

# Cabinet

## 7 December 2021

### Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Vehicle Access Policy

#### For Decision

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr L Miller, Customer and Community Services

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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**Report Status:** Public

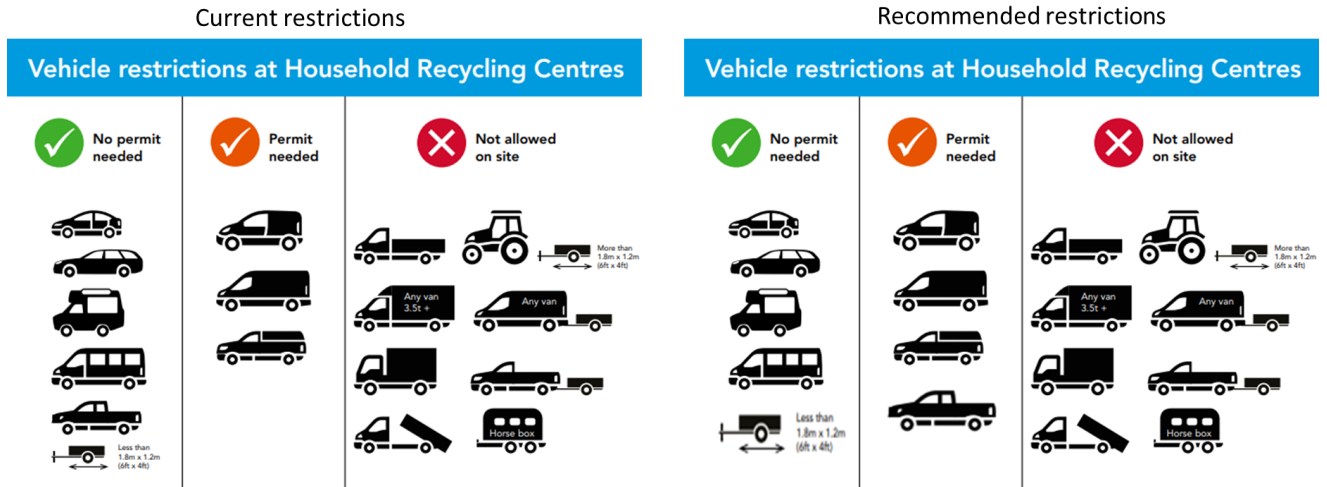
#### Recommendation:

That Cabinet review and acknowledge the recommendation from the [Place and Resources Overview Committee 19 October 2021](#) (Minute 27.) and approve the following changes to the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Vehicle Access Policy: -

- 1. That sole vehicle visits are limited to 12 visits per year, this is currently unlimited.** *Sole vehicles are when there is only one vehicle belonging to a household and this vehicle requires a permit. – see Infographic 1. This vehicle cannot be commercially registered, or sign written.*
- 2. That weekend access for limited entry permits is allowed and increase visits to six per year.** *Limited entry permits are defined by the policy for where there is more than one vehicle belonging to a household or the vehicle is commercially registered, or sign written. Currently only three visits are permitted. - see Infographic 1*
- 3. That dual crew cab, 'pick up' type vehicles are added to in the 'needs a permit' list**

**4. That an annual declaration for permit renewal is required rather than automatic renewal of all permits**

It is anticipated that these changes will be implemented from 1 April 2022 after appropriate communication with residents.



Infographic 1. – [HRC Vehicle Restrictions](#)

**Reason for Recommendation:**

Evidence provided from public consultation and officer assessment have identified that the existing vehicle access policy requires refinement. The amendments proposed seek to provide a fairer approach to accessing HRCs by legitimate users to deposit their household waste alongside limiting the potential for trade waste abuse.

**1. Executive Summary**

1.1. Dorset Council operates a policy to manage the types of vehicles which can use HRCs to deposit household waste. This allows legitimate users to access the HRCs and to limit the potential for commercial waste abuse and minimise congestion.

1.2. The current vehicle access policy has been in operation for 11 years and has ~4,200 live permits. Vehicle ownership has changed but the policy has not evolved to reflect this. Public consultation and officer feedback indicate that some aspects of the policy do not meet the needs of Dorset Council residents.

- 1.3. This paper details the review process of the policy and recommends amendments to refresh and update the restrictions in place.
- 1.4. These changes have been recommended by the Place and Resources Overview Committee. The outcomes from this committee are detailed in section 14.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1. This policy and its requirements are directly linked to Dorset Council's waste disposal budget. Seeking only to manage recycling and waste that the council is legally required accept at its HRCs. It aims to manage and prevent the misuse by individuals depositing, commercial waste (waste from a business) at a HRCs. The costs for administering this policy are small – less than £10,000 per year and the monitoring and recording of permit use are contractual requirements of the HRC operator.

## **3. Wellbeing & Health**

HRCs provide a safe and environmentally sound outlet for bulky household waste which needs to be removed from residents homes.

## **4. Climate implications**

- 4.1. Managing waste as a resource is the heart of the services Dorset Council provides. HRCs provide a valuable resource to Dorset Council residents to separate, reuse, recycle and deposit their household waste.
- 4.2. Improving access to legitimate users seeks to maximise the amount of household waste that is reused, recycled or composted via the HRCs.
- 4.3. In the case of the Sole Vehicle Permit detailed in 15.1 permit holders will only have 12 visits per year which should encourage them to fill their vehicles to make the visit more worthwhile, as opposed to more frequent visits with less items in the vehicle each visit.

## **5. Other Implications**

N/A

## **6. Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: LOW  
Residual Risk: LOW

Concerns of increased fly tipping have been raised from the public consultation. Recommendation two improves access to HRCs allowing legitimate users a greater availability to access the service. This includes use at weekend and an additional three visits per year. Limiting sole vehicle permits to 12 visits per year although a reduction for unlimited access is supported by usage monitoring and consultation responses as a reasonable number of visits for most users over a 12-month period. These policy amendments are therefore not considered to increase the risk fly tipping with the Dorset Council area.

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An equalities screening assessment has been conducted and has not identified any negative impacts.

## **8. Appendices**

[Place and Resources Overview Committee 19 October 2021 – Minute 27](#)

## **9. Background Papers**

1. [Household Recycling Centre Access Policy Review – Consultation Response Report – July 2021](#)
2. [Surrounding Local Authority Vehicle Restrictions](#)

## **10. Current Policy Background**

10.1. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides the statutory obligation for the Council to arrange for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and each place is available for the deposit of waste free of charge by persons resident in the area ([section 51](#))

- 10.2. Most councils operate some form of restrictions policy which may include height barriers, van and trailer bans, weight restrictions and permit systems to control access to their HRCs
- 10.3. These schemes have proved successful in their aims and this has become increasingly important as the cost of waste treatment and disposal continues to rise and the temptation for traders to misuse household waste facilities increases
- 10.4. This is a challenging area to control and police as a lot of commercial waste is in nature very similar to household waste, for example waste from gardeners and independent trades people. It is difficult to distinguish from legitimate waste produced from householders, but it is more likely to be delivered via a trade vehicle.
- 10.5. Vehicle restrictions at HRCs were first introduced in January 2003 when a ban on all vans except where there were the sole means of transport in a household was enforced. This was amended in October 2009 when limited entry was permitted for some commercial vehicles and hire vans. The focus of these restrictions was and still is to tackle trade waste abuse.
- 10.6. Where permits are required under the current policy two options exist:
- a) The Sole Vehicle Permit - where this vehicle requires a permit but is only the vehicle belonging to a household, is not commercially registered and is not sign written. Permit holders can make unlimited visits on any day of the week
  - b) The Limited Entry Permit – where there is more than one vehicle belonging to a household or the vehicle is commercially registered, or sign written. Only allowed for use during weekdays (excluding bank holidays)
- Both types of permit are for Dorset Council residents only and only one permit can be issued per household.
- 10.7. Permit checking at HRCs is conducted via smart devices and not via Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This technology is however being investigated by officers in order to improve accuracy and to provide real time monitoring of permit use.

## **11. Provisions for trade waste**

- 11.1. Currently Dorset Council provides outlets for trade waste at its waste transfer stations in Bridport and Sherborne and the HRC in Swanage. These services are charged for.
- 11.2. All other Dorset Council waste facilities have been assessed for similar services but have been deemed not fit to effectively provide and administer.
- 11.3. All future HRC and waste transfer stations are being designed with dedicated trade waste facilities to allow proper access, segregation, weighing and charging to take place.
- 11.4. Provision of such services is not only recognised as a commercial opportunity for Dorset council but also to provide convenient local outlets for small business to manage their waste effectively.

## **12. Policy Review**

- 12.1. An officer working group has critically reviewed the existing policy. This has involved investigating how all neighbouring Councils implement similar restrictions ([See Background Paper 2](#)). This work identified the following issues with the existing policy:
  - a) The current policy has been in operation for 11 years
  - b) Vehicle ownership has changed but the policy has not - e.g. greater ownership of crew cab vehicles and camper vans
  - c) Lacks detail in some area and is over complicated in others – leading to challenge and escalated complaints
  - d) Is considered unfair for certain people when certain vehicle access is not permitted at weekends
  - e) The policy was ratified by a council that no longer exists and there is a target to review all existing policies within Dorset Council by 2022

## **13. Consultation**

- 13.1. The recommendations of this paper are informed and supported by results obtained from a public consultation exercise. This ran between 28th May 2021 and 11th July 2021 and received a total of 3,289 responses.

13.2. Of the total amount of respondents 535 had used the existing scheme to access an HRC with a permit for a vehicle. Based on the total amount of 'live' permits this represents ~12% of all current permit holders.

13.3. A range of questions relating to the HRC service were asked including specific question relating to the existing vehicle permit scheme. Full details of the consultation can be viewed in [Background Paper One](#)

#### **14. Place & Resources Overview Committee 19 October 2021**

During the committee meeting the following points were noted and then discussed with the Portfolio Holder:

14.1. Clarification was requested on what was meant by a 'sole vehicle'.

- The wording for this definition has been amended

14.2. Consideration as to whether a charge could be made for more than 12 visits a year.

- Access to HRCs is legally required to be free of charge to residents within the area and therefore only a fee covering the cost of administration could be made
- The number of visits recommended (12) is considered fair based on usage and consultation data. Additional visits may be subject to abuse by commercial waste operators

14.3. Requests for support for town and parish councils and other community groups with waste issues

- This matter is considered out of scope of the report but will be addressed between members and officers

14.4. A request made for guidance to be included in the policy for waste in connection with second homes used as holiday lets

- Where permits are applicable these are only issued to Dorset Council residents whose main home is in the Dorset Council area and can only be used for the deposit of their own household waste

14.5. A future discussion around fly tipping would be welcomed

- This matter is considered out of scope of this report but will be addressed and members will be briefed in due course

14.6. Provision of weblinks on the Dorset Council website to offer useful information available in this area.

- This matter will be addressed by officers

## 15. Detailed Recommendations

15.1. **Recommendation 1.** That sole vehicle visits are limited to 12 visits per year, this is currently unlimited.

15.1.1. Unlimited access for sole vehicle permit holders – has the potential for abuse and anecdotally does get abused by small businesses and trades people. Evidence from enforcement activity also supports this. High usage of sole vehicle permits is regularly investigated, and permits have been revoked.

15.1.2. The council's permit database shows that of the current sole vehicle permit holders (1,901 in total) only 9% of holders use the HRCs more than 12 times per year.

15.1.3. Results from the public consultation show that 84% of respondents visit an HRC up to 12 times per year. Of these respondents who currently use permits only 11% use an HRC more than 12 times per year.

15.1.4. Limiting to 12 visits is considered reasonable for the majority and restricts the potential for abuse.



15.1.5. Limiting residents to 12 visits per year will encourage them to fill their vehicle and make the visit more worthwhile, as opposed to more frequent visits with less items in the vehicle each visit.

15.2. **Recommendation 2.** That weekend access for limited entry permits is allowed and increase visits to six per year

15.2.1. The current system only allows weekday use with the limited entry permit. There are currently 2,297 live permits. This has often been the source of complaints and is cited as impractical for working people. Allowing access at weekends makes the use of commercially marked vehicles for household waste delivery possible when working residents are more likely to have the free time to make the journey. This also spreads the traffic load and allowing for improved social distancing

15.2.2. This approach correlates well with the responses received within the consultation. With van users, identifying the weekends as the best time to use the HRCs.

15.2.3. Of those respondents who had used the limited entry permit 63% didn't feel this had met their needs. The main reasons attributed to these judgments were the limit of three visits per year and not being able to use the HRCs at the weekend.

15.2.4. Overall, this increase in availability is seen as an improvement for legitimate access to HRCs. Allowing residents to make use of van or another permitted vehicle for the occasional large load.

15.3. **Recommendation 3.** That dual crew cab, 'pick up' type vehicles are added to in the 'needs a permit' list

15.3.1. Currently only single cab pickups require a permit. Dual crew cab pickups type vehicles have large carrying capacities and are often used by commercial businesses. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest these vehicles are being used to circumvent existing restrictions. Putting them in scope to require a permit seeks to limit the impact of commercial waste abuse at the HRCs while allowing reasonable access for legitimate users. This also provide parity across all pick up classifications.

15.3.2. Consultation results do not fully support this inclusion with only 41.3% of respondents identifying Double cab pickups as vehicles

currently not requiring permits as needing one. However, of the options provided for vehicles which should require a permit they were the most frequently identified.

15.3.3. This update would also provide continuity with most of neighbouring authorities who currently require these vehicles to have permits.

15.4. **Recommendation 4:** That an annual declaration for permit renewal is required rather than automatic renewal of all permits

15.4.1. The need for permit holders to provide an annual declaration gives the opportunity to refresh and agree to the conditions of use with the service users.

15.4.2. The accuracy of the live permit holder data would also be improved, resulting in more effective monitoring of system use and a more robust data set for future policy development, providing the ability to better understand uptake and use of the system. This will also provide more robust GDPR compliance.

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.