

**Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Looking
After the Environment**



20 March 2006

**Review of Household Waste Recycling
Centre Scrutiny Project**

Report of Access to the Coast Scrutiny Working Group

Purpose of Report

1. To review progress in implementation of the recommendations made by the Household Waste Recycling Scrutiny Working Group.

Background

2. Household Waste Recycling Centres play an important role in assisting with the Council's waste agenda. A project to examine how well Recycling Centres are operating commenced in 2004 and reported in April 2005. The Scrutiny Working Group report made a number of recommendations about how the operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres could be improved.

Current Position

3. A review meeting took place on 9 March 2006 when Members received a presentation from the Acting Director of Environment and a representative from Premier Waste about progress on each of the recommendations. The recommendations are summarised in the attached report, together with responses from officers. Additional detail was given at the meeting in relation to some of the specific areas of progress outlined in the attached report.
4. We were pleased to note that good progress has been made in relation to our recommendations and would like to thank the officers concerned.

Recommendation

5. There has been considerable progress in implementation of the Working Group recommendations. We recommend that the attached progress report be noted and that the project be now concluded.

Contact: Tom Bolton Tel: 0191 3833149

Date of Meeting: 9 March 2006

Members Present: Councillors J Armstrong, Carroll (Chairman) Barker and A M Williams.

Co-opted Members: J Crosby and D Easton.

Cabinet Member: B Myers.

An apology for absence was received from D M Jones.

“Recycling for the Future”

Household Waste Recycling Centre Scrutiny Working Group

Review of Recommendations – 9 March 2006

No.	Recommendation	Progress
1	Whether any improvements need to be made to signage on sites and in particular, signage for those members of the public who have reading impairment or whose first language is not English.	Type of signs required has been identified. Currently working on graphics and text based on comments made in the Equality and Diversity Access Report.
2	If any changes can be made to extend the opening hours of sites, particularly during the winter months and to provide appropriate lighting at HWRCs, subject to planning requirements.	Opening times is a Health & Safety issue. Some sites don't have power therefore staggered hours will remain in place.
3	Whether arrangements can be made on unimproved sites to more speedily remove household items such as doors, furniture and other goods whose storage and display creates the impression that such items are for sale and that sub-contractors be reminded of the restrictions in their contracts which prohibit such sales.	Premier have formally re-iterated to site contractors the operating licence clause on sale of goods on site. Premier site managers are now reinforcing this. DCC also monitoring.
4	If any action can be taken to improve traffic flows on popular sites and prevent congestion and back-up onto the adjoining road network, including advance signage in highways to alert users of sites of hold ups.	Improved signage for traffic flow will be looked at whilst implementing Equality and Diversity Access Report. Unfortunately, physical restraints at some sites make improvements difficult.
5	Whether any future developments of HWRCs include consideration of sites where there are existing structures, which might be utilised to provide enclosed (roofed) sites.	Where land is identified for a new/replacement site and a building exists, an assessment of the possible use of the building will form part of the process.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
6	How the performance and quality of staff employed at HWRCs can be improved in relation to issues such as customer care and health and safety, including relevant qualifications (NVQ, or appropriate), and how conditions of employment (including rates of pay) are monitored by Premier Waste. This would include assistance with access to skips for timber and green waste on some HWRCs, which are currently set at ground level	Staff are expected to assist the public where required and this has been re-iterated to all staff. Customer care, H & S and conditions of employment are issues to be considered for inclusion in specifications of future contracts for managing HWRC's.
7	Whether the current incentive system within the existing contract arrangements for operation of the HWRCs can be improved to ensure that sites not only achieve high recycling rates, but also ensure that the public experience of usage of sites is improved. Premier Waste should also be asked to consider whether there is a need to develop performance criteria for sub-contractors who manage HWRCs.	Customer care issue will be monitored closely between now and the end of the existing contract. Incentives to be considered for any future contract.
8	That consideration be given to whether sub-contractors on HWRCs should have appropriate ISO accreditation in respect of health and safety.	Another issue for future contracts.
9	Whether the existing arrangements for the emptying of some recycling facilities on HWRCs, such as bottle banks, are operating effectively to prevent build ups of material.	Servicing on site is being monitored by Premier's recycling managers and DCC. Servicing on some sites eg. glass is the responsibility of the local district council. Previous problems such as glass build up at Coxhoe has now been resolved with the district's contractor.
10	How arrangements for closures of HWRCs on Christmas and New Year's Days can be more effectively communicated to the public (there may be opportunities for joint working here with the District Councils, most of whom leaflet the public with details of revised collection arrangements over the Holiday period).	To be looked at this year in conjunction with the districts. Temporary signs to be erected for 4 weeks prior to Christmas advising of closure on Christmas day and New Year's day.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
11	How the public can be better informed about arrangements for disposal of white goods and tyres at sites free of charge, perhaps via a publicity campaign (possibly jointly with the District Councils) or information in Countywide.	Article to be arranged for Countywide. Leaflets to be distributed with permits. Website information to be updated.
12	How provision at those sites which are still unimproved can be upgraded.	Where space on site allows, paper, glass and cans will be introduced to each site.
13	That Premier Waste should be asked to consider whether arrangements for the deposit of gas bottles at HWRCs and their collection by the manufacturers can be improved – perhaps by the transportation of bottles to the 3 Transfer Stations for collection purposes.	Premier are arranging a “clean sweep” of redundant gas bottles as a one off across all sites to dispose of bottles they’ve been unable to repatriate. Some gas bottle companies are reluctant to repatriate their bottles and are very slow at responding to Premier’s repeated requests for collection.
14	Whether at some point during the next 12 months an evaluation of the [waste permit] scheme be carried out, which includes an element of public consultation.	We have taken public/member feedback into account in refining the permit scheme. We are due for a satisfaction survey of HWRC’s in 2006/07 which could include reference to permits.
15	Close monitoring of fly tipping, particularly around HWRCs, be undertaken to assess whether the new permit scheme is impacting adversely on fly tipping levels.	Fly tipping around HWRC’s continues to occur, at a similar level as prior to the permit scheme.
16	What opportunities exist for the provision of plastics recycling facilities on HWRCs and how these can be introduced.	No opportunities at present but we are investigating provision of facilities at one site in each district area.
17	Whether opportunities exist for better marketing of recycled compost produced by the County Council to the public and bodies such as Town and Parish Councils and whether greater use can be made of this material in schemes undertaken by the Council.	Note that the compost is in fact Premier’s property. However, Premier will be requested to promote improved marketing and co-operate with DCC campaigns.