



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 2 NOVEMBER 2023**

**RECYCLING AND HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITES  
CONSULTATION**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Environment And Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation on the following proposals:
  - a) Closure of three of the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS): Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby;
  - b) Change to part time opening at the Bottesford RHWS;
  - c) Reduce summer opening hours at all RHWS; and
  - d) Introduce Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy (LRWS) sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (consisting of the Council and the seven Leicestershire District Councils) intends to manage municipal waste up to 2050. The current LRWS was adopted by the Council on 24 April 2023.
3. The RHWS service supports the objectives of the Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030 and the 'Clean and Green' outcome within the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.
4. The current RHWS Service Offer was approved by the Cabinet on 18 November 2015, and includes five-day opening all year round, charges for the majority of non-household waste, and a single service approach for all sites.
5. Since 2013, there have been a number of service reduction and efficiency changes to the operation of the RHWS service to achieve Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings of approximately £2.7m.
6. The Cabinet agreed to a public consultation on RHWS summer opening hours changes on 25 June 2019 however, the changes were not taken forward at the time.

7. On 13 February 2023, the Scrutiny Commission appointed a cross party Scrutiny Review Panel to test the assessment criteria applied to identify sites for potential closure and to consider how the closures would impact residents for the future. The report and recommendations of the Panel were considered as an exempt report under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and supported by the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2023 and by the Cabinet on 23 June 2023.

### **Background**

8. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 to provide places at which residents in its area may deposit their household waste free of charge. The EPA requires that each place provided is open at all reasonable times including at least one period on a Saturday or Sunday. The Council has discretion to determine the number of these facilities, the location of such facilities, the opening hours to be operated and what charges if any are applied for accepting non-household waste or waste from businesses or non-residents.
9. There are 14 RHWS sites located across the County, all of which are directly operated by the Council. There are 70 operational staff working across the sites, including Recycling Operatives, Charging Operatives and Plant Operatives. The Council owns and operates its own fleet of roll on/roll off vehicles (nine HGVs). A map showing the location of Leicestershire's RHWS is shown in Appendix A of this report.
10. Waste Transfer Stations are co-located at the Kibworth, Loughborough and Whetstone RHWS. District Council depots are next to the Whetstone, Oadby, Melton, and Coalville RHWS.
11. The total operational budget for waste management in 2022/23 was £28.9m. The current net budget for operation of the RHWS is circa £3.9m (excluding waste disposal and treatment).
12. Previously, the Cabinet agreed current opening times for all RHWS which are as follows (Appendix B of this report contains a site-by-site breakdown of opening days/times):
  - a) 9.00am to 7.00pm, five days a week from April to September (summer hours) (Saturday to Wednesday or Thursday to Monday dependent on site);
  - b) 9.00am to 4.00pm, five days a week from October to March (winter hours); and
  - c) All sites to be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

### **Proposals/Options**

13. Waste Services are required to make savings as part of the MTFS 2023-27. Options were presented to Members, including proposals to meet the savings target by closing some of the RHWS and reducing summer opening hours.
14. All RHWS were assessed for potential closure against a number of criteria, including:
  - a) Finance (cost per visit and cost per tonne of waste received);
  - b) Ongoing operational deliverability;

- c) Catchment areas (including cross boundary use);
  - d) Site usage patterns;
  - e) Predicted housing growth;
  - f) Site infrastructure;
  - g) Legal compliance;
  - h) Implementation timescale.
15. A Scrutiny Review Panel was convened to test the application of the assessment criteria. The Panel's report and recommendations were considered as an exempt report under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and supported by the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2023 and by the Cabinet on 23 June 2023.
16. Following on from the Cabinet's decision to support the recommendations of the Panel, a detailed proposal was developed. On 24 October 2023 the Cabinet authorised a public consultation on the following proposal:
- a) Close three RHWS: Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby.
  - b) A permanent change to part time opening at the Bottesford RHWS (from five days a week to three days a week).
  - c) Reduction of summer opening hours (April-September) from 9.00am-7.00pm to 9.00am-5.00pm on three days per week (Saturday-Monday), 9.00am-7.00pm retained on the other two days (Tuesday and Wednesday or Thursday and Friday dependent on site). At Bottesford, 9.00am-5.00pm opening hours to be on Saturdays only due to part time opening.
  - d) Introduce Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.
17. It is proposed to retain the 7.00pm closing time on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday where a site is open from April to September to cater for those working during the day. Retaining some later opening times during the week was a theme of the feedback in the 2019 consultation on reducing summer opening hours.
18. All of the RHWS are currently closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. It is proposed to close all RHWS on Christmas Eve, as data shows generally lower visitor numbers on this day compared to other days in December. The saving will not contribute towards the MTFs savings target but will partially offset additional operational costs and will enable a better service during the busy period between Christmas and New Year by allowing staff the time to prepare sites beforehand.

### **Consultation**

19. A 12-week consultation on the proposals is currently underway and it ends on 24 January 2024. This report forms part of the consultation and seeks the views of the Committee on the proposals.
20. The consultation consists of an online questionnaire available via a link which will be available on the Council's website from 1 November. Additionally, posters and flyers have been placed at all RHWS to inform users of the consultation process and how they can participate in it. A telephone number and email address has been provided for people to request alternative formats of the questionnaire. Additional activities, including focus groups, presentations to specific groups, online engagement via Social Pinpoint etc, will also be considered.

21. In addition to service users and the general public, a variety of other stakeholders will be consulted, such as: district councils, parish councils, neighbouring Waste Disposal Authorities (Leicester City Council and other County Councils), and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group.
22. Responses to the consultation will be reviewed and their impacts considered. Feedback from the public and stakeholders will be assessed to understand if any mitigating adjustments to the proposals might be needed.

### **Resource Implications**

23. The MTFS 2023-27 includes a saving target of £580,000 from the RHWS service. The proposals considered in this report are estimated to achieve savings of £420,000, with £270,000 from three RWHS closures and £150,000 from the reduction of summer opening hours by 2025/26. The revised savings target of £420,000 will be included in the MTFS 2024-28 alongside consideration of growth pressures on the RHWS service to take account of current or proposed changes affecting how waste is managed.
24. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

### **Timetable for Decisions**

25. Timetable of decisions and potential implementation:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Report to the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the outcome of the consultation and recommendations	11 March 2024
Report to the Cabinet with the outcome of the consultation and recommendations (including views expressed by the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee)	23 April 2024
Implementation: Site closures and part time opening (subject to Cabinet approval)	October 2024
Implementation: Christmas Eve closure (subject to Cabinet approval)	December 2024
Implementation: Summer opening hours changes (subject to Cabinet approval)	April 2025

### **Conclusions**

26. This report seeks the views of the Committee as part of the ongoing consultation on the aforementioned proposals detailed in paragraphs 13 – 18 above.

## **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

27. A copy of this report has been circulated to all Members.

## **Equality Implications**

28. The first iteration of the Equalities Impact Assessment has been drafted (available in Appendix C of this report). An updated version will be produced upon the completion of the consultation exercise in February 2024.
29. The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group are to be consulted as part of the consultation.

## **Human Rights Implications**

30. No human rights implications are anticipated but this will be considered further during the consultation.

## **Background papers**

18 November 2015 - Report to the Cabinet – ‘Recycling and Household Waste Sites in Leicestershire - Proposed Changes and Third Sector Recycling Credits’:

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4232&Ver=4>

25 June 2019 - Report to the Cabinet – ‘Recycling and Household Waste Sites Future Service Offer’

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s146584/RHWS%20Future%20Service%20Offer.pdf>

22 February 2023 - Report to the County Council – ‘Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27’:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s174965/MTFS%20Report%202023-2027.pdf>

24 April 2023 – Report to the Cabinet – ‘Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022-2050’:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s175771/Leicestershire%20Resources%20and%20Waste%20Strategy%20Cabinet%20240423.pdf>

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Location of Recycling and Household Waste Sites in Leicestershire.

Appendix B - Current RHWS Opening Days/Hours by Location

Appendix C - Equalities Impact Assessment (first iteration)

## **Officer(s) to Contact**

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