

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 26 NOVEMBER 2024****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE****LEAD OFFICER: SIMON CROWTHER INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, PROPERTY AND GROWTH****SUBJECT: BAGSHOT COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE****ORGANISATION STRATEGY HIGH PERFORMING COUNCIL****PRIORITY AREA:****Purpose of the Report:**

The Report is to recommend the permanent closure of the Community Recycling Centre at Swift Lane, Bagshot GU19 5NJ (the 'Bagshot CRC') and that opening hours of the Community Recycling Centre at Wilton Road Camberley be extended by an extra day a week (Tuesday) to compensate.

This piece of work helps Surrey County Council meet its high performing council priority objective and No One Left Behind because it seeks to to remove a sub-standard facility from the waste estate whilst providing additional service capacity nearby and address ongoing harassment and intimidation of waste contractor SUEZ's staff.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agree to the closure of the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) at Swift Lane, Bagshot and as a consequence agree to the opening of the CRC at Wilton Road, Camberley for an extra day a week (Tuesday).
2. Allow those residents of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead who currently use the Bagshot CRC to use Lyne CRC, Chertsey as an alternative.

Reason for Recommendations:

The Bagshot CRC site is small, unmodernised and not fit for purpose. It is not an 'unsafe' site (SUEZ have obligations to keep the site safe and lawful) but there are hazards – for example, users of the site park their cars in the centre of the plot, and then walk across the path of moving vehicles to access the various waste containers.

The site has to close for container exchange, leading to inconvenience & a build-up of queues. There is no means of compacting waste in the containers which means that they will be taken off the site with spare capacity – creating more of a carbon

impact per tonne in terms of haulage and increased vehicle movements. These issues do not occur at modernised sites.

There is an ongoing pattern of vandalism, fly tipping and unlawful entry at the Bagshot CRC site which happens out of hours (i.e. when the CRC is closed and overnight). Staff have been threatened by (some) users of the site who are attempting to bring non-acceptable (potentially unlawful) material onto the site. Rather than confront the user, for their own safety, the staff have had to accept the waste as presented.

Fly tipping has occurred both within the site and outside of the entrance. The existing perimeter fencing does not present a sufficient barrier to these episodes, which often involve the use of mechanical equipment. Material fly tipped has in the past included hazardous materials such as asbestos. Prevention measures would be difficult and costly to implement and could include reinforced walls with climb prevention, enhanced 24 hr security guard presence and additional lighting.

SUEZ have recorded 801 instances of fly tipping across all Surrey CRC sites between January 2019 and August 2024. Of these, 531 (66%) were at Bagshot CRC. Of the other 14 sites, Lyne Lane CRC, near Chertsey, experienced 89 fly tipping incidents (11%) in the period. Fly tipping incidents at all of the other 13 sites combined make up the remaining 23%.

SCC's waste contractor, SUEZ, retain incident logs which have recorded 48 nuisance incidents (fly-tipping, break ins, vandalism, anti-social behaviour) at Bagshot CRC between 2nd January and 25th August 2024. No other SCC CRC suffers such high levels of nuisance-based disruption. This disruption impacts on site staff and users negatively, the site often having to close to allow remedial action. A summary of the SUEZ incident logs is included at Annex C.

Despite the high levels of disruption, a review of complaints received from users of the site by SUEZ since January 2023 shows that 23 complaints have been recorded across the CRC estate, none of which relate to Bagshot CRC. SUEZ believe that this reflects the empathy felt by users for the on-site staff, recognising the difficulties the site presents.

The access road is narrow and itself suffers from fly tipping.

Swift lane is not accessible on foot, so closure won't impact pedestrian visitors.

The nearest alternative site is Camberley CRC which is approximately 6 miles away from the Bagshot CRC and has a travel time between the two sites (by car) of approximately 15 minutes. Alternative CRC sites are located within 10 miles

Analysis undertaken by SCC's Transport Modelling specialists shows that the Swift Lane CRC in Bagshot is the closest CRC to 12,428 households. If the Bagshot CRC was to close:

- 7,894 (63.5%) would see no increase in drive time when accessing the nearest alternative CRC (Lyne, Woking or Camberley) if the Bagshot site was to close; and

- 4,544 (36.5%) would have a maximum drive time of 20 minutes (covering 7.8 miles) to their nearest alternative CRC site.

A map marked up with postcode 'clusters' in the Bagshot CRC catchment area showing the closest alternative sites is included at Annex D

The site is owned by Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) who lease it to SCC. The site will be returned to SHBC if it closed.

Executive Summary:

Rationale For Closure

1. The Bagshot CRC site is unmodernised and not split level meaning that members of the public need to climb steps in order to place items in the collecting containers. Containers are placed around the perimeter of the site which also means that car parking is in the centre of the site and cars and members of the public are therefore crossing each other's paths. Any required movement of waste containers can only take place when the site is closed. Although SCC's waste contractor (SUEZ) keep the site safe, it has inherent problems which are not present at other CRCs which are on split level.
2. For many years, Bagshot CRC has suffered from overnight vandalism and unlawful ingress. Containers (particularly those for electricals) are regularly forced open and plundered, and the site office has been vandalised. The perimeter fence has been driven into and fly tipping has been left both outside of the gates and tipped over fences. Prevention measures would be difficult and costly to implement and could include reinforced walls with climb prevention, enhanced 24 hr security guard presence and additional lighting.
3. A number of local residents have made threats to SUEZ's staff as well as delivered materials to the CRC which are not allowed. SUEZ's staff have to 'turn a blind eye' to some of these behaviours as they are threatened with violence if they try to object.
4. SCC Officers and Suez management are acutely aware of the position at this CRC and put in place such mitigation and staff protection measures as reasonably practicable. Unfortunately Bagshot CRC remains not fit for purpose and potentially risky and hazardous.
5. The size and shape of the site are such that it could not be modernised and redeveloped as a split level site, as this would require the construction of a raised area and access ramps leaving insufficient space for waste containers, container movements and parking for site staff.
6. If the recommendation is accepted, users of Bagshot CRC would be directed to alternative CRC sites in Camberley, Chertsey and Woking. The nearest site to Bagshot CRC is Wilton Road CRC, Camberley.

7. Some nearby residents of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) use Bagshot CRC with the permission of SCC, and a proportional contribution to its operational costs is made by the Borough council. If the recommendation is accepted, RBWM residents would be directed to Lyne CRC, Chertsey and a proportion of its operational costs would be recharged to RBWM based on the number of visits from the Borough.
8. The site is owned by Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) who lease it to SCC. The site will be returned to SHBC if it closed. SCC understands that SHBC has an alternative tenant interested in the site who will take over once SUEZ have vacated the site and SCC surrendered the head lease. The exact date of closure (if agreed) will be determined following the Cabinet Decision set out above.

Link to Strategic Waste Infrastructure Plan

9. The Council, as the statutory Waste Disposal Authority ('WDA'), is responsible for the bulking, transport, treatment, and disposal of all household collected waste by the eleven District and Boroughs of Surrey (referred to as statutory Waste Collection Authorities) and also the disposal of waste delivered to the County's 15 Community Recycling Centres ('CRCs').
10. A report provided to Cabinet in April 2023 set out future plans for strategic waste developments to increase capacity and modernise the waste infrastructure in Surrey. The report mainly dealt with the development of new assets, including waste transfer stations and a new Material Recovery Facility.
11. The county's 15 CRCs were not specifically discussed in the Report: at the time there was no intention to increase or decrease the number of CRCs in Surrey, although it is noted that five CRCs (including Bagshot CRC) are unmodernised and at an appropriate time in the future would benefit from investment and/or replacement. Modern CRCs tend to be on split level sites and future requirements from DEFRA set out the potential for increased separation of waste materials (i.e. more waste containers required).
12. The recommendation to close Bagshot CRC is made knowing that alternative nearby sites with capacity exist, and that the Bagshot CRC is unmodernised and too small to be upgraded for future requirements. This, together with the issues set out above, support the recommendation to close the site.

Consultation:

13. SCC waste contractor SUEZ has been consulted on the closure and has expressed support for the proposal.

14. A public consultation was carried out for a period of four weeks commencing on Monday 16th September and concluding on Friday 11th October. A total of 1079 responses were received.
15. A copy of the consultation document is included at Annex A. An analysis of responses is included at Annexes B1 and B2. The consultation showed that 93% of respondents were opposed to the closure of Bagshot CRC and that in the event of closure 76% of respondents would use the proposed alternative sites at Camberley, Lyne and Woking.
16. A total of 305 responses (28.26%) were from non-Surrey residents in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). Surrey County Council allows residents of RBWM to use Bagshot CRC. This arrangement is a concession to RBWM as SCC has no obligation to allow non-Surrey residents access to any of its CRCs. At the time of the consultation, no decision had been made to allow RBWM residents access to Lyne CRC as an alternative which could account for some of the consultation responses which were against closure. Free text responses to the consultation from RBWM residents requested access to Lyne CRC if Bagshot CRC was closed.
17. Analysis of open text responses (Annex B2) showed reasons for opposition included the following concerns:
 - Inconvenience caused by increased travelling distances to alternative sites (particularly for residents of RBWM)
 - A perception that increased queueing was likely at alternative sites
 - Environmental concerns (e.g. increased carbon emissions)
 - A perception that Bagshot CRC offers a better service (because it is less busy)
 - Increased fly tipping in the local area
 - Reallocation of operational savings following closure
18. SCC's experience shows that previous changes to CRC facility provision such as reduced opening hours and days have not resulted in any increased fly-tipping. (As noted above, Bagshot CRC has the highest fly-tipping incidence of the CRCs in Surrey.)
19. Windlesham Parish Council have raised an objection to the closure of Bagshot CRC voicing concerns that congestion will increase at Camberley CRC, the closure will result in increased fly-tipping and that it will inconvenience local residents disproportionately.
20. The catchment area for Bagshot CRC includes 12,428 households. ONS population estimate data shows that on average, each household in Surrey Heath is comprised of 2.51 people and that 78.2% of the population are aged 18 and over. From this it is estimated that 24,535 residents aged 18 and over live in the area served by Bagshot CRC. Based on this,

approximately 3% of Surrey residents served by Bagshot CRC engaged in the consultation process.

Risk Management and Implications:

21. There are no specific risks involved in the closure of a CRC. Closure of Bagshot CRC decreases the following risks to SCC:
- a. Injury or harm to a member of staff, council employee, or contractor;
 - b. Vandalism and unlawful ingress to Council property;
 - c. Environmental damage as a result of vandalism (e.g. oil spills on site because oil containers are damaged);
 - d. Abuse or threatening behaviour to a member of the public, member of staff or contractor; and
 - e. Reputational damage as a result of the above.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

22. The revenue costs for the closure of the site are estimated to be a one-off cost of £20,000. No Capital is required.
23. The estimated running costs for Bagshot CRC for 2024/25 are £145,000. However additional costs for opening the Camberley site for an additional day per week have been confirmed by SUEZ as £40,000 per annum resulting in a small annual revenue saving of £105,000.
24. For the avoidance of doubt, the recommendation to close Bagshot CRC is not to achieve financial savings. Such savings are a low-value consequence of the closure and are largely due to reduced security costs.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

25. The Council continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment. Local authorities across the country are experiencing significant budgetary pressures. Surrey County Council has made significant progress in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the cost of service delivery, increasing demand, financial uncertainty and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to deliver financial efficiencies and reduce spending in order to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
26. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to

continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.

27. The proposed closure of the Community Recycling Centre at Swift Lane, Bagshot is forecast to give rise to a net annual revenue saving of £0.1m which will be taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. As such, the S151 Officer supports the recommended approach.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

28. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Surrey County Council, as a waste disposal authority, has a duty to provide places where residents in its area may dispose of household waste. Each place that is provided must be reasonably accessible to residents and open at reasonable times. Cabinet will need to consider whether the alternative arrangements set out in this report enable those duties to be met.
29. Cabinet will note that those residents who responded to the public consultation overwhelmingly opposed the proposed closure of the site. Cabinet must conscientiously consider the outcome of that consultation. In doing so however, Cabinet should also consider other relevant considerations such as any impact on budget and safety risks associated with the proposal. The weight to be given to each relevant consideration is for the cabinet to decide.
30. The Council's contractor, Suez, supports the recommendation. Therefore there would be no adverse impact on existing contractual arrangements.
31. The Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010) equally applies to this decision. There is a need to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the equality and diversity paragraphs of the report and the appended equality impact assessment. Members will see that no negative impacts on those with protected characteristics have been identified save for a slightly longer journey time to an alternative site.

Equalities and Diversity:

32. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared for the proposal. A summary of key impacts and mitigations is set out below.
- The closure of the site would not impact or disadvantage any group more than any other and affects all current users of the site.
 - All of the alternative sites are more accessible, split-level sites and do not require the use of steps to access waste containers.

- The alternative site at Woking includes a Revive Reuse shop providing opportunities for an enhanced visitor experience.
- Users of the Bagshot site must cross vehicle routes through the site to access waste containers which presents a hazard. All of the proposed alternative sites are designed such that vehicles are unloaded next to waste containers, negating the need for users to come into potential conflict with other users' vehicles.
- Use of the proposed alternative sites would have a relatively small impact on journey times and distances and only a relatively small cohort of users would see increased journey times to alternative sites.
- If Bagshot CRC is closed, the alternative site in Camberley will be opened for an additional day each week meaning that this site is available seven days per week. Bagshot CRC is open only four days per week (Saturday to Tuesday inclusive).
- SUEZ will redeploy staff from Bagshot CRC to resource the additional opening hours at Camberley CRC and to provide additional assistance for site users at all three alternative sites.
- The Resources and Circular Economy Team will work with Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) to monitor fly tipping in Bagshot following closure of the CRC. However, it should be noted that SHBC and/or the Environment Agency would be responsible for clearance and enforcement action (dependant on scale) where waste is fly tipped on the highway or public land.
- SUEZ will monitor compliments and complaints from site users to identify whether any service improvements could be introduced to further mitigate the impact of the closure.

Other Implications:

33. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	None
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	None
Environmental sustainability	Recent evidence shows that approximately 920 visits are made to Bagshot CRC per week. Modelling undertaken by the Transport Studies Team shows that 36.53 % of the users of the Bagshot site would have to travel up to 20 minutes or 7.8 miles to the closest alternative site if Bagshot CRC closed. The impact of this marginal increase in travel would be the generation of an additional 58 Tonnes of CO2 annually (based on 211g CO2 /mile). However, it is anticipated that a proportion of recyclable waste which would otherwise have been taken to Bagshot CRC, would instead be deposited in bins for kerbside collection, reducing the number of journeys. The Bagshot CRC site and all alternative sites are located outside of Air Quality Management Areas.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Please see above. The proposal would cause a small increase CO2 emissions associated with increased travel distances to and from alternative sites
Public Health	None

What Happens Next:

34. Timescale for closure

- a. SCC serve lease surrender notice to Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) in December 2024
- b. SCC instruct SUEZ to submit environmental permit surrender application.
- c. Lease requires three months notice of surrender. However, SHBC have a potential tenant who has expressed an interest in leasing the site when SCC close the site. SHBC require two months to market the site to ensure best value, after which the potential tenant can enter into a lease with SHBC. It is understood that this process is under way.
- d. Subject to SHBC approval, it is anticipated that Bagshot CRC will close immediately prior to the new tenant moving onto the site. This is likely to take place in December 2024
- e. Residents will be informed of the closure via a press release, site notices, social media posts and the SCC website

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Consulted:

Residents through public consultation

Annexes:

Annex A – Public consultation questionnaire

Annex B – Analyses of responses to public consultation

Annex C – SUEZ incident log for Swift Lane CRC

Annex D – A map marked up with postcode ‘clusters’ in the Bagshot CRC catchment area showing the closest alternative site

Annex E- Equality Impact Assessment

Sources/background papers:

Cabinet Report: April 2023 – Strategic Waste Infrastructure
