to be the least busy hours of the day. On average, 7% of visits to the sites took place during the extended opening hours. The additional cost for extended opening at the sites during the period was £52,112. This represented a 51% increase in staffing costs at the sites during the 6-month period.
8. There is no evidence to suggest that the extended opening hours reduced congestion or increased the recycling rates at either site.
9. Costs to cease or extend the scheme to more sites are presented below.

Options	Additional annual charge
Cease scheme	£0
Retain at both sites	£52,112
Extend to 6 strategically placed sites	£156,336
Extend to all 15 sites	£390,870

#### Additional staffing to increase recycling at lower performing sites

10. Officers identified that some sites in Surrey are reaching recycling rates of almost 80% whilst others achieve 10% less. For example in November 2011, the Chertsey CRC achieved a recycling rate of 67.7%, whilst the CRC site at Warlingham achieved a recycling rate of 78%. One possible reason is that some sites are extremely busy and may need extra staff to help to divert as much waste as possible into recycling containers. Charlton Lane and Slyfield were identified as two high throughput and lower performing sites which might benefit from extra resource, to increase recycling and a trial was therefore undertaken at these two sites. One of the aims of the trial was to establish whether the additional cost of staffing could be offset by the increase in material recycling value and consequent reduction in landfill disposal costs.
11. The trial commenced during September 2011 and is continuing on a month-by-month basis. The extra staff at Charlton Lane and Slyfield cost nearly £5,500 per month per site. However, savings on disposal partially offsets this additional cost, as the staff divert waste away from disposal and into recycling containers.

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12. At Charlton Lane CRC the effect has been to raise the recycling performance from 74% to 81% during September and this performance level is holding at 80% in October. Charlton Lane has moved up from an average position within the 15 sites and is now the top recycling site in Surrey. Overall the scheme at Charlton Lane had a net cost of approximately £662 in September as costs of additional staff were offset by savings made on diverting waste away from disposal and into recycling.
13. At Slyfield CRC performance rose by 6% in September from 63% to 69% raising it from being the lowest recycler (15<sup>th</sup>) to 8th place. As Slyfield didn't achieve as high a recycling rate, the net cost of the scheme was approximately £1,872 in September.
14. The summary table below shows September's performance. The seasonal downturn in refuse collected at the other 13 sites from August to September has been considered before calculating the effect of the extra staff diverting additional material away from the disposal containers and into the recycling containers.

Sep-11	Cost of additional staff	Extra tonnage recycled	Cost of tonnage recycled	Savings on avoided disposal	Net Cost	Additional cost per extra tonne recycled	Increase in recycling performance
Charlton Lane	£5,434	67	£1,005	£5,777	£662	£10	7%
Slyfield	£5,443	51	£764	£4,335	£1,872	£36	6%

15. Unfortunately Slyfield's performance has since dropped in October. SITA is looking into this with a view to identifying what the problem is and correcting it.
16. The trial cost approximately a total of £2,500 in September but increased to £6,000 in October, as the cost at Slyfield in October was the full cost of the staff with little return.
17. Officers would like to continue funding the scheme at Slyfield until the New Year. In January, Leatherhead will close temporarily for redevelopment and staff will then be redeployed to Slyfield to replace additional staff currently paid for by the scheme. The trial can then continue until August 2012 with no additional staffing cost to the council.
18. The purpose of maximising recycling at the community recycling centres is two-fold. Firstly it enables Surrey County Council to contribute to the overall target within the Surrey Joint Municipal waste Management Strategy of 70 % recycling by 2013. Secondly by diverting material from landfill, the council will avoid future increases in landfill disposal costs. (Landfill tax increases by £8 per tonne per year and will be £80 per tonne in 2013/14).
19. Therefore, whilst there is a net overall cost at present, this will become a net saving in future years as the cost of landfill increases.

### **Mattress recycling**

20. Currently, options for mattress recycling are limited, with processing costs exceeding that of landfill. However, SITA are currently operating a trial where the mattress covers are mechanically separated from the metal within. The metal is then recycled along with CRC metal and the mattress covers are sent

to an energy from waste facility. SITA will provide costs for this activity for SCC to consider, upon completion of the trial.

### **Wood recovery and recycling**

21. The UK wood market is currently experiencing difficulties, due to loss of processing capability in the UK due to a fire at Sonae (the biggest wood recycler in the UK), lack of Waste Incineration Directive (WID) compliant biomass facilities in the UK that can take the low grade material that we produce and low demand for biomass feedstock in Europe due to the so far extremely mild winter. This has resulted in gate fees for wood to biomass of over £40/t instead of £25/t. Options for recycling the wood generated at the recycling centres are extremely limited due to the high contamination levels in the material.
22. Surrey County Council officers believe that the processing of wood waste into a fuel for biomass is recycling, but Defra are unable to remove its status as a waste, due to the unknown level of contaminants that remain in the product. As a result Surrey County Council is currently unable to include wood chip for biomass in its recycling calculation. Wood waste to biomass also attracts lower gate fees than wood waste to recycling, so this route offers a more cost effective method of managing Surrey's wood arisings. In addition there is a carbon benefit in sending wood to biomass combustion as opposed to recycling.
23. Current market intelligence suggests that by 2015 demand for wood chip for biomass will outstrip supply, meaning that biomass facilities will need to import wood from abroad. This will increase the value of Surrey's waste wood supply. The SE7 group of authorities are examining whether there might be opportunities to pool wood as a resource at this time.
24. Currently, some companies can offer evidence of recycling waste wood whereby the local authority wood is sent to biomass, but the wood recycler will demonstrate that they recycled an equivalent tonnage of uncontaminated wood sourced from other producers. The council has currently adopted this method for some of its waste wood, however many authorities use this method to claim that 100% of their wood is recycled.
25. SITA has secured 5000ktpa at Hadfields wood recyclers, who are able to allocate the tonnage to pallet production.
26. Typically wood recyclers will charge a premium to evidence recycling for local authority wood, meaning the cost to send wood to biomass (classed as a recovery operation) is a cheaper option than recycling.
27. The issue that will need to be considered by the council is whether, given the additional costs of recycling wood compared with biomass, it is still appropriate to pursue a recycling solution for wood in order to meet the 70% recycling target within the Surrey Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

### **Carpet recovery and recycling**

28. SITA are now sending carpets to Mid UK (Lincolnshire) where 15% of the material is manually sorted for recycling and the remainder is shredded and converted into a Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF), replacing fossil fuels at 6 local

cement kilns. Mid UK are currently upgrading their carpet recycling operation and after April 2012 hope to reach a recycling rate of 30%.

**Bulky residual waste to Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF)**

29. Existing energy from waste facilities such as Allington and Lakeside are able to process waste collected in black bags, but are unable to process the large bulky residual waste that is created at the CRCs (for example, large pieces of furniture not fit for reuse or recycling). SITA has recently begun a trial to shred this bulky waste and send it to an energy from waste plant in Holland where it will be used as a fuel to create energy. Surrey will pay the same rates as landfill. This means that some transfer stations and CRCs will become zero landfill sites. This will help the council to meet the objective within the Surrey Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy of ceasing the use of landfill as a waste disposal method by 2013.

**Surrey Future Job Fund**

30. The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) was a central government initiative designed to address youth unemployment, aimed to provide jobs for 18-24 year olds who had been out of work for 6-12 months.
31. Within Surrey this initiative proposed a target to create 350 jobs through cooperation between Surrey County Council, the Surrey Economic Partnership and various partners from the public, private and third party sectors across the county.
32. It was anticipated that this scheme would provide development, focus and key skills training to long term unemployed youth, thus improving employability, and providing a service to the local community and businesses through the addition of paid labour resources and increased productivity.
33. SITA Surrey secured a FJF grant contract on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to create a maximum of 45 jobs across SITA sites, countywide.
34. The level of grant awarded to SITA afforded costs to hire entry-level starters each for a period of no less than 26 weeks working a maximum of 25 hours per week.
35. The future jobs fund employed staff at Surrey CRCs from October 2010 until September 2011.
36. 45 FJF employees joined SITA Surrey at a cost of £4,423.44 per individual (this cost was covered by the central government grant).
37. Over the course of the FJF scheme 20 employees did not complete the funded 26 weeks employment, 6 of which because they obtained other jobs. Many of the remainder did not provide reasons as to why they left. SITA have confirmed that they have not received any further information from the FJF organisers on this.
38. SITA Surrey took on a total of 7 future job fund employees onto permanent contracts at Earlswood, Lyne Lane, Martyrs Lane, Slyfield, Wilton Road and Witley. SITA Surrey also took on 1 future job fund employee on a rolling 6-month contract at Charlton Lane.

### CRC Redevelopment programme

39. The CRC redevelopment programme is aimed at improving service and recycling levels by identifying new sites to replace smaller congested ones, and to upgrade existing sites. A programme of conversion of many of the CRC's into modern split-level recycling centres is currently underway. The purpose of the redevelopments is to improve safety, reduce queuing and provide additional space for more recycling containers. Redevelopments to date include:

- a. Lyne Lane, Chertsey
- b. Blenheim Road, Epsom
- c. Earlswood, Redhill
- d. Charlton Lane, Shepperton
- e. Martyrs Lane, Woking

40. Further redevelopments are planned to take place at the following sites:

- a. Randalls Road, Leatherhead – this site is due to close on the 9<sup>th</sup> January for approximately 8 months to enable redevelopment.
- b. Petworth Road, Witley – After a number of delays the expansion and improvement of this site is currently underway. The site remains open during the redevelopment works, which are due to be completed in May 2012.
- c. Bond Road, Tandridge (Relocate) – site searches ongoing
- d. Swift Lane, Bagshot (Relocate) – site searches ongoing

### Current performance of the Community Recycling Centres

41. The table below shows the increase in recycling achieved during 2011/2012.

CRC recycling rates	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	YTD
2010/2011	54%	57%	54%	52%	55%	64%	63%	57%
2011/2012	67%	68%	67%	73%	73%	75%	75%	71%

### Conclusions:

#### Financial and value for money implications

CRC operations, including the redevelopment programme are provided for within the council's waste management budget.

#### Equalities Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken for the Community Recycling Centres has identified positive benefits in improving the accessibility of sites by creating split level sites and removing the need to climb steps to access recycling containers.

#### Environmental Impact

Reducing waste, recycling and diverting it from landfill has positive environmental benefits.

### Risk Management Implications

The performance of the community recycling centres is closely monitored to ensure as much waste as possible is diverted from landfill.

### Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets

Reduction of waste arisings, increase in recycling and diversion of waste from landfill are priorities for the council.

### Recommendations:

Number	Activity	Recommendation
1	Extended opening	Cease
2	Additional staff to increase recycling	Continue and seek to achieve maximum recycling at minimum cost
3	Mattress recycling	Continue with trial until 31 January 2012 and base decision on cost of recycling versus cost of disposal
4	Wood recovery and recycling	Continue to explore options for recovery and recycling based on cost, and desire to recycle over options for recovery
5	Carpet recovery and recycling	Continue to explore options for recovery and recycling based on cost, and desire to recycle over options for recovery
6	Bulky residual waste to SRF	Continue with trial and assess future costs provided by SITA
7	Surrey Future Jobs Fund	Scheme has ceased
8	CRC development programme	Six redevelopments completed, one underway, four planned in accordance with Action Plan.
9	Current CRC performance	Continue to increase recycling and recovery rates in accordance with Action Plan and monitor performance

Officers request that the Committee consider and comment on the report, consider the above recommendations, and review the CRC service again in six months time.

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