

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 25 JANUARY 2022****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT****LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: CHANGES TO SURREY'S COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE POLICIES****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE****Purpose of the Report:**

To seek approval for a number of changes to the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) operating policy in advance of the main waste disposal re-procurement that align to our strategic priorities and are designed to increase operational efficiency, simplify policy for residents, and respond to customer feedback.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cabinet approve:

1. Allowing users of pickups, trailers or vans registered on the SCC permit scheme to bring chargeable construction waste to the nine CRCs that currently accept it.
2. Restricting the use of all Surrey CRCs to Surrey residents only, requiring proof of identify to gain entry, to ensure Surrey are only paying for waste we have a legal duty to dispose of.
3. Temporary COVID measures allowing residual waste to be accepted at the four 'Recycling Only' CRCs be made permanent.

**Reason for Recommendations:**

There is currently an anomaly in the CRC operating policy that allows a resident with a car to bring in chargeable construction or DIY waste to CRC sites but does not allow residents who have a permit for a van, pickup, or trailer to bring in the same waste.

Construction and DIY wastes are not considered household waste. Residents are allowed to bring certain construction and DIY waste into nine CRCs by car and dispose of it for a charge. The original rationale for not allowing vans, pickups, and trailers to be used was to reduce the risk of trade waste abuse through limiting capacity of vehicles permitted.

Changing the policy to allow users of permitted vans, trailers, and pick-ups to bring chargeable construction and DIY waste to the nine CRCs that operate the chargeable waste scheme will make the policy simpler for residents and more consistent. Trade waste will still be banned from CRCs

Secondly, most waste disposal authorities that border Surrey have now introduced resident only policies at their CRC sites preventing Surrey residents from using them. To ensure that SCC are only paying for waste they have a legal duty to dispose of it is recommended that a Surrey resident only policy is also implemented at Surrey CRCs.

Finally, during the Covid pandemic residual waste containers were reintroduced at the four 'recycling only' Surrey CRCs as a means of reducing congestion at other CRCs caused by social distancing measures. Tonnages of residual waste across Surrey have not increased because of this measure, therefore it is recommended that SCC retains these temporary arrangements mainly as a means of reducing car travel undertaken by residents who currently have to travel longer distances to CRC sites that do accept residual waste.

## **Executive Summary:**

### **Context**

1. Surrey County Council are currently part way through the 'Rethinking Waste' transformation programme. The Rethinking Waste programme will set the future strategic direction for the waste disposal service through the waste disposal service re-procurement due September 2024. The programme seeks to move the county to a circular economy model, minimising the waste created and maximising the value of the waste that is created through an increase in the reuse and recycling of such waste, and to ultimately drive toward a more environmentally and financially sustainable model for managing waste and resources.
2. The Programme, working closely with district partners and the market, will also make recommendations to respond to some potentially significant changes arising from the emerging national Resources and Waste Strategy.
3. However, in advance of the re-procurement, and as a result of customer feedback, the impact of COVID and some external changes to policy made by neighbouring waste disposal authorities that has impacts for SCC, several changes to CRC operating policy are being recommended for earlier implementation. These changes will improve the CRC service for residents, whilst also promoting the objectives of the Rethinking Waste Programme. The table below provides further information on the fit with waste service strategic priorities.

### **The proposed policy changes**

#### **Van, pickup and trailer permit scheme terms and conditions**

4. The current SCC van permit policy prohibits any construction waste being brought into our CRCs in a van, pickup, or trailer. However, our chargeable waste scheme allows car drivers to bring in rubble, soil, plasterboard, and other inert material on payment of a charge. Customer feedback has highlighted that some customers find this policy restrictive and for ease would like to be able to also bring this material in by van, pickup, or trailer. It is therefore proposed to remove this restriction.
5. The existing charging scheme recovers the costs of receiving these materials at a CRC and infrastructure and staff are already in place making this change to allow vans, pickups, and trailers to bring chargeable construction waste to CRCs cost neutral for the council.

6. The restrictions on tradespersons would remain in force and anyone driving a van or pulling a trailer which is suspected of carrying trade waste would be prevented from entering using current measures and tests. This is because the CRC planning consents currently restricts use of the sites to householders and many sites do not have capacity to accept trade waste. Suez, SCC's waste contractor already provides a trade waste service at Epsom, Guildford, and Leatherhead waste transfer stations.

### **Surrey resident-only CRCs**

7. Currently five CRCs already have a 'Surrey residents only' policy in response to neighbouring councils who have adopted 'resident only' policies or have implemented booking systems that restrict entry to residents only. These include Hampshire, Berkshire, West Sussex, and Kent. Neighbouring London boroughs have also operated resident-only policies for some time.
8. A survey in 2017 identified that 13% of the users of Camberley and Farnham CRCs came from Hampshire or Berkshire therefore because of the policy we would expect the CRCs to become less busy and that we would have reduced costs and less material to deal with.
9. A Surrey Resident scheme already operates effectively at the Shepperton, Epsom, Warlingham, Caterham and Camberley CRCs. At these sites, proof of residency such as driving licence or utility bill is requested at a resident's first visit of the year to a CRC, at which point a windscreen sticker is provided as proof of residency for the remainder of that year. Site staff will allow a vehicle displaying the windscreen sticker entry to the site without having to do a repeat of the residency checks for subsequent visits, thereby reducing the queuing that might otherwise result to a minimum and reducing inconvenience for the resident. This existing resident scheme can be extended to all CRC sites across Surrey without any substantive additional staff or infrastructure costs.
10. It would be preferable for resident convenience and environmental reasons related to longer distances travelled by car for residents to be able to visit the CRC site nearest to their homes, irrespective of administrative boundaries. However, SCC officers have been unable to broker cost sharing mechanisms with neighbouring authorities to enable this, with the exception of West Sussex CC who allow the continued use of their East Grinstead site for residents from the South East of Surrey in return for a payment to cover costs. In addition, we have an arrangement with Windsor & Maidenhead Council for their residents to use the Bagshot CRC for a charge and it is proposed that this remains in place.
11. Therefore, to ensure that SCC are only paying for waste for which it is legally obliged to dispose, it is recommended that the council adopt a similar resident-only approach at all CRC sites.

### **Residual waste facilities at 'Recycling Only' CRCs**

12. Residual waste facilities were removed at Bagshot, Cranleigh, Warlingham and Dorking CRCs in May 2019 following a Cabinet decision in January 2019. In March 2021, Cabinet agreed to reintroduce residual waste facilities for a period of up to 12 months to alleviate traffic congestion at other sites during the Covid response resulting from social distancing measures.
13. It should be noted that the reintroduction of residual waste facilities at these four sites has not led to an increase in the overall amount of residual waste generated from the

CRC service. Annexe 1 gives more detail. The four sites between them, handle just 6% of the total amount of waste and recycling collected at our CRCs and therefore any change, if detectable, is likely to be minimal.

14. Social distancing measures have now ceased and therefore a decision needs to be made about the temporary residual waste facilities at the 'recycling only' sites.
15. The permanent reintroduction of residual waste containers will increase the offering at these CRCs without additional costs. Evidence suggests that when the recycling-only sites were introduced, the sites became less frequented, whilst other sites that accepted residual waste became busier. Offering a residual waste facility at all sites will reduce customer journey distances and increase efficiency of operation leading to an increase in customer satisfaction.
16. There is also the potential to reduce distances travelled by car to CRCs by residents of Dorking, Cranleigh, Warlingham and Bagshot. These are all significant population centres and Cranleigh is about to have an additional 1,800 households built at Dunsfold creating additional need.
17. In addition, the opportunity to introduce black bag sorting at these four additional sites as well as the other eleven CRCs. Black bag sorting is a valuable method employed to increase recycling and reduce residual waste by removing by hand obvious recyclables from the black bag.
18. Therefore, on balance of the evidence, it is recommended that there is a permanent reintroduction of residual waste containers at these four sites.

#### **Consultation:**

19. There has been no public consultation, but the majority of the changes are a direct result of customer feedback. In addition, district and borough colleagues will be engaged regarding these changes to ensure smooth implementation.
20. The report will be taken to the January Environment Select Committee

#### **Risk Management and Implications:**

21. There is a risk that by accepting vans and trailers with chargeable construction waste this may lead to other types of construction being brought to the sites in vans and trailers. The van permit terms and conditions will however make it clear that these other types of construction waste are not permitted to be brought to the site, and CRC staff will be present to monitor usage and to enforce the council's policy of refusing drivers of vans and trailers to deposit any construction waste that does not fall within the remit of the charging scheme. As the council holds personal details of all van permit holders, any issues that arise can be followed up after the event by officers.
22. The reintroduction of residual waste containers at the four 'recycling only' sites may encourage residents to bring more residual waste than might otherwise be the case if they were to revert to recycling only sites. However, evidence suggests that this has not been the case since the introduction of the policy change for these sites to accept residual waste from April 2021 and officers will continue to monitor residual waste quantities at all sites accordingly. It should also be borne in mind that in the case of Cranleigh a significant housing development of several thousand houses is likely to

start soon which will distort this pattern and place an additional need for residual waste arrangements in this part of the county.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications:**

23. It is not expected that the overall tonnage of residual waste will increase as a result of accepting residual waste at the four small CRCs on a permanent basis and therefore there should be no cost implications for the council. This assessment is based on the fact that we have not seen any overall increase in tonnage since residual waste containers were re-introduced in April 2021.
24. We will allow van and trailer users to deposit chargeable construction waste but the cost of managing this will be covered by the charges we levy and there will be no increase in administration costs.
25. By restricting the use of our sites to Surrey residents only we are likely to see a reduction in overall tonnage and costs

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary:**

26. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected 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 stable provision of services in the medium term. The measures recommended are not expected to result in a significant change to costs, although this will continue to be monitored. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the proposed approach.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:**

27. The Council is a Waste Disposal Authority. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council has a duty to provide places at which residents may dispose of household waste free of charge. The Council has a power to charge for the disposal of non-domestic waste.
28. The proposals to allow users of pickups and trailers to bring chargeable waste and to extend the number of sites that accept residual waste are decisions that the Council can make and will provide a better service to residents.
29. The Council does not owe duties to residents of neighbouring local authorities and can therefore lawfully restrict the use of its CRCs to Surrey residents.

#### **Equalities and Diversity:**

30. An Equality Impact Assessment was included in the Cabinet report of 29 January 2019 and reviewed as part of the Cabinet paper of 27 October 2019. The re-

introduction of non-recyclable materials to the four community recycling centres will have no material impact on the findings of the earlier Equality Impact Assessments.

**Other Implications:**

31. 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.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	None
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	None
Environmental sustainability	None. Residents will continue to be encouraged to recycle as much waste as possible through provision of comprehensive recycling facilities at all community recycling centres and non- recyclable waste will continue to be treated in the most sustainable way, avoiding the use of landfill where possible.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Residents will have less far to drive to dispose of their waste therefore reducing transport related carbon emissions.  Minimising waste in the first place and reusing and recycling as much of what is left provides the greatest contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and this will continue to be strongly encouraged at the CRCs.
Public Health	None.

**What Happens Next:**

32. Subject to agreement by Cabinet of these recommendations, the changes will be made as follows,

- a. The change to the van permit policy to allow chargeable construction waste to be brought in vans and trailers will be publicised and implemented by 31 March 2022
- b. The resident-only policy will be publicised and implemented across all CRCs by 31 March 2022
- c. The CRCs at Bagshot, Warlingham, Cranleigh and Dorking will accept residual waste on a permanent basis

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**Consulted:**

Member for Environment, Waste and Climate Change

Cabinet members and the council's Corporate Leadership Team.

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Trends in residual waste tonnages at CRCs

**Sources/background papers:**

Cabinet Agenda and Minutes 29 January 2019

Cabinet Agenda and Minutes 30 March 2021

## Annex 1 - Trends in residual waste tonnages at CRCS

Tonnages of residual waste accepted at the CRCs for the period January to October 2021 are shown in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Tonnages of residual waste taken at CRCS during 2021**

	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21
Warlingham	-	-	-	10	7	13	17	15	17	12
Farnham	66	71	144	83	89	75	76	100	72	66
Caterham	67	82	103	118	52	80	66	104	43	66
Earlswood	225	262	325	302	227	229	238	245	185	180
Chertsey	148	140	175	174	123	164	148	142	127	110
Woking	221	222	247	247	209	236	242	236	231	211
Cranleigh	-	-	-	20	26	30	26	32	30	29
Dorking	-	-	-	17	21	28	14	32	38	25
Bagshot	-	-	-	20	23	27	30	32	31	29
Camberley	205	162	220	194	173	195	199	208	187	182
Witley	227	191	207	166	156	172	149	157	151	140
Shepperton	273	336	292	274	293	220	278	297	221	200
Epsom	127	123	144	126	127	108	124	145	118	115
Leatherhead	222	216	283	247	217	242	224	245	203	187
Guildford	130	132	147	130	130	124	142	164	133	133
	1,913	1,937	2,285	2,127	1,875	1,943	1,974	2,155	1,786	1,685

There does not appear to be any increase in tonnages because of introducing the residual waste arrangements at the 'recycling only' sites. Interestingly the highest monthly total of residual waste for the year to date was in March, the month preceding the reintroduction of residual waste at these sites. The amounts of residual waste at the 'recycling only' sites have remained at a relatively constant level since April 2021 and certainly do not suggest a pattern of growth.

The amounts of residual waste collected at each of the CRCs between April and October 2021 is shown in **Figure 1** below. This shows that the four small CRCs dealt with significantly less residual waste than the other larger CRCs. Collectively these four sites managed only 4% of the residual waste collected during this period.

**Figure 1. Contribution of each CRC to total residual waste across Surrey CRCS**

