

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		PSEG/01/14
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 January 2014	
RECYCLING CENTRES FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTE: DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY		
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A project is underway to develop a service delivery and infrastructure strategy for the Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service, and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste is inviting the Committee to feed into its consideration.

At the meeting the Committee will receive a briefing on the issues under review and how the development of the strategy will be taken forward.

A briefing paper prepared by Jason Searles, Head of Commissioning Sustainable Essex Integration & Waste, is attached as an Appendix to this report to provide some background on the topic.

(Please note that for the purposes of the work programme there are now two strands to the Committee's consideration of the RCHW Service. The Committee was advised at its meeting in September 2013 (Minute 4) about an earlier scrutiny review recommendation that further investigation be undertaken on the longer term future of the Service. The development of the RCHW service delivery and infrastructure strategy that is the focus of this item relates to a new Executive project where the Committee is being invited to input in the active formulation of proposals for changes to the Service in the short/ medium term. With particular reference to the overall work programme any further scrutiny work on the RCHW Service will have to be considered in terms of the topic selection criteria and prioritising resources.)

Action required by the Committee:

The Committee receive a briefing on this matter.

Appendix

Recycling Centre for Household Waste

Identification and Development of Future Service Options

Briefing paper prepared by Jason Searles, Head of Commissioning Sustainable Essex Integration & Waste

Purpose of Report

As the provider of the Recycling Centre for Household Waste service Essex County Council is due to commence a review of the service to ensure it is best placed to meet current and future needs.

The support of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee is sought to assist with

- obtaining and reviewing service user views
- development of ideas and reviewing of options for future service standards
- Identifying service development and infrastructure opportunities

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider how it wishes to participate in this process to develop future service delivery options.

Overview

Essex County Council (ECC) is the statutory Waste Disposal Authority for Essex and has a duty to provide facilities for the residents to dispose of their household waste. ECC fulfils this requirement through the provision of 21 Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW). Many of these sites were developed when recycling was in its infancy and were co-located as an ancillary activity to landfill site operations which have now ceased. This has led to a network of RCHW sites that has grown organically over many years resulting in sites which may not be located in the right areas or able to meet current or future demands

ECC is due to start a process to obtain the view of users, partners and other interested parties on what is important about the current service and what are the areas that may need further development.

The information collated, together with service data, will be used to develop options for how the service and associated infrastructure could evolve to optimise efficiency and ensure value for money for the taxpayer. These options which may include changing the configuration of sites, developing new sites or operating some of them in a different way will be subject to further consultation before any changes are adopted.

Background to Service Review

ECC has been responsible for the provision of waste disposal facilities since the early 1970s and the current requirement to provide RCHW is contained within the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The number and location of sites provided by ECC has been subject to constant change with many small sites closing in the 1990s and more recently some larger bespoke sites being developed.

The service was last subject to a review in 2011 which culminated in a number of operational and infrastructure changes including;

- Reduction in the number of sites from 23 to the current 21
- Changes to operating hours
- Operation of some sites on a part time basis (between 4 & 6 days a week)

These changes helped improve the efficiency of the retained sites by condensing usage and delivered operational cost savings of approximately £650,000 p.a. However it is recognised that changes also impacted on members of the public using the sites by reducing access through shortened opening hours and requiring some to travel further.

During the 2011 review of the service, and following the adoption of service changes, a Task and Finish Group of the former Policy and Scrutiny Committee considered a number of issues and impacts resulting from the changes and identified the need for consideration to be made as to how the service develops in the future; particularly in light of new waste infrastructure becoming operational, changes to kerbside recycling collection services and changing user needs

The current network of 21 RCHW sites in Essex are operated on behalf of the County Council under a long term integrated waste management contract. This contract, which commenced in November 2013, was awarded following extensive market testing to ensure it represented good value for money. Although only recently procured the contract does provide significant levels of flexibility to accommodate changing needs and requirements.

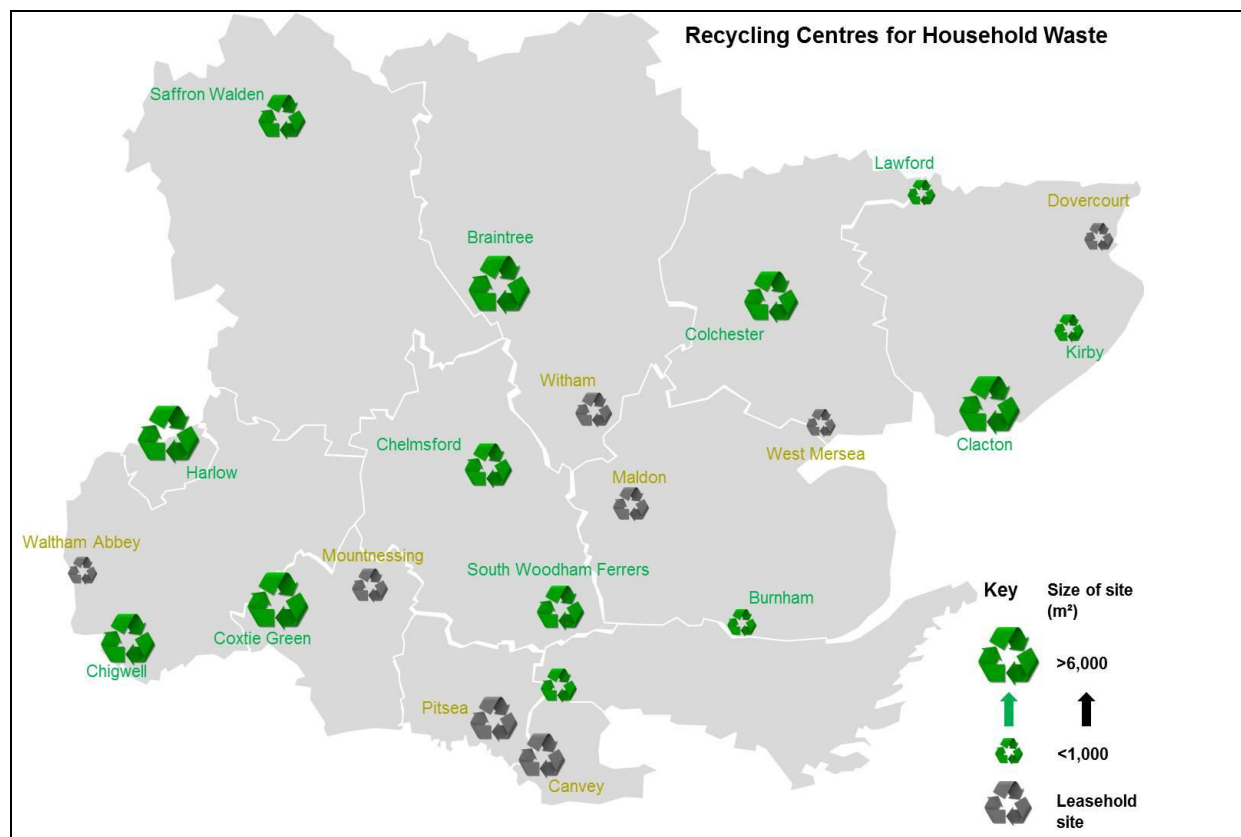


Fig 1: RCHW site provision

The above map shows the locations of the current network of facilities and gives an indication of the size and tenure of these facilities.

Although some of the RCHW sites in Essex are large purpose built facilities many are not; being developed at a time when landfilling was the primary way we managed waste, and recycling opportunities were limited. These differences in site infrastructure affect the way in which we operate the sites and the services we can provide. Many of the smaller older sites are unable to offer the full range of recycling opportunities, require users to climb steps and may have to close to the public at points during the day so vehicles can empty the full containers; this is not the case at the more modern facilities.

Service Review Process

This review, which the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to participate in, will help identify whether the current configuration of sites is right and what operational changes could be made in the short and longer term to ensure future needs are met. It is also the intention that this review will have consideration for whether there are opportunities to reduce levels of recycling service duplication between providers, increase efficiency and reduce overall costs of the service

The initial stage of the process will be seeking the views of those that use the service to provide some insight into how the service may need to evolve and what opportunities. It is the intention to commence this initial survey work in February 2014.

The views expressed through the survey and gathered from other sources, such as the Scrutiny Committee, together with operational data, will be used to develop future service delivery options. The future timetable for deliver will be heavily dependent on the opportunities and options that emerge from this review phase; however it is anticipated that some initial recommendations and delivery programmes will be developed for consideration and a decision on adoption during spring 2014.
