



Date of Meeting: 5 November 2019

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Anthony Alford – Lead Member for Customer, Community and Regulatory Services

Local Member(s): All

Director: John Sellgren, Executive Director for Place

**Executive Summary:**

At the meeting of 30 July 2019, Cabinet considered a report on the access to Hampshire County Council's Somerley Household Recycling Centre ("HRC") and resolved that a decision be deferred pending further discussion of options with Hampshire County Council (HCC).

This report provides an update on these discussions and considers recent proposals by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council ("BCP") for similar arrangements for use of HRCs in their area from April 2020.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**

An EqIA has been carried out for the Somerley HRC changes and has been approved by the Place Diversity Action Group. This has been published on Dorset Council's web site: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/pdfs/eais/dorset-council/place/2019-eqia-somerley-household-recycling-centre.pdf>

The EqIA identifies negative impacts for residents with a disability and those on low incomes.

**Budget:**

It is proposed that there continues to be £130,000 in the 2020/21 waste services budget for maintaining Dorset resident access to Somerley and Nuffield HRCs.

In 2020/21 it is estimated that maintaining access to Somerley HRC in Hampshire will result in a cost of £215,000. It is estimated that maintaining access to Millhams and Christchurch HRCs in BCP area, where cross border arrangements are not in place, will cost approximately £250,000. The continued cost of supporting access to Nuffield HRC is £70,000, totalling £535,000

This creates a net additional cost pressure for Dorset Council of £405,000 in 2020/21.

**Risk Assessment:**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: HIGH

Residual Risk with recommendations: LOW

**Climate implications:**

Agreeing the recommendations would allow residents to continue to use their closest HRC, thereby minimising and additional travel and carbon impacts from using HRCs further afield.

**Other Implications:**

None

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that

- a) Dorset Council provides for an additional £405,000 in the 2020/21 budget to cover payments to Hampshire County Council and BCP Council to allow Dorset residents continued access to Somerley, Millhams, Christchurch and Nuffield HRC's;
- b) Authority be delegated to the Lead Member for Customer, Community and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Director for Place to finalise arrangements with HCC and BCP councils.
- c) the provision of a new HRC and waste transfer facility in the east of the County is investigated as part of a wider HRC review;
- d) a survey is undertaken of the use of all Dorset Council HRCs by residents outside Dorset, to help inform the HRC review and future HRC strategy.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

- a) Continued use of Somerley HRC by Dorset users will lessen additional congestion and additional costs at Wimborne HRC (which is considered likely if residents are required to bear the charges) which is already at capacity, and avoid residents travelling additional distance to access waste services adding to carbon emissions;
- b) Continued use of BCP HRCs will be required to prevent additional congestion, delay and increased cost to Dorset Council, and avoid additional travel by residents to access waste services adding to carbon emissions;
- c) A site search for a replacement site to Wimborne HRC is part of the ongoing infrastructure requirements of the service;
- d) A survey of Dorset Council HRCs will establish usage by non-Dorset residents, and help consideration of whether charges for non-Dorset residents should be introduced.

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet 30 July 2019 - Future use of Somerley Household Recycling Centre (HRC) by Dorset residents

Place Scrutiny Committee 10 July 2019 - Future use of Somerley Household Recycling Centre (HRC) by Dorset residents

Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee 24 January 2013 – Household Recycling Centres – Cross-border usage

Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee 17 January 2019 - Public consultation for Somerley HRC usage

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## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Hampshire County Council propose to introduce charges for non-residents at their Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) from next year. Nearly 60% of the users of Hampshire County Councils Somerley HRC near Ringwood are Dorset residents.
- 1.2 Options for maintaining access were considered by Place Scrutiny Committee on 10 July 2019 who recommended that:
  - the Cabinet do not follow the recommendation contained in the report but have further discussions with Hampshire County Council in respect of Somerley HRC in order to give free access to residents for a 2-year period in order to find a long-term solution.
  - the Cabinet investigate any potential for cross border income to the Shaftesbury HRC site to offset any future costs.
- 1.3 The Cabinet on 30 July 2019 resolved that a decision on this matter be deferred pending further discussion with Hampshire County Council to discuss the use of Somerley Household Recycling Centre by Dorset residents. The Leaders of both councils have subsequently met and agreed to pursue an equitable financial solution.
- 1.4 The Executive Director for Place has recently received a letter from BCP council who have requested a contribution for Dorset residents to continue to access the HRCs in their area after April 2020.

## **2. Use of Somerley HRC, Hampshire**

- 2.1 As reported to the July 2019 Cabinet, proposed charges for Dorset residents to use Somerley HRC (if not met by Dorset Council) are likely to increase congestion and costs at the Wimborne HRC as well as residents travelling further to dispose of their waste adding to carbon emissions.
- 2.2 Hampshire County Council are intending to use pre-registration of vehicles from Hampshire residents combined with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at their HRCs to identify users from outside the area. The option of allowing Dorset residents to register vehicles is not being pursued at this stage due to the short timescales available to enable HCC to incorporate this change into their wider HRC ANPR programme. Officers will continue to investigate a registration process, although any changes to the Hampshire system is likely to incur additional costs which would need to be passed to Dorset council.
- 2.3 To avoid any additional costs and delays at Somerley HRC as a result of residents paying at the gate, it is proposed that Dorset Council contribute to HCC's cost of operating the site. Based on costs provided by Hampshire County Council on usage by Dorset residents is estimated that the cost to Dorset in 2020/21 will be £215,000. The cost will be ongoing until a Dorset Council solution is found to HRC provision in the area. Any future changes or need to register as a user of the site will be communicated as appropriate to residents.

### **3. Use of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole HRCs**

- 3.1 The use of the Millhams HRC by Dorset residents took many years to negotiate after the previous local government reorganisation. For a time, access was restricted to Dorset residents who lived within a certain distance from the site. This caused significant congestion at Wimborne HRC. Eventually a reciprocal arrangement was agreed whereby all Dorset residents can access the Millhams HRC site with any cost offset by Bournemouth residents use of the Christchurch HRC. Under the new local authority arrangements this reciprocal arrangement will no longer apply from 1 April 2020 as the running of Christchurch HRC will pass to BCP.
- 3.2 BCP estimate that 15% of the users of Millhams HRC are Dorset residents. BCP intend to carry out detailed traffic surveys at both Millhams and Christchurch HRCs to establish the percentage of users who are Dorset residents, although the number of Dorset residents using Christchurch HRC is expected to be significantly lower than Millhams. BCP estimate the cost of Dorset residents' use of Millhams HRC as £200,000 to £300,000. If we apply the pricing model used at Nuffield officers estimate the approximate cost to be £200,000. It would therefore be prudent to budget for £250,000 to cover likely costs of maintaining Dorset residents access to both Millhams and Christchurch HRCs.
- 3.3 If Dorset residents are prevented from using Millhams and Christchurch HRCs, or if they are charged for their use, there would be likely additional congestion and costs at Wimborne HRC which is already at capacity. It is therefore proposed that Dorset Council agrees to contribute reasonable costs to BCP to maintain access to both Millhams and Christchurch HRCs until a solution is found to HRC provision in the area. It is proposed that the existing arrangements for Dorset residents to access Nuffield HRC also continue at a cost of £70,000 per annum.

### **4. HRC cross border usage from other neighbouring authorities**

- 4.1 Officer discussions with Somerset and Devon County Councils have not indicated any cross-border issues or intention to introduce measures for non-residents in the near future. Wiltshire Council has already introduced a ban on Dorset and other non-Wiltshire residents using their HRCs.
- 4.2 Historic survey data has shown low usage of Dorset HRCs by non-residents. It is proposed that updated surveys are required to explore if Dorset Council needs to implement charges for non-Dorset resident usage.

### **5. Long term solution and review of HRC provision**

- 5.1 One of the major drivers to retain access to cross border HRCs is the inadequate provision of HRCs in the east of the County. Wimborne HRC is already operating at capacity with queues and delays occurring frequently. The site has a small footprint and closes several times a day for containers to be changed. Any additional usage of this site will impact on new and existing

users and further impact on residential properties and businesses who share the road to the site. This site is single level, with users having to climb steps to gantries to access the containers.

- 5.2 The option to improve Wimborne HRC was investigated some years ago and rejected due to high costs. Waste Local Plans have recognised that a replacement HRC is needed to serve the east of the County but a site has not been allocated. Whilst it was not possible to identify a site in the new Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan, the need was specifically mentioned in the Inspectors report (January 2019) and the Plan includes policies that allow for the provision of this facility. A new HRC may cost between £3 – 5 million and could form part of a waste transfer facility to serve the east of the county. No funding is identified in any legacy capital programme for a new HRC in east of the county. It should be noted that the provision of a new site can take several years.
- 5.3 Further changes are likely with the HRC service: under the Waste and Resources Strategy the Government has stated that it intends to review the practice of charging for disposal of construction and demolition waste from householders at HRCs. Dorset and most surrounding councils charge for this type of material. Any limitation on charging for this type of material may increase the cost to Dorset Council of the HRC service (and potentially any cross-border HRC arrangements). In addition, the Government will review opportunities for greater reuse of waste at HRCs. Following consultation on these matters national policy may change and there may be opportunities to access funding.
- 5.4 It is recommended to commence the search for a suitable replacement to Wimborne HRC immediately to review the provision of HRCs in Dorset taking into account emerging changes to national policy, and to link with the expiry of the current HRC management contract in 2024.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Disruption to current cross-border HRC arrangements will result in additional congestion and costs at Wimborne HRC. It is proposed that Dorset make an equitable contribution to HCC and BCP councils towards the cost of HRC provision in these areas, based on Dorset resident use.
- 6.2 A review of HRC provision will take into account the lack of adequate provision in the east of the County, the outcome of the National Waste and Resources strategy and the expiry of the current management contract.