

## INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION REPORT

Published on 22 August 2018

### Changes to Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours

<b>Dates between which decision will be taken</b>	Earliest date: 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2018 Latest date: 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2018
<b>Fire, Planning and Infrastructure</b>	Cllr Nigel Moor
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Background Papers</b>	Environmental Protection Act 1990  Gloucestershire County Council Medium Term Financial Strategy Budget 2018/19  Council minutes Wednesday 14 February 2018 10.00 am (item 7)
<b>Location/Contact for inspection of Background Documents</b>	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/section/51">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/section/51</a> <a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1060">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1060</a> <a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s43511/Item%20%20App%20%20-%20MTFS%20Detailed%20Document.pdf">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s43511/Item%20%20App%20%20-%20MTFS%20Detailed%20Document.pdf</a> (page 55) <a href="http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=333&amp;MId=8880">http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=333&amp;MId=8880</a>
<b>Main Consultees</b>	Ubico Ltd District Councils within Gloucestershire
<b>Planned Dates</b>	A county-wide communications campaign will take place in September and October in preparation for any changes.  Winter opening hours and day closures would commence when the clocks change on 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2018. New summer opening hours would commence when the clocks change in March 2019 and day closures would continue through the summer opening hours.
<b>Divisional Councillor</b>	All
<b>Officer</b>	<b>Any representations should be sent to:</b>  Andy Pritchard, Waste Strategy and Development Manager Tel: 01452 427014 Email: <a href="mailto:andy.pritchard@gloucestershire.gov.uk">andy.pritchard@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>  <b>By 5.00pm on Thursday 30 August 2018</b>

<p><b>Purpose of Report</b></p>	<p>To seek approval to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change the opening hours of the five Gloucestershire Household Recycling Centres (HRCs).</li> <li>2. Authorise the Head of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team to take all necessary steps and actions to implement these changes so they are effective from the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To approve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1) Changing the opening hours of all Council Household Recycling Centre (HRC) sites as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Open all HRC sites each year between 10am-4pm during the winter Greenwich Mean Time period excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day;</li> <li>(b) Open all HRC sites each year between 9am and 5pm during the British Summer Time period; and</li> <li>(c) During both periods set out in 1.1(a) and 1.1(b) above to close each HRC site for one mid-week day per week the first such closure not occurring before 28th October 2018.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Delegate authority to the Head of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team, to take all necessary steps and actions to implement these changes so they are effective from the 28th October 2018, which shall include authorisation to determine which day each site will close for the purposes of 1.1(c) above.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b></p>	<p>These recommendations will contribute to the required medium term financial strategy savings in the waste management budget.</p>
<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p>	<p>These changes will deliver budget savings with no additional resource required from the Joint Waste Team.</p>

## MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

### 1. Background

1.1 In February 2018, the Council set its budget for 2018/19. Within the scope of this decision, a saving of £167,000 for 2018/19 on the waste management budget was agreed, with the intention that this would be achieved (in part) by a change in the winter opening hours of the HRC sites.

1.2 A change in HRC opening hours is not uncommon at councils across England. Many have taken steps in recent years to review and reduce opening times in order to meet the financial challenges they face. Opening times must maintain compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 section 51, whereby there remains a duty for Waste Disposal Authorities to provide places for the public to deposit their household waste. The legislation does not dictate opening hours, but states;

*“each place (must be) available for the deposit of waste at all reasonable times (including at least one period on the Saturday or following day of each week except a week in which the Saturday is 25th December or 1st January).”*

1.3 There are five HRCs operated by Ubico Ltd on behalf of the Council. These are Fosse Cross near Cirencester, Hempsted in Gloucester, Wingmoor Farm at Bishops Cleeve, Pyke Quarry near Horsley and Oak Quarry near Coleford. A sixth HRC located at Swindon Road in Cheltenham is operated by Ubico on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. This site is outside the scope of this report. All five County Council HRCs currently open at 9am and close at 6.15pm throughout the year, excluding Christmas Day and New Years Day when they are closed. These opening times have been in place for several years.

1.4 Traffic count studies at Wingmoor Farm and Hempsted HRCs show that peak demand occurs between mid/late morning and mid/late afternoon; typically from between 10am to 11am and 3pm to 4pm. Visitor numbers are at their lowest between 9am & 10am, and after 5pm. This statistic is supported by a recent Cotswold District Council public consultation on waste services, which asked when people normally visited the HRC. The consultation responses indicated that majority of users visit between 10am and 4pm (77%), predominantly at weekends. The traffic count data is presented in Appendix 1. Additionally, visitor numbers are at their highest on weekends and bank holidays, especially between Easter and September.

1.5 A seasonal variation in waste tonnage can also be observed. Annual patterns of HRC waste tonnage fluctuate due to an increase in garden, soil and DIY type wastes which creates a peak between Easter and the autumn. Apart from an upwards spike in the fortnight after Christmas, waste tonnages are traditionally lower during the winter months (by around 25-30%). This data is presented in Appendix 2.

## **2. REVIEW OF OPENING HOURS.**

- 2.1 A review of opening hours has been undertaken with Ubico that takes into account the requirements of the EPA, the savings target for 2018/19 of £167,000 pa, the observed daily pattern of visitor numbers and the seasonal nature of site usage.
- 2.3 Reduced opening hours of between 10am and 4pm in winter would provide an estimated saving of £116,000pa. For the avoidance of doubt, winter is considered to be the Greenwich Mean Time period each year (late October to late March). In addition, consideration has been given to closing all HRC sites on Boxing Day. Whilst some people use the HRCs on Boxing Day it is traditionally a quiet time for the sites, and many authorities do not open HRCs on Boxing Day for this reason. The closure of HRCs on Boxing Day would generate an additional estimated saving of £4,000pa.
- 2.4 The total saving generated by changing winter opening hours and a Boxing Day closure as described above is estimated at £120,000pa. This falls short of the 2018/19 financial saving target by £47,000pa. Reducing winter opening hours further in order to achieve these savings would present operational risks in terms of increased usage of the sites during the remaining opening times; resulting in increased queuing and a shortage of time to effectively service the sites. As a result, the review was broadened to consider changes to opening hours across the year.
- 2.5 A number of additional options have been considered. Each of these presents a combination of reduced opening hours in winter (including a Boxing Day closure) with other changes throughout the year. Again, consideration has been given to seasonal and daily site usage patterns in order to minimise the impact of reduced opening hours.

### **2.5.1 Option 1 – Reduce winter and summer opening hours**

Description: Open all sites between 10am-4pm (winter, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day) and 9am-5.00pm (summer).

Reasoning: Generates an additional saving whilst minimising service disruption, by closing at the quietest times of the day.

Estimated saving: £173,000pa.

Issues/risk: Delivers the level of savings required from 2019/20 onwards, but not in 2018/19 (due to mid-year implementation).

### **2.5.2 Option 2 – Reduce summer and winter opening hours and close all HRCs for one day per week**

Open all sites between 10am-4pm (winter, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day) and 9am-5.00pm (summer) whilst closing each HRC for one mid-week day per week.

Reasoning: This approach is equitable across the county. Weekday closures can vary from site to site so that a service is available within Gloucestershire at all times.

Estimated saving: £216,000pa.

Issues/risk: Some operational practicalities for Ubico Ltd in devising suitable shift patterns. Some disruption to local residents who may find their local HRC closed one mid-week day per week.

### **2.5.3 Option 3 - Reduce summer and winter opening hours and close all HRCs for two days per week**

Open all sites between 10am-4pm (winter, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day) and 9am-5.00pm (summer) whilst closing each HRC for two mid-week day per week.

Reasoning: This approach is equitable across all areas of the county and does not disadvantage any one area. Weekday closures can vary from site to site in order to ensure that a service is available within Gloucestershire at all times.

Estimated saving; £251,000pa.

Issues/risk: Higher visitor numbers to sites on the days that they remain open, resulting in additional queuing and waste transfer requirements. Greater disruption to residents who will find their local HRC site closed two mid-week days per week.

### **2.5.4 Option 4 - Do nothing and retain current HRC opening hours**

Agreed budget savings will not be achieved, resulting in a budget overspend.

- 2.6 The council's provider, Ubico, has advised that savings would be mainly generated by rationalising staff costs, whilst ensuring sufficient staff numbers remain in place at all times for the safe and effective working of the sites. Additional savings may be accrued due to a subsequent reduction in waste tonnages but the potential impact of this is unknown.
- 2.7 The savings identified above are full year savings. It is not envisaged that any changes to opening hours are made before 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at the time the clocks change to GMT. Given this, the savings available in financial year 2018/19 will be no more than £90,000pa. Proposals to meet the balance of the £167,000 saving (£77,000) are being developed by the Joint Waste Team.
- 2.8 A comprehensive communications plan will be needed to publicise any agreed changes to opening hours. A one-off budget expenditure of up to £10,000 is estimated, which will be off-set against the estimated savings in 2018/19.

## **3 Summary and Officer Recommendation**

- 3.1 Table 1 summarises the Options set out in Paragraph 2.5.

Table 1: Summary of Options

No.	Description	Estimated Saving	Meets saving target 2018/19	Meets saving target 2019/20
1	Reduce winter and summer opening hours	£173,000pa	Not fully, due to mid year implementation	Yes
2	Reduce summer and winter opening hours and close all HRCs for one day per week	£216,000pa	Not fully, due to mid year implementation (but greater saving than option 1)	Yes
3	Reduce summer and winter opening hours and close all HRCs for two days per week	£251,000pa	Not fully, due to mid year implementation (but greater saving than options 1 and 2)	Yes
4	Do nothing	£0	No	No

### 3.2 Officer Recommendation:

That Option 2 be implemented: Open all sites between 10am-4pm in winter, (excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day) and 9am-5pm during the summer, whilst closing each site one mid-week day per week, to commence from 28th October 2018. Option 2 offers an effective balance between savings opportunities whilst minimising service and operational disruptions. This offers a saving of approximately £90,000 in 2018/19 and £216,000 in 2019/2020.

## 4 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 In addition to the risks outlined within this report, there will be a risk of increased fly-tipping outside the HRCs in the short term. This could arise in extreme cases if members of the public were unaware of the changes to opening hours and were to arrive at site at times of closure. Whilst it is unlikely that most people would resort to fly-tipping, it is our experience, and that of other authorities, that this may occur in some instances. Improved signage at the site entrance, advanced notification of new opening hours and regular policing of the site gates by Ubico during the first few weeks would be implemented in order to reduce this risk. Ongoing monitoring of fly-tipping incidents reported to and managed by district councils should also continue to be reviewed as part of the implementation of any changes.
- 4.2 In all cases, a shortened pattern of opening times may result in longer queuing at peak times of demand. We will seek to mitigate the risk of excessive queueing by continuing with a programme of compactor upgrades which would reduce the amount of time that containers are unavailable for use, thereby allowing traffic to flow through the HRCs in

the most efficient way. Communications can also focus on encouraging people to visit at quieter times of the week if possible (i.e. asking people to avoid weekends and public holidays if they can).

- 4.3 Shorter HRC opening hours may impact the district council kerbside collections, increasing demand for these services (particularly perhaps for bulky waste and garden waste collections). Whilst potentially benefitting the districts in terms of a potential for increased income (as both bulky waste and garden waste services are charged for), it could put pressure on these services if demand were to rise significantly. Any impact on district services will be reviewed in the first year of operating the new opening hours.
- 4.4 Shorter opening hours at Wingmoor Farm HRC may increase the usage of Cheltenham's Swindon Road HRC. Close contact will be maintained with the borough council and its site operator (Ubico Ltd) in order to monitor any impact.
- 4.5 Delivery of the savings is contingent upon Ubico implementing a suitable shift pattern and agreeing any contractual changes with staff (should these arise). It will be necessary for Ubico to communicate and consult with its staff ahead of any changes.
- 4.6 Whilst lighting and gritting is provided at HRCs, a reduction in winter opening hours might reduce health and safety risks associated with darker and/or frosty conditions.

## **5 Equalities considerations**

- 5.1 A due regard statement has been completed. No material impact on any of the nine protected characteristics was identified relating to the changes in opening hours. HRC services will remain available to all members of the public to deposit household waste in line with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

## **6 Consultation feedback**

- 6.1 Consultation with Ubico has resulted in the options and savings as outlined in this report.

## **7 Performance Management/Follow-up**

- 7.1 A reduced expenditure resulting from these changes will form part of the adjustment to the base budget for the service. The performance of the HRC contract in terms of both ongoing financial impact and recycling performance will continue to be monitored, as will fly-tipping trends.

<b>Report Title</b>	Changes to the Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	Section 51 Environmental Protection Act (1990)
<b>Relevant County Council policy</b>	None
<b>Resource Implications</b>	These changes will deliver budget savings with no additional resource required from the Joint Waste Team.
<b>Sustainability checklist:</b>  Partnerships  Decision Making and Involvement  Economy and Employment  Caring for people  Social Value  Built Environment  Natural Environment' including Ecology (Biodiversity)  Education and Information	This project is not being undertaken to deliver added social or environmental benefits to the service. Whilst there may be a resulting reduction in vehicle movements (customer and contractor) the primary benefit is one of operating within reduced budgets.
<b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	Carbon Emissions Implications? Neutral Vulnerable to climate change? No

<b>Due Regard Statement</b>	Has a Due Regard Statement been completed? Yes.
<b>Human rights Implications</b>	None
<b>Consultation Arrangements</b>	Consultation has been undertaken with Ubico Ltd when developing the options outlined in this report.

**Appendix 1**

**Traffic Count Analysis**

The charts below show the traffic count analysis (average number of vehicles per day) undertaken at Wingmoor Farm and Hempsted HRCs during September and November 2017 and February 2018.

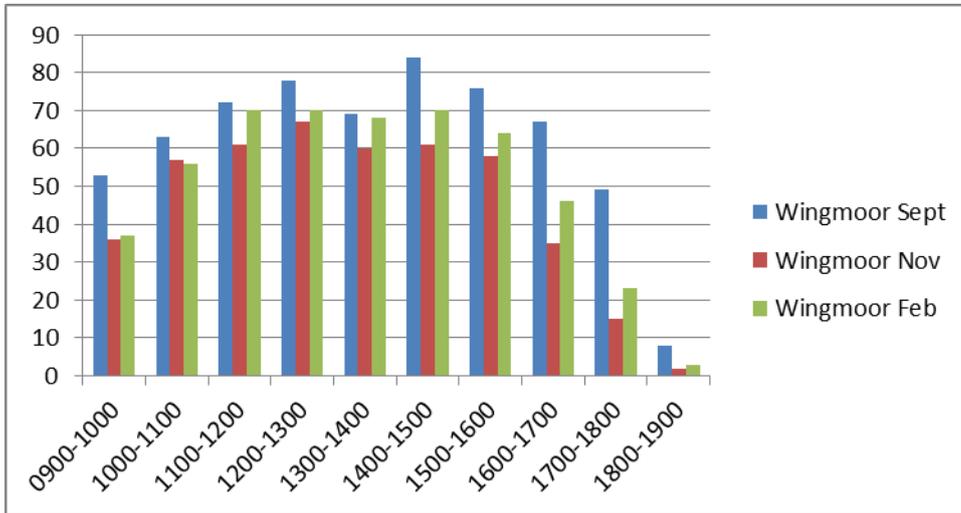


Chart 1. Average number of visitors per day at Wingmoor Farm

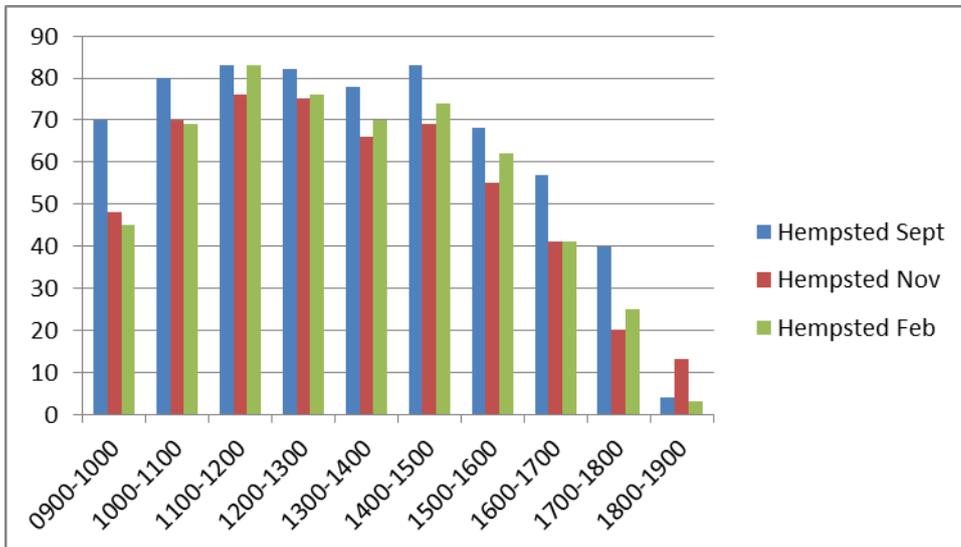


Chart 2. Average number of visitors per day at Hempsted

**Appendix 2**

**Seasonal HRC tonnage variations**

The charts below show the seasonal variation in waste tonnages received at the HRCs between 2015/16 and 2017/18.

