

Cabinet – 30 July 2019

Recommendations from the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 July 2019

7. Future use of Somerley Household Recycling Centre (HRC) by Dorset residents

Members considered a report that outlined the charges that Hampshire County Council proposed to introduce for non-residents at their Household Recycling Centre (HRC) from April 2020. This report would also be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 30 July 2019. It was highlighted that 56% of the users of Hampshire County Council's Somerley HRC near Ringwood were Dorset residents.

The Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy highlighted a survey that had been conducted with the local residents who currently used the Somerley HRC.

He noted that whichever option was selected Dorset Council would incur further costs, either in terms of a direct payment to Hampshire County Council or in terms of consequential costs within Dorset. The recommendation to the Cabinet was that there would be no payment to Hampshire as there was no budget for it.

In response to a question from a member about the different items taken to the HRC rather than put in the kerbside bins and whether this had been considered, the Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy responded that this had been driven by Hampshire County Council and the advice to residents would be go to their own (Dorset) HRC to dispose of such items.

The Vice-Chairman made reference to the £225k income for non-household waste disposal and asked about expenditure for fly tipping across the County. The Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy advised that the costs of fly tipping would be considerable smaller and undertook to provide further information outside of the meeting. Members were reminded that income was gained from non-household waste and the responsibility of this was passed to the contractor.

Following a question about Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at the HRC, officers advised that this was not operational at the moment but was planning to be introduced in January 2020. However, Hampshire would prefer not to use this system for Dorset residents.

One member made reference to the £60k that had been budgeted for Hampshire but to date had not been used and therefore felt there was budget provision for this service.

The Chairman invited the local members to speak:-

Toni Coombs, Councillor for Verwood advised members that she had been involved in this issue for 3 years. She had lived in Verwood since 1991 and had enjoyed free access to HRCs during this period. Cross border charging started in the London area and had a ripple effect, which continued to happen across the country. She felt

one authority should not be subsidising another authority. Recently she had attended the Portfolio Holders decision day at Hampshire County Council, whilst the decision had not changed it had been agreed there would be more time for the decision to be made. A large consultation had been carried out with over 1500 responses. The HRC was 0.9 miles from the edge of Verwood and Cllr Coombs highlighted the other areas that would be affected. She felt there would be a cost to Dorset whatever happened. She accepted there was no budget but felt that residents would have to pay twice – via their council tax and again through this. She felt the post code system would be easiest to administer.

Mike Dyer, Councillor for West Moors and Three Legged Cross, commented there would be an immediate saving if Dorset Council paid for the Somerley HRC rather than diverting the waste into Dorset. He felt there should be several lots of £60k sitting somewhere that hadn't been paid to Hampshire. He suggested there was a case for paying Hampshire a sum, akin to a form of rental for using their facility as Dorset wouldn't be building one any time soon. He made reference to the 2 year transitional period and felt that in respect of climate change the economics and moral arguments needed to be looked at very carefully.

David Tooke, Councillor for Cranborne and Alderholt, reiterated the point about climate change with additional distances having to be travelled. If there was no money in the budget where would it come from? He felt there was money tucked away for residents to be able to use the HRC and urged the Cabinet to rethink the conclusion and to start negotiating with some real effort.

The Chairman reminded members that the Council had declared a climate emergency and felt this impacted on this decision.

The Vice-Chairman highlighted the need to do what was right for the residents of Dorset. There was an opportunity if the service was subsidised to work with the new Climate Change Group and felt if the Council invested a little it could perhaps save a bit.

One member wished to challenge the assumption that out of area use would include Shaftesbury HRC. She noted that a lot of Wiltshire residents used this facility and considered if there should be discussions with Wiltshire regarding some sort of trade off.

In respect of comments made about the Wimborne HRC one member agreed it was well run but access was very difficult and was over capacity already. He felt the Council needed to look at building another HRC and that there shouldn't be a double taxation imposed on some residents.

One member commented that Verwood was not a small rural part of the county but a significant population centre and we should not pass on the pressures to Wimborne. He felt the rental suggestion was a good point. It was important that the new Council found a way that all its services were universal. He suggested looking at the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate as a potential site. Asking residents to pay would give completely the wrong message and suggested the Council paid the money for the 2 years transitional period in order to give more time for a decision.

Cllr Anthony Alford advised members that part of his current portfolio included waste and that prior to that he was the Chairman of the Dorset Waste Partnership. The

Council was now running on a very lean basis in respect of budgets. When the budget was set there was an expectation to deliver the service within budget. To suggest there was money available to meet the impact was unrealistic. There would have to be compensating savings elsewhere which could be reduced provision for HRCs elsewhere. In respect of Wimborne, he accepted that a replacement facility was needed but it would take some time.

Recommendation

1. That Cabinet do not follow the recommendation contained in the report but to 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.
2. That Cabinet investigate any potential for cross border income to the Shaftesbury HRC site to offset any future costs.