



Environment and Transport Select Committee  
12 December 2013

### Community Recycling Centre Service Update

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

To provide an update on the current and potential future provision of service

#### Introduction:

1. Surrey County Council is a Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) and has a statutory duty under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide places where residents living in the area can dispose of their own household waste, free of charge.
2. In order to fulfil this duty, Surrey County Council provides a network of 15 Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) across the county, where residents can dispose of and recycle many household materials and some non-household materials, free of charge. The sites, which are operated by the council's waste management contractor, SITA Surrey, are open 363 days of the year (apart from Bond Road which is closed on Sundays). The county council also provides four waste transfer stations where waste and recycling from the CRCs and our 11 District and Borough Councils is delivered, bulked and transported to onwards destinations.
3. Surrey residents produce over 500,000 tonnes of waste and recycling each year. Waste and recycling from the CRCs makes up just over one quarter the total and during 2012/2013 was 130,000 tonnes.
4. The recycling rate for the entire County (including district and borough kerbside collections and CRCs) is currently 52% but at the CRCs alone the rate is higher, at 65%. Over the past few years significant steps have been taken to reduce the amount of material from CRCs that is landfilled. Currently over 90% of materials at the CRCs are separated out to be either recycled, composted, reuse, recovered or sent to energy from waste facilities.
5. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 does not specify how many sites should be provided by WDAs. However it specifies that the

authority should provide site(s) that are reasonably accessible to residents and make those place(s) available at reasonable times for residents to dispose of their own household waste free of charge.

### **Current performance, service planning and pilots**

6. Surrey County Council is working with SITA Surrey to increase recycling and divert as much waste away from landfill. For the year to date approximately one third of the CRCs are recycling, composting or recovering almost all material that they collect such that virtually nothing from the sites is sent to landfill.
7. Almost 40 different materials are collected at the CRCs sites and the range of materials continues to be expanded as opportunities arise.
8. Mattresses, which are one of the most difficult materials to recover or recycle, are currently being separated at all sites and then processed at Epsom Waste Transfer Station. The metal from the mattresses is separated and recycled, whilst the fibres are processed into Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) which is then shipped to Amsterdam to create energy for the city.
9. Water based paints are currently being separated at all sites, to be either reused or sent for recovery.
10. A trial is currently underway at two sites to extract further recycling out of the residual (or black bag) containers. One of the sites is currently extracting almost half a ton per day of material which would have previously been sent to landfill or energy recovery plants.
11. Automated Traffic Counters (ATCs) have now been installed at all of the sites. This will provide an hourly count of vehicles at every site, enabling better service planning and in future improving the efficiency of the service.

### **Cost reductions**

12. The CRC service is currently being reviewed by officers with a view to improving performance, achieving financial savings and improving the efficiency of the service. Officers are investigating a number of different options and have visited other local authorities who have already successfully adopted very different approaches to the provision of their own services. Some of the options being investigated are –
  - Review of opening hours – this may result in proposals to reduce opening hours slightly when the sites are not busy
  - Review of opening days – during the winter sites are much less busy than in the summer and will not be running efficiently as a result. There may be opportunities to close certain sites on certain days and redirect residents to the next nearest site
  - Review of the number of sites provided – the EPA 1990 requires Surrey County Council to provide site(s) for residents to use free

of charge, but does not specify any particular number. Officers are investigating the overall effect of reducing the total number of sites in the County.

- Introduction of charging for non-household waste – a number of other large authorities are already charging for non-household items brought by residents to their sites. Officers are investigating charging systems for tyres, gas bottles, rubble, plasterboard and asbestos.
- Introduction of alternative 'Pay as you throw' sites – an alternative to closing sites is to reclassify sites so they are no longer provided under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and charge an entry fee. Officers have already spoken to colleagues in Somerset where 4 of their 18 sites now charge for entry.
- Increasing capture rates for recycling – a trial is currently underway at two sites in Surrey to intercept and extract more recycling which would have ended up going to landfill or energy from waste facilities. Officers are calculating whether this trial is cost effective.
- Advertising at sites – Surrey's sites receive over 2 million visits per year. Officers are investigating whether there is scope to generate revenue from advertising at the sites.

## Site Redevelopments

### Redevelopment programme

13. Following the adoption of the Surrey Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in 2006, SITA Surrey commenced a major redevelopment programme of Surrey's community recycling centres.

14. The following redevelopments have already taken place.

- Epsom – addition of new split level container area
- Lyne Lane, Chertsey – redevelopment into split level site
- Earlswood, Redhill – new split level site
- Charlton Lane, Sunbury – new split level container area
- Martyrs Lane, Woking – new split level site
- Witley – new split level site
- Leatherhead – new split level site and waste transfer station

### Future developments

15. **Slyfield (Guildford)** – Surrey County Council and Sita Surrey are currently working on redeveloping the existing Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and Community Recycling Centre (CRC). The existing facilities are overburdened due to the continuous development and expansion of services and materials collected by Surrey. As a result, there are serious congestion problems which affect residents using the site and the local authorities who deliver waste and recycling to the site. This has a knock on effect for the entire industrial estate, when the site is busy.

16. **Other sites** – As part of the major redevelopment programme, it was intended to relocate the sites at Bagshot and Waringham. Both are small sites with access constraints. However despite extensive searches it has not been possible to find any suitable alternative sites in the nearby area and therefore the sites will remain as they are for the time being.

#### **Awards**

17. The redeveloped CRCs have proved popular with residents and have won a number of awards for their design. These are listed as follows.

- Earlswood Redevelopment
  - Award from Reigate Society 2011
- Witley Redevelopment
  - Godalming Trust Design Award 2012
  - Letsrecycle 'National Civic Amenity Site of the Year 2013
  - Waverley Design Award 2013
- Leatherhead Redevelopment
  - Shortlisted for Institute of Civil Engineers South East England Engineering Excellence Awards 2013.

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

18. The CRC service is the most highly rated service that Surrey County Council provides and has been so for the last two years. The county council and Surrey Police jointly commission the survey to regularly check public satisfaction with public services, gather views on local issues affecting quality of life and track change over time. The satisfaction level for the service (satisfied or very satisfied) is currently 80% for Quarter 2 of 2013/2014 and regularly achieves up to 85% each quarter. Link to the resident survey is here-

<http://www.surreyi.gov.uk/GroupPage.aspx?GroupID=56>

Link to Quarter 2 data is here -

<http://www.surreyi.gov.uk/Resource.aspx?GroupID=56&ResourceID=1219>

#### **Conclusions:**

19. Considerable work is underway to improve Surrey's waste infrastructure, the efficiency of the CRC service and to achieve financial savings associated with the CRC service.

#### **Recommendations:**

20. Officers request that members note this report and comment on the progress made to date.

**Next steps:**

21. Officers continue to progress the development of infrastructure and the review of the CRC service and will forward proposals to committee for consideration in due course.

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**Sources/background papers:** None.

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