

Questions for Cabinet – Household Recycling Centre (HRC) service – procurement project

21st April 2020

Questions raised by Cllr Robin Stuchbury on 10th April 2020:

In light of the report from the Cabinet member on the agenda proposing the possibility of a new waste and recycling site within Buckingham:

- A) After the decision and recommendation has been made by the Cabinet*
- B) Will the decision be going to the community board to discuss and,*
- C) If the decision is positive, to allocate an enhanced waste refuge site within Buckingham and recycling? Will the local members be involved in the discussions of a future site allocation? If the decision of the cabinet is to meet the growth within Buckingham and the surrounding villages through delivering a new site and enhance facilities, will there be consultation thereafter with the Buckingham Town Council, who will be drafting a new local plan very soon in corporation with Buckinghamshire Council, to ensure good working practices between both local representation and unitary representation? To be assured, if it's a positive decision to invest within the Buckingham catchment area, site allocation between the two councils is a partnership as the council will be aware there is a Buckingham Plan which still carries legal planning weight, and the Vale of Aylesbury Plan was not agreed unfortunately before Buckinghamshire Council came into operation and it could be suggested the Buckingham Plan carries more weight than the emerging plan.*
- D) In light of the new local authority inheriting the aspirations of the previous authorities to improve and lower the carbon footprint, I would ask that some consideration of an enhanced site enabling recycling and exchange as was historically the case before the new contract was agreed by Buckinghamshire County Council, whereby consideration of residents both take property to the recycle centre and purchase materials/furniture, thereby lowering the need for transport of such materials within the county and creating a green exchange of property in-house where recycling of properties within the community could take place again and lower the councils overall carbon footprint.*

Response:

We will be looking at options later in the year and will put a Business Case together to go into the MTFP process this summer (as there is currently no funding to do a site search or review). If the Business Case is supported then work will be undertaken during 2021 to pull together a feasibility study for a new site for the Buckingham area. Therefore the engagement strategy hasn't yet been established. I see no reason why some form of discussion with the Community Board and Town Council won't take place – the Town Council might even have land under their control which might feature in the site search process.

Questions raised by Cllr Robin Stuchbury on 14th April 2020:

Following my original question to cabinet previously three points occur to me:

a) Existing contract terms presumably make it impractical to bring all waste collections under a single contract immediately, but this could be done by granting shorter/longer renewals to current contracts, thereby eventually aligning them. I would see this as essential in order to (eventually) have them all under one contract – there would be clear advantages arising through economies of scale, but this is not mentioned in the paper.

Response:

The simple answer to this question is yes, it is not possible to bring all waste collections under one single contract immediately. As you will be aware a new collection contract was recently awarded to Veolia and starts on 7th September covering the old Chiltern and Wycombe areas and then will cover the old South Bucks area from November 2021. This is a 10 year contract, and no major change is possible until after 2025 when contractual changes can be triggered, but that would not be without some significant financial implications.

b) None of the narrative concerning HRCs factor in the cost of fly-tipping recovery and prosecution (it may have been mentioned in the non-attached appendices). I see this as important, particularly given the impact of the recently introduced charges for some goods on fly-tipping to date, and the likely escalation of fly-tipping if further HRCs are closed. This must surely be taken into account in the overall costing.

Response:

In regard to fly tipping, colleagues in the Fly Tipping enforcement team are clear that most fly tips are carried out by commercial operators (who would never use the HRCs anyway) and comprises of household waste that is free to bring to sites, like mattresses. So whilst it is a natural assumption that charges at HRCs may have a knock on effect on fly tipping, there is no evidence to suggest this. The savings being realised across in Waste Services include the disposal of fly tipping. The overall changes have seen reductions in the running costs of this service allowing the Council to spend that money on other services.

c) Reference to re-siting Buckingham HRC is puzzling. No mention is made of why this is deemed necessary except for the housing growth north of the county. Why hasn't BCC asked for s106 contributions from developers for increased waste handling? Would the Unitary Authority accept that developers have some responsibility for this? How much shortfall in capacity is there at the current site? Where is it proposed to site a new facility?

Response:

The Household Recycling Centre at Buckingham is near its operational capacity limits and there is limited space in which it can be expanded in its current location. The facility has a theoretical capacity of 5,400 tonnes per annum and provisional facility throughput for Buckingham for 2019/20 was c. 3,100 tonnes. I am sure you will be aware that during peak periods the site struggles to cope with the number of users and is not able to run as efficiently.