

SUBJECT:	<i>Review of Remaining Recycling Centre: Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont</i>
RELEVANT MEMBER:	<i>Cllr. C Jones, Cabinet Member for Environment</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	<i>Chris Marchant, Head of Environment</i>
REPORT AUTHOR:	<i>Callum Lynam, Waste Policy & Project Team Leader</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>Prestwood, Great Missenden, Little Chalfont</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To review the remaining recycling centres in Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont. This matter was reported to the Environment PAG on 14 November and to the Services Overview Committee on 26 November. At each respective meeting the Cabinet recommendation was endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

To proceed with the recommendation from Environment PAG and Services Overview Committee to undertake the closure of the remaining three recycling centres from 7 January 2020.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1. The review of the three remaining recycling centres in Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont supports Cabinets previous aim to close all recycling centres, for reasons outlined in background papers.
- 2.2. In collaboration with local Councillors, Parish Councils and residents, Officers have completed actions requested by Cabinet to record evidence of usage at the three sites and to educate local residents on the benefits of the kerbside collection service, including the policy to collect extra recycling and/or collection of larger flattened cardboard boxes at the kerbside.
- 2.3. The review found that the three sites acted as a convenient outlet for local residents but they were not necessary for residents to recycle their paper and cardboard. Residents have access to the kerbside household service and were aware they could present additional recycling on collection day.
- 2.4. The review found that the centres were continually plagued with misuse, including bins being broken, non-recyclable waste being deposited, fly-tipping and businesses using the sites to dispose of their trade waste. This continuous misuse presents an ongoing cost for the Council, which is disproportionate to the benefit of convenience offered to a small number of local residents.

- 2.5. The Council are committed to delivering the convenient kerbside collection service and will continue to assist local residents who require additional support in using this service.
- 2.6. On 9 July 2019, Cabinet agreed to support the recommendation to close five of eight sites, leaving sites in Great Missenden, Prestwood and Little Chalfont subject to further review. With the eventual aim to close (all) subject to further progress report to Cabinet. This recommendation was agreed under the conditions the activities outlined in section 3 were undertaken.

3. Activities undertaken in Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont

Officers undertook the following activities at Link Road, Great Missenden; High Street car park, Prestwood; and Snells Wood car park, Little Chalfont sites.

- 3.1. Provide cardboard recycling facilities at these three sites.

Response: 6 x 1100 litre bulk bins for paper and cardboard only installed at each site between 5/08/19 and 14/08/2019

- 3.2. Swap-out the current large containers for 1100 litre bulk bins – eradicate need for specialised collection vehicle.

Response: As above

- 3.3. A commitment to undertake communication programme to educate and inform local residents to support behavioural changes

Response: A communication plan was approved and delivered with the following activities now completed:

- Signs erected at all recycling sites to inform residents about upcoming changes and 'what to do with additional recycling' from w/c 22/07 (Appendix 2)
- Members bulletin issued on 19/07 with details on what sites will be closed, what sites will remain open and reasons for changes (Appendix 3)
- Press release released on 26/07 (copy available at <https://chiltern.gov.uk/recyclingsitechanges>)
- Relevant Parish clerks and internal stakeholders emailed about changes with a list of FAQs to help respond to enquiries (26/07) (Appendix 4)
- New extra recycling guidance produced and publish on social media from w/c 9/09/19 (Appendix 5)
- Relevant Parish clerks and internal stakeholders emailed about progress to date and future works (14/10) (Appendix 6)

- Staff on site to educate users and monitor usage between 7/10 and 18/10. In total, officers from the Joint Waste Team and Serco were present for a combined 60 hours across all three sites. Feedback is outlined in 4.1
- Letters sent to all households in Great Missenden, Prestwood and Little Chalfont to educate residents on the Council's policy to collect extra recycling, how to request new kerbside recycling containers, how to request textile sacks and how to book a bulky waste collection. Letters were despatched on 16/10 (Appendix 7)
- Household bins tagged in Great Missenden, Prestwood and Little Chalfont with guidance on how to present extra recycling and how to request new kerbside recycling containers. Bins were tagged between 21/10 and 25/10 (Appendix 8)
- Annual collection calendar and guides delivered to all households in Chiltern with a page dedicated to guidance on how to present extra recycling. Calendars were despatched on 18/10 (Appendix 9)

Additional and ongoing activities, including a second letter 'drop', social media messages and further engagement with parishes are scheduled, and will support decisions made about the future of these sites.

3.4. Monitor use of facilities, gathering evidence to determine future position.

Response: Staff on site to educate users and monitor usage between 7/10 and 18/10. In total, officers from the Joint Waste Team and Serco were present for a combined 60 hours across all three sites. Feedback from this monitoring is outlined in section 4.

3.5. Report back to Cabinet the results of the review by autumn 2019.

Response: This commitment was made under the assumption that actions 3.1 and 3.2 would commence immediately, giving 3 months to complete the review. These actions were delayed until mid-August, so it was agreed with the Portfolio Holder to report back to Cabinet on 10 December 2019 instead.

4. Results of review

Since the 1100 cardboard litre bins were introduced, officers from the Council and Serco have been proactively monitoring the sites and responding to issues as they arise. This has produced a good understanding of the operational challenges faced, outlined in 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5

To further understand how often and why residents use these facilities, officers from the Council and Serco surveyed residents as they used the bins between 7/10 and 18/10. In

total, Officers talked to 151 residents over 60 hours across all three sites. The key findings from this monitoring are outlined in 4.1.

4.1. The sites only experienced small numbers of visitors per hour, which varied between sites. The most popular site was Prestwood, with an average of 3.1 visitors per hour; followed by Little Chalfont, with an average of 2.1 visitors per hour; and lastly Great Missenden, with an average of 1 visitor per hour. This does not include visitors outside of working hours, however, judging from the waste which appeared following a day of monitoring, these visitors were likely often tradespersons, as described in 5.4.

Visitors typically used the sites between once a week and once a month (Figure 1) to support their kerbside collection. A few residents chose to use the sites multiple times a week instead of the kerbside collection.

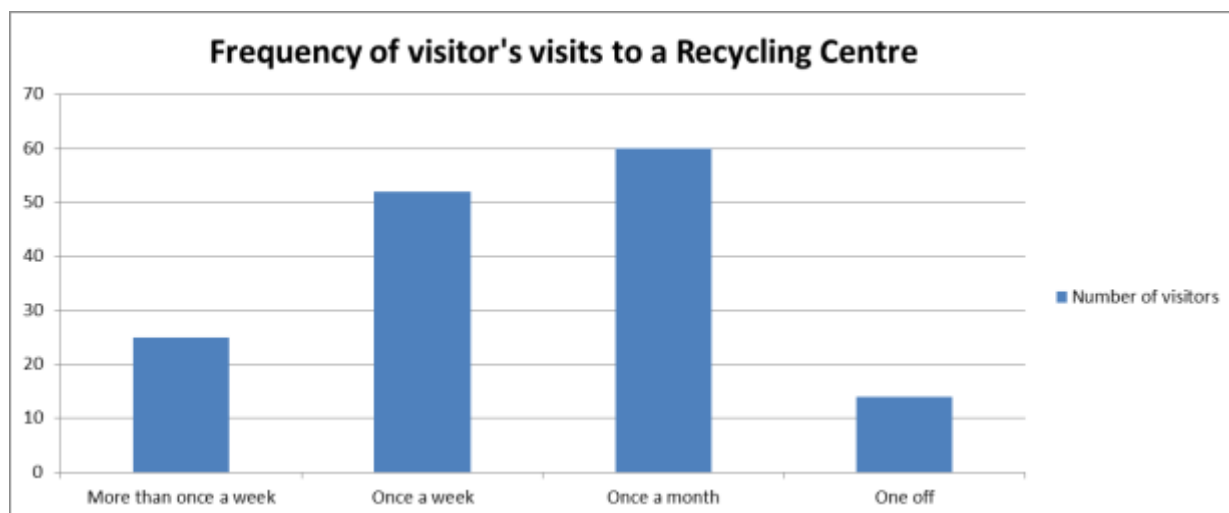


Figure 1: Visitors self-reported frequency using the recycling centres from a total of 151 responses

The reasons visitors gave for using the site were coded into four categories: have access to the recycling service but have lost their bin; have access to the recycling service but use the centre because it is convenient; have access to the recycling service but use the centre to recycle excess; and, do not have access to a recycling service. The results are displayed in Figure 2.

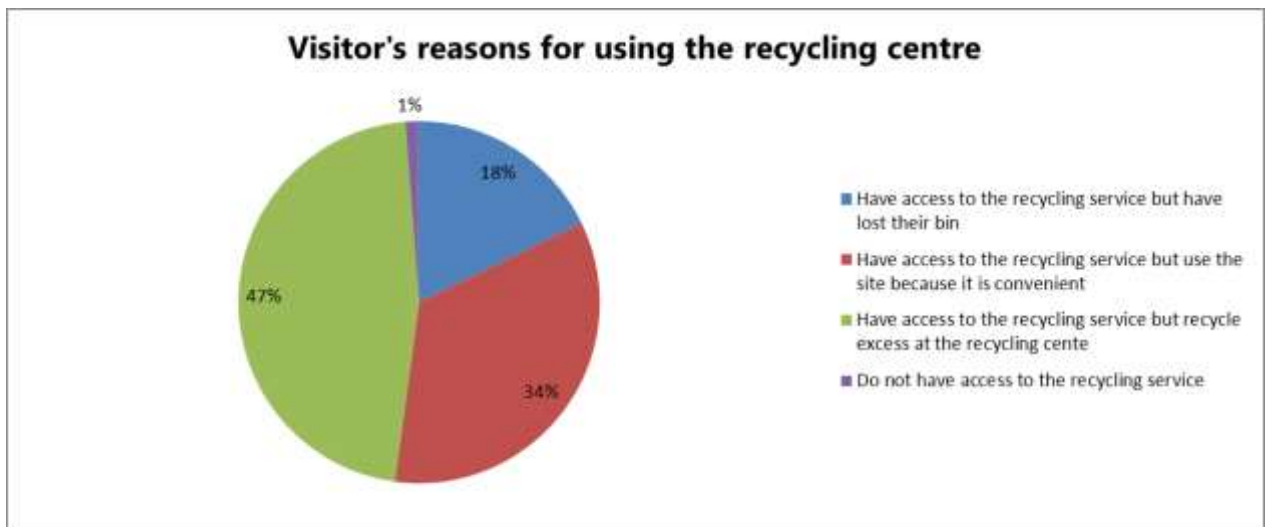


Figure 2: Visitor's reasons for using the recycling centres from a total of 151 responses

The majority of visitors had access to the kerbside service but used the recycling centre out of choice, rather than necessity. Typically, using the recycling centre was part of a routine, or to prevent a build of recycling at home. This was despite 85% of visitors being aware the Council would collect extra recycling at the kerbside.

For the residents who no longer had bins, Council staff ordered replacement bins free of charge for the residents. This was also presented in the letter delivered to all householders in Great Missenden, Prestwood and Little Chalfont (see 3.3).

For the small number of residents who did not have access to the service, Council staff took the resident's details to arrange a site visit to establish a recycling solution.

These findings demonstrate that these sites act as a convenient outlet for local residents but are not necessary for residents to recycle their cardboard. The kerbside collection scheme offers the same benefits without the problems experienced with managing these sites, outlined in 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

- 4.2. The 1100 litre bins installed at these sites were fitted with a locked lid with a fixed aperture (See photos at Appendix 10). This configuration was designed to enable residents to use the bins as an overflow for their domestic paper and cardboard recycling, whilst preventing large, non-household items from being placed in the bins. Unfortunately, at all three sites, bins had their locks broken, apertures removed, and in some instances, lids removed entirely from their hinges (Appendix 10). Broken bin lids are more vulnerable to anti-social behaviour, including dumping of waste and arson attacks, both of which have

occurred at local recycling centres in recent history. The ongoing costs to repair bin lids represents a significant maintenance cost, especially when experience demonstrates individuals will disregard and overcome all attempts to secure the bins.

- 4.3. The materials collected were regularly contaminated with non-recyclable waste, so had to be sent for energy recovery, ruining the efforts of residents who had correctly used the recycling facilities. Many of the examples of contaminated waste (Appendix 11) demonstrate a blatant disregard for disposing of waste items responsibly, and in most cases, have either broken the bins, or taken advantage of a broken bin in doing so. The bins continue to be a convenient outlet for socially irresponsible individuals to dump waste at the expense of our residents.
- 4.4. Our monitoring highlighted continued miss-use by businesses disposing of trade waste (Appendix 12). Officers noted a few occasions whereby vans drove into the car park, witnessed officers near the bins, and drove away again. The majority of trade waste was likely deposited outside of monitoring hours (09:00 – 17:00), however, it would be unsustainable, and only a short term solution, to resource monitoring outside of these hours.

Businesses have a Duty of Care to contain, control and dispose of waste responsibly, and are legally required to keep copies of waste transfer notes for each load of waste that leaves their premises (or documents containing the same information) for a minimum of two years. The suspected trade waste originated from a mixture of local businesses and mobile traders, such as market traders and tradespersons (electricians, plumbers, carpenters etc.). We have acted on advice received from Bucks County Council's enforcement team to write to businesses that we suspect used the bins to dispose of their business waste, to remind them of their duty of care. It would be expensive and potentially frivolous to enact enforcement powers, as it is difficult to undeniably prove that businesses deliberately ignored their duty of care and that suspect waste was produced from business activities. A large volume of suspected trade waste was also unaddressed, typically consisting of cardboard boxes from market stalls and building materials.

- 4.5. Our monitoring also highlighted an assortment of fly-tipping cases, from bagged general waste to a porcelain toilet (Appendix 13). Fly-tipped waste is unsightly, creates a local nuisance, and drains operational resource to clear. Our experience to date suggests the bins will continue to act as a magnet for fly tipping for as long as they are in situ. Conversely, at ex-recycling sites, where we have removed bins, we have experienced little to no fly-tipping.

5. Summary

5.1. Services Overview Committee to advise Cabinet on whether to proceed with the recommendation from Environment PAG on 14/11/19 to undertake the closure of the remaining three recycling centres from January 7th 2020

5.2. In view of the outcome of the monitoring and communications carried out, the Waste Team will carry out the following further engagement with residents including:

- New signage erected at sites to communicate any changes and the policy to collect extra recycling
- Posts on Social Media to communicate any changes and the policy to collect extra recycling
- Letters to local residents to communicate any changes and the policy to collect extra recycling
- Further engagement with Parish Councils

6. Corporate Implications

6.1. Choosing to continue operating these facilities represents a significant ongoing drain on resources, not limited to resourcing the collections and cleansing of sites, disposing of contaminated waste, clearing fly-tipping and repairing containers.

6.2. There are no legal implications as it is within the scope of the current contract to close the recycling centres

6.3. Requests for additional kerbside containers can be met from existing budgets.

6.4. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990), the Council does not have a legal duty to collect waste using recycling centres. It does however have duty to collect household waste from domestic properties although the frequency of collection is not specified. There is also a legal duty under S45A of the EPA 1990 to collect a minimum of two streams of recyclable household waste, separate from any residual household waste, from the kerbside. The proposal in this report does not therefore impact upon any waste or recycling collection duty that the council currently has.

6.5. Contractual change notices and other arrangements will be managed by the Joint Waste Team with advice from Chiltern District Council Legal Services if this is necessary.

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

7.1 This proposal helps the authority to achieve our three shared headline objectives:

- Delivering cost- effective, customer- focused services
- Working towards safe and healthier local communities
- Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

7.2 Keeping residents at the centre of our objective to provide easy, convenient and accessible domestic collection services, to ensure customer satisfaction remains high. Latest available figures from November 2018 show customer satisfaction in Chiltern at 93.4% (*recycling collection service*)

7.3 Providing services that represent good value and divert much needed resource to front line services

7.4 Reducing anti-social activity, whilst improving the local community street scene through sustainable services and solutions.

8. Next Steps

Following consideration by Cabinet to proceed with the closure of the remaining three recycling centres from 7 January 2020.

<p>Background Papers:</p>	<p>Previous reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Recycling Centres (bring sites) – recommendation to Services Overview Committee 27 November 2018 • Recycling Centre Recommendation – report to JWCC October 2018 • Recycling Centre report and study to Services Overview Committee 13 June 2019 • Review of Remaining Recycling Centres - report to Cabinet on 9 July 2019 • Review of Remaining Recycling Centre: Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont - report to Environment PAG on 14 November 2019 • Review of Remaining Recycling Centre: Prestwood, Great Missenden and Little Chalfont – report to Services Overview Committee on 26 November 2019
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