

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	10th September 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Brian Jones: Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment/Tony Ward: Head of Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services
Report author	Tony Ward/Tara Dumas, Waste & Recycling Manager
Title	Procurement for a new contract to manage our Household Waste Recycling Centres

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is about a proposal to engage in a joint procurement process with Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) to manage Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in both counties.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role by examining, and providing feedback on, the proposal.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee support the principle of collaborating with CCBC to procure a joint contract for managing HWRCs in both counties, including the proposal to align our HWRC policies and for consistent charges to be applied across all sites for certain non-household items.
- 3.2. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

- 4.1. Both Councils have a need to procure new contracts for managing their HWRCs during this financial year. Informal discussions have been taking place between the respective Heads of Service, Waste Managers and Lead Members regarding the potential advantages of working together on this piece of work.
- 4.2. There are several likely advantages to pursuing a collaboration with CCBC on HWRCs, including:

- Financial benefits arising from economies of scale, including increased tendering interest from the private waste sector.
- Consistency of approach with a neighbouring authority;
- Opportunities for cross-border use, to enable residents to use their nearest HWRC, regardless of which county it is in; and
- Opportunities for this to be a first step towards a potentially wider collaborative approach to the management of HWRCs. Any future expansion of the approach across North Wales would likely generate further financial benefits and enable cross-border use across more local authority areas, which would be of great benefit to residents.
- Optimisation of waste diversion and further income share through adoption of re-use shop operating model already demonstrated successfully at one Conwy HWRC site.

4.3. Although this may appear to be a relatively mundane and uncontroversial proposal, it would require a single set of policies for the use of HWRCs across both counties, and also for consistent charges to be applied across all sites for non-household waste items, such as do it yourself (DIY)/Construction Waste. Conwy have been successfully charging for non-household waste since 2017/18, and are therefore not prepared to change that position. We also feel it would be beneficial (for the Council and for residents) to introduce charges for non-household waste brought to our HWRCs, but it is acknowledged that this element of the proposal is likely to attract a negative reaction from residents.

4.4. We have a statutory responsibility to provide HWRCs to enable residents to dispose of household waste free of charge. However, a number of waste types are classed as non-household, and the Council has no obligation to accept these types of waste free of charge, and we are permitted to charge residents for their disposal. The collaboration would therefore see Denbighshire County Council (DCC) introducing reasonable charges for certain non-household materials, which would be to cover the high costs of transporting, treating and disposing these materials. This would still present an affordably priced solution for residents as opposed to the hire of a private skip.

4.5. The types of material likely to be affected by the introduction of a reasonable charge for disposal would be:

- Tyres
- Asbestos
- Plasterboard
- Soil, Rubble and Construction waste (including 'DIY Waste' e.g. bathroom suites & kitchen units)
- Gas canisters

- 4.6. As an example, for hardcore, rubble and DIY/Construction Waste, Conwy currently charge £2 per bag or £20 per trailer. A bag is equivalent to a small, plastic, sand / aggregate bag from a standard DIY stores (or similar) that can be safely lifted by one person. A trailer is defined as a standard small single axle trailer, with an estimated maximum load of 750 kg.
- 4.7. Our current policy already states that things like building rubble, bricks, tiles and soil are not classed as domestic waste (even if they come from a household) and that we have no obligation to accept these at our sites. It goes on to say that we do accept small amounts, but no more than 3 bags per visit, and that residents should hire a skip from a licensed company if they need to dispose of more of this type of waste. The proposal would therefore give residents an alternative to using a skip hire company, and would allow them to bring such waste to our HWRCs for a reasonable charge (which will be a lot cheaper than hiring a skip).

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. The proposals support the Corporate Priority “Environment” through providing resilience in the provision of recycling services to Denbighshire Residents (by optimising their efficiency and availability) and opportunities to pursue greater re-use (waste diversion) of unwanted items, supporting circular economy principals.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. There is no significant impact on other services. The proposal will contribute to the delivery of the saving already agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget, i.e. a £100k increase in income from reviewing waste charges. This saving is net of the cost to provide additional environment crime officer support (0.6 FTE Grade 6) for the ongoing prevention and investigation of waste related crimes.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. Overall the collaborative procurement and alignment of services has a positive impact across the Well Being Goals, providing opportunities to enhance the customer experience through access to more facilities, improve the waste re-use infrastructure, optimise community benefits and deliver efficiencies arising from economies of scale and a more data led/evidenced based approach to our service provision through the use of a booking system currently under trial. It will be necessary to update the well-being impact assessment once policies and charging structures have been agreed between both Councils and appropriate stakeholders have been consulted with regards to specific aspects of service provision (e.g. Charitable sector regarding access to facilities, re-use organisations with regards to access to unwanted items and operation of on-site re-use facilities.).

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. As highlighted in 4.1., informal discussions have taken place between the respective Heads of Service, Waste Managers and Lead Members from DCC and CCBC, with all parties being in favour of taking this proposal forward. The proposal has also been discussed with Informal Cabinet (28th July, 2020) and Group Leaders on (29th July, 2020).

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 The proposal to collaborate with Conwy County Borough Council to procure a joint contract for managing Household Waste Recycling Centres is supported. The waste service as a whole is under severe financial pressure and the Council has needed to recognise significant financial pressures in recent years (£1.4m in 2020/21). Efficiencies that can be identified while expanding the service on offer is very much welcome.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. There is a risk that this project would result in negative feedback from the public, and negative press coverage, as we expect people to focus only on the proposal for DCC to introduce charges for non-household waste. We can try to mitigate against this risk with proactive communities to explain that the charges are actually for a new service that we don't currently provide, i.e. that the charges are to provide residents with a reasonably priced alternative to hiring a skip for larger amounts of non-household waste. We need to be clear that we don't currently accept anything more than very small amounts of non-household waste in our HWRCs, so this is an expanded offer for residents. We also need to focus on the intention to allow cross-border use between the two counties, as this will be a significant benefit for many residents in Conwy and Denbighshire.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Scrutiny's powers in relation to matters detailed in this report are as per:

- Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution