

12 October 2017		ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Linford Household Waste & Recycling Centre – Future Site Redevelopment		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Yes	
Report of: Beau Stanford-Francis – Environmental Protection & Contracted Services Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Julie Rogers – Assistant Director of Environment		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox – Corporate Director of Environment and Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Council operates a single Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Linford. The site is operating significantly over capacity with the layout and infrastructure not being in keeping with modern sites. This reduces the opportunities to encourage re-use and recycling. The site was recently bought back in-house after the incumbent contractor rejected the opportunity to renew the contract for operating the site. This has presented the Council with an opportunity to improve the site and take measures to encourage recycling at the site.

The site as is will not meet the borough's projected growth going forward and additional capacity will need to be created. The site has a number of infrastructure challenges that will need to be addressed, however, the present location is owned by the Council and outline design ideas suggest that the site has the potential to deliver a redesign that will meet Thurrock's future requirements.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1.1 To undertake a Planning Application for the redevelopment of the HWRC Linford, on its current Buckingham Hill site in line with the design principles detailed in 4.3.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock Council has a statutory obligation under section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide residents with a facility for the disposal of bulky household waste. The Act establishes minimum standards for the provision of the service in terms of the minimum number of sites for each Authority, it does not however, contain any guidance regarding the standards by which sites should be operated with local authority's being able to set hours of operation, site layout and waste acceptance criteria.
- 2.2 Thurrock Council currently operates a single site at Buckingham Hill Road in Linford which is situated on a former Essex County Council Landfill Site. The land that the site sits on is owned by Thurrock Council. The current site has been operating in its current layout and working plan since March 1997 and was designed to accept in the region of 6,000 tonnes of household waste per annum. At present the site is receiving 11,000 tonnes per annum. There are currently 65,490 households within the borough and this is forecast to increase to 78,100 by 2030.
- 2.3 In line with Environmental Permitting Regulations Linford HWRC is operated under licence from the Environment Agency with regular inspections being undertaken to ensure that the site is being run in accordance with the law. The site licence governs the site operations and the waste types that the site can accept; it also imposes requirements for site competent persons. Failure to comply with the terms of the licence can lead to the Council being prosecuted under Environmental Legislation or the restriction or closure of the site.
- 2.4 Between September 2009 and November 2010 the Council operated a second recycling only centre at St Clements Way in West Thurrock. The throughput at the West Thurrock site was low and the site was deemed to be no longer viable to operate. The site was closed in 2011/12.
- 2.5 The Linford site was run under contract between 2010 and 2017. In the lead up to the expiry of the contract the contractor was offered the opportunity to extend the contract however, they rejected the opportunity stating that extension was neither financially nor operationally viable. The rejection of the contract extension, the volatility in waste disposal prices and the outdated design of the site meant that in conjunction with external specialist waste disposal consultants the decision was taken that procurement of the site 'as-is' was not a viable proposition. In June 2017 the management of the Linford HWRC was brought in-house under the Council's direct management

3. Interim Site Management update

- 3.1 Taking the site into Council control has allowed the Authority to undertake a number of interim quick wins to improve the site operations, introduce new avenues for recycling and reduce costs. These include:

- New site signage and markings
- Introduction of the new site operating plan
- TUPE Transfer of existing staff and transfer of agency staff to permanent roles.
- Introduction of new waste disposal routes including revised paint containers, plate glass, co-mingled hardcore and ceramics, acceptance of fluorescent light tubes, PVC bin.
- Extensive staff training to improve the site efficiency, health and safety and the customer experience.
- Introduction of a new uniform policy to make staff more visible to the public and present a more professional face for the Council.

3.2 Site operational costs remain within the budget however, the cost of disposing and transporting the waste deposited is over and above that budgeted, this is likely to create a budget pressure over the year. Management of the disposal element of the site budget is primarily controlled by preventing the unauthorised deposit of waste at the site and by ensuring that waste is segregated into the cheapest disposal stream. A small number of waste disposal streams generate an income for the site however, the majority specifically: Plasterboard, Residual Waste, Wood Waste and Hardcore incur significant costs.

4. Proposed Site Redevelopment Principles and Implementation

4.1 The current HWRC is not in keeping with modern facilities at other boroughs. The size of the site is struggling to meet current demand and will not be able to support the borough's projected growth agenda. As it currently stands the site would not be able to be re-configured to support charged commercial waste deposits, a greater range of recycling containers or a dedicated re-use facility. The proposed re-development of the existing site will be designed to meet the borough's requirements to 2030. Depending on the pace of growth within the borough and the stability of the amount of waste deposited per household an additional site may be required.

4.2 Issues with current site

4.2.1 Site Highway Access

Access to this cramped site is far from ideal. There is no dedicated turning lane and there is insufficient space to stack cars within the site. When the site is busy, queues quickly spill out onto the highway and on many weekends queues have been known to extend for at least 300 metres and lasting up to 45 minutes. The customer exit lane is also in conflict with large lorries entering and leaving the site as it is not possible to service the site outside normal opening times. The traffic management issues at the current site prevent operatives from undertaking wide scale checking of Council Tax records; this is due to the time taken to undertake the checks contributing to significant traffic problems on the highway.

4.2.2 Size of Permitted Area

The site as is can be seen as per appendix 1. The site covers the entire fenced area however; the Environmental Permit only covers the area outlined in Red. The second area outlined in yellow does not form part of the permitted licenced area of the site and therefore, waste storage or operations cannot take place on this element. This was previously used for the storage of old items from the closed St Clements Way Depot, these items are no longer fit for purpose and have been removed. The non-permitted area can only be used for the storage of empty bins which severely curtails the options for configuring the site. The non-permitted area does not have planning permission, does not have drainage and is not on hard standing; this means that there is little to no change of an Environmental Permit being granted for the use of this area without major redevelopment.

4.2.3 Site Layout and access to containers

The current layout of the site is neither efficient or user friendly for both the general public and site operatives, limited space means that this will largely need to be resolved by improved layout and site design. The site infrastructure is basic by modern standards, particularly when compared to sites which are built on a split level, separating the public from site operations and avoiding the need for carrying waste up steps. Such sites are considered by the HSE as safer and easier for customers to use. Currently, site users have to walk via parking and access lanes whilst carrying bulky items. This is a particular concern for those carrying items from the rearmost lanes.

4.2.4 Services and Utilities

The site has a mains supply of water and a landline telephone. The site does not however; have mains sewerage, electricity or gas. The workarounds to this include a portable generator to provide power which is costly and caused significant problems with powering site CCTV and security measures. Sewage is managed using a cess pit which is costly to empty and maintain. A key impact of the lack of mains power is that the site opening times are restricted to daylight hours as the lighting required to run the site safely is not feasible on a generator.

4.2.5 Land Management and Environmental Issues

The site is located on a former Essex County Council municipal landfill site and there is paucity of data relating to ground conditions, surface water drainage and gas migration issues. Site redevelopment will need to include further ground condition surveys and is likely to limit redevelopment to the current site footprint and the identified 'un-permitted area'

4.3 Proposed Site Re-design Principles

4.3.1 Expand Site Permitted Waste Operations Area

Expand the permitted waste operation area to cover the full available area of land within the fences boundary of the site (both the yellow and red outlined areas on Appendix 1. This will involve land remediation, adequate drainage and hard standing to be put in place.

4.3.2 Introduce a Split Level Site Layout

The site will be landscaped in order to allow the larger high use bins to be sunk to a level that will allow the public to access the skips without having to climb steps. This will improve the customer experience, improve health and safety for the public and staff and will make customer more likely to use the recycling bins instead on only making one trip upstairs to deposit waste in the residual waste bin.

4.3.3 Highways Access Improvements

Introduce a dedicated right turn lane to reduce the queuing traffic on Buckingham Hill Road who are waiting to turn right into the site. In addition the increased site area will allow for additional 'on-site' stacking to reduce queuing on the Public Highway. The exit for Commercial Vehicles and HGV's servicing the site will also be segregated from car access and egress which will greatly improve site safety.

4.3.4 Connect the Site to Mains Power and Sewerage

Connecting the site to mains utilities will reduce revenue costs and will increase the reliability of site equipment and machinery. It will also allow for adequate lighting to be put in place during the winter months as well as removing the requirement for a septic tank, reducing costs and allowing for the drainage that will be required for site expansion. Recent commercial and residential redevelopments at Stanford-Le-Hope West mean that connection to mains service is now a viable option.

4.3.5 Significant Increase in Recycling and Re-use Facilities On-site

An increased range of recycling and re-use containers on-site will allow for a greater amount of waste items to be recycled or re-used instead of them being disposed of via more expensive methods. Increased space will allow for greater opportunities for partnership with local re-use community groups which will allow a greater number of items such as furniture, bicycles, electrical items and even items such as crutches to find new homes.

4.3.6 Introduce a dedicated Commercial Waste Disposal Facility On-site

The current site throughput data shows that commercial waste is being disposed off at the site. An improved site layout and infrastructure will allow for the site to apply for an environmental permit for commercial waste disposal on-site. This will include the introduction of an electronic weighbridge with a dedicated commercial waste lane. This will provide an avenue for income generation and will provide commercial waste producers with a further avenue to dispose of their waste.

4.4 Site Redevelopment Plan Options Appraisal

4.4.1 Do Nothing

The site at present is not in keeping with modern standards with access to the site itself and waste containers being less than optimum from a Health and Safety Perspective. The current site layout and size will not allow for the

projected number of future households within the borough and is therefore not a viable long term option. The requirement to climb stairs for high volume bins, the cramped layout and the need to cross lanes of traffic to deposit items mean that the user experience is not conducive to maximise recycling opportunities.

4.4.2 Build a new site at an alternate location

An independent planning consultancy has reviewed Council Owned Land to determine any alternative locations that could house a site. No suitable locations have been found that have adequate access or are in a location that is far enough from densely populated areas but that is situated close to major transport routes. Sites on land not owned by the Council have been considered however the cost implications of leasing or purchasing a site mean that this option is not feasible.

4.4.3 Maintain the current site 'as-is' and build a second similar size site at an alternate location

This approach was tried and failed at the St. Clements facility, which closed within a year. The cost of purchasing or leasing a second site has been discussed as per '5.4.2'. In addition the additional manpower and equipment required to operate a second site would incur significant revenue costs that are not currently budgeted for and would prove prohibitive.

4.4.4 Invest in the current site and expand into the non permit area – ***the recommended option***

The Council own the full site and would not incur any lease or purchase costs. The current site is ideally located; not being directly adjacent to a built up area but still being located within excellent access to the A13 and A1306. Outline design ideas to scope the sites potential to meet the boroughs' needs as per Appendix 2. These outline scoping plans are encouraging and suggest that the site is suitable for redevelopment.

4.4.5 Site Redevelopment Budget

The estimated required budget for redevelopment of the site in order to meet the design principles identified will only be able to be finalised once the planning process has been completed and a competitive tender process has been undertaken. Members agreed a Capital budget of £2.6million to resolve the future of the site at Cabinet in February 2017. Redevelopment of the current site and the improvement to the site layout particularly a move to a split level site is unlikely to result in any additional operations costs. The improved recycling and re-use facility as well as the opportunity to generate an income from commercial waste is likely to reduce the net revenue cost of running the site.

4.4.6 Proposed Site Re-design Procurement Process

Procurement of the site redevelopment contracts will be undertaken in line with the processes required under EU Procurement Regulations.

4.4.7 Proposed Implementation Plan

Completion of the planning process, procurement and build is estimated to take 18 – 24 months. The timeline will be confirmed following completion of the Planning and subsequent Procurement Stage. It is proposed that at the end of each stage that a briefing report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update on progress. Re-development of the site will be undertaken in two halves to allow for the site to remain operational at an acceptable reduced capacity throughout the build

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 This recommendation to redevelop the site has been made to ensure that Thurrock has a fit for purpose waste disposal facility for households and businesses that will meet the future growth projections for the borough. The proposed site changes will improve; site efficiency, health and safety considerations and will create an customer experience that will encourage re-use and recycling.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 6.1 Site Redevelopment Member Panel 19 September 2017. Including adjacent Ward Councillors from Stanford-Le-Hope West, Tilbury East, The Cabinet Member for Environment and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Cleaner Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.2 Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee October 2017.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 This report supports the Councils priority to “Promote and Protect our Clean and Green Environment”

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Capital Implications, Senior Financial Accountant

The Capital Programme has allowed for £2.6 million for site redevelopment. As plans for the site are finalised and the procurement process is completed a firm site redevelopment budget will be confirmed. Should this exceed the proposed initial allocation then a bid for any further required monies will be required. At present no additional revenue requirement has been identified for the operation of the future site.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Monitoring Officer

Under section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council has a statutory obligation as a waste disposal authority provide a facility for 'persons resident in its area' to dispose of household waste. Section 51(3) of the act makes provision for an authority to make charges for the deposit of Commercial or Industrial Waste.

The proposed value of the contracts for redevelopment of the site is above the thresholds for the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and therefore a full and compliant EU Procurement Process must be followed. In addition to the requirements of EU Procurement legislation the Procurement will be required to meet the Councils Contract Rules which sit within the Councils Constitution.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

The redeveloped site will result in improved access to the site for those with accessibility requirements. The removal of stepped access to container and dedicated parking bays will resolve significant impediments that currently severely restrict site access by disabled and elderly people. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be required as part of any redevelopment.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Proposed Commercial Waste avenue at redeveloped site has the potential to reduce fly-tipping.

9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

WRAP Household Waste and Recycling Centre guidance for Local Authorities:

http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/INH0449_HWRC_Guidance_2015_7%20FINAL.pdf

10. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1: Current Site Layout

Appendix 2: Outline mock-up of potential redevelopment options on-site.

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